

奈良 Nara

Start your Japanese Journey in Nara

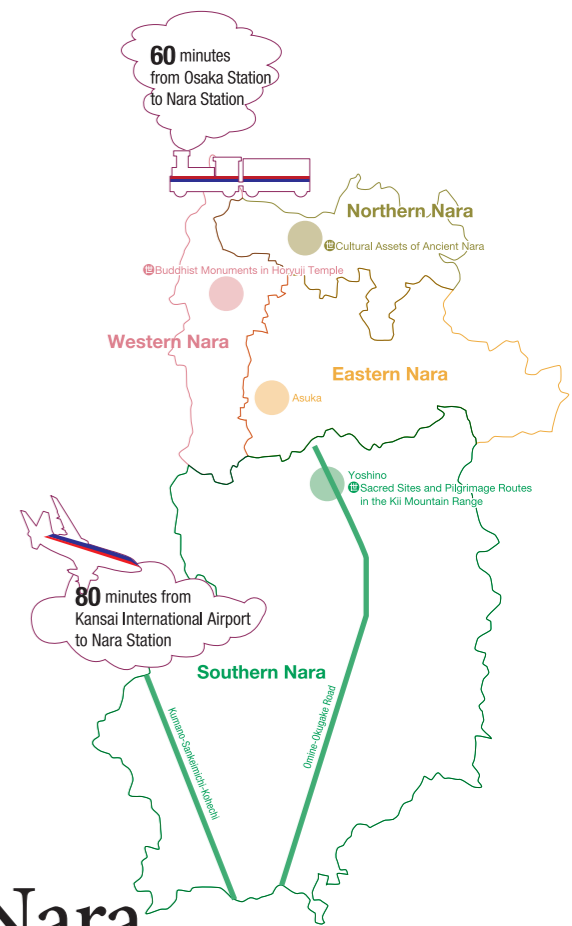




NARA
JAPAN



Start your Japanese Journey in Nara

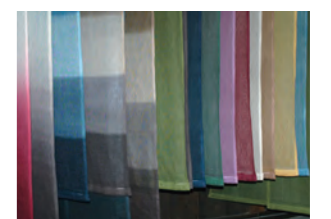


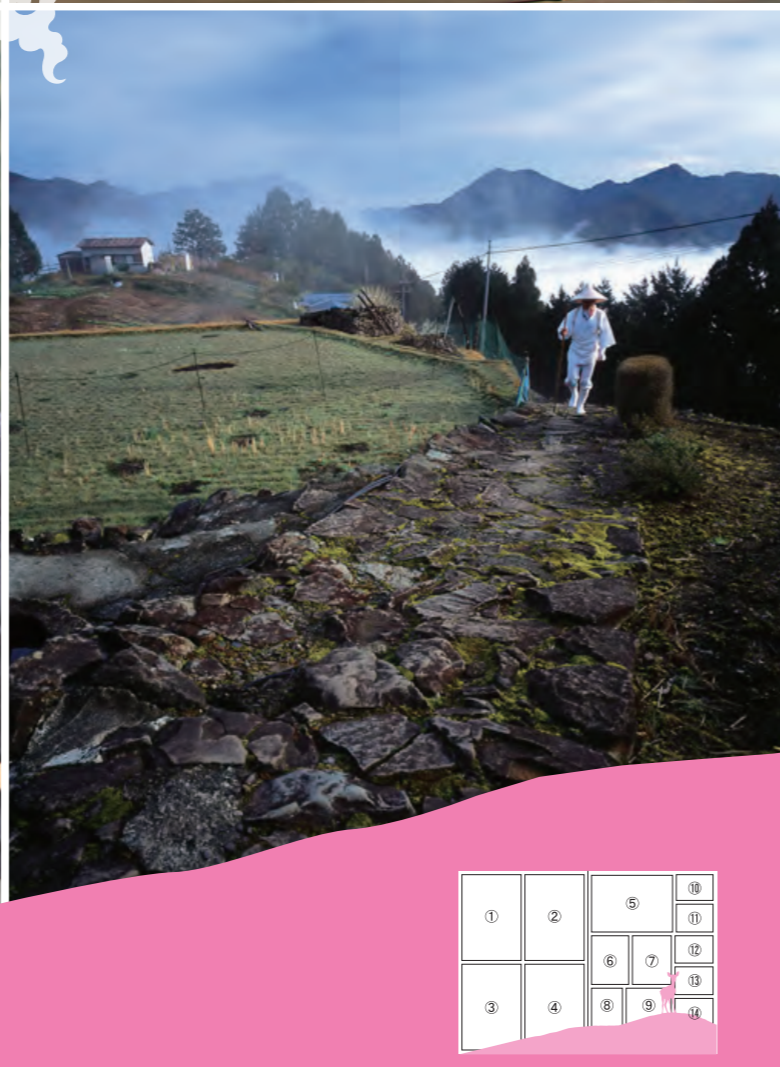
The history of Japan started in Nara. Starting your journey in Japan from Nara is highly recommended.

Nara is situated in the center of Japan, in the Kansai area, where old and new Japan exist side by side. There are many places to go sightseeing, such as historic sites and cityscapes, and there are also great places to eat or shop. Nara was called Yamato in ancient times and it was the region where Japanese culture began. In 710, the ancient capital of Yamato, named Heijō-kyō, was moved to Nara. Nara became a cultural hub of Japan as the endpoint of the Silk Road and received many things and ideas from Europe and Asia. After importing Buddhism and other cultural assets from China and the Korean peninsula, Japan developed a unique culture. In Nara, a lot of tourist assets that came from Japan's history and culture are scattered all around. Nara (with a population of 1.4 million) is within easy access of the other big cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto, so you can arrange your journey in various ways. This pamphlet shows many attractions in Nara divided into four areas. Keep this with you while you stay in Nara so that you can enjoy your journey.

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Experience Nara

Top 14 Seeing Spots in Nara
Start your journey in Japan from Nara

① Soni Highlands famous for silver grass in autumn ② "Neri-Kuyo-Eshiki" at Taimadera Temple is a ceremonious event connecting this world to the next ③ Deer-gathering: Gathering a herd of deer by blowing a natural horn at Nara Park ④ Kumano-Sankeimichi-Kohechi: Footpath leading pilgrims to Kumano ⑤ Vermillion-lacquered corridors at Kasuga Taisha Shrine with hanging lanterns ⑥ "Asuka Ruby", No.1 strawberry brand in Japan ⑦ Muroji Temple with a designated National Treasure, the smallest pagoda of its kind in Japan ⑧ Enjoy viewing beautiful rows of houses in Imai-cho, while strolling through the town ⑨ Nara Park, home of wild deer ⑩ Japanese Sweet featuring the mascot of Nara-Machi, Migawari-zaru ⑪ Try out a Japanese kimono: Strolling around old cities in Nara ⑫ Yatadera Temple famous for hydrangeas ⑬ The Great Statue of Buddha with an affectionate smile at Asukadera Temple ⑭ Stepping stones in Asuka, depicted in a poem of Manyoshu



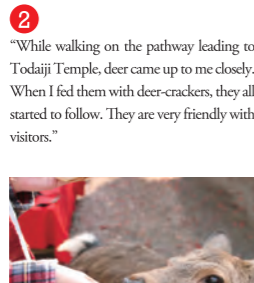
Deer and humans peacefully co-existing at a place of historical and cultural wealth

Nara Park

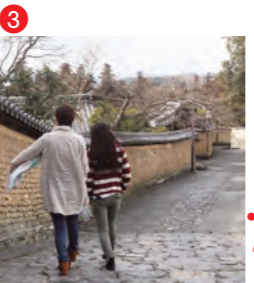
Heading eastward from Kintetsu Nara Station, you can see Mt. Wakakusa in front of you, as well as wild deer coming and going all the time. With about 660 hectares of green grass, Nara Park is the home of wild deer, and also holds UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Todaiji Temple, Kohfukuji Temple, and Kasuga Taisha Shrine. The deer living in Nara have been treated as messengers of god since the ancient times, so the animals have been living with people for a long time in Nara. The park is open for everyone and at any time. There are no gates or fences. Strolling through the park is a good opportunity to experience the past.



1 "After passing through the busy shopping street from Kintetsu Nara Station, I came across Sarusawa-ike Pond. After climbing up 52 steps to Kohfukuji Temple, I took some great photos of the five-story pagoda. Now let's go take a look at the Nanendo Hall!"



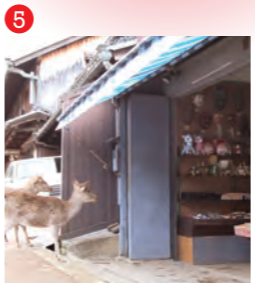
2 "While walking on the pathway leading to Todaiji Temple, deer came up to me closely. When I fed them with deer-crackers, they all started to follow. They are very friendly with visitors."



3 "I came across a path with long mud walls behind Daibutsuden Hall, which leads to Nigatsudo Hall. It offers a glimpse of the past. This area makes me want to walk around in a traditional Japanese kimono."



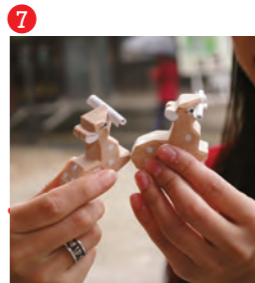
4 "Wow, Todaiji's a really big temple. It not only has Nigatsudo and Sangatsudo Halls, but also a Shigatsudo Hall. Let's pray something good happens while we travel around Nara!"



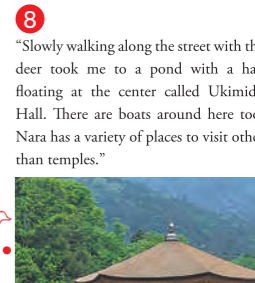
5 "There're many stands selling souvenirs on the street at the foot of Mt. Wakakusa. The deer seem to look hungrily at those stands. They might even be regular customers! After all, the stands do sell deer-crackers."



6 "Taking a break at a tea stand with a nice atmosphere sure is relaxing. It makes me feel as though I've travelled back in time. Nara's great for sightseeing at a leisurely pace. A rushed, fast-paced tour would be such a waste."



7 "This is the fortune I got at a stall in Kasuga Taisha Shrine. The deer's so cute! In Japan, we often get our fortune to see if we will have a lucky day. The fortunes that the deer are holding are also available in English."



8 "Slowly walking along the street with the deer took me to a pond with a hall floating at the center called Ukimido Hall. There are boats around here too. Nara has a variety of places to visit other than temples."



東大寺



Todaiji Temple P43a/2E



興福寺

Kohfukuji Temple P43a/4D



元興寺

Gangoji Temple P43a/5D



平城宮跡

Heijokyo Palace Site P43b/3D

Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara

World Heritage Sites of North Nara have a 1,300-year history of preserving Buddhist art



Of Japan's 16 world heritage sites, three are in Nara prefecture: "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara," "Buddhist Monuments in the Horyuji Area," and "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range."

Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara, which attracts many tourists, was registered on UNESCO's World Heritage list in December of 1998. It was selected for its cultural value as an ancient capital of Japan where the uniqueness of Japanese culture formed through interchanges with China and the Korean peninsula. It was also selected for the art and architecture which have influenced styles and forms of great works in later periods and have been preserved up to the current day. It is highly recommended to take a slow-paced trip to experience all of the impressive cultural richness of such monuments, which are spread across eight sites in Nara City.



春日大社

Kasuga Taisha Shrine P43a/4G

Kasuga Taisha Shrine was established to protect Heijokyo, the ancient capital of Japan in Nara. It is the head shrine of about 3000 branch Kasuga shrines in Japan. The vast precincts are situated in the forest. It has a vermilion-lacquered main building and open fields named Tobihino where there are a lot of deer, and the Manyo Botanical Garden. The shrine is characterized by about 2,000 stone lanterns installed along the long approach leading up to the center of the shrine, as well as the 1,000 lanterns dangling from the top of the gallery.

Primeval Forest in Mt. Kasuga

Mt. Kasuga is specified as a mountain dedicated to Kasuga Taisha Shrine. It has been prohibited to cut down the trees or hunt animals and birds living there since 841. Therefore, the primeval forest boasts Japan's largest number of huge trees, plus many rare trees as well. Primeval Forest in Mt. Kasuga has been preserved as part of the mountain dedicated to Kasuga Taisha Shrine, with a respect for the old Shinto-based religious reverence for mountains and nature itself as a place where deities live. Due to this reason, the Forest preserves scenery imbued with the memories of the cultural traditions of ancient Nara. Therefore, it was not registered on the list of World Natural Heritage, but on the list of World Cultural Heritage.

春日山原始林



唐招提寺

Toshodaiji Temple P43b/6C

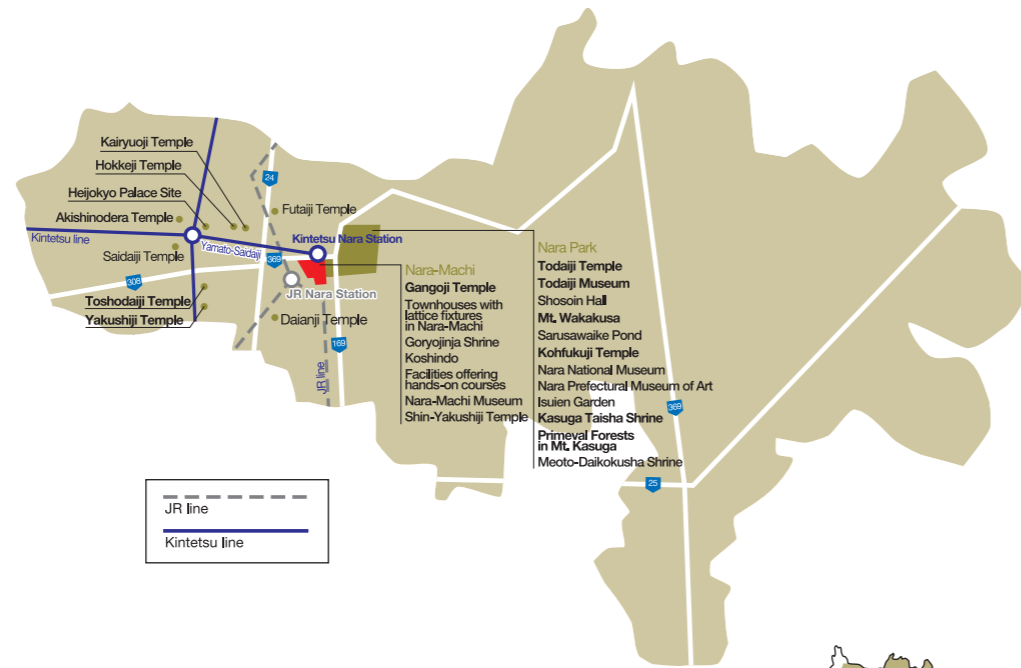
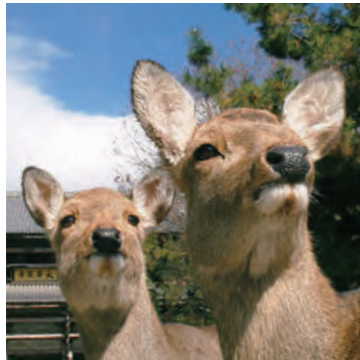
This temple was established in 759 as a place for learning Buddhist precepts. It was founded by Ganjin (Jian zhen), a high-ranking Buddhist priest from Tang Dynasty China, after many hardships. The 10-year repair project for the inside of the Kondo Hall Buddhist statues was completed in 2009. The interior and statues are very valuable because of their rarity as items surviving since the 8th century. The main building, the Kodo (Lecture Hall), is the only existing remnants of architecture from the time of Nara's Heijokyo Capital, or ancient Nara. Additionally, lotuses and Chinese flowers called qionghua planted in the memory of Ganjin, decorate the temple precincts.

Yakushiji Temple

Yakushiji Temple is a temple established by Emperor Tenmu who wished to cure the empress' illness. It was moved to its present location at the time of the relocation of the ancient capital of Nara. Most of the buildings except the East pagoda were unfortunately lost in fires or earthquakes. Following efforts to raise contributions by selling copies of handwritten Buddhist scriptures, step by step restoration was conducted for the architectural plan of Yakushiji Temple, which features a temple style with pagodas on the east and west sides of the Kondo Hall. As a result, many highly valuable pieces of Buddhist art designated as National Treasures have been displayed at the reconstructed buildings.

薬師寺

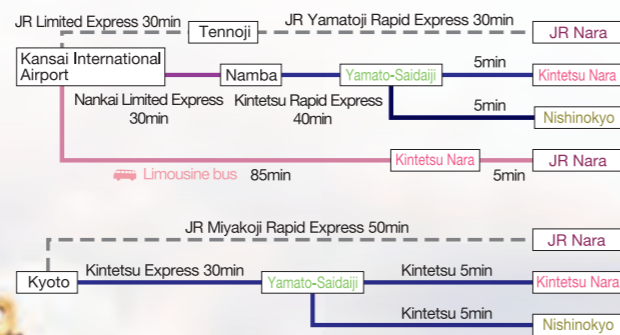




Northern Nara

Areas around Nara Park / Areas around Nishi-no-kyo

Access to Northern Nara



Variety of Products



With Nara Park as a home for deer, various deer-related products can be seen in Northern Nara: At Kasuga Taisha Shrine

① Talismans featuring a white deer that was sent to Mt. Mikasa from the sky ② Palm-sized, deer with a piece of paper telling your fortune [English version available] at Kokuho-kan Hall (Treasure Hall) of Kohfukuji Temple and shops in Nara National Museum ③ Tags with pictures of the Ashura statue and other products featuring Buddhist statues at Nara-Machi Museum ④ Various sizes of charms named Migawari-zaru (a monkey-shaped mascot of Nara-Machi) to ward off evil (it can be used as a good luck charm by writing your wish on the back of it) at Hokkeji Temple ⑤ Handmade dog-shaped charms to ward off evil made at nurseries of Hokkeji Temple, popular among visitors.



Deer-gathering

Gathering a herd of deer by blowing a horn (a reservation is necessary)

This is an event for viewing a herd of deer coming from various parts of Nara Park as the sound of natural horn is heard. The scene is impressive. This course is available if you book in advance by phone.
☎ 0742-22-2388 (Foundation for the Protection of Deer in Nara Park)



Try out a Japanese kimono Strolling around cities in Nara in a kimono

By using a kimono-rental service, visitors can enjoy strolling around Nara-Machi where there are many historic townhouses, as well as around a part of the area with a UNESCO World Heritage sites while wearing a traditional Japanese kimono. The shop will also help you put on kimono in the traditional way.

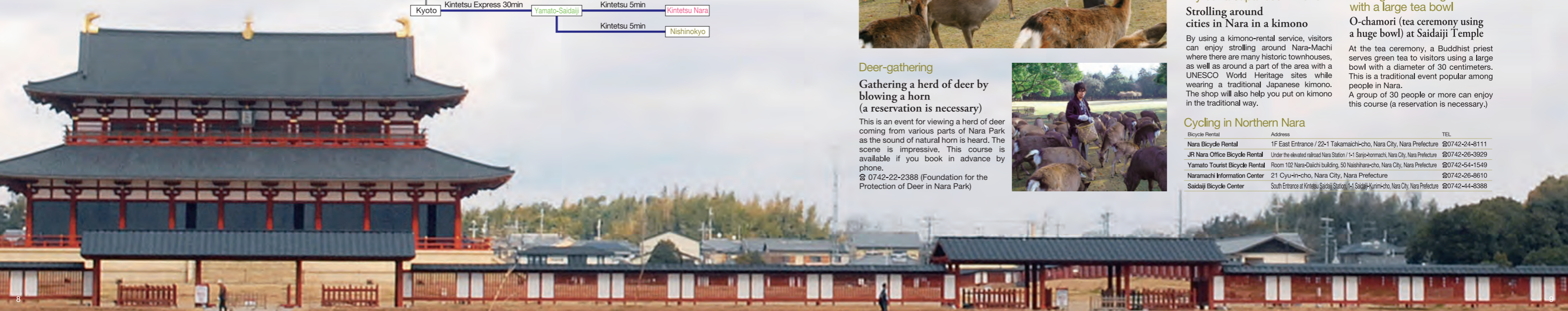


Getting a taste of green tea with a large tea bowl O-chamori (tea ceremony using a huge bowl) at Saidaiji Temple

At the tea ceremony, a Buddhist priest serves green tea to visitors using a large bowl with a diameter of 30 centimeters. This is a traditional event popular among people in Nara. A group of 30 people or more can enjoy this course (a reservation is necessary.)

Cycling in Northern Nara

Bicycle Rental	Address	TEL
Nara Bicycle Rental	1F East Entrance / 22-1 Takamaichi-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture	☎0742-24-8111
JR Nara Office Bicycle Rental	Under the elevated railroad Nara Station / 1-1 Sanjo-honmachi, Nara City, Nara Prefecture	☎0742-26-3929
Yamato Tourist Bicycle Rental	Room 102 Nara-Daichi building, 50 Naishihara-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture	☎0742-54-1549
Naramachi Information Center	21 Cyu-in-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture	☎0742-26-9610
Saidaiji Bicycle Center	South Entrance at Kintetsu Saidaiji Station, 1-1 Saidaiji-Kurimi-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture	☎0742-44-8388





The world's largest gilt-bronze Buddha statue, built to bring happiness to the people

Todaiji Temple P43a/2E



In the 8th century, the people of Japan were facing many disasters such as famines and earthquakes. Emperor Shomu, who wished for the happiness of the people, was very anxious about such great hardships. The large Todaiji Temple was established by the emperor in hopes of achieving peace in the lives of Japanese people. Casting a great statue of Buddha was a national project which took three years. In 752, the casting was completed and a major opening ceremony was held in Nara, Japan's international capital city at the time, in the form of Buddhist dedication service to empower the eyes of the statue. After that, the establishment of seven buildings of the temple continued over the next nearly 40 years.

Most of the existing buildings are replicas built after the 17th century because buildings of the temple were lost twice after the 12th century. The must-sees in Todaiji Temple are the world's largest gilt-bronze statue of the "Cosmic Buddha" or "Universal Buddha" (Dainichi Nyorai), a 15-meter-high, approximately 380-ton statue, and Great Buddha Hall where it is enshrined.

In vast precincts of the temple, there are many buildings including Nigatsudo Hall, Sangatsudo Hall (Hokedo Hall), and Kaidando Hall. In Nigatsudo Hall, a notable event named "Shuni-e," alternatively called "Omizu-tori," which is an event telling people in Nara about the coming of spring, is conducted. In Sangatsudo Hall, many Buddhist statues made in the 7th to 8th centuries are enshrined. Kaidando Hall is a ceremony hall where aspiring Buddhist priests pledge to follow religious precepts. In addition, the building of Todaiji Museum was completed in 2011. The museum offers a chance for visitors to see many pieces of Buddhist art from the Todaiji Temple collection.

406-1 Zoshi-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-22-5511 (Todaiji Temple), 0742-20-5511 (Todaiji Museum) ●Daibutsu-den Hall, Hokkedo Hall (Sangatsudo-dō), Kaidan-in Hall Hours 7:30-17:30 (Apr-Sep), 7:30-17:00 (Oct), 8:00-16:30 (Nov-Feb), 8:00-17:00 (Mar) Admission for the last entrance to Todaiji Museum is required by the time 30min before the closing hour. Note: During Shoso-in Display at Nara National Museum, it is open until 18:00 on weekdays, 19:00 on the week-ends (Fri, Sat&Sat, and holidays). During Shu-ni-e Festival (Mar 1-14), it is open until 19:00 everyday, Open throughout the year, but the museum may be closed during display change. ●¥500 (Todaiji Museum), ¥800 (for entering both Daibutsu-den Hall and Todaiji Museum) ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a loop bus to Daibutsu-den Kasuga-Taisha-me. It's about a 5-min-walk from the terminal. From Kintetsu Narastation, it's about a 20-min-walk.



