

Japan

A horizontal bar with segments of blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.

Kyoto

(PDF Chapter)

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Pages 61

Page Range 288–348

Useful Links

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COVERAGE INCLUDES:

- History
- Sights
- Activities
- Courses
- Festivals & Events
- Sleeping
- Eating
- Drinking & Nightlife
- Entertainment
- Shopping



Kyoto

📍 075 / POP 1.47 MILLION

Includes →

Sights	292
Activities	320
Courses	320
Festivals & Events	321
Sleeping	321
Eating	331
Drinking & Nightlife	339
Entertainment	341
Shopping	342

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Omen (p337)
- ➔ Kyōgoku Kane-yo (p333)
- ➔ Roan Kikunoi (p334)
- ➔ Kitcho Arashiyama (p338)
- ➔ Yoshikawa (p334)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Tawaraya (p323)
- ➔ Capsule Ryokan Kyoto (p321)
- ➔ Hyatt Regency Kyoto (p329)
- ➔ Westin Miyako Kyoto (p330)
- ➔ Dormy Inn Premium Kyoto Ekimae (p322)

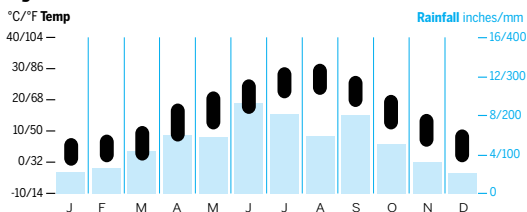
Why Go?

For much of its history, Kyoto (京都) *was* Japan. Even today, Kyoto is *the* place to go to see what Japan is all about. Here is where you'll find all those things you associate with the Land of the Rising Sun: ancient temples, colourful shrines and sublime gardens. Indeed, Kyoto is the storehouse of Japan's traditions, and it's even the place where the Japanese go to learn about their own culture.

With 17 Unesco World Heritage Sites, more than 1600 Buddhist temples and over 400 Shintō shrines, Kyoto is one of the world's most culturally rich cities. And traditional architecture is only half the story: there are also dazzling geisha dances, otherworldly kabuki (stylised Japanese theatre) performances, and an incredible range of shops and restaurants. All told, it's fair to say that Kyoto ranks with Paris, London and Rome as one of those cities that everyone should see at least once.

When to Go

Kyoto



Late Mar–mid-Apr Kyoto in cherry-blossom season is one of the world's great sights.

May–Sep Summer is hot and humid and June is rainy, but summer evenings are magical.

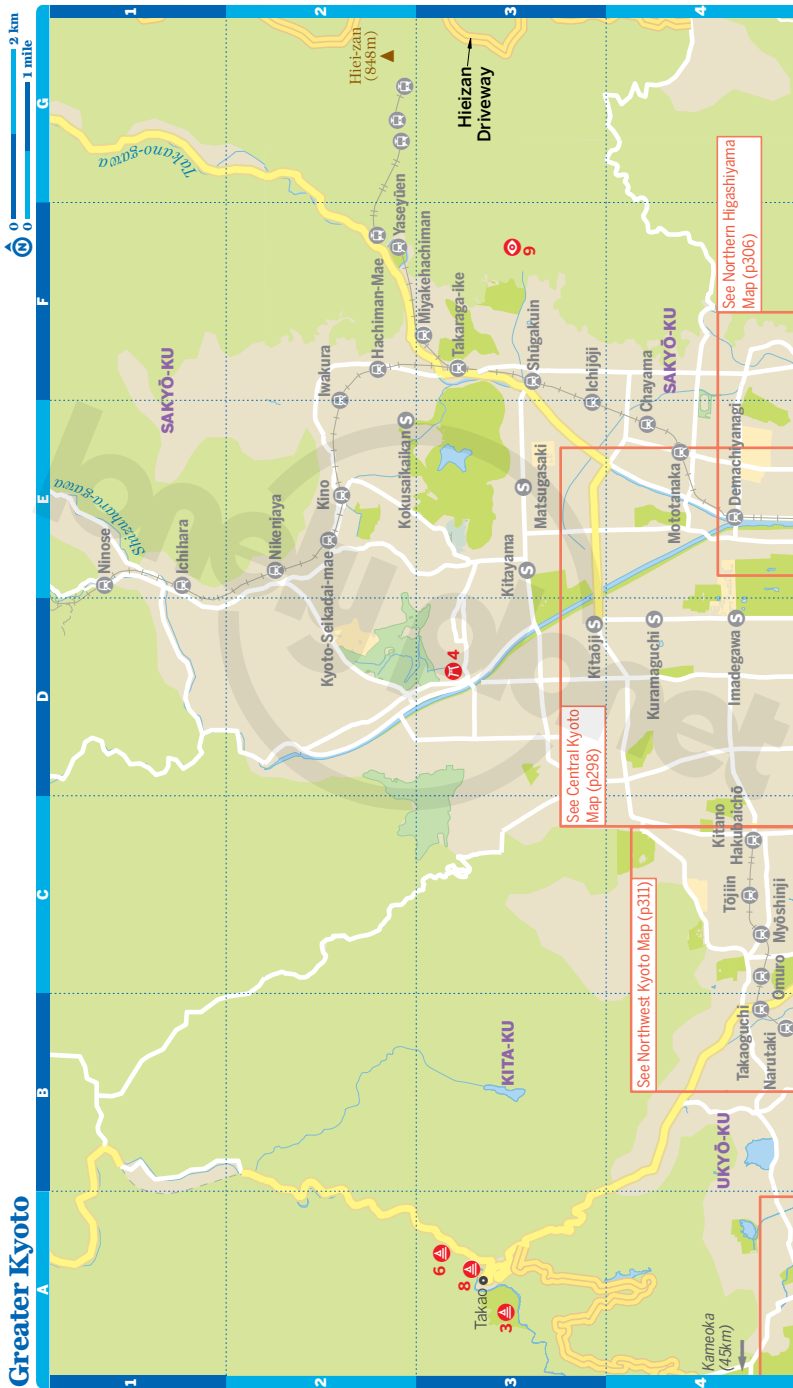
Oct–early Dec Fall foliage makes the perfect backdrop for Kyoto's temples, shrines and gardens.

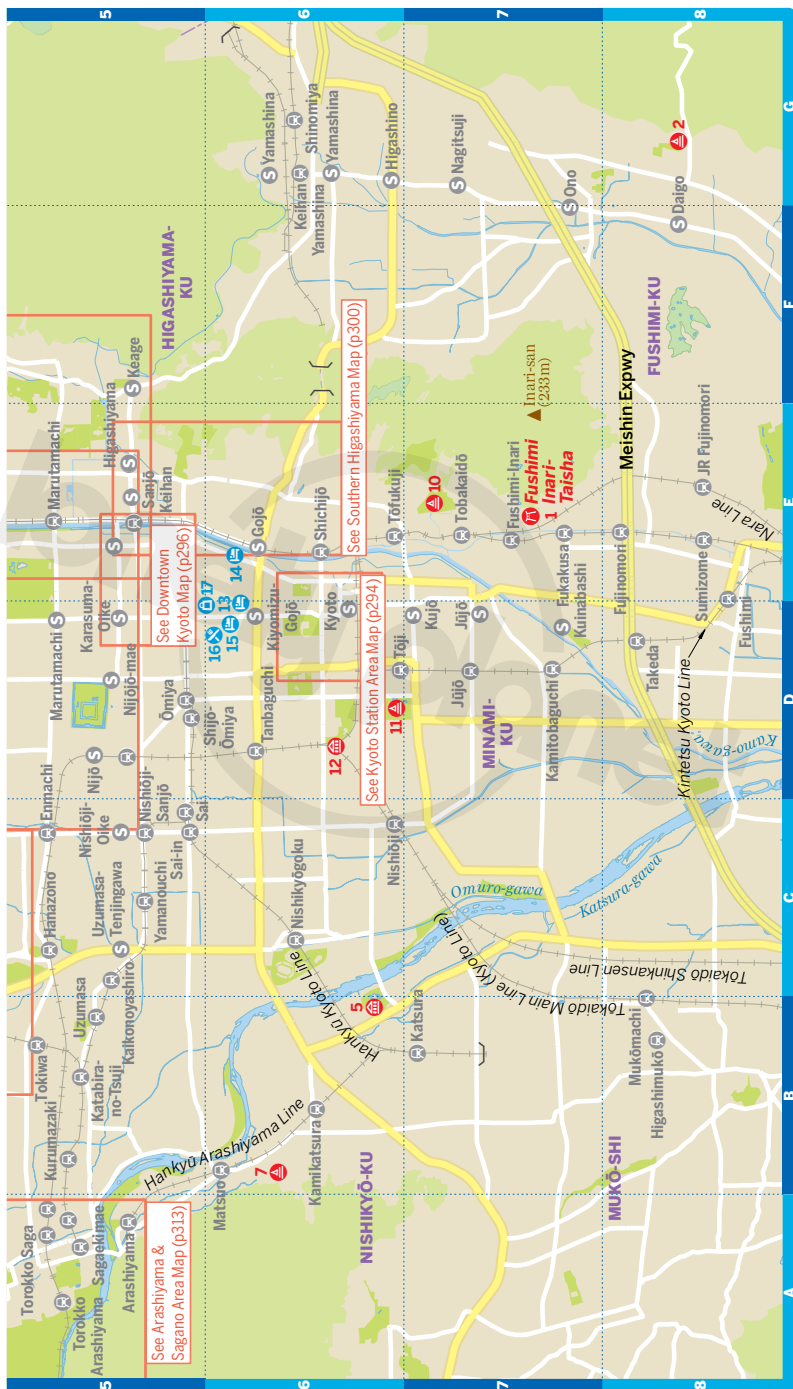


Kyoto Highlights

- 1 Wandering through arcades of vermilion shrine gates at **Fushimi-Inari Taisha** (p314).
- 2 Marvelling at the golden hall of **Kinkaku-ji** (p310) floating over its tranquil pond.
- 3 Spending a night in a traditional Kyoto ryokan, such as **Tawaraya** (p323).
- 4 Strolling through atmospheric **Gion** (p303).
- 5 Immersing in the green fantasy world of **Arashiyama Bamboo Grove** (p312).
- 6 Pondering the meaning of it all as you stroll along the **Path of Philosophy** (p305).
- 7 Climbing to the mountain temple of **Kurama-dera** (p318).
- 8 Being charmed by Geisha at **Miyako Odori** (p341).
- 9 Browsing **Nishiki Market** (p294) for Kyoto specialities.
- 10 Picnicking in the spacious grounds of **Kyoto Imperial Palace Park** (p297).

Greater Kyoto





See Arashiyama & Sagano Area Map (p313)

See Downtown Kyoto Map (p296)

See Southern Higashiyama Map (p300)

See Kyoto Station Area Map (p294)

Greater Kyoto

📍 Top Sights

- 1 Fushimi Inari-Taisha.....E7

📍 Sights

- 2 Daigo-jiG8
 3 Jingo-jiA3
 4 Kamigamo-jinjaD3
 5 Katsura RikyūB6
 6 Kōzan-jiA3
 7 Saihō-jiB6
 8 Saimyō-jiA3
 9 Shūgaku-in Rikyū Imperial VillaF3
 10 Tōfuku-jiE7
 11 Tō-jiD6

12 Umekōji Steam Locomotive

- Museum.....D6

🛏 Sleeping

- 13 Citadines Karasuma-Gojō Kyoto.....D6
 14 Hotel Sunroute Kyoto.....E6
 15 Tōyoko Inn Kyoto Gojō KarasumaD6

🍴 Eating

- 16 Shunsai Tempura ArimaD6

🛍 Shopping

- Kōbō-san Market.....(see 11)
 17 Wagami no MiseD6

History

The Kyoto basin was first settled in the 7th century, and by 794 it had become Heian-kyō, the capital of Japan. Like Nara, a previous capital, the city was laid out in a grid pattern modelled on the Chinese Tang-dynasty capital, Chang'an (contemporary Xi'an). Although the city was to serve as capital of Japan and home to the Japanese imperial family from 794 to 1868 (when the Meiji Restoration took the imperial family to the new capital, Tokyo), the city was not always the focus of Japanese political power. During the Kamakura period (1185–1333), Kamakura served as the national capital, and during the Edo period (1600–1867), the Tokugawa shogunate ruled Japan from Edo (now Tokyo).

👁 Sights

👁 Kyoto Station Area

Although most of Kyoto's attractions are further north, there are a few attractions within walking distance of the station. The most impressive sight in this area is the vast Higashi Hongan-ji, but don't forget the station building itself – it's an attraction in its own right.

Kyoto Station

NOTABLE BUILDING

(京都駅; Map p294; Karasuma-dōri, Higashishio-kōji-chō, Shiokōji-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; 🚉 Kyoto Station) The Kyoto Station building is a striking steel-and-glass structure – a kind of futuristic cathedral for the transport age. You are sure to be impressed by the tremendous space that arches above you as you enter the main concourse. Moreover, you will probably enjoy a brief exploration of the many levels of the station, all the way up to the 15th-floor observation level.

The station building contains several food courts, as well as the Isetan Department Store and the Kyoto Tourist Information Center (TIC). Be sure to take the escalator from the 7th floor on the east side of the building up to the 11th-floor glass corridor that runs high above the main concourse of the station.

Kyoto Tower

NOTABLE BUILDING

(京都タワー; Map p294; Karasuma-dōri, Shichijō-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; admission ¥770; ☀9am–9pm, last entry 8.40pm; 🚉 Kyoto Station) Located right outside the Karasuma (north) gate of Kyoto Station, this retro tower looks like a rocket perched atop the Kyoto Tower Hotel. The tower provides excellent views in all directions and you can really get a sense of the Kyoto *bonchi* (flat basin). It's a great place to get orientated to the city upon arrival. There are free mounted binoculars to use, and these allow ripping views over to Kiyomizu-dera and as far south as Osaka.

Higashi Hongan-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(東本願寺; Map p294; Karasuma-dōri, Shichijō-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀5.50am–5.30pm Mar–Oct, 6.20am–4.30pm Nov–Feb; 🚉 Kyoto Station) **FREE** A short walk north of Kyoto Station, Higashi Hongan-ji (Eastern Temple of the True Vow) is the last word in all things grand and gaudy. Considering its proximity to the station, the free admission, the awesome structures and the dazzling interiors, this temple is the obvious spot to visit when near the station. The temple is dominated by the vast **Goei-dō** hall, said to be the second-largest wooden structure in Japan, standing 38m high, 76m long and 58m wide.

The recently refurbished hall contains an image of Shinran, the founder of the sect, although the image is often hidden behind sumptuous gilded doors. The adjoining

Amida-dō hall is presently under restoration. This restoration is expected to be completed in December 2015, but the hall is not slated to open until the spring of 2016.

There's a tremendous **coil of rope** made from human hair on display in the passageway. Following the destruction of the temple in the 1880s, a group of female temple devotees donated their locks to make the ropes that hauled the massive timbers used for reconstruction.

Higashi Hongan-ji was established in 1602 by Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu in a 'divide and conquer' attempt to weaken the power of the enormously popular Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land) school. The temple is now the headquarters of the Ōtani branch of Jōdo Shinshū.

Nishi Hongan-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(西本願寺; Map p294; Horikawa-dōri, Hanayachō-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☺ 6am-5pm Nov-Feb, 5.30am-5.30pm Mar, Apr, Sep & Oct, to 6pm May-Aug; ☒ Kyoto Station) **FREE** A vast temple complex located about 15 minutes' walk northwest of Kyoto Station, Nishi Hongan-ji comprises five buildings that feature some of the finest examples of architecture and artistic achievement from the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600). The **Goiei-dō** (main hall) is a marvellous sight. Another must-see building is the **Daisho-in** hall, which has sumptuous paintings, carvings and metal ornamentation. A small garden and two *nō* (stylised Japanese dance-drama) stages are connected

with the hall. The dazzling **Kara-mon** has intricate ornamental carvings.

Tō-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(東寺; Map p290; 1 Kujō-chō, Minami-ku; admission to grounds free, Kondō, Kōdō & Treasure Hall ¥500 each, pagoda, Kondō & Kōdō ¥800; ☺ 8.30am-5.30pm, to 4.30pm Sep-Mar; ☒ Karasuma line to Kyoto, ☒ Kintetsu Kyoto line to Toji) One of the main sights south of Kyoto Station, Tō-ji is an appealing complex of halls and a fantastic pagoda that makes a fine backdrop for the monthly flea market held on the grounds. The temple was established in 794 by imperial decree to protect the city. In 823 the emperor handed it over to Kūkai (known posthumously as Kōbō Daishi), the founder of the Shingon school of Buddhism.

Umekōji Steam Locomotive Museum

MUSEUM

(梅小路蒸気機関車館; Map p290; Kankiji-chō, Shimogyō-ku; adult/child ¥400/100, train ride ¥200/100; ☺ 10am-5pm, closed Mon, except 25 Mar-7 Apr & 21 Jul-7 Aug; ☒ Kyoto City bus 33, 205 or 208 from Kyoto Station to Umekō-ji Kōen-mae) A hit with steam-train buffs and kids, this excellent museum features 18 vintage steam locomotives (dating from 1914 to 1948) and related displays. It is in the former JR Nijō Station building, which was recently relocated here and thoughtfully reconstructed. You can take a 10-minute ride on one of the smoke-spewing choo-choos (departures at 11am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm).

KYOTO IN...

Two Days

On the morning of your first day, head to **Southern Higashiyama** and visit Kiyomizudera (p302), Chion-in (p303) and Maruyama-kōen (p303). If you've still got energy left for the afternoon, continue north after lunch to explore the **Northern Higashiyama** area. Start at Nanzen-ji (p305) and then follow the Path of Philosophy (p305) up to Hōnen-in (p308) and Ginkaku-ji (p308). On the following day, head west to **Arashiyama and Sagano** and explore Tenryū-ji (p312), the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove (p312), Ōkōchi Sansō (p312) and Giō-ji (p314).

Four Days

On your first few days in Kyoto, follow the two-day itinerary above, but consider visiting Southern Higashiyama and Northern Higashiyama on separate days so you can slow down and spend a little more time exploring, stopping into some of the smaller sites en route. After hitting these areas and the **Arashiyama and Sagano** area, take a break from temple-hopping and visit a museum such as the Kyoto National Museum (p301) or a downtown sight such as Nishiki Market (p294). If you like hiking, consider taking a half-day trip up to **Kurama** (p318). Finally, be sure to spend one evening of your stay exploring Gion (p303) and Ponto-chō (p295).

Kyoto Station Area



0 200 m
0 0.1 miles



Downtown Kyoto

Downtown Kyoto looks much like any other Japanese city, but there are some excellent attractions to be found here; if you'd like a break from temples and shrines, then the area can be a welcome change. It's also good on a rainy day because of the number of covered arcades and indoor attractions.

Nishiki Market

(錦市場; Map p296; Nishikikōji-dōri, btwn Teramachi & Takakura, Nakagyō-ku; ☀9am-5pm;  Karasuma line to Shijō,  Hankyū line to Karasuma or Kawaramachi) If you're interested in seeing all the really weird and wonderful foods that go into Kyoto cuisine, wander through Nishiki Market. It's in the centre of town, one block north of (and parallel to) Shijō-dōri, running west off Teramachi shopping arcade. This market is a great place to visit on a rainy day or if you need a

MARKET

break from temple-hopping. The variety of foods on display is staggering, and the frequent cries of *irasshaimase!* (welcome!) are heart-warming.

Museum of Kyoto

MUSEUM

(京都文化博物館; Map p296; Takakura-dōri, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; admission ¥500, extra for special exhibitions; ☀10am-7.30pm, closed Mon;  Karasuma or Tōzai lines to Karasuma-Oike) This museum is worth visiting if a special exhibition is on (the regular exhibits are not particularly interesting and don't have much in the way of English explanations). On the 1st floor, the **Roji Tempō** is a reconstruction of a typical merchant area in Kyoto during the Edo period (this section can be entered free; some of the shops sell souvenirs and serve local dishes). Check the *Kyoto Visitor's Guide* website (www.kyotoguide.com) for upcoming special exhibitions.

Kyoto Station Area

Sights

- 1 Higashi Hongan-ji..... C2
- 2 Kyoto Station..... C4
- 3 Kyoto Tower..... C3
- 4 Nishi Hongan-ji..... A1

Sleeping

- 5 Budget Inn..... A2
- 6 Capsule Ryokan Kyoto..... A2
- 7 Dormy Inn Premium Kyoto Ekimae..... C3
- 8 Hotel Granvia Kyoto..... C3
- 9 Ibis Styles Kyoto Station..... C4
- 10 K's House Kyoto..... D2
- 11 Matsubaya Ryokan..... C1
- 12 Ryokan Shimizu..... B2

- 13 Tour Club..... A2

Eating

- 14 Cube..... B3
- Eat Paradise..... (see 14)
- Kyoto Rāmen Kōji..... (see 14)

Shopping

- 15 Bic Camera..... B3
- 16 Kōjitsu Sansō..... C3
- 17 Yodobashi Camera..... C3

Information

- 18 Kyoto Tourist Information Center..... B4

Kyoto International Manga Museum

MUSEUM

(京都国際マンガミュージアム; Map p296; www.kyotomm.jp/english; Karasuma-dōri, Oike-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; adult/child ¥800/300; ☺10am-6pm, closed Wed; ㊥Karasuma or Tōzai lines to Karasuma-Oike) This fine museum has a collection of some 300,000 manga (Japanese comic books). Located in an old elementary school building, the museum is the perfect introduction to the art of manga. While most of the manga and displays are in Japanese, the collection of translated works is growing. In addition to the galleries that show both the historical development of manga and original artwork done in manga style, there are beginners' workshops and portrait drawings on weekends.

Visitors with children will appreciate the children's library and the occasional performances of *kami-shibai* (humorous traditional Japanese sliding-picture shows), not to mention the Astroturf lawn where the kids can run free. The museum hosts six-month-long special exhibits yearly: check the website for details.

Ponto-chō

NEIGHBOURHOOD

(先斗町; Map p296; Ponto-chō, Nakagyō-ku; ㊥Tōzai line to Sanjo-Keihan or Kyoto-Shiyakushomae, ㊦Keihan line to Sanjo, Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) There are few streets in Asia that rival this narrow pedestrian-only walkway for atmosphere. Not much to look at by day, the street comes alive by night, with wonderful lanterns, traditional wooden exteriors, and elegant Kyotoites disappearing into the doorways of elite old restaurants and bars.

Central Kyoto

The area we refer to as Central Kyoto includes the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park, Nijō-jō, a couple of important shrines and the Nishijin weaving district. It's flat and easy to explore either by bicycle or on foot.

Kyoto Imperial Palace

HISTORIC BUILDING

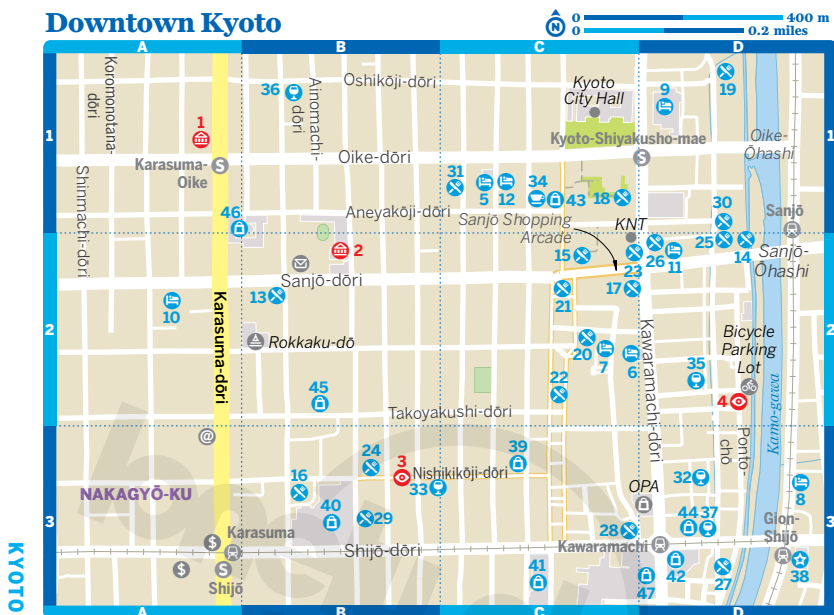
(京都御所, Kyoto Gosho; Map p298; Kyoto Gosho, Nakagyō-ku; ㊥Karasuma line to Marutamachi or Imadegawa) The Kyoto Imperial Palace, known as the Gosho in Japanese, is a walled complex that sits in the middle of the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park. While no longer the official residence of the Japanese emperor, it's still a grand edifice.

The original imperial palace was built in 794 and was replaced numerous times after

VISITING THE IMPERIAL PALACE

Imperial Household Agency (宮内庁京都事務所; Map p298; ☎211-1215; ☺8.45am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri; ㊥Karasuma line to Imadegawa) Permission to visit the Gosho is granted by the Kunaichō, the Imperial Household Agency, which is inside the walled park surrounding the palace, a short walk from Imadegawa Station on the Karasuma line. You have to fill out an application form and show your passport. Children can visit if they are accompanied by adults over 20 years of age (but are forbidden entry to the other three imperial properties of Katsura Rikyū, Sentō Gosho and Shūgaku-in Rikyū).

Downtown Kyoto



Downtown Kyoto

📍 Sights

- 1 Kyoto International Manga Museum A1
 2 Museum of Kyoto B2
 3 Nishiki Market B3
 4 Ponto-chō D2

🏨 Sleeping

- 5 Hiiragiya Ryokan C1
 6 Hotel Unizo C2
 7 Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto C2
 8 JAM Hostel Kyoto Gion D3
 9 Kyoto Hotel Ōkura D1
 10 Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyoto Sanjō A2
 11 Royal Park Hotel The Kyoto D2
 12 Tawaraya C1
 Yoshikawa (see 31)

🍽️ Eating

- 13 Biotei B2
 14 Ganko D2
 15 Honke Tagoto C2
 16 Ippūdō B3
 17 Karafuneya Coffee Sanjō Honten C2
 18 Kerala C1
 19 Kiyamachi Sakuragawa D1
 20 Kyōgoku Kane-yo C2
 21 Mishima-tei C2
 22 mumokuteki cafe C2
 23 Musashi Sushi C2
 24 Nishiki Warai B3

- 25 Ootoya D2
 26 Rāmen Kairikiya D2
 27 Roan Kikunoi D3
 28 Tagoto Honten C3
 29 Tsukiji Sushisei B3
 30 Tsukimochiya Naomasa D1
 31 Yoshikawa C1

🍷 Drinking & Nightlife

- 32 A Bar D3
 33 Iketsuru Kajitsu B3
 34 Park Café C1
 35 Rocking Bar ING D2
 36 Sake Bar Yoramu B1
 Sama Sama (see 30)
 37 World Peace Love D3

🎮 Entertainment

- 38 Minami-za D3

🛍️ Shopping

- 39 Aritsugu C3
 40 Daimaru B3
 41 Fujii Daimaru Department Store C3
 42 Kyoto Marui D3
 43 Kyūkyō-dō C1
 44 Nijūsan-ya D3
 45 Rakushikan B2
 46 Shin-Puh-Kan A1
 47 Takashimaya D3

i KYOTO TIPS

In Kyoto there are a few things to keep in mind to make your stay easier and perhaps a little safer:

- ✦ Look both ways when exiting a shop or hotel onto a sidewalk, especially if you have young ones in tow: Kyoto is a city of cyclists and there is almost always someone on a bicycle tearing in your direction.
- ✦ Bring a pair of slip-on shoes to save you from untying and tying your laces each time you visit a temple.
- ✦ Don't take a taxi in the main Higashiyama sightseeing district during cherry-blossom season – the streets will be so crowded that it will be faster to walk or cycle.
- ✦ Head for the hills to find the most beautiful sights. Yes, the centre has some great spots, but as a general rule, the closer you get to the mountains, the more attractive the city gets.

destruction by fire. The present building, on a different site and smaller than the original, was constructed in 1855. Enthronement of a new emperor and other state ceremonies are still held here.

