

Communication in Japan

A Multimedia
Exploration of
Tradition
and *Innovation*
in Japan



Before You Fly

WHAT TO DO TWO MONTHS BEFORE



Start walking more. Try to get about 10,000 steps a day (about five miles) in the shoes you plan to wear to Japan. We will walk at least this much each day.



Learn some simple words and phrases. Here are a few to start:

Sumimasen = Excuse me

Arigatou = Thanks

Hai = Yes

Konnichiwa = Hello

Onegaishimasu = Please

ありがとう



Find out what options you have for international calls and data on your phone. You may want to stick with WiFi only while abroad.



Find out if your credit card charges foreign transaction fees, and consider using one that doesn't.



Make sure you have a passport, with at least 6 months left before expiration.



Download the Google translate app to your phone.





PREPARING FOR THE FLIGHT

PACKING

- 
- Enough clothing for 5 days
 - Passport and identification (license)
 - Bring cash to convert to yen
 - Phone charger and extra battery
 - Comfortable shoes, easy to slip on/off
 - Nice socks, no holes
 - Sunglasses/hat/small umbrella
 - Small hand towel/ sanitizer
 - A crossbody travel bag for daily use
 - Pack light, leave extra room for souvenirs

FOR A MORE COMFORTABLE FLIGHT

- 
- Small snacks, like trail mix or protein bars
 - Headphones for in-flight movies
 - Inflatable neck pillow
 - Sleep mask
 - Lip Balm
 - Hand wipes
 - Face mask



Summer in Japan



Summer in Japan is filled with festivals (matsuri) and fireworks (hanabi). During this time you'll see women dressed in light, colorful summer clothing (yukata), and the men as well (jinbei). Japanese wind chimes (furin) are a symbolic summertime sound, as well as the cicadas (semi), which can be very noisy! It helps to be prepared for the very hot and humid weather. The rainy season begins in June, but rainfall is usually light and misty. A small umbrella should be fine, and they are easy to find at any convenience store. When you need to cool off, look for the iconic symbol for ice (kori) 氷. Shaved ice (kakigori) is a summertime treat, and it's traditional to add sweet cream and fruits to your shaved ice.

As you explore, take advantage of the many vending machines to stay hydrated (I love Pocari Sweat), and it helps to carry a small, personal fan, or a thin cotton towel (tenugui) to wipe the sweat off and cool down. Wear light clothing, a hat, and sunscreen to make your travels more comfortable. Temperatures will range between 70 and 90 degrees on average. Summer is a lively, vibrant, and youthful season in Japan!



Surviving Summer:

<https://www.japan-experience.com/to-know/understanding-japan/5-ways-to-survive-summer-in-japan>

Dressing for Summer:

<https://www.japan-experience.com/to-know/visiting-japan/yukata-and-jinbei>



Food in Japan

Food is plentiful, inexpensive, fresh, and tasty in Japan. Sushi comes to mind, but also ramen noodles, tonkatsu (fried pork cutlet), curry rice, okonomiyaki (savory pancake), takoyaki (grilled balls of octopus), taiyaki (fish-shaped cake with sweet filling), yakitori (grilled chicken skewers), karaage (fried chicken), Japanese crepes (rolled up with a filling), dango (steamed rice dumplings skewered on a stick), and green tea.

Many Japanese start their day with natto (sticky, fermented soy beans), rice, grilled fish, and miso soup (seaweed and tofu in a broth). Tamagoyaki (egg omelette) is also popular at breakfast, or in a bento (lunch box) as a side dish. They are usually slightly sweet and rolled into a rectangle. Convenience stores carry a variety of fresh foods, available at all hours, such as sandwiches, or rice balls (onigiri). Lunch may be a quick bowl of ramen at a stand-up noodle shop (tachigui), or a bento from home. There are many options for dinner, such as a hot-pot of vegetables, noodles, and meat (nabe) or a meal that includes multiple small serving dishes of fresh and pickled vegetables, rice, and fish. Salarymen working long hours may stop at an Japanese bar (izakaya) for drinks and snacks late at night.

In Japanese restaurants, you'll find that serving sizes are generally smaller than we have in America, and tipping is not customary. You will often find that food is served as a 'set' meal. Chopsticks (ohashi) are used for almost everything, although you can request a fork if needed. You will usually get your check at the table and pay at the cashier as you leave, although some ramen shops let you order and purchase a ticket from a machine, which you present to the staff. Check out the websites below for much more, including popular dishes and table manners.



