

Kyoto Station Area

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Feeling the power of Japanese Buddhism expressed in the soaring main halls and their glittering interiors at **Higashi Hongan-ji** (p50). Its recently refurbished main

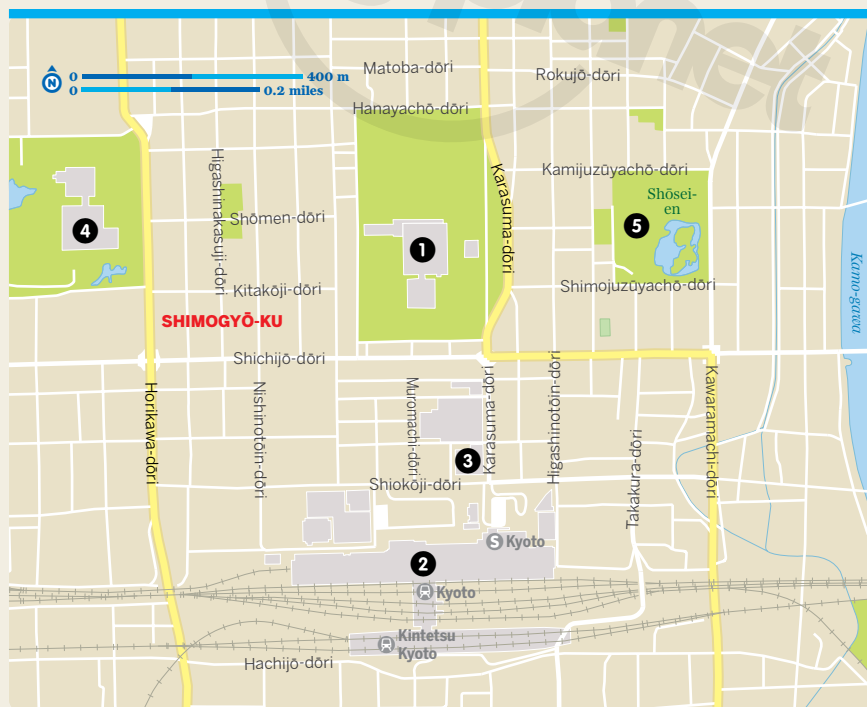
hall is one of the largest wooden buildings on earth.

2 Climbing to the roof of **Kyoto Station** (p50).

3 Savouring the views from the top of **Kyoto Tower** (p50).

4 Immersing yourself in the grandeur of **Nishi Hongan-ji** (p50).

5 Escaping the concrete jungle and taking a breather in **Shōsei-en** (p50).



For more detail of this area, see Map p212 ➔

Explore: Kyoto Station Area

For most travellers to Kyoto, the Kyoto Station area serves as the entry point to the city. Odds are, your first step in Kyoto will be onto one of the train platforms in Kyoto Station. This being the case, we should warn you that your first glimpse of the city is likely to be an anticlimax at best, a rude shock at worst: the area around the station is a sea of concrete, neon and billboards. But, rest assured, there is good stuff in every direction.

Like the areas around most train stations in Japan, the Kyoto Station area is chock-a-block with hotels. However, many people choose to stay in other parts of the city, so they usually hightail it to their digs and skip sightseeing in the Kyoto Station area entirely. This is a shame, since there are some worthwhile sights here, including two of Kyoto's largest and most impressive temples: Higashi Hongan-ji and Nishi Hongan-ji.

Of course, this being the city's main transport hub, the focus here is less on sightseeing and more on meeting your basic needs. The station building itself is packed with restaurants and shops, as are the streets surrounding the buildings. There's a lot of good food here, but few people would head to this area just to eat, given the offerings in other parts of the city.

Local Life

- ➔ **Hang-out** The steps leading up to the roof of the station on the west side of the main concourse of Kyoto Station are where local youths congregate.
- ➔ **Shopping in a hurry** Bic Camera (p51), one of the city's largest and cheapest electronics and camera shops, is connected directly to Kyoto Station by the Nishinotō-in gate.
- ➔ **Food for the trip** Porta (p52), the shopping mall underneath the north side of the station, is crammed with shops that sell takeaway food.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** The JR lines, including the *shinkansen* (bullet train), and the private Kintetsu line operate to/from Kyoto Station.
- ➔ **Bus** Many city buses, JR buses and other bus lines operate to/from the Kyoto Station Bus Terminal (on the north side of the station).
- ➔ **Subway** The Karasuma subway line stops directly underneath Kyoto Station (the Kyoto Station stop is called simply 'Kyoto').

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

During high seasons for tourism (cherry-blossom season in April and foliage season in November), the taxi ranks on the south and north side of Kyoto Station can be very long. If you're in a hurry, walk a few blocks north of the station and hail a cab off the street.

Best Things to See

- ➔ Higashi Hongan-ji (p50)
- ➔ Nishi Hongan-ji (p50)
- ➔ Shōsei-en (p50)

For reviews, see p50. ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Cube (p51)
- ➔ Eat Paradise (p51)
- ➔ Kyoto Rāmen Kōji (p51)

For reviews, see p51. ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Bic Camera (p51)
- ➔ Yodobashi Camera (p52)
- ➔ Isetan Department Store (p52)

For reviews, see p51. ➔