The Goshō does not rate highly in comparison with other attractions in Kyoto and you must apply for permission to visit. However, the surrounding Kyoto Imperial Palace Park is open to the public from dawn to dusk and can be visited freely without any application procedure. It's Kyoto's premier green space.

➔ **Sentō Goshō Palace**

(仙洞御所; Map p298; ☎ 211-1215; Kyoto Gyōen, Nakagyō-ku; ㊦ Karasuma line to Marutamachi or Imadegawa) The Sentō Goshō is the second imperial property located within the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park (the other one is the Goshō, which is located about 100m northwest). The structures within this walled compound are not particularly grand, but the magnificent gardens, laid out in 1630 by renowned landscape designer Kobori Enshū, are excellent.

It was originally constructed in 1630 during the reign of Emperor Go-Mizunō as a residence for retired emperors. The palace was repeatedly destroyed by fire and reconstructed; it continued to serve its purpose until a final blaze in 1854, after which it was never rebuilt. Today only two structures, the **Seika-tei** and **Yūshin-tei** teahouses, remain.

Visitors must obtain advance permission from the Imperial Household Agency and be more than 20 years old. One-hour tours (in Japanese) start daily at 11am and 1.30pm. The route takes you past lovely ponds and pathways and, in many ways, a visit here is more enjoyable than a visit to the Goshō, especially if you are a fan of Japanese gardens.

➔ **Kyoto Imperial Palace Park**

(京都御苑; Map p298; Kyoto Gyōen, Nakagyō-ku; ☎ dawn to dusk; ㊦ Karasuma line to Marutamachi or Imadegawa) **FREE** The Kyoto Imperial Palace (Kyoto Goshō) and Sentō Goshō are surrounded by the spacious Kyoto Imperial Palace Park, which is planted with a huge variety of flowering trees and open fields. It's perfect for picnics, strolls and just about any sport you can think of. Take some time to visit the pond at the park's southern end, which contains gorgeous carp. The park is most beautiful in the plum- and cherry-blossom seasons (late February and late March, respectively).

Nijō-jō

(二条城; Map p298; 541 Nijōjō-chō, Nijō-dōri, Horikawa nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; admission ¥600; ☎ 8.45am-5pm, closed Tue in Dec, Jan, Jul & Aug; ㊦ Tōzai line to Nijō-jō-mae) The military might of Japan's great warlord generals, the Tokugawa shoguns, is amply demonstrated by the imposing stone walls and ramparts of their great castle, Nijō-jō, which dominates a large part of northwest Kyoto. Hidden behind these you will find a superb palace surrounded by beautiful gardens. As you might expect, a sight of this grandeur attracts a lot of crowds, so it's best to visit just after opening or shortly before closing.

This castle was built in 1603 as the official Kyoto residence of the first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu. The ostentatious style of its construction was intended as a demonstration of Ieyasu's prestige and also to signal the demise of the emperor's power. As a safeguard against treachery, Ieyasu had the interior fitted with 'nightingale' floors, as well as concealed chambers where bodyguards could keep watch.

Central Kyoto



After passing through the grand **Karamon gate**, you enter **Ninomaru** palace, which is divided into five buildings with numerous chambers. The **Ōhiroma Yon-no-Ma** (Fourth Chamber) has spectacular screen paintings. Don't miss the excellent **Ninomaru Palace Garden**, which was designed by the tea master and landscape architect Kobori Enshū.

★ **Daitoku-ji** BUDDHIST TEMPLE
(大徳寺; Map p298; 53 Daitokujichō, Murasakino, Kita-ku; ☀ dawn-dusk; ㊚ Karasuma line to Kitaōji) **FREE** Daitoku-ji is a separate world within Kyoto – a world of Zen temples, perfectly raked gardens and wandering lanes. It's one of the most rewarding destinations in this part of the city, particularly for those with an interest in Japanese gardens. The temple serves as the headquarters of the Rinzai Daitoku-ji school of Zen Buddhism. The highlights among the 24 subtemples include

Daisen-in, Kōtō-in, Ōbai-in, Ryōgen-in and **Zuihō-in**.

Nishijin NEIGHBOURHOOD
(西陣; Nishijin, Kamigyō-ku; ㊚ Kyoto City bus 9 to Horikawa-Imadegawa) Nishijin is Kyoto's traditional textile centre, the source of all those dazzling kimono fabrics and *obi* (kimono sashes) that you see being paraded about town. The area is famous for Nishijin-ori (Nishijin weaving). There are quite a few *machiya* (traditional Japanese town houses) in this district, so it's a good place simply to wander.

Nishijin Textile Center MUSEUM
(西陣織会館; Map p298; ㊚ 451-9231; Horikawa-dōri, Imadegawa-sagaru, Kamigyō-ku; ☀ 9am-5pm; ㊚ Kyoto City bus 9 to Horikawa-Imadegawa) **FREE** In the heart of the Nishijin textile district, this is worth a peek before starting a walk around the area. There are also displays of completed fabrics and kimonos, as well as

Central Kyoto

📍 Top Sights

- 1 Daitoku-ji..... B1

📍 Sights

- 2 Kitano Tenman-gū..... A2
 3 Kyoto Botanical Gardens..... C1
 4 Kyoto Imperial Palace..... C3
 5 Kyoto Imperial Palace Park..... C3
 6 Nijo-jō..... B4
 7 Nishijin Textile Center..... B2
 8 Orinasu-kan..... B2
 9 Sentō Goshō Palace..... C3
 10 Shimogamo-jinja..... D1

📍 Activities, Courses & Tours

- 11 Funaoka Onsen..... B2
 12 Haru Cooking Class..... D2

📍 Sleeping

- 13 Palace Side Hotel..... C3
 14 Ritz-Carlton Kyoto..... D4
 15 Ryokan Rakuchō..... C1

📍 Eating

- 16 Bon Bon Café..... D2
 17 Café Bibliotec Hello!..... C4
 18 Falafel Garden..... D2
 19 Papa Jon's..... C2
 20 Saryo Zen Cafe..... C4

📍 Entertainment

- 21 Club Ōkitsu Kyoto..... C3
 22 Kyoto Kanze Kaikan Nō Theatre..... D4

📍 Shopping

- Tenjin-san Market..... (see 2)

weaving demonstrations and occasional kimono fashion shows. Unfortunately, it's often overrun by large tour groups. It's on the southwest corner of the Horikawa-dōri and Imadegawa-dōri intersection.

Orinasu-kan

MUSEUM

(織成館; Map p298; 693 Daikoku-chō, Kamigyō-ku; adult/child ¥500/350; ☎10am-4pm, closed Mon; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 9 to Horikawa-Imadegawa) This atmospheric, and usually quiet, museum, housed in a Nishijin weaving factory, has impressive exhibits of Nishijin textiles. The **Susamei-sha** building across the street is also open to the public and worth a look.

Shimogamo-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

(下鴨神社; Map p298; 59 Izumigawa-chō, Shimogamo, Sakyō-ku; ☎6.30am-5pm; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 205 to Shimogamo-jinja-mae, 🚶 Keihan line to Demachiyangi) **FREE** This shrine, dating from the 8th century, is a Unesco World Heritage Site. It is nestled in the fork of the Kamo-gawa and Takano-gawa rivers, and is approached along a shady path through the lovely Tadasu-no-mori. This wooded area is said to be a place where lies cannot be concealed and is considered a prime location to sort out disputes. The trees here are mostly broadleaf (a rarity in Kyoto) and they are gorgeous in the springtime.

Kyoto Botanical Gardens

PARK

(京都府立植物園; Map p298; Shimogamo-hangi-chō, Sakyō-ku; gardens adult ¥200, child free-¥150, greenhouse adult ¥200, child free-¥150; ☎9am-5pm, greenhouse 10am-4pm, closed 28 Dec-4 Jan; 🚶 Karasuma line to Kitayama) The Kyoto Botanical Gardens occupy 240,000

sq metres and feature 12,000 plants, flowers and trees. It is pleasant to stroll through the rose, cherry and herb gardens or see the rows of camphor trees and the large tropical **greenhouse**. This is a good spot for a picnic. It's also a great spot for a *hanami* (cherry-blossom viewing) party, and the blossoms here tend to hold on a little longer than those elsewhere in the city.

Kamigamo-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

(上賀茂神社; Map p290; 339 Motoyama, Kamigamo, Kita-ku; ☎6am-5pm; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 9 to Kamigamo-misonobashi) **FREE** Kamigamo-jinja is one of Japan's oldest shrines and predates the founding of Kyoto. Established in 679, it is dedicated to Raijin, the god of thunder, and is one of Kyoto's 17 Unesco World Heritage Sites. The present buildings (more than 40 in all), including the impressive **Haiden** hall, are exact reproductions of the originals, dating from the 17th to 19th centuries.

📍 Southern Higashiyama

The Higashiyama (東山) district, which runs along the base of the Higashiyama mountains (Eastern Mountains), is the main sightseeing district in Kyoto, and it should be at the top of your Kyoto itinerary. It is thick with impressive sights: fine temples, shrines, gardens, museums, traditional neighbourhoods and parks.

Sanjūsangen-dō Temple

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(三十三間堂; Map p300; 657 Sanjūsangendōmawari-chō, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥600; ☎8am-4.30pm Apr-Oct, 9am-3.30pm Nov-Mar; 🚶 Kyoto

Southern Higashiyama

0 0.2 miles
400 m

KYOTO



Southern Higashiyama

📍 Top Sights

- 1 Shōren-in D2

📍 Sights

- 2 Chion-in D2
 3 Gion D4
 4 Kawai Kanjirō Memorial Hall B6
 5 Kennin-ji B4
 6 Kiyomizu-dera D5
 7 Kōdai-ji D4
 8 Kyoto National Museum B7
 9 Maruyama-kōen D3
 10 Ninen-zaka & Sannen-zaka D5
 11 Sanjūsangen-dō Temple B7
 12 Yasaka-jinja C3

📍 Activities, Courses & Tours

- 13 Camellia Tea Experience C4
 14 En C2
 15 Maika A4

📍 Sleeping

- 16 Gion Apartments A5
 Gion Hatanaka (see 42)
 17 Gion House B4
 18 Gojō Guest House B5
 19 Hyatt Regency Kyoto B7
 20 Koto Inn D1
 21 Motonago C3

- 22 Ryokan Uemura C4
 23 Sakara Kyoto C1
 24 Seikōrō A5
 25 Shiraume Ryokan B2

📍 Eating

- 26 Café 3032 C4
 27 Hisago C4
 28 Kagizen Yoshifusa B3
 29 Kasagi-ya C4
 30 Kikunoī D3
 31 Omen Kodai-ji D4
 32 Oshokujidokoro Asuka D1
 33 Rakushō C3
 34 Rāmen Santōka B1
 35 Ryūmon C1
 36 Sobadokoro Shibazaki C5

📍 Drinking & Nightlife

- 37 Gael Irish Pub B3
 38 Gion Finlandia Bar B3

📍 Entertainment

- 39 Gion Corner B3
 40 Gion Odori C2
 41 Kyō Odori A4
 42 Kyoto Cuisine & Maiko Evening C3
 Miyako Odori (see 39)

City bus 206 or 208 to Sanjūsangen-dō-mae, ㊤ Keihan line to Shichijō) This superb temple's name refers to the 33 *sanjūsan* (bays) between the pillars of this long, narrow building. The building houses 1001 wooden statues of Kannon (the Buddhist goddess of mercy); the chief image, the 1000-armed Senjū-Kannon, was carved by the celebrated sculptor Tankei in 1254. It is flanked by 500 smaller Kannon images, neatly lined in rows. The visual effect is stunning, making this a must-see in Southern Higashiyama and a good starting point for exploration of the area.

Kyoto National Museum MUSEUM

(京都国立博物館; Map p300; www.kyohaku.go.jp; 527 Chaya-machi, Higashiyama-ku; adult/student ¥500/250; ☎9.30am-6pm, to 8pm Fri, closed Mon; ㊤ Kyoto City bus 206 or 208 to Sanjūsangen-dō-mae, ㊤ Keihan line to Shichijō) The Kyoto National Museum is Kyoto's premier art museum and plays host to the highest level exhibitions in the city. It was founded in 1895 as an imperial repository for art and treasures from local temples and shrines. In the original **main hall** there are 17 rooms with displays of over 1000 art-

works, historical artefacts and handicrafts. The new **Heisei Chishinkan**, designed by Taniguchi Yoshio and opened in 2014, is a brilliant modern counterpoint to the original building.

While the permanent collection is worth a visit, the special exhibitions are the real highlights. Check the Tourist Information Center (TIC) or the Kyoto Visitor's Guide website to see what's on while you're in town.

Kawai Kanjirō Memorial Hall MUSEUM

(河井寛治郎記念館; Map p300; 569 Kanei-chō, Gojō-zaka, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥900; ☎10am-5pm, closed Mon & around 11-20 Aug & 24 Dec-7 Jan, dates vary each year; ㊤ Kyoto City bus 206 or 207 to Umamachi) This small memorial hall is one of Kyoto's most commonly overlooked little gems. The hall was the home and workshop of one of Japan's most famous potters, Kawai Kanjirō (1890-1966). The 1937 house is built in rural style and contains examples of Kanjirō's work, his collection of folk art and ceramics, his workshop and a fascinating *nobori-gama* (stepped kiln). The museum is near the intersection of Gojō-dōri and Higashiōji-dōri.

Kiyomizu-dera

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(清水寺; Map p300; 1-294 Kiyomizu, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥300; ☀6am-6pm; 🚶Kyoto City bus 206 to Kiyomizu-michi or Gojō-zaka, 🚶Keihan line to Kiyomizu-Gojō) A buzzing hive of activity perched on a hill overlooking the basin of Kyoto, Kiyomizu-dera is one of Kyoto's most popular and most enjoyable temples. It may not be the tranquil refuge that many associate with Buddhist temples, but it represents the popular expression of faith in Japan. For those with children in tow, this temple is sure to delight as there are plenty of things to do here.

This ancient temple was first built in 798, but the present buildings are reconstructions dating from 1633. As an affiliate of the Hossō school of Buddhism, which originated in Nara, it has successfully survived the many intrigues of local Kyoto schools of Buddhism through the centuries and is now one of the most famous landmarks of the city (which means it can get very crowded during spring and autumn).

The **Hondō** (Main Hall) has a huge verandah that is supported by pillars and juts out over the hillside. Just below this hall is the waterfall **Otowa-no-taki**, where

visitors drink sacred waters believed to bestow health and longevity. Dotted around the precincts are other halls and shrines. At **Jishu-jinja**, the shrine up the steps above the main hall, visitors try to ensure success in love by closing their eyes and walking about 18m between a pair of stones – if you miss the stone, your desire for love won't be fulfilled! Note that you can ask someone to guide you, but if you do, you'll need someone's assistance to find your true love.

Before you enter the actual temple precincts, check out the **Tainai-meguri**, the entrance to which is just to the left (north) of the pagoda that is located in front of the main entrance to the temple (there is no English sign). We won't tell you too much about it as it will ruin the experience. Suffice to say that by entering the Tainai-meguri, you are symbolically entering the womb of a female bodhisattva. When you get to the rock in the darkness, spin it in either direction to make a wish.

The steep approach to the temple is known as **Chawan-zaka** (Teapot Lane) and is lined with shops selling Kyoto handicrafts, local snacks and souvenirs.

Check at the Tourist Information Center (TIC) for the scheduling of special nighttime illuminations of the temple held in the spring and autumn.

KYOTO'S BEST TEMPLES & SHRINES

Nanzen-ji (p305) The one temple that has it all: expansive grounds, a fine *ka-re-sansui* (dry landscape) garden, intimate subtemples and soaring halls.

Shōren-in (p303) A rarely visited retreat on the main Southern Higashiyama tourist route with a superb garden.

Hōnen-in (p308) A pocket sanctuary hidden above the Path of Philosophy.

Daitoku-ji (p298) A walled-in world of Zen temples that will delight fans of Japanese gardens.

Kurama-dera (p318) A mountaintop temple in the hills north of Kyoto that really feels close to the gods.

Fushimi Inari-Taisha (p314) A mountain covered with hypnotic arcades of *torii* (Shinto shrine gates) – one of Japan's most distinctive sights.

Shimogamo-jinja (p299) A historic and lovely shrine approached by a soothing tree-lined arcade.

Ninen-zaka & Sannen-zaka

NEIGHBOURHOOD

(二年坂・三年坂; Map p300; Higashiyama-ku; 🚶Kyoto City bus 206 to Kiyomizu-michi or Gojō-zaka, 🚶Keihan line to Kiyomizu-Gojō) Just downhill from and slightly to the north of Kiyomizu-dera is one of Kyoto's loveliest restored neighbourhoods, the Ninenzaka-Sannen-zaka area. The name refers to the two main streets of the area: Ninenzaka and Sannen-zaka, literally 'Two-Year Hill' and 'Three-Year Hill' (the years referring to the ancient imperial years when they were first laid out). These two charming streets are lined with old wooden houses, traditional shops and restaurants.

If you fancy a break, there are many tea-houses and cafes along these lanes.

Kōdai-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(高台寺; Map p300; 526 Shimokawara-chō, Kōdai-ji, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥600; ☀9am-5pm; 🚶Kyoto City bus 206 to Yasui, 🚶Tōzai line to Higashiyama) This exquisite temple was founded in 1605 by Kita-no-Mandokoro in memory of her late husband, Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The extensive grounds include

gardens designed by the famed landscape architect Kobori Enshū, and teahouses designed by the renowned master of the tea ceremony, Sen no Rikyū.

The temple holds three annual special night-time illuminations, when the gardens are lit by multicoloured spotlights. The illuminations are held from mid-March to early May, 1 to 18 August and late October to early December.

Maruyama-kōen

PARK

(円山公園; Map p300; Maruyama-chō, Higashiyama-ku; ㊟ Tōzai line to Higashiyama) Maruyama-kōen is a favourite of locals and visitors alike. This park is the place to come to escape the bustle of the city centre and amble around gardens, ponds, souvenir shops and restaurants. Peaceful paths meander through the trees and carp glide through the waters of a small pond in the park's centre.

Yasaka-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

(八坂神社; Map p300; 625 Gion-machi, Kita-gawa, Higashiyama-ku; ☎ 24hr; ㊟ Tōzai line to Higashiyama) **FREE** This colourful and spacious shrine is considered the guardian shrine of the Gion entertainment district. It's a bustling, colourful place that is well worth a visit while exploring Southern Higashiyama; it can easily be paired with Maruyama-kōen, the park just up the hill.

Chion-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(知恩院; Map p300; 400 Rinka-chō, Higashiyama-ku; admission inner buildings & garden ¥500, grounds free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm; ㊟ Tōzai line to Higashiyama) A collection of soaring buildings and spacious courtyards, Chion-in serves as the headquarters of the Jōdo sect, the largest sect of Buddhism in Japan. It's the most popular pilgrimage temple in Kyoto and it's always a hive of activity. For visitors with a taste for the grand, this temple is sure to satisfy.

Chion-in was established in 1234 on the site where Hōnen, one of the most famous figures in Japanese Buddhism, taught his brand of Buddhism (Jōdo, or Pure Land, Buddhism) and eventually fasted to death.

The oldest of the present buildings date to the 17th century. The two-storey **San-mon**, a Buddhist temple gate at the main entrance, is the largest temple gate in Japan and prepares you for the massive scale of the temple. The immense main hall contains an image of Hōnen. It's connected to another hall, the **Dai Hōjō**, by a 'nightingale' floor (that sings and squeaks at every move, making it difficult for intruders to move about quietly).

Up a flight of steps southeast of the main hall is the temple's **giant bell**, which was cast in 1633 and weighs 70 tonnes. It is the largest bell in Japan. The bell is rung by the temple's monks 108 times on New Year's Eve each year.

★ Shōren-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(青蓮院; Map p300; 69-1 Sanjōbō-chō, Awataguchi, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-5pm; ㊟ Tōzai line to Higashiyama) This temple is hard to miss, with its giant camphor trees growing just outside the walls. Fortunately, most tourists march right on past, heading to the area's more famous temples. That is their loss, because this intimate little sanctuary contains a superb landscape garden, that you can enjoy while drinking a cup of green tea (ask at the reception office).

Gion

NEIGHBOURHOOD

(祇園周辺; Map p300; Higashiyama-ku; ㊟ Tōzai line to Sanjō, ㊟ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Gion is the famous entertainment and geisha quarter on the eastern bank of the Kamo-gawa. While Gion's true origins were in teahouses catering to weary visitors to Yasaka-jinja (a neighbourhood shrine), by the mid-18th century the area was Kyoto's largest pleasure district. Despite the looming modern architecture, congested traffic and contemporary nightlife establishments that have compromised its historical beauty, there are still some places left in Gion for an enjoyable walk.

Hanami-kōji runs north-south and bisects **Shijō-dōri**. The southern section is lined with 17th-century traditional restaurants and teahouses, many of which are exclusive establishments for geisha entertainment. At the south end you reach **Gion Corner** and **Gion Kōbu Kaburen-jō Theatre** (祇園甲部歌舞練場).

If you walk from Shijō-dōri along the northern section of Hanami-kōji and take your third left, you will find yourself on **Shimbashi** (sometimes called Shirakawa Minami-dōri), which is one of Kyoto's most beautiful streets and, arguably, the most beautiful street in all of Asia, especially in the evening and during cherry-blossom season. A bit further north lie **Shinmonzen-dōri** and **Furumonzen-dōri**, running east-west. Wander in either direction along these streets, which are packed with old houses, art galleries and shops specialising in antiques – but don't expect flea-market prices.

City Walk Southern Higashiyama

START GOJŌ-ZAKA BUS STOP ON HIGASHIŌJI-DŌRI

END JINGŪ-MICHI BUS STOP ON SANJŌ-DŌRI

LENGTH 5KM; **FOUR HOURS**

Take bus 18, 100, 206 or 207 to the starting point, then walk up the Gojō-zaka slope. Head uphill until you reach the first fork in the road; bear right and continue up Chawan-zaka (Teapot Lane). At the top of the hill, you'll come to Kiyomizu-dera. Before you enter the temple, we recommend you pay ¥100 to descend into the **1 Tainai-meguri**, the entrance to which is just left of the main temple entrance. Next, enter **2 Kiyomizu-dera** (p302).

After touring Kiyomizu-dera, exit down Kiyomizu-michi. Continue down the hill until you reach a four-way intersection; take a right here down the stone-paved steps. This is Sannen-zaka, an atmospheric lane lined with traditional shops and cafes.

Halfway down Sannen-zaka, the road curves to the left. Follow it a short distance, then go right down a flight of steps into Ninen-zaka. Soon on your left you will find tiny **3 Kasagi-ya** (p335), which has been serving tea and Japanese-style sweets for as long as anyone can remember. At the end of Ninen-zaka zig-zag left (at the vending machines) then right (just past the parking lot), and continue north. Soon, on your left, you'll come to the entrance to **4 Ishibei-kōji** – perhaps the most beautiful street in Kyoto. Take a detour to explore this lane, then retrace your steps and continue north, passing almost immediately the entrance to **5 Kōdai-ji** (p302) on the right up a long flight of stairs.

After Kōdai-ji continue north to the T-junction; turn right and then take a quick left. You'll cross the wide pedestrian arcade that leads to Ōtani cemetery and then descend into **6 Maruyama-kōen** (p303). In the centre of the park you'll see the giant Gion *shidare-zakura*, Kyoto's most famous cherry tree.

From the park, you can head west into the grounds of **7 Yasaka-jinja** (p303). Then return to the park and head north to tour the grounds of the impressive **8 Chion-in** (p303). From here it's a quick walk to **9 Shōren-in** (p303). From Shōren-in walk down to Sanjō-dōri.



Kennin-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(建仁寺; Map p300; 584 Komatsu-chō, Yamatoōji-dōri, Shijo-sagaru, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥500; ☀ 10am-4pm; 🚶 Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Founded in 1202 by the monk Eisai, Kennin-ji is the oldest Zen temple in Kyoto. It is an island of peace and calm on the border of the boisterous Gion nightlife district and it makes a fine counterpoint to the worldly pleasures of that area. The highlight at Kennin-ji is the fine and expansive *karesansui* (dry-landscape rock garden). The painting of the twin dragons on the roof of the **Hōdō** hall is also fantastic.

Northern Higashiyama

The northern Higashiyama area includes such first-rate attractions as Nanzen-ji, Ginkaku-ji, Hōnen-in and Shūgaku-in Rikyū. You can spend a wonderful day walking from Keage Station on the Tōzai subway line all the way north to Ginkaku-ji via the Tetsugaku-no-Michi (Path of Philosophy), stopping in the countless temples and shrines en route.

★ Nanzen-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(南禅寺; Map p306; 86 Fukuchi-chō, Nanzen-ji, Sakyō-ku; admission Hōjō garden ¥500, San-mon gate ¥400, grounds free; ☀ 8.40am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi, 📍 Tōzai line to Keage) This is one of the most rewarding temples in Kyoto, with its expansive grounds and numerous subtemples. At its entrance stands the massive **Sanmon**. Steps lead up to the 2nd storey, which has a fine view over the city. Beyond the gate is the main hall of the temple, above which you will find the **Hōjō**, where the Leaping Tiger Garden is a classic Zen garden well worth a look.

Nanzen-ji Oku-no-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(南禅寺奥の院; Map p306; Fukuchi-chō, Nanzen-ji, Sakyō-ku; ☀ dawn-dusk; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi, 📍 Tōzai line to Keage) **FREE** Perhaps the best part of Nanzen-ji is overlooked by most visitors: Nanzen-ji Oku-no-in, a small shrine hidden in a forested hollow behind the main precinct. It's here that pilgrims pray while standing under the falls, sometimes in the dead of winter.

To get here, walk up to the red-brick aqueduct in front of Nanzen-in. Follow the road that runs parallel to the aqueduct up into the hills, and walk past (or through) Kōtoku-an, a small subtemple on your left.

Continue up the steps into the woods until you reach a waterfall in a beautiful mountain glen.

Tenju-an

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(天授庵; Map p306; 86-8 Fukuchi-chō, Nanzen-ji, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥400; ☀ 9am-5pm Mar-mid-Nov, to 4.30pm mid-Nov-Feb; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi, 📍 Tōzai line to Keage) A subtemple of Nanzen-ji, Tenju-an is located on the south side of San-mon, the main gate of Nanzen-ji. Constructed in 1337, Tenju-an has a splendid garden and a great collection of carp in its pond.

Konchi-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(金地院; Map p306; 86-12 Fukuchi-chō, Nanzen-ji, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥400; ☀ 8.30am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi, 📍 Tōzai line to Keage) Just southwest of the main precincts of Nanzen-ji, this fine subtemple has a wonderful garden designed by Kobori Enshū. If you want to find a good example of the *shakkei* (borrowed scenery) technique, look no further.