Food and Drink in Japan:
<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e620.html>



Etiquette:
<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2005.html>



IC Cards

One essential item you'll need in Japan is an IC Card (IC stands for integrated circuit). This is a prepaid, reloadable card you can use for train travel, vending machines, and other purchases. Luckily, you can purchase them easily at most stations, and add money there too. As you pass through the ticket gate, you hold the card over the card reader as you pass by and the fare is automatically deducted. If there is any problem, there is someone at the ticket gate to help you. I say it's essential because the train stations are crowded and busy! This makes it easy to get through the gates without stopping to buy new tickets each time. It's also a souvenir you can take home :)



Websites:

For more information on IC Cards:
https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2359_003.html

Tokyo Area

Suica: <https://www.jreast.co.jp/e/pass/suica.html>
Pasmo: <https://www.pasmo.co.jp/visitors/en/>

Osaka Area

ICOCA: <https://www.jr-odekake.net/icoca/>

Train Travel

The rail system in Japan is extensive, punctual, clean, quiet, and efficient. If you are lost, someone is always happy to help. Even when it's very crowded, people wait in line patiently and don't crowd the doors. Train etiquette is centered on being considerate of others, and ensuring a pleasant journey for everyone. Some train etiquette and facts:

- You'll notice that stations have different melodies that play, depending on whether a train is arriving or leaving. As trains arrive, the melody is supposed to wake you up, and make you more alert. As you depart, it's supposed to relax you and give a sense of relief.
- Keep noise to a minimum and put your phone on mute. It's rude to talk loudly to your travel companions, or on the phone. If you're listening to music, use headphones and make sure the sound isn't leaking out.
- Most Japanese do not eat or drink on the train, except for water. Unless you're on the shinkansen, save it for your destination. Also, refrain from applying makeup, smoking, or personal grooming.
- Don't litter. Make sure you take your trash with you.
- Try not to take up too much room. Keep your luggage close or on the overhead shelf. Save priority seats for others in need. If you leave something behind it will be turned in to lost and found, so check.
- Many Japanese work long hours and sleep on the train ride home. It's not unusual to end up with someone sleeping on your shoulder!
- If it's crowded and you're standing, hold onto the hand strap and turn so you're facing the seated passenger. It can be so crowded during rush hours that white-gloved 'pushers' are squeezing people in so the doors can close!
- If you plan to go to several cities during your stay, then it makes sense to purchase the Japan Rail Pass, which allows unlimited travel on Japan Railway trains for a week or more. Hop on the bullet train (shinkansen) for an unforgettable and comfortable experience. You'll be able to buy snacks and drinks on board, enjoy wifi, or enjoy the passing countryside.
- The train stations are a destination themselves, many with shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. You can pick up a bento for your train travel, or drinks from the many vending machines.

From the world-renowned bullet trains, to the local trains, you have many options to see the country.

To find out more
website:
<https://www.japanstation.com/>





Photo: [Borislav Evtimov](#)

Tokyo



Tokyo (東京) is a fabulous mix of old and new, the traditional and the innovative! It is the capital of Japan, and the most populated metropolitan area in the world, at around 38 million residents. Despite the population, it's orderly, clean, and safe, with many different wards, cities, and attractions. Make time to visit Meiji Shrine, Shinjuku, Shibuya Crossing, Akihabara, Asakusa, Nihonbashi, Odaiba, Ueno, the Ghibli Museum, and the Imperial Palace. There is an amazing variety of food available, so be adventurous and try something new!



from Tokyo station, you are across the street from the Imperial Palace, where you could tour the grounds or rent a bicycle to enjoy the scenic views. Historic Tokyo Station has beautiful architecture and is one of the busiest train stations in Japan. From there you can go anywhere you like in the city.



for JR Tokyo Station: 1 Chome Marunouchi, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0005, Japan



Tokyo Highlights:<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2164.html>

Tokyo Station:<https://www.gotokyo.org/en/destinations/central-tokyo/tokyo-station-and-marunouchi/index.html>



Meiji Shrine

Meiji Shrine (明治神宮, Meiji Jingū) is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the first emperor of modern Japan, Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. It is the most popular and visited the shrine in Japan, with 3 million visitors attending for the traditional first prayers of the New Year (Hatsumode). You enter through a large Torii gate, and walk a 10-minute path to the main buildings, surrounded by a forest of trees and the sounds of nature. It's a popular place for weddings, events, and rituals. It's open every day and admission is free, but you should bring cash if you wish to visit the museum, the inner garden, the gift shops, restaurant, or café.