The treasure house of 8th century art and craftwork

Shosoin Hall P43a/1E



Shosoin Hall is a treasure house of art and craftworks brought to Japan from various lands such as Persia, India, and China via the Silk Road. The treasure house, a storehouse built by putting triangularly cut logs across each other, contains a collection with almost 9,000 pieces. To protect the collection from Japan's high humidity, it has a system to regulate its inside conditions. Shosoin was established in 756. It is the largest building of its kind in Japan. The special display of treasures can be seen only once a year when "Shosoin Exhibition" is held at Nara National Museum.

Zoshi-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎ 0742-26-2811 (Shosoin Hall Office of Imperial Household Agency) Note: Shosoin Hall is closed until 2015 due to maintenance projects. ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Aoyama-jutaku and get off at Imakoji stop. It's about an 8-min-walk from the stop. Otherwise, take a loop bus to Daibutsu-den-Kasuga-Taisha-mae stop. It's about a 15-min-walk from the terminal. From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 25-min-walk.



A vermilion-lacquered Shinto shrine beautifully reflecting light of hanging lanterns

Kasuga Taisha Shrine P43a/4G

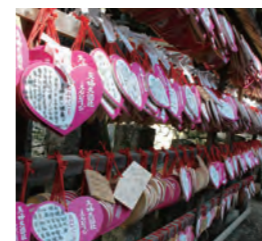


Kasuga Taisha Shrine is surrounded by a thick forest, striking a stark contrast between the appearance of vermilion-lacquered walls and the green background. According to a tradition, in the 8th century when the shrine was established, the enshrined deity came to Mt. Mikasa, riding a white deer. Since then, deer have been protected as messengers of the deity enshrined there.

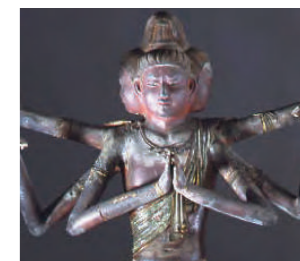
Passing through the second gateway (Ni-no-torii) via a long walkway after passing the first gateway (Ichi-no-torii) takes visitors to the main building. In the precinct surrounded by corridors, there are the main shrine (Gohonden) and stage (Maidono) with a garden beyond the south gate, which is located by the southern corridor.

The main shrine, a designated National Treasure, is composed of four different shrines. The garden is famous for its wisteria, and the blooming flowers make for beautiful scenery in May in the background of the vermilion-lacquered shrines. In the vast precincts, 61 other shrines are situated. Meoto-Daikoku-sha Shrine, the twelfth shrine dedicated to the deity of romantic match-making and happy relationship between men and women, enshrines heart-shaped votive tablets.

Kasuga Taisha Shrine is characterized with two major events: the Buddhist Lantern Festival and Kasuga Wakamiya Festival. On the day of the first event, the path leading to the shrine is lit up with about 2,000 stone lanterns, and the corridors with about 1,000 dangling lanterns. The latter event offers visitors a chance to see a parade of people wearing historical costumes. With Primal Forest in Mt. Kasuga, which has been protected as the mountain dedicated to Kasuga Taisha Shrine, a complete view of all around the shrine gives a glimpse of ancient days in Nara.



160 Kasuga-no-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-22-7788 ●Main shrine Hours 6:30-17:30 (Apr-Oct), 7:00-16:30 (Nov-Mar) Homotsuden Hall (Treasure Hall) Hours 9:00-16:00 Manyo Botanical Garden Hours 9:00-16:00 ☎: During display change four times a year (Hobutsu-den Hall) / Every Mondays in a period between Dec and Jan (Manyo Botanical Garden) ●Special admission Main shrine ¥500, Hobutsu-den Hall ¥400 Entrance fee ¥500 (Manyo Botanical Garden) ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Kasuga-Taisha-Honden. Otherwise, take a loop bus to Kasuga-Taisha-Omote-Sando. It's about a 10-min-walk from the stop.



A temple where one-sixth of the Buddhist sculptures are National Treasures

Kohfukuji Temple P43a/4D



Kohfukuji Temple, dating from 710 when it was relocated from Asuka to the present place and named Kohfukuji Temple in response to the relocation of the ancient state capital Heijokyo, is a temple with the second highest wooden five-story pagoda, about 50-meter-high, in Japan. Like Sarusawa-ike Pond, the appearance of the temple represents the landscape of Nara. The pagoda was lost in fire several times and was repeatedly rebuilt. The existing pagoda is a replica built in the 15th century. Like the pagoda, the Kondo Hall was rebuilt in the 15th century. The building scale and architectural style were reproduced at the same level of original ones. In this imposing hall with a wide frontage, a statue of the Medicine Buddha is enshrined as the principal deity.

Kokuhokan, or the National Treasure House, houses Kohfukuji Temple's Buddhist art collection. Of the Buddhist works of art, the statue of Ashura, famous for its three faces and six arms, is enshrined here and has been attracting many Buddhist statue enthusiasts in Japan. In recent years, this Ashura statue has triggered a revival in the popularity of going to see Buddhist statues in Japan.

The treasure house was remodeled in 2010 and glass display cases were removed, so now visitors are able to see Buddhist statues being indirectly illuminated without reflections on the glass.

In addition, in the vast precincts of the temple, there are other attractive buildings such as Hokuendo Hall and Nanendo Hall of the main hall, Hakkakudo Hall, as well as a National Treasure three-story pagoda, and Chukondo Hall, which is under reconstruction. The sites are always crowded with many tourists and local visitors.

48 Noborioji-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-22-7755 ●9:00-17:00 (last entrance by 16:45) ☐Open throughout the year ●Kokuho-kan Hall ¥600, Kondo Hall ¥300 (¥800 for entering both halls), free admission to grounds. ●From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 5-min-walk. From JR Nara Station, take a loop bus and get off at Kencho-mae stop.



The grass-burning of Mt. Wakakusa, a representative image of Nara



Mt. Wakakusa P43a/2H

Mt. Wakakusa, a 342-meter high grass-covered mountain, is famous as a home for many wandering deer who feed on the grass on the 33-hectare gently sloping mountain. The mountain is popular among hikers because it is easy to climb. From the top of the mountain, it is possible to see a view of the entire Nara basin, as well as Great Buddha Hall (Daibutsuden Hall) of Todaiji Temple. As an annual event, the grass of Mt. Wakakusa is burned in January. Seeing the burning grass of the mountain brings people a real feeling of winter in Nara.



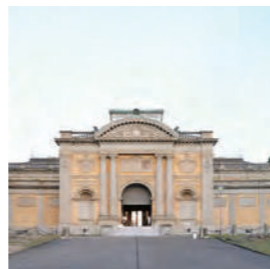
469 Zoshi-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-22-0375 (Administration Office of Nara Park) ●9:00-17:00 (3rd Sat of Mar to 2nd Sun of Dec) ●¥150 ☑From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Kasuga-Taisha-Honden. It's about a 5-min-walk from the terminal. Otherwise, take a loop bus to Daibutsuden-Kasuga-Taisha-mae. It's about a 10-min-walk from the terminal.

The museum's extensive collection of Buddhist art of Nara



Nara National Museum P43a/4E

Nara National Museum is composed of a main building, a French Renaissance-style hall named Nara Buddhist Sculpture Hall, and an annex designed as an imitation of Shoso-in Treasure House. Nara National Museum is comparable to other top national museums in Tokyo, Kyoto and Kyushu. The purpose of establishing this museum was to prevent loss or damage of cultural properties, such as Buddhist sculptures, when handed down to temples and shrines in Nara. The museum holds the annual Shoso-in Exhibition, an attractive special display, between the end of October and the beginning of November.



50 Noborijo-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎050-5542-8600 ●Hours 9:00-17:00 (last entrance by 30min before the closing hour) Note: Service hours may vary depending on conditions. A confirmation is required. ☑Mon (or the next business day in case of holidays), Jan 1 Note: Closing days may vary depending on conditions. A confirmation is required. ●¥500 (except special exhibitions) ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk. From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a loop bus to Himuro-jinja-Kokuritsu-Hakubutsukan (National Museum).

An extensive collection of Japanese woodblock prints and Japanese paintings



Nara Prefectural Museum of Art P43a/3D

Nara Prefectural Museum of Art was established in 1973 to display a donated collection of art, ranging from Japanese woodblock prints and Japanese paintings created in the 17th century to modern works of art. The museum owns about 4,400 pieces, including paintings, craftworks, sculptures, calligraphy works, and some documents showing traditional lifestyles. Of these works, some are created by artists who are closely connected to Nara.



10-6 Noborijo-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-23-3968 ●9:00-17:00 (last entrance by 30min before closing hour) ☑Mon (or the next business day in case of holidays), New Year and year-end (Dec 28-Jan 4) ●¥400 Note: Free of charge by showing the passport (except during special displays) Entrance fee ¥500 (except special display) ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 5-min-walk. From JR Nara Station, take a loop bus to Kencho-mae.

A garden featuring a path around a pond with the background of a UNESCO World Heritage Site



Isuien Garden P43a/3E

Even though it is situated in the center of Nara City, Isuien Garden is one of the best gardens in Nara, and is free from the hustle and bustle of the city, giving visitors a calm feeling of time passing by slowly. The garden is designed in a style featuring a path around a pond, making use of a beautiful surrounding landscape of mountains in the distance of the neighborhood trees in the layout or design of the garden. Visitors can view all of Mt. Wakakusa and the tilted roof on the south gate of Todaiji Temple. A stroll through the garden makes it possible to feel the atmosphere of ancient Nara.



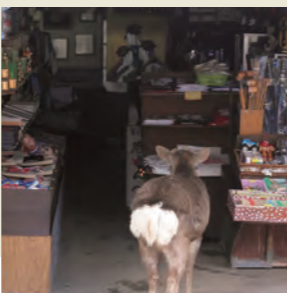
74 Suimono-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-25-0781 ●9:30-16:00 ☑Tue and New Year & year-end (Open every day in Apr, May, Oct, and Nov) ●¥650 ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk. From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a loop bus to Kencho-mae.

Column

Deer everywhere you go; the uniqueness of Nara

The first thing that meets visitors' eyes in Nara Park is probably the numerous deer leisurely feeding on the grass around town. They walk freely along the street while drivers patiently ignore the hindrance. They are everywhere in the vast precincts of tourist sites such as Kasuga Taisha Shrine, Todaiji Temple, and Kohfukuj Temple or on the open field around the foot of Mt. Wakakusa. The uniqueness of Nara is that there are traffic signs "Slow - Deer Crossing", everywhere in the city, and that there are shops selling "deer crackers" to feed them. They are well-known for drawing close to tourists trying to feed them. The gentle atmosphere produced at the place where people are living with wild deer is worth a visit because it is such an uncommon scene. Deer have been treated as "a sacred messenger" or "a dedicated animal" since the time when a tradition concerning Kasuga Taisha Shrine was formed about 1,300 years ago, which says that the dedicated deity came to the shrine riding a white deer. Since then, the city has become a home of deer and has been a place of peaceful coexistence between the deer and humans. Now, over 1,000 wild deer native to Japan live in Nara Park. Of the deer, almost 70 percent of deer are female and they breed in May to June every year. Then, brown spotted fawns make their park debut in the middle of June. With strong maternal love, the female deer keep a close eye on their young. Since the deer become nervous at this time of year,

tourists should take care not to draw too close. When it comes to events concerning deer, there is a big ceremony to cut the two horns of male deer named "Tsunokiri," a 300-year old event featuring male deer, in October. This is a ceremony to cut overgrown horns of deer in front of an audience. In addition, there is another big event named "Deer Gathering," which gives visitors a rare chance to see a huge number of deer gathered together at a one place. The spectacle of deer drawn together by the sound of a horn is a must-see. To preserve the deer in Nara, the Foundation for the Protection of Deer in Nara Park was established. The organization plays a role of raising awareness in the general public about the protective actions for the coexistence between humans and deer, as well as of improving public attitudes toward the animals. In order to protect deer from traffic accidents, the group offers a service to install clearly visible traffic signs. Thanks to such activities, the uniqueness of Nara as a place for coexistence between humans and deer has been maintained for a long time. With the friendly atmosphere, it seems that the deer in Nara bow to tourists when they are fed special deer-crackers.



A kind of history museum in which old and new things are intermingled



Nara-Machi P43a/6D

Nara-Machi refers to some districts in the city center of Nara, covering an area where there are old townhouses situated among the remnants of Gangoji Temple precincts, which were moved from Asuka at the time of the relocation of the ancient capital named Heijokyo. In Nara-Machi, there are temples and shrines built in the 8th century, and townhouses of merchants and common people built in and after the 17th century. This is because the area had been formed with Buddhist temples as the central part, and then developed into a business district. Recently, some shops such as cafes and art galleries, which were remodeled from townhouses, were opened in Nara-Machi area. What attracted these shop operators is the charm of Nara-Machi. The owners are comparatively young and creative in expressing their individuality, and they added a new character to this old district. The intermingled sense between old and new in Nara-Machi entices visitors to take a stroll in the street.



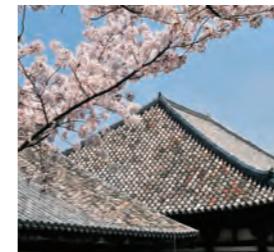
Around Gangoji Temple in Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-27-1820 (Office of the Foundation for Nara-Machi Regional Development) ●on an as needed basis ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk. From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a loop bus to Tenri-eki-Shimo-yama and get off at Fukuchi-in-cho stop.

The temple with the oldest round roof tiles in Japan



Gangoji Temple P43a/5D

Gangoji Temple started in 718 when the first full-scale temple in Japan Asukadera (Hokoji Temple) was moved to its present location. However, now the temple is just composed of remains of Buddhist priests' residences, which are called "Gokuraku-do Hall," and Zen-do Hall, a lecture hall. One point of interest is that the oldest round tiles in Japan, which were produced in the 6th century, still remain on some parts of the roofs of two halls.



11 Chuin-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-23-1377 ●9:00-17:00 (last entrance by 16:30) Open throughout the year ●¥400 ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Tenri or Shimoyama and get off at Fukuchi-in-cho stop. It's about a 5-min-walk from the stop. It's about a 15-min-walk from Kintetsu Nara Station. From JR Nara Station, take a bus to Tenri and get off at Tanaka-cho stop. It's about a 5-min-walk from the stop.

A shrine dedicated to the deity of marriage, famous for its beautiful double-flowered cherry and peony trees



Goryojinja Shrine P43a/5D

Goryojinja Shrine, which is characterized with its vibrant vermilion-lacquered gateway, has long been popular among the local people. The blossoms of double-flowered cherry and peony trees on the precincts of the shrine are must-sees. The shrine is always crowded with many visitors in the peak seasons for viewing blossoms. It also attracts young couples because it is a shrine dedicated to the deity of marriage.



24 Yakushido-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-23-5309 ●Visiting is possible on an as needed basis. ☑Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk.

Catching a sight of traditional townhouses in Nara-Machi



Townhouses with lattice fixtures P43a/6D

Two-storied townhouses in Nara-Machi reproduce a typical atmosphere of traditional townhouses from the late 19th century in Nara. The structure of a traditional townhouse is characterized by its narrow frontage and long depth. Building a house with narrow frontage was a good way to avoid a higher tax rate, which varied depending on the width of frontage: the narrower the frontage, the lower the tax. The structure was also a result of popularity of houses facing a main street. In addition, there are other noticeable things concerning the design of these houses: lattice fixtures and small windows that look like insect cages. The former is used as a kind of blinds, as well as for ventilation. The latter is used for allowing the rooms to get a lot of sunlight. There are a lot of ideas for making life comfortable in such ways.



44 Gangoji-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-23-4820 ●9:00-17:00 ☑Mon (or the next business day in case of holidays), the day after holidays (except Sat&Sun), New Year & year-end (Dec26-Jan5) ●Free of charge ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk.

The mascot of Nara-Machi, Migawari-zaru



Koshindo P43a/6C

Koshindo is the birthplace of the "migawari-zaru," a monkey-shaped charm against evil which is usually hung under the eaves of townhouses in Nara-Machi. It is believed that hanging a charm for each family member helps to protect the whole family. Therefore, the charm is called "migawari-zaru" ("migawari" means a substitute).



14 Nishi-shin-ya-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ●Visiting is possible on an as needed basis. ☑Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk.

Historical documents about the traditional lifestyle in Nara-Machi on display



Nara-Machi Museum P43a/5D

Nara-Machi Museum was established by the current director who decided to preserve Nara-Machi by providing his own house as an archive for displaying several kinds of artifacts and documents. There are many daily use items and articles, as well as documents relating to the history and ethnology of Nara-Machi. In Nara-Machi Museum, visitors can buy "Migawari-zaru", a monkey-shaped charm against evils, which is the mascot of Nara-Machi.



12 Nishi-shin-ya-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-22-5509 ●10:00-16:00 (Sat, Sun and holidays /Main building), 10:00-16:00 (Mon, Tue, Thu, and Fri/ annex and shops) ☑Mon through Fri (Main building), Wed (annex and shops) ●Free of charge ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, it's about a 15-min-walk.

A temple with Medicine Buddha protected by Twelve Divine Generals



Shin-Yakushiji Temple P43a/6G

Shin-Yakushiji Temple is a historic temple built in 747 in hopes of curing Emperor Shomu's illness. It was quite a large temple with a complete compound containing seven structures. Unfortunately, most of the buildings were burned down in a big fire caused by lightning. Fortunately, the main building has maintained its appearance since the time of its establishment in the 8th century. The inside of the main building is very impressive. It features a wooden statue of Medicine Buddha and the largest statue of his Twelve Divine Generals in Japan.



1352 Takabatake-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-22-3736 ●9:00-17:00 ☑Open throughout the year ●¥600 ☑From Kintetsu Nara Station, take a loop bus to Wariishi-cho (Shin-Yakushiji-guchi). It's about a 15-min-walk from the terminal.



A large temple with beautiful pagodas on both sides

Yakushiji Temple P43b/7C



Yakushiji Temple was founded in 718 when a building built by Emperor Shomu in hopes of curing his wife's illness was moved to the present location in response to the relocation of the ancient capital called Heijokyo. The temple used to boast splendid buildings such as Kondo Hall, pagodas sitting at both east and west sides, and Kodo Hall (a lecture hall) surrounded by corridors. The plan was called "the arch of the dragon king's palace." Unfortunately, almost all the buildings were burned down in fires caused by civil wars and natural disasters over the years. The pagoda situated at the east side of the temple is the only surviving building. After a series of restoration projects, some buildings of the temple, such as Kondo Hall, the western pagoda, the entrance gate, Kodo Hall, and corridors were rebuilt one by one. Today's temple compound is a complete recreation of the way it was at the time of its founding. The surviving pagoda at the east side, which was built in the 8th century, makes a sharp contrast with the western pagoda, which was reconstructed in the 20th century. Each looks like a six story pagoda because of its structure with characteristic ornamental roofs; however, both are actually three-story pagodas. In Kondo Hall, sitting at the center of the buildings, the principal image of worship, considered "the very best masterpiece of the Buddhist art in Japan," is a statue of Medicine Buddha (Bhaisajyaguru) enshrined on a lotus pedestal whose surface is carved with beautiful patterns, and is believed to have been delivered through the Silk Road. In Kodo Hall, the statue of the Future Buddha (Miroku) and his two attendants and the stone image of the historical Buddha's footprint, a monument made in the 8th century and one of the oldest monument of its kinds in Japan, are the principal images of worship.

The temple attracts people who attend sessions where they can hand-copy Buddhist scriptures with writing brush and also enjoy a casual and fun lecture about Buddhism. It should be noted that the eastern pagoda is closed now due to the demolition and repair works until 2018.

457 Nishino-kyo-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-33-6001 ●8:30-17:00 (last entrance by 16:30) ☒Open throughout the year (A confirmation is necessary to check if Genjo-Sanzoin-Garan is open) ●¥500 (¥800 during Genjo-Sanzaoin-Garan is on display) ●From Kintetsu Nishino-kyo Station



The remains of the first fully developed, internationally famous capital of Japan in the 8th century

Heijokyo Palace Site P43b/3D-3E

Heijokyo was the first fully developed capital city of Japan, the center of politics and the economy, which lasted for about 70 years until about 780. At the remains of Heijokyo palace, visitors can see some replicas of the buildings and a restored garden: the Suzakumon of Heijokyo Palace (the main gate to the palace), Daigoku-den Imperial Audience Hall (the hall in which Emperor conducted ceremonies and made political decisions), and To-in Garden. The site, which stretches almost one kilometer from north to south and over a kilometer east to west, was opened to celebrate the 1,300 anniversary of the Nara Heijokyo capital as a major national event in 2010.



Sakicho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-35-8201 (Historical Archives) ●9:00-16:30 (last entrance by 16:00) ☒Mon, New Year & year-end (Heijokyo palace Archives, Relics Display, Daigoku-den Hall, Heijokyo Historic Archives) ●Entrance fee Heijokyo Historic Archives ¥500/ Note: Free of charge by showing passport. ●From Kintetsu Yamato-Saidaiji Station, it's about a 10-min-walk. From JR Nara Station, take a bus to Saidaiji and get off at Heijo-kyuseki stop.



The temple closely related to Ganjin (688-763), a high-ranking Buddhist priest who introduced the system to follow Buddhist precepts in Japan



Toshodaiji Temple P43b/6C

Toshodaiji Temple was built by Ganjin, a high-ranking Buddhist priest from China, as a private temple for Buddhist priests in training who wished to follow Buddhist precepts. There are buildings such as Kondo Hall, a store house called Azekura, and Koro (a bell tower) on the precincts. All of these buildings have been designated as National Treasures in Japan. The buildings give a glimpse of the way it was at the time of its founding. On May 19th at the Round Fans Festival, called "Uchiwamaki," heart-shaped fans are distributed to visitors.



13-46 Gojo-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-33-7900 ●8:30-17:00 (last entrance by 16:30) ☒Open throughout the year (A confirmation is necessary if Genjo-Sanzoin-Garan is open) ●¥600 ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Rokujo-zan and get off at Toshodaiji stop.

The temple known as a place for seeking peace and security and wishing for protection against cancer



Daianji Temple P43b/7G

Daianji Temple was founded in the 8th century when it was moved to the present place in response to the relocation of ancient capital Heijokyo, and then called Daianji Temple. Originally, it was quite a huge temple. The precincts covered a vast area in which two 70-meter-high pagodas were situated at both the eastern and western sides of the temple. The temple was one of Japan's top temples, as well as a Buddhist educational facility for over 800 priests seeking the way of Buddhism. Now, Daianji Temple is known as a temple to which visitors go for worshipping for preventing cancer.



2-18-1 Daianji, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-61-6312 ●9:00-17:00 (last entrance by 16:00) ☒Dec 31 ●Main Shrine and Shuzo-ko (Treasure Hall) ¥400 ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Daianji, Sharp, or Shira-tsuchi-cho, and get off at Daianji stop. It's about a 10-min-walk from the stop.



A large temple in West Nara

Saidaiji Temple P43b/3B

Saidaiji Temple was built in 764 in hopes of bringing peace and order to the country. A notable event at the temple is a special tea ceremony. A huge container, 40 centimeters in diameter and 10 kilos in weight, is used as a cup for the ceremony, and the guests are asked to pass a cup of tea around and drink from it in turn. It is believed that the origin of the ceremony was an event offering tea to the deity of the village shrine in hope of bringing peace and order to the country, and then the tea was offered to visitors. A group of 30 people or more can enjoy this ceremony (a reservation is necessary.)

