

Kansai leisure spots to
refresh your spirits



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The coronavirus pandemic is raging all over the world. The Kansai area is home to many spots that visitors can enjoy openly while avoiding the risk of infection. Of course, tourists need to be mindful in their behavior to avoid getting infected or allowing others to get infected, but we are glad to introduce some Kansai leisure spots with rich natural surroundings, offering opportunities to refresh your spirits and enjoy some peace of mind away from the troubles of the world.



Enjoy while being careful of infection



**Wash your hands
frequently**



**Cover your
nose and mouth**



**Maintain
social distancing**



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SHIGA

Prefecture

Spot

01 Mt. Ibuki Trekking

Mt. Ibuki boasts an altitude of 1,377m, making it the highest mountain in Shiga Prefecture. Located on the border with Gifu Prefecture, it is popular among people as one of Japan's 100 famous mountains. It has been known as a treasure trove of medicinal and alpine plants since ancient times, and there are also various endemic species which are designated as national natural monuments. Furthermore, Mt. Ibuki is famous for having been climbed by Yamatotakeru no Mikoto, a legendary Japanese prince of the Yamato dynasty, who also appeared in "The Nihon Shoki, (Chronicles of Japan) and "Kojiki" (Records of Ancient Matters). When the major shrines of Ise Jingu, Kumano Hongu Taisha, Izanagi Jingu, Former Ise Geku Toyouke Great Shrine located in Kinki Region, and Mt. Ibuki are connected with lines, a beautiful "pentagram" will appear on the map. This pentagram star is called Japan's ley line, a barrier which protects the ancient Heijokyo Capital. This is why Mt. Ibuki is said to be a sacred mountain that makes you feel its power both in name and in reality.



Spot

02 Terraced Rice Field

You can see a lot of beautiful terraced rice fields in Shiga.

Among them, the most famous are the "Hata no Tanada" in Takashima City and the "Oogi no Tanada" in Otsu City. In particular, "Hata no Tanada" has been selected as one of the 100 beautiful rice terraces in Japan, and it has been used as a filming location for various movies. Approximately 40 small villages maintain terraced rice fields in an area with an altitude of 300 to 400 m and a steep slope angle of 10 degrees. Surprisingly, it is said that people started living in this area during the Jomon period, some 2,000 years ago. Nowadays, as it is getting difficult to maintain terraced rice fields due to the aging of the villagers, they utilize the rice terrace owner system to interact with people from urban cities, such as offering the experiences of planting and harvesting rice.



Spot

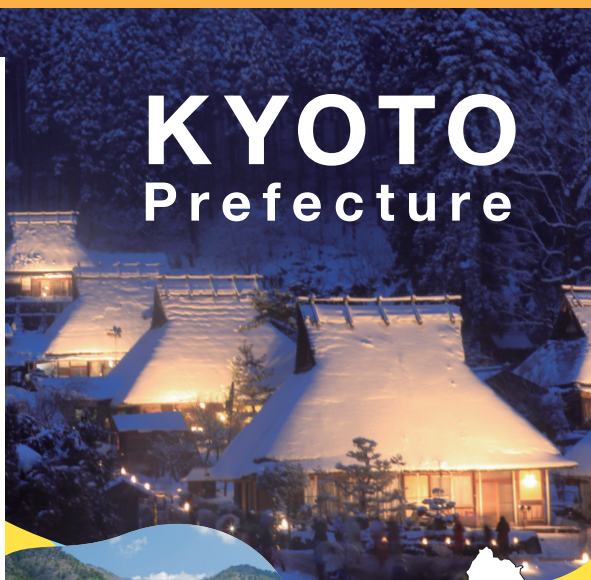
03 Kayabuki no sato (Thatched Village)

In Miyama Town's "Kayabuki no sato (Thatched Village)", which is a tourist spot representing the town, there are many traditional thatched houses. Among the houses in the "North" village, 39 out of a total of 50 have thatched roofs. The level of the preservation of the historical landscape and the groups of buildings which are created by traditional techniques are both highly regarded aspects of the area, and it was selected as a preservation district of the groups of important traditional buildings designated by the national government in December of 1993. Throughout the year it is a popular tourist spot that represents Miyama Town as a place where you can encounter the original scenery of Japan. Kamakura Shrine is a recommended spot from which you can look down upon the sights of the whole village. There is also a local English guided tour of the village. (Prior reservation required)

Kayabuki no sato (Thatched Village)

URL:<https://miyamanavi.com/sightseeing/kayabuki-no-sato>

KYOTO Prefecture



Spot

04 Takenomichