



OVERVIEW

Your Kyoto, Nara & Osaka trip

Nov 28 – Dec 5, 2026 · 7 nights · 2 adults · balanced pace

✓ **Checked on Oct 18, 2026. Confirm before you go. Free recheck about 7 days before you fly: we re-check the plan and list anything that changed.**

KIX → Kyoto (4) → Nara on the way → Osaka, Namba (3) → Arima day trip → KIX

Kyoto 4 nights · Nov 28 – Dec 2 · Kyoto Station area or Shijo–Karasuma · *see Book-by timeline*

Osaka 3 nights · Dec 2 – 5 · Namba · *see Book-by timeline*

Top 3 bookings

- **Hotels, Kyoto + Namba:** by Oct 25 our suggestion
- **HARUKA ticket:** sales open Oct 28, 10:00 Japan time (Oct 27, 7 pm Edmonton time) official
- **Arima bus, both ways:** sales open Nov 3, 9:00 Japan time (Nov 2, 6 pm Edmonton time) official

Official = a real sales opening or rule. Our suggestion = a buffer date we recommend. All booking links: [Book-by timeline](#), page 2.

Money & tickets

- Transport approx. ¥7,850 per adult (HARUKA 2,200 + Kintetsu 760 + 680 + Arima bus 1,400 ×2 + Rapi:t 1,410); ¥8,890 with both Kintetsu limited expresses. Local subway/bus rides extra
- Cash only: Todai-ji, Kofuku-ji, Okutan Kiyomizu, Kushikatsu Daruma. Cashless only: Gekkeikan
- Card: no foreign-transaction fee; always choose to pay in yen, not CAD. JPY → CAD today: [Bank of Canada daily rates ↗](#)
- Tax-free refund at the KIX kiosk, before bag check-in
- **Where to get cash:**
 - KIX Terminal 1, 1F arrivals: Japan Post + Seven Bank ATMs; KIX Currency Exchange (6:15–23:00), Travelex [KIX ATMs ↗ KIX exchange ↗](#)
 - 7-Eleven or Japan Post ATMs near your stays: [Kyoto Station \(map\) ↗](#) [Shijo–Karasuma \(map\) ↗](#) [Namba \(map\) ↗](#) [7-Eleven ATM finder ↗](#) [Japan Post ATMs ↗](#)
 - Carry enough yen for the cash-only places above

Weather (JMA, English): [Kyoto \(JMA\) ↗](#) · [Nara \(JMA\) ↗](#) · [Osaka \(JMA\) ↗](#) · [Arima / Hyogo \(JMA\) ↗](#)

Your 8 days

1	Sat Nov 28	Land at KIX, ride to Kyoto	5	Wed Dec 2	Todai-ji and Nara, on to Osaka
2	Sun Nov 29	Nijo Castle, Kiyomizu-dera by night	6	Thu Dec 3	Arima Onsen day trip
3	Mon Nov 30	Fushimi Inari, maples, sake	7	Fri Dec 4	Osaka Castle, last food crawl
4	Tue Dec 1	Arashiyama, Golden Pavilion	8	Sat Dec 5	Fly home from KIX

In this plan: Overview · Big choices & Book-by · Days · Calendar & Triplt · Tickets · **Phrases & Help** (last page)
Changed since Oct 18, 2026: Nothing yet, recheck due Nov 21.



Big choices

For the decisions that shape your trip, here's our top pick plus one different option. Choose what suits you.

Kyoto hotel area	Our top pick: Kyoto Station area (easiest for HARUKA and the Kintetsu to Nara) · <i>see Book-by timeline</i> Different vibe: Shijo-Karasuma: walk to Nishiki, Gion, Pontocho · <i>see Book-by timeline</i>
Osaka hotel area	Our top pick: Namba (Kintetsu from Nara arrives here; Rapi:t leaves from here) · <i>see Book-by timeline</i> Alternative: Umeda: next to the Arima bus stop (Day 6) · <i>see Book-by timeline</i>
Sake, Day 3	Our top pick: Gekkeikan Okura Sake Museum (3 tastings, priority booking) · <i>see Book-by timeline</i> Different vibe: Kizakura Kappa Country: free sake museum + brewery pub; closed Tue Kizakura Kappa Country ↗
Arashiyama, Day 4	Our top pick: On your own: bamboo grove early, Tenryu-ji (no booking, beat the crowds) Different vibe: Sagano Romantic Train, Hozu gorge; runs Dec 1; current trains retire Dec 29 · <i>see Book-by timeline</i>
Night viewing	Our top pick: Kiyomizu-dera, Day 2 (to Nov 30) (on the way back to Gion) Quieter option: Eikando, Day 4 (to Dec 10)
Osaka dinner, Day 7	Our top pick: Kushikatsu Daruma, Shinsekai main shop (the original; no reservations, cash only) Easier to book: Daruma Namba main shop, near your hotel: weekday reservations from 2 people Daruma Namba main shop ↗

Book-by timeline

We plan, you book. Official = a real sales opening or rule. Our suggestion = a buffer date we recommend.