Go to Harajuku Station on the JR Yamanote Line. Exit the station to the right and walk for about one minute. The entrance will be on the right.



1-1 Yoyogikamizonocho, Shibuya City, Tokyo 151-8557



<https://www.meijijingu.or.jp/en/about/>



Shibuya Crossing

Shibuya Crossing (also known as the Scramble intersection) is one of the most iconic Tokyo spots. When traffic stops, thousands of people cross the intersection in all directions. On the ground, it's a lively and energetic rush while you cross the street, surrounded by the lights, sounds, and people of the city. Step into the Starbucks overlooking the street for a view from above while sipping a latte, or check it out from the 360° open-air observation deck located on the roof of the Shibuya Scramble Square skyscraper, called Shibuya Sky. You've probably seen this intersection before, in movies and music videos. It's surrounded by shops, cafes, restaurants, and constant energy. A must-see spot in Tokyo!



From Shibuya station, take the Hachiko exit. You can see it from the Hachiko statue!



2-chōme-1 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya City, Tokyo
150-0043, Japan



<https://www.japan.travel/en/spot/2177/>



<https://worldcams.tv/japan/tokyo/shibuya-crossing>



Hachikō Statue

Hachikō (ハチ公, 10 November 1923 – 8 March 1935) was a Japanese Akita dog known for his remarkable loyalty. He would leave home and meet his owner, Hidesaburō Ueno, at Shibuya Station each evening after his commute from work at Tokyo Imperial University. One day Ueno suffered a cerebral hemorrhage during a lecture, and never returned to the station where Hachikō waited. Hachikō continued to wait for over nine years following Ueno's death. Commuters and station staff began to bring him food and treats as word of his faithfulness spread.



Hachikō became a national sensation. His faithfulness to his master's memory impressed the people of Japan as a spirit of family loyalty to which all should strive to achieve. Teachers and parents used Hachikō's vigil as an example for children to follow. A bronze statue was erected in his honor at Shibuya Station in 1948, which serves as a popular meeting spot today.



 Shibuya Station. Take the Hachikō Exit (ハチ公口, Hachikō-guchi) on the west side.

 2 Chome-1 Dogenzaka, Shibuya City, Tokyo 150-0043, Japan

 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hachik%C5%8D>



Ameyoko

Ameya-Yokocho (Ameyoko) is a well known street market in Ueno, with hundreds of shops and food stalls. After World War II it became known for the many candy shops (the name means "sweets shop alley" in Japanese), but it was also known for the American military surplus goods you could buy as well. This is a lively shopping place where you'll find many bargains, but make time to explore the area as well. Ueno is also home to the oldest, and most popular zoo in Japan, established in 1882, as well as Ueno Park, established in 1873. There are also several museums and temples to explore. Almost everything is close to Ueno station.



From JR Ueno Station, exit the Shinobazu Gate on the first floor. Ameyoko is directly across the road.



4-chōme-7 Ueno, Taito City, Tokyo 110-0005, Japan



Ameyoko:
<https://www.uenostation.com/ameya-yokocho-ameyoko-uenos-lively-street-market/>
Ueno:
<https://www.gotokyo.org/en/destinations/northern-tokyo/ueno/index.html>



Akihabara

Akihabara is a shopping district well known for electronics, manga, anime, video games, maid cafés, and arcades. The area grew rapidly after WWII when there was little government oversight. Its nickname became "Electric Town" because the shops there focused on 'futuristic' household electronics and appliances, and then computers, video games, and the gamers that love them. Now you might consider it the center of pop-culture in Japan. It's a clean and safe area to shop for otaku culture items and souvenirs.



Akihabara Station, on the west side of the station



Taito City, Tokyo 110-0006



<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3003.html>
<http://e-akihabara.jp/e>



Miraikan

The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, known as the Miraikan 未来館, features many science and technological innovations. There are interactive displays within three permanent exhibits, focused on space, the earth, and sustainability. It includes a large, impressive, LED panel display of the earth (the Geo-Cosmos) with current weather patterns depicted. You'll see a demonstration of Honda's ASIMO robot, which has opposable thumbs and can walk, run, and kick a soccer ball. There are English audio guides for the permanent exhibits and a dome theater. There is a small admission fee. Inside is a cafe and museum shop.



