

Kyoto — the eternal capital of Japan

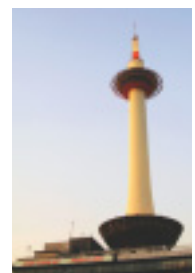
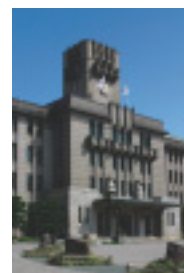
Kyoto is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Japan. People from all over the world visit Kyoto every year. Kyoto is located in the Kinki region, almost in the center of the Japan Archipelago. The city is surrounded by mountains on three sides (north, east and west) and several rivers and streams, like Kamo River and Katsura River, run through the city.

The average temperature is 15 degrees. Because it is in a basin surrounded by mountains, the temperature gap between summer and winter is large. The seasonal beauty of nature is splendid in Kyoto. The cherry blossoms in spring, the Kamo River in summer, crimson leaves in autumn, and snow in winter. You can be fascinated with Kyoto scenery no matter which season you visit Kyoto.

In 794, the national capital was moved to Kyoto (it was moved to Tokyo in 1868). Over 1,000 years, Kyoto was the political, cultural and artistic center of the country. Today, Kyoto is home to the greatest wealth of historical and cultural properties in Japan. Japanese history can't be told without Kyoto's history.

The appeals of Kyoto are not only historical. Many global companies, from traditional crafts to the latest science and technology, have their headquarters in Kyoto. The mixture of traditional and modern creates a unique assimilation that exists only in Kyoto, such as buildings, art and culture. Kyoto never stops developing. You can find new attractions every time you visit.

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Seeing

● Temples and Shrines

Fortunately Kyoto had few bomb attacks during World War 2. Therefore a number of temples and shrines from different eras still remain. Many of them are Important Cultural Properties and preserved carefully as historical heritages. What is more, various traditional events are held all around the year at those historical places. Those events are alive close to Kyoto life.



Buying

● Nishiki Food Market and Higashiyama

[Nishiki Food Market]

This market, about 400m long from east to west (Teramachi to Takakura) is called 'capital's kitchen'. As the name represents, everything is here: Kyoto vegetables, tofu, pickles, dried food, seafood, obanzai (Kyoto home made dishes), etc. About 150 shops stand along both sides of the street. It is always crowded with people from all over Japan and the world.

[Higashiyama]

One of the attractive shopping areas in Higashiyama is Shinmonzen St. and Furumonzen St. where many Japanese antique shops and traditional crafts shops stand. At the Meiji restoration time (around 1868), those shops sold Japanese goods to foreign business men. This area is worth exploring, if only to look, for art crafts (pottery, fans, kimono, wood block prints, bamboo crafts, Kyoto dolls, wooden crafts, etc.) in the show windows.



Dining

● Kyoto cuisine, Kyoto vegetables and Kyoto sweets

[Kyoto cuisine]

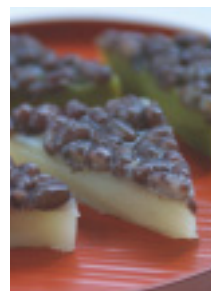
Because it is surrounded by mountains, Kyoto has developed a unique cuisine. Especially Kyoto has specialized in dishes using ingredients from mountains. Traditional Kyoto cuisine is full of seasonal ingredients. Taste, presentation, beautiful bowls and plates, and seasonal atmosphere are all delights of Kyoto cuisine.

[Kyoto vegetables]

Kyoto vegetables are important food that is appreciated as useful ingredients. It is often said that Kyoto vegetables are especially tasty because of improvements made by Kyoto farmers. Because they usually have more nutrients than common vegetables (vitamin, mineral, food fiber, etc.), Kyoto vegetables have very popular in Japan.

[Kyoto sweets]

Kyoto sweets are elegant and beautiful. It is worth being called "flower of Japanese food culture". There are two types of Kyoto sweets. One is made from seasonal ingredients. The other takes on the shapes of seasonal motifs. Usually Kyoto sweets are made from plant ingredients, so that they are low calorie and healthy. They are the secrets of the popularity.



Entertainment

● Shijo Kawaramachi and Gion

[Shijo Kawaramachi]

This is the most bustling area in Kyoto where new and old are uniquely combined. Between Sanjo and Shijo, a variety of entertainment spots are waiting for you: department stores, movie theaters, fashion, karaoke, game arcade, Japanese and western restaurants and more! Kiyamachi and Pontocho, east of Kawaramachi, have a wide range of restaurants, bars, sushi, traditional ryotei. Many people enjoy those streets until midnight.

[Gion]

Gion is one of the most famous tourist areas in Kyoto in front of Yasaka Shrine. It is known for its Hanamachi (Flower Towns) where maiko and geiko live. Exclusive Japanese restaurants and tea houses add a dignified appearance. If you are lucky, you can see maiko and geiko elegantly walking along the area's historical streets.



Staying

● Ryokan and hotel

[Ryokan]

If you wish to experience Japanese style of life, it is recommended to stay in a ryokan. Many of them have an old wooden structure. The price varies so you can choose an affordable one. Staying in typical Japanese rooms with tatami mat, tokonoma alcove, shoji sliding window and sleeping on futon, you will feel the warm atmosphere of Japanese life.

[Hotels]

A wide range of hotels are available in Kyoto from business hotel to world famous grand hotels. The price is approximately 5,000-9,000 yen (single room/person) for a business hotel and 10,000-30,000 yen (single room/person) for other hotels.