Eikan-dō

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(永観堂; Map p306; 48 Eikandō-chō, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥600; ☀ 9am-5pm; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi, 📍 Tōzai line to Keage) Perhaps Kyoto's most famous (and most crowded) autumn-foliage destination, Eikan-dō is a superb temple just a short walk south of the famous Path of Philosophy. Eikan-dō is made interesting by its varied architecture, its gardens and its works of art. It was founded as Zenrin-ji in 855 by the priest Shinshō, but the name was changed to Eikan-dō in the 11th century to honour the philanthropic priest Eikan.

In the **Amida-dō** hall at the southern end of the complex is a famous statue of Mikaeri Amida Buddha glancing backwards.

From Amida-dō, head north to the end of the curving covered **garyūō** (walkway). Change into the sandals provided, then climb the steep steps up the mountainside to the **Tahō-tō** pagoda, from where there's a fine view across the city.

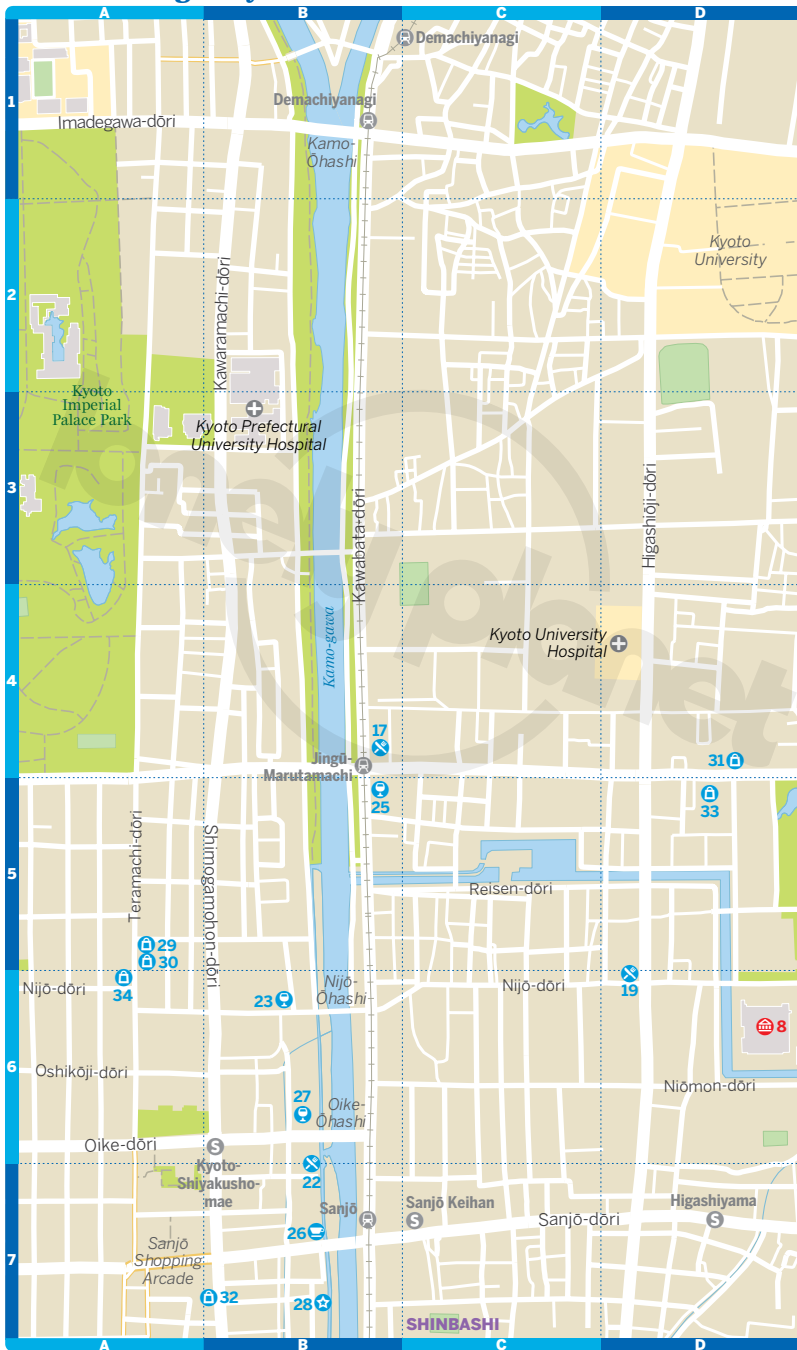
**Path of Philosophy
(Tetsugaku-no-Michi)**

NEIGHBOURHOOD

(哲学の道; Map p306; Sakyō-ku; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi or Ginkakuji-michi, 📍 Tōzai line to Keage) The Tetsugaku-no-Michi is one of the most pleasant walks in all of Kyoto. Lined with a great variety of flowering plants, bushes and trees, it is a corridor of colour throughout most of the year. Follow

Northern Higashiyama

KYOTO





Northern Higashiyama

📍 Top Sights

- 1 Hönen-in H2
2 Nanzen-ji G6

📍 Sights

- 3 Eikan-dō H5
4 Ginkaku-ji H2
5 Heian-jingū E5
6 Konchi-in G7
7 Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art E6
8 Miyako Messe & Fureai-Kan Kyoto
Museum of Traditional Crafts D6
9 Nanzen-ji Oku-no-in H7
10 National Museum of Modern Art E6
11 Okazaki-kōen Area E5
12 Path of Philosophy (Tetsugaku-
no-Michi) H2
13 Tenju-an G6

🏠 Sleeping

- 14 Kyoto Garden Ryokan Yachiyo F6
15 Westin Miyako Kyoto F7

🍴 Eating

- 16 Au Temps Perdu E6
17 Earth Kitchen Company B4

- Goya (see 8)
18 Hinode Udon G5
19 Karako D6
20 Kiraku E7
21 Omen H2
22 Tōsuirō B7

🍷 Drinking & Nightlife

- 23 Bar K6 B6
24 Kick Up G7
25 Metro B5
26 Starbucks Kyoto Sanjō-Ōhashi B7
27 Tadg's Gastro Pub B6

🎭 Entertainment

- 28 Kamogawa Odori B7

🛍 Shopping

- 29 Ippōdō Tea A5
30 Kamiji Kakimoto A5
31 Kyoto Handicraft Center D4
32 Mina B7
33 Tōzandō D5
34 Zōhiko A6

the traffic-free route along a canal lined with cherry trees that come into spectacular bloom in early April. It only takes 30 minutes to do the walk, which starts at Nyakuōji-bashi, above Eikan-dō, and leads to Ginkaku-ji.

The path takes its name from one of its most famous strollers, 20th-century philosopher Nishida Kitarō, who is said to have meandered lost in thought along the path.

During the day you should be prepared for crowds (especially in the cherry-blossom season); a night stroll will definitely be quieter.

★ Hönen-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(法然院; Map p306; 30 Goshonodan-chō, Shishigatani, Sakyo-ku; ☎6am-4pm; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Ginkakuji-michi) **FREE** One of Kyoto's hidden pleasures, this temple was founded in 1680 to honour the priest Hönen. It's a lovely, secluded temple with carefully raked gardens set back in the woods. The temple buildings include a small gallery where frequent exhibitions featuring local and international artists are held. If you need to escape the crowds that positively plague nearby Ginkaku-ji, come to this serene refuge.

Hönen-in is a 12-minute walk from Ginkaku-ji, on a side street above the Tetsugaku-no-Michi; you may have to ask for directions.

Ginkaku-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(銀閣寺; Map p306; 2 Ginkaku-ji-chō, Sakyo-ku; admission ¥500; ☎8.30am-5pm Mar-Nov, 9am-4.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Ginkaku-ji-michi stop) Home to a sumptuous garden and elegant structures, Ginkaku-ji is one of Kyoto's premier sites. The temple started its life in 1482 as a retirement villa for shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa, who desired a place to retreat from the turmoil of a civil war. While the name Ginkaku-ji literally translates as 'Silver Pavilion', the shogun's ambition to cover the building with silver was never realised. After Yoshimasa's death, the villa was converted into a temple.

Walkways lead through the gardens, which include meticulously raked cones of white sand (said to be symbolic of a mountain and a lake), tall pines and a pond in front of the temple. A path also leads up the mountainside through the trees.

Note that Ginkaku-ji is one of the city's most popular sites, and it is almost always crowded, especially during spring and autumn. We strongly recommend visiting right after it opens or just before it closes.

Okazaki-kōen Area

NEIGHBOURHOOD

(岡崎公園; Map p306; Okazaki, Sakyo-ku; 🚶 Tōzai line to Higashiyama) Okazaki-kōen is an expanse of parks and canals that lies between Niōmon-

dōri and Heian-jingū. Two of Kyoto's significant museums can be found here, as well as two smaller museums. If you find yourself in Kyoto on a rainy day and need to do some indoor sightseeing, this area has enough to keep you sheltered for most of the day.

Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art MUSEUM
(京都市美術館; Map p306; 124 Enshōji-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku; admission varies; ☎9am-5pm, closed Mon; ㊤Tōzai line to Higashiyama) This fine museum holds several major exhibitions a year, as well as a variety of free shows. It's always worth stopping by to see if something is on while you are in town. The pond behind the museum is a great place for a picnic.

National Museum of Modern Art MUSEUM
(京都国立近代美術館; Map p306; www.momak.go.jp/english; Enshōji-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥430; ☎9.30am-5pm, closed Mon; ㊤Tōzai line to Higashiyama) This museum is renowned for its Japanese ceramics and paintings. There is an excellent permanent collection, which includes many pottery pieces by Kawai Kanjirō. The coffee shop here overlooks a picturesque canal.

Miyako Messe & Fureai-Kan Kyoto Museum of Traditional Crafts MUSEUM
(みやこめっせ・京都伝統産業ふれあい館; Map p306; 9-1 Seishōji-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku; ☎9am-5pm, closed 18 & 19 Aug, 29 Dec-3 Jan; ㊤Tōzai line to Higashiyama) **FREE** This multi-purpose hall has excellent displays of Kyoto crafts. Exhibits include wood-block prints, lacquerware, bamboo goods and gold-leaf work. It's located in the basement of Miyako Messe (Kyoto International Exhibition Hall).

Heian-jingū SHINTO SHRINE
(平安神宮; Map p306; Nishitenno-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku; admission garden ¥600; ☎6am-5pm Nov-Feb, 6am-6pm Mar-Oct; ㊤Tōzai line to Higashiyama) One of Kyoto's more popular sights, this shrine was built in 1895 to commemorate the 1100th anniversary of the founding of Kyoto. The shrine buildings are colourful replicas, reduced to a two-thirds scale, of the Imperial Court Palace of the Heian period (794-1185). About 500m in front of the shrine is a massive steel **torii** (shrine gate). Although it appears to be entirely separate, this is actually considered the main entrance to the shrine itself.

The vast **garden** here, behind the shrine, is a fine place for a wander and particular-

ly lovely during the cherry-blossom season. With its large pond and Chinese-inspired bridge, the garden is a tribute to the style that was popular in the Heian period. It is well known for its wisteria, irises and weeping cherry trees.

One of Kyoto's biggest festivals, the **Jidai Matsuri** is held here on 22 October. On 2 and 3 June, **Takigi nō** is also held here. Takigi nō is a picturesque form of *nō* (stylised dance-drama performed on a bare stage) performed in the light of blazing fires. Tickets cost ¥3000 if you pay in advance (ask at the Tourist Information Center for the location of ticket agencies) or you can pay ¥4000 at the entrance gate.

Shūgaku-in Rikyū Imperial Villa NOTABLE BUILDING
(修学院離宮; Map p290; ☎211-1215; Shūgaku-in, Yabusoe, Sakyō-ku; ㊤Kyoto City bus 5 from Kyoto Station to Shūgakuinrikyū-michi) **FREE** Lying at the foot of Hiei-zan, this superb imperial villa is one of the highlights of northeast Kyoto. It was designed as a lavish summer retreat for the imperial family. The gardens here, with their views down over the city of Kyoto, are worth the trouble it takes to visit.

Construction of the villa was begun in the 1650s by Emperor Go-Mizunō, following his abdication. Work was continued by his daughter Akeno-miya after his death in 1680.

The villa grounds are divided into three enormous garden areas on a hillside – lower, middle and upper. Each has superb tea-ceremony houses: the upper, **Kami-no-chaya**, and lower, **Shimo-no-chaya**, were completed in 1659, and the middle teahouse, **Naka-no-chaya**, was completed in 1682. The gardens' reputation rests on their ponds, pathways and impressive use of *shakkei* (borrowed scenery) in the form of the surrounding hills. The view from Kami-no-chaya is particularly impressive.

One-hour tours (in Japanese) start at 9am, 10am, 11am, 1.30pm and 3pm; try to arrive early. A basic leaflet in English is provided and more detailed literature is for sale in the tour waiting room.

You must make reservations through the Imperial Household Agency – usually several weeks in advance.

Hiei-zan & Enryaku-ji TEMPLE
(延暦寺; 4220 Honmachi, Sakamoto, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥700; ☎8.30am-4.30pm, 9am-4pm in winter; ㊤Kyoto bus to Enryakuji Bus Center,

Keihan bus to Enryakuji Bus Center) Located atop 848m-high Hiei-zan (the mountain that dominates the skyline in the northeast of the city), the Enryaku-ji temple complex is an entire world of temples and dark forests that feels a long way from the hustle and bustle of the city below. A visit to this temple is a good way to spend half a day hiking, poking around temples and enjoying the atmosphere of a key site in Japanese history.

Enryaku-ji was founded in 788 by Saichō, also known as Dengyō-daishi, the priest who established the Tenzai school. This school did not receive imperial recognition until 823, after Saichō's death; however, from the 8th century the temple grew in power. At its height, Enryaku-ji possessed some 3000 buildings and an army of thousands of *sōhei* (warrior monks). In 1571 Oda Nobunaga saw the temple's power as a threat to his aims to unify the nation and he destroyed most of the buildings, along with the monks inside. Today only three pagodas and 120 minor temples remain.

The complex is divided into three sections: **Tōtō**, **Saitō** and **Yokawa**. The Tōtō (eastern pagoda section) contains the **Kompon Chū-dō** (Primary Central Hall), which is the most important building in the complex. The flames on the three dharma lamps in front of the altar have been kept lit for more than 1200 years. The **Daikō-dō** (Great Lecture Hall) displays life-sized wooden statues of the founders of various Buddhist schools. This part of the temple is heavily geared to group access, with large expanses of asphalt for parking.

The Saitō (western pagoda section) contains the Shaka-dō, which dates from 1595 and houses a rare Buddha sculpture of the Shaka Nyorai (Historical Buddha). The Saitō, with its stone paths winding through forests of tall trees, temples shrouded in mist and the sound of distant gongs, is the most atmospheric part of the temple. Hold on to your ticket from the Tōtō section, as you may need to show it here.

The Yokawa is of minimal interest and a 4km bus ride away from the Saitō area. The Chū-dō here was originally built in 848. It was destroyed by fire several times and has undergone repeated reconstruction (most recently in 1971). If you plan to visit this area as well as Tōtō and Saitō, allow a full day for in-depth exploration.

Northwest Kyoto

Northwest Kyoto has many excellent sights spread over a large area. Highlights include Kinkaku-ji (the famed Golden Pavilion) and Ryōan-ji, with its mysterious stone garden. Note that three of the area's main sights – Kinkaku-ji, Ryōan-ji and Ninna-ji – can easily be linked together to form a great half-day tour out of the city centre.

Kitano Tenman-gū

SHINTO SHRINE

(北野天満宮; Map p298; Bakuro-chō, Kamigyō-ku; ☺ 5am-6pm Apr-Sep, 5.30am-5.30pm Oct-Mar; ☑ Kyoto City bus 50 from Kyoto Station to Kitano-Tenmangū-mae) **FREE** The most atmospheric Shintō shrine in Northwest Kyoto, Kitano Tenman-gū is also the site of Tenjin-San Market, one of Kyoto's most popular flea markets. It's a pleasant spot for a lazy stroll and the shrine buildings themselves are beautiful. The present buildings were built in 1607 by Toyotomi Hideyori; the grounds contain an extensive grove of plum trees, which burst into bloom in early March.

Kinkaku-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(金閣寺; Map p311; 1 Kinkakuji-chō, Kita-ku; admission ¥400; ☺ 9am-5pm; ☑ Kyoto City bus 205 from Kyoto Station to Kinkakuji-michi, Kyoto City bus 59 from Sanjo-Keihan to Kinkakuji-mae) Kyoto's famed 'Golden Pavilion', Kinkaku-ji is one of Japan's best-known sights. The main hall, covered in brilliant gold leaf, shining above its reflecting pond is truly spectacular. Needless to say, due to its beauty, the temple can be packed any day of the year. Thus, we recommend going early in the day or just before closing, ideally on a weekday.

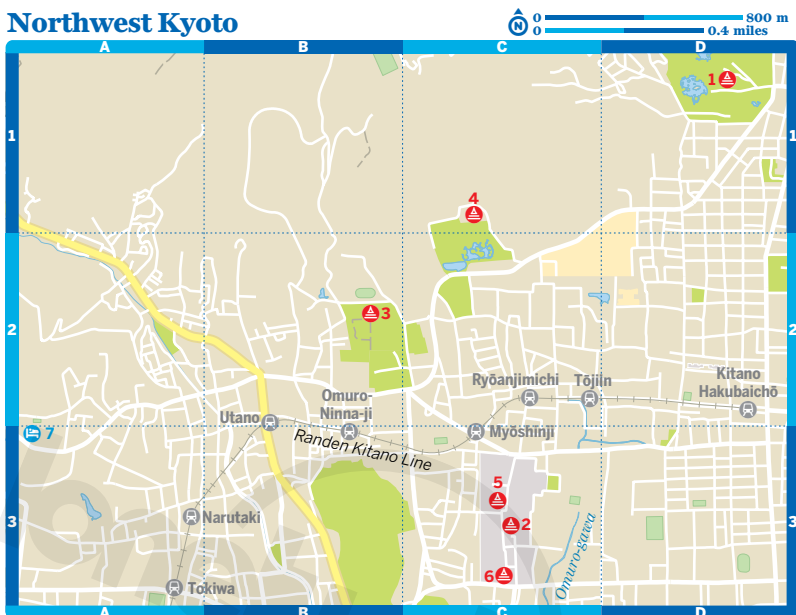
The original building was built in 1397 as a retirement villa for shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. His son converted it into a temple. In 1950 a young monk consummated his obsession with the temple by burning it to the ground. The monk's story was fictionalised in Mishima Yukio's *The Golden Pavilion*. In 1955 a full reconstruction was completed that followed the original design, but the gold-foil covering was extended to the lower floors.

Ryōan-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(龍安寺; Map p311; 13 Goryōnoshitamachi, Ryōan-ji, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥500; ☺ 8am-5pm Mar-Nov, 8.30am-4.30pm Dec-Feb; ☑ Kyoto City bus 59 from Sanjo-Keihan to Ryoanji-mae) You've probably seen a picture of the rock garden here – it's one of the symbols of Kyoto and one of

Northwest Kyoto



Northwest Kyoto

Sights

- | | |
|--------------------|----|
| 1 Kinkaku-ji | D1 |
| 2 Myōshin-ji | C3 |
| 3 Ninna-ji | B2 |
| 4 Ryōan-ji | C1 |
| 5 Shunkō-in | C3 |
| 6 Taizō-in | C3 |

Sleeping

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Shunkō-in | (see 5) |
| 7 Utano Youth Hostel | A3 |

Japan's better-known sights. Ryōan-ji belongs to the Rinzai school and was founded in 1450. The garden, an oblong of sand with an austere collection of 15 carefully placed rocks, apparently adrift in a sea of sand, is enclosed by an earthen wall. The designer, who remains unknown to this day, provided no explanation.

Ninna-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(仁和寺; Map p311; 33 Omurodouchi, Ukyō-ku; admission to Kondō hall ¥500, Reihōkan ¥500, grounds free; ☎9am-5pm Mar-Nov, 9am-4.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 59 from Sanjo-Keihan to Omuro Ninna-ji, Kyoto City bus 26 from Kyoto Station to Omuro Ninna-ji) Few travellers make the journey all the way out to this sprawling

temple complex, but most who do find it a pleasant spot. It's certainly a good counterpoint to the crowded and more famous temples nearby. If you're after something a bit off the beaten track in northwest Kyoto, this temple may fit the bill.

Myōshin-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(妙心寺; Map p311; 1 Myōshin-ji-chō, Hanazono, Ukyō-ku; admission to main temple free, other areas of complex ¥500; ☎9.10-11.50am & 1-3.40pm; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 10 from Sanjo-Keihan to Myōshin-ji Kita-mon-mae) Myōshin-ji is a separate world within Kyoto, a walled-off complex of temples and subtemples that invites lazy strolling. The subtemple of **Taizō-in** here contains one of the city's more interesting gardens. Myōshin-ji dates from 1342 and belongs to the Rinzai school. There are 47 subtemples, but only a few are open to the public.

From the north gate, follow the broad stone avenue flanked by rows of temples to the southern part of the complex. The eponymous **Myōshin-ji** temple here is roughly in the middle of the complex. Your entry fee entitles you to a tour of several of the buildings of the temple. The ceiling of the **Hattō** (Lecture Hall) here features Tanyū Kanō's unnerving painting *Unryūzu* (meaning 'Dragon glaring in eight directions'). Your

guide will invite you to stand directly beneath the dragon; doing so makes it appear that it's spiralling up or down.

Shunkō-in (春光院; Map p311; ☎462-5488; <http://www.shunkoin.com/>), a subtemple of Myōshin-ji, offers regular *zazen* (seated Zen meditation) sessions for foreigners with English explanations for ¥1000. This is highly recommended.

🗨️ Arashiyama & Sagano Area

嵐山・嵯峨野

Arashiyama and Sagano, at the base of Kyoto's western mountains (known as the Arashiyama), is Kyoto's second-most important sightseeing district after Higashiyama. On first sight, you may wonder what all the fuss is about; the main street and the area around the famous Tōgetsu-kyō bridge have all the makings of a classic Japanese tourist trap. But once you head up the hills to the temples hidden among the greenery, you will understand the appeal.

Bus 28 links Kyoto Station with Arashiyama. Bus 11 connects Keihan Sanjō Station with Arashiyama. The most convenient rail connection is the JR Sagano/San-in line from Kyoto Station or Nijō Station to Saga-Arashiyama Station (be careful to take only local trains, as the express trains do not stop at Saga-Arashiyama). You can also take the Hankyū line from downtown Kyoto to Arashiyama Station, but this involves changing trains at Katsura. A fast way to get there from the middle of Kyoto (both downtown and central) is to take the Tōzai subway line to the western-most stop (Uzumasa-Tenjin-gawa) and take a taxi from there to Arashiyama (the taxi ride will take about 15 minutes and cost around ¥1600).

Kameyama-kōen

PARK

(亀山公園; Map p313; Sagaogurayama, Ukyō-ku; ☎Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryuji-mae, JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) Just upstream from Tōgetsu-kyō and behind Tenryū-ji, this park is a nice place to escape the crowds of Arashiyama. It's laced with trails, one of which leads to a lookout over Katsura-gawa and up into the Arashiyama mountains. It's especially attractive during cherry-blossom and autumn-foliage seasons. Keep an eye out for monkeys, which occasionally descend from the nearby hills to pick fruit.

Tenryū-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(天龍寺; Map p313; 68 Susukinobaba-chō, Saga-Tenryū-ji, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥600; ☎8.30am-5.30pm, to 5pm 21 Oct-20 Mar; ☎Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryuji-mae, JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This fine temple has one of the most attractive stroll gardens in all of Kyoto, particularly during the spring cherry-blossom and autumn-foliage seasons. The main 14th-century Zen garden, with its backdrop of the Arashiyama mountains, is a good example of *shakkei* (borrowed scenery). Unfortunately, it's no secret that the garden here is world class, so it pays to visit early in the morning or on a weekday.

★ Arashiyama Bamboo Grove

PARK

(嵐山竹林; Map p313; Ogurayama, Saga, Ukyō-ku; ☎dawn-dusk; ☎Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryuji-mae, JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) **FREE** Walking into this extensive bamboo grove is like entering another world – the thick green bamboo stalks seem to continue endlessly in every direction and there's a strange quality to the light. You'll be unable to resist trying to take a few photos, but you might be disappointed with the results: photos just can't capture the magic of this place. The grove runs from just outside the north gate of Tenryū-ji to just below Ōkōchi Sansō villa.

★ Ōkōchi Sansō

HISTORIC BUILDING

(大河内山莊; Map p313; 8 Tabuchiya-machō, Sagaogurayama, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥1000; ☎9am-5pm; ☎Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryuji-mae, JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This is the lavish estate of Ōkōchi Denjirō, an actor famous for his samurai films. The sprawling stroll gardens may well be the most lovely in all of Kyoto, particularly when you consider the brilliant views eastwards across the city. The house and teahouse are also sublime. Be sure to follow all the trails around the gardens. Hold onto the tea ticket you were given upon entry to claim the tea and cake that comes with admission.

The following sights are all located north of Ōkōchi Sansō. Strolling from Ōkōchi Sansō all the way to Adashino Nembutsu-ji is a nice way to spend a few hours in Arashiyama and Sagano.

Arashiyama & Sagano Area



Arashiyama & Sagano Area

Top Sights

- 1 Arashiyama Bamboo Grove..... B3
2 Okochi Sanso B3

Sights

- 3 Adashino Nenbutsu-ji..... A1
4 Arashiyama Monkey Park
Iwatayama C4
5 Giō-ji..... A1
6 Jōjakkō-ji..... B2
7 Kameyama-kōen..... B3
8 Nison-in..... B2

- 9 Rakushisha..... B2
10 Tenryū-ji..... C3

Sleeping

- 11 Hoshinoya Kyoto B3

Eating

- 12 Arashiyama Yoshimura C3
13 Kitcho Arashiyama..... C3
14 Komichi..... B2
15 Shigetsu..... C3
16 Yoshida-ya..... C3

Jōjakkō-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(常寂光寺; Map p313; 3 Ogura-chō, Sagaogurayama, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥400; ☀9am-5pm; 🚏 Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, 🚉 JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This temple is perched on

top of a mossy knoll and is famed for its brilliant maple trees, which turn a lovely crimson red in November, and its thatched-roof Niō-mon gate. The Hondō was constructed in the 16th century out of wood sourced from Fushimi-jō.

Rakushisha

HISTORIC BUILDING

(落柿舎; Map p313; 20 Hinomyōjin-chō, Sagaogurayama, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥200; ☀9am-5pm Mar-Dec, 10am-4pm Jan & Feb, closed 31 Dec & 1 Jan; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, 🚶 JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This building was the hut of Mukai Kyorai, the best-known disciple of the illustrious haiku poet Bashō. Legend holds that Kyorai dubbed the house Rakushisha (literally 'House of the Fallen Persimmons') after he woke one morning following a fierce storm to find the persimmons he had planned to sell were all fallen from the trees in the garden and scattered on the ground.

Nison-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(二尊院; Map p313; 27 Monzenchōjin-chō, Sagani-son-in, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥500; ☀9am-4.30pm; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, 🚶 JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This is a popular spot with maple-watchers. Nison-in was originally built in the 9th century by Emperor Saga. It houses two important Kamakura-era Buddha statues side by side (Shaka on the right and Amida on the left). The temple features lacquered nightingale floors.

Giō-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(祇王寺; Map p313; 32 Kozaka-chō, Sagatoriimoto, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥300; ☀9am-5pm, with seasonal variations; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, 🚶 JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This tiny temple near the north end of the main Arashiyama sightseeing route is one of Kyoto's hidden gems. Its main attraction is the lush moss garden outside the thatch-roofed hall of the temple.