Miraikan

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF EMERGING
SCIENCE AND INNOVATION



5-minute walk from "Tokyo International Cruise Terminal Station"



2-3-6 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo, Japan



<https://www.miraikan.jst.go.jp/en/>

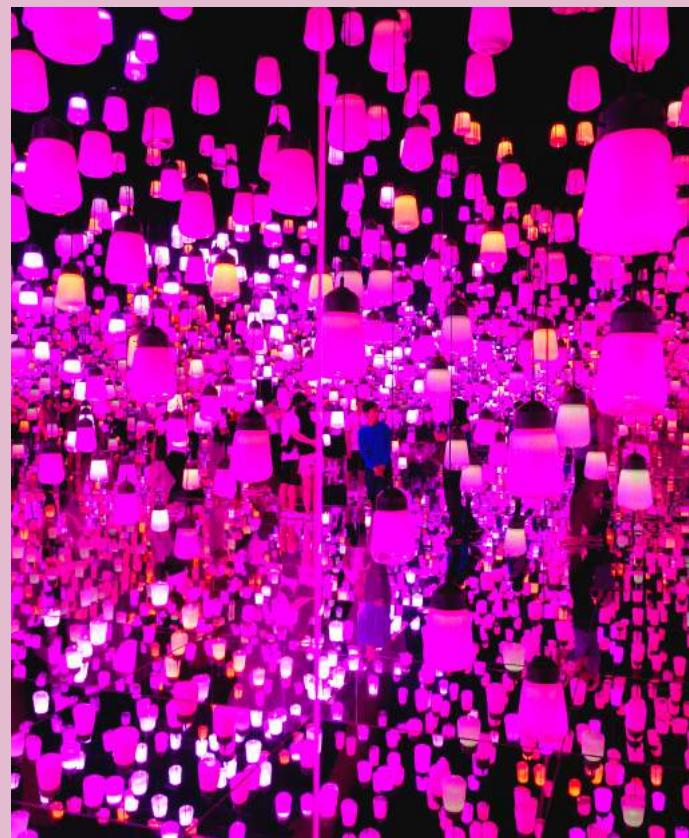


teamLab Borderless

TeamLab Borderless is a digital art museum and an unforgettable visual experience, where you can immerse yourself, interact with, and influence the art. It's an art collection without boundaries, in a museum without a map, created by the art collective teamLab. This is an interdisciplinary group of artists formed in 2001 in Tokyo, Japan. The group refers to themselves as "Ultra-technologists," and consists of artists, programmers, engineers, CG animators, mathematicians, and architects. Some of the art changes seasonally, and there are special temporary installations throughout Japan to enjoy. There is an admission fee (about \$30 for adults).



photos by dconvertini on Flickr



A 5-minute walk from Tokyo Teleport Station on the Rinkai Line or 3 minutes walk from Aomi Station on the Yurikamome Line.



Go to the second floor of Palette Town, and go through the MEGA WEB building towards the giant Ferris wheel.



Odaiba Palette Town 2F, 1-3-8 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo, Japan



<https://borderless.teamlab.art/>



Starbucks Reserve™ Roastery Tokyo

Japan is filled with coffee shops and cafes, but you don't want to miss this coffee experience at the Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Tokyo. The building is beautifully and thoughtfully designed, inspired by Japan's love of craftsmanship, innovation, and excellence. Stepping inside is a wonderland for your senses, with four floors to explore. Exclusive and rare coffees, teas, pastries and merchandise are available.



Exit Naka-Meguro Station and head northeast on Yamate-Dori Avenue. About a 12 minute walk. The building will be on the right.



2-19-23 Aobadai, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, 153-0042



<https://stories.starbucks.com/stories/2019/top-10-things-to-know-about-the-starbucks-reserve-roastery-tokyo/>



Sengakuji Temple

Sengakuji is a famous Buddhist temple located in Minato, Tokyo. This small temple is famous as the gravesite for the 47 Ronin, or leaderless Samurai, who died avenging their master's honor. The incident took place in 1701, when Asano Naganori, Feudal Lord of Ako, drew his sword against his rival, Kira Yoshinaka, within the Edo Castle. He was sentenced to die by Seppuku, while his rival, who had insulted and maligned him for years, had no punishment. Asano's samurai planned their revenge for almost two years, then attacked and killed Kira, presenting his head to Asano's grave at Sengakuji. They were sentenced to die by seppuku and buried alongside their master.