1-1-5 Saidaiji-shiba-machi, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-45-4700 ●8:30-16:30 (Main temple, Shiten-do Hall, Aizome-do Hall) / 8:30-17:30 Jun-Sep 9:00-16:30 (Juho-kan Hall is open during Jan 15-Feb4, Apr1-May31, Oct25-Nov15) ☒Open throughout the year ●Main temple ¥400/Shiten-do Hall, Aizome-do Hall and Juho-kan Hall each ¥300 ●From Kintetsu Saidaiji Station, it's about a 3-min-walk.

The temple with a beautiful statue of Gigeiten, the Muse of the East



Akishinodera Temple P43b/1B

The main building of Akishinodera Temple is situated in a group of mossy trees in Akishino. In the main building, 25 Buddhist statues including a statue of Medicine Buddha with two attendants, the principal deity of the temple, which is designated as an Important Cultural Asset, are enshrined. Of these statues, the statue of Gigeiten, the deity of art, in particular, is famous. The deity might be comparable with the Muse, a Greek goddess, so it is called the "Muse of the East" in Japan. The elegant appearance attracts many classical art enthusiasts. In addition, the deity is popular among people in show business in Japan.



757 Akishino-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-45-4600 ●9:30-16:30 ☒Open throughout the year ●¥500 ●From Kintetsu Yamato-Saidaiji Station, take a bus to Oshikuma, and get off at Akishino-dera stop.

A temple people visit for protection while traveling or studying overseas



Kairyuouji Temple P43b/3F

It is believed that Kairyuouji Temple was established in the 8th century. The principal deity of the temple is Eleven-faced Kannon, a Buddhist figure of compassion. The first chief priest was an academic monk who went to China during the Tang Dynasty (618-906) as a member of a missionary to bring some Buddhist scriptures after overcoming hardships caused by heavy storms at sea. With such a background, the temple became popular among people who wish to go or to study abroad safely.



897 Hokkeji-Kitamachi, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-33-5765 ●9:30-16:30 ☒Aug 12-17, Dec 24-31 ●¥400 ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Stations, take a bus to Saidaiji or Koku-Jieitai-mae, and get off at Hokkeji stop.

A nunnery famous for its dog-shaped talisman



Hokkeji Temple P43b/3F

Hokkeji Temple was established for women at the direction of Empress Komyo, the wife of Emperor Shomu who was a founder of Todaiji Temple. With deep understanding of the teachings of Buddhism, Empress Komyo was eager to promote social welfare in the country. She was the first to carry out such a project in Japan. Visitors can buy dog-shaped talismans produced by priestesses as charms against evil. Making such talismans is considered as one of the austerities at the nunnery.



882 Hokkeji-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-33-2261 ●9:00-17:00 ☒Open throughout the year ●Main temple ¥500-700/ ¥800-1000 for entering both Main temple and Meisho Garden Note: Admission fees may vary depending on times. A confirmation is necessary. ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Stations, take a bus to Saidaiji or Koku-Jieitai-mae, and get off at Hokkeji stop.

A temple often alternatively called "Narihira-dera" named after Ariwara-no Narihira, a famous poet in the 9th century



Futaiji Temple P43b/2G

Futaiji Temple started in 847 when Ariwara-no-Narihira, a great poet in the 9th century, carved a statue of Sho Kannon as the primal deity of the temple. The statue, reportedly carved out of wood by the great poet, is enshrined in the main building of the temple. Visitors can see several kinds of beautiful flowers such as weeping forsythia, yellow iris, water lily, and camellia. The flowers are must-sees in spring.



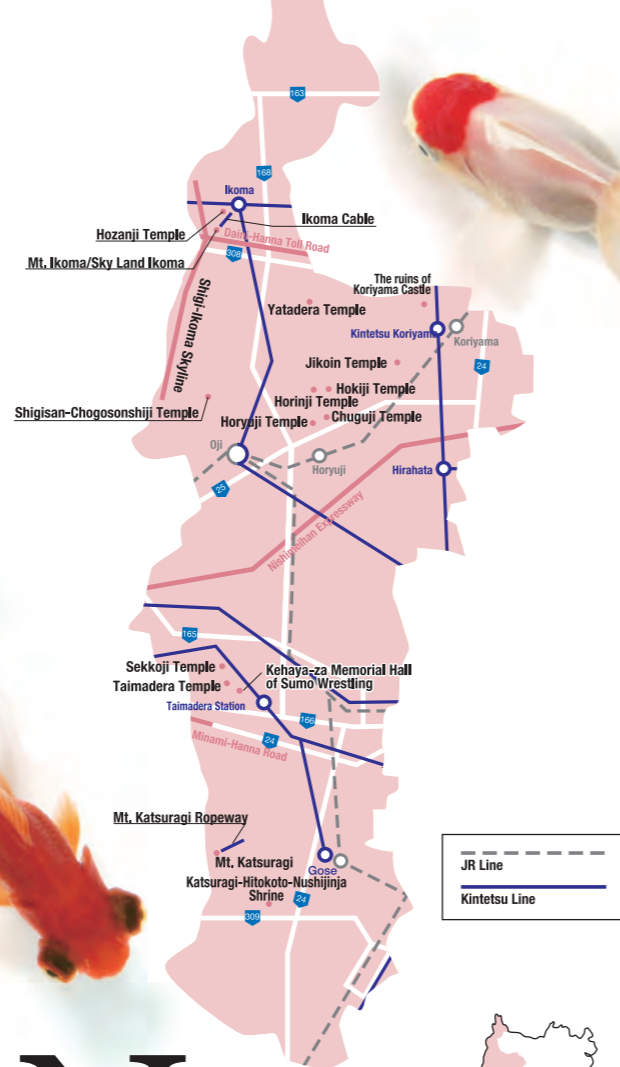
517 Horen-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0742-22-5278 ●9:00-17:00 Open throughout the year ●¥400 ●From JR or Kintetsu Nara Stations, take a bus to Saidaiji or Koku-Jieitai-mae, and get off at Ichijo-koko-mae stop. It's about 5-min-walk from the stop. From Kintetsu Shin-Omiya Station, it's about a 15-min-walk.

Column

Ganjin (688-763), a high-ranking Buddhist priest who came from China to introduce to Japan the system for following Buddhist precepts

In the 8th century in Nara, it was necessary to invite a Buddhist priest capable of conducting a ceremony to give the Buddhist precepts to Buddhist priests in training. In response to a request from Japan, Ganjin, finally arrived at Nara after six failed attempts to come to Japan and having undergone hardships during which he went blind. It was 11 years later from the first attempt to when Ganjin, 66 years old by that time, was heartily welcomed in Japan. At the beginning of his stay in Japan, he conducted ceremonies to give the Buddhist precepts to many candidates including Emperor Shomu. Ganjin was eager to improve the observance of rules among Japanese Buddhist priests. In 755, he established Kaidan-in (an ordination platform) at Todaiji Temple, which was the first formal organization to conduct the ceremony of giving Buddhist precepts in Japan. In 759, he established Toshodaiji Temple on donated lands in Nishinokyo in Nara. Ganjin hoped that the temple would become an ideal place for Buddhist priests under his control to practice austerities according to their ambitions, so the word "shodai" ("private temple") was used. Ganjin's teachings have been handed down from generation to generation. Even now, there are many people visiting the tomb of Ganjin, which was built in the precincts of Toshodaiji Temple, showing their respect for his achievements in the world of Japanese Buddhism.

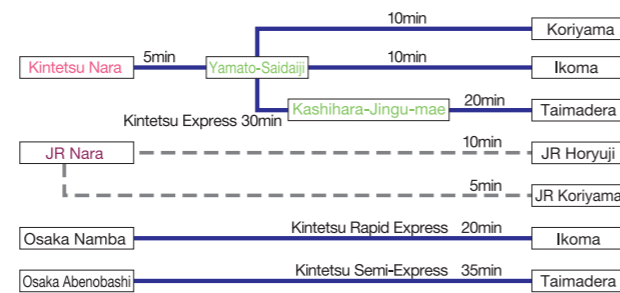




Western Nara

Areas around Horyuji Temple

Access to Western Nara



Variety of Products



- 1 Traditional Japanese paper with an indigo-dyed pattern of goldfish
- 2 Various goldfish-shaped straps made of indigo cloth at Mt. Ikoma
- 3 Two special cable cars featuring unique mascots, a dog and a cat named Bull and Mike, take tourists to the top of Mt. Ikoma. The cable cars are popular among tourists because the cars make barking or meowing sounds when they pass each other using a special sound system. Get to the mountaintop using the unique cable cars and take a souvenir picture with them at Jikoin Temple
- 4 Clam-shaped talismans with a small bell, popular among visitors wishing for help from Kannon at Shigisan-chogosonshiji Temple
- 5 Tiger-shaped talismans, popular among visitors who believe the talismans will protect them



Hands-on Course



Indigo dye

Experience dying cloth using a big jar of indigo dye

You can experience making a dyed handkerchief in indigo at a shop. This course offers a chance to dye a cloth with a big jar for indigo dye in the traditional way, just like artisans used to do. There are several dying techniques. You can take home your very own beautiful hand-dyed indigo handkerchief. One course is about 90 minutes. Starting from 9:00 / 10:45 / 13:15 / 15:00 (four times a day)

Cha-no-yu, or tea ceremony

A course to learn how to serve a bowl of green tea at a temple famous for tea ceremony

The tea is made by adding hot water to powdered green tea, called matcha, and mixing it using a whisk made in Nara.

The tea ceremony, a unique part of Japanese culture, emphasizes the host's hospitality towards the guests in a series of fixed manners.

In the beautiful garden on the precincts of Jikoin Temple, you can feel a calm atmosphere while learning how to serve a bowl of tea.

It's a great chance to taste matcha with Japanese sweets. (a reservation is necessary) ☎ 0743-53-3004 (Jikoin Temple)



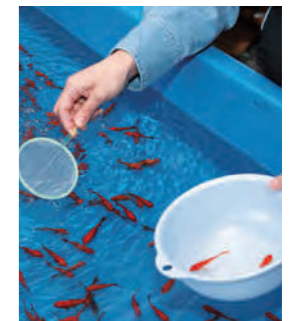
Kingyo-sukui, or Goldfish-scooping

A course of scooping goldfish at Yamato-Koriyama

In Japan, a game named kingyo-sukui, or goldfish-scooping is played at fair stalls during festivals or similar events held in the precincts of temples and shrines.

Goldfish scooping is an amusing game for children using a flat scoop made of thin paper and wire frame with which they scoop the red or black fish that were cultivated locally.

It is a game to see how many swimming fish you can scoop up from water with a thin, weak paper tool. In Yamato-Koriyama, home of cultivated goldfish in Japan, visitors can play this game everyday.



Cycling in Western Nara

Bicycle Rental	Address	TEL
Horyuji Center	1-1-7 Horyuji-minami, Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture (Inside Nara-Kotsu Horyuji Bus Center at JR Horyuji Station)	☎0745-74-0047
Horyuji i Center	1-8-25 Horyuji-minami, Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture (Ikaruga-cho Tourism Association)	☎0745-74-6800



Home of the Buddhist Statue famous for its enigmatic smile

Chuguji Temple P44c/4E



Chuguji Temple was originally built as a residence of Prince Shotoku's mother. After her death, it was made into a nunnery in accordance to her wishes. There is a wooden statue of Nyoirin Kannon, a statue made in the 7th century, sitting in the half lotus position with its right foot on its left knee and its right hand on its cheek as it smiles slightly. The smile is called an enigmatic smile, and in Japan, it is considered as one of the three most famous smiles in the world along with the Sphinx and Mona Lisa. The nunnery has been preserved for 1400 years. During these years, the Tenjukoku Shucho Mandala, a national treasure which has embroidered patterns believed to be the oldest in Japan, was relocated here from Horyuji Temple.



1-1-2 Horyuji-kita, Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-75-2106 ●9:00 - 16:30 (last entrance by 16:15) 9:00-16:00 (Oct1-Mar20/last entrance by 15:45) ☺Open throughout the year ● ¥500 ●By Bus From JR Horyuji Station, take a bus to Horyuji-mon-mae. From Kintetsu Tsutsui Station, take a bus to Oji and get off at Cyuguji-mae stop. It's about a 5-min walk from the stop.



The Oldest Wooden Building in the World

Horyuji Temple P44c/4E



Horyuji Temple was established by Prince Shotoku Taishi(574-622) and Empress Suiko (554-628) in 607 to show respect for the late Emperor Yomei. As the 31st emperor and Shotoku's father, Emperor Yomei believed that building a Buddhist temple could help him recover from illness. This building, the oldest wooden building in the world, was designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 1993. The temple precincts cover 187 million square meters. The temple can be roughly divided into two main groups of buildings. One is the Saiin Garan (Western Precinct), established in the 7th century and comprised of a series of the oldest wooden buildings in the world. The other is the Toin Garan (Eastern Precinct), established in the 8th century. The two precincts include at least 55 buildings specified as National Treasures or Important Cultural Assets. In the Kondo Hall of the Saiin Garan, several statues have been enshrined, including a wooden sitting statue of Medicine Buddha (Bhaisajyaguru) and statues of the historical Buddha (Shakayamuni) with two attending Buddhas made in the 7th century. There is a canopy, on which heavenly beings and phoenixes are beautifully drawn, which dangles from the ceiling of the Kondo Hall. The wall paintings were restored in the 20th century and recreated on the walls of the hall. The five-story pagoda, a 31.5-meter-wooden structure situated in the western side of the Kondo Hall, is the oldest pagoda of its kind in Japan. The two precincts are connected by a corridor, and the Daikodo Hall (a lecture hall) is connected to the gate of the middle of the corridor. Since there is a large art collection in the Saiin Garan, it is the best site to see. In addition, there are some other sightseeing spots of special note, such as Tamamushijinja Shrine, a statue of Kudara Kannon (a Buddha of compassion), and Kudara Kannon-do Hall of Daihozojin (the Great Treasure Gallery) in which national treasures made in the 7th century are kept outside of the corridor. Unlike the Saiin Garan, the Toin Garan is comprised of a series of buildings built in the 8th century. Ikaruga Palace, a former residence of Prince Shotoku Taishi, was situated here. The scenery takes visitors back to the time of Prince Shotoku Taishi Yumedono Hall in the center of the Toin Garan is the oldest octagonal hall in Japan, and it houses Buddhist statues that were placed in memory of Prince Shotoku Taishi. Of these statues, Kuse Kannon, an esoteric Buddhist statue, in particular, can be seen by the public twice a year at specified times in the spring and winter. Horyuji Temple is known as a treasure trove of Buddhist cultural assets because it has 2,300 items designated as National Treasures or Important Cultural Assets of Japan. It is possible to see some influence of art from China, the Korean peninsula, and even as far away as Greece.

1-1 Horyuji-san-nai, Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-75-2555 ● 8:00 - 17:00 (Feb22-Nov3), 8:00-16:30 (Nov4-Feb21) ☺ Open throughout the year ● ¥1000 (available for Saiin-Garan Hall, Daihozo-in Hall, and Toin Garan Hall) ¥200 (for only Toin Garan Hall) ● By Bus From JR Horyuji Station, take a bus to Horyuji-mon-mae. From JR Oji Station or Kintetsu Nara Station, take a bus to Horyuji-mon-mae and get off at Horyuji stop.

Includes the oldest three-story pagoda in Japan



Hokiji Temple P44c/3F

Hokiji Temple was designated together with Horyuji Temple as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993. The pagoda is located on the eastern side of the precincts and the Kondo Hall is on the western side. The layout is the opposite of Horyuji Temple. At 24 meters high and having been built in 708, this three-story pagoda in the countryside, which is designated as a National Treasure, is the biggest and oldest pagoda in Japan. In the Kodo Hall (lecture hall), the standing statue of the eleven-faced Kannon is enshrined.



1873 Okamoto, Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-75-5559 ●8:00 - 17:00 (last entrance by 16:30 on Nov 4 and Feb 21) ☺ Open throughout the year ● ¥300 ●By Bus From JR Koriyama Station, take a bus to Horyuji-mon-mae and get off at Hokiji-mae stop. From JR or Kintetsu Oji Station, take a bus to Nara and get off at Hokiji-guchi stop. It's about a 10-min walk from the station.

A temple built by the son of Prince Shotoku Taishi



Horinji Temple P44c/3E

Horinji Temple was reportedly established by the son of Prince Shotoku Taishi in hopes of curing Prince Shotoku's illness. Research conducted later shows that it was originally a quite sizable temple, about two-thirds as large as Horyuji Temple. There are some 7th century Buddhist statues enshrined there for worship. The buildings in the precincts, however, were completely lost in a fire. After that, they were rebuilt and a three-story pagoda was also beautifully reconstructed, thanks to great efforts made by 20th century experts.



1570 Mii, Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-75-2686 ●8:00 - 17:00 (last entrance by 16:30) 8:00-16:30(Dec1-the end of Feb)/last entrance by 16:30) ☺ Open throughout the year ● ¥500 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Koriyama Station, take a bus to Horyuji and get off at Chuguji-mae stop. It's about a 15-min walk from the stop. From JR or Kintetsu Oji Station, take a bus to Nara via Horyuji-mae stop and get off at Chuguji-mae stop. It's about a 15-min walk from the stop.



Column

Horyuji Temple Buddhist buildings in the area are treasures of Buddhist culture in the world

This area with Buddhist monuments was the first place designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Japan back in 1993. It is made up of a 15 hectare core district and 571 hectares of surrounding districts. In the core district, there are several temples such as Horyuji Temple and Hokiji Temple, and the outer districts are called "Ikaruga no Sato" (Ikaruga Village).

Three temples in the middle parts of the district (Horyuji Temple, Chuguji Temple, and Hokiji Temple), being closely connected with Prince Shotoku, were built between the 7th and 8th centuries. All of the 19 buildings in the Saiin Garan and the Toin Garan, the precincts of Horyuji Temple, are designated as Japanese National Treasures. The Kondo Hall, the five-story pagoda, the Chumon Gate, and the corridor in the Saiin Garan are believed to be the oldest surviving wooden buildings

in the world. The architecture is a rare Buddhist style building which can no longer be found in China or on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, the buildings in the precincts of Horyuji Temple, including some buildings built later on, are highly valued as extremely precious artifacts for verifying the accomplishments of Buddhist architecture and culture in Japan and East Asia.

Since the districts called the Ikaruga Region, located away from the center of Nara Prefecture, were undamaged by war, all Buddhist art collections, including 115 National Treasures and 1,955 Important Cultural Heritage items of Horyuji Temple, have been preserved. The magnificent temple and the local area show how a peaceful period of time has preserved both history and culture.



Column

Prince Shotoku Taishi, a Mysterious and Legendary Figure

Prince Shotoku Taishi was the son of Emperor Yomei, the 31st emperor of Japan. He became a regent under the government of Empress Suiko, the 33rd emperor, at the age of 19, and established Shitennoji Temple in Osaka and Horyuji Temple in Nara at the age of 27. At the age of 29, he also established a system to rank officials into 12 levels through which he made evaluations for distinguishing highly talented officials or persons with proven performance. At the age of 30, he created the first constitution of Japan - the "17 Article Constitution." He was eager to apply Buddhist and Confucian ideas his political policies.

Additionally around this time, he sent delegations to China (an envoy to Sui Dynasty China) and ordered the compiling of the history of Japan. It is believed that he had the amazing ability to listen to opinions of ten different people at the same time. The portrait of Prince Shotoku Taishi, an absolutely indispensable person in the history of Japan, was printed on paper bills at seven different times, making him the most frequently used figure in Japanese currency.



A temple on a cliff known for its papier-mache tiger



Shigisan-Chogosonshiji Temple P44C/4A

Shigisan-Chogosonshiji Temple is a temple dedicated to Vaisravana (guardian deity of Buddhism). According to legend, Prince Shotoku Taishi learned military strategy from Vaisravana on Mt. Shigi. In the temple precincts, many papier-mache tigers can be seen, including the biggest one in the world. It is believed that anyone who passes through the inside of the main building will be healed from any illness. The main building, which stands on the edge of the cliff, offers a magnificent view. The temple is always crowded with people wishing for success in business or good health of their families.



2280-1 Shigi-san, Heguri-cho, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-72-2277 ●9:00-17:00 (Main temple), 9:00-16:30 (Reiho-kan Hall) ☐Open throughout the year ●Admission Reiho-kan Hall ¥300 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Shigisan-shita Station, take a bus to Shigisan and get off at Shigisan stop. It's about a 15-min walk from the stop. From Kintetsu Takayasu-yama Station, take a bus to Shigisan and get off at Shigisan-mon stop. It's about a 10-min walk from the stop.

Ikoma-Shoten, a temple dedicated to a deity of business success



Hozanji Temple P42/2C

Hozanji Temple is also called Ikoma-Shoten, originally established by Kukai (774-835), posthumously known as Kobo Daishi, and Enno-Gyoja (634-701), the founder of mountain ascetic practices, as a place for ascetics of esoteric Buddhism. Later, it was made over into a temple dedicated to Nandikesvara in 1678. There is also a statue of a Bodhisattva, which is an enlightened Buddhist saint who has vowed to stay active in the world to end the suffering of all beings. It is near a great rock wall behind several buildings, including various of temples and shrines and the Haiden (front shrine), Hondo (main building), and a two-story pagoda. Being a place dedicated to a deity of good business, the temple is always crowded with people seeking blessings and worldly favors.



1-1 Monzen-cho, Ikoma City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-73-2006 ●Visiting is possible at any time. ☐Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By cable car From Kintetsu Ikoma Station, take a cable car to Torii-mae and get off at Hozanji stop. It's about a 10-min walk from the stop.

Top viewing spot for cherry blossoms



The ruins of Koriyama Castle P44C/1H

Koriyama Castle used to be the largest castle in Nara. It is surrounded by three moats: the Uchibori (inner moat), Nakabori (middle moat), and Sotobori (outer moat). There used to be a donjon, a residential area for samurai warriors, and a town in the territory of the castle surrounded by the moats. A long time ago, the castle town was a large city, but it was completely lost in a fire. After that, the castle was finally torn down, although its tower was restored and preserved along with the deep moats and strong stone walls. Now, the ruins of the castle have become a famous place for cherry blossoms. It was selected as one of the top 100 sites in Japan for seeing cherry blossoms, so it is usually crowded with visitors in spring when the cherry blossoms bloom.



Jonai-cho, Yamato-Koriyama City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-52-2010 (Yamato-Koriyama City Tourism Association) ●Visiting is possible at any time. ☐Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●From Kintetsu Koriyama Station, it's about a 7-min walk. From JR Koriyama Station, it's about a 15-min walk.

A view of both of Nara and Osaka in one glance



The Shigi-Ikoma Skyline P44C/3A

The Shigi-Ikoma Skyline, a highway stretching for 20.9 km in total through the Shigi-Ikoma mountain range from north to south, is an enjoyable scenic drive between Nara and Osaka prefectures. The highway allows visitors to enjoy wonderful views at all seasons of the year: cherry blossoms in the spring, green leaves in the summer, red leaves in the autumn, and snowy landscapes in the winter. In addition, there are many sightseeing spots such as an amusement park, temples, and an observatory famous for its bells. Visitors can also take in a beautiful night scene.