By Oct 25 our suggestion	- Kyoto hotel, Nov 28 – Dec 2 (free cancellation) · Kyoto Station hotels (map) ↗ · Expedia, Nov 28 – Dec 2 ↗ (affiliate link) ...or Shijo-Karasuma · Shijo-Karasuma hotels (map) ↗ · Expedia (Kyoto-wide, Karasuma first) ↗ (affiliate link) - Namba hotel, Dec 2 – 5 · Namba hotels (map) ↗ · Expedia, Dec 2 – 5 ↗ (affiliate link) ...or Umeda (alternative) · Umeda hotels (map) ↗
Oct 28, 10:00 Japan time official	HARUKA ticket sales open (book by Nov 21, our suggestion) · JR-WEST online booking ↗
Nov 1, 0:00 Japan time official	Sagano Romantic Train seats, Dec 1 (only if you choose it; Oct 31, 9 am Edmonton time) · Sagano Romantic Train tickets ↗
Nov 2, 10:30 Japan time official	Kintetsu limited express seat, Dec 2 (optional) · Kintetsu limited express seats ↗
Nov 3, 9:00 Japan time official	Hankyu bus seats, Dec 3, both ways (book by Nov 21, our suggestion) · Hankyu bus (Japanese) ↗
Early Nov our suggestion	Check the updated leaf forecast · Leaf forecast ↗
Nov 16, 9:30 Japan time official	Gekkeikan priority entry, Nov 30 (optional; online booking closes Nov 29, 4:30 pm) · Gekkeikan museum ↗
By Nov 21 our suggestion	- Visit Japan Web · Visit Japan Web ↗ - Nijo Honmaru Palace ticket (optional) · Nijo Castle ↗
By Nov 25 our suggestion	- eSIM installed · Mobal Japan eSIM ↗ (affiliate link) - ICOCA in Apple Wallet · ICOCA on Apple Pay ↗
By Nov 27 our suggestion	Rapi:t ticket · Rapi:t Digital Ticket ↗
Optional our suggestion	Osaka Castle advance ticket · Osaka Castle Museum ↗

Some links are affiliate links. If you buy through them, we may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you.



Day by day

Day 1 Sat Nov 28 Land at KIX, ride to Kyoto

Morning Land at KIX

Afternoon HARUKA to Kyoto (approx. 75 min), check in

Evening Pontocho and Kiyamachi

Book this: HARUKA ticket, by Nov 21 [our suggestion](#) · [see Book-by timeline](#)

- Collect HARUKA ticket: JR machine at KIX (IC-chip passport) or ticket office [HARUKA ticket rules](#) ↗
- **Eat:** [yakitori near Kiyamachi \(map\)](#) ↗
- **Drinks:** [bars in Pontocho \(map\)](#) ↗
- **Rain:** Same plan; Kyoto Station is all under cover

Maps: [Kansai Airport Station](#) · [Kyoto Station](#) · [Pontocho](#) · **Directions:** [KIX → Kyoto Station](#)

Day 2 Sun Nov 29 Nijo Castle, Kiyomizu-dera by night

Morning Nijo Castle at opening

Afternoon Nishiki Market → Ninenzaka → Kiyomizu-dera

Evening Night viewing (last entry 9:00 pm), Gion

Book this: Honmaru Palace timed ticket (optional), by Nov 21 [our suggestion](#) · [see Book-by timeline](#)

- Nijo: Ninomaru Palace open today; no photos inside
- Kiyomizu-dera night viewing Nov 21–30, to 9:30 pm; no booking shown [Kiyomizu-dera night viewing](#) ↗
- Gion: Hanamikoji, Shirakawa lanes
- **Eat:** [Nishiki Market stalls \(map\)](#) ↗ [Okutan Kiyomizu, yudofu \(Tabelog\)](#) ↗ · Okutan: cash only, closed Thu; daytime hours, check Tabelog
- **Drinks:** [bars near Gion Shijo \(map\)](#) ↗
- **Rain:** Kyoto National Museum (last day of its special exhibition) [Kyoto National Museum](#) ↗

Maps: [Nijo Castle](#) · [Nishiki Market](#) · [Kiyomizu-dera](#) · [Hanamikoji](#) · **Directions:** [Kyoto Station → Nijo Castle](#) · [Nishiki → Kiyomizu-dera](#)