Adashino Nenbutsu-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(化野念仏寺; Map p313; 17 Adashino-chō, Sagatoriimoto, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥500; ☀9am-4.30pm, to 3.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, 🚶 JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This rather unusual temple is where the abandoned bones of paupers without kin were gathered. More than 8000 stone images are crammed into the temple grounds, dedicated to the repose of their spirits. The abandoned souls are remembered with candles each year in the Sentō Kuyō ceremony held here on the evenings of 23 and 24 August.

The temple is not a must-see attraction, but it's certainly interesting and the stone images make unusual photographs.

Arashiyama Monkey Park Iwatayama

PARK

(嵐山モンキーパークいわたやま; Map p313; 8 Genrokuzan-chō, Arashiyama, Ukyō-ku; adult/child ¥550/250; ☀9am-5pm 15 Mar-Oct, to 4pm Nov-14 Mar; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, 🚶 JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) Though it is common to spot wild monkeys in the nearby mountains, here you can encounter them at a close distance and enjoy watching the playful creatures frolic about. It makes for an excellent photo opportunity, not only of the monkeys but also of the panoramic view over Kyoto. Refreshingly, it is the animals who are free to roam while the humans who feed them are caged in a box!

You enter the park near the south side of Tōgetsu-kyō, through the orange *torii* (shrine gate) of Ichitani-jinja. Buy your tickets from the machine to the left of the shrine at the top of the steps. Just be warned: it's a steep climb up the hill to get to the monkeys. If it's a hot day, you're going to be drenched by the time you get to the spot where they gather.

👁 Southeast Kyoto

Southeast Kyoto contains some of Kyoto's most impressive sights, including Tōfuku-ji, with its lovely garden, and Fushi-Inari-Taisha, with its hypnotically beautiful arcades of Shintō shrine gates.

Tōfuku-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(東福寺; Map p290; 15-778 Honmahi, Higashiyama-ku; admission garden ¥400, Tsutenkyō bridge ¥400, grounds free; ☀9am-4pm Apr-Oct, 8.30am-4pm Nov-early Dec, 9am-3.30pm early Dec-Mar; 🚶 Keihan line to Tōfukuji, JR Nara line to Tōfukuji) Home to a spectacular garden, several superb structures and beautiful precincts, Tōfuku-ji is one of the finest temples in Kyoto. It's well worth a special visit and can easily be paired with a trip to Fushimi Inari-Taisha (the two are linked by the Keihan train line).

★ Fushimi-Inari Taisha

SHINTO SHRINE

(伏見稲荷大社; Map p290; 68 Yabunouchi-chō, Fukakusa, Fushimi-ku; ☀dawn-dusk; 🚶 JR Nara line to Inari, Keihan line to Fushimi-Inari) **FREE** With seemingly endless arcades of vermilion *torii* (shrine gates) spread across a thickly wooded mountain, this vast shrine complex is a

world unto its own. It is, quite simply, one of the most impressive and memorable sights in all of Kyoto.

The entire complex, consisting of five shrines, sprawls across the wooded slopes of Inari-san. A pathway wanders 4km up the mountain and is lined with dozens of atmospheric sub-shrines.

Fushimi Inari was dedicated to the gods of rice and sake by the Hata family in the 8th century. As the role of agriculture diminished, deities were enrolled to ensure prosperity in business. Nowadays, the shrine is one of Japan's most popular, and is the head shrine for some 40,000 Inari shrines scattered the length and breadth of the country.

As you explore the shrine, you will come across hundreds of stone foxes. The fox is considered the messenger of Inari, the god of cereals, and the stone foxes, too, are often referred to as Inari. The key often seen in the fox's mouth is for the rice granary. On an incidental note, the Japanese traditionally see the fox as a sacred, somewhat mysterious figure capable of 'possessing' humans – the favoured point of entry is under the fingernails.

The walk around the upper precincts of the shrine is a pleasant day hike. It also makes for a very eerie stroll in the late afternoon and early evening, when the various graveyards and miniature shrines along the path take on a mysterious air. It's best to go with a friend at this time.

On 8 April there's a Sangyō-sai festival with offerings and dances to ensure prosperity for national industry. During the first few days in January, thousands of believers visit this shrine as their *hatsu-mōde* (first shrine visit of the New Year) to pray for good fortune.

Daigo-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(醍醐寺; Map p290; 22 Higashiōji-chō, Daigo, Fushimi-ku; admission Sampō-in ¥600, Kondō Hall & Pagoda ¥600, grounds free; ☉9am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4pm Dec-Feb; ㊦Tōzai line to Daigo) Daigo-ji is a sprawling temple complex located in the Daigo district of Kyoto, which lies on the east side of the Higashiyama mountains, accessible by the Tōzai subway line. Outside of the cherry-blossom season (early April), it's not a high-priority destination, but it makes a good half-day trip for those who like hiking and want a break from the more famous temples in the city centre.

Daigo-ji was founded in 874 by Shobo, who gave it the name Daigo (meaning 'the

ultimate essence of milk'). This refers to the five periods of Buddha's teaching, which were compared to the five forms of milk prepared in India; the highest form is called *daigo* in Japanese.

The temple was expanded into a vast complex on two levels: **Shimo Daigo** (lower) and **Kami Daigo** (upper). Kami Daigo is atop **Daigo-yama**, behind the temple. During the 15th century those buildings on the lower level were destroyed, with the sole exception of the five-storey pagoda. Built in 951, this pagoda is treasured as the oldest of its kind in Japan and is the oldest existing building in Kyoto.

In the late 16th century, Hideyoshi took a fancy to Daigo-ji and ordered extensive rebuilding. It is now one of the Shingon school's main temples. To explore Daigo-ji thoroughly and at a leisurely pace, mixing some hiking with your temple-viewing, you will need at least half a day.

The subtemple **Sampō-in** is a fine example of the amazing opulence of that period. The Kanō paintings and the garden are special features.

From Sampō-in it's a steep and tiring 50-minute climb up to Kami Daigo. To get here, walk up the large avenue of cherry trees, through the Niō-mon gate, out the back gate of the lower temple, up a concrete incline and into the forest, past the pagoda.

KYOTO'S BEST HIKES

Daimonji-yama There is no finer walk in the city than the 30-minute climb to the viewpoint above Ginkaku-ji (p308) in Northern Higashiyama. The trail leaves from a parking lot just above and behind the temple. You might have to ask a local to point you in the right direction – ask for 'Daimonji-yama no haikingu kosu'.

Fushimi Inari-Taisha Paths lined with *torii* (Shinto shrine gates) criss-cross this mountain shrine in southeast Kyoto. The one-hour pilgrimage loop around the top of the mountain is highly recommended.

Kurama to Kibune The two-hour walk over the top of Kurama-yama from Kurama to Kibune via the mountain temple of Kurama-dera (p318) is one of the best easy half-day trips out of the city.

To get to Daigo-ji, take the Tōzai line subway east from central Kyoto to the Daigo stop, and walk east (towards the mountains) for about 10 minutes. Make sure that the train you board is bound for Roku-jizō, as some head to Hama-Ōtsu instead. Admission to the grounds is free most of the year but during the cherry-blossom and autumn-foliage seasons it costs ¥600.

🌀 Uji 宇治

Uji is a small city to the south of Kyoto. Its main claims to fame are Byōdō-in and tea cultivation. Uji's stone bridge – the oldest of its kind in Japan – has been the scene of many bitter clashes in previous centuries.

Uji can be reached by rail in about 40 minutes from Kyoto on the Keihan Uji line or JR Nara line. When arriving in Uji by Keihan train, leave the station, cross the river via the first bridge on the right, and then turn left to find Byōdō-in. When coming by JR, the temple is about 10 minutes' walk east (towards the river) of Uji Station.

Byōdō-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(平等院; ☎0774-21-2861; 116 Uji-enge, Uji-shi; admission ¥600; 🕒8.30am-5.15pm; 🚉JR Nara line or Keihan line to Uji) Byōdō-in is the star attraction in the Kyoto suburb of Uji. It's home to one of the loveliest Buddhist structures in Japan: the **Hōō-dō** hall, which is depicted on the back of the Japanese ¥10 coin. Perched overlooking a serene reflecting pond, this recently refurbished hall is a stunning sight. Paired with a stroll along the banks of the nearby Uji-gawa, this temple makes a good half-day trip out of Kyoto City.

This temple was converted from a Fujiwara villa into a Buddhist temple in 1052. The Hōō-dō (Phoenix Hall), the main hall of the temple, was built in 1053 and is the only original building remaining. The phoenix used to be a popular mythical bird in China and was revered by the Japanese as a protector of Buddha. The architecture of the building resembles the shape of the bird and there are two bronze phoenixes perched opposite each other on the roof.

The Hōō-dō was originally intended to represent Amida's heavenly palace in the Pure Land. This building is one of the few extant examples of Heian-period architecture, and its graceful lines make you wish that far more had survived the wars and fires that have plagued Kyoto's past. Inside the hall is the famous statue of Amida Bud-

dha and 52 *bosatsu* (Bodhisattvas) dating from the 11th century and attributed to the priest-sculptor Jōchō.

Nearby, the **Hōmotsukan Treasure House** contains the original temple bell and door paintings and the original phoenix roof adornments. Allow about an hour to wander through the grounds.

🌀 Southwest Kyoto

Saihō-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(西芳寺; Map p290; 56 Jingatani-chō, Matsuo, Nishikyō-ku; admission ¥3000; 🚉Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Matsuo-taisha-mae, Kyoto bus 63 from Sanjō-Keihan to Koke-dera) Saihō-ji, one of Kyoto's best-known gardens, is famed for its superb moss garden, hence the temple's nickname: Koke-dera (Moss Temple). The heart-shaped garden, laid out in 1339 by Musō Kokushi, surrounds a tranquil pond. In order to limit the number of visitors, you must apply to visit and then copy a sutra with ink and brush before exploring the garden.

While copying a sutra might seem daunting, it's actually fairly self-explanatory and if you're lost, just glance at what the Japanese visitors are doing. It's not necessary to finish the entire sutra, just do the best you can. Once in the garden, you are free to explore on your own and at your own pace.

To visit Saihō-ji you must make a reservation. Send a postcard at least one week before the date you wish to visit and include your name, number of visitors, address in Japan, occupation, age (you must be over 18) and desired date (choice of alternative dates preferred). The address: Saihō-ji, 56 Kamigaya-chō, Matsuo, Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto-shi 615-8286, JAPAN.

Enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard for a reply to your Japanese address. You might find it convenient to buy an Ōfuku-hagaki (send and return postcard set) at a Japanese post office.

Katsura Rikyū

HISTORIC BUILDING

(桂離宮; Map p290; Katsura Detached Palace; Katsura Misono, Nishikyō-ku; 🚉Kyoto City bus 33 to Katsura Rikyū-mae, 🚉Hankyū line to Katsura) **FREE** Katsura Rikyū, one of Kyoto's imperial properties, is widely considered to be the pinnacle of Japanese traditional architecture and garden design. Set amid an otherwise drab neighbourhood, it is (literally) an island of incredible beauty. The villa was built in 1624 for the emperor's brother,

Prince Toshihito. Every conceivable detail of the villa – the teahouses, the large pond with islets and the surrounding garden – has been given meticulous attention.

Tours (in Japanese) start at 10am, 11am, 2pm and 3pm, and last 40 minutes. Try to be there 20 minutes before the start time. An explanatory video is shown in the waiting room and a leaflet is provided in English.

You must make reservations, usually several weeks in advance, through the Imperial Household Agency. There are those, however, who feel that the troublesome application process, the distance of the villa from downtown and the need to join a regimented tour detracts from the experience.

The villa is a 15-minute walk from Katsura Station, on the Hankyū line. A taxi from the station to the villa will cost around ¥700. Alternatively, Kyoto bus 33 stops at Katsura Rikyū-mae stop, which is a five-minute walk from the villa.

👁️ Ōhara (大原)

Since ancient times Ōhara, a quiet farming town about 10km north of Kyoto, has been regarded as a holy site by followers of the Jōdo school of Buddhism. The region provides a charming glimpse of rural Japan, along with the picturesque Sanzen-in, Jakkō-in and several other fine temples. It is most popular in autumn, when the maple leaves change colour and the mountain views are spectacular. During the peak foliage season of November, this area can get very crowded, especially on weekends.

Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station will drop you to the Ōhara stop (¥600, one hour).

Sanzen-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(三千院; 540 Raikōin-chō, Ōhara, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥700; ☀️ 9am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚏 Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station to Ōhara) Famed for its autumn foliage, hydrangea garden and stunning Buddha images, this temple is deservedly popular with foreign and domestic tourists alike. The temple's garden, **Yūsei-en**, is one of the most photographed sights in Japan, and rightly so.

Take some time to sit on the steps of the **Shin-den** hall and admire the beauty of the Yūsei-en. Then head off to see **Ōjō-gokura-ku-in** (Temple of Rebirth in Paradise), the hall in which stands the impressive Amitabha trinity, a large Amida image flanked by attendants Kannon and Seishi (god of wis-

dom). After this, walk up to the garden at the back of the temple where, in late spring and summer, you can walk among hectares of blooming hydrangeas.

Sanzen-in was founded in 784 by the priest Saichō and belongs to the Tendai school. Saichō, considered one of the great patriarchs of Buddhism in Japan, also founded Enryaku-ji.

If you're keen for a short hike after leaving the temple, continue up the hill to see the rather oddly named **Soundless Waterfall** (Oto-nashi-no-taki; 音無の滝). Though in fact it sounds like any other waterfall, its resonance is believed to have inspired Shōmyō Buddhist chanting.

The approach to Sanzen-in is opposite the bus stop; there is no English sign but you can usually just follow the Japanese tourists. The temple is located about 600m up this walk on your left as you crest the hill.

Jakkō-in

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(寂光院; 676 Kusao-chō, Ōhara, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥600; ☀️ 9am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4.30pm Dec-Feb; 🚏 Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station to Ōhara) Jakkō-in sits on the opposite side of Ōhara from the famous Sanzen-in. It's reached by a very pleasant walk through a quaint 'old Japan' village. It's a relatively small temple and makes an interesting end point to a fine walk in the country.

The history of the temple is exceedingly tragic. The actual founding date of the temple is subject to some debate (it's thought to be somewhere between the 6th and 11th centuries), but it acquired fame as the temple that harboured Kenrei Mon-in, a lady of the Taira clan. In 1185 the Taira were soundly defeated in a sea battle against the Minamoto clan at Dan-no-ura. With the entire Taira clan slaughtered or drowned, Kenrei Mon-in threw herself into the waves with her son

KITAYAMA AREA

Starting on the north side of Kyoto city and stretching almost all the way to the Sea of Japan, the Kitayama (Northern Mountains) are a natural escape prized by Kyoto city dwellers. Attractions here include the village of Ōhara, with its pastoral beauty, the fine mountain temple at Kurama, the river dining platforms at Kibune, and the trio of mountain temples in Takao.

Antoku, the infant emperor. She was fished out – the only member of the clan to survive.

She was returned to Kyoto, where she became a nun and lived in a bare hut until it collapsed during an earthquake. Kenrei Mon-in was then accepted into Jakkō-in and stayed there, immersed in prayer and sorrowful memories, until her death 27 years later. Her tomb is located high on the hill behind the temple.

The main building of this temple burned down in May 2000 and the newly reconstructed main hall lacks some of the charm of the original. Nonetheless, it is a nice spot.

Jakkō-in is west of Ōhara. Walk out of the bus stop up the road to the traffic lights, then follow the small road to the left. You might have to ask directions on the way.

🗨️ Kurama & Kibune 鞍馬・貴船

Only 30 minutes north of Kyoto on the Eiden Eizan main line, Kurama and Kibune are a pair of tranquil valleys long favoured by Kyotoites as places to escape the crowds and stresses of the city below. Kurama's main attractions are its mountain temple and its onsen (hot springs). Kibune, over the ridge, is a cluster of ryokan overlooking a mountain stream. It is best enjoyed in the summer, when the ryokan serve dinner on platforms built over the rushing waters of the Kibune-gawa, providing welcome relief from the summer heat.

The two valleys lend themselves to being explored together. In the winter you can start from Kibune, walk for an hour or so over the ridge, visit Kurama-dera and then soak in the onsen before heading back to Kyoto. In the summer the reverse is best; start from Kurama, walk up to the temple, then down the other side to Kibune to enjoy a meal suspended above the cool river.

If you happen to be in Kyoto on the night of 22 October, be sure not to miss the **Kurama-no-hi Matsuri** (Kurama Fire Festival), one of the most exciting festivals in the Kyoto area.

To get to Kurama and Kibune, take the Eiden Eizan line from Kyoto's Demachiyangi Station. For Kibune, get off at the second-to-last stop, Kibune Guchi, take a right out of the station and walk about 20 minutes up the hill. For Kurama, go to the last stop, Kurama, and walk straight out of the station. Both destinations are ¥410 and take about 30 minutes to reach.

Kurama-dera

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(鞍馬寺; Map p319; 1074 Kurama Honmachi, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥200; ☀️9am-4.30pm; 🚶 Eiden Eizan line from Demachiyangi to Kurama) Located high on a thickly wooded mountain, Kurama-dera is one of the few temples in modern Japan that still manages to retain an air of real spirituality. This is a magical place that gains a lot of its power from its brilliant natural setting.

The temple also has a fascinating history. In 770 the monk Gantei left Nara's Tōshōdai-ji in search of a wilderness sanctuary in which to meditate. Wandering in the hills north of Kyoto, he came across a white horse that led him to the valley known today as Kurama. After seeing a vision of the deity Bishamon-ten, guardian of the northern quarter of the Buddhist heaven, Gantei established Kurama-dera just below the peak of Kurama-yama. Originally belonging to the Tendai school of Buddhism, Kurama has been independent since 1949, describing its own brand of Buddhism as Kurama-kyō.

The entrance to the temple is just up the hill from Kurama Station. A tram goes to the top for ¥100 or you can hike up in about 30 minutes (follow the main path past the tram station). The trail is worth taking (if it's not too hot), since it winds through a forest of towering old-growth cryptomeria trees, passing by **Yuki-jinja** (Map p319), a small Shintō shrine, on the way. Near the peak, there is a courtyard dominated by the **Honden** (Main Hall); behind this a trail leads off to the mountain's peak.

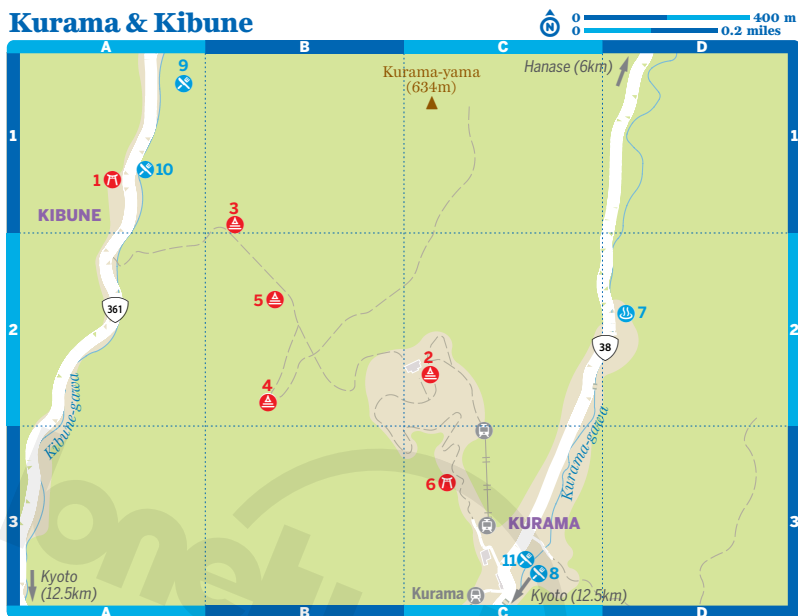
At the top, you can take a brief detour across the ridge to **Ōsugi-gongen** (Map p319), a quiet shrine in a grove of trees. Those who want to continue to Kibune can take the trail down the other side. It's a 1.2km, 30-minute hike from the Honden to the valley floor of Kibune. On the way down are two mountain shrines, **Sōjō-ga-dani Fudō-dō** (Map p319) and **Okuno-in Maō-den** (Map p319), which make pleasant rest stops.

🗨️ Takao 高雄

Takao is a secluded mountain village tucked far away in the northwestern part of Kyoto. It is famed for autumn foliage and the temples of Jingo-ji, Saimyō-ji and Kōzan-ji.

There are two options for buses to Takao: an hourly JR bus that leaves from Kyoto Station, which takes about an hour to reach the Takao stop (get off at the Yamashiro-Takao stop); and Kyoto city bus 8 from Shijō-

Kurama & Kibune



Kurama & Kibune

📍 Sights

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| 1 Kibune-jinja..... | A1 |
| 2 Kurama-dera..... | C2 |
| 3 Okuno-in Maō-den..... | B1 |
| 4 Ōsugi-gongen..... | B2 |
| 5 Sōjō-ga-dani Fudō-dō..... | B2 |
| 6 Yuki-jinja..... | C3 |

🚌 Activities, Courses & Tours

- | | |
|---------------------|----|
| 7 Kurama Onsen..... | D2 |
|---------------------|----|

🍽️ Eating

- | | |
|------------------------|----|
| 8 Aburaya-Shokudō..... | C3 |
| 9 Hirobun..... | A1 |
| 10 Kibune Club..... | A1 |
| 11 Yōshūji..... | C3 |

Karasuma (get off at the Takao stop). To get to Jingo-ji from these bus stops, walk down to the river, then look for the steps on the other side.

Jingo-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(神護寺; Map p290; 5 Takao-chō, Umegahata, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥500; ☀9am-4pm; 🚶JR Bus from Kyoto Station to Yamashiro-Takao) This mountaintop temple is one of our favourites in all of Kyoto. It sits at the top of a long flight of stairs that stretch from the Kiyotaki-gawa to the temple's main gate. The

Kondō (Gold Hall) is the most impressive of the temple's structures, located roughly in the middle of the grounds at the top of another flight of stairs.

After visiting the Kondō, head in the opposite direction along a wooded path to an open area overlooking the valley. Here you'll see people tossing small discs over the railing into the chasm below. These are *kawarakenage*, light clay discs that people throw in order to rid themselves of their bad karma. Be careful, it's addictive and at ¥100 for two it can get expensive (you can buy the discs at a nearby stall). The trick is to flick the discs very gently, convex side up, like a frisbee. When you get it right, they sail all the way down the valley – taking all that bad karma with them (try not to think about the hikers down below).

To get to Jingo-ji, walk down to the river from the the Yamashiro-Takao bus stop and climb the steps on the other side.

Saimyō-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(西明寺; Map p290; 2 Makino-chō, Umegahata, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥500; ☀9am-5pm; 🚶JR Bus from Kyoto Station to Yamashiro-Takao) About five minutes upstream from the base of the steps that lead to Jingo-ji, this fine little temple is one of our favourite spots in Kyoto. See if you can find your way round to the small

waterfall at the side of the temple. The grotto here is pure magic.

Kōzan-ji

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

(高山寺; Map p290; 8 Toganoo-chō, Umegahata, Ukyō-ku; admission ¥600; ☎ 8.30am-5pm; ㊚ JR Bus from Kyoto Station to Yamashiro-Takao or Toga-no-O) Hidden amid a grove of towering cedar trees, this temple is famous for the *chujū giga* scroll in its collection. It's an ink-brush depiction of frolicking animals that is considered by many to be the precursor of today's ubiquitous manga (Japanese comics). The temple is reached by following the main road north from the Yamashiro-Takao bus stop or, more conveniently, by getting off the JR bus at the Toga-no-O bus stop, which is right outside the temple.



Activities

Funaoka Onsen

ONSEN

(船岡温泉; Map p298; 82-1 Minami-Funaoka-chō-Murasakino, Kita-ku; admission ¥410; ☎ 3pm-1am Mon-Sat, 8am-1am Sun & holidays; ㊚ Kyoto City Bus 9 from Kyoto Station to Horikawa-Kuramaguchi) This old bath on Kuramaguchi-dōri is Kyoto's best. It boasts an outdoor bath, a sauna, a cypress-wood tub, an electric bath, a herbal bath and a few more for good measure. To get there, head west about 400m on Kuramaguchi-dōri from the Kuramaguchi-Horikawa intersection. It's on the left, not far past the Lawson convenience store. Look for the large rocks.

Be sure to check out the *ranma* (carved wooden panels) in the changing room. Carved during Japan's invasion of Manchuria, the panels offer insight into the prevailing mindset of that era. (Note the panels do contain some violent imagery, which may disturb some visitors.)

Kurama Onsen

ONSEN

(鞍馬温泉; Map p319; 520 Kurama Honmachi, Sakyo-ku; admission outdoor bath only ¥1000, outdoor & indoor bath ¥2500; ☎ 10am-9pm; ㊚ Eiden Eizan line from Demachiyanagi to Kurama) One of the few onsen within easy reach of Kyoto, Kurama Onsen is a great place to relax after a hike. The outdoor bath has fine views of Kurama-yama, while the indoor bath area includes some relaxation areas in addition to the tubs. For both baths, buy a ticket from the machine outside the door of the main building.

To get to Kurama Onsen, walk straight out of Kurama Station and continue up the main street, passing the entrance to Kurama-dera

on your left. The onsen is about 10 minutes' walk on the right. There's also a free shuttle bus between the station and the onsen, which meets incoming trains.

Maika

GEISHA COSTUME

(舞香; Map p300; ☎ 551-1661; www.maika.tv/e; 297 Miyagawa suji 4-chōme, Higashiyama-ku; maiko/geisha from ¥6500/8000; ㊚ Keihan line to Gion-Shijo or Kiyomizu-Gojo) If you ever wondered how you might look as a geisha, try this *maiko-henshin* (geisha transformation) shop in Gion. If you don't mind spending a bit extra, it's possible to head out in costume for a stroll through Gion. The process takes about an hour. Call to reserve at least one day in advance.

Camellia Tea Experience

TEA CEREMONY

(茶道体験カメリア; Map p300; ☎ 525-3238; www.tea-kyoto.com; 349 Masuya-chō, Higashiyama-ku; tea ceremony per person ¥2000; ㊚ Kyoto City bus 206 to Yasui) Camellia is a superb place to try a simple Japanese tea ceremony. It's located in a beautiful old Japanese house just off Ninen-zaka, not far from Kiyomizu-dera. The host, Atsuko, speaks fluent English and explains the ceremony simply and clearly, while managing to perform an elegant ceremony without making guests nervous. The website has an excellent map and explanation.

En

TEA CEREMONY

(えん; Map p300; ☎ 080-3782-2706; 272 Matsubara-chō, Higashiyama-ku; tea ceremony per person ¥2000; ☎ 3-6pm, closed Wed; ㊚ Kyoto City bus 206 to Gion or Chionin-mae) This is a small tea-house near Gion where you can experience the Japanese tea ceremony with a minimum of fuss or expense. English explanations are provided and tea ceremonies are held at 3pm, 4pm, 5pm or 6pm (check the website for latest times, as these may change). Reservations are recommended in high season. It's a little tricky to find: it's down a little alley off Higashiōji-dōri – look for the sign just south of Tenkaippin Rāmen.

Courses

Uzuki

COOKING COURSE

(www.kyotouzuki.com; 3hr class per person ¥4000) If you want to learn how to cook some of the delightful foods you've tried in Kyoto, we highly recommend Uzuki, a small cooking class conducted in a Japanese home for groups of two to four people. You will learn how to cook a variety of dishes and then sit

down and enjoy the fruits of your labour. You can consult beforehand if you have particular dishes you'd like to cook. The fee includes all ingredients. Reserve via the website.

