

Nara City (奈良市)

Once the capital of Japan, Nara City is a thriving city rich in history and tradition where men and deer coexist in perfect harmony. Remarkable, well-preserved shrines and temples can be found dotted around the city central to Nara Park where deer roam around freely. Tourists can enjoy feeding the deer as they endeavor on historical journey through the city. Many other impressive sites such as Yakushi-ji and Toshodai-ji are located outside the park and are not to be missed. With many faces over the seasons, the wonderful combination of nature and history make Nara City one of the top destinations of Japan.



Kasuga Taisha Shrine (春日大社)

Enter Kasuga Taisha Shrine, a place frozen in time taking us back to a Japan long forgotten by most. Appointed as a Kanpei-taisha during 1871 to 1946, the shrine is one of the most recognized shrines in Japan to date. Kasuga Taisha Shrine has ensured the protection of the country since 768, and thanks to a renovation done every 20 years, remains in pristine condition.

Get lost in the maze of vermillion buildings and bronze lanterns spread out along the shrine complex as you hear prayers recited early morning from the Naoraiden Hall. Located in the heart of Nara Park, the sanctuary offers delightful seasonal views. Avoid large crowds by planning your visit to the shrine early in the morning.



Yakushi-ji Temple (薬師寺)

A few train stops away from Nara you will find Yakushi-ji, the Buddha of Healing's dwelling place in Nara. Also known as the Temple of Medicine, the temple was built around 680 at Emperor Tenmu's request in hopes of the Empress to recover from a serious illness. In the main building you will find Yakushi Nyorai, the Buddha of Healing based on a pedestal with images that symbolize the country's cross by the Silk Road, recognizing the internationality of the Nara period.



Hiyori Restaurant (旬彩)

Shinsai Hiyori is a highly reputable restaurant located in Naramachi. Enjoy a selection of skillfully prepared dishes and experience the Japanese *kaiseki* cuisine. Known primarily for its vegetables, the Shinsai Hiyori aims to introduce customers to delicious, regional products in a warm and friendly atmosphere.



Ryokan Matsumae (松前旅館)

Enjoy a peaceful and relaxing stay at Ryokan Matsumae to prepare for or end a day of exploring the stunning Naramachi. With simple yet elegant décor, the ryokan offers complete immersion in traditional Japanese culture. Featuring calligraphy and ikebana, the tasteful, simple rooms create a tranquil and comfortable environment. Change into a yukata (light cotton kimono) after taking a long relaxing bath as you await for a delicious dinner to be served. The ryokan owners are fine connoisseurs on topics of culture and art so do not miss out on the opportunity to ask about calligraphy or perhaps the significance of the Buddha statues in Nara. An excellent choice of accommodation for those looking for the perfect sleeping compliment to match the city of Nara.



Totsukawa (十津川)

Totsukawa is the ideal destination for those seeking great outdoor adventure in Nara. Numerous trails can be found in the thick green forests of bamboo and Japanese cedar trees. Among the many trails, Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route is the most famous. Walk along the grand trees that have survived thousands of years and surround yourself in a beautiful, natural landscape.



Kohechi Pilgrimage route (熊野古道)

Taking you through the sacred sites of the Kii Mountain Range, the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Once the home of the gods, these paths have been trodden on since the Heian Period and for a long time have served as a natural worship place. Literally translated to 'little path', the Kohechi is the shortest of the five pilgrimage routes that constitute the Kumano Kodo. Stone Kannon statues lined up along the paved paths accompany your walk through the 72km trail of mystical dense forest of mist and infinite trees. The Kohechi is a perfect destination for a quiet stroll of thought and self-reflection as encounters with other visitors are rare.



Subaru hotel (奈良スバルホテル)

Set in a unique mountainous region along the Kumano Kodo Kohechi trail, the Subaru hotel is a fantastic spot for weary travelers to stop and relax. Rest your tired body in the baths believed to have therapeutic benefits as you gaze out to the stunning view beyond. Although Totsukawa is a quiet area, the hotel is full of life and excels in its services and facilities. Famous for its outdoor baths with exquisite views, they frequently welcome many visitors who come for the hotel amenities including rooms and food. Meals are specialized in natural ingredients of Totsukawa, serving only the finest regional produce. Both Western and Japanese styled room options are available.

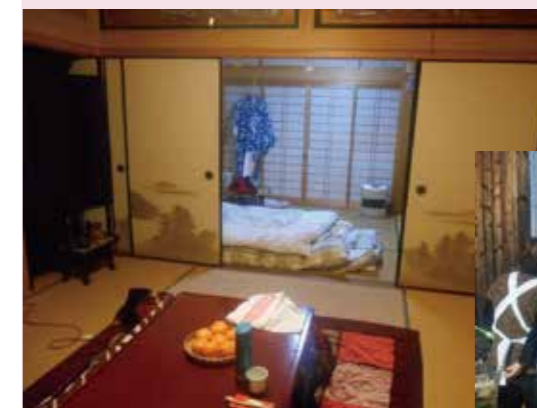


Asuka (明日香)

Once the cultural and political center of Japan, Asuka City boasts many historical attractions such as palace ruins and burial mounds (kofun). With a variety of sights ranging from the Asuka-dera temple to stunning agricultural settings, the city is a perfect destination to enjoy and immerse oneself in the simplistic and traditional Japanese lifestyle. The city is working hard to serve more foreign tourists and is increasing accommodation options suitable for them. Visit Asuka City and appreciate the last remains of a glorious past.



Home stay in Asuka (飛鳥民泊)



Choose a traditional minpaku homestay in Asuka for a chance to immerse yourself in the Japanese lifestyle. Enjoy spending time with a local family and discover everyday life in Japan. Prepare a delicious dinner with your host family and share stories and laughs as you sip on sake and enjoy the meal you cooked together. Warm up in the kotatsu before cozying up into a futon and have a pleasant night's sleep. Leave the next day with new recipes in mind and a delightful memory of experiencing everyday life with Asuka locals.

