

3 DAYS IN

JAPAN

Osaka

ITINERARY

+ NARA DAY TRIP



Getting There

Getting there

Tokyo to Osaka

- 3h10 from JR Tokyo Station on Nozomi Shinkansen
- Arrive JR Shin-Osaka Station

Hiroshima to Osaka

- 1h30 from JR Hiroshima Station on Nozomi Shinkansen
- Arrive JR Shin-Osaka Station
- Use [IC Card](#) on Osaka Metro



Where to stay in Osaka

- Cross Hotel, Dotonbori [BOOK →](#)
- Dotonbori Hotel, Dotonbori [BOOK →](#)
- 5mins from Namba Metro Station

How to get to Dotonbori

- Once at JR Shin-Osaka Station, head to the Osaka Metro for Namba Station
- 18 mins on Midosuji Line Local towards Nakamozu
- Use the north exits to reach Dotonbori area



Where to eat in Osaka

- Shinsaibashi-suji Arcade
- Kuromon Ichiba Market
- Dotonbori & Shinsekai areas

Foodies book in advance

- [Dotonbori daytime food tour →](#)
- [Shinsekai evening food tour →](#)
- [Kuromon Market food tour →](#)



DAY 1:

Dotonbori

Things to do in Dotonbori & Shinsekai

- Welcome to “Japan’s Kitchen!” Spend some time exploring the Dotonbori area.
- Wander through the endless of shopping arcades, pick up souvenirs, electronics & more.
- Ride the Dotonbori Ferris Wheel, towering 77 metres above the Dotonbori River
- Spot the famous Glico Man billboard, a much-loved icon of Osaka since 1935.
- Don’t forget to look down! Be on the lookout for the beautifully decorated manhole covers in the streets.
- Head to the carnival-like neighbourhood of Shinsekai to see Tsukenkaku Tower.



- Find Hozen-ji Yokocho, a narrow paved laneway lined with traditional eateries, small shops & cafés. Hozen-ji Temple can be found here as well as the popular moss-covered statue called Mizukake Fudo (believed to bring good luck by splashing).
- Don’t miss the amazing illuminations along Dotonbori River at night!

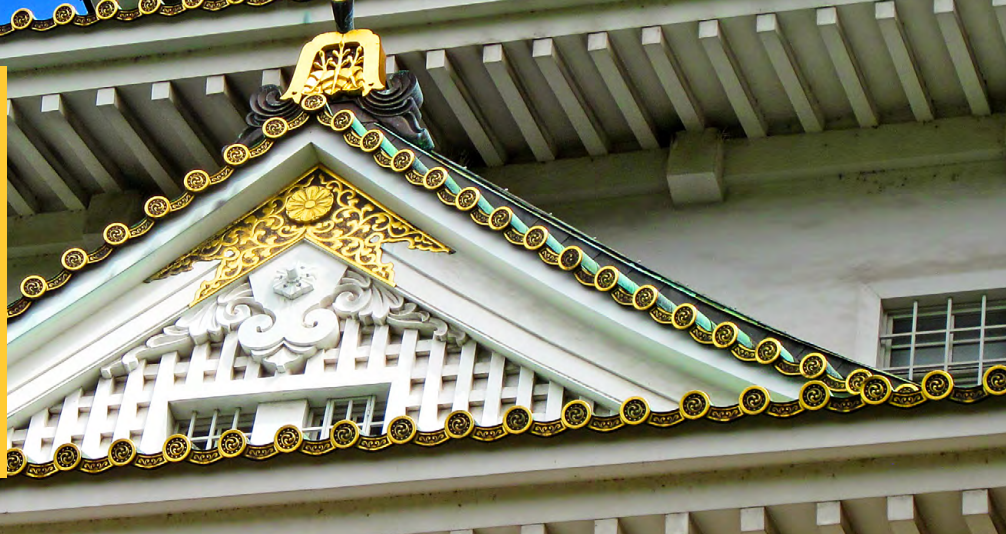
Where to eat in Dotonbori

- Shinsaibashi-suji Arcade
- Kuromon Ichiba Market
- Dotonbori

Optional experiences to book in advance

- [Universal Studios Japan Pass](#) →
- [teamLab Botanical Gardens Osaka](#) →
- [Osaka City Cruise](#) →
- [Nanbana no Sato illuminations](#) →
- [Umeda Sky Building observatory](#) →
- [View all things to do in Osaka](#) →

DAY 2: *Osaka Castle*



Things to do at Osaka Castle

- Before the castle, head to Namba Shrine to witness a giant lion's head believed to swallow evil that follows you.



- Be organised and purchase Osaka Castle skip-the-line tickets in advance [BOOK →](#)
- Allow at least 2 hours to cover 8 floors of the castle.
- Don't miss the Osaka Castle Museum, housing over 10,000 artefacts, weaponry & dioramas of significant events.
- Don't forget to head to the the castle's rooftop to take in 360° views of the city from the observation deck!