Haru Cooking Class COOKING COURSE

(料理教室はる; Map p298; <http://www.kyoto-cooking-class.com/index.html>; Shimogamo Miyazaki-chō 166-32, Sakyō-ku; per person from ¥5900; ☺ classes from 2pm daily, reservation required) Haru Cooking Class is a friendly one-man cooking school located in a private home a little bit north of Demachiyana. The school's teacher, Haru, speaks great English and can teach both vegetarian and non-vegetarian cooking. He also offers tours of Nishiki Market. Reserve by email.

🌸 Festivals & Events

There are hundreds of festivals happening in Kyoto throughout the year. Listings of these can be found in the free *Kansai Scene* weekly magazine or on www.kyotoguide.com. The following are some of the major and most spectacular festivals. These attract hordes of spectators from out of town, so you will need to book accommodation well in advance.

Setsubun Matsuri at Yoshida-jinja RELIGIOUS

This festival is held on the day of *setsubun* (2, 3 or 4 February; check with the TIC), which marks the last day of winter in the Japanese lunar calendar. In this festival, people climb up to Yoshida-jinja in the Northern Higashiyama area to watch a huge bonfire (in which old good-luck charms are burned). It's one of Kyoto's more dramatic festivals. The action starts at dusk.

Aoi Matsuri PARADE

The Hollyhock Festival dates back to the 6th century and commemorates the successful prayers of the people for the gods to stop calamitous weather. These days the procession involves imperial messengers carried in ox carts and a retinue of 600 people dressed in traditional costume. The procession leaves at around 10am on 15 May from the Kyoto Goshō and heads for Shimogamo-jinja.

Gion Matsuri PARADE

Kyoto's most important festival, Gion Matsuri reaches a climax on 17 July with a parade of over 30 floats and a smaller parade on 24 July. On the three evenings preceding the 17th, people gather on Shijō-dōri dressed in beautiful *yukata* (light summer kimonos) to look at the floats and carouse from one street stall to the next.

Daimon-ji Gozan Okuribi CULTURAL

This festival is celebrated on 16 August as a means of bidding farewell to the souls of ancestors. Enormous fires, in the form of Chinese characters or other shapes, are lit on five mountains. The largest fire is burned on Daimon-ji-yama, just above Ginkaku-ji, in Northern Higashiyama. The fires start at 8pm and the best perspective is from the banks of the Kamo-gawa.

Jidai Matsuri PARADE

The Festival of the Ages is of comparatively recent origin, only dating back to 1895. More than 2000 people, dressed in costumes ranging from the 8th century to the 19th century, parade from Kyoto Goshō to Heian-jingū on 22 October.

Kurama-no-hi Matsuri CULTURAL

In perhaps Kyoto's most dramatic festival, the Kurama Fire Festival, huge flaming torches are carried through the streets of Kurama by men in loincloths on 22 October (the same day as the Jidai Matsuri). Note that trains to and from Kurama will be completely packed with passengers on the evening of the festival (we suggest going early and returning late).

🛏 Sleeping

The most convenient areas in which to be based, in terms of easy access to shopping, dining and sightseeing attractions, are downtown Kyoto and the Higashiyama area. The Kyoto Station area is also a good location, with excellent access to transport and plenty of shops and restaurants. Transport information in the following listings is from Kyoto Station, unless otherwise noted.

🚉 Kyoto Station Area

★ Capsule Ryokan Kyoto CAPSULE HOTEL ▼

(カプセル旅館京都; Map p294; ☎ 344-1510; www.capsule-ryokan-kyoto.com; 204 Tsuchihashi-chō, Shimogyō-ku; capsule ¥3500, tw per person from ¥3990; 📍 📞 📺 Karasuma line to Kyoto, 🚉 JR Tōkaidō main line to Kyoto) This unique new accommodation offers ryokan-style capsules (meaning tatami mats inside the capsules), as well as comfortable, cleverly designed private rooms. Each capsule also has its own TV and cable internet access point, while the private rooms have all the amenities you might need. Free internet, wi-fi and other amenities are available in the comfortable lounge.

It's near the southeast corner of the Horikawa-Shichijo intersection.

★Tour Club

GUESTHOUSE ¥

(ツアークラブ; Map p294; ☎ 353-6968; www.kyotojp.com; 362 Momiji-chō, Higashinakasuji, Shōmen-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; d/tw/tr per person ¥3490/3885/2960; ☺☺☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) This clean, well-maintained guesthouse remains a favourite of foreign visitors to Kyoto. Facilities include internet access, a small Zen garden, laundry, wi-fi, and free tea and coffee. Most private rooms have a private bathroom and toilet, and there is a spacious quad room for families. This is probably the best choice in this price bracket.

From Kyoto Station turn north off Shichijō-dōri two blocks before Horikawa (at the faux-Greco building) and keep an eye out for the English sign.

Budget Inn

GUESTHOUSE ¥

(バジェットイン; Map p294; ☎ 344-1510; www.budgetinnjp.com; 295 Aburanokōji-chō, Aburanokōji, Shichijō-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; tr/q/5-person r per person ¥3660/3245/2996; ☺☺☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) This well-run guesthouse is an excellent choice in this price bracket. It has eight Japanese-style private rooms, all of which are clean and well maintained. All rooms have private bathroom and toilet, and can accommodate up to five people, making it good for families. The staff is very helpful and friendly, and internet access, laundry and wi-fi are available.

Matsubaya Ryokan

RYOKAN ¥

(松葉家旅館; Map p294; ☎ 351-3727; www.matsubayainn.com/; Kamijuzūyachō-dōri, Higashinotōin nishi-iru, Shimogyō-ku; r per person from ¥4400; ☺☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) A short walk from Kyoto Station, this newly renovated ryokan has clean, well-kept rooms and a management that is used to foreign guests. Some rooms on the 1st floor look out on small gardens. Western (¥500 to ¥900) or Japanese breakfast (¥1000) is available.

Ryokan Shimizu

RYOKAN ¥

(京の宿しみず; Map p294; ☎ 371-5538; www.kyoto-shimizu.net; 644 Kagiya-chō, Shichijō-dōri, Wakamiya-agaru, Shimogyō-ku; r per person from ¥5250, Sat & nights before holidays plus ¥1080; ☺☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) A short walk north of Kyoto Station's Karasuma central gate, this friendly ryokan has a loyal following of foreign guests, and

for good reason: it's clean, well run and fun. Rooms are standard ryokan style with one difference: all have private bathrooms and toilets. Bicycle rental is available.

K's House Kyoto

GUESTHOUSE ¥

(ケイズハウス京都; Map p294; ☎ 342-2444; http://kshouse.jp/kyoto-e/; 418 Naya-chō, Dotemachi-dōri, Shichijō-agaru, Shimogyō-ku; dm from ¥2400, s/d/tw per person from ¥3800/3100/3100; ☺☺☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) K's House is a large 'New Zealand-style' guesthouse with both private and dorm rooms. The rooms are simple but adequate and there are spacious common areas. The rooftop terrace, patio and attached bar-restaurant make this a very sociable spot and a good place to meet other travellers and share information.

★Ibis Styles Kyoto Station

HOTEL ¥¥

(イビススタイルズ 京都ステーション; Map p294; ☎ 693-8444; www.ibis.com/gb/hotel-9418-ibis-styles-kyoto-station/index.shtml; 47 Higashikujō-Kamitonoda-chō, Minami-ku; r from ¥6500-10,000; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) This great new business hotel just outside the south entrance to Kyoto Station offers excellent value. The rooms are small but packed with features you need. The staff are extremely efficient. All in all, this is a great option for the price.

★Dormy Inn Premium Kyoto

Ekimae

HOTEL ¥¥

(ドリーミーインPREMIUM京都駅前; Map p294; ☎ 371-5489; www.hotespa.net/hotels/kyoto; Higashishioikōji-chō 558-8, Shimogyō-ku; tw/d from ¥12,500/11,890; ☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line to Kyoto) Located almost directly across the street from Kyoto Station, this efficient new hotel is a great choice. Rooms are clean and well maintained and the on-site spa bath is a nice plus.

★Hotel Granvia Kyoto

HOTEL ¥¥¥

(ホテルグランヴィア京都; Map p294; ☎ 344-8888; www.granviakyoto.com; Karasuma-dōri, Shiokōji-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; tw/d from ¥16,000/21,000; ☺☺☺; ☑) Karasuma line to Kyoto, (JR Tōkaidō main line) Imagine being able to step out of bed and straight into the *shinkansen* (bullet train). This is almost possible when you stay at the Hotel Granvia, which is located directly above Kyoto Station. The rooms are clean, spacious and elegant, with deep bathtubs. This is a very professional operation with good on-site restaurants, some of which have views over the city.

🏠 Downtown Kyoto

★Hotel Sunroute Kyoto

HOTEL 3.5

(ホテルサンルート京都; Map p290; ☎ 371-3711; www.sunroute.jp/english/hotelinfo/kinki/kyoto/; 406 Nanba-chō, Kawaramachi-dōri, Matsubara-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; r from ¥6300-10,000; 📶📶; 🚗 Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) Located within easy walking distance of downtown, this brand-new hotel is a superb choice in this price bracket. As you'd expect, rooms aren't large, but they have everything you need. It's well run and comfortable with foreign travellers. In-room internet is LAN cable only, but there's free wi-fi in the 2nd-floor lobby.

Hotel Unizo

HOTEL 3.5

(ホテルユニゾ京都; Map p296; ☎ 241-3351; www.hotelunizo.com/eng/kyoto/; Kawaramachi-dōri, Sanjō-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; s/d/tw from ¥10,000/17,000/19,000; 📶📶📶; 🚗 Kyoto City bus 5 to Kawaramachi-Sanjō, 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) They don't get more convenient than this business hotel: it's smack in the middle of Kyoto's nightlife, shopping and dining district – you can walk to hundreds of restaurants and shops within five minutes. It's a standard-issue business hotel, with tiny but adequate rooms and unit bathrooms. Nothing special, but it's clean, well run and used to foreign guests.

Royal Park Hotel The Kyoto

HOTEL 3.5

(ロイヤルパークホテル ザ 京都; Map p296; ☎ 241-1111; www.rph-the.co.jp/en/kyoto/; Sanjō-dōri, Kawaramachi higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; s/d from ¥10,000/12,500; 📶; 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, 🚗 Keihan line to Sanjō) Located on Sanjō-dōri, a stone's throw from the river, this hotel commands a super-convenient location, with tons of shops and restaurants within easy walking distance. The hotel has a modern, chic feel, and rooms are slightly larger than at standard business hotels. The French bakery downstairs makes breakfast a breeze.

Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto

HOTEL 3.5

(ホテルビスタプレミオ京都; Map p296; ☎ 256-5888; www.hotel-vista.jp/kyoto-kawaramachi/index_e.html; Matsugae-chō 457, Kawaramachi-dōri, Rokkaku nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; s/d/tw from ¥6800/11,000; 📶📶; 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) Newly refurbished, and tucked into a lane between two of Kyoto's main downtown shopping streets, this is a really smart, clean hotel. There are some nice Japanese design touches in the rooms,

which are compact but adequate. Overall, it's good value for the money and a super-convenient location.

Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyoto Sanjō

HOTEL 3.5

(三井ガーデンホテル 京都三条; Map p296; ☎ 256-3331; www.gardenhotels.co.jp/eng/sanjo/; 80 Mikura-chō, Sanjō-dōri, Karasuma nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; s/d/tw from ¥6000/8700/9600; 📶; 📍 Tōzai or Karasuma lines to Karasuma-Oike) Just west of the downtown dining and shopping district, this is a clean and efficient hotel that offers good value for the price and reasonably comfortable rooms.

★Tawaraya

RYOKAN 3.5

(俵屋; Map p296; ☎ 211-5566; 278 Nakahakusan-chō, Fuyachō, Oike-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; r per person incl 2 meals ¥55,891-74,520; 📶📶; 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, exit 8) Tawaraya has been operating for more than three centuries and is one of the finest places to stay in the world. From the decorations to the service to the food, everything is simply the best available. It's a very intimate, warm and personal place that has many loyal guests.

★Hiiragiya Ryokan

RYOKAN 3.5

(終屋; Map p296; ☎ 221-1136; www.hiiragiya.co.jp/en; Nakahakusan-chō, Fuyachō, Aneyakōji-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; r per person incl 2 meals ¥34,560-86,400; 📶📶; 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, exit 8) This elegant ryokan has long been favoured by celebrities from around the world. Facilities and services are excellent and the location is hard to beat. Ask for one of the newly redecorated rooms if you prefer a polished sheen; alternatively, request an older room if you fancy some 'Old Japan' *wabi-sabi* (imperfect beauty).

Kyoto Hotel Ōkura

HOTEL 3.5

(京都ホテルオークラ; Map p296; ☎ 211-5111; <http://okura.kyotohotel.co.jp/english/>; 537-4 Ichinofunairi-chō, Kawaramachi-dōri, Oike, Nakagyō-ku; s/d/tw from ¥13,600/23,000/18,400; 📶📶; 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, exit 3) This towering hotel in the centre of town commands an impressive view of the Higashiyama Mountains. Rooms are spacious and clean and many have great views, especially the excellent corner suites – we just wish we could open a window to enjoy the breeze.

You can access the Kyoto subway system directly from the hotel, which is convenient on rainy days or if you have luggage. You can often find great online rates for the Ōkura and it's one of the better value places in this price bracket.



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2



1. Kyoto Station (p292)

Kyoto Tower is reflected in the facade of this futuristic building.

2. Daigo-ji (p315)

This Buddhist temple was founded in AD 874. Its five-storey pagoda is the oldest of its kind in Japan.

3. Nishiki Market (p294)

Offering a staggering range of weird and wonderful ingredients, this is a must-see for foodies.

4. Traditional dress

Women in kimono stroll past women dressed as geisha in Kyoto.



4



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3

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1. Fushimi-Inari Taisha (p314)

Arcades of vermilion torii (shrine gates) spread across this vast Shintō shrine complex, one of Kyoto's most memorable sights.

2. Kyoto Station (p292)

Not just a transport hub, Kyoto Station is an architectural marvel of glass and steel.

3. Kiyomizu-dera (p302)

Set on a hill overlooking Kyoto, this popular, crowded Buddhist temple offers a look at how faith is expressed in Japan today.



Yoshikawa

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(吉川; Map p296; ☎ 221-5544; www.kyoto-yoshikawa.co.jp; 135 Matsushita-chō, Tominokōji, Oike-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥32,400 (low season), ¥48,600 (high season); @; ㊤ Tōzai or Karasuma lines to Karasuma-Oike) Located in the heart of downtown, within easy walking distance of two subway stations and the entire dining and nightlife district, this superb traditional ryokan has beautiful rooms and a stunning garden. The ryokan is famous for its tempura and its meals are of a high standard. All rooms have private bathrooms and toilets.

Ritz-Carlton Kyoto

HOTEL ¥¥¥

(ザ・リッツ・カールトン京都; Map p298; ☎ 746-5555; www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Kyoto; 543 Hokoden-chō, Nijō-Ōhashi-hotori, Nakagyō-ku; r ¥65,000-200,000; @ ㊤ ㊤; ㊤ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, ㊤ Keihan line to Sanjō or Jingū-Marutamachi) The new Ritz-Carlton is an oasis of luxury that commands perhaps the finest views of any hotel in the city – it's located on the banks for the Kamo-gawa and huge windows in the east-facing rooms take in the whole expanse of the Higashiyama mountains. The rooms are superbly designed and supremely comfortable, with plenty of Japanese touches.

Common areas are elegant and the on-site restaurants and bars are excellent. Finally, there are fine spa, gym and pool facilities.

Central Kyoto**Gojō Guest House**

GUESTHOUSE ¥

(五条ゲストハウス; Map p300; ☎ 525-2299; www.gojo-guest-house.com/; Gojōbashi higashi 3-396-2, Higashiyama-ku; dm ¥2600, s/tw ¥3500/6600; @; ㊤ Keihan line to Kiyomizu-Gojō) This is a fine guesthouse in an old wooden Japanese house, which makes the place feel more like a ryokan than your average guesthouse. It's a relaxed and friendly place at home with foreign guests. The staff speak good English and can help with travel advice. Best of all, it has *gaijin* (foreigner)-sized futons!

Palace Side Hotel

HOTEL ¥¥

(ザ・パレスサイドホテル; Map p298; ☎ 415-8887; www.palacesidehotel.co.jp; Okakuen-chō, Karasuma-dōri, Shimotachiuri-agaru, Kamigyō-ku; s/tw/d from ¥6300/10,200/10,200; @ ㊤; ㊤ Karasuma line to Marutamachi) Overlooking the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park, this excellent-value hotel has a lot going for it, start-

ing with friendly English-speaking staff, great service, washing machines, an on-site restaurant, well-maintained rooms and free internet terminals. The rooms are small but serviceable.

Ryokan Rakuchō

RYOKAN ¥¥

(洛頂旅館; Map p298; ☎ 721-2174; 67 Higashi-hangi-chō, Shimogamo, Sakyō-ku; s/tw/tr ¥5300/9240/12,600; @ ㊤ ㊤; ㊤ Kyoto City bus 205 to Furitsudaigaku-mae, ㊤ Karasuma line to Kitaōji) There is a lot to appreciate about this fine foreigner-friendly ryokan in the northern part of town: there is a nice little garden; it's entirely nonsmoking; and the rooms are clean and simple. Meals aren't served, but staff can provide you with a good map of local eateries. The downside is the somewhat out-of-the-way location.

Tōyoko Inn Kyoto Gojō Karasuma

HOTEL ¥¥

(東横INN京都五条烏丸; Map p290; ☎ 344-1045; www.toyoko-inn.com/hotel/00040/; Gojō Karasuma-chō 393, Karasuma-dōri, Matsubara-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; s/tw incl breakfast from ¥6804/10,044; @; ㊤ Karasuma line to Gojō) Those familiar with the Tōyoko Inn chain know that this hotel brand specialises in simple, clean, fully equipped but small rooms at the lowest price possible. There are all kinds of extras: free breakfast, free telephone calls inside Japan, and reduced rates on rental cars. Staff will even lend you a laptop if you need to check your email.

It's a little south of the city centre, but easily accessed by subway from Kyoto Station.

Citadines Karasuma-Gojō Kyoto

HOTEL ¥¥¥

(シタディーン京都 烏丸五条; Map p290; ☎ 352-8900; www.citadines.jp/kyoto; Matsuya-chō 432, Gojō-dōri, Karasuma higashi-iru, Shimogyō-ku; tw/d from ¥28,600; @; ㊤ Karasuma line to Gojō) On Gojō-dōri, a bit south of the main downtown district, but within easy walking distance of the Karasuma subway line (as well as the Keihan line), this serviced apartment-hotel is a welcome addition to the Kyoto accommodation scene. The kitchens allow you to do your own cooking and other touches make you feel right at home.

Southern Higashiyama**JAM Hostel Kyoto Gion**

GUESTHOUSE ¥

(JAM ジャムホステル京都祇園; Map p296; ☎ 201-3374; www.jamhostel.com; 170 Tokiwa-chō, Higashiyama-ku; dm per person ¥2000-4000; ㊤ Keihan line to Gion Shijō) This new guesthouse boasts a convenient location on the

edge of Gion and a sake bar downstairs that is a convivial place for guests to mix with local regulars. There are a variety of simple but clean dorm rooms and shared bathing facilities.

Gion Apartments

APARTMENT ¥¥

(ザギオンアパートメント; Map p300; www.thegionapartments.com/home; Yamatooji-dōri, Gojo-agaru, Higashiyama-ku; apt per night from ¥12,000; ☎; 国 Keihan line to Kiyomizu-Gojo) This is a collection of several well-maintained apartments on the south end of Gion. Each of the apartments has a kitchenette, laundry facilities and private shower/bath. The apartments are within walking distance of Gion, downtown Kyoto and the Southern Higashiyama tourist district.

Ryokan Uemura

RYOKAN ¥¥

(旅館うえむら; Map p300; ☎ fax 561-0377; Ishibe-kōji, Shimogawara, Higashiyama-ku; r incl breakfast per person ¥10,000; ☎; 国 Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui) This beautiful little ryokan is at ease with foreign guests. It's on a quaint, quiet cobblestone alley, just down the hill from some of Kyoto's most important sights. The owner prefers bookings by fax and asks that cancellations also be made by fax – with so few rooms, it can be costly when bookings are broken without notice.

Book well in advance, as there are only three rooms. There's a 10pm curfew.

★Hyatt Regency Kyoto

HOTEL ¥¥¥

(ハイアットリージェンシー京都; Map p300; ☎ 541-1234; www.kyoto.regency.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html; 644-2 Sanjūsangendō-mawari, Higashiyama-ku; r from ¥28,512; ☎ @ ☎; 国 Keihan line to Shichijō) The Hyatt Regency is an excellent, stylish and foreigner-friendly hotel at the southern end of Kyoto's Southern Higashiyama sightseeing district. Many travellers consider this the best hotel in Kyoto. The staff are extremely efficient and helpful (there are even foreign staff members – a rarity in Japan). The on-site restaurants and bar are excellent.

The stylish rooms and bathrooms have lots of neat touches. The concierges are knowledgeable about the city and they'll even lend you a laptop to check your email if you don't have your own.

Shiraume Ryokan

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(白梅; Map p300; ☎ 561-1459; www.shiraume-kyoto.jp/index_en.html; Gion Shimbashi, Shirakawa hotori, Shijōnawate-agaru, higashi-iru, Higashiyama-ku; r per person incl 2 meals ¥23,760-37,800;

KYOTO'S BEST RYOKAN

Tawaraya (p323) A serene haven in the heart of the city, this ryokan is often rated the best in Japan.

Hiiragiya Ryokan (p323) With a beautiful new wing and a *wabi-sabi* old wing, Hiiragiya offers the classic ryokan experience.

Seikōrō An elegant ryokan near the river with rates within the range of mere mortals.

Shiraume Ryokan A boutique ryokan in the heart of Gion with a loyal following of discerning guests.

per person incl breakfast only ¥16,200-27,000; @; 国 Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Looking out over the Shirakawa Canal in Shimbashi, a lovely street in Gion, this ryokan offers excellent location, atmosphere and service. The decor is traditional with a small inner garden and nice wooden bathtubs. This is a great spot to sample the Japanese ryokan experience.

Gion Hatanaka

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(祇園畑中; Map p300; ☎ 541-5315; www.thehatanaka.co.jp/english/; Yasaka-jinja Minami-mon mae, Higashiyama-ku; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥25,000; ☎ ☎; 国 Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui) Gion Hatanaka is a fine ryokan right in the heart of the Southern Higashiyama sightseeing district (less than a minute's walk from Yasaka-jinja). Despite being fairly large, it manages to retain an intimate and private feeling. In addition to bathtubs in each room, there is a huge wooden communal bath. The rooms are clean, well designed and relaxing.

This ryokan offers regularly scheduled geisha entertainment that nonguests are welcome to join.

Seikōrō

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(晴鴨楼; Map p300; ☎ 561-0771; http://ryokan.asia/seikoro; 467 Nishi Tachibana-chō, 3 chō-me, Toyamachi-dōri, Gojō-sagaru, Higashiyama-ku; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥21,600; ☎ @ ☎; 国 Keihan line to Kiyomizu-Gojō) The Seikōrō is a classic ryokan with a grandly decorated lobby. It's fairly spacious, with excellent, comfortable rooms, attentive service and a fairly convenient midtown location. Several rooms look over gardens and all have private bathrooms.

Motonago

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(旅館元奈古; Map p300; ☎ 561-2087; www.motonago.com/en/top.html; 511 Washio-chō, Kōdajimichi, Higashiyama-ku; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥18,367; ☎ @ ☎; ☑ Kyoto City bus 206 to Gion) This ryokan may have the best location of any in the city, and it hits all the right notes for one in this class: classic Japanese decor, friendly service, nice bathtubs and a few small Japanese gardens.

Gion House

RENTAL HOUSE ¥¥¥

(ザ祇園ハウス; Map p300; ☎ 353-8282; www.thegionhouse.com; 563-12 Komatsu-chō, Higashiyama-ku; per night from ¥23,000; ☎; ☑ Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui, ☑ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) This beautifully decorated traditional Japanese house stands right on the edge of Gion and would make the perfect getaway for those seeking something other than a run-of-the-mill hotel. It's spacious and comfortable, and there's everything you need to take care of yourselves for a few days in the old capital.

Sakara Kyoto

INN ¥¥¥

(桜香楽; Map p300; http://sakarakyoto.com; 541-2 Furukawa-chō, Higashiyama-ku; r ¥11,000-25,000; @ ☎; ☑ Tōzai line to Higashiyama) This modern Japanese-style inn is conveniently located in a covered pedestrian shopping arcade just south of Sanjō-dōri, about 50m from Higashiyama subway station. It's great for couples and families, and rooms can accommodate up to five people. Each room has bath/shower, kitchenette and laundry facilities. Reservation is by email only.

Northern Higashiyama**★ Westin Miyako Kyoto**

HOTEL ¥¥¥

(ウェスティン都ホテル京都; Map p306; ☎ 771-7111; www.miyakohotels.ne.jp/westinkyoto; Keage, Sanjō-dōri, Higashiyama-ku; d/tw from ¥16,200, Japanese-style r from ¥18,360; ☎ @ ☎ ☎; ☑ Tōzai line to Keage, exit 2) This grande dame of Kyoto hotels overlooks the Higashiyama sightseeing district (meaning it's one of the best locations for sightseeing in Kyoto). Rooms are clean and well maintained, and staff are at home with foreign guests. Rooms on the north side have great views over the city to the Kitayama mountains.

There is a fitness centre, as well as a private garden and walking trail. The hotel even has its own ryokan section for those who want to try staying in a ryokan without giving up the convenience of a hotel.

Koto Inn

RENTAL HOUSE ¥¥¥

(古都イン; Map p300; ☎ 751-2753; koto.inn@gmail.com; 373 Horiike-chō, Higashiyama-ku; per night from ¥15,000; ☎ @ ☎; ☑ Tōzai line to Higashiyama) Conveniently located near the Higashiyama sightseeing district, this vacation rental is good for families, couples and groups who want a bit of privacy. It's got everything you need and is decorated with lovely Japanese antiques. While the building is traditionally Japanese, all the facilities are fully modernised.

Kyoto Garden Ryokan Yachiyo

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(旅館八千代; Map p306; ☎ 771-4148; www.ryokan-yachiyo.com; 34 Fukuchi-chō, Nanzen-ji, Sakyō-ku; r per person incl 2 meals ¥18,900-42,000; ☎ ☎; ☑ Tōzai line to Keage, exit 2) Located just down the street from Nanzen-ji, this large ryokan is at home with foreign guests. Rooms are spacious and clean, and some look out over private gardens. English-speaking staff are available.

Northwest Kyoto and Arashiyama & Sagano Area**Utano Youth Hostel**

HOSTEL ¥

(宇多野ユースホステル; Map p311; ☎ 462-2288; http://yh-kyoto.or.jp/utano/index.html; Nakayama-chō 29, Uzumasa, Ukyō-ku; dm/tw per person ¥3300/4000; ☑ Kyoto City bus 26 to Yūsu-Hosuteru-mae) The best hostel in Kyoto, Utano is friendly and well organised and makes a convenient base for the sights of northwest Kyoto (but keep in mind that it's a hike to reach any other part of town). If you want to skip the hostel food, turn left along the main road to find several coffee shops offering cheap *teishoku* (set-course meals). There is a 10pm curfew.