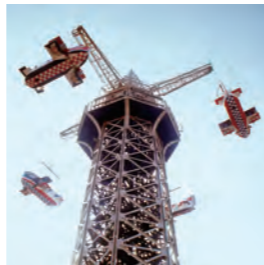
☎0743-74-2125 ●6:30-24:00 (23:00 during Nov 1-the end of Feb) ☐Open throughout the year, but service may be closed depending on conditions including weather. ●Fee ¥350-1900 ●North Entrance & Exit: Tozan-guchi (Sanjo-guchi) on Hanna Road. South Entrance & Exit: Shigisan-mon

An amusement park with a wonderful view



Sky Land Ikoma P42/2C

Mt. Ikoma is 642 meters above sea level, lying in between Nara and Osaka. Sky Land Ikoma, an amusement park on the summit, is accessible by cable car from the foot of the mountain. The park's flight tower ride is known for being the oldest existing piece of large-scale amusement park equipment in Japan. During the summer time, the park is open late, attracting many families and couples. The park rides offer a great viewing spot of all the cities in Osaka.



2312-1 Nabata-cho, Ikoma City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-74-2173 ●10:00-17:00 (Note: Service hour may vary depending on times. Service from evening is available during summertime. A confirmation is necessary. ☐Thu (Except regular holidays and holidays in spring and summer) Service may be closed depending on conditions including weather. ●Free of charge ●By Cable car From Kintetsu Ikoma Station, take a cable car to Torii-mae on Ikoma Cable Line and get off at Ikoma-sanjo stop.

Temple of hydrangeas built by Emperor Tenmu



Yatadera Temple (a.k.a. Kongosanji Temple) P44C/1E

The temple, officially named Kongosanji Temple, is dedicated to Japan's oldest statue of the Bodhisattva named Jizo (Ksitigarbha in Sanskrit), the protector of children and travelers. People always call it Yatadera Temple because it is built in the countryside of Yata district. There is a flower garden in front of the main building with 60 different types of hydrangeas with a total of 10,000 flower roots. The temple is always crowded with many tourists when the blossoms are in full bloom during the rainy season (June and July).



3754 Yada-cho, Yamato-Koriyama City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-53-1522 ●8:30-17:00 ☐Open throughout the year ●¥400 (during early June to July) / otherwise, free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Koriyama Station, take a bus to Yata-dera.

The atmosphere of a tea-ceremony room



Jikoin Temple P44C/2F

The temple was built by the founder and tea master of the Sekishu-ryu school of tea ceremony. Around the precincts as a whole, there is an atmosphere similar to a tea ceremony room. Visitors can see this style when entering the precincts because of several elements of the surroundings, including the front gate, the approach leading up to the temple, garden, path, and ceremonial tea room, create an atmosphere that gives visitors the chance to feel the hospitality expressed in tea ceremony. The beautiful Japanese garden characterized by its use of the natural scenery extending over the Yamato Plain, makes it possible for visitors to enjoy savoring green tea. Unlike typical gardens at Zen Buddhist temples, it has fewer stones as well as various kinds of trees arranged in unique ways, providing an excellent view in all four seasons. Visitors can eat a vegetarian cuisine named "Sekishu ryori" and "Sekishu noodles" featuring somen (white, thin noodles) cooked without oil. The naming "Sekishu" is connected with Katagiri Sekishu who was good at cooking Kaiseki Ryori, the course meal served at the tea ceremony.



865 Koizumi-cho, Yamato-Koriyama City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-53-3004 ●9:00-17:00 ☐Open throughout the year ●¥1000 (with refreshment [green tea]) ●By Bus From Kintetsu Koriyama Station, take a bus to Horyuji or Koizumi-Higashi-guchi, and get off at Katagiri-Nishi-Shogakko stop.

Pagodas on its east and west sides have been preserved since the 8th century



Taimadera Temple P42/4C

This temple came to be called "Taimadera Temple" after being moved to its present location. It was originally built by Prince Shotoku's younger brother at another location in 681. This is the only temple in Japan that has three-story pagoda made in the 8th century at both its east and west sides. The main building is dedicated to the Taima Mandala, which is 9 meters in diameter. It was reportedly created by Princess Chujo, a legendary heroine who offered prayers to the land of Perfect Bliss. The temple is also famous for its peonies. The traditional event named "Neri-Kuyo-Eshiki" is held in May. By building a bridge in the precincts that goes from this world to the next, the ceremony expresses the situation at the time when Princess Chujo died a peaceful death. Neri-Kuyo-Eshiki is popular among people and it has continued for over 1,000 years, attracting many visitors every year. In the vast precincts, there is a strolling garden named "Nakanobo" with a pond in the center, which was made in the 17th century. Nakanobo is considered as one of three top gardens in Nara. The garden was designed to incorporate a pagoda into the garden's composition as a background element based on the concept of shakkei, or "borrowed view."



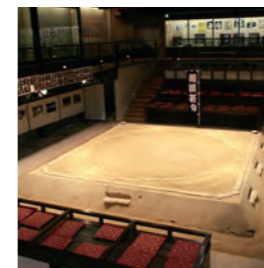
1263 Taima, Katsuragi City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-48-2004 (Temple Office, Go-nen-in Hall) ●9:00-17:00 ☐Open throughout the year ●Admission ¥500 (Main temple, Kondo Hall, Kodo Hall) ●From Kintetsu Taimadera Station, it's about a 15-min walk.

Home of precious documents on sumo wrestling



Sumo Museum Kehaya-za P42/4C

Katsuragi City is known as the birthplace of Taimano Kehaya, the founder of sumo wrestling. The hall is one of the very few museums of sumo wrestling in Japan. There is an actual-size ring and box seats, so visitors are able to experience sumo wrestling. The hall displays documents on the history of sumo wrestling and information about the local wrestlers.



83-1 Taima, Katsuragi City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-48-4611 ●10:00-17:00 ☐Tue and Wed (except holidays), New Year&year-end ●Entrance fee ¥300 / Free of charge by showing passport ●From Kintetsu Taimadera Station, it's about a 5-min walk.

A scenic mountain with azaleas, Japanese maples, and frost on trees



Mt. Katsuragi P42/5C

At 956 meters above sea level, Mt. Katsuragi, a prominent mountain of the Kongo Mountains that extend across Nara and Osaka, is popular among hikers. From the top of the mountain, a panoramic view as far as Osaka Bay can be seen in the distance. Azaleas, described by the phrase "A glimpse catches one million trees," Japanese pampas grasses in autumn and frost on trees in winter are popular among sightseers.



1-3 Gose City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-62-3001 (Tourism Office of Gose City Hall) ●Visiting is possible at any time. ☐Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By Bus and Ropeway From Kintetsu Gose Station, take a bus to Katsuragi-Ropeway-mae, and get off at the terminal then get on a ropeway on Katsuragi-zan Ropeway Line to the top of mountain.

A deity that only answers one of your prayers



Katsuragi-Hitokoto-Nushijinja Shrine P42/5C

This is a Shinto shrine beside Katsuragi Kodo ("the ancient path of Katsuragi"). It is located beyond some stone steps at the end of the beautiful approach that leads from the shrine gate. The shrine is dedicated to "Ichigon-san", the deity believed to answer any prayer, but only one prayer per person. For this reason, the shrine attracts many believers. Since Japan's oldest historical record, the Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters), mentions the shrine, it has very long history, which is also evidenced by a 1200 year-old ginkgo tree.



432 Mori-waki, Gose City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-66-0178 ●Visiting is possible at any time. ☐Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Gose Station, take a bus to Gojo-Bus-Center and get off at Miyado-bashi. It's about a 20-min walk from the terminal.

A temple with its famous peonies, which has a close connection to Chujo-Hime (Princess Chujo)



Sekkoji Temple P42/4C

It is told that the origin of this temple was a structure built 1,300 years ago or more when a stone statue of Maitreya Buddha (the Future Buddha) and his two attendant Buddhas appeared from a shining spot in the ground. Thus, it was named Sekkoji Temple (literally "stone-shine temple"). The temple has a set of stone statues, one of which is the oldest Maitreya statue in Japan. The temple is also called Somedera Temple (literally "dyeing temple") because there is a well which is believed to have been used by Princess Chujo to dye thread of which she fabricated a mandala (a Buddhist visual schema of enlightenment) of Taimadera Temple. The temple is famous for its 400 or more types of peonies including the winter peony, which blooms beautifully in spring.



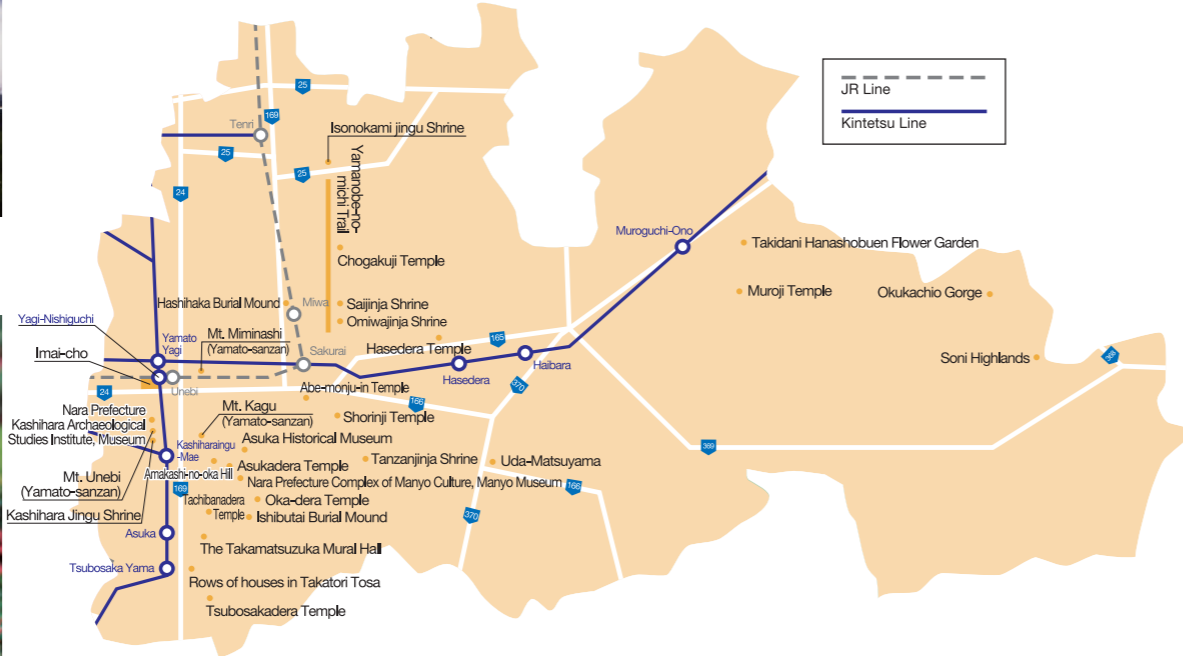
387 Someno, Katsuragi City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-48-2031 ●8:30-17:00 (Apr-Oct), 9:00-16:30 (Nov-Mar) ☐Open throughout the year ●¥400 ●From Kintetsu Nijo-jinja-guchi Station, it's about a 15-min walk.

Column

The goldfish culture, developed as a part-time job for samurai

Japan's goldfish culture began in 1724 when Yoshisato Yanagisawa (1687-1745), the first feudal lord of the Yamato Koriyama Domain, became the landlord of the castle in this domain after leaving Kofu Domain (present-day Yamanashi prefecture) and bringing his pet goldfish. The environment of the domain was suitable for raising goldfish because there were many agricultural reservoirs, which made it possible to catch water fleas to feed young goldfish. Thanks to the development of the goldfish	industry, samurai warriors were able to work part time raising goldfish to help support their families. As various kinds of goldfish came to be raised, Yamato Koriyama developed into the largest center of goldfish culture in Japan. Now, the city exports goldfish to foreign countries, and enjoys a good reputation with goldfish lovers across the globe.
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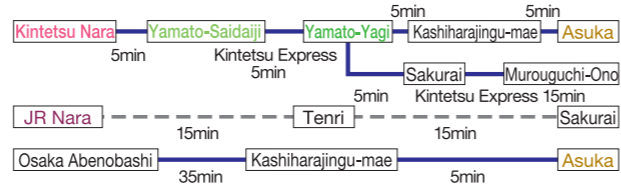


Eastern Nara

Areas around Asuka / Areas around Sakurai



Access to Eastern Nara



Variety of Products

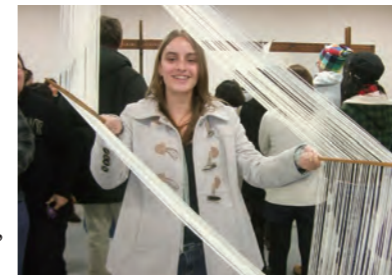


As Eastern Nara has many historical sites including the oldest road, temple, and shrine in Japan, visitors can buy various kinds of souvenirs that make it possible to feel the nostalgic atmosphere in the ancient city at Kashiwara Jingu Shrine. ① Talismans featuring Yatagarasu or the three-legged crow, an imaginary animal that showed Emperor Jimmu the way at the shop in Nara Prefecture Kashiwara Archaeological Studies Institute, Museum. ② Ornaments featuring clay figures named Haniwa, which were used as buried icons, unearthed from excavations sites of tombs at Tanzan Shrine. ③ Talismans featuring Fujiwara-no Kamatari, the dedicated figure of the shrine and a hero in Japanese history, popular among visitors. It appears to play Kemari, a football-like game that was popular among the aristocracy at Isonokami Shrine. ④ Papers with your fortune written on them in a chicken-shaped container, which visitors can buy in the precincts of the shrine where a flock of chickens comes and goes at Hasedera Temple. ⑤ Talismans featuring the red peonies the temple is famous for.

Hands-on Course

Somen

Make somen (thin, white noodles) by yourself



In Sakurai City, the birth place of thin, white noodles named somen, visitors are able to make the noodles by themselves and see historical documents on somen. A reservation is required for this course.

Strawberry picking

Enjoy strawberry picking at a farm



Nara has a famous strawberry brand, the "Asuka Ruby." Visitors can pick and eat fresh strawberries and take some home as well.

A reservation is required for this course.

Cycling in East Nara

Bicycle Rental	Address	TEL
Asuka Bicycle Rental	138-6 Misono, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-54-3919
Hashimoto Bicycle Rental	757-3 Gojo-no-cho, Kashiwara City, Nara Prefecture Near the Route 169 in front of Kintetsu Oka Station	☎0744-27-4663
Yoshimoto Bicycle Rental	842 Kawaharajo-cho, Tenri City, Nara Prefecture	☎0743-63-1127
Kintetsu Sunflower Bicycle Rental Sakurai Center	190 Sakurai, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture (Inside Sakurai Station)	☎0744-43-6377
Uda City Dendo Assistance Bicycle Rental	Haibara-hagihara, Uda City, Nara Prefecture (Uda City Tourist Information Center)	☎0745-88-9049

Onsen

Soni Highlands Onsen Hot Spring: Okame-no-Yu

P42/4G

Soni Highlands, famous for Japanese pampas grass in autumn

In the Soni Highlands, famous for Japanese pampas grass, there is a popular spa facility where visitors can enjoy taking a bath at the outdoor hot spring while enjoying the view. The baths are said to help beautify the skin.

830 Taroji, Soni Village, Uda County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-98-2615 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Nabari Station, take a bus to Yamagasa-nishi stop, and get off at Taroji stop. It's about a 20-min walk from the stop.



Spa Facilities in East Nara

Spa	Address	TEL
Yamato Onsen Hot Spring	600-1 Kabatacho, Tenri City, Nara Prefecture	☎0743-64-1126
Kashiwara-no-yu	652-2 Kumecho, Kashiwara City, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-28-6636
Hasedera Onsen Hot Spring	828 Hase, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-47-7012
Ouda-onsen Akino-no-yu	250-2 Ouda Hirou, Uda City, Nara Prefecture	☎0745-83-4126
Okukochi Onsen Hot Spring	1037 Imai, Soni Village, Nara Prefecture	☎0745-94-2231



The oldest, great statue of Buddha in Asuka

Asukadera Temple P44d/5E



Asukadera Temple, built in 596, is the oldest full-scale Buddhist temple in Japan. The temple was formerly known as Gangōji Temple in Nara. The scale of the original precincts was three times larger than those of the present Hōryūji Temple, stretching about 200 meters east to west and about 300 meters north to south. Corridors surrounded the vast precincts, and there was a pagoda situated at the center of the precincts and three Kondo Halls surrounded the pagoda. At present, however, only the main building still exists. The principal icon, the great statue of Buddha that is enshrined in the main building, is the oldest Buddhist statue in Japan. The statue has webs between the fingers like a water bird, which expresses one of Buddha's teachings.

682 Asuka, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-54-2126 ●9:00 - 17:30 (Apr - Sep) / 9:00 - 17:00 (Oct - Mar) / Note: Last entrance by 15min. before closing hour ☺Open throughout the year ●¥350 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Stations, take a round bus around Asuka (named "Kame bus") and get off at Asuka-Daibutsu-mae stop.

A mural hall with faithfully restored, richly colored wall paintings



The Takamatsuzuka Mural Hall P44d/7D

In 1972, richly colored wall paintings were discovered in a stone hut situated at the site of Takamatsuzuka Tumulus, which was reported as the most significant archeological discovery in Japan since World War II. Takamatsuzuka Tumulus is a 5-meter-high, two-storied round burial mound composed of the base, 23 meters in diameter, and an upper layer, 18 meters in diameter. A group of men and women and four goddesses are depicted on the eastern and the western walls. On the eastern wall has an image of the sun on it, and an image of the moon on the western wall. The schemes of constellations and other things can be seen on the ceiling. The wall paintings seem to have been drawn under the cultural influence of China and the Korean peninsula. While the actual walls are not open to the public, full-scale replicas of the wall paintings, as well as stone burial chamber and several artifacts, which were faithfully reproduced thanks to the cutting edge techniques using infrared detectors, microscope photographs, can be seen in the Mural Hall.



439 Hirata, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎: 0744-54-3340 (The Takamatsuzuka Mural Hall) ●9:00 - 17:00 (last entrance by 16:30) ☺Dec 29 to Jan 3 ●¥250 ●: By foot From Kintetsu Asuka Station, it's about a 15-min walk.

Representing Asuka - Japan's largest square burial mound



Ishibutai Burial Mound P44d/7F

Ishibutai Burial Mound is one of the largest corridor-type tombs in Japan. The inside stone room can be seen from the outside since the mound covering it is now gone. Since the flat ceiling looks like a stage, it is called Ishibutai (literally "stone stage"). The main stone and 30 pillar-like stones weigh almost 2,300 tons. The tomb is believed to be the tomb of Soga-no-Umako, a person in power at the beginning of the 7th century.



: Shimasho, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎00744-54-4577 (Asuka Village Regional Development Corporation) ●8:30-17:00 ☺Open throughout the year ●¥250 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Station, take a round bus around Asuka named "Kame bus" and get off at Ishibutai stop.

The largest clay figure in Japan - a 4.6-meter high Buddhist statue



Okadera Temple P44d/6F

The principal icon of Okadera Temple, a sitting statue of Nyoirin Kannon, is the largest clay figure in Japan. It is considered to be one of the top three Buddhist statues in Japan, along with the bronze statue of the "Cosmic" or "Universal" Buddha in Todaiji Temple and the wooden statue of Eleven-Faced Kannon Bosatsu in Hasedera Temple. The 4.6-meter high statue of Nyoirin Kannon is the largest clay Buddhist statue of its kind in Japan. Since the temple is situated at the middle of Mt. Oka, it is called "Okadera" or "the temple of Oka." The temple is one of the oldest good luck charm temples in Japan. Many people go to the temple to worship.



806 Oka, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-54-2007 ●8:30 - 17:00 (Dec - late Feb 8,00 - 16:30) ☺Open throughout the year ●¥300 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Station, take a round bus around Asuka named "Kame bus" and get off at Okadera-mae stop. It's about a 10-min walk from the stop.

Column

Mysterious stone sculptures in Asuka

Two stone sculptures, named "Kame-ishi" (literally "Tortoise Stone") and "Saru-ishi" (literally "Monkey Stone"), are representative examples of stone sculptures in Asuka. Kame-ishi, a huge, tortoise-shaped stone sculpture appears to be crouching and smiling. It is 3.6 meters long, 2.1 meters wide, 1.8 meters high, and weighs 10 tons. The sculpture has a humorous appearance. Since it is located on the corner of some houses, it may be easily overlooked. .

Four monkey-shaped stone sculptures, Saru-ishi, whose appearances are also humorous, were discovered in a rice field. They are currently located in the tomb of Princess Kibi. Of these four sculptures, three were two-faced sculptures. While only one of the two faces can be seen here., replicas offer a glimpse of the other face. It is still unknown why such stone sculpture exists in Asuka and who made it.



A temple in the birthplace of Prince Shotoku



Tachibanadera Temple P44d/7E

Tachibanadera Temple is believed to have been a temple in the birthplace of Prince Shotoku Taishi and is one of the top seven temples built by Prince Shotoku Taishi. While the date when it was founded is unknown, it is assumed that the precincts of the temple were vast and many buildings were built there in the 8th century. At present, there is a main temple in which the principal icon, a statue of Prince Shotoku Taishi, is enshrined. In addition, Kannon-do Hall and the traces of the five-story pagoda still exist. There is also a mysterious stone structure made in the Asuka period (592-710). The stone has two faces carved on it, expressing both the good and evil of human beings.



532 Tachibana, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-54-2026 ●9:00-17:00 ☺Open throughout the year ●¥350 ●By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Station, take a round bus around Asuka named "Kame bus" and get off at Okamoto-bashi stop. It's about 15-min-walk from the stop.

Traces of an ancient, powerful clan's beautiful scenic house



Amakashi-no-oka Hill P44d/5E

It is believed that the house of an ancient, powerful clan was situated on Amakashi-no-oka Hill in the 7th century. Located at the center of Asuka, the hill stands 148 meters high with a gentle slope. From the top of the hill, visitors can see the three mountains of Yamato and Asuka village. There is a passageway with cherry and azalea trees at the western side where visitors can take a relaxing walk.



Toyoura, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎00744-54-2411 (Administration Center of Asuka Historical National Park) ●By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Station, take a round bus around Asuka named "Kame bus" and get off at Ama-Kashino-oka stop.

A focus on the Manyo culture



Nara Prefecture Complex of Manyo Culture, Manyo Museum P44d/6E

Nara Prefecture Complex of Manyo Culture, Manyo Museum is an information-providing facility that focuses on the ancient culture of Japan, in particular, on the Manyo, the oldest collection of poems in Japan. The facility has three functions: research center, museum, and library. The facility also has been working towards the preservation of tangible cultural assets. There are exhibitions including Japanese paintings representing the themes depicted in the poems of the Manyo. Moreover, information-providing devices are also available. Seeing puppets, pictures, dioramas, and audio-visual materials helps visitors gain knowledge about the profiles of poets and the background of poems in an easy-to-understand way.



10 Asuka, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-54-1850 ●9:00-17:30 (last entrance by 17:00) ☺Wed (or Thu if Wed is holiday), Beginning and the end of the year, and Display Change Day, Note: Wed is open during special display or exhibition. ●¥600 600 (except during special exhibition) Note: Foreign visitors can enter at free of charge by showing passport. ●By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Station, take a round bus around Asuka named "Kame bus" and get off at Mauryo-Bunka-Kan-Vishiguchi stop.

Archive of the history and culture of Asuka



Asuka Historical Museum P44d/5F

Asuka Historical Museum provides visitors with information on the history and culture of the ancient capital of Asuka, focusing on the introduction of Buddhism into Japan in the 6th century and on the relocation of ancient capital to Heijo-kyo in Nara in the 8th century. In addition, there are exhibitions of unearthed articles of Takamatsuzuka Tumulus and Asukadera Temple as well as models. The museum displays a stone replica that symbolizes Asuka in the front garden. Special exhibitions are open from time to time. It is recommended to start your sightseeing in Asuka at the museum.