More things to do in & around Osaka

- Discover American pop culture in Amerika-Mura
- Visit the Umeda Sky Building Lookout, an iconic landmark of Osaka [BOOK →](#)
- Fun for all ages at LegoLand Discovery Centre [BOOK →](#)
- Learn more about the 19th century at Osaka Museum of Housing & Living [BOOK →](#)
- View Osaka from 58 storeys high & enjoy a meal at Sky Garden restaurant at popular Harukas 300 [BOOK →](#)
- Spend the afternoon relaxing in a traditional hot spring at Solaniwa Onsen [BOOK →](#)

Optional experiences to book in advance

- [Samurai & Ninja Experience at Osaka Castle →](#)
- [3 Hour Osaka Cycling Tour →](#)

DAY 3:

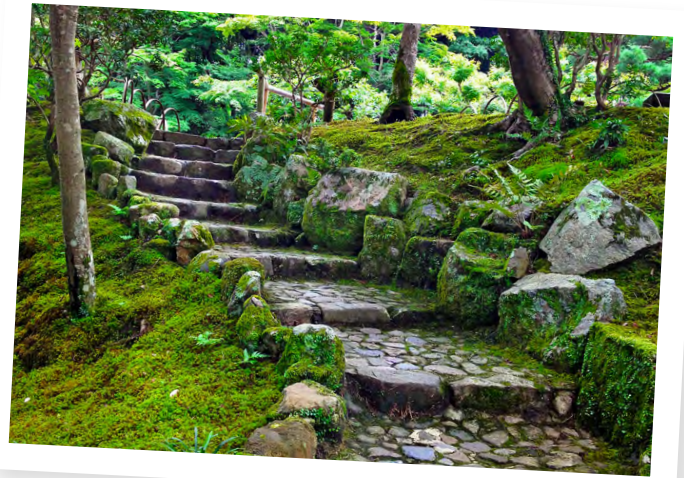
Nara



Things to do in Nara

Osaka to Nara

- 35mins from Osaka Namba Station to Nara Kintetsu Station (not JR Nara) via Rapid Express Kintetsu train
- Nara Park 6mins walk
- [Buy Kintetsu Pass in advance →](#)



- Relax in Yoshiki-en Gardens as a lesser-known alternative to nearby Isui-en Gardens
- Walk through the incredible 13th century Nandiamon Gate, housing two giant statues of the Nio Guardian Kings
- Marvel at the world's largest wooden structure, Todai-ji. This UNESCO site is home to the large bronze Daibutsu, dating back to the 8th century
- If you can fit through the hole in the pillar behind Daibutsu, it's believed you'll reach enlightenment!
- Meet the sacred deer, said to be messengers to the gods. Make sure to only feed them *shika senbei* (deer crackers)
- Explore Nigatsu-do, part of the Todau-ji complex featuring an impressive hall with views over Nara city
- Visit Kofuku-ji's pagoda, a UNESCO site dating back to the 8th century. Don't miss the Treasure Hall next door!
- Discover Kasuga Taisha, another UNESCO site that is the most celebrated shrine in all of Nara. Featuring over 3,000 ornate lanterns decorating the buildings, it's a must-see.



Optional experiences to book in advance

- [Guided half-day Nara walking tour by a local with lunch →](#)

DAY TRIPS Osaka

Optional Day Trips from Osaka

[Read this day trips from Osaka guide in full detail on my blog →](#)

30 mins from Osaka

- Kobe

1 hour from Osaka

- Himeji
- Uji [BOOK](#)
- Akashi Kaikyo Bridge & Awajishima Island



1.5 hours from Osaka

- Kurashiki [READ MORE](#)
- Okayama



2 hours from Osaka

- Mt Koya (Koyasan)

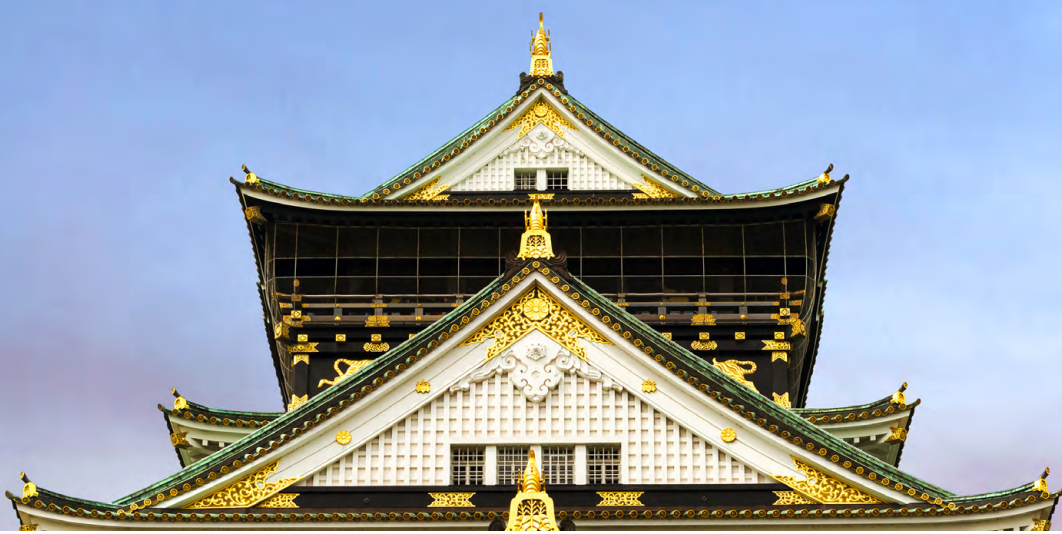
2+ hours from Osaka

- Naoshima Island



Passes to book in advance

- [Japan Rail Pass →](#)
- [Suica \(IC\) Card →](#)
- [Kansai Thru Pass →](#)
- [More types of transport passes →](#)



Quick links to useful resources

Essentials to book in advance for Japan

- [Japan Rail Pass](#) →
- [Rechargeable Suica Card](#) →
- [Pocket WiFi](#) →
- [Travel SIM Card](#) →

[View this complete 3 Days in Osaka & Nara Itinerary](#) →

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- [Hiroshima to Miyajima by Ferry](#) →
- [The Venice of Japan: Kurashiki](#) →
- [20+ Essential Japan Travel Tips](#) →

Happy (invisible) travels,

Alyse



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