Shunkō-in

TEMPLE LODGE ¥

(春光院; Map p311; ☎ 462-5488; rev.taka.kawakami@gmail.com; Myōshinji-chō 42, Hanazono, Ukyō-ku; per person ¥4000-5000; @; ☑ JR Sagano/San-in line to Hanazono) This is a *shukubō* (temple lodging) at a subtemple in Myōshinji. It's very comfortable and quiet and the main priest here speaks fluent English. For an extra ¥1000 you can try Zen meditation and go on a guided tour of the temple. Being in the temple at night is a very special experience.

Hoshinoya Kyoto

RYOKAN ¥¥¥

(星のや京都; Map p313; ☎ 871-0001; http://kyoto.hoshinoya.com/en; Arashiyama Genrokuzan-chō 11-2, Nishikyō-ku; r per person incl meals from

¥70,296; 京都バス28番 京都駅 → Arashiyama-Tenryūji-mae, JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) Sitting in a secluded area on the south bank of the Hozu-gawa in Arashiyama (upstream from the main sight-seeing district), this modern take on the classic Japanese inn is quickly becoming a favourite of well-heeled visitors to Kyoto in search of privacy and a unique experience. Rooms feature incredible views of the river and the surrounding mountains.

The best part is the approach: you'll be chauffeured by a private boat from a dock near Togetsu-kyō bridge to the inn (note that on days following heavy rains, you'll have to go by car instead). This is easily one of the most unique places to stay in Kyoto.

✈️ Kansai Airport

Hotel Nikkō Kansai Airport

HOTEL ¥¥

(ホテル日航関西空港; ☎072-455-1111; www.nikkokix.com; Senshū Kūkō Kita 1, Izumisano-shi, Osaka-fu; s/tw/d from ¥9500/11,000/14,500; 24時間; JR Haruka Airport Express to Kansai Airport) The only hotel at the airport is the excellent Hotel Nikkō Kansai Airport, connected to the main terminal building by a pedestrian bridge (you can even bring your luggage trolleys right to your room). The rooms here are in good condition, spacious and comfortable enough for brief stays.

🍴 Eating

Kyoto is a great place to explore Japanese cuisine and you'll find good restaurants regardless of your budget. If you tire of Japanese food, there are also plenty of excellent international restaurants to choose from. You'll find the thickest concentration of eateries in downtown Kyoto, but also great choices in Southern Higashiyama/Gion and in and around Kyoto Station.

Because Kyoto gets a lot of foreign travellers, you'll find a surprising number of English menus and most places are quite comfortable with foreign guests.

✈️ Kyoto Station Area

The new Kyoto Station building is chock-a-block with restaurants, and if you find yourself anywhere near the station around mealtime, this is probably your best bet in terms of variety and price.

There are several food courts scattered about the station building. The best of these

can be found on the 11th floor on the west side of the building: the **Cube** (ザ キューブ; Map p294; ☎371-2134; 11F Kyoto Station Bldg, Karasuma-dōri, Shioikōji-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☺11am-10pm; 5) Karasuma line to Kyoto, JR Tōkaidō main line to Kyoto) food court and Isetan department store's **Eat Paradise** (イートパラダイス; Map p294; ☎352-1111; 11F Kyoto Station Bldg, Karasuma-dōri, Shioikōji-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☺11am-10pm; 京都駅) food court. In Eat Paradise, we like Tonkatsu Wako for *tonkatsu* (deep-fried pork cutlets), Tenichi for sublime tempura, and Wakuden for approachable *kaiseki* fare. To get to these food courts, take the west escalators from the main concourse all the way up to the 11th floor and look for Cube on your left and Eat Paradise straight in front of you.

Other options in the station include **Kyoto Rāmen Kōji** (京都拉麵小路; Map p294; ☎361-4401; 10F Kyoto Station Bldg, Karasuma-dōri, Shioikōji-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; rāmen ¥700-1000; ☺11am-10pm; 京都駅), a group of seven *rāmen* (noodles in broth) restaurants on the 10th floor. Buy tickets from the machines, which don't have English but have pictures on the buttons. In addition to *rāmen*, you can get green-tea ice cream and other Japanese desserts at Chasen, and *tako-yaki* (grilled octopus dumplings) at Miyako.

About five minutes' walk north of the station, Yodobashi Camera (p343) has a wide selection of restaurants on the 6th floor, and an international supermarket with lots of takeaway items on the B2 floor.

✈️ Downtown Kyoto

Downtown Kyoto has the best variety of approachable Japanese and international restaurants.

★ Ippūdō

RĀMEN ¥

(一風堂; Map p296; ☎213-8800; Higashinotō-in, Nishikōji higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; rāmen ¥750-950; ☺11am-2am; 24時間; 5) Karasuma line to Shijō) There's a reason that there's usually a line outside this *rāmen* joint at lunchtime: the *rāmen* is awesome and the bite-sized *gyōza* (Chinese dumplings) are to die for. We recommend the *gyōza* set meal (¥750 or ¥850 depending on your choice of *rāmen*). It's on Nishiki-dōri, next to a post office and diagonally across from a Starbucks.

Saryo Zen Cafe

CAFE ¥

(茶寮「然」カフェ; Map p298; Zenkashoin Kyoto Muromachi Store, 271-1 Takoyakushi-chō,

Muromachi-dōri, Nijō-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; drinks from ¥1000; ☺10am-7pm, closed 2nd & 4th Mon; ㊤; ㊦ Karasuma or Tōzai line to Karasuma-Oike) This brilliant modern tea room is a great place for a break – a break from sightseeing and a break from the international coffee chains that are taking over the city. You can enjoy a cup of *matcha* (powdered green tea) here served with a delicious Kyoto sweet, all in extremely comfortable surroundings.

Kerala

INDIAN ♣

(ケララ; Map p296; ㊤251-0141; 2nd fl, KUS Bldg, Kawaramachi-dōri, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥850/2500; ☺11.30am-2pm & 5-9pm; ㊤ ㊦; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This narrow restaurant upstairs on Kawaramachi-dōri is Kyoto's best Indian restaurant. The ¥850 lunch set menu is an excellent deal, as is the vegetarian lunch, and the English menu is a bonus. Dinners run closer to ¥2500 per head and are of very high quality. Finish off the meal with the incredibly rich and creamy coconut ice cream.

Café Bibliotec Hello!

CAFE ♣

(カフェブリオティックハロー!; Map p298; ㊤231-8625; 650 Seimei-chō, Nijō-dōri, Yanaginobanba higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; meals from ¥1000, coffee ¥450; ☺11.30am-midnight; ㊤; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) As the name suggests, books line the walls of this cool cafe located in a converted *machiya* (traditional Japanese town house). You can get the usual range of coffee and tea drinks here, as well as light cafe lunches. It's popular with young ladies who work nearby and it's a great place to relax with a book or magazine. Look for the plants out the front.

Nishiki Warai

OKONOMIYAKI ♣

(錦わらい; Map p296; ㊤257-5966; 1st fl, Mizukōto Bldg, 597 Nishiuoya-chō, Nishikikōji-dōri, Takakura nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; okonomiyaki from ¥680; ☺11.30am-midnight; ㊤; ㊦ Karasuma line to Shijō, ㊦ Hankyū line to Karasuma) This Nishiki-dōri restaurant is a great place to try *okonomiyaki* (Japanese pancakes) in casual surroundings. It can get a little smoky, but it's a fun spot to eat. It serves sets from as little as ¥680 at lunch. It's about 20m west of the west end of Nishiki Market; look for the English sign in the window.

Karafuneya Coffee Sanjō Honten

CAFE ♣

(からふねや珈琲三条本店; Map p296; ㊤254-8774; 39 Daikoku-chō, Kawaramachi-dōri, Sanjō-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; meals from ¥900; ☺9am-1am; ㊤; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, ㊦ Keihan line

to Sanjō) This casual coffee and dessert shop, downtown on Kawaramachi-dōri, is in the middle of Kyoto's main shopping district. It's a great spot for a pick-me-up during a day of retail therapy.

Japan is famous for its plastic food models, but this place takes them to a whole new level – it's like some futuristic dessert museum. We like the centrepiece of the display: the mother of all sundaes that goes for ¥10,000 to ¥18,000 and requires advance reservation to order. Lesser mortals can try the tasty *matcha* parfait for ¥780 or any of the cafe drinks and light meals on offer.

Biotei

VEGETARIAN ♣

(びお亭; Map p296; ㊤255-0086; 2nd fl, M&I Bldg, 28 Umetada-chō, Sanjō-dōri, Higashinotōin nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; lunch from ¥860; ☺lunch & dinner, closed Sun, Mon, dinner Thu & lunch Sat; ㊤ ㊦; ㊦ Tōzai or Karasuma lines to Karasuma-Oike) Located diagonally across from the Nakagyō post office, this is a favourite of Kyoto vegetarians and has an English menu. It serves daily sets of Japanese vegetarian food (the occasional bit of meat is offered as an option, but you'll be asked your preference). The seating is cramped but the food is very good and carefully made from quality ingredients.

Honke Tagoto

NOODLES ♣

(本家田毎; Map p296; ㊤221-3030; 12 Ishibashi-chō, Sanjō-dōri, Kawaramachi Nishi iru, Nakagyō-ku; noodle dishes from ¥840; ☺11am-9pm; ㊤; ㊦ Tōzai Line to Kyoto Shiyakusho-mae) One of Kyoto's oldest *soba* restaurants makes a good break for those who have overdone on *rāmen*. It's in the Sanjō covered arcade and you can see inside to the tables.

Rāmen Kairikiya

RĀMEN ♣

(ラーメン魁力屋; Map p296; ㊤251-0303; 1st fl, Hijikata Bldg, 435-2 Ebisu-chō, Kawaramachi-dōri, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; rāmen from ¥650; ☺11am-3am; ㊤; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) Not far from the Sanjō-Kawaramachi intersection, this popular *rāmen* specialist welcomes foreigners with an English menu and friendly staff. It's got several types of *rāmen* to choose from and tasty sets that include items like fried rice, fried chicken or *gyōza*, all for about ¥950.

Tsukimochiya Naomasa

SWEETS ♣

(月餅家 直正; Map p296; ㊤231-0175; 530 Kamiōsaka-chō, Kiyamachi-dōri, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; tsukimochi ¥150; ☺9.30am-7pm, closed Thu; ㊦ Keihan line to Sanjō) This classic old sweet shop, about 50m north of San-

jō-dōri on Kiyamachi-dōri, is a great place to get acquainted with traditional Kyoto sweets. Just point at what looks good and staff will wrap it up nicely for you. There's no English sign; look for the traditional Kyoto exterior and the sweets in the window. It's closed on the third Wednesday of the month.

Ootoya

(大戸屋; Map p296; ☎255-4811; 2nd fl, Goshoame Bldg, Sanjō-dōri, Kawaramachi higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; meals from ¥480; ☀11am-11pm; ㊦Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, ㊧Keihan line to Sanjō) Ootoya is a clean, modern Japanese restaurant that serves a range of standard Japanese dishes at bargain-basement prices. It's popular with Kyoto students and young office workers. The large picture menu makes ordering a breeze. Look for the English sign, then climb a flight of steps.

Musashi Sushi

(寿しのむさし; Map p296; ☎222-0634; Kawaramachi-dōri, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; all plates ¥140; ☀11am-10pm; ㊦; ㊦Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, ㊧Keihan line to Sanjō) If you've never tried a *kaiten-sushi* (conveyor-belt sushi restaurant), don't miss this place – all the dishes are a mere ¥140. It's not the best sushi in the world, but it's cheap, reliable and fun. Needless to say, it's easy to eat here: you just grab what you want off the conveyor belt.

Kyōgoku Kane-yo

(京極かねよ; Map p296; ☎221-0669; 456 Matsugaechō, Rokkaku, Shinkyōgoku higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; unagi over rice from ¥1200; ☀11.30am-9pm; ㊦; ㊦Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This is a good place to try *unagi* (eel), that most sublime of Japanese dishes. You can choose to either sit downstairs with a nice view of the waterfall, or upstairs on the tatami. The *kane-yo donburi* (eel over rice; ¥1200) set is excellent value. Look for the barrels of live eels outside and the wooden facade.

Tsukiji Sushisei

(築地寿司清; Map p296; ☎252-1537; 581 Obiya-chō, Takakura-dōri, Nishikikōji-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; sushi sets ¥1296-3150; ☀11.30am-3pm & 5-10pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-10pm Sat, Sun & holidays; ㊦; ㊦Karasuma line to Shijō) On the basement floor, next to Daimaru department store, this simple sushi restaurant serves excellent sushi. You can order a set or just point at what looks good. You can see inside the restaurant from street level, so it should be easy to spot.

Ganko

(がんどこ; Map p296; ☎255-1128; 101 Nakajima-chō, Sanjō-dōri, Kawaramachi higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; lunch ¥1000-2500, dinner around ¥5000; ☀11am-11pm; ㊦; ㊦Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae or Sanjō Keihan, ㊧Keihan line

KYOTO SPECIALITIES

Tofu Kyoto's famously good groundwater and preponderance of Buddhist monks (who were, at least historically, vegetarian) make Kyoto's tofu the most revered in Japan. You'll find it in restaurants across the city, but to see the full range of what can be done with it, try **Tōsuirō** (豆水楼; Map p306; ☎251-1600; Kiyamachi-dōri, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; lunch/dinner ¥2000/5000; ☀11.30am-2pm & 5-9.30pm Mon-Sat, noon-8.30pm Sun; ㊦Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae).

Kyō-wagashi In a city where the cuisine carefully echoes the four seasons and the tea ceremony is practised with all the ardour of a religion, it's not surprising that sweets have achieved an incredible level of sophistication and variety. Try some seasonal favourites at places such as Kagizen Yoshifusa (p335), Saryo Zen Cafe (p331) or Tsukimochiya Naomasa.

Kyō-kaiseki *Kaiseki* is arguably the most refined cuisine in the world, and the Kyoto version, *kyō-kaiseki*, is the pinnacle of the art. Indeed, there's no finer place on earth to sample this superb fare than in Kyoto, as the entire city acts as part of the experience. Some of the city's great temples of *kaiseki* include Kikunoi (p336), Roan Kikunoi (p334) and Kitcho Arashiyama (p338).

Mitarashi dango Small dumplings of rice flour on skewers covered with a sweet sauce, these typical Kyoto snacks are the perfect way to power yourself through an afternoon of sightseeing. You'll see them on sale near popular temples and shrines and in Nishiki Market (p294).

to Sanjō) This giant four-storey dining hall is part of Kansai's biggest sushi chain. The ground floor is the sushi area (you can order non-sushi dishes here as well); it has a long sushi counter and plenty of tables (and room for a stroller if you have tots in tow). It's very popular with both tourists and locals.

mumokuteki cafe

VEGETARIAN ¥¥

(ムモクテキカフェ; Map p296; www.mumokuteki.com/cafe/index_e.html; 2nd fl, Human Forum Bldg, 351 Iseya-chō, Gokomachi-dōri, Rokkaku-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; meals from ¥1500; ☺ 11.30am-10pm; ☺ ㊦ ㊧; ㊨ Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) This vegetarian cafe hidden above a shop in the Teramachi shopping arcade is a lifesaver for many Kyoto vegetarians. The food is tasty, varied and served in casual surroundings. Most of it is vegan, but non-vegan options are clearly marked on the menu. It's hidden up a flight of steps above a clothing shop called Spinnis.

The steps up to the restaurant are located inside the shop.

Tagoto Honten

KAISEKI ¥¥

(田ごと本店; Map p296; ㊦ 221-1811; 34 Otabi-chō, Shijō-dōri, Kawaramachi nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥1600/3400; ☺ lunch 11am-3pm, dinner 4.30-9pm; ㊦; ㊨ Keihan line to Shijō, Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) Across the street from Takashimaya department store, this longstanding Kyoto restaurant serves approachable *kaiseiki* fare in a variety of rooms, both private and common. Its *kiku* set (¥2000) includes some sashimi, a bit of tempura and a variety of other nibbles. *Kaiseiki* dinner courses start at ¥6480 and you must make reservations in advance.

★Roan Kikunoi

KAISEKI ¥¥¥

(露庵菊乃井; Map p296; ㊦ 361-5580; http://kikunoi.jp/english/store/roan/; 118 Saito-chō, Kiyamachi-dōri, Shijō-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥4000/10,000; ☺ 11.30am-1.30pm & 5-8.30pm; ☺ ㊦; ㊨ Hankyū line to Kawaramachi, Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Roan Kikunoi is a fantastic place to experience the wonders of *kaiseiki* cuisine. It's a clean, intimate space located right downtown. The chef takes an experimental and creative approach to *kaiseiki* and the results are a wonder for the eyes and palate. It's highly recommended. Reserve through your hotel or ryokan concierge.

★Yoshikawa

TEMPURA ¥¥¥

(吉川; Map p296; ㊦ 221-5544; www.kyoto-yoshikawa.co.jp/; Tominokōji, Oike-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku;

lunch ¥3000-25,000, dinner ¥6000-25,000; ☺ 11am-2pm & 5-8.30pm; ㊦; ㊨ Tōzai line to Karasuma-Oike or Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This is the place to go for delectable tempura. It offers table seating, but it's much more interesting to sit and eat around the small counter and observe the chefs at work. It's near Oike-dōri in a fine traditional Japanese-style building. Reservation required for tatami room; counter and table seating unavailable on Sunday.

Shunsai Tempura Arima

TEMPURA ¥¥¥

(旬菜天ぶら 有馬; Map p290; ㊦ 344-0111; 572 Sanno-chō, Muromachi-dōri, Takatsujī-agaru, Simogyō-ku; meals from ¥5000; ☺ 11.30am-2pm & 5.30-10.30pm, closed Thu; ㊦; ㊨ Karasuma line to Shijō) Tempura is one of Japan's most divine dishes and this friendly downtown restaurant is a great place to try it. It's a tiny family-run joint that is at home with foreign guests. The English-language menus and set meals make ordering a breeze. It's on a corner with a small English sign.

Mishima-tei

JAPANESE ¥¥¥

(三嶋亭; Map p296; ㊦ 221-0003; 405 Sakurano-chō, Teramachi-dōri, Sanjō-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; sukiyaki lunch/dinner from ¥9500/12,700; ☺ 11.30am-10pm, closed Wed; ㊦; ㊨ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This is an inexpensive place to sample sukiyaki. The quality of the meat here is very high, which is hardly surprising when you consider there is a butcher right downstairs. There is an English menu and a discount for foreign travellers! It's in the intersection of the Sanjō and Teramachi covered arcades.

Kiyamachi Sakuragawa

KAISEKI ¥¥¥

(木屋町 櫻川; Map p296; ㊦ 255-4477; Kiyamachi-dōri, Nijō-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; lunch/dinner sets from ¥5000/10,000; ☺ 11.30am-2pm & 5-9pm, closed Sun; ㊨ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This elegant restaurant on a scenic stretch of Kiyamachi-dōri is an excellent place to try *kaiseiki*. The modest but fully satisfying food is beautifully presented and it's a joy to watch the chef in action. The warmth of the reception adds to the quality of the food. Reservations are recommended and smart casual is the way to go here.

✂ Central Kyoto

★Papa Jon's

CAFE ¥

(パパジョンズカフェ 本店; Map p298; ㊦ 415-2655; 642-4 Shokokuji-chō, Karasuma-dōri, Kamidachiuri higashi-iru, Kamigyō-ku; lunch from ¥850; ☺ 10am-9pm, closed irregularly; ☺ ㊦; ㊨ Kara-

suma line to Imadegawa) A three-minute walk from the north border of the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park, this clean, well-lit place serves brilliant New York cheesecake and great coffee drinks. Other menu items include pizza, homemade quiche, soup and tasty salads. Paintings by local artists are on display. It's a great lunch stop in Central Kyoto.

Bon Bon Café

CAFE ♡

(ボンボンカフェ; Map p298; ☎213-8686; Kawaramachi, Imadegawa, Higashi-iru, Kita-gawa, Kamigyō-ku; coffee/sandwiches from ¥350/500; ☺11am-11pm; 西京線 to Demachianagi) If you find yourself in need of a light meal or drink while you're in the Demachianagi area, this casual open-air cafe is an excellent choice. There is a variety of cakes and light meals on offer. It's on the west bank of the Kamo-gawa and outdoor seats here are very pleasant on warm evenings.

☞ Southern Higashiyama

Kasagi-ya

TEAHOUSE ♡

(かさぎ屋; Map p300; ☎561-9562; 349 Masuya chō, Kōdai-ji, Higashiyama-ku; tea & sweets from ¥600; ☺11am-6pm, closed Tue; 西; 西 Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui) At Kasagi-ya, on Sannen-zaka near Kiyomizu-dera, you can enjoy a nice cup of *matcha* (powdered green tea) and a variety of sweets. This funky old wooden shop has atmosphere to boot and friendly staff – which makes it worth the wait if there's a queue. It's hard to spot – you may have to ask one of the local shop owners.

Rakushō

CAFE ♡

(落匠; Map p300; ☎561-6892; 516 Washio-chō, Kodaijikitamon-dōri, Shimogawara higashi-iru, Higashiyama-ku; tea from ¥500; ☺9am-6pm, closed irregularly; 西; 西 Kyoto City bus 204 to Higashiyama-Yasui) This casual Japanese-style tea room on Nene-no-Michi in the heart of the Southern Higashiyama sightseeing district is well placed for a break while doing the main tourist route in this area. The real attraction is the small *koi* (Japanese carp) pond adjoining the tea room. The owner is a champion *koi* breeder and his fish are superb!

Café 3032

CAFE ♡

(カフェ サンゼロサンニ; Map p300; ☎531-8869; 102 Tatsumi-chō, Higashioji-dōri, Matsubara-agaru, Higashiyama-ku; light meals from ¥600; ☺8am-10pm, closed irregularly; 西; 西 Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui) This super-casual

cafe on Higashioji, just down the hill from the main Southern Higashiyama sightseeing district, is a great place for a light lunch or cuppa while exploring the area. There's an English menu and foreign visitors are welcomed. The fare includes sandwiches, curry, beer and coffee.

Kagizen Yoshifusa

TEAHOUSE ♡

(鍵善良房; Map p300; ☎561-1818; www.kagizen.co.jp/en/; 264 Gion machi, Kita-gawa, Higashiyama-ku; kuzukiri ¥900; ☺9.30am-6pm, closed Mon; 西; 西 Hankyū line to Kawaramachi, Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) This Gion institution is one of Kyoto's oldest and best-known *okashi-ya* (sweet shops). It sells a variety of traditional sweets and has a lovely tea room out the back where you can sample cold *kuzukiri* (transparent arrowroot noodles) served with a *kuro-mitsu* (sweet black sugar) dipping sauce, or just a nice cup of *matcha* and a sweet.

Rāmen Santōka

RĀMEN ♡

(らーめん山頭火; Map p300; ☎532-1335; http://santouka.co.jp/en/; Yamatoōji-dōri, Sanjō-sagaru Higashi gawa, Higashiyama-ku; rāmen from ¥770; ☺11am-2am Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun & national holidays; 西; 西 Tōzai line to Sanjō-Keihan, 西 Keihan line to Sanjō) The young chefs at this sleek restaurant dish out some seriously good Hokkaidō-style *rāmen* (noodles in a meat broth with meat and vegetables). You will be given a choice of three kinds of soup when you order: *shio* (salt), *shōyu* (soy sauce) or miso – we highly recommend you go for the miso soup.

Oshokujidokoro Asuka

SHOKUDŌ ♡

(お食事処明日香; Map p300; ☎751-1941; 144 Nishi-machi, Sanjō-dōri, Jingū-michi nishi-iru, Higashiyama-ku; meals from ¥850; ☺11am-11pm, closed Mon; 西; 西 Tōzai line to Higashiyama) With an English menu, and a staff of friendly Kyoto *mama-sans* who are at home with foreign customers, this is a great place for a cheap lunch or dinner while sightseeing in the Higashiyama area. The tempura *morī-awase* (assorted tempura set) is a big pile of tempura for only ¥1000. Look for the red lantern and pictures of the set meals.

Hisago

NOODLES ♡

(ひさご; Map p300; ☎561-2109; 484 Shimokawara-chō, Higashiyama-ku; meals from ¥900; ☺11.30am-7.30pm, closed Mon; 西; 西 Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui) If you need a quick meal while in the main Southern Higashiyama sightseeing district, this simple

noodle and rice restaurant is a good bet. It's within easy walking distance of Kiyomizudera and Maruyama-kōen. *Oyako-donburi* (chicken and egg over rice; ¥980) is the speciality of the house.

There is no English sign; look for the traditional front and the small collection of food models on display. In the busy seasons, there's almost always a queue outside.

Omen Kodai-ji

NOODLES ¥¥

(おめん 高台寺店; Map p300; ☎541-5007; 358 Masuya-chō, Kodaiji-dōri, Shimokawara higashi-iru, Higashiyama-ku; noodles from ¥1150, set menu ¥1800; ☺11am-9pm, closed irregularly; ☒ Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Yasui) This branch of Kyoto's famed Omen noodle chain is the best place to stop while exploring the Southern Higashiyama district. It's in a remodelled Japanese building with a light, airy feeling. The signature udon (thick white wheat noodles) are delicious and there are many other à la carte offerings.

Sobadokoro Shibazaki

NOODLES ¥¥

(そば処柴崎; Map p300; ☎525-3600; 4-190-3 Kiyomizu, Higashiyama-ku; soba from ¥1026; ☺11am-6pm, closed Tue except national holidays; ☒; ☒ Kyoto City bus 206 to Kiyomizu-michi, ☒ Keihan line to Kiyomizu-Gojō) For excellent *soba* noodles and well-presented tempura sets (among other things) in the Kiyomizudera area, try this comfortable and spacious restaurant. After your meal, head upstairs to check out the sublime collection of Japanese lacquerware. Look for the low stone wall and the *noren* curtains hanging in the entryway.

Ryūmon

CHINESE ¥¥

(龍門; Map p300; ☎752-8181; Sanjō-dōri, Higashiōji nishi-iru, Higashiyama-ku; dinner set from ¥3000; ☺5pm-5am; ☒ Tōzai line to Higashiyama or Sanjō-Keihan, ☒ Keihan line to Sanjō) This place may look like a total dive but the food is reliable and authentic, as the crowds of Kyoto's Chinese residents will attest. There's no English menu but there is a picture menu and some of the wait staff can speak English.

★ Kikunoi

KAISEKI ¥¥¥

(菊乃井; Map p300; ☎561-0015; <http://kikunoi.jp/english/store/>; 459 Shimokawara-chō, Yasakatoriimae-sagaru, Shimokawara-dōri, Higashiyama-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥4000/15,000; ☺noon-1pm & 5-8pm; ☺☒; ☒ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) This is one of Kyoto's true culinary temples, serving some of the finest *kaiseki* (Japanese haute cuisine) in the city. Located

in a hidden nook near Maruyama-kōen, this restaurant has everything necessary for the full over-the-top *kaiseki* experience, from setting, to service, to exquisitely executed cuisine, often with a creative twist. Reserve through your hotel or ryokan concierge.