Day 3 Mon Nov 30 Fushimi Inari, maples, sake

Morning Fushimi Inari early, then Tofuku-ji

Afternoon Fushimi sake district, Gekkeikan museum

Evening Dinner around Kiyamachi

Book this: Gekkeikan priority entry (optional), online Nov 16, 9:30 – Nov 29, 4:30 pm Japan time [official](#) · [see Book-by timeline](#)

- Fushimi Inari: grounds widely reported open 24 h (unconfirmed, check before you go)
- Tofuku-ji autumn period Nov 14 – Dec 6; bridge photos may be restricted [Tofuku-ji](#) ↗
- Gekkeikan: last entry 4:00 pm; sake tasting after the visit; cashless only
- **Eat:** [kitsune udon near Fushimi Inari \(map\)](#) ↗
- **Drinks:** [sake bars in Fushimi \(map\)](#) ↗
- **Rain:** Lower Inari gates only; longer at the sake museum (Kyoto National Museum closed Mon)

Maps: [Fushimi Inari Taisha](#) · [Tofuku-ji](#) · [Gekkeikan Okura Sake Museum](#) · **Directions:** [Kyoto Station → Inari](#) · [Tofuku-ji → Chushojima](#)

**Day 4** Tue Dec 1 **Arashiyama, Golden Pavilion****Morning** Bamboo grove early, Tenryu-ji**Afternoon** Kinkaku-ji (bus or taxi)**Evening** Eikando night visit (entry 5:30–8:30 pm)**Book this:** nothing to book.

- Tenryu-ji garden: last entry 4:50 pm [Tenryu-ji ↗](#)
- Kinkaku-ji: allow extra travel time in leaf season [Kinkaku-ji ↗](#)
- Eikando night visit Nov 20 – Dec 10; no booking shown [Eikando night visit ↗](#)
- **Eat:** [yuba / tofu near Arashiyama \(map\) ↗](#)
- **Drinks:** [bars near Sanjo-Kawaramachi \(map\) ↗](#)
- **Rain:** Teramachi and Shinkyogoku covered arcades; Kinkaku-ji works in rain

Maps: [Arashiyama Bamboo Grove](#) · [Tenryu-ji](#) · [Kinkaku-ji](#) · [Eikando](#) · **Directions:** [Kyoto Station → Saga-Arashiyama](#) · [Arashiyama → Kinkaku-ji](#)

Day 5 Wed Dec 2 **Todai-ji and Nara, on to Osaka****Morning** Kintetsu to Nara (limited express approx. 34 min); Kofuku-ji**Afternoon** Todai-ji, Kasuga Taisha, Naramachi**Evening** Kintetsu to Namba; Dotonbori

Book this: Kintetsu limited express seat (optional), sales open Nov 2, 10:30 Japan time [official](#) · [see Book-by timeline](#)

- Bags: Yamato same-day to a Namba hotel with a front desk; drop at Kyoto Station Center by 10:00 [Yamato same-day bags \(Kyoto\) ↗](#)
- Kofuku-ji museum: last entry 4:45 pm; cash only; pagoda under repair [Kofuku-ji ↗](#)
- Todai-ji Great Buddha Hall: cash only [Todai-ji ↗](#)
- Nara → Namba limited express: journey time unconfirmed, check before you go
- **Eat:** [kakinoha-zushi near Kintetsu-Nara \(map\) ↗](#) [takoyaki on Dotonbori \(map\) ↗](#)
- **Drinks:** [bars near Hozenji Yokocho \(map\) ↗](#)
- **Rain:** Todai-ji and Kofuku-ji museum are indoors; skip Naramachi

Maps: [Kofuku-ji](#) · [Todai-ji](#) · [Kasuga Taisha](#) · [Dotonbori](#) · **Directions:** [Kyoto → Kintetsu-Nara](#) · [Kintetsu-Nara → Osaka-Namba](#)

Day 6 Thu Dec 3 **Arima Onsen day trip****Morning** Subway to Umeda, Hankyu bus to Arima (approx. 55–60 min)**Afternoon** Kin no Yu and Gin no Yu baths**Evening** Last bus back 5:40 pm; dinner in Umeda

Book this: Hankyu bus, both ways, sales open Nov 3, 9:00 Japan time; book by Nov 21 [official](#) · [see Book-by timeline](#)

- Bus: ¥1,400 each way; all seats reserved; last bus Arima 5:40 pm → Umeda 6:35 pm
- Two-bath ticket covers both; soap provided, towels sold [Kin no Yu ↗](#) [Gin no Yu ↗](#)
- **Eat:** [tansan senbei in Arima \(map\) ↗](#)
- **Drinks:** [izakaya in Umeda \(map\) ↗](#)
- **Rain:** Works in any weather