



Kyoto

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- » Tawaraya (p283)
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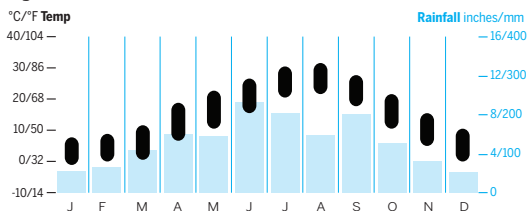
Why Go?

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 traditional culture, and it's the place where even the Japanese go to learn about their own culture.

With 17 Unesco World Heritage Sites (see the box, p279), more than 1600 Buddhist temples and over 400 Shintō shrines, Kyoto is one of the world's most culturally rich cities. It is fair to say that Kyoto ranks with Paris, London and Rome as one of those cities that everyone should see at least once in their lives. And, needless to say, it should rank at the top of any Japan itinerary.

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 in Kyoto.

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

Kyoto Highlights

- 1 Wander through the seemingly endless arcades of vermilion shrine gates at **Fushimi-Inari** **Taisha** (p274)
- 2 Marvel at the golden hall of **Kinkaku-ji** (p270) floating over its tranquil pond
- 3 Spend a night in a traditional **ryokan** (p281); Kyoto has some of the best in the country
- 4 Take an evening stroll through **Gion** (p264) and keep your eyes peeled for geisha
- 5 Immerse yourself in the green fantasy world of Arashiyama's **Bamboo Grove** (p271)
- 6 Ponder the meaning of it all as you stroll along the

