

UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN KYOTO PREFECTURE: A 2-DAY TRIP FROM TOKYO



Temples, shrines, and old buildings. These things might be what Kyoto is known for, but they are not the only attractions that it has to offer! If you know where to look, you will find quiet and idyllic landscapes, beautiful nature, and ancient traditions. Just outside the city there are many places to explore to avoid the crowds with an itinerary that takes you to some beautiful and lesser-known spots around Kyoto. Explore a tea plantation, visit a real katana swordsmith, try some traditional food, and even soak in soothing hot springs.

Getting to Kyoto

From Tokyo's Narita or Haneda airport it takes about 1 hour by plane to the Kansai International Airport or Itami Airport. Both are connected with Kyoto and the surrounding cities.

DAY 1

Dig Deeper into Kyoto's Tea Culture

Start your trip by visiting Wazuka town. Here you can admire the beautiful hillside tea plantations and experience tea leaf harvesting. You can also tour a tea factory and try grinding matcha. At lunch time, head over to d:matcha restaurant and try dishes made with tea leaves. d:matcha also organizes many tours and activities.

How to get there: From the Kansai International Airport or Itami Airport, take a limousine bus to Nara Station. From here, a 30-minute taxi ride will take you to Wazuka town's d:matcha restaurant. Total travel time: approx. 2 hours.

Visit Kyoto's Only Katana Swordsmith

After exploring the world of green tea, make your way towards Kameoka city and Masahiro Tantojo, Kyoto's last remaining katana swordsmith. At this workshop you can see a master swordsmith at work while he forges the legendary katana. You can also try crafting your own short sword or knife. Visits require a reservation.

How to get there: From Nara Station take a train to Kyoto Station and then to Kameoka Station.

Soak in Hot Springs Surrounded by Nature

Kameoka city is home to Yunohana Onsen, a lesser-known hot spring resort. Spend the night in one of the ryokan inns in the area and enjoy the healing waters that are said to have been used by Japanese warriors in the past.

DAY 2

A Secret Bamboo Forest

One of Kyoto's most famous spots is the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove. Few people know that the nearby Muko city also hosts a bamboo forest, although much less crowded by tourists. Walk along the semi-deserted paths among the bamboo trees and enjoy a magical, quiet stroll.

How to get there: From Kameoka Station take a train to Kyoto Station, then take a train to Mukomachi Station. From here it is a 10-minute taxi ride to the bamboo forest. Total travel time: approx. 1 hour.

Gardens and Lunch Boxes

Travel further south to the city of Yawata, a town dotted with picturesque temples and shrines. Make sure you visit Shokado, a beautiful garden featuring an old teahouse made by famous calligrapher Shokado Shojo. Next to the garden is Kyoto Kitcho, a restaurant known for inventing the Japanese square bento box.

How to get there: From the bamboo forest, walk to Higashimuko Station. Take a train to Nishiyama-Tennozan Station and then a bus to Keihan Yodo Station. Take a train to Kuzuha Station. From here, take a bus to the Oshiba Shokadomae Bus Stop. Total travel time: approx. 1 hour and 30 minutes.

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