✂ Northern Higashiyama

★ Goya

OKINAWAN ¥

(ゴーヤ; Map p306; ☎752-1158; 114-6 Nishida-chō, Jōdo-ji, Sakyō-ku; meals from ¥700; ☺noon-5pm & 6pm-midnight, closed Wed; ☒; ☒ Kyoto City bus 5 to Ginkakuji-michi) We love this Okinawan-style restaurant for its tasty food, stylish interior and comfortable upstairs seating. It's perfect for lunch while exploring northern Higashiyama and it's just a short walk from Ginkaku-ji. At lunch it serves simple dishes like *taco rice* (¥880) and *gōya champurū* (bitter melon stir-fry; ¥730), while dinners comprise a wide range of *izakaya* (Japanese pub) fare.

Kiraku

OKONOMIYAKI ¥

(きらく 三条本店; Map p306; ☎761-5780; 208 Nakanochō, Sanjō-Shirakawa, Higashiyama-ku; okonomiyaki from ¥1000; ☺11.30am-2pm & 5pm-midnight, closed Mon; ☒ Tōzai line to Higashiyama or Keage) This approachable and friendly *okonomiyaki* restaurant on Sanjō, close to Nanzen-ji and other popular Northern Higashiyama sights, is an excellent place to stop for lunch while exploring the area or for dinner after a long day of sightseeing. In addition to the usual *okonomiyaki* favourites, you'll find dishes like *gyōza* (Chinese dumplings) and *yaki-soba* (fried noodles).

Karako

RĀMEN ¥

(からこ; Map p306; ☎752-8234; 12-3 Tokusei-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku; *rāmen* from ¥650; ☺11.30am-2pm & 6pm-2am, to 1am Mon, closed Tue; ☒; ☒ Kyoto City bus 206 to Higashiyama-Nijō) Karako is our favourite *rāmen* (noodles in a meat broth with meat and vegetables) restaurant in Kyoto. While there's not much atmosphere, the *rāmen* is excellent – the soup is thick and rich and the *chāshū* (roast pork slices) melt in your mouth. We recommend that you ask for the *kotteri* (thick soup) *rāmen*. Look for the lantern outside.

Falafel Garden

ISRAELI ¥

(ファラフェルガーデン; Map p298; ☎712-1856; <http://www.falafelgarden.com/english/index.html>; 15-2 Kamiyanagi-chō, Tanaka, Sakyō-ku; falafel from ¥410; ☺11am-9.30pm; ☒; ☒ Keihan line to Demachiyana) This funky place near

Demachiyanaagi Station serves excellent falafel and a range of other dishes, as well as offering a set menu (from ¥1000). We like its open, relaxed feeling, but the main draw is those tasty falafels!

Hinode Udon

NOODLES ¥

(日の出うどん; Map p306; ☎751-9251; 36 Kitanobō-chō, Nanzenji, Sakyō-ku; noodles from ¥450; ☀11am-3.30pm, closed Sun, 1st & 3rd Mon, except for Apr & Nov; 📍; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Eikandō-michi) Filling noodle and rice dishes are served at this pleasant shop with an English menu. Plain *udon* (thick white wheat noodles) are only ¥500, but we recommend you spring for the *nabeyaki udon* (pot-baked *udon* in broth) for ¥950. This is a good lunch spot when temple-hopping in the Northern Higashiyama area.

Earth Kitchen Company

BENTŌ ¥

(あーすきっちゃんかんばんにー; Map p306; ☎771-1897; 9-7 Higashi Maruta-chō, Kawabata, Marutamachi, Sakyō-ku; lunch ¥735; ☀10.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, closed Sat & Sun; 📍; 🚶 Keihan line to Jingū-Marutamachi) 🍃 Located on Marutamachi-dōri near the Kamo-gawa, this tiny spot seats just two people but does a bustling business serving tasty takeaway lunch *bentō* (boxed meals). If you fancy a picnic lunch for your temple-hopping and the ease of an English menu, this is the place.

★Omen

NOODLES ¥¥

(おめん; Map p306; ☎771-8994; 74 Jōdo-ji Ishibashi-chō, Sakyō-ku; noodles from ¥1150; ☀11am-9pm, closed Thu & 1 other day a month; 📍; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 5 to Ginkakuji-michi) This elegant noodle shop is named after the thick white noodles that are served in broth with a selection of seven fresh vegetables. Just say *omen* and you'll be given your choice of hot or cold noodles, a bowl of soup to dip them in and a plate of vegetables (put these into the soup along with sesame seeds).

There's also an extensive à la carte menu. You can get a fine salad here, brilliant *tori sansho yaki* (chicken cooked with Japanese mountain spice), good tempura and occasionally a nice plate of sashimi. Best of all, there's an English menu. It's about five minutes' walk from Ginkaku-ji in a traditional Japanese house with a lantern outside. Highly recommended.

Au Temps Perdu

FRENCH ¥¥

(オ・タン・ペルデユ; Map p306; ☎762-1299; 64 Enshōji-chō, Okazaki, Sakyō-ku; food/drink from ¥1300/500; ☀closed Mon; 📍; 🚶 Tōzai line to Higashiyama) Overlooking the Shirakawa Canal, just across the street from the National Museum of Modern Art, this tiny indoor/outdoor French-style cafe offers some of the best people-watching in Northern Higashiyama. It's easy to pull a baby stroller up to these outdoor tables.

DEPARTMENT-STORE DINING

Yes, we know: the idea of dining in a department store sounds as appetising as dining in a gas station. However, Japanese department stores, especially those in large cities such as Tokyo and Kyoto, are loaded with good dining options. And, unlike many street-level shops, they're usually fairly comfortable with foreign diners (if there's any communication trouble, they can always call down to the bilingual staff at the information counter).

On their basement floors, you'll find *depachika* (from the English word 'department' and the Japanese word *chika*, which means 'underground'). A good *depachika* is like an Aladdin's cave of gustatory delights that rivals the best gourmet shops in any Western city. Meanwhile, on their upper floors, you'll usually find a *resutoran-gai* ('restaurant city') that includes restaurants serving all the Japanese standards – sushi, noodles, *tonkatsu*, tempura – along with a few international restaurants, usually French, Italian and Chinese.

If you're feeling peckish in downtown Kyoto, here are some good department-store-dining options:

Takashimaya (p343) This elegant department store has an incredible food floor (on the B1 level) and the best department store *resutoran-gai* in the city (on the 7th floor).

Daimaru (p344) On the north side of Shijō, between Kawaramachi and Karasuma streets, Daimaru has a food floor that rivals the one at Takashimaya (note the awesome Japanese sweets section) and a solid *resutoran-gai* on the 8th floor.

Northwest Kyoto and Arashiyama & Sagano Area

Komichi

CAFE ¥

(こみち; Map p313; ☎872-5313; 23 Ōjōin-chō, Nison-in Monzen, Saga, Ukyō-ku; matcha ¥650; ☺10am-5pm, closed Wed; 📍Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryū-ji-mae, 📍JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This friendly little teahouse is perfectly located along the Arashiyama tourist trail. In addition to hot and cold tea and coffee, it serves *uji kintoki* (shaved ice with sweetened green tea) in summer and a variety of light noodle dishes year-round. The picture menu helps with ordering. The sign is green and black on a white background.

Yoshida-ya

SHOKUDŌ ¥

(よしだや; Map p313; ☎861-0213; 20-24 Tsukurimichi-chō, Saga Tenryū-ji, Ukyō-ku; lunch from ¥650; ☺10.30am-5pm, closed Wed; 📍Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryū-ji-mae, 📍JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) This quaint and friendly little *teishoku-ya* (set-meal restaurant) is the perfect place to grab a simple lunch while in Arashiyama. All the standard *teishoku* favourites are on offer, including dishes such as *oyakodon* (egg and chicken over a bowl of rice; ¥900).

Arashiyama Yoshimura

NOODLES ¥¥

(嵐山よしむら; Map p313; ☎863-5700; Togetsu-kyō kita, Saga-Tenryū-ji, Ukyō-ku; soba dishes from ¥1080, set meals from ¥1600; ☺11am-5pm; 📍Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryū-ji-mae, 📍JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) For a tasty bowl of *soba* noodles and a million-dollar view over the Arashiyama mountains and the Togetsu-kyō bridge, head to this extremely popular eatery just north of the famous bridge, overlooking the Katsura-gawa. There's an English menu but no English sign; look for the big glass windows and the stone wall.

Shigetsu

VEGETARIAN, JAPANESE ¥¥

(篩月; Map p313; ☎882-9725; 68 Susukinobaba-chō, Saga-Tenryū-ji, Ukyō-ku; lunch sets incl temple admission ¥3500, ¥5500 & ¥7500; ☺11am-2pm; 📍Kyoto City bus 28 from Kyoto Station to Arashiyama-Tenryū-ji-mae, 📍JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama or Hankyū line to Arashiyama, change at Katsura) To sample *shōjin-ryōri* (Buddhist vegetarian cuisine), try Shigetsu

in the precincts of Tenryū-ji. This healthy fare has been sustaining monks for more than a thousand years in Japan, so it will probably get you through an afternoon of sightseeing, although carnivores may be left craving something. Shigetsu has beautiful garden views.

Kitcho Arashiyama

KAISEKI ¥¥¥

(吉兆嵐山本店; Map p313; ☎881-1101; www.kitcho.com/kyoto/shoplist_en/arashiyama/; 58 Susukinobaba-chō, Saga-Tenryū-ji, Ukyō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥36,750/42,000; ☺11.30am-3pm & 5-9pm, closed Wed; 📍JR Sagano/San-in line to Saga-Arashiyama) Considered one of the best *kaiseki* restaurants in Kyoto (and Japan, for that matter), Kitcho Arashiyama is the place to sample the full *kaiseki* experience. Meals are served in private rooms overlooking gardens. The food, service, explanations and atmosphere are all first rate. We suggest having a Japanese person call to reserve, or make a booking online via its website.

Ōhara

Seryō-Jaya

SHOKUDŌ ¥¥

(芹生茶屋; ☎744-2301; 24 Shorinin-chō, Ōhara, Sakyō-ku; lunch sets from ¥1000; ☺11am-5pm; 📍Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station to Ōhara) Just by the entry gate to Sanzen-in, Seryō-Jaya serves tasty *soba* noodles and other fare. There is outdoor seating in the warmer months. Look for the food models.

Kurama & Kibune

Visitors to Kibune from June to September should not miss the chance to cool down by dining at one of the picturesque restaurants beside the Kibune-gawa. Meals are served here on platforms (known as *kawa-doko*) suspended over the river, as cool water flows just underneath. Most of the restaurants offer some kind of lunch special for around ¥3000. For a full *kaiseki* dinner spread (¥5000 to ¥10,000), have a Japanese speaker call to reserve in advance. Be warned that restaurants in Kibune have been known to turn away solo diners.

Aburaya-Shokudō

SHOKUDŌ ¥

(鞍馬 油屋食堂; Map p319; ☎741-2009; 252 Honmachi, Kurama, Sakyō-ku; udon & *soba* from ¥600; ☺10.30am-4.30pm; 📍Eiden Eizan line from Demachyanagi to Kurama) Just down the steps from the main gate of Kurama-dera, this classic old-style *shokudō* (all-round restaurant) reminds us of what Japan was like be-

fore it got rich. The *sansai teishoku* (¥1750) is a delightful selection of vegetables, rice and *soba* topped with grated yam.

Kibune Club

CAFE ¥

(貴船俱樂部; Map p319; ☎741-3039; 76 Kibune-chō, Kurama, Sakyō-ku; coffee from ¥500; ☀11am-6pm; 📍; 🚶 Eiden Eizan line from Demachiyana-gi to Kibune-guchi) The exposed wooden beams and open, airy feel of this rustic cafe make it a great spot to stop for a cuppa while exploring Kibune. In winter it sometimes cranks up the wood stove, which makes the place rather cosy. It's easy to spot.

★Yōshūji

VEGETARIAN ¥¥

(雍州路; Map p319; ☎741-2848; 1074 Honmachi, Kurama, Sakyō-ku; meals from ¥1080; ☀10am-6pm, closed Tue; 📍; 🚶 Eiden Eizan line from Demachiyana-gi to Kurama) Yōshūji serves superb *shōjin-ryōri* in a delightful old Japanese farmhouse with an *irori* (open hearth). The house special, a sumptuous selection of vegetarian dishes served in red lacquered bowls, is called *kurama-yama shōjin zen* (¥2700). Or if you just feel like a quick bite, try the *uzu-soba* (*soba* topped with mountain vegetables; ¥1080).

You'll find it halfway up the steps leading to the main gate of Kurama-dera; look for the orange lanterns out the front.

Hirobun

JAPANESE ¥¥

(ひろ文; Map p319; ☎741-2147; 87 Kibune-chō, Kurama, Sakyō-ku; noodles from ¥1000, *kaiseki* courses from ¥8600; ☀11am-9pm; 🚶 Eiden Eizan line from Demachiyana-gi to Kibune-guchi) This is a good place to sample riverside or 'above-river' dining in Kibune. There's a friendly crew of women here who run the show and the food is quite good. Note that it does not accept solo diners for *kaiseki* courses (but you can have noodles). Look for the black-and-white sign and the lantern. Reserve for dinner.



Drinking & Nightlife

Kyoto has a great variety of bars, clubs and *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eateries), all of which are good places to meet Japanese folks. And if you happen to be in Kyoto in the summer, many hotels and department stores operate rooftop beer gardens with all-you-can-eat-and-drink deals and good views of the city.

In addition to the places listed here, all the top-end hotels listed in the Sleeping section have at least one good bar on the

premises. We particularly like Tōzan Bar at the Hyatt (p329).

★World Peace Love

CLUB

(ワールドピースラブ; Map p296; ☎213-4119; <http://world-kyoto.com/>; Basement, Imajium Bldg, 97 Shin-chō, Nishikiyamachi, Shijō-agaru, Shimogyō-ku; admission ¥2500-3000, drinks from ¥500; ☀8pm-1am, closed irregularly but usually Mon, Tue & Thu; 🚶 Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) World is Kyoto's largest club and it naturally hosts some of the biggest events. It has two floors, a dance floor and lockers where you can leave your stuff while you dance the night away. Events include everything from deep soul to reggae and techno to salsa.

Tadg's Gastro Pub

PUB

(ダイグ ガストロ パブ; Map p306; ☎213-0214; <http://tadgs.com>; 1st fl, 498 Kamikoriki-chō, Nakagyō-ku; drinks from around ¥500; ☀lunch & dinner until late, closed Wed; 🚶 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) Looking out on a particularly scenic stretch of Kiyamachi-dōri, Tadg's is a great place for a drink or two in the evening and you can choose from an extensive selection of craft beers, along with a variety of wines, sake and spirits. Seating is available, including an enclosed garden out the back for smokers.

Sama Sama

BAR

(**サマサマ; Map p296; ☎241-4100; 532-16 Kamiōsaka-chō, Kiyamachi, Sanjō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; drinks ¥600-700; ☀8pm-2am, closed Mon; 🚶 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This place seems like a very comfortable cave somewhere near the Mediterranean. Scoot up to the counter or make yourself at home on the floor cushions and enjoy a wide variety of drinks, some of them from Indonesia (like the owner). It's down an alley just north of Sanjō; the alley has a sign for Sukiyaki Komai Tei.

Gion Finlandia Bar

BAR

(ぎをん フィンランドディアバー; Map p300; ☎541-3482; 570-123 Gion-machi minamigawa, Higashiyama-ku, (Hanamikōji, Shijō-sagaru hitosuji-me nishi-iru minamigawa); per drink about ¥900; ☀6pm-3am; 🚶 Keihan Line to Gion-Shijō) This stylish Gion bar in an old geisha house is a great place for a civilised drink. The 1st floor is decorated with Finnish touches while the upstairs retains a Japanese feeling, with sunken floors and tatami mats. Admission is ¥500 and you can expect to pay around ¥3000 for a few drinks.

Sake Bar Yoramu

BAR

(酒バー よらむ; Map p296; ☎213-1512; www.sakebar-yoramu.com/index_eng.html; 35-1 Matsuya-chō, Nijō-dōri, Higashinotoin, higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; sake tasting sets from ¥1200; ☼6pm-midnight, closed Sun-Tue; ㊦ Karasuma or Tozai lines to Karasuma-Oike) Named for Yoramu, the Israeli sake expert who runs Sake Bar Yoramu, this bar is highly recommended for anyone after an education in sake. It's small and can only accommodate a handful of people. By day, it's a *soba* restaurant.

Bar K6

BAR

(バーK6; Map p306; ☎255-5009; 2nd fl, Le Valls Bldg, Nijō-dōri, Kiyamachi higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; drinks from around ¥600; ☼6pm-3am, to 5am Fri & Sat; ㊦ Tozai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae, ㊧ Keihan line to Jingu-Marutamachi) Overlooking one of the prettiest stretches of Kiyamachi-dōri, this upscale modern Japanese bar has a great selection of single malts and some of the best cocktails in town. There's even a local craft brew on offer. It's popular with well-heeled locals and travellers staying at some of the top-flight hotels nearby.

Gael Irish Pub

BAR

(ザガエルアイリッシュパブ; Map p300; ☎525-0680; 2nd fl, Ōto Bldg, Nijūikken-chō, Shijō-dōri, Yamatoōji-agaru, Higashiyama-ku; drinks from ¥500; ☼5pm-1am, later Thu-Sun; ㊧ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) A cosy little Irish bar on the doorstep of Gion. It offers good food, excellent beer and friendly staff, as well as occasional live music. It's a great place to meet local expats and see what's going on in town. It's up a flight of steps.

Rocking Bar ING

BAR

(ロック居酒屋ING; Map p296; ☎255-5087; www.kyotoingbar.com/; 2nd fl, Royal Bldg, 288 Minamikurayama-chō, Nishikiyamachi-dōri, Takoyakushi-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; drinks from ¥550; ☼6pm-2am Sun-Thu, to 5am Fri & Sat; ㊧ Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) This *izakaya*-cum-bar on Kiyamachi is one of our favourite spots for a drink in Kyoto. It offers cheap bar snacks (¥350 to ¥750) and drinks, good music and friendly staff. It's in the Royal building; you'll know you're getting close when you see all the hostesses out trawling for customers on the streets nearby.

Kick Up

BAR

(キックアップ; Map p306; ☎761-5604; Higashikomonoza-chō 331, Higashiyama-ku; drinks/food from ¥600/500; ☼7pm-midnight, closed Wed; ㊦ Tozai line to Keage) Located just across

the street from the Westin Miyako Kyoto, this wonderful bar attracts a regular crowd of Kyoto expats, local Japanese and guests from the Westin. It's subdued, relaxing and friendly.

Iketsuru Kajitsu

JUICE BAR

(池鶴果実; Map p296; ☎221-3368; Nishikikōji-dōri, Yanaginobanba higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; juice ¥450; ☼9am-6.30pm, closed Wed; ㊦ Karasuma line to Shijō, ㊧ Hankyū line to Karasuma) We love this fruit-juice specialist in Nishiki Market. In addition to all the usual favourites, it sometimes has durian on hand and can whip up a very unusual durian juice. Look for the fruit on display – it's on the south side of the market, a little east of Yanaginobanba-dōri.

Park Café

CAFE

(パークカフェ; Map p296; ☎211-8954; 1st fl, Gion Bldg, 340-1 Aneyakōji kado, Gokomachi-dōri, Nakagyō-ku; drinks from ¥450; ☼noon-11pm; ㊦ Tozai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This cool little cafe always reminds us of a Melbourne coffee shop. It's on the edge of the Downtown Kyoto shopping district and is a convenient place to take a break. The comfy seats invite a nice long linger over a cuppa and the owner has an interesting music collection.

Starbucks Kyoto Sanjō-Ōhashi

CAFE

(スターバックス京都三条大橋店; Map p306; ☎213-2326; 113 Nakajima-chō, Sanjō-dōri, Kawaramachi higashi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; coffee drinks from ¥300; ☼8am-11pm; ☼☼) This Starbucks branch makes a great meeting point when exploring downtown Kyoto. The free wi-fi is also super convenient (just make sure you register in advance online).

A Bar

IZAKAYA

(居酒屋A (あ); Map p296; ☎213-2129; www.a-bar.net/; 2nd fl, Reiho Kaikan, 366 Kamiya-chō, Nishikiyamachi-dōri, Shijō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; drinks from ¥350; ☼6pm-1am; ㊧ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō, Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) This is a raucous student *izakaya* with a log-cabin interior located in the Kiyamachi area. There's a big menu to choose from and everything's cheap (dishes ¥160 to ¥680). The best part comes when staff add up the bill – you'll swear they've undercharged you by half!

Metro

CLUB

(メトロ; Map p306; ☎752-4765; http://www.metro.ne.jp/; BF Ebisu Bldg, Kawabata-dōri, Marutamachi-sagaru, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥500-3000;

☺ about 7pm-3am; ㊦ Keihan line to Jingū-Marutamachi) Metro is part disco, part 'live house' (small concert hall) and it even hosts the occasional art exhibition. It attracts an eclectic mix of creative types and has a different theme nightly, so check ahead in *Kansai Scene* to see what's going on. Tourists are entitled to one free drink (bring your passport).

★ Entertainment

Most of Kyoto's cultural entertainment is of an occasional nature, and you'll need to check with the TIC or *Kansai Scene* to find out whether anything interesting coincides with your visit.

Geisha Dances & Entertainment

In the spring and autumn, Kyoto's geisha (or, properly speaking, *geiko* and *maiko*) perform fantastic dances, usually on seasonal themes. For a small additional fee, you can participate in a brief tea ceremony before the show. We *highly* recommend seeing one of these dances if you are in town when they are being held. Ask at the tourist information centre or at your lodgings for help with ticket purchases. Tour companies can also help with tickets.

★ Gion Odori

DANCE

(祇園をどり; Map p300; ㊦ 561-0224; Gion, Higashiyama-ku; admission/incl tea ¥3500/4000; ☺ shows 1.30pm & 4pm; ㊦ Kyoto City bus 206 to Gion) This is a quaint and charming geisha dance put on by the geisha of the Gion Higashi geisha district. It's held from 1 to 10 November at the **Gion Kaikan Theatre** (祇園会館), near Yasaka-jinja.

★ Miyako Odori

DANCE

(都をどり; Map p300; ㊦ 541-3391; www.miyako-odori.jp/english/; Gionkoku Kaburenjo, 570-2 Gionmachi-minamigawa, Higashiyama-ku; seat reserved/nonreserved/reserved incl tea ¥4200/2500/4800; ☺ shows 12.30pm, 2pm, 3.30pm & 4.50pm; ㊦ Kyoto City bus 206 to Gion, ㊦ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Presented by the Gion Kōbu geisha district, this is our favourite geisha dance in Kyoto. It's a real stunner and the colourful images will remain with you long after the curtain falls. It's held throughout April at the Gion Kōbu Kaburenjō Theatre, on Hanami-kōji, just south of Shijō-dōri.

Kamogawa Odori

DANCE

(鴨川をどり; Map p306; ㊦ 221-2025; Ponto-chō, Sanjō-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; normal/special seat/

special seat incl tea ¥2000/4000/4500; ☺ shows 12.30pm, 2.20pm & 4.10pm; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) Geisha dances from 1 to 24 May at Ponto-chō Kaburenjō Theatre in Ponto-chō.

Kitano Odori

DANCE

(北野をどり; ㊦ 461-0148; Imadegawa-dōri, Nishihonmatsu nishi iru, Kamigyō-ku; admission/with tea ¥4000/4500; ☺ shows 1.30pm & 4pm) At Kamishichiken Kaburenjō Theatre (上七軒歌舞練場), east of Kitano-Tenman-gū; 15 to 25 April.

Kyō Odori

DANCE

(京おどり; Map p300; ㊦ 561-1151; Miyagawachō Kaburenjo, 4-306 Miyagawasuji, Higashiyama-ku; seat reserved/nonreserved ¥4000/2000, incl tea plus ¥500; ☺ shows 12.30pm, 2.30pm & 4.30pm; ㊦ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Put on by the Miyagawa-chō geisha district, this wonderful geisha dance is among the most picturesque performances of the Kyoto year. It's held from the first to the third Sunday in April at the **Miyagawa-chō Kaburenjō Theatre** (宮川町歌舞練場), east of the Kamogawa between Shijō-dōri and Gojō-dōri.

Kyoto Cuisine & Maiko Evening

DANCE

(ぎおん畑中; Map p300; ㊦ 541-5315; www.kyotomaiko.jp; Hatanaka Ryokan, 505 Minamigawa, Gion-machi, Yasaka-jinja Minamimon-mae, Higashiyama-ku; per person ¥18,000; ☺ 6-8pm Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat; ㊦ Kyoto City bus 206 to Gion or Chionin-mae, ㊦ Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) If you want to witness geisha perform and then actually speak with them, one of the best opportunities is at Gion Hatanaka (p329), a Gion ryokan that offers a regularly scheduled evening of elegant Kyoto *kaiseki* food and personal entertainment by real Kyoto *geiko* (fully fledged geisha) and *maiko* (apprentice geisha).

Traditional Culture, Theatre & Music

Musical performances featuring the koto (13-stringed instrument played flat on the floor), *shamisen* (three-stringed, banjo-like instrument) and *shakuhachi* (Japanese bamboo flute) are held in Kyoto on an irregular basis. Traditional performances of *bugaku* (court music and dance) are often held at Kyoto shrines during festival periods. Occasionally contemporary *butō* dance is also performed in Kyoto. Check with the tourist information centre to see if any performances are scheduled to be held while you are visiting the city.

★ **Minami-za**

THEATRE

(南座; Map p296; ☎ 561-0160; www.kabuki-bito.jp/eng/contents/theatre/kyoto_minamiza.html; Shijō-Ōhashi, Higashiyama-ku; performances ¥4000-27,000; 📍 Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) The oldest kabuki theatre in Japan is the Minami-za theatre in Gion. The major event of the year is the **Kaomise festival** (1 to 26 December), which features Japan's finest kabuki actors. Other performances take place on an irregular basis – check with the TIC. The most likely months for performances are May, June and September.

★ **Kyoto Kanze Kaikan Nō Theatre**

THEATRE

(京都観世会館; Map p298; ☎ 771-6114; 44 Okazaki Enshoji-chō, Sakyō-ku; admission ¥3500-13,000; ☀ 9.30am-5pm, closed Mon; 📍 Tōzai line to Higashiyama) This is your best bet for performances of *nō*.

★ **Club Ōkitsu Kyoto**

JAPANESE CULTURE

(京都桜橋倶楽部「桜橋庵」; Map p298; ☎ 411-8585; www.okitsu-kyoto.com; 524-1 Mototsuchimikado-chō, Kamichōjamachi-dōri, Shinmachi higashi-iru, Kamigyō-ku; 📍 Karasuma line to Imadegawa) Ōkitsu provides an upmarket introduction to various aspects of Japanese culture including tea ceremony and the incense ceremony. The introduction is performed in an exquisite Japanese villa near the Kyoto Imperial Palace and participants get a real sense of the elegance and refinement of traditional Japanese culture.

It also offers kimono dressing upon request (note that kimono dressing is not offered alone: it must be part of a package including tea ceremony and/or incense ceremony).

★ **Gion Corner**

THEATRE

(ギオンコーナー; Map p300; ☎ 561-1119; www.kyoto-gioncorner.com/global/en.html; Yasaka Kaikan, 570-2 Gionmachi Minamigawa, Higashiyama-ku; admission ¥3150; ☀ performances nightly 6pm & 7pm, Fri, Sat & Sun only 1 Dec-2nd week Mar; 📍 Keihan line to Gion-Shijō) Gion Corner presents shows that include a bit of tea ceremony, koto music, ikebana (the art of flower arranging), *gagaku* (court music), *kyōgen* (ancient comic plays), *kyōmai* (Kyoto-style dance) and *bunraku* (classical puppet theatre). It's geared to a tourist market and is fairly pricey for what you get.