601 Okuyama, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-54-3561 ●9:00-16:30 (last entrance by 16:00) ☺Mon (Tue if Mon is a holiday), Dec 26-Jan 3 ●¥260 ●: By Bus From Kintetsu Kashihara-Jingu-mae or Asuka Station, take a round bus around Asuka named "Kame bus" and get off at Asuka-Shiroyo-kan-mae stop. From JR or Kintetsu Sakurai Stations, take a bus to Ishibutai and get off at Asuka-Shiroyo-kan-mae stop.

Column

Try cycling in Asuka while sightseeing!



Since sightseeing spots are scattered throughout Asuka, cycling in the area is recommended. With good road conditions and signs at main points, it is easy for visitors to find their destinations. Bicycle parking lots are available, and there are some designated spots for leaving your bicycle when you are finished with it.

Bicycle Rental around Kintetsu Asuka Station

Bicycle Rental	Address	TEL
1 Asuka Bicycle Rental	138-6 Misono, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-54-3919
2 Manyo Bicycle Rental	Hirata, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-54-3500
3 Koto Bicycle Rental	Koshi, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-54-4508
4 Do-no-Mae Bicycle Rental	Kawahara, Asuka Village, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture	☎0744-54-2395

Famous for Kannon, a protector of eye disease

Tsubosakadera Temple P42/5D

The principle icon of Tsubosakadera Temple, a statue of Eleven-Faced Kannon Bosatsu, is popular among people who wish to be protected from eye disease. The temple has a connection with India through charity activities. Thanks to the friendly relationship with people in India, the standing statue of great Kannon, a 20-meter-high stone statue, was constructed. The statue is the largest one of its kind in the world. The temple is also famous for Japanese roses.



3 Tsubosaka, Takatori-cho, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-52-2016 ● 8:30-17:00 ☒ Open throughout the year ● ¥600 ● By Bus From Kintetsu Tsubosakayama Station, take a bus to Tsubosaka-dera Temple, and get off at the terminal.



The road reaching the largest mountain castle in Japan

Rows of Houses in Takatori Tosa P42/5D

The town of Takatori Tosa developed into a castle town governed by the Takatori castle in the 17th century. At present, there are remains of the old castle town along with a 2-kilometer road reaching the remains of Takatori castle. With a historical townscape, the Japanese doll-seeing tour and other events in the four seasons are popular attractions.



20-2, Kamitosa, Takatori-cho, Takaichi County, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-52-1150 (Tourist Information Center "Muso-kan") ● 9:30-16:30 (Muso-kan) ☒ Mon (or the next business day in case holidays), beginning and year-end, during Bon holidays in summer. ● Free of charge ● From Kintetsu Tsubosakayama Station, it's about a 15-min walk.



Dedicated to enshrine the first emperor in Japan

Kashiharajingu Shrine P44d/4B

Kashihara Jingu Shrine was established in 1890 at the place where Emperor Jinmu, the first emperor of Japan, was reportedly enthroned. The place was based on the description of Nihon-Shoki, the oldest book of the mythologized history of Japan. There is a reservoir named Fukata Pond and a garden in the forest that belongs to the vast precincts of the shrine, covering about half a square kilometer. The main shrine is a building with a gabled roof. The building had been used as a Naishi-dokoro (storage house) of the ancient Imperial Palace in Kyoto and then turned into the main shrine after being relocated to Nara. A serene atmosphere in the site offers relief from noisy streets. The graveled entrance path lined with evergreen oak trees leads visitors from a gateway, called a torii, to the open space in front of the front shrine. The vast precincts surrounded by thick woods have always a calm atmosphere. The Shinto shrine is famous for the wooden votive tablets that dangle from the eaves of its front shrine. Each tablet has one of the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac on it.



934 Kume-cho, Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-22-3271 ● Visiting is possible from sunrise to sunset ☒ Open throughout the year ● Hobutsukan Hall ¥300, free admission to grounds ● From Kintetsu Kashihara-jingu-mae Station, it's about a 5-min walk.



A glimpse of ancient Japan

Nara Prefecture Kashihara Archaeological Studies Institute, Museum P44d/4B

The museum permanently displays about 500,000 items unearthed from excavation sites in Nara where the Archaeological Institute has conducted extensive research since 1938. Visitors can gain knowledge of the history and culture, as well as the change in living styles of people in Nara through the displays.



50-2, Unebi-cho, Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-24-1185 ● 9:00 - 17:00 (last entrance by 16:30) ☒ Mon (Tue if Mon is holiday), Dec 28 - Jan 4 ● ¥400 Note: Foreign visitors can enter at free of charge by showing passport. ● From Kintetsu Unebi-Goryo-mae Station, it's about a 5-min walk.



Mountains depicted in the Manyoshu

Yamato-sanzan P44d/4B 1D 3E

Three mountains in Kashihara City, composed of Mt. Kagu (152m), Mt. Unebi (199m), and Mt. Miminashi (140m), are generally called the Yamato-sanzan (top three mountains in Yamato). The top three mountains are depicted in many poems of the Manyoshu. In addition, they have appeared in many myths and legends because of their beautiful shapes. There is an old story saying that in ancient times, people thought of Mt. Unebi as a female and other two mountains as male, so people considered the relationship among them as a love triangle.



Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-20-1123 (Kashihara City Tourist Association) ● On an as needed basis ● From JR Kaguyama Station, it's about a 15-min walk to Mt. Kagu. From Kintetsu Unebi-Goryo-mae Station, it's about a 10-min walk to Mt. Unebi. From Kintetsu Miminashi Station, it's about a 10-min walk to Mt. Miminashi.



A town that flourished so much that it was said to have possessed almost 70% of the gold in Nara

Imai-cho P44d/2B

Imai-cho was designated as an Important Preservation District of Historic Buildings because of its long history and many old traditional buildings built in a period of time between the 16th and the 18th centuries. The historic site offers a glimpse of the past and makes visitors feel as though they have been transported to Japan's Middle Ages, which were about 1,000 years ago. Imai-cho started as a temple-oriented town in the 16th century. A temple named Shonenji Temple was situated at the center of the town. Later, because Imai-cho had been besieged, it was protected by circular moats surrounding the whole area of the town that extended 600 meters east to west and over 300 meters north to south. At a later time, Imai-cho came to enjoy a high degree of autonomy in Nara just like Sakai City, south of Osaka City. Then the town developed into a flourishing commercial town with a population of almost 5,000 people in the 17th century. To express the scale of the town's wealth, there was a saying: "almost 70 percent of the gold in Nara belongs to Imai." In Imai-cho, several old families still exist. The house of Kawai is a sake brewing family. The house of Yoneya used to sell hardware (the house is open to visitors). In this historic town, there are many other houses of old families that have been doing business since the old days. Out of the rich families in the district, there were some old families that produced administrative leaders of the town, such as the house of Imanishi. On the land of the Imanishi family, there is a building that was used as the Imai-cho courthouse. The grand residence shows how the family was influential in governing the town. To start your stroll through Imai-cho, our recommendation is to visit the Imai-Machinami Information Center, named "Hana-Iraka," because the center provides several services for visitors to easily learn about the historical background and sites in Imai-cho through displays and visual materials.



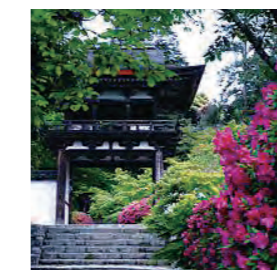
Imaicho, Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-24-8719 ("Hana-iraka", Imai-Machinami Visitors Center) ● Service hour varies depending on facilities. ☒ Mon (the next business day in case holidays: Hana-iraka) Entrance fees vary depending on facilities. ● From Kintetsu Yamato-Yagi-Nishiguchi Station, it's about a 5-min walk.



A prominent temple with flowers

Chogakuji Temple P45e/3C

Chogakuji Temple was established by Kukai (774-835), posthumously known as Kobo Daishi, in 824. Shoromon Gate of the temple is one part of the temple that remains from the time of establishment. Along with the gate, the principal deity of the temple, the crystal-eyes statue of Amida Buddha (the "Buddha of Infinite Light") and two attendants, is also the oldest one of its kind in Japan. The temple has many cultural assets. There is an 11x4 meter painting depicting a Buddhist hell. The impressive picture is open to the public in autumn. The temple is famous for its beautiful azalea blossoms, which are at their best between April and May.



Yanagimotocho, Tenri City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-66-1051 ● 10:00-17:00 ☒ Open throughout the year ● ¥350 ● From Kintetsu Tenri Station or JR Sakurai Station, take a bus to Sakurai-station-kitaguchi and get off at Kami-nan-ka stop. It's about a 10-min walk from the stop.



A "keyhole-shaped" burial mound of the ancient Queen Himiko

Hashihaka Burial Mound P45e/4B

Hashihaka Burial Mound, a 272-meter high keyhole-shaped burial mound, is situated at the foot of Mt. Miwa. Based on the description in Japan's oldest book of historical legends, the Nihon-Shoki, the tomb had been considered as the tomb of the wife of the dedicated deity of Omiwajima Shrine. At the time of excavation, it was assumed that the tomb was built in a period between the late 3rd and early 4th centuries. More recently, however, a new view that it was made at the beginning of 3rd century appeared, and a new theory emerged and made waves by claiming that it was the tomb of the ancient Queen Himiko.



Hashinaka, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-42-9111 (Sakurai City Tourism Association) ● Free to grounds (Viewing from outside only) ☒ Open throughout the year ● Free of charge ● From JR Makimuku Station, it's about a 15-min walk.



The oldest road in Japan, which runs between Mt. Miwa and Mt. Kasuga

Yamanobe-no-michi Trail P45e/3C

The road running between the foot of Mt. Miwa and that of Mt. Kasuga in the Yamato Plain is called Yamanobe-no-michi Trail. According to historical evidence, the road is supposed to be the oldest road in Japan. With several historical monuments dotting the roadside, such as tombs, temples and shrines, and the remains of ancient buildings on the road, it is a truly historic road in Nara. The route reaching from Isonokamijingu Shrine to Omiwajima Shrine, in particular, is popular among tourists as the best route offering an easy chance to enjoy seeing historic sites between early spring and late autumn.



● From JR or Kintetsu Tenri Stations, it's about 5 hours to JR or Kintetsu Sakurai Station.

Column

Nara, the birthplace of the Manyoshu

The Manyoshu is the oldest existing collection of poems in Japan. It was compiled in the late 7th and 8th centuries. The collection totals 20 volumes and includes over 4,500 poems composed by people of all social classes, ranging from emperors and nobles to lower officials and common people. As Nara is called "the birthplace of the Manyoshu", there are many poems giving descriptions of Nara, including the city of Asuka and three mountainous areas in Yamato in Nara.

While some poets expressed human emotions, others gave glimpses of seasonal landscapes or expressed passions about love and feelings about separation. There are various kinds of poems in the Manyoshu. Poems of the Manyoshu were written a special kind of script called "Manyo-kana," one of the Japanese phonetic alphabets. The use of Manyo-kana was essential for poets to express their feelings and emotions. It is no exaggeration to state that the Manyoshu is the first work of Japanese literature written with Japan's unique writing system.



One of the oldest shrines in Japan which has a close connection to Swords



Isonokamijingu Shrine P45e/20

Isonokamijingu Shrine is believed to be one of the oldest shrines in Japan. The Romon Gate with a cypress-bark roof is situated on the precincts, as well as the front shrine, a National Treasure, and another shrine with a unique structure. Chickens, known to be the messengers of God, are also seen protecting the shrine. The shrine enshrines a sword as the sacred object of worship, which had reportedly been used as weapon at the time when Emperor Jimmu, the semi-legendary first emperor in Japan, made the conquest of enemies in eastern parts out of his land. In addition, the shrine keeps many treasures, including the Seven-Branded Sword (a National Treasure) that is supposed to have been sent to the emperor of Japan from the king of the ancient Korean kingdom of Baekje in the 4th century.



384 Furucho, Tenri City, Nara Prefecture ☎0743-62-0900 ●on an as needed basis ☺Open throughout the year ☑From JR or Kintetsu Tenri Stations, take a bus to Chishawara, and get off at Isonokami-Jingu-mae stop.

A view of the sacred mountain of Mt. Omiwa from the front shrine



Omiwajinja Shrine P45e/5C

Omiwajinja Shrine is one of the oldest shrines in Japan, and its focus is Mt. Omiwa. The precincts were designed to have an entrance gate called a "torii" situated at the back of the front shrine to provide a clear view of Mt. Omiwa, the sacred mountain of the shrine, without obstructions. This is why there is no main shrine there. The shrine is popular among people in the liquor industry in Japan because the shrine is dedicated to the deity of sake, Japanese rice wine. In the precincts, there are sake barrels enshrined to the shrine. The talismans, called "sugi-tama," which are made of cedar wood and dangled on the eaves of Japanese breweries, are the products made of cedar trees from Mt. Miwa.



1422 Miwa, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-42-6633 ●on an as needed basis to the grounds Hours 9:30-15:30 (Treasure Hall) Note: The hall ("Hebutsu-shuno-ko") is open only on the first day of every month, the week-end, and holidays, and during Jan 1 - Jan 5. ☺Open throughout the year ☑Treasure Hall ¥200, free admission to grounds ☑From JR Miwa Station, it's about a 5-min walk.

Famous for its peonies and attracting devotees of Kannon

Hasedera Temple P45e/4D



Hasedera Temple is characterized with a huge veranda-like stage of the main hall that is supported by hundreds of pillars and extends over the hillside. The main hall is a National Treasure. Visitors can see a grand view from the scaffolding-supported stage. In the main hall, a 10-meter-high Buddhist statue, the largest wooden statue of its kind in Japan, is enshrined. This Eleven-Faced Kannon Bosatsu is a major draw for devotees of Kannon, a Buddhist figure of compassion. There is a beautiful stairway of 339 steps on the upward slope, lined with oval lanterns dangling from the ceiling. Going up the stairs from the Deva Gate takes visitors to the main hall through the solemn atmosphere. There is a brown five-story pagoda at the western side, slightly off the main hall. The brown pagoda is in harmony with green trees in the mountainous area behind it.

Hasedera Temple, sometimes called "the temple of peonies," offers a beautiful view with 7,000 peony blossoms including 150 different kinds. The peony blossoms are at their best in the beginning of May. The temple is usually crowded with tourists at that season. In addition, the stage of the temple offers very impressive scenery of colored leaves in the autumn, cherry and hydrangea blossoms in the spring. Visitors can enjoy several aspects of the precincts colored with various flowers regardless of the season. In the precincts of the temple, various annual events are held. The precincts are lit up with many lanterns to celebrate the closing of the year on the day of Kannon Lantern Festival at year-end. During Dada-oshi Festival in February, men in a costume of an Oni, a demon, walk around the precincts. Both festivals are popular among visitors. Recently, traditional Japanese musical performances and other kinds of concerts are held in the precincts, too. In addition, there are a variety of events, so visitors can enjoy this beautiful temple in various ways. During late autumn, a bus service connecting to Muroji Temple can be used, so that tourists can enjoy viewing colored leaves. It's a must-see spot around this area.



731-1 Hase, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-47-7001 ●8:30-17:00 (Apr-Sep) 9:00-16:30 (Oct-Mar) ☺Open throughout the year ●¥500 ●From Kintetsu Hasedera Station, it's about a 15-min walk.

Curing illnesses with sacred spring-water



Saijinja Shrine P45e/4C

Saijinja Shrine is a branch shrine of Omiwajinja Shrine. It is popular among people because it is believed that the shrine is capable of curing people from illness with spring water gushing out from a well of water with miraculous effects. The well is located at the back of the front shrine. The shrine is always crowded with people who wish to be cured because they believe that the water is effective against any kind of illness. The word "Sai" means a water source or a well from which miraculous water gushes. To go to Mt. Miwa, a reservation is necessary at the shrine office.



1422 Miwa, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-42-6633 (Omiwa Shrine) ●on an as needed basis ☺Open throughout the year ●¥300, Admission Shrines Free ☑From JR Miwa Station, it's about a 15-min walk.

A temple with a 7-meter-high statue of Manjushri, the Buddha of wisdom



Abe-monjuin Temple P45e/5B

Abe-monjuin Temple is one of the top three temples of its kind in Japan. The temple is always crowded with visitors praying for success in school because the temple is dedicated to Manjushri (Monju), the Buddha of wisdom. There is a statue of Manjushri riding on a lion, and a wooden mosaic work made of Japanese cypress that was made in the 12th century. The image of Manjushri, a 7-meter-high statue riding on a lion, is the largest of its kind in Japan. The temple is popular among people as a place for charms against evil, as well as charms against troubles due to unlucky directions. Of course, people go to receive blessings for academic success, knowledge, and prevention of senility.



645 Abe, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-43-0002 ●9:00-17:00 (the main hall only) ☺Open throughout the year ●¥200 (included drink service [green tea] at the main hall) ☑From JR or Kintetsu Sakurai Stations, take a bus to Ishibutai and get off at Abe-monjuin-mae stop.



A temple situated on sacred ground with beautiful rhododendron flowers, open for women unlike other similar temples



Muroji Temple, sometimes called "Nyoinin-Koya" P45e/4H

Muroji Temple was built at the end of the 8th century by 5 monks who prayed for peace in the country. After passing through Deva Gate, visitors can see stone steps which take them to Kondo Hall on the right side, and to Mirokudo Hall on the left, before reaching Kancho-do Hall, the main hall of Muroji Temple. In Kondo Hall, the standing statue of the historical Buddha and Eleven-Faced Kannon Bosatsu are enshrined. In Mirokudo Hall, the sitting statue of the historical Buddha is enshrined. The statue of Nyoirin Kannon Bosatsu, the principal icon, is enshrined in Kancho-do Hall. Behind the Kancho-do Hall, there is a 16-meter-high five-story pagoda. For a pagoda situated outside, this is the smallest of its kind in Japan. Going further, visitors will see Okuno-in Hall situated in a primeval forest. Unlike Mt. Koya in Wakayama prefecture that used to prohibit women's entering into the sacred mountain in the past, Muroji Temple has always been open to women even though it belongs to the same sect of Buddhism. Muroji Temple, sometimes called "Nyoinin-Koya", is popular among female believers. The temple is famous for its rhododendron flowers.



78 Murou, Uda City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-93-2003 ●8:30-16:30/ Notes: 8:00-17:00 (Apr 11-Sep 30) 8:00-16:00 (Dec 1-Feb 28) ☺Open throughout the year ●¥600 ●From Kintetsu Murou-Ono Station, take a bus to Muroji Temple.

Beautiful flower garden at the foot of Mt. Uda



Takidani Hanashobuen Flower Garden P42/4G

Takidani Hanashobuen Flower Garden is situated in a mountainous area near Mt. Uda. The garden has almost one million iris trees including 600 different kinds. The iris blossoms in the vast garden are at their best between June and July. In addition to flowers in the spring such as weeping cherry and moss phlox, the garden offers a chance to enjoy seeing several flowers including clematis, climbing rose, hydrangea, and cosmos through the year. There are commercial facilities in the garden including a stall selling seeds, a restaurant, and a gift shop.



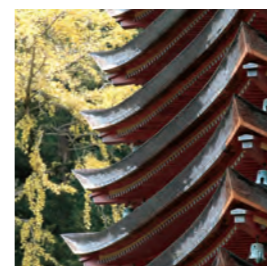
348 Murou Takidani, Uda City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-92-3187 ●9:00-18:00/ Notes: 9:00-21:00 (during events) ☺Open throughout the year ●¥800 ●From Kintetsu Sanbon-matsu Station, take a bus to Takidani-Hana-Shobuen. It's about a 25-min walk from the stop.

Characterized by its 13-story wooden pagoda and maple trees



Tanzanjinja Shrine P45e/7C

Tanzanjinja Shrine enshrines Fujiwara-no-Kamatari (614-669), an administrator who accomplished political reforms in the 7th century. The precincts of the shrine cover the entire area of Mt. Tono-Mine. Tanzanjinja Shrine has several splendid vermilion-lacquered shrines in its vast precincts, including a front shrine. A 17-meter high, 13-story wooden pagoda, which was rebuilt in 1532, is the only 13-story wooden pagoda in the world. The shrine is famous for its maple trees that are at their best in autumn, and for an event named "kemari" (a soccer-like game played by aristocrats in older times) which is held in spring and autumn.



319 Tononome, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-49-0001 ●8:30-16:30 ☺Open throughout the year ●¥500 ●From JR or Kintetsu Sakurai Station, take a bus to Tanzan shrine stop. It's about a 5-min walk from the stop.

Famous for silver grass



Soni Highlands P42/4G

Soni Highlands, covering about 38 hectares, is characterized with a sea of pampas grass with silver-white feathery flowers in autumn. The scenic beauty has been attracting many tourists and the outdoor trails offer fresh air for hiking enthusiasts in spring and summer. In addition, there is a hot spring nearby and the spa is popular among women because of its health and beauty benefits.



Taraji, Soni Village, Uda County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-94-2101 (Soni Village Tourism Association) ☺Open throughout the year ●¥500 in case of visiting in private land, otherwise free ●From Kintetsu Nabari Station, take a bus to Yama-kasu-nishi and get off at Taraji stop. It's about 60-min-walk from the stop. Note: Buses bounding to Soni-Kogen are available during Oct to Nov. It's about a 10-min walk from the terminal.

An old castle town with rich history and culture



Uda-Matsuyama P45e/6E

Uda-Matsuyama was once a flourishing castle town governed by Uda castle, and later became a commercial district. The historical townscape has been preserved. The town planning of Matsuyama district was designed based on the old plans when the town belonged to the domains owned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a samurai general who unified Japan in the 16th century. The district was designated as a National Special Historic Site and Special Place of Scenic Beauty.



1846 Ouda-Hirou, Uda City, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-87-2274 ("Sengen-sha"), Matsuyama District Regional Development Center ●8:00-17:00 (Sengen-sha) ☺Dec 29-Jan 3 (Sengen-sha) / Note: A confirmation is necessary if the center would be extraordinary closed. ●Free of charge ●From Kintetsu Halbara Station, take a bus to Ouda.

A temple for those wishing for safe childbirth



Shorinji Temple P45e/6C

Shorinji Temple was established as a branch temple of Tanzan Shrine (as a form of ecumenical fusion of Shinto and Buddhism in Japan). In Kannon-do Hall of the temple, the standing statue of Eleven-Faced Kannon, a National Treasure, is enshrined. It is considered to be a masterpiece sculpture from the Tenpyo era (729-749). The statue had been enshrined in Daigorinji Temple Temple, a branch temple of Omiwa Shrine, as the principal icon in the 8th century and it was relocated to Shorinji Temple. In the main building, visitors can see the principal icon of Koyasu-Enmei Jizo, the protector of children, which is popular among pregnant women seeking safe childbirth.



692 Shimo, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture ☎0744-43-0005 ●9:00-16:30 ☺Open throughout the year ●¥400 / Note: ¥500 during Mandara Display (Nov1-30) ●From JR or Kintetsu Sakurai Station, take a bus to Tanzan shrine stop and get off at Shorinji-mae stop.