This true story has been portrayed in numerous plays, movies, television, and literature. The 47 Ronin are celebrated by the Japanese as cultural icons, for their actions of loyalty, justice, persistence, courage, and honor. Sengakuji hosts the Gishisai Festival on December 14 of each year to commemorate the 47 Ronin.



Go to Sengakuji Station, take exit A2, and go to the right. The temple is about a 4-minute walk.



〒108-0074 2-11-1 Takanawa, Minato-ku, Tokyo



http://www.sengakuji.or.jp/about_sengakuji_en/





Yokohama

Yokohama is a harbor city overlooking Tokyo Bay, where Japan first opened up to the world in 1859. It's the capital of Kanagawa Prefecture, with almost 4 million citizens, second in size to Tokyo. You'll find numerous attractions here, including Landmark Tower, Cosmo Clock 21 Ferris Wheel in Cosmo World, the Nippon Maru, Minato Mirai 21 area, China Town, Museums, Shops, Restaurants, Gardens, and beautiful views of the bay.



 Yokohama Station leads to many areas of interest. Sakuragicho Station is closest to Landmark Tower, Cosmoworld, Cup Noodles Museum. Kannai Station is closer to Yokohama Stadium, the Gundam Factory, and Chinatown



Japan, 〒220-0011 Kanagawa, Yokohama, Nishi Ward, Takashima,
〒220-0005 2 丁目 1 6



<https://www.yokohamajapan.com/>



Great Buddha of Kamakura

The Great Buddha of Kamakura (鎌倉大仏, Kamakura Daibutsu) is a bronze statue standing almost 44 feet tall including its base, located on the grounds of Kotoku-in Temple. It was built in 1252, and is the second largest Buddha in Japan, second to the Nara Daibutsu. It has endured typhoons and earthquakes, and is unique in that it sits in the open air. Visitors can even go inside the body of the Buddha, and see the construction from the inside. It is one of the most iconic symbols of Kamakura, and a popular spot for photos. While most of the population of Japan do not adhere to any religious beliefs, Buddhism is second to Shinto beliefs in Japan.



Get off at JR Yokosuka Line Kamakura Station. Change to the Enoshima Electric Railway (bound for Fujisawa) and get off at Hase Station, the third stop (approx. seven minutes from Kamakura). Kotoku-in is a seven-minute walk North from the station.



4-2-28, Hase, Kamakura,
Kanagawa Prefecture 248-0016, Japan



<https://www.kotoku-in.jp/en/>



Zushi Beach

Zushi Beach is popular for all ages, with windsurfing, paddle boarding, swimming, hotels, and restaurants. It's facing Sagami Bay, and on a clear day, you can see Mount Fuji. It's also the site for Summer fireworks festivals, film festivals, and "Yabusame", where mounted archers shoot at targets while galloping on a horse. There are some restrictions, such as no tattoos, alcohol, barbecues, or loud music. You cannot wear your swimsuit walking to the beach, but you can change clothes there. It's a nice getaway from the city!



From Zushi station, take the East exit and it's about a 15-minute walk.



2-chōme-3 Shinjuku, Zushi, Kanagawa
249-0007, Japan

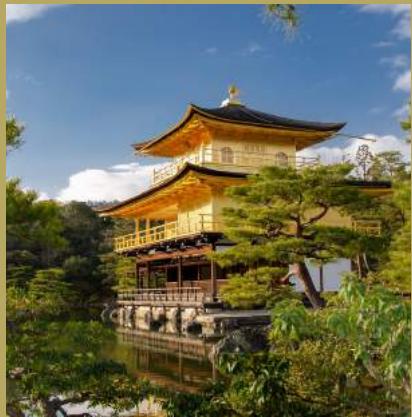


<https://zushi-beach.jp/>



Kyoto

Kyoto is a cultural treasure and the former capital of Japan, from 794 - 1868. Here you'll begin from Kyoto Station, in the heart of the city. The station itself is 15 stories and hosts shops, restaurants, hotels, and a beautiful view of the city on both sides. Kyoto is home to many buddhist temples, shinto shrines, gardens, and traditional wooden architecture such as machiya. There is so much to see and do, I recommend guided tours whenever possible.



