

# Central Kyoto



## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Enter the hidden world of the **Kyoto Imperial Palace** (p71) and marvel at the splendour of the Japanese court. In addition to the stunning buildings and interiors, the gardens are lovely and make for pleasant strolling
- 2 Wander through the hypnotic arcades of *torii* (Shintō shrine gates) at **Fushimi-Inari-Taisha** (p76).
- 3 Stroll through the expansive grounds of **Tōfuku-ji** (p76).
- 4 Visit the many sub-temples at **Daitoku-ji** (p72).
- 5 Take a stroll through the long tree-lined approach to **Shimogamo-jinja** (p73).

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

During cherry blossom season (early April), the city's main tourist sites will be mobbed. If you want to enjoy the blossoms without the crowds, head to the banks of the Kamo-gawa or Takano-gawa, north of Imadegawa-dōri.



### Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Cocohana (p77)
- ➔ Prinz (p77)
- ➔ Hiragana-kan (p77)

For reviews, see p76 ➔



### Best Places for a Stroll

- ➔ Kyoto Imperial Palace Park (p71)
- ➔ Shimogamo-jinja (p73)
- ➔ Fushimi-Inari-Taisha (p76)

For reviews, see p72 ➔



### Best Places for Kids

- ➔ Umekōji Steam Locomotive Museum (p74)
- ➔ Fushimi-Inari-Taisha (p76)
- ➔ Kyoto Botanical Gardens (p73)

For reviews, see p72 ➔

## Explore: Central Kyoto

The area we refer to as Central Kyoto in this book is not so much a distinct neighbourhood as it is a vast swath of the city that surrounds the better known sightseeing districts of Downtown Kyoto (p54), the Kyoto Station Area (p48), Southern Higashiyama (p79) and Northern Higashiyama (p92). Central Kyoto runs from the hills that form the northern border of the city proper to the flat suburbs south of Kyoto Station. As such, it is not an area that one would attempt to explore in one day.

The best way to enjoy Central Kyoto is to choose one or two sights that are relatively close to each other and focus on them. You can often link sights in Central Kyoto up with sights in other nearby sightseeing districts, like Downtown Kyoto or the Southern Higashiyama area.

There are many possible routes that take advantage of the offerings here. For example, you could start in the southeast region of the area with a visit to Fushimi-Inari-Taisha and Tōfuku-ji, then head north into the Southern Higashiyama area. Or, you could visit the sights in the Northern Higashiyama Area, like Ginkaku-ji, and continue north to the lesser visited sights of Manshū-in and Shisendō.

Likewise, you might pay a visit to the walled-in Zen world of Daitoku-ji, with its wonderful subtemples, and then continue into Northwest Kyoto (p104) to visit the shining apparition of Kinkaku-ji – the famed Golden Pavilion.

Needless to say, because of its size, this area lends itself to being explored by bicycle.

## Local Life

- ➔ **Hangout** Kyoto families with children gather on sunny weekend days along the banks of the Kamo-gawa, just north of Kamo-Ōhashi.
- ➔ **Jogging Route** (p71) Local runners favour the many paths of the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park.
- ➔ **Picnic Spot** (p73) Spread a blanket and eat al fresco in the expansive fields of the Kyoto Botanical Gardens.

## Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** Take the JR or Keihan lines to sights in the southeast.
- ➔ **Bus** Take buses to sights in the northeast.
- ➔ **Subway** Take the Karasuma subway line to sights in the north and centre. Take the Tōzai subway line to Nijō-jō.