A gorge with huge, unique rocks and beautiful flowers

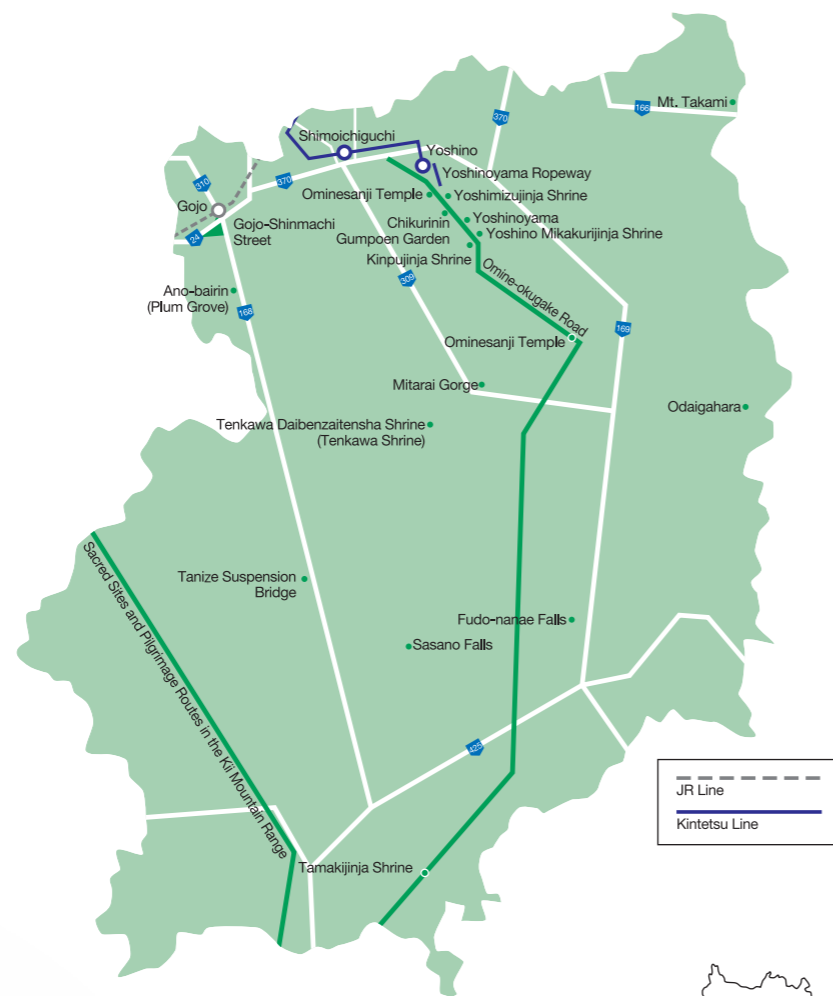
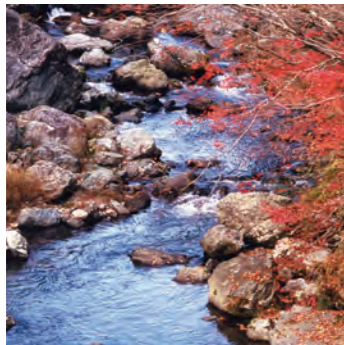


Okukochi Gorge P42/4G

Okukochi Gorge, located at a V-shaped gorge of the Shourenji River with steep sides that look like they have been split with an axe, is part of Murou Akame Aoyama Quasi-National Park in Japan. There are strange rocks such as Byobu-iwa (folding-screen rock), Kabuto-dake (samurai-helmet rock), and Yoro-i-dake (samurai-armor rock). The panoramic view includes these strange rocks, as well as a scenic beauty of azalea flowers, and wild cherry and Japanese maple trees.



Soni Village, Uda County, Nara Prefecture ☎0745-94-2101 (Soni Village Tourism Association) ●all-day ☺Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●From Kintetsu Nabari Station, take a bus to Yama-kasu-nishi and get off at a suitable stop in Soni Village.

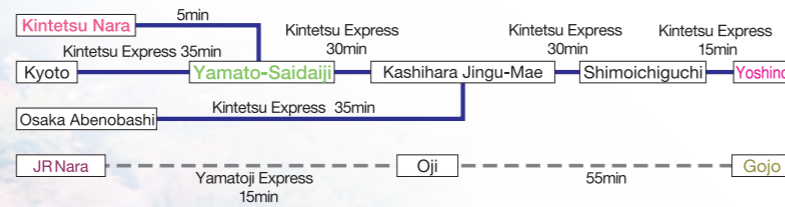


Southern Nara

Areas around Yoshino



Access to Southern Nara



Dorogawa Onsen Hot Spring

P45/2B

The birthplace of esoteric Buddhism asceticism in mountainous areas
The town of Hot Springs, where ascetic priests come and go

A sect of esoteric Buddhist mountain asceticism called Shugendo is a uniquely Japanese religion. When Mt. Omine, the home of the ascetic, is open to the public, you can see priests come and go and hear them blowing conch horns; the sound can be heard even on the streets. The atmosphere of streets in the town, lined with about 20 Japanese style inns and souvenir shops, is pleasantly calm. The town has characteristics and scenery of the four seasons, represented by new green leaves in the spring, mild temperatures in the summer, red leaves in the autumn, and white snow in the winter.

Dorogawa, Tenkawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture (Tourist Information Center at Ominesan Dorogawa Spa) ☎0747-64-0333 ☑By Bus From Kintetsu Shimoichiguchi Station, take a bus to Dorokawa-Onsen stop and get off the terminal.

Spa Facilities in Southern Nara

Spa	Address	TEL
Yoshino Onsen Hot Spring	902-1 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture	☎00746-32-3061 (Yoshino Onsen Yumoto)
Shin-Yoshino Onsen Hot Spring	403 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture	☎0746-32-3023 (Tatsumi-ya)
Shizuka-no-yu	Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture	☎0746-32-5155 (Sako-ya)
Totsukawa Onsen Hot Spring	Hiratai, Totsukawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture	☎0746-63-0200 (Totsukawa Tourism Association)
Tosenji Onsen Hot Spring	Musashi, Totsukawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture	☎0746-63-0200 (Totsukawa Tourism Association)
Kamiyu Onsen Hot Spring	Detan, Totsukawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture	☎0746-63-0200 (Totsukawa Tourism Association)



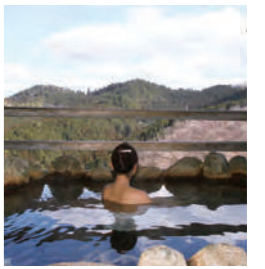
Yoshinoyama Onsen Hot Spring

P45/1B

Japanese-style inns where visitors can enjoy open air bath and cherry blossom viewing

Yoshinoyama is known for cherry blossoms. Standing atop a mountain gives visitors a complete view of Nakasenbon, where inns are situated, as well as Kamisenbon, a far distant area. In addition, a view of cherry blossoms can be seen while enjoying hot spring waters of open-air baths.

937 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-32-5121 (Yumoto Hono-ya) ☑From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a cable car to Yoshinoyama Station.. It' s about 10-min-walk from the terminal.



1



2

3

With Yoshinoyama, famous for its cherry blossoms, there are many cherry-related products, as well as Shugendo-related goods, in Southern Nara. ① Daranisuke, medicine for the stomach, is believed to have been created by Ennogyojo, the founder of Shugendo. It's still popular among local people. This is a specialty in Dorogawa, and a representative medicine of Nara. ② Dried confections made of kudzu powder, which are formed using flower or leaf-shaped moulds. They are suitable gifts because of their mild taste and long shelf life. ③ A beautiful sweet-bean jelly named Cherry Yokan contains a cherry blossom. It is a specialty in Yoshino



Japanese Traditional paper

How about making Japanese traditional paper?



With rich sources of water, the industry of paper making has been active in Yoshino region since the 8th century. To make paper, the bark of kozo paper mulberry is used as raw material. Visitors can make various sizes of paper like post cards or square-shaped paper by themselves in hands-on courses, which offer lessons taught by an artisan.



Japanese-style Candy Making

Making a Japanese-style Candy with kudzu

Yoshino-kudzu is a traditional confectionery from the Yoshino region. Using some flower- or leaf-shaped moulds, kudzu powder can be formed into various plant-like shapes. Your hand-made Yoshino-kudzu is perfect as a souvenir for your friends.

Cycling in Southern Nara

Bicycle Rental	Address	TEL
Terakawa Bicycle Rental	Sawatani in Tenkawa Village (near Tenkawa-Kawai bus stop)	☎0747-63-0307
at Dorogawa	Dorogawa in Tenkawa Village (near Dorogawa-Onsen bus stop)	☎0747-64-0609
Rakurin Bicycle Rental	3-70 Sue, Gojo City, Tourist Information Center at JR Gojo Station	☎0747-20-9005

Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range in the Yoshino region

A place of historic richness that is one of the top ranking places famous for cherry blossoms in Japan

Yoshinoyama P45/1B



Yoshinoyama, a UNESCO World Heritage Site has been famous for its cherry blossoms since ancient times. It covers an entire ridge starting from the northern end of the Mt Omine range to the south, extending about eight kilometers in length. In the area, cherry trees have been treated as sacred trees and planted by local people since ancient times. Therefore, it is now the home of about 30,000 trees including 200 species of cherry trees such as white wild cherry. The cherry blossoms begin to bloom in early April at the foot of the mountain, and the trees gradually reach full bloom from the bottom to the top of the mountain by the end of April. The blooming starts at Shimosenbon (the lowest part), and progresses up to Nakasenbon (the middle part), then Kamisenbon (the upper part), and finally Okusenbon (the summit). The number of beautiful cherry trees is so large that the scenery is depicted by a phrase "A glimpse catches one million trees." During the top season for blossoms, the trees are lit up at night with floodlights, so by visiting in the evening you can enjoy cherry blossoms lit up at night. With wealth of history involving this site and sacred trees, depending on visibility, it offers several aspects of various kinds of cherry blossoms.

Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-32-1007 (Yoshinoyama Tourism Association) 🚌 By Ropeway From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a ropeway to Senbonguchi Station, and get off at Yoshinoyama Station.



Footpath leading pilgrims to sacred places

Kumano-Sankeimichi-Kohechi P42/1B



The footpath named Kumano-Sankeimichi-Kohechi is a path leading pilgrims to two sacred places: Mt. Koya and Kumano-Hongu Grand Shrine. Of several paths leading up to a shrine in Kumano, this path is the shortest one (72km in total length). On the one hand, the footpath, which is paved with stone tiles and lined with stone Buddhist statues at both sides, provides relief to travelers during their pilgrimage. On the other hand, the footpath can be a challenge for pilgrims because of its steepness—it winds through mountainous areas with three peaks 3,000-meter-high peaks. Visitors can find a small village named Hatenashi of Totsukawa which becomes visible on their way to their destination. The site is called Tenku-no-Sato ("A small village rising to a majestic height"). This village offers views of a serene landscape of the Hatenashi Mountains, which gives relief from visitors' stressful lives as they stroll through the peaceful village. The scenery augments the atmosphere in which visitors can feel time pass slowly in this mountain oasis at the top of a steep footpath.

☎ 0747-37-2101 (Nosegawa Village Office) 0746-63-0200 (Totsukawa Village Tourism Association) 🚌 By Bus From Kintetsu YamatoYagi Station or JR Gojo Station, take an express bus to Shingu station stop, and get off at Totsukawa Onsen stop.



A temple of Shugendo dedicated to the largest statue of Zao-Gongen in Japan

Kinpusenji Temple P45/1B



Kinpusenji Temple dates back to the time when Ennoyojo, the founder of Shugendo (a variation of esoteric Buddhism), reportedly carved statues of Kongo Zao-Gongen from a wild cherry tree to enshrine the statues in the hall at the top and foot of the mountains in order to identify the statue as the principal deity of the religious austerities he practiced at Omnesan Sanjo Gadake.

2498 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-32-8371 ●8:30-16:30 🕒 Open throughout the year 🎫 Zaodo Hall ¥500 (Except the period during special Exhibition) 🚌 By Ropeway From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a ropeway to Senbonguchi Station, and get off at Yoshinoyama Station. It's a 15-min walk from the station.

A Shinto shrine with a diverse historical background

Yoshimizujinja Shrine P45/1B



Yoshimizujinja Shrine was originally built in the 7th century as a dwelling for esoteric Buddhist priests. Its original name was Yoshimizuin; however, it was renamed Yoshimizujinja Shrine because of the anti-Buddhist movement that occurred in conjunction with the rise of modernism Japan's Meiji period (1868-1912). There are several anecdotes about Yoshimizujinja Shrine that have been handed down through Japanese history. Yoshimizujinja Shrine became a temporary palace for the emperor during a time of upheaval in 14th century. In addition, it was used as an accommodation appointed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a samurai general who unified Japan in the 16th century, when he held a banquet to enjoy cherry blossoms. Visitors can see the entire view of the mountaintop from the precincts.

579 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-32-3024 ●8:00-17:30 🕒 Open throughout the year 🎫 ¥400 🚌 By Ropeway From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a ropeway to Senbonguchi Station, and get off at Yoshinoyama Station. It's a 20-min-walk from the station.

The route with religious sites for practicing austerities of esoteric Buddhism

Omine-Okugake Road P45/3C



The Omine-Okugake Road connects sacred places Yoshino-Omine and Kumano. It is about 90km in total length and is famous for the religious sites where priests of esoteric Buddhism practice austerities. The religious sites stand at several places along the route and were reportedly established by Ennoyojo, the founder of the type of esoteric Buddhism. The austerities, which have been conducted at such places since ancient times, are called "Okugake." Surrounded by a mysterious mountain atmosphere, the sacred route, a UNESCO World Heritage site, passes through a primeval forest at an altitude of almost 2,000 meters above sea level.

☎0747-63-0999 (Tenkawa Village Tourist Information Center)

A shrine dedicated to the deities of the Japanese creation myth

Tamakijinja Shrine P45/6B



Tamakijinja Shrine sits atop Mt. Tamaki, 1,076 meters above sea level. From here, visitors can take in a complete view of Kumano Mountains amid a sea of clouds. The shrine is called "the sacred shrine of ascetics of esoteric Buddhism sitting in the highest part of three Kumano Mountains." In the precincts, there are a large number of trees including a 3,000-year-old lignitized Japanese cedar (a cedar native to Japan), which soars over visitors and tells of the long history of the shrine.

Tamaigawa, Totsukawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-64-0500 ●Free admission to grounds 🕒 Open throughout the year 🎫 Free of charge 🚌 By Bus and Taxi From Kintetsu Yagi Station or JR Gojo Station, take an express bus to Shingu Station stop, and get off at Totsukawa Onsen stop. It's about a 20-min ride by taxi.

One of Nara's top three gardens, established by tea master Sen-no-Rikyu

Chikurinin Gumpoen Garden P45/1B



Chikurinin Gumpoen Garden is a garden that visitors can walk through, and it also has a pond. It covers about 33,000 square meters and was built by tea master Sen-no-Rikyu, an outstanding figure of tea ceremony in Japan.

2142 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-32-8081 ●8:00-17:00 🕒 Open throughout the year 🎫 ¥300 (Free of charge if using accommodation) 🚌 By Ropeway From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a ropeway to Senbonguchi Station, and get off at Yoshinoyama Station. After that, get on a bus to Okusenbonguchi stop and get off at Chikurin-in-Mae stop.

The Shrine dedicated to deities of water and pregnancy

Yoshino Mikumarijinja Shrine P45/1B



Yoshino Mikumarijinja Shrine is a shrine dedicated to seven deities. Of these enshrined deities, the main is a deity of water. Since the sounds "Mikumari" (literary "enshrined water") and "Mikomori" (literary "be blessed with children") are similar, the shrine became a center of faith for people who wish to have a child. It is believed that the great samurai general Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who unified Japan in 16th century, was blessed with a child after visiting here. Although it is uncommon for a main shrine to have three main buildings connected to it, this structure does. Following his father's wishes, it was rebuilt by the son of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

1612 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎ 0746-32-3012 ●8:00-16:00 🕒 Open throughout the year 🎫 Free of charge 🚌 By Ropeway From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a ropeway to Senbonguchi Station, and get off at Yoshinoyama Station. After that, get on a bus to Okusenbonguchi stop and get off at Chikurin-in-Mae stop. It's about a 30-min walk from the stop.

A shrine used for esoteric Buddhist ascetics

Kinpujinja Shrine P45/1B



Kinpujinja Shrine, which is dedicated to the local landlord deity of Yoshinoyama, is an old shrine located near the entrance gate at Okusenbon (the top of the mountain). The area in which the shrine is situated is a part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site named Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range. The site became an important place for ascetics of esoteric Buddhism around 1,000 years ago. Many ascetics began their rigorous ascetic exercises at this shrine. The shrine is characterized by its simplicity and its detached building, which is called "the hideout of Yoshitsune" according to an old tradition telling that Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune, a commander of samurai warriors in 12th century who was an enemy of the Imperial Court, is believed to have hidden out here.

1651 Yoshinoyama, Yoshinocho, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-32-3081 (Tourism Association Office of Yoshino Town Hall) ●Have an advance booking for visiting the main shrine. 🕒 Open throughout the year 🎫 Admission Yoshitsune-kakure-toHideout of Yoshitsune) ¥300 🚌 By Ropeway From Kintetsu Yoshino Station, take a ropeway to Senbonguchi Station, and get off at Yoshinoyama Station. After that, get on a bus to Okusenbonguchi stop and get off at the terminal. It's about a 5-min walk from the stop.

Japan's only sacred site where the entrance of women is still forbidden

Omnesanji Temple P45/2C



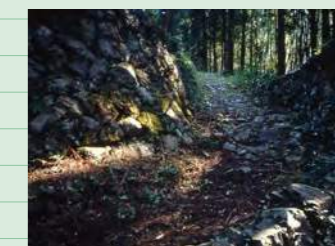
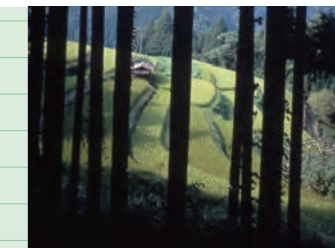
Omnesanji Temple, standing atop Mt. Sanjogatake amid the Mt. Omine range, is the main training temple for esoteric Buddhist ascetics and was established by Ennoyojo, the founder of this variation of esoteric Buddhism. The temple had been repeatedly destroyed by fire but was rebuilt shacach time. The present-day main building was rebuilt in the 17th century. Worshipping at the temple is only permitted during the specified period starting from the opening day (May 3rd) to the closing day (September 23rd). With the religious background of this type of esoteric practice, the entrance of women into the temple has been strictly prohibited from ancient times, and this rule remains in effect today.

Dorogawa, Tenkawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0747-63-0999 (Tenkawa Village Tourist Information Center) 🕒 Open from May 3 to Sep 22. 🚌 By Bus From Kintetsu Shimoichiguchi Station, take a bus to Dorogawa Onsen stop, and get off at the terminal. After that, Nyonin-kekka (starting point) is about a 60-min walk from the stop. Trip to the top of mountain is about 3 hours from the point.

Column

Shugendo, an esoteric tradition connected to Buddhism, and the UNESCO World Heritage Sites named Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

There are two pilgrimage routes in the world that have been included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. One is "the Pilgrimage Route of Santiago de Compostela" , a route for Christian pilgrims in Spain and France. The other is Japan's Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, which was selected in 2004 as a sacred pilgrimage route. They share the common ground of being sites strongly influenced by religious faith. The Kii Mountain range is situated in the vast area covering parts of three prefectures in the Kansai Region of Western Japan: Mie, Nara, and Wakayama prefectures. The mountain range consists of a series of steep mountains lying both in an east-west direction and in a north-south direction along the Kii peninsula, with summits reaching altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 meters. The mountains occupy almost the entire peninsula, which projects into the Pacific Ocean. With plentiful rainfall and a wealth of forest resources, the area has been considered a home of natural deities since ancient times. From the belief in natural deities in this environment, "Buddhist esoteric ascetics" was created. The ascetic priests consider the sacred mountains "Pure Lands," so it is common for them to practice several austerities in a mountainous area so as to gain some of the mysterious powers of the deities. Kumano-sanzan, Mt. Koya, and Yoshino and Omine are considered as such sacred places, and the pilgrimage routes such as Koheji and Omine-Okugake lead pilgrims to the sites. These sites became popular spots to which many visitors go for worshipping from every part of Japan. With their historical and cultural background, the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range have developed. Thanks to the plentiful nature, the sites have fostered a fusion of religion and culture throughout history. This is why they were designated UNESCO World Heritage sites.



Tanize Suspension Bridge ; a rope bridge for strolling in the sky

Tanize Suspension Bridge P45f/4A

This suspension bridge was installed by the local people in Tanize in 1954. The people used their own money to fund it. Surrounded by steep mountains, the rope bridge offers picturesque scenery with a complete view of the Kumano River below visitors' eyes. It has become a must-see spot in Totsukawa. Every step of strolling on the rope bridge is full of thrills because of the swinging motion that lets visitors enjoy their stroll in the sky.

Uenoji, Totsukawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-63-0200 (Totsukawa Village Tourism Association) ☑Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu YamatoYagi Station or JR Gojo Station, take an express bus to Shingu Station stop, and get off at Uenoji stop.



A 32-meter-high waterfall to relieve your stress

Sasano Falls P45f/5B

Sasano Falls, or the Bamboo Grass Waterfall, is a 32-meter-high waterfall which has been named as one of the top 100 waterfalls in Japan. The waterfall has become popular with tourists who want to feel relief at the spot where negative ions (that is supposed to have a positive effect on people) are generated. Visitors can relax in the atmosphere at the spot full of wonderful sounds and scenery, such as falling blue water, which looks like a hanging rope glittering in a beautiful surrounding landscape of mountains as it falls into the basin below. In addition, green leaves in the summer and red leaves in the autumn are must-sees. The clear stream gives people the chance to enjoy fishing for sweet-fish or red-spotted trout.



Naibara, Totsukawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-63-0200 (Totsukawa Village Tourism Association) ☑Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu YamatoYagi Station or JR Gojo Station, take an express bus to Shingu Station stop, and get off at Takigawaguchi stop. It's 12km by foot.

A 7.7 kilometer hiking trail with a picturesque view

Mitarai Gorge P45f/3B

Mitarai Gorge, situated in Tenkawa Village, offers scenic beauty thanks to its location facing the mountains, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which provide the source of water to the gorge and are called "the roof of the Kansai Region" (Kansai is the western part of central Japan). Visitors can enjoy trekking across the well maintained hiking routes available in this beautiful natural environment. Standing on a rope bridge makes it possible to see a complete view of water splashing under a waterfall. In addition, there are many sites to see such as deep pools with a mysterious emerald sheen created by the reflection of great rocks in the water. The site boasts green leaves in the summer and red leaves in the autumn, which are especially praised as the number one must-see nature-viewing spot in the Kansai Region.

Kitozumi, Tenkawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0747-63-0999 (Tenkawa Village Tourist Information Center) ●Any time ☑Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Shimoichiguchi Station, take a bus to Dorogawa Onsen stop or Nakaiosumi stop, and get off at Tenkawa-Kawaaai stop. It's about a 45-min walk from the stop.

A Shinto shrine dedicated to the deities of traditional performing arts

Tenkawa Daibenzaitensha Shrine P45f/3B

Tenkawa Daibenzaitensha Shrine is one of the top three shrines of its kind in Japan. It was the largest religious site for ascetics to practice at the time when Kukai (774-835), posthumously known as Kobo Daishi, began to conduct ascetic practices on Mt. Omine before founding a religious site atop Mt. Koya. As a Shinto shrine dedicated to the deities of traditional performing arts, it has attracted insiders of the entertainment industry. Some famous entertainers also go incognito to worship at the shrine. In addition, the shrine keeps many valuable materials concerning Noh theatre, a traditional performing art of Japan, which show the development process of this art form. Noh performances dedicated to the deities are held on the days of important events (the regularly held festival in July and other big festivals in spring and autumn) on the special stage for drama in the shrine.



Tsubouchi, Tenkawa Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0747-63-0558 ☑Open throughout the year ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Shimoichiguchi Station, take a bus to Nakaiosumi stop, and get off at Tenkawa-Daibenzaiten-sha stop.



