



# Kyoto

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Kikunoi (p346)
- ➔ Omen (p346)
- ➔ Kyōgoku Kane-yo (p342)
- ➔ Yoshikawa (p344)
- ➔ Honke Owariya (p342)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Hyatt Regency Kyoto (p336)
- ➔ Tawaraya (p334)
- ➔ Capsule Ryokan Kyoto (p332)
- ➔ Ritz-Carlton Kyoto (p334)
- ➔ Lower East 9 Hostel (p332)

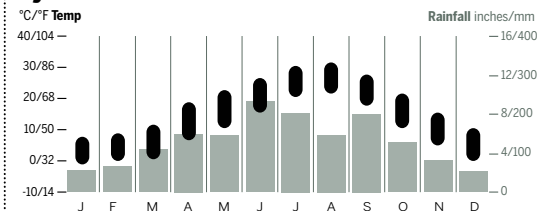
## Why Go?

Kyoto is old Japan writ large: quiet temples, sublime gardens, colourful shrines and geisha scurrying to secret liaisons. With 17 Unesco World Heritage Sites, more than 1000 Buddhist temples and over 400 Shintō shrines it is one of the world's most culturally rich cities. But Kyoto is not just about sightseeing: while the rest of Japan has adopted modernity with abandon, the old ways are still clinging on here. Visit an old *shōtengai* (market street) and admire the ancient speciality shops: tofu sellers, *washi* (Japanese hand-made paper) stores and tea merchants.

Traditional Japanese culture – and thus Kyoto itself – is intimately bound to the changing of the seasons. Everything shifts with the passage of time: the blooms in a temple garden, the garnishes on a plate served during a formal *kaiseki* (haute cuisine) meal, even the ornaments with which geisha adorn their hair. Whether this is your first visit or your 10th, the city is bound to surprise you with something new and extraordinary.

## When to Go

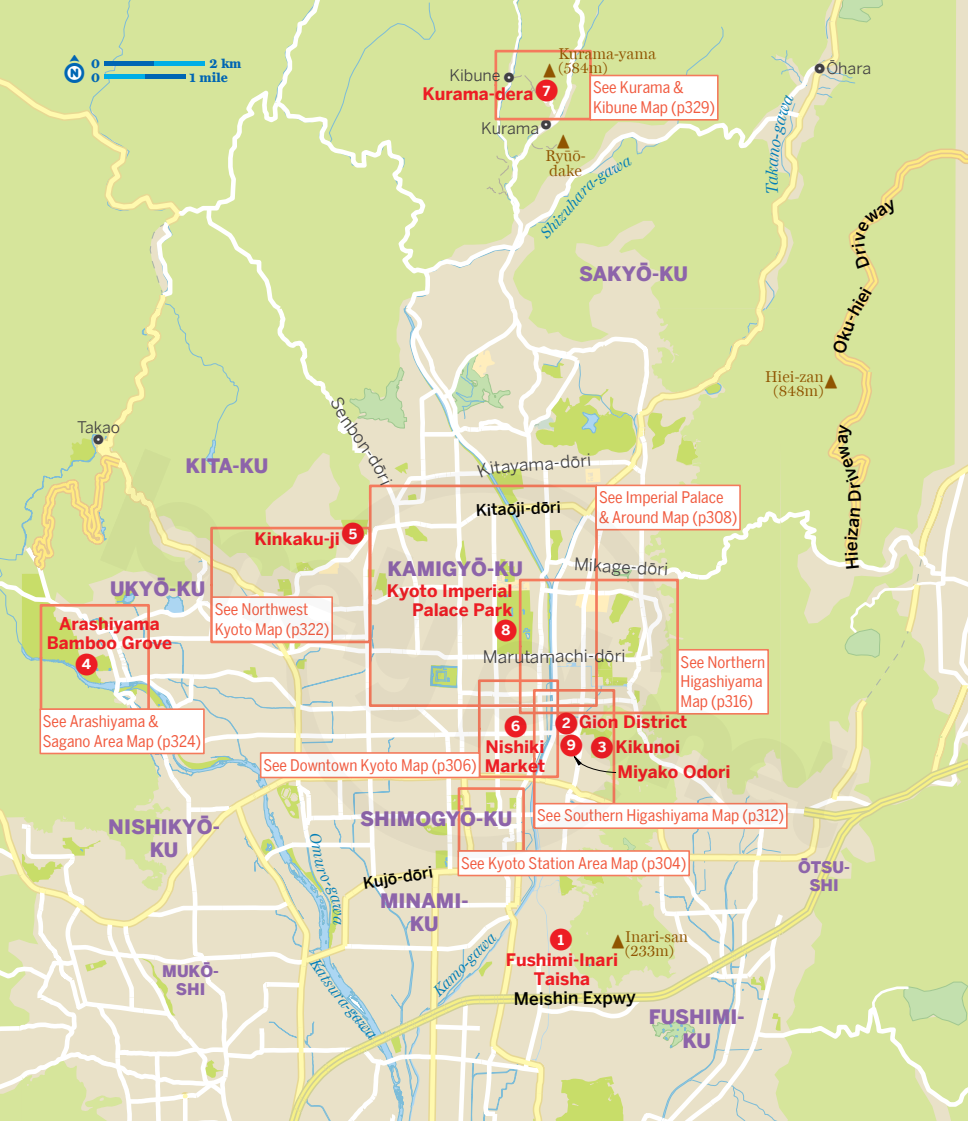
### Kyoto



**Apr–May** Cherry blossoms (early April) are enchanting, as are spring geisha dances (April and May).

**Jul–Sep** Summer evenings are magical (though summer days are hot and humid).

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



## Kyoto Highlights

- 1 Fushimi Inari-Taisha** (p303) Wandering through the magical tunnel of vermilion gates at this shrine.
- 2 Gion district** (p315) Strolling through the atmospheric district at night.
- 3 Kikunoi** (p346) Splurging on a once-in-a-lifetime meal of *kaiseki* (haute cuisine).
- 4 Arashiyama Bamboo Grove** (p323) Immersing yourself in this lush landscape.
- 5 Kinkaku-ji** (p321) Marvelling at the golden hall of this temple floating over its tranquil pond.
- 6 Nishiki Market** (p304) Shopping for local gourmet goods.
- 7 Kurama-dera** (p328) Climbing up to the mountain temple.
- 8 Kyoto Imperial Palace Park** (p308) Picnicking on the spacious grounds of the palace.
- 9 Miyako Odori** (p351) Being charmed by geisha at an annual performance of traditional dance.