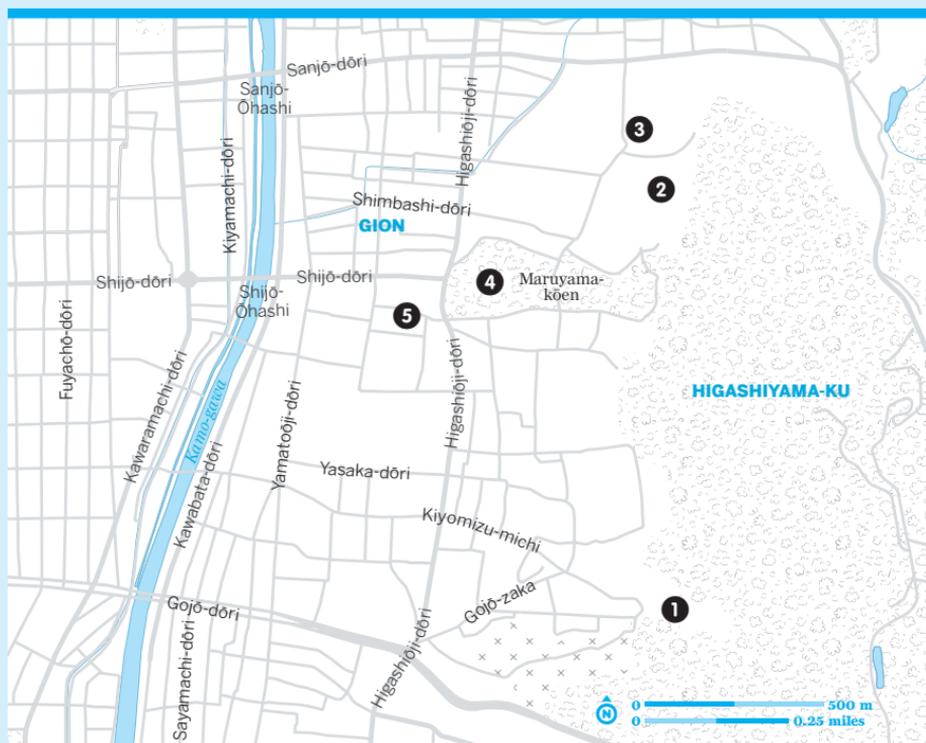


Southern Higashiyama

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Climbing to the top of the Southern Higashiyama district to visit one of Kyoto's most colourful temples: **Kiyomizu-dera** (p81). This temple is almost always crowded but there's plenty of room to move about and the throngs add to the energy of the place.
- 2 Letting your soul be soothed by the chanting monks at **Chion-in** (p82).
- 3 Sipping a cup of green tea while looking over the sublime garden at **Shōren-in** (p87).
- 4 Clapping your hands to awaken the gods at **Yasakajinja** (p84).
- 5 Taking an evening stroll through the world of geisha in the **Gion District** (p87).



Lonely Planet's Top Tip

During the cherry blossom season in early April, the streets of Southern Higashiyama will be choked with traffic. *Do not* get in a taxi or bus in this area at this time unless you just want to sit there. Walking or taking the train/subway is the way to go during peak season.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ōzawa (p87)
- ➔ Omen Kodai-ji (p88)
- ➔ Kasagi-ya (p89)

For reviews, see p87 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Gael Irish Pub (p89)
- ➔ Gion Finlandia Bar (p90)
- ➔ Bar Main Higashiyama (p89)

For reviews, see p89 ➔

Best Places for a Stroll

- ➔ Gion District (p87)
- ➔ Ninen-zaka & Sannen-zaka (p84)
- ➔ Maruyama-kōen (p84)

For reviews, see p83 ➔

Explore: Southern Higashiyama

Stretching along the base of the Higashiyama (Eastern Mountains) from the top of Shichijō-dōri to the top of Sanjō-dōri, Southern Higashiyama comprises the thickest concentration of sights in all of Kyoto and is the place you should begin your exploration of the city.

The well-established sightseeing route through this district is covered in our Hills, Temples & Lanes in Southern Higashiyama walking tour (p85). Following this route is the best way to get a good introduction to the area. It's best to do this route in the order presented (south to north), since you'll be going slowly downhill most of the way, but it's perfectly possible to do it from north to south. Keep in mind that the walking tour does not cover some of the sights at the southern end of this district, like Sanjūsangen-dō, a fine temple, and the Kyoto National Museum.

A half day is usually sufficient to cover the main walking route in Southern Higashiyama, but if you eat lunch en route and take your time, you could easily spend a full day in this area. Note that this is Kyoto's most popular sightseeing district, so it will be crowded during peak seasons. Also, don't forget that the lanes here are almost deserted in the evening and a stroll through the darkened streets can be magical.

Downhill from the main sightseeing route, you'll find Gion, Kyoto's high-end entertainment and geisha district. The best way to explore this area is to follow our Night Walk Through the Floating World walking tour (p86).

Local Life

- ➔ **Hangouts** Maruyama-kōen (p84), a green oasis in the middle of Southern Higashiyama, is popular with locals for picnics, strolls and dates.
- ➔ **Eating** The scenic lanes of Ninen-zaka and Sannen-zaka (p84) are lined with tea shops and restaurants.
- ➔ **Expat's favourite** Kyoto expats who crave a proper Western breakfast or a proper pizza head to the restaurants at the Hyatt Regency Kyoto (p145).

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** The private Keihan line provides access to Southern Higashiyama. Get off at Gion-shijō or Shichijō stations and walk uphill (east).
- ➔ **Bus** Kyoto city buses serve various stops in the district and are a good way to access Kiyomizu-dera.
- ➔ **Subway** The Tōzai subway line's Higashiyama Station offers easy access to the northern end of the district.