Gojo-Shinmachi street with rows of houses in the town with the oldest house in Japan

Gojo-Shinmachi street P45f/1A

Gojo City was a transport hub and grew into a key town where many merchants and travelers came and went. The city has old houses standing in rows along the street called "Shinmachi Dori." These houses were supposedly built in 17th and in 18th centuries, so visitors are able to get a view of traditional architectural style of Japan. The buildings have been well preserved, and they are treated as important cultural resources telling Nara's history to visitors. Of these old houses, some are considered the oldest ones in Japan, among such houses whose age is clear.

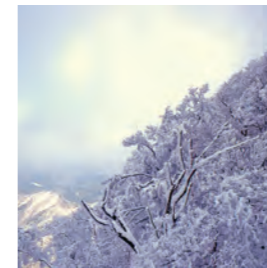


1-1-1 Honmachi, Gojo City, Nara Prefecture ☎0747-22-4001 (Gojo City Hall) ●From JR Gojo Station, it's about a 10-min walk.

The "Matterhorn of West Japan" with beautiful frost on the trees

Mt. Takami P42/5G

The 1,249-meter-high Mt. Takami, situated on the border between Higashi Yoshino Village in Nara and Mie prefecture, is popular among mountain climbing enthusiasts because the mountain offers a view of beautiful frost on the trees. It is characterized by its well proportioned pyramidal shape, so it is called the "Matterhorn of Kansai" (the western part of central Japan). The mountain also attracts many visitors who love seeing winter views or migratory birds.

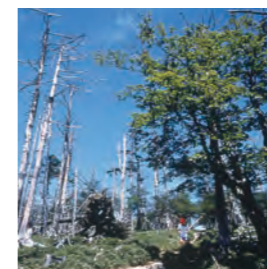


Sugitani, Higashi Yoshino Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-42-0441 (Higashi Yoshino Village Office) ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Haibara Station, take a bus to Sugitani stop, and get off at Takamiyama Tozan-guchi stop. The top of mountain is about a 2-hour walk from the stop. Note: On the weekend during a period between Jan and Feb, there's a special bus called "Usui-go" which takes you to Takamiyama Tozan-guchi stop from Kintetsu Haibara Station (twice a day in the morning).

A paradise for wild animals and plants

Odaigahara P42/8G

Odaigahara, which belongs to Yoshino and Kumano National Park, represents a paradise for wild animals and plants in Japan. Like Yakushima Island, a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, the site receives a plentiful amount of rainfall (500 cm) throughout the year. With thick forests having grown there thanks to sufficient rainfall, the environment provides an ideal home for distinctive animals and plants to grow. With well-maintained routes, the site attracts many trekkers.



660-1 Kotochi, Kamikitayama Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-83-0312 (Odaigahara Visitors Center) ●9:00 - 17:00 (Odaigahara Visitors Center) ☑Closed: Late Nov - late Apr (Odaigahara Visitors Center) ●By Bus From Kintetsu Yamato-Kamichi Station, take a bus to Odaigahara stop, and get off at the terminal. Note: Bus services are unavailable during Dec to Mid Apr.

A towering 100-meter waterfall

Fudo-nanae Falls P45f/5B

Fudo-nanae Falls on the Zenkigawa River are 160 meters high. The magnificent spectacle produced by the falls is quite impressive. With plentiful water, the great waterfall was included in the list of top 100 waterfalls in Japan, and it is characterized with its seven story structure over which a great volume of water runs. One of the characteristics is represented by its name "Nanae," which literally means "seven-storied." There is an observatory beside a path through a forest. The site boasts a landscape which is beautified with green leaves in spring and red leaves in autumn.



Zenki, Shimokitayama Village, Yoshino County, Nara Prefecture ☎0746-86-0016 (Industry and Construction Section of Shimokitayama Village Office) ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Yamato-Kamichi Station, take a bus to Yumori-Onsen-Sugino-yu stop, and get off at the terminal. After that, take a bus to Kamikuwahara stop and get off at Zenki-guchi stop. It's a 100-min walk from the stop. (It's about 10 minutes from Zenki-guchi by car using the Route 169.)

Plum trees covering the mountain like a sea of clouds

Ano-bairin (Plum Grove) P45f/3A

Ano-bairin is one of the largest plum groves in Nara prefecture. During the period from the end of February to the end of March, about 20,000 trees gradually come into full bloom, starting from the foot and going up to the middle part of mountain. In the peak season, the site looks like a sea of clouds made of slightly fragrant plum blossoms. As it is depicted by the phrase, "A glimpse catches one thousands trees," the scenery seen from the foot of the mountain full of blossoms is magnificent. Visiting a local museum named "Ano Village Museum of History and Folklore" allows people to learn a lot about the local history and lifestyles of the area.



Nishiyoshino-cho Hokusogi, Gojo City, Nara Prefecture ☎0747-33-0301 (Nishi-yoshino Branch of Gojo City Hall) ●Hours 9:00 - 17:00 (Nishi-yoshino Branch of Gojo City Hall) ●Free of charge ●By Bus From Kintetsu Yamato-Yagi Station or JR Gojo Station, take an express bus to Shingu stop, and get off at Ano-Wada-Kitaguchi stop.

Column

Enjoy soaking in a hot spring and become one with nature at Yoshinoyama

Japanese people are very fond of soaking in hot springs. With many volcanic areas, there are a lot of hot springs in Japan. Spring quality and differences in health benefits may vary depending on mineral contents and temperature. Soaking in a hot spring with the intention of curing illness has been called the "hot-spring cure" since ancient times.

Yoshinoyama has many historic hot springs renowned for their medicinal properties (refer to p.30).

Totsukawa Onsen-kyo became the first hot spring in Japan that made a formal announcement that it provides visitors with only "unprocessed spring water." "Unprocessed spring water" means that the spring water is not processed either by circulation or recycling of the water.

Using unprocessed spring water is highly valued because it keeps water clean without any bacteria growth. Totsukawa Onsen-kyo is characterized as a "pure spring" free from boiling, disinfection with chlorine, and dilution. In Totsukawa, there are three hot springs with different health benefits: Onsenchi, Totsukawa, and Kamiyu. A common point among these hot springs is that they offer "unprocessed spring water." Plentiful amounts of hot water make it possible for visitors to enjoy soaking in an unprocessed spring. Beyond just that, there are many must-sees in Totsukawa village such as Tamakijinja Shrine (p.33), Sasano Falls, and Tanize Suspension Bridge (p.34).

Allotting a day to relax by soaking in a hot spring during the trip to Nara is highly recommended because hot springs give relief from your stressful life.



Nara, home of divine swords, sake, and Japanese gardens

When thinking about characteristics of Japanese culture, it can be pointed out that production techniques have been developed with respect to nature and deities, and that such techniques have been handed down from generation to generation. Nara is considered to be the birthplace of several things representing Japanese culture. For example, the "Seven-Branded Sword," which is enshrined in Isonokamijingu Shrine in Tenri City in Nara, was produced as a special item to be dedicated to the principal deity. With their beautiful shapes and gleaming blades, Japanese swords have been treated as pieces of art as well as weapons. In addition, Japanese swords were a symbol of power, as shown in some pictures of the figure of Prince Shotoku with a sword.

Since the techniques of producing swords were introduced from China, Japanese swords that were made between the 7th and the 8th centuries had straight blades. Later, the blades of Japanese swords came to be curved through a newly developed technique. This technique was developed by a group of sword-makers called "Amakuni," who were native to the Yamato region in Nara. This production technique became the standard way of producing Japanese swords and has been handed down to the present day. Many masterpieces of Japanese sword-making have been dedicated to Shoso-in, the National Treasure Hall, in Nara. Of these swords, some were used for ceremonies as ornamental items with beautiful patterns on the surface, and others were used in real battle as excellent weapons. Looking at the present day, a group of swordsmiths called the Gassan School has been keeping these traditional techniques for over 800 years in Sakurai City in Nara. Among swordsmiths of the Tsukiyama School, there is a master swordsmith who has been designated as a Living National Treasure in Japan because of his excellent craftsmanship. When producing a truly great sword, there are three requirements: first, flexibility so it won't break, second, hardness so it won't become bent, and finally, sharpness to cut well. Making it too hard may make it brittle even if it is strong. Making it too flexible may lead to it getting bent and warped. It is absolutely essential to adjust these characteristics to make



Zen Garden in Jikoin Temple that can be seen from inside a shoin-style room (photo left)

Trace of the garden of Daijōin Temple in Naramachi (photo below)

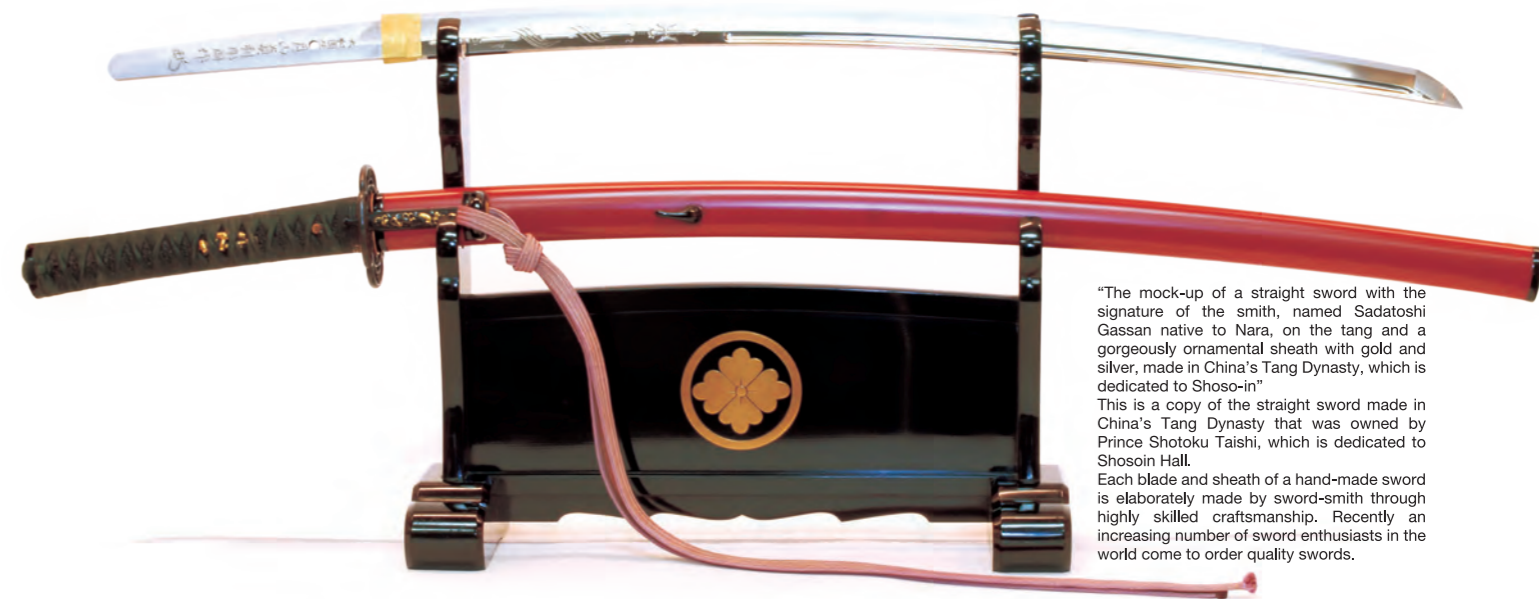
Isui-en Garden, featuring a path around a pond, with a landscape of a World Heritage site as a "borrowed view" (photo upper left)

Toin Hall Garden at Heijō-kyū Palace Site, a reproduced ancient garden (photo upper right) The top garden of ancient Nara still offers a glimpse of the beauty of the four seasons



There's a saying: "Nara, birthplace of Sake". In fact, Omiwajinja Shrine in Sakurai City in Nara is dedicated to the deity of sake. The shrine is popular among breweries and liquor dealers in Japan. Refined sake, named Nara-zake, has become synonymous with quality sake, or rice wine. There is a sake brand, named "Yamato-no-umazake" (literally "quality sake in Nara"), nationwide marketed by a local sake brewery in Nara. Recently, there are several restaurants serving refined sake to their customers with Western dishes, so people came to enjoy drinking sake in various ways.

the mutually contradicting properties of iron complement each other. These techniques are required for swordsmiths to produce a great sword. Thanks to the techniques that have been secretly handed down by swordsmiths, as well as other techniques for decorating the blade and the sheath of the sword, Japanese swords have become pieces of fine art and that are highly praised around the world. Sake, or rice wine, is another special product dedicated to the deities that has its origin in Nara. It is believed that an alcoholic beverage produced by Buddhist priests, named "Sobo-shu" was the first sake of its kind. The raw material of Sobo-shu was rice dedicated to temples. Shoryakuji Temple in Nara was at the top of the list of temples producing sake at that time. The basic techniques of producing sake, which became the foundation of modern techniques of producing refined sake, were established before the 17th century. In course of time, quality refined sake, named Nara-zake, was produced in Nara through these techniques. Thus, Nara is believed to be the birthplace of refined sake. There is a shrine named Omiwajinja Shrine in Sakurai City, Nara which offers sake to the deity of sake. Omiwajinja Shrine has become popular among breweries and liquor dealers in Japan. The shrine holds a Sake Festival on November 14 and attracts many breweries and liquor dealers who come from several parts of Japan. At this time of the year, they prepare to produce fresh sake which is why many people in the sake industry visit Omiwajinja Shrine in hopes of good results. In the world of sake, there is an old custom to hang a lucky charm made of a Japanese cedar tree named "sugi-tama" (literally "cedar ball") under the eaves of houses. There is a sugi-tama hung from the eaves of houses of worship at Omiwajinja Shrine, too. On the day of the Sake Festival, old sugi-tama are replaced with new ones. As an old custom, breweries obtain a small sugi-tama made of a Japanese cedar tree cut at Mt. Miwa that is considered to be the sacred tree of the shrine in order to hang it under the eaves of their houses. Dangling a sugi-tama is a sign showing that the production of fresh sake has been completed. The garden is a sacred place where rituals and ceremonies are held, and a place with a close connection to gods as well as temples and shrines, that has been designed with respect to the sacred entities. At the site of the reconstructed Heijō-kyū Palace, for example, there is Toin Hall Garden, which is also a Chisenkaiyushiki Garden. Chisenkaiyushiki is a style of Japanese gardens which typically has a pond in the center with a landscape created around the pond. Throughout history, styles of Japanese gardens have changed depending on trends and social conditions of the time after the relocation of the capital from Nara to Kyoto. In Nara, there are prominent gardens designed by some distinguished gardeners. They include the Zen-style garden of Jikoin Temple in Yamatokoriyama City, which was designed by Tea Master Katagiri Sekishū. There is also the scenic garden of Nakanobo in Taimadera Temple in Katsuragi City, also designed by Katagiri Sekishū. The garden can be seen from a traditional Japanese formal reception room in the temple. In addition, there is also Chikurinjin Gumpoen Garden, a garden for walking in that has a pond in the center. It was arranged in Yoshino by Tea Master Sen-no-Rikyū and remodeled by Hosokawa Yusai. This garden has the personality of its famous creators. These three gardens are highly respected, and they are called the "Top three gardens in the Nara area." Japanese gardens are a perfect place where visitors can feel some sense of the spirituality of Japan.



"The mock-up of a straight sword with the signature of the smith, named Sadatoshi Gassan native to Nara, on the tang and a gorgeously ornamental sheath with gold and silver, made in China's Tang Dynasty, which is dedicated to Shoso-in" This is a copy of the straight sword made in China's Tang Dynasty that was owned by Prince Shotoku Taishi, which is dedicated to Shosoin Hall. Each blade and sheath of a hand-made sword is elaborately made by sword-smith through highly skilled craftsmanship. Recently an increasing number of sword enthusiasts in the world come to order quality swords.

Asuka-style Japanese stew

The origin of this dish is believed to be a stew-like dish made with goat milk. It was eaten to help cope with cold weather and was made by a Buddhist priest who came from China to Nara in the 7th century. Now, the dish is made up of cow milk and soybean paste in seasoned chicken bone soup stock with chicken and vegetables simmered together as the main ingredients.



Yoshino kudzu

Kudzu is a plant of the pea family. To make kudzu powder, a starch gained from the root of kudzu is used. Kudzu is the main ingredient for making various foods such as kudzu cake and dried confections. In addition, a noodle-like "Kudzu kin" is also popular. The bark of kudzu root can also be used as an ingredient for cold medicine.



Somen (vermicelli-like thin, white noodles)

The origin of this dish is believed to be a stew-like dish made with goat milk. It was eaten to help cope with cold weather and was made by a Buddhist priest who came from China to Nara in the 7th century. Now, the dish is made up of cow milk and soybean paste in seasoned chicken bone soup stock with chicken and vegetables simmered together as the main ingredients.



Sushi wrapped in persimmon leaves

Persimmon leaf-wrapped sushi (kaki-no-ha sushi) is a bite-sized kind of sushi, wrapped in a persimmon leaf. It is a cut of pressed sushi-rice topped with a variety of ingredients such as mackerel and salmon. Originally, this sushi was a special dish served at a summer festival. Since the sushi is preserved, it can make a good souvenir to take back home with you.



Chagayu

Chagayu is a rice porridge made by boiling rice with tea. A typical feature of chagayu in Nara is that it is not so sticky. Nara is an old tea-producing district, and sent tea to the government as a form of payment in the past. It is said that the custom of boiling rice with tea started as a way of using up the rest of the tea leftover from this amount sent to the government.



Takayama tea whisks

Tea whisks are kitchen utensils used for mixing a cup of powdered green tea. Takayama, a city in Nara, has an almost 90 percent share of the tea whisk market in Japan. The secret of producing whisks has been kept in Takayama for 500 years or more. There are various kinds of whisks. Some are suitable for tea ceremony schools, while there are others for specific uses.



Nara-zarashi (bleached hemp cloth)

Nara-zarashi is hemp cloth woven by hand and bleached completely. In former times, Nara-zarashi was used for making clothes for Buddhist and Shinto priests. It was also used for making high-grade hemp costumes for performers of traditional theater such as Noh and Kyogen. Nowadays, it is used as material for producing knick-knacks and various items that are sold as gifts or souvenirs.



Nara calligraphy brushes

The production of writing brushes started when Kukai (774-835), posthumously known as Kobo Daishi, introduced the technique of producing brushes into Japan from China's Tang Dynasty. Since Nara was a district where India ink sticks were produced and there were a lot of temples and shrines used them, the industry of brush-making developed in Nara. Various kinds of brushes were produced and then a certain type of brush came to be called the "Nara Brush."

Nara Food X Goods

Most of the local dishes in Nara are simple, common dishes that were eaten by the local people as part of their everyday diet throughout Nara's long history and environment. Eating the local dishes in Nara allows you to enjoy the same dishes that were eaten in ancient Japan.

Nara, the ancient capital of Japan, was a center of culture and artistic techniques that had spread from various Asian countries. The styles of traditional arts and craftworks in Japan were formed through a long history during which native properties of things and ideas in Japan fused together with borrowed ones. Many skills and techniques of traditional arts and craftworks maintained for generations have been handed down uninterruptedly to the present day.



Nara fans

A tradition says that the origin of the Nara fan was a fan made by a Shinto priest of Kasuga Taisha Shrine in the 8th century with the intention of making something like an implement of war. The original fan was made with thick frames plastered with paper laminated with persimmon tannin. The fan developed and became sophisticated in terms of design. Recently, natural scenery and other features of Nara are used as ornamental marks on fans whose surfaces are finely and beautifully watermarked.



Akahada-ware

A part of the town of Akahada-cho, named Nishino-kyo, has been a district where pottery has been produced since the olden days. With requests from Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, many porcelain and brazier-like ware has been produced there. In response to the development of tea ceremony, the district came to produce a lot of pieces for the ceremony. Some people believe the district came to be called Akahada (literally "red skin") because the clay used to make pottery turns red when heated.

Nara History

239 Himiko, the Queen of Wa (ancient Japan) receives a gold seal from the Wei Court in China

300 The establishment of the government led by the Yamato Court in Nara. Construction of tumuli increases

538 The introduction of Buddhism from Paekche (ancient Korean kingdom)

593 During the reign of Empress Suiko, Prince Shotoku is appointed regent.

596 Establishment of Asukadera Temple

710 Establishment of Heijo capital (Nara)

712 Compilation of "Kojiki"

718 Relocation of Asukadera Temple to Heijo capital. It is renamed Gangoji Temple. Relocation of Yakushiji Temple to Heijokyo in Nara

720 Compilation of "Nihon shoki"

724 Emperor Shomu is enthroned.

752 Consecration of Great Buddha (Daibutsu) of Todaiji Temple

The water-drawing ceremony at Todaiji Temple (Shuni-e) begins

754 High Priest Ganjin arrives in Japan from China's Tang Dynasty

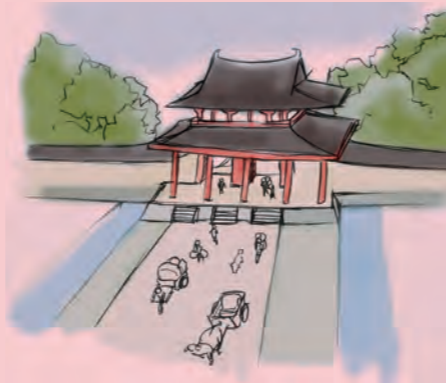
759 Establishment of Todaiji Temple

Compilation of "The Manyoshu"

768 Establishment of Kasuga Taisha Shrine

784 Establishment of Nagaoka-kyo Capital (Kyoto)

794 Establishment of Heian-kyo Capital (Kyoto)



894 Abolition of Japanese envoys to Tang Dynasty (China)

1136 "On-matsuri", a festival at Kasuga Wakamiya in Kasuga Taisha Shrine, begins

1180 Todaiji Temple and Kohfukuji Temple is lost in a fire during the Siege of Nara

1192 Minamoto-no Yoritomo establishes the Kamakura shogunate



1203 Famous sculptors Unkei and Kaikei create the two wooden statues of Kongo Rikishi at the Nandaimon gate of Todaiji Temple

1336 1336 After the conflict between the northern and southern courts, Emperor Godaigo settles down in Yoshino, Nara

1338 Ashikaga Takauji establishes the Muromachi shogunate

1392 Unification of the northern and southern courts

1600 After winning the battle of Sekigahara, Tokugawa Ieyasu begins to dominate the Yamato domain

1603 Ieyasu establishes the Edo shogunate

1871 Nara starts as Nara Prefecture as a result of the Abolition of Clan System and the Establishment of Prefectures after the Meiji Restoration

1880 Nara Park opens

1972 The wall paintings of Takamatsuzuka Tumulus are found

1976 Restoration of Kondo Hall of Yakushiji Temple

1993 The Buddhist Monuments in the Horyuji Area (Western Nara) is designated as a UNESCO's World Heritage site

1998 Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara (Northern Nara) is designated as a UNESCO's World Heritage site

2004 Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Southern Nara) is designated as a UNESCO's World Heritage site

2010 Nara Prefecture celebrates the 1300th anniversary of the Nara Heijokyo



Kofun Period

Asuka Period

Nara Period

Heian Period

Kamakura Period

Muromachi Period

Azuchi-Momoyama Period

Edo Period

Meiji Period Showa Period

Heisei Period



Annual Events in Nara

4th Sat. Wakakusa Yamayaki (Grass Burning Ceremony) (P12)

23rd Konin-e Ceremony (Cancer Prevention Bamboo Sake Festival) at Daianji Temple (P14)



1st-14th Shuni-e Fire Ceremony at Todaiji Temple (P10)

1st-31st Hina Dolls Display at Local Houses in Takatori Tosa (P26)

22nd-24th Oeshiki (A Ceremony Commemorating Prince Shotoku) at Horyuji Temple (P18)

30th-Apr. 5th Hana-e shiki (Flower Ceremony) at Yakushiji Temple (P14)



3rd Toakeshiki (The Door-opening Ceremony) at Omimesanji Temple (P32)

