



My Drift

Title: Kyoto

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Date: 15 May 2026

Article Number: (532-2026-15)

What is the most beautiful city in Japan? Well, I didn't know so I ask a few of my Japanese friends and a few of my friend's wives who are Japanese. The consensus answer was Kyoto. Just to be sure, I googled the question and guess what, the answer again was Kyoto. I have been to Japan many times but never to Kyoto. So, let's learn more about this city and show a few pictures.

Kyoto (Japanese: 京都, officially Kyoto City), is the capital city of Kyoto Prefecture in the Kansai region of Japan's largest and most populous island of Honshu. As of 2020, the city had a population of 1.46 million, making it the ninth-most populous city in Japan. More than half (56.8%) of Kyoto Prefecture's population resides in the city. The city is the cultural anchor of the substantially larger Greater Kyoto, a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) home to a census-estimated 3.8 million people. It is also part of the even larger Keihanshin metropolitan area, along with Osaka and Kobe.

Kyoto is one of the oldest municipalities in Japan, having been chosen in 794 as the new seat of Japan's imperial court by Emperor Kanmu. The original city, named Heian-kyō, was arranged in accordance with traditional Chinese feng shui following the model of the ancient Chinese capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang. The emperors of Japan ruled from Kyoto in the following eleven centuries until 1869. It was the scene of several key events of the Muromachi period, Sengoku period, and the Boshin War, such as the Ōnin War, the Honnō-ji Incident, the Kinmon incident, and the Battle of Toba–Fushimi. The capital was relocated from Kyoto to Tokyo after the Meiji Restoration. The modern municipality of Kyoto was established in 1889. The city was spared from large-scale destruction during World War II and, as a result, its prewar cultural heritage has mostly been preserved.

Kyoto is considered the cultural capital of Japan and is a major tourist destination. The Agency for Cultural Affairs of the national government is headquartered in the city. It is home to numerous Buddhist temples, Shinto

shrines, palaces and gardens, some of which have been designated collectively as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Prominent landmarks include the Kyoto Imperial Palace, Kiyomizu-dera, Kinkaku-ji, Ginkaku-ji, and Kyoto Tower. The internationally renowned video game company Nintendo is based in Kyoto. Kyoto is also a center of higher learning in the country, and its institutions include Kyoto University, the second-oldest university in Japan.



Tokyo and Kyoto are approximately 230–288 miles apart, depending on the route. The fastest way to travel between them is the Shinkansen bullet train, which takes roughly 2 hours and 15 minutes. Driving takes about 5.5 hours, while buses take 7–9 hours.













As you can see, Kyoto is a very pretty place.

Interesting Facts and Places to Visit

Kyoto was the imperial capital of Japan for over 1,000 years (794–1868) and boasts over 1,600 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines.

Once upon a time, Kyoto was Japan's largest city. Tokyo and Osaka took the lead towards the end of the 16th century. Today, it's the ninth-largest city in Japan.

Towards the end of World War II, the Target Committee of the United States Manhattan Project put Kyoto at the top of the list of targets for the atomic bomb. The then U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, allegedly refused because it was the ancient capital of Japan and one of great religious significance to the Japanese. He had visited and been impressed by the city's many architectural treasures several times.



Kyoto has several hundred Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, a castle, three palaces, beautiful parks and gardens, numerous museums, and more than 30 colleges and universities.

The city is still home to active geisha districts (hanamachi), with Gion being the most famous, where trained women perform traditional arts.



Kyoto specialties are rooted in refined traditional cuisine, featuring Kyoto-style sushi (Kyo-zushi), matcha sweets, tofu dishes (Yudofu), and pickled vegetables (Tsukemono).

Must-Visit Culinary Locations

- **Nishiki Market:** Known as "Kyoto's Kitchen," offering a wide range of local, pickled items, fresh seafood, and traditional snacks.



- **Giro Giro Hitoshina:** A popular, approachable spot for modern kaiseki dining in a casual setting.
- **Honke Owariya:** A historic restaurant operating for centuries, specializing in soba noodles.

A must visit attraction is the Bamboo Forest, Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, a natural bamboo forest in Arashiyama, Kyoto, Japan. It consists mostly of mōsō bamboo.



While the geisha culture is famously associated with Kyoto, did you know that the city also has a population of stray cats that are dressed as geishas? These adorable felines roam the streets wearing tiny kimonos and even have their own mini hairpins.



If you are planning a trip to Japan, you might want to put Kyoto at the top of your list of places to visit.

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