Kyoto Station is a destination to itself, but from there you can take a bus or train to many sites, such as the Gion District, the Bamboo Forest, Fushimi-Inari shrine, the Kyoto Railway Museum, Aquarium, Nijo Castle, Nishiki market, Kinkaku-ji (golden temple), Kiyomizudera Temple (pure water temple), and many other historic temples and attractions.



for JR Kyoto Station: Higashishijoji Kamadoncho, Shimogyo Ward, Kyoto, Japan



Kyoto Highlights: <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2158.html>

Kyoto Station: <https://www.kyotostation.com/>



Gion District

Gion is the entertainment district in Kyoto, with a rich history of traditional arts and architecture, art and antique shops, traditional crafts, teahouses, and Kabuki theater. If you hope to see Geisha (called Geiko in Kyoto), or Maiko (apprentice Geisha) then you need to visit this area, especially towards the evening, as they are on their way to appointments. Geisha are considered highly trained entertainers, specializing in music, dance, and the arts. There are daily performances at Hanami-Koji's Gion Kobu Kaburenjo theater, or Gion Corner. As you enjoy this popular area, there are rules to follow. Never touch the Geisha, and photography is not allowed unless you ask permission.



From JR Kyoto Station, take bus number 100 or 206 to the Gion bus stop (about 300 yen).



Gionmachi Minamigawa, Higashiyama Ward, Kyoto, 600-8340, Japan



Things to Do (with Map): <https://www.insidekyoto.com/walking-in-gion>
Gion Highlights: <https://japanobjects.com/features/gion-kyoto>



Fushimi Inari Shrine and Torii Gates

The famed vermilion torii gates can be found at Fushimi Inari Shrine. This type of shrine is used to worship the deity Inari. There are thousands of shrines dedicated to Inari, which are typically associated with rice, prosperity, the color red, and symbols of foxes. Foxes act as Inari's messengers and are often depicted at the shrine entrance, holding a symbolic item in their mouth or under their paw. Offerings of rice, sake, and fried tofu are popular. Fushimi Inari-Taisha, the head shrine of Inari, is known for its path of a thousand vermilion torii gates, which were donated by Japanese merchants. It may take up to 2 hours to walk the entire path, but there are beautiful views, with an overlook of Kyoto about halfway up. The shrine is open 24 hours a day and there is no fee. There are many shops and food stalls leading to the shrine, and you can purchase a fox ema, which is a wooden plaque where you can write your wishes.



Right next to Inari Station, on the JR Nara Line
(5 minutes from Kyoto station)



68 Fukakusa Yabunouchi-cho, Fushimi-ku,
Kyoto City 612-0882



<http://inari.jp/en/>





Arashiyama Bamboo Grove

The Arashiyama Bamboo Grove on the west side of Kyoto is a beautiful forest of green. The path leads you through towering bamboo trees, which can be a breathtaking, and peaceful experience. The least crowded time to visit is early morning. There are shops and restaurants in the area around the grove, but in the summer, be prepared for the heat and humidity. This area of Kyoto is known for its natural beauty, as well as Togetsukyo Bridge and Tenryuji temple, a World Cultural Heritage site.



The grove is a 10-minute walk from Sага-Аrashiyama Station on the JR Sagano Line.



JUkyo Ward, Kyoto, 616-0000, Japan



<https://www.japan.travel/en/spot/1141/>



Nara

Japan was unified in Nara, where the first capital was established from 710 - 784. During this time Nara became the center for Buddhism, art, politics, and cultural exchange. As a result there are many ancient temples and world heritage sites. Nara is also known for hundreds of freely roaming deer. They are considered messengers to the Gods, and are protected as a national treasure. You can buy crackers to feed the deer for about 150 yen, and they are eager to interact with you, but remember they are wild animals. They will bow and expect a treat, and if you are too slow you may get a nudge or a nibble! You can see a little of everything by heading toward Nara Park. It is the location of many of Nara's main attractions including Todaiji, Kasuga Taisha, Kofukuji and the Nara National Museum.



From Kyoto, go to Nara Station, or even better, Kintetsu-Nara station, and walk East along Omiya-dori.



4-469 Zoshicho, Nara 630-8501 Nara Prefecture



<https://www.visitnara.jp/>