14th Neri-kuyo eshiki at Taimadera Temple (P21)

19th Uchiwa-maki (Paper fan throwing Ceremony) at Toshodaiji Temple (P14)

3rd Sat. Takigionoh at Kohfukuji Temple (P11) and Kasuga Taisha Shrine (P11)



7th Kaerutobi (Frog Hopping Ceremony) at Kinpusenji Temple (P32)

Mid Jul.-late Sep. Light-up Promenade in Nara Park (P4)



The harvest moon Moon Viewing at Shin-Yakushiji Temple (P13)

The harvest moon Uneme Festival at Sarusawa-ike Pond (P11)

The harvest moon Kangetsu Sanbutsue (Buddhist ritual with moon viewing) at Toshodaiji Temple (P14)

Mid Sep.-Hatsutori in Oct. Yama-akari (Lantern Festival) at Soni Highlands (P29)

3rd Kemari (Kickball Festival) at Tanzanjinja Shrine (P29)

14th Sake Festival at Omiwajinja Shrine (P28)



Ume (Japanese apricot)

Cherry blossom

Wisteria

Hydrangea

Iris

Cosmos

Japanese Bush Clover

Cluster

Autumn Leaves

Winter Camellia

Early Feb. - Mid Mar. Shika Yose (Deer Gathering) in Nara Park (P4)

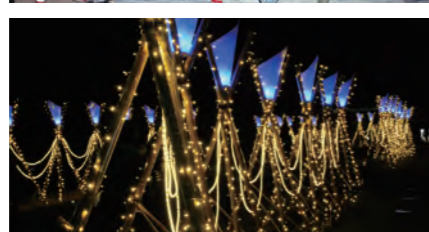
3rd Oni-oi shiki (Rite of driving away devils) at Kohfukuji Temple (P11)

3rd Oni-bi (Devil Fire Festival) at Kinpusenji Temple (P32)

8th to 14th Shiawase Kairo Nara Rurie (Illumination Festival) at Nara Park (P4)

9th Ningyo Kuyo (Doll Memorial Service) at Shorinji Temple (P29)

14th Dadaoshi Festival at Hasadera Temple (P28)



1st-7th Hina-e shiki (Doll Festival) at Hokkeji Temple (P15)

10th-12th Hana-kue shiki (Flower Ceremony) at Kinpusenji Temple (P32)

2nd Sat. & Sun. Ochamori (Grand Tea Ceremony) at Saidaiji Temple (P15)

29th Kemari (Spring Kickball Festival) at Tanzanjinja Shrine (P29)



23rd Take Kuyo (Prayers for Protection against Cancer and Memorial Ceremony for Bamboo) at Daianji Temple (P14)



2nd & 3rd Dorogawa Gyoja Festival at Tenkawa (P31)

In mid-Aug Nara Toka-e (Lantern Festival) in Nara Park (P4)

7th Ominugui (Dusting ritual of the Great Buddha) at Todaiji Temple (P10)

13th - 15th Bon Festival Dance at Totsukawa (P31)

14th - 15th Chugen Mantoro (Lantern Festival) at Kasuga Taisha Shrine (P11)

15th Daimonji Okuribi (Bonfires) in the Mt. Takamado

15th Manto Kuyo-e (Ten Thousand Lanterns Festival) at Todaiji Temple (P10)

Last Sat. & Sun. Basara Festival Nara City



Sat. & Sun. Deer-antler cutting ritual in Nara Park (P4)

2nd Sunday Shishi-mai (Lion Dance) in Soni Village (P29)

Late Oct. - Early Nov. Shoso-in Exhibition at Nara National Museum (P12)



15th Ominugui (Dusting ritual of the Buddha) at Toshodaiji Temple (P14)

15th - 18th Kasuga Wakamiya Onmatsuri Festival at Kasuga Taisha Shrine (P11)

29th Ominugui (Dusting ritual of the Buddha) at Yakushiji Temple (P14)



Winter Camellia ■ Sekkoji Temple (P21)

Ume (Japanese apricot) ■ Ume Groves in Tsukigase, Oriwaka, Hirohashi and Anou (P35)

Cherry blossom ■ Yoshinoyama (P32), Nara Park (P4), Heijokyo Palace Site (P15), the ruins of Koriyama Castle (P20), Horyuji Temple (P18), Hongo no Matabe Sakura

Wisteria ■ Kasuga Taisha Shrine (P11)

Rhododendron ■ Muroji Temple (P29), Okadera Temple (P24), Odaigahara Visitor Center (P35)

Azalea ■ Katsuragi Heights Lodge (P21), Mt. Kono

Hydrangea ■ Yatadera Temple (P20), Kumedera Temple, Yoshinoyama (P32)

Iris ■ Takidani Hanashobuen Flower Garden (P29), Yagyu Hanashobuen Flower Garden, Yamato Folklore Park, Umamikyuryo Park

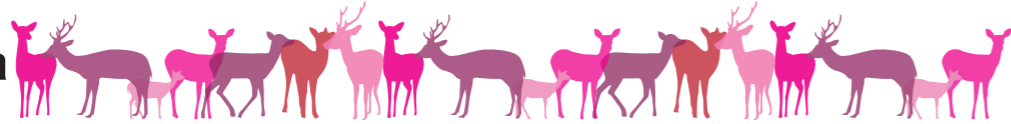
Japanese Bush Clover ■ Gangoji Temple (P13), Byakugoji Temple

Cosmos ■ Hannayaji Temple, Ikaruga-no Sato (P18), Abe-monju-in Temple (P28)

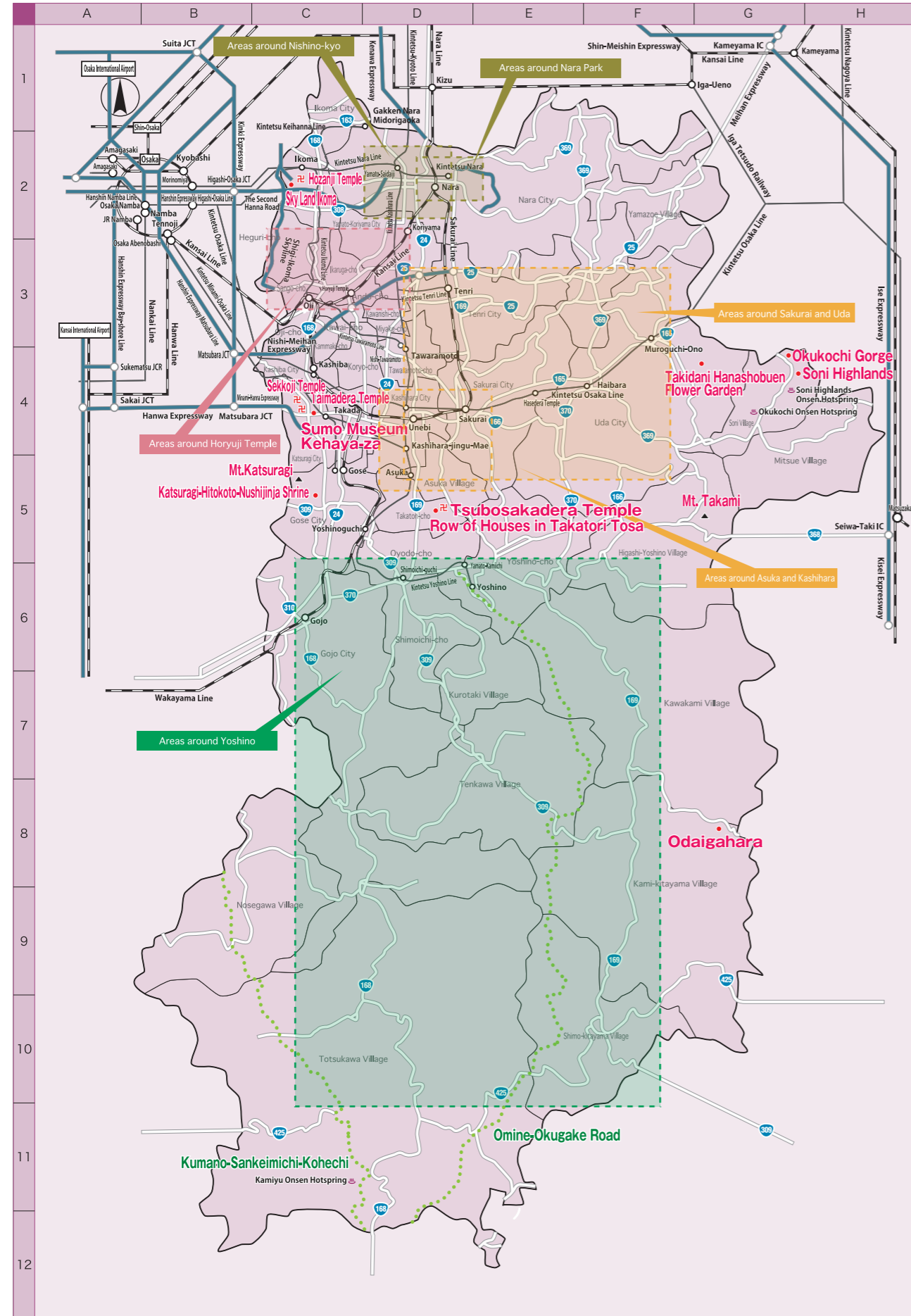
Cluster ■ Horyuji Temple (P18), Asuka Village (P25)

Autumn Leaves ■ Nara Park (P4), Shoryakuiji Temple, Yagyu Kaido Road, Shigisan-Chogonsenji Temple (P20), Yamanobe-no-michi Trail (P27), Tanzan jinja Shrine (P29), Okukochi Onsen Hospring (P29), Yoshinoyama (P32), Mitazai Gorge (P34)

Map of Nara



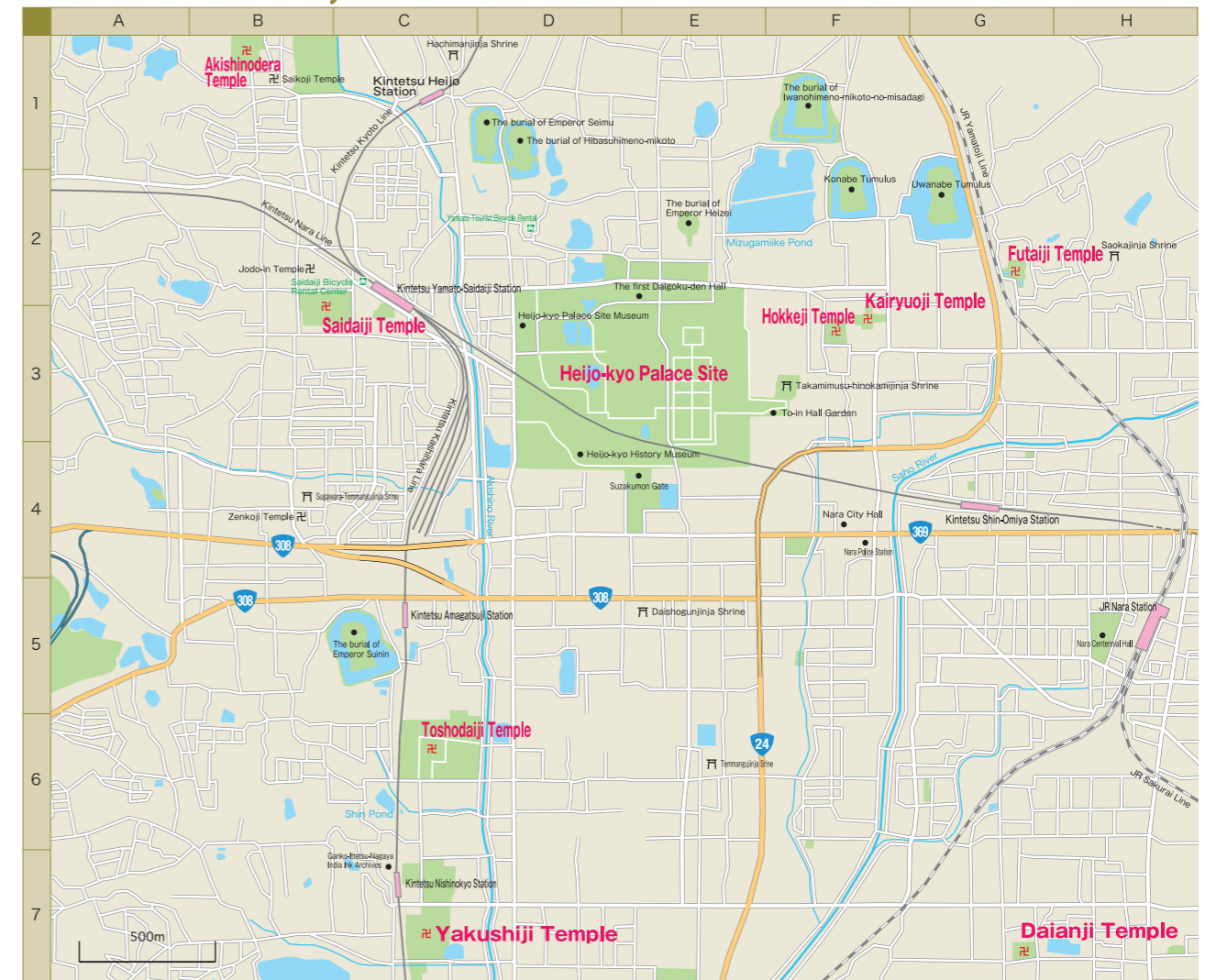
Whole area of Nara Prefecture



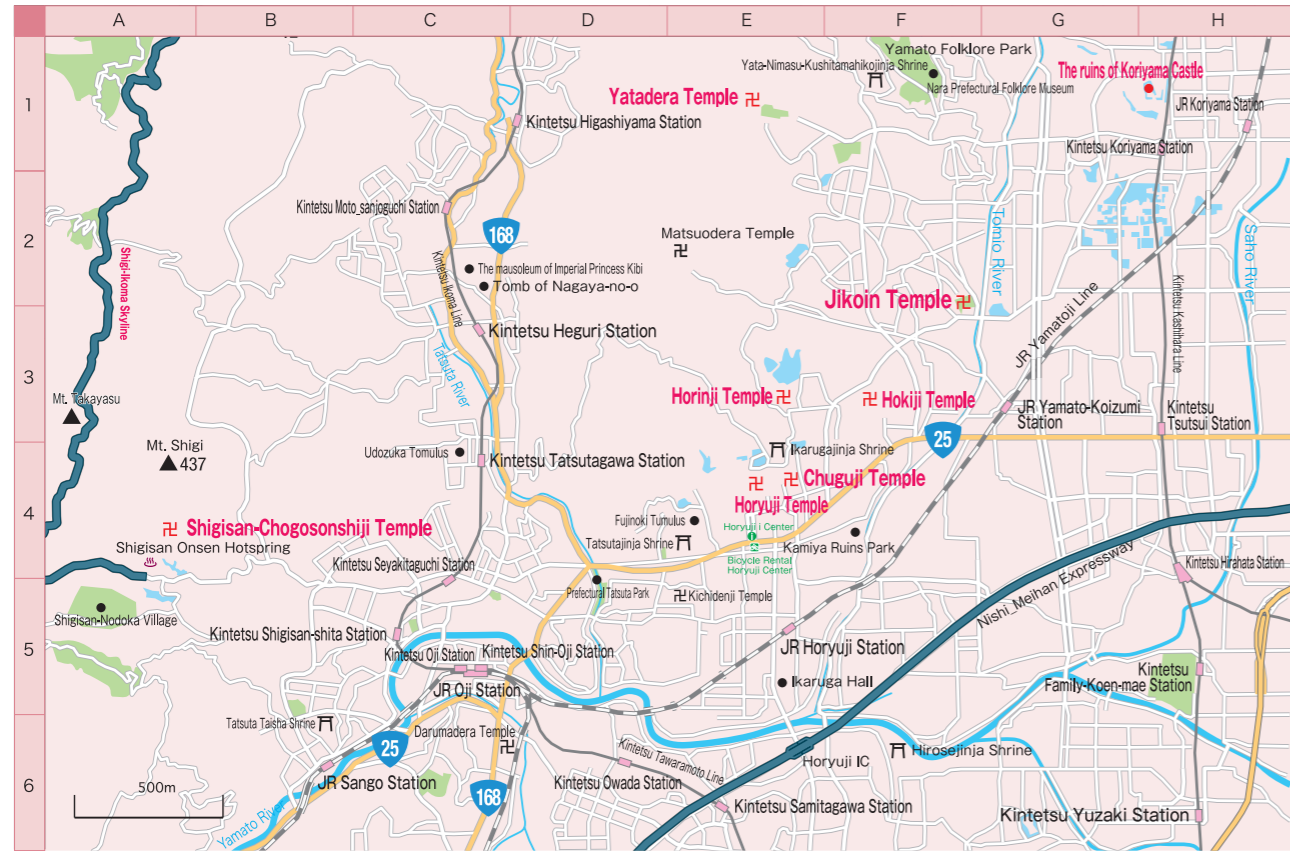
a Areas Around Nara Park (Northern Nara)



b Areas Around Nishino-kyo (Northern Nara)



c Areas Around Horyuji Temple (Western Nara)



e Areas around Sakurai and Uda (Eastern Nara)



d Areas around Asuka and Kashihara (Eastern Nara)



f Areas around Yoshino (Southern Nara)



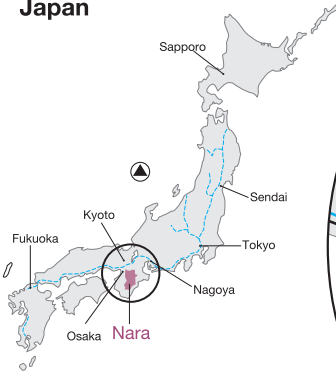
Keys of Map

- JR Line
- Private Railroad/Wireless Line
- Mountain
- Temple
- Shrine
- Onsen Hot Spring
- Bicycle Rental
- Information
- Number of page
- Horizontally oriented alphabets
- Vertically oriented numbers
- National Highway

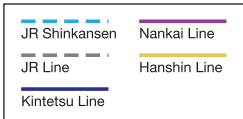
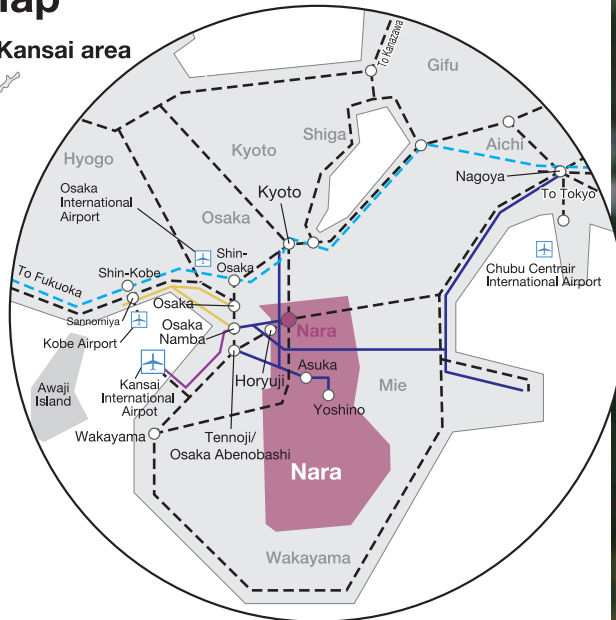


Nara Access Map

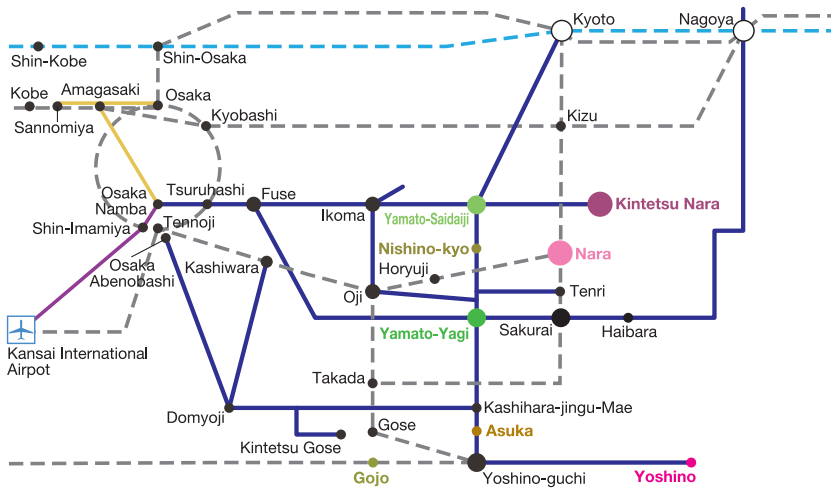
Japan



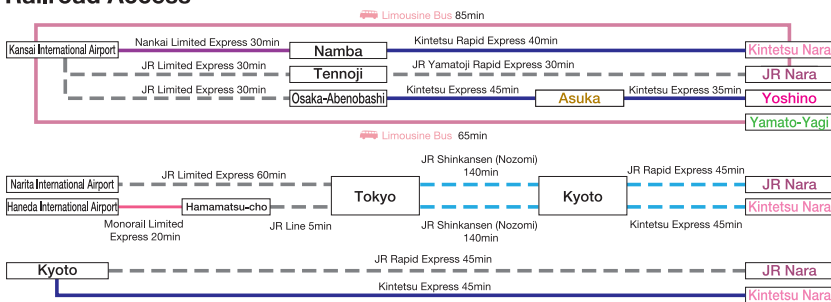
Kansai area



Route Map



Railroad Access



Tourist Information Centers

Kansai Tourist Information Center at Kansai International Airport TEL: +81-724-56-6025 Language: Japanese/English/Chinese Open: 8:30~20:30 (Apr - Oct) 9:00~21:00 (Nov - Mar)	Nara Prefecture Information Center TEL: +81-742-27-2003 Language: Japanese/English Open: 10:00~17:00	Nara City Tourist Center TEL: +81-742-22-5595 Language: Japanese/English Open: 9:00~21:00 (Service in English: 9:00-19:00)	Nara City Tourist Information Center TEL: +81-742-27-2223 Language: Japanese/English Open: 9:00~21:00 (Service in English: 9:00 - 19:00)
JR Nara Station Tourist Information Center TEL: +81-742-22-9821 Language: Japanese/English Open: 9:00~17:00	Kintetsu Nara Station Tourist Information Center TEL: +81-742-24-4858 Language: Japanese/English Open: 9:00~17:00	Sarusawaiki Tourist Information Center TEL: +81-742-26-1991 Language: Japanese/English Open: 9:00~17:00	Horyuji I Center TEL: +81-745-74-6800 Language: Japanese/English Open: 8:30~18:00 (Service in English: 9:00 - 16:00)

Volunteer Interpreter and Tour Guide Groups

Nara S.G.G. Club TEL: +81-742-22-5595 Language: English/French/German Open: 9:00~19:00	Nara YMCA TEL: +81-742-45-5920 Language: English Open: 9:30~20:00	Nara Student Guide TEL: +81-742-26-4753 Language: English Open: 9:30~17:00	Ikaruga ICES SGG TEL: +81-745-74-6800 Language: English/Chinese Open: 8:30~16:00
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Nara Prefectural Government Office 630-8501 30 Noborioji-cho, Nara City, Nara Prefecture
TEL: +81-742-27-8553 HP: <http://www.pref.nara.jp/> E-mail: iad-nara@mahoroba.ne.jp

Photographs were provided by the following: Corporation aggregate Nara City Tourism Association, General Incorporated Foundation Nara Visitors Bureau, Asukaen Co., Ltd., studio38, and Yomuri Shinbun Osaka Office
 All the references in this pamphlet are based on the information as of February of 2012.