

Kitayama Area & North Kyoto

FAR NORTHERN HIGASHIYAMA AREA | ŌHARA | KURAMA & KIBUNE | TAKAO | NORTH & NORTHEAST KYOTO

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Ascending to the mountain temple of **Kuramadera** (p120), one of the best half-day trips in Kyoto. If you have the energy, continue over the top of the mountain and down to the village of Kibune.

2 Escaping to the quaint rural village of Ōhara to visit the Buddhist paradise of **Sanzen-in** (p119) and then walk the rural footpaths of the village.

3 Taking a dip on a snowy winter day in **Kurama Onsen** (p123).

4 Eating lunch suspended over the rushing waters of the **Kibune-gawa** (p122) in the hamlet of Kibune.

5 Climbing to **Jingo-ji** (p121), a mountain temple where you can play 'karmic frisbee'.



For more detail of this area, see Map p222 →

Explore: Kitayama Area & North Kyoto

The Kitayama area and north Kyoto encompasses the sights at the north end of Kyoto city, including the temples of Manshu-in and Shisen-dō, the imperial villa of Shūgaku-in Rikyū, and the mountaintop temple complex of Enryaku-ji, which sits atop Hiei-zan (Mt Hiei). This section also includes four villages located in the Kitayama ('Northern Mountains') area just north of the city: Takao, Ōhara, Kurama and Kibune. All of these make interesting trips out of the city centre and are good ways to escape the crowds that plague some sights closer to downtown.

Needless to say, due to their location, most of these sights require at least half a day to visit and you shouldn't try to link any of these areas into one day trip.

All of the sights can be reached by public transport. Kurama and Kibune are a very easy 30-minute trip from Kyoto via the Eizan Dentetsu line. Likewise, Ōhara is an easy 40-minute bus trip from central Kyoto (longer in autumn-foliage season). Buses and/or funiculars will get you up Hiei-zan to visit Enryaku-ji.

Local Life

- ➔ **Beat the heat** Locals head to the *yuka* (dining platforms) over the river in Kibune (p120) to cool off when the Kyoto summer heat cranks up.
- ➔ **A taste of winter** Folks who love winter scenery head up to Kurama-dera (p120) after a snowstorm hits the area.
- ➔ **Foliage treat** The village of Ōhara (p119) is loved by locals and other Japanese for its autumn foliage.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** The Eizan line will get you to Kurama and Kibune.
- ➔ **Bus** Kyoto City buses and/or Kyoto buses (they're different) serve all the destinations in these districts. JR buses also serve Takao.
- ➔ **Car** A rental car is a good option for exploring the Kitayama area.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Avoid Ōhara on busy autumn-foliage weekends in November. There's only one main road up there from Kyoto and you'll spend too much time sitting in traffic (and the temples will be crowded when you get there). Wait until Monday if you can.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Yōshūji (p123)
- ➔ Hirobun (p123)
- ➔ Seryō-Jaya (p122)

For reviews, see p122. ➔

Best Places to Hike

- ➔ Kurama and Kibune (p120)
- ➔ Takao (p121)
- ➔ Hiei-zan (p121)

For reviews, see p118. ➔

Best Temples to Visit

- ➔ Kurama-dera (p120)
- ➔ Sanzen-in (p119)
- ➔ Jingo-ji (p121)

For reviews, see p118. ➔