🛒 **Shopping**

The heart of Kyoto's shopping district is around the intersection of Shijō-dōri and Kawaramachi-dōri. The blocks to the north

and west of here are packed with stores selling both traditional and modern goods. Kyoto's largest department stores (Kyoto Marui, Takashimaya, Daimaru and Fujii Daimaru) can be found in this area.

Some of the best shopping can be had along Kyoto's three downtown shopping arcades: **Shinkyōgoku shopping arcade**, **Teramachi shopping arcade** and Nishiki Market (p294). Teramachi and Shinkyōgoku run parallel to each other in the heart of downtown. The former has a mix of tasteful and tacky shops; the latter specialises in tacky stuff for the hordes of schoolkids who visit Kyoto every year. Nishiki branches off Teramachi to the west, about 100m north of Shijō-dōri.

The place to look for antiques in Kyoto is Shinmonzen-dōri, in Gion. The street is lined with great old shops, many of them specialising in one thing or another (furniture, pottery, scrolls, prints etc). You can easily spend an afternoon strolling from shop to shop, but be warned: if something strikes your fancy you're going to have to break out the credit card – prices here are steep!

Teramachi-dōri, between Oike-dōri and Marutamachi-dōri, has a number of classic old Kyoto arts, crafts, antiques and tea shops. This is probably the best place for shopping if you're after 'old Kyoto' items.

★ **Aritsugu**

HOMEWARES

(有次; Map p296; ☎ 221-1091; 219 Kajiya-chō, Nishikikōji-dōri, Gokomachi nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀ 9am-5.30pm; 📍 Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) While you're in the Nishiki Market, have a look at this store – it's where you can find some of the best kitchen knives in the world. It also carries a selection of excellent and unique Japanese kitchenware.

★ **Wagami no Mise**

HANDICRAFTS

(倭紙の店; Map p290; ☎ 341-1419; 1st fl, Kajinoha Bldg, 298 Ōgisakaya-chō, Higashinotōin-dōri, Bukkōji-agaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀ 9.30am-5.30pm, to 4.30pm Sat, closed Sun; 📍 Karasuma line to Shijō) A short walk from the Shijō-Karasuma crossing, this place sells a fabulous variety of *washi* (Japanese handmade paper) for reasonable prices. It's one of our favourite shops in Kyoto for souvenirs.

★ **Zōhiko**

LACQUERWARE

(象彦; Map p306; ☎ 229-6625; www.zohiko.co.jp/english/; 719-1 Yohojimae-chō, Teramachi-dōri, Nijō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀ 10am-6pm; 📍 Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) Zōhiko is the best

MARKETS

If you're in town when one of the following markets is on, by all means go! Markets are the best places to find antiques and bric-a-brac at reasonable prices, and are the only places in Japan where you can actually bargain for a better price.

- ◆ On the 21st of each month, **Kōbō-san Market** (弘法さん (東寺露天市); Map p290; ☎ 691-3325; 1 Kujō-chō, Tō-ji, Minami-ku; ☀ dawn to dusk, 21st of each month; 🚶 Kintetsu line to Tōji) is held at Tō-ji to commemorate the death of Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai), who in 823 was appointed abbot of the temple.
- ◆ Another major market, **Tenjin-san Market** (天神さん(北野天満宮露天市); Map p298; ☎ 461-0005; Kitano Tenman-gū, Bakuro-chō, Kamigyō-ku; ☀ dawn to dusk, 25th of each month; 🚶 Kyoto City bus 50 or 101 to Kitano Tenmangū-mae) is held on the 25th of each month at Kitano Tenman-gū, marking the day of the birth (and, coincidentally, the death) of the Heian-era statesman Sugawara Michizane (845–903).

place in Kyoto to buy one of Japan's most beguiling art/craft forms: lacquerware. If you aren't familiar with just how beautiful these products can be, you owe it to yourself to make the pilgrimage to Zōhiko. You'll find a great selection of cups, bowls, trays and various kinds of boxes.

If you want a gift or souvenir that really makes an impression, this is a great choice!

★ **Takashimaya** DEPARTMENT STORE
(高島屋; Map p296; ☎ 221-8811; Shijō-Kawaramachi Kado, Shimogyō-ku; ☀ 10am-8pm, restaurants to 9.30pm; 🚶 Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) The grande dame of Kyoto department stores, Takashimaya is almost a tourist attraction in its own right, from the mind-boggling riches of the basement food floor to the wonderful selection of lacquerware and ceramics on the 6th floor. And don't miss the kimono!

★ **Mina** SHOPPING CENTRE
(ミーナ京都; Map p306; ☎ 222-8470; Kawaramachi-dōri, Shijō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀ restaurants 11am-midnight; 🚶 Keihan line to Gion-Shijō, Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) One of Kyoto's trendiest shopping malls, Mina has branches of two of Japan's most interesting chains: Uniqlo, a budget clothing brand that has spread overseas, and Loft, a fashionable department store that stocks all manner of curio and gift items.

Kōjitsu Sansō OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT
(好日山荘; Map p294; ☎ 708-5178; 5th fl, Kyoto Yodobashi Camera, Karasuma-dōri, Shichijō-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀ 9.30am-10pm; 🚶 Kyoto Station) On the 5th floor of the Yodobashi Camera building, this is one of Kyoto's biggest outdoor goods shops. If you're heading up to

the Japan Alps to do some hiking, you might want to stop here before getting on the train.

Bic Camera ELECTRONICS
(ビックカメラ; Map p294; ☎ 353-1111; 927 Higashi Shioikōji-chō, Shimogyō-ku; ☀ 10am-9pm; 🚶 Kyoto Station) This vast new shop is directly connected to Kyoto Station via the Nishinotō-in gate; otherwise, it's accessed by leaving the north (Karasuma) gate and walking west. You will be amazed by the sheer amount of goods this store has on display.

Yodobashi Camera ELECTRONICS
(ヨドバシカメラ; Map p294; ☎ 351-1010; 590-2 Higashi Shioikōji-chō, Shimogyō-ku; ☀ 9.30am-10pm; 🚶 Kyoto Station) This mammoth shop sells a range of electronics, camera and computer goods, and also has a restaurant floor, supermarket, bookshop, cafe and, well, the list goes on. It's a few minutes' walk north of Kyoto Station.

Kamiji Kakimoto HANDICRAFTS
(紙司柿本; Map p306; ☎ 211-3481; 54 Tokiwagichō, Teramachi-dōri, Nijō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀ 9am-6pm; 🚶 Keihan line to Jingū-Marutamachi) This is one of our favourite places to buy *washi* in Kyoto. It's got such unusual items as *washi* computer printer paper and *washi* wallpaper, along with great letter writing and wrapping paper.

Rakushikan HANDICRAFTS
(楽紙館; Map p296; ☎ 221-1070; Takoyakushi-dōri, Takakura nishi-iru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀ 10.30am-6pm, closed Mon, first/last week of the year; 🚶 Karasuma line to Shijō) This *washi* specialist is a true wonderland for artists, creative types and anyone who knows just how beautiful this handmade paper can be. There are three

floors to explore and occasional *washi*-making demonstrations.

Kyūkyō-dō

HANDICRAFTS

(鳩居堂; Map p296; ☎231-0510; 520 Shimohonnojimae-chō, Teramachi-dōri, Aneyakōji-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀10am-6pm Mon-Sat, closed Sun & 1-3 Jan; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This old shop in the Teramachi covered arcade sells a selection of incense, *shodō* (Japanese calligraphy) goods, tea-ceremony supplies and *washi*. Prices are on the high side but the quality is good. Overall, this is your best one-stop shop for distinctively Japanese souvenirs.

Kyoto Handicraft Center

CRAFTS

(京都ハンディクラフトセンター; Map p306; ☎761-7000; <http://www.kyotohandicraftcenter.com/>; 21 Entomi-chō, Shōgoin, Sakyō-ku; ☀10am-7pm; ㊦ Kyoto City bus 206 to Kumano-jinja-mae) The Kyoto Handicraft Center sells a good range of Japanese arts and crafts. You can find such things as wood-block prints, Japanese dolls, damascene crafts, pearls, clothing and books. English-speaking staff are on hand and currency exchange is available. It's within walking distance of the main Higashiyama sightseeing route.

Tōzandō

SWORDS

(東山堂; Map p306; ☎762-1341; 24 Shōgoin Entomi-chō, Sakyō-ku; ☀10am-7pm; ㊦ Kyoto City bus 206 to Kumano-jinja-mae) If you're a fan of Japanese swords and armour, you have to visit this wonderful shop on Marutamachi (diagonally opposite the Kyoto Handicraft Center). It has authentic swords, newly made Japanese armour, martial arts goods etc, and there's usually someone on hand who can speak English.

Ippōdō Tea

TEA

(一保堂茶舗; Map p306; ☎211-3421; www.ippo-do-tea.co.jp/en/; Teramachi-dōri, Nijō-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀9am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun & holidays; ㊦ Tōzai line to Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae) This old-style tea shop sells the best Japanese tea in Kyoto. Its *matcha* makes an excellent and lightweight souvenir. Try a 40g container of *wa-no-mukashi* (meaning 'old-time Japan') for ¥1600, which makes 25 cups of excellent green tea. Ippō-dō is north of the city hall, on Teramachi-dōri. It has an adjoining tea-house (open 11am to 5.30pm).

Nijūsan-ya

ACCESSORIES

(二十三や; Map p296; ☎221-2371; Shijō-dōri, Kawaramachi higashi-iru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀10am-

8pm; ㊦ Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) Boxwood combs and hair clips are one of Kyoto's most famous traditional crafts, and they are still used in the elaborate hairstyles of the city's geisha and *maiko*. This tiny hole-in-the-wall shop has a fine selection for you to choose from (and if you don't like what's on view, you can ask if it has other choices in stock – it usually does).

Daimaru

DEPARTMENT STORE

(大丸; Map p296; ☎211-8111; Tachiuri Nishi-machi 79, Shijō-dōri, Takakura nishi-iru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀10am-8pm, restaurants 11am-9pm, closed 1 Jan; ㊦ Karasuma line to Shijō, ㊦ Hankyū line to Karasuma) Daimaru has fantastic service, a brilliant selection of goods and a basement food floor that will make you want to move to Kyoto.

Fujii Daimaru

Department Store

DEPARTMENT STORE

(フジイダイマル; Map p296; ☎221-8181; Shijō-dōri, Teramachi nishi-iru; ☀10.30am-8pm; ㊦ Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) This smallish department store is very popular with local young ladies who flock here to peruse the interesting selection of up-to-the-minute fashions and jewellery. Older Kyotoites head to the basement food floor to snag great bargains on a wide selection of food, including great takeaway sushi and tropical fruit.

Kyoto Marui

DEPARTMENT STORE

(丸井; Map p296; ☎257-0101; 68 Shin-chō, Shijō-dōri, Kawaramachi higashi-iru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀10.30am-8.30pm, restaurants to 10pm; ㊦ Hankyū line to Kawaramachi) This new youth-oriented department store hails from Tokyo and brings some of that fashion sense with it. It's a good place to see what's hot with the local fashionistas.

Shin-Puh-Kan

SHOPPING CENTRE

(新風館; Map p296; ☎213-6688; Karasuma-dōri, Aneyakōji-kudaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☀shops 11am-8pm Sun-Thu, to 9pm Fri & Sat, restaurants 11am-11pm, closed irregularly; ㊦ Karasuma line to Karasuma-Oike) This interesting shopping complex has a variety of boutiques and restaurants clustered around a huge open-air atrium. The offerings run to the cutting-edge and ephemeral, which attracts the young kids who congregate here. Occasional art and music performances are held in the atrium.

i Orientation

Kyoto is laid out in a grid pattern and is extremely easy to navigate. Kyoto Station, the city's main station, is located at the southern end of the city,

and the JR and Kintetsu lines operate from here. The real centre of Kyoto is located around Shijō-dōri, about 2km north of Kyoto Station via Karasuma-dōri. The commercial and nightlife centres are between Shijō-dōri to the south and Sanjō-dōri to the north, and between Kawaramachi-dōri to the east and Karasuma-dōri to the west.

Although some of Kyoto's major sights are in the city centre, Kyoto's best sightseeing is on the outskirts of the city, along the base of the eastern and western mountains (known as Higashiyama and Arashiyama, respectively). Sights on the east side are best reached by bus, bicycle or the Tōzai subway line. Sights on the west side are best reached by bus or train (or by bicycle if you're very keen). Outside the city itself, the mountain villages of Ōhara, Kurama and Takao make wonderful day trips and are easily accessible by public transport.

i Information

INTERNET ACCESS

The city of Kyoto has recently launched a free wi-fi access program for foreign travellers, with hot spots across the city. You must email to get the access code. Go to <http://kanko.city.kyoto.lg.jp/wifi/en/> to find a map of hot spots and to get started. Note that access is limited to three hours, but you can get another access code for additional hours.

Kinko's (キンコーズ; Map p296; ☎213-6802; 651-1 Tearaimizu-chō, Karasuma-dōri, Takoyakushi-sagaru, Nakagyō-ku; 1st 10min ¥270, then every 10min ¥216; ☎24hr; ㊟Karasuma line to Shijō or Karasuma-Oike) This copy shop has several terminals where you can log on to the internet. It's expensive but conveniently located.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Kyoto University Hospital (京都大学医学部 附属病院; Map p306; ☎751-3111; 54 Shōgo-inkawahara-chō, Sakyō-ku; ☎8.30am-11am; ㊟Keihan line to Jingū-Marutamachi) Best hospital in Kyoto. There is an information counter near the entrance that can point you in the right direction.

MONEY

Most of the major banks are near the Shijō-Karasuma intersection, two stops north of Kyoto Station on the Karasuma line subway.

International transactions (such as wire transfers) can be made at **Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ** (三菱東京UFJ銀行; Map p296; ☎211-4583; ㊟Karasuma line to Shijō), which is at the southeast corner of this intersection. Other international transactions can be made at **Citibank** (シティバンク; Map p296; ☎212-5387; ☎office 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, ATM 24hr; ㊟Karasuma line to Shijō), just west of this intersection.

You can change travellers cheques at most post offices around town, including the Kyoto Central Post Office, next to Kyoto Station. Post offices also have ATMs that accept most foreign-issued cards. If your card doesn't work at postal ATMs, try the ATMs in 7-Eleven convenience stores. Failing that, try Citibank, which has a 24-hour ATM that accepts most foreign-issued cards.

POST

Kyoto Central Post Office (京都中央郵便局; Map p294; ☎365-2471; 843-12 Higashishiokōji-chō, Shimogyō-ku; ☎9am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sat & Sun, ATMs 12.05am-11.55pm Mon-Sat, to 9pm Sun & holidays; ㊟Karasuma line to Kyoto) Conveniently located next to Kyoto Station (take the Karasuma exit; the post office is on the northwestern side of the station). There's an after-hours service counter on the southern side of the post office, open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The ATMs here are open almost 24 hours a day.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Kyoto International Community House (京都国際交流開会, KICH; Map p306; ☎752-3010; 2-1 Torii-chō, Awataguchi, Sakyō-ku; ☎9am-9pm, closed Mon; ㊟Tōzai line to Keage, exit 2) An essential stop for those planning a long-term stay in Kyoto, KICH can also be quite useful for short-term visitors. It has a library with maps, books, newspapers and magazines from around the world, and a board displaying messages regarding work, accommodation, rummage sales etc.

You can send and receive faxes, and use the internet (register at the information counter). You can also pick up a copy of its excellent *Guide to Kyoto* map and its *Easy Living in Kyoto* book (note that both of these are intended for residents). You can also chill out in the lobby and watch CNN news.

Kyoto Tourist Information Center (京都総合観光案内所; TIC; Map p294; ☎343-0548; 2F Kyoto Station Bldg, Shimogyō-ku; ☎8.30am-7pm; ㊟Karasuma line to Kyoto) Located in the main concourse on the 2nd floor of the Kyoto Station building that runs between the *shinkansen* station and the front of the station (near Isetan department store), this is the main tourist information centre in Kyoto. English speakers are always on hand and, occasionally, speakers of other European and Asian languages are available.

It stocks useful maps of the city, as well as bus maps, and can answer most of your questions. Note that it's called 'Kyo Navi' in Japanese (in case you have to ask someone).

TRAVEL AGENCIES

KNT (近畿日本ツアーリスト; Map p296; ☎255-0489; 437 Ebisu-chō, Kawaramachi-dōri,

Sanjo-agaru, Nakagyō-ku; ☺ 10.30am-7pm
Mon-Fri, to 6.30pm Sat & Sun)

USEFUL WEBSITES

Kansai Scene (www.kansaiscene.com) Free monthly magazine and website that covers upcoming events in Kansai (including Kyoto).

Kyoto Visitor's Guide (www.kyotoguide.com) Official source of up-to-date tourist and travel information.

i Getting There & Away

Travel between Kyoto and other parts of Japan is a breeze. Kansai is served by the Tōkaidō and San-yō *shinkansen* (bullet train) lines, several JR main lines and a few private rail lines. It is also possible to travel to/from Kyoto and other parts of Honshū, Shikoku and Kyūshū by long-distance highway buses. Finally, Kyoto is served by two airports (Kansai International Airport and Osaka Itami Airport). Kyoto is also relatively close to Nagoya, in case you can only get a flight to Centrair airport.

AIR

Kyoto is served by Osaka Itami Airport (ITM), which principally handles domestic traffic, and Kansai International Airport (KIX), which principally handles international flights. There are frequent flights between Tokyo and Itami (around ¥25,000, 80 minutes), but unless you're very lucky with airport connections you'll probably find it as quick and more convenient to take the *shinkansen*. There are ample connections to/from both airports, though the trip to/from Kansai International Airport takes longer and costs more.

BUS

Overnight JR buses run between Tokyo Station (Nihonbashi-guchi/arrival, Yaesu-guchi/departure long-distance bus stop) and Kyoto Station Bus Terminal (京都駅前バスターミナル).

The trip takes about eight hours and there are usually departures nightly, at 10.10pm, 10.30pm, 11pm (daily from Tokyo to Kyoto) and 11pm (daily from Kyoto to Tokyo). The fare starts at ¥5400 one way. There is a similar service to/from Shinjuku Station's Shin-minami-guchi in Tokyo.

Other JR bus transport possibilities include Kanazawa (one way from ¥3800) and Hiroshima (one way from ¥4450).

TRAIN

Kyoto is on the Tōkaidō-San-yō *shinkansen* line, which runs between Tokyo and Kyūshū, with stops at places such as Nagoya, Osaka, Kōbe, Himeji and Hiroshima en route. The *shinkansen* operates to/from Kyoto Station (Kyoto's main train station). On the Tokyo end, it operates from Tokyo, Shinagawa and Shin-Yokohama stations.

From Kyoto, fares and times for Nozomi (the fastest type of *shinkansen*) include Tokyo (¥13,080, 2¾ hours), Nagoya (¥5070, 40 minutes), Shin-Osaka (¥1420, 13 minutes), Hiroshima (¥10,570, two hours) and Hakata (¥15,120, 2¾ hours).

Nara The private Kintetsu line (sometimes written in English as the Kinki Nippon railway) links Kyoto (Kintetsu Kyoto Station, south side of the main Kyoto Station building) and Nara (Kintetsu Nara Station). There are fast direct *tokkyū* (limited express; ¥1110, 33 minutes) and ordinary express trains (¥610, 40 minutes), which may require a change at Saidai-ji.

The JR Nara line also connects Kyoto Station with JR Nara Station (express ¥710, 41 minutes). This is a great option for Japan Rail Pass holders.

Osaka The fastest train other than the *shinkansen* between Kyoto Station and Osaka is the JR *shinkaisoku* (special rapid train), which takes 29 minutes (¥560). In Osaka, the train stops at both Shin-Osaka and Osaka Stations.

There is also the cheaper private Hankyū line, which runs between Hankyū Kawaramachi, Karasuma and Ōmiya Stations in Kyoto and Hankyū Umeda Station in Osaka (*tokkyū* or limited express Umeda-Kawaramachi ¥400, 40 minutes). These trains are usually more comfortable than the JR trains, and if you board at Kawaramachi or Umeda, you can usually get a seat.

Alternatively, you can take the Keihan main line between Demachiyana, Sanjō, Shijō or Shichijō Stations in Kyoto and Keihan Yodoyabashi Station in Osaka (*tokkyū* to/from Sanjō ¥410, 51 minutes). Yodoyabashi is on the Midō-suji subway line. Again, these are more comfortable than JR trains and you can usually get a seat if you board in Demachiyana or Yodoyabashi.

Tokyo The *shinkansen* line has the fastest and most frequent rail links. The journey can also be undertaken by a series of regular JR express trains, but keep in mind that it takes around eight hours and involves several changes along the way. The fare is ¥8210. Get the staff at the ticket counter to write down the exact details of each transfer for you when you buy your ticket.

i Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Osaka Itami Airport (ITM) 大阪伊丹空港

There are frequent limousine buses between Osaka Itami Airport and Kyoto Station (the Kyoto Station airport bus stop is opposite the south side of the station, in front of Avanti department store). Buses also run between the airport and various hotels around town, but on a less regular basis (check with your hotel). The journey should take around 55 minutes and the cost is ¥1280. Be sure to allow extra time in case of traffic.

At Itami, the stand for these buses is outside the arrivals hall; buy your tickets from the machines and ask one of the attendants which stand is for Kyoto (hint: you've got a better chance of getting a seat if you board at the South Terminal).

MK Taxi (p348) offers limousine van service to/from the airport for ¥2400. Call at least two days in advance to reserve, or ask at the information counter in the arrivals hall on arrival in Osaka.

Kansai International Airport (KIX)

関西国際空港

The fastest, most convenient way to travel between KIX and Kyoto is on the special Haruka airport express, which makes the trip in about 75 minutes. Most seats are reserved (¥3370), but there are usually two cars on each train with unreserved seats (¥2850). Open seats are almost always available, so you don't have to purchase tickets in advance. First and last departures from Kyoto to KIX are 5.46am and 8.15pm; first and last departures from KIX to Kyoto are 6.30am Monday to Friday, 6.40am Saturday, Sunday and holidays and 10.16pm. Note that the Haruka is one of the few trains in Japan that is frequently late (although not usually by more than a few minutes). We suggest leaving a little extra time when heading from Kyoto to the airport to catch a flight.

If you have time to spare, you can save some money by taking the *kankū kaisoku* (Kansai airport express) between the airport and Osaka Station and taking a regular *shinkaisoku* to/from Kyoto. The total journey by this method takes about 95 minutes with good connections and costs ¥1750, making it the cheapest option (note that you can save ¥130 by exiting and re-entering at Osaka Station).

It's also possible to travel by limousine bus between Kyoto and KIX (¥2550, about 90 minutes). In Kyoto, the bus departs from the same place as the Itami-bound bus.

A final option is the **MK Taxi Sky Gate Shuttle limousine van service** (☎778-5489; www.mk-taxi-japan.com), which will pick you up anywhere in Kyoto city and deliver you to KIX for ¥3600. Call at least two days in advance to reserve. The advantage of this method is that you are delivered from door to door and you don't have to lug your baggage through the train station. MK has a counter in the arrivals hall of KIX, and if there's room they'll put you on the next van to Kyoto. A similar service is offered by **Yasaka Taxi** (☎803-4800).

BICYCLE

Kyoto is a great city to explore on a bicycle; with the exception of outlying areas it's mostly flat and there is a bike path running the length of the Kamo-gawa.

Unfortunately, Kyoto must rank near the top in having the world's worst public facilities for bike parking, and the city regularly impounds bikes parked outside regulation bike-parking areas. If your bike does disappear, check for a poster in the vicinity (in both Japanese and English) indicating the time of seizure and the inconvenient place you'll have to go to pay a ¥2000 fine and retrieve your bike.

There are two bicycle-parking lots in town that are convenient for tourists: one in front of Kyoto Station and another off Kiyamachi-dōri, between Sanjō-dōri and Shijō-dōri. It costs ¥150 per day to park your bicycle here. Be sure to hang onto the ticket you pick up as you enter.

Kyoto Cycling Tour Project (京都サイクリングツアープロジェクト; KCTP; Map p294; ☎354-3636; www.kctp.net/en; 552-13 Higashi-Aburanokoji-chō, Aburanokōji-dōri, Shiokōji-sagaru, Shimogyō-ku; ☀9am-7pm; 📍 Karasuma line to Kyoto, 🚉 JR line to Kyoto) A great place to rent a bike. These folk rent bikes (¥1000 per day) that are perfect for getting around the city. KCTP also conducts a variety of excellent bicycle tours of Kyoto with English-speaking guides. These are a great way to see the city (check the website for details).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus

Kyoto has an extensive network of bus routes providing an efficient way of getting around at moderate cost. Many of the routes used by visitors have announcements in English. The core timetable for buses is between 7am and 9pm, though a few run earlier or later.

Maps & Information The main **Kyoto Bus Information Centre** (京都バス案内所; Map p294) is located in front of Kyoto Station. Here you can pick up bus maps, purchase bus tickets and passes (on all lines, including highway buses), and get additional information.

The TIC stocks the *Bus Navi: Kyoto City Bus Sightseeing Map*, which shows the city's main bus lines. But this map is not exhaustive. If you can read a little Japanese, pick up a copy of the regular (and more detailed) Japanese bus map available at major bus terminals throughout the city, including the main bus information centre.

Terminals & Stations Kyoto's main bus terminals are also train stations: Kyoto Station, Sanjō Station, Karasuma-Shijō Station and Kitaōji Station. The bus terminal at Kyoto Station is on the north side and has three main departure bays (departure points are indicated by the letter of the bay and number of the stop within that bay).

Bus stops usually have a map of destinations from that stop and a timetable for the buses serving that stop.

Riding Buses Three-digit numbers written against a red background denote loop lines: bus 204 runs around the northern part of the city and buses 205 and 206 circle the city via Kyoto Station. Buses with route numbers on a blue background take other routes.

When heading for locations outside the city centre, be careful which bus you board. Kyoto City buses are green, Kyoto buses are tan and Keihan buses are red and white.

Entry to the bus is usually through the back door and exit is via the front door. Inner-city buses charge a flat fare (¥230 for adults, ¥120 for children aged six to 12, free for those younger), which you drop into the clear plastic receptacle on top of the machine next to the driver on your way out. A separate machine gives change for ¥100 and ¥500 coins or ¥1000 notes.

On buses serving the outer areas, take a *seiri-ken* (numbered ticket) on boarding. When alighting, an electronic board above the driver displays the fare corresponding to your ticket number (drop the *seiri-ken* into the ticket box with your fare).

Subway

Kyoto has two efficient subway lines, which operate from around 5.30am to around 11.30pm. The minimum fare is ¥210 (children ¥110).

The quickest way to travel between the north and south of the city is the Karasuma subway line. The line has 15 stops and runs from Takeda in the far south, via Kyoto Station, to the Kyoto International Conference Hall (Kokusaikaikan Station) in the north.

The east-west Tōzai subway line crosses Kyoto from Uzumasa-Tenjingawa in the west, meeting the Karasuma line at Karasuma-Oike Station, and continuing east to Sanjō Keihan, Yamashina and Rokujizō, in the east and southeast.

TAXI

Kyoto taxi fares start at ¥640 for the first 2km. The exception is **MK Taxi** (☎778-4141; www.mktaxi-japan.com), where fares start at ¥600.

MK Taxi also provides tours of the city with English-speaking drivers. For a group of up to four, prices start at ¥22,300 for a three-hour tour.



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