

2 DAY Itinerary for Kyoto's Major Attractions

DAY 1 Arashiyama

Whether it's your first time in Kyoto or not, Arashiyama, a valley area in the northwest Kyoto with scenic natural beauty will not disappoint you even you keep the expectation high. Blessed with an iconic mountain view, the gently flowing Hozu River, and bright green bamboo forests, the district entertains tourist with various seasonal faces catching your eyes here and there. On top of that, Tenryuji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a spacious pond garden, relaxes your mind.



Kinkakuji & Ginkakuji

In stark contrast to the Arashiyama view, Kinkakuji Temple, a.k.a. the Golden Pavilion, shines all year around. Be sure to visit one of the most popular sites in Kyoto, and learn about the time when a then-Shogun could afford to plate the multi-complex building with golden leaves. The next up on the itinerary is Ginkakuji Temple, literally the Silver Pavilion albeit there is no silver to be seen on the structure. This rather subdued temple represents an important concept in Japan, "wabi-sabi": things are to decay in the end, and that is exactly why they are beautiful.



Gion area

Drop by at Gion, the most prosperous maiko, also known as geisha district in Japan, and check out the streets lined with old town houses where the traditional female entertainers host guests in an exclusive banquet. If you are lucky, you may spot a maiko walking on their work.



DAY 2

Fushimi Inari & Sanjyusangendo

Day 2 begins with a short train trip to the south to visit Fushimi Inari, a Shinto shrine with eye-catching countless numbers of torii gates standing along a path of Inari Mountain. You can climb up the hill as high as you feel like and come back. Hop on a train back to the central part of the city to take a look at 1001 Buddhist statues displayed in the long hall of Sanjyusangendo Temple.

Carved out of wood and then lacquered by a group of skillful sculptors more than 800 years back, it's said that you can find a statue with a face that reminds you of someone you love.



Kiyomizudera Temple & Nijojo Castle

After lunch, head to Kiyomizudera Temple with its main stage famously built at the top of a 13 meter hill supported by massive wooden pillars. Towards down the foot of the temple, stroll through picturesque streets called Sannenzaka and Nineizaka lined with many souvenir shops to buy a memento of your trip. Finally, we hit the 5th UNESCO World Heritage Site of the tour, Nijo Castle. The 424 year-old castle served more as a Shogun's temporarily residence than as a military fortress, which a castle was mostly made for back in time. As a result the interior is filled with a collection of lavish paintings and sculptures as a sign of the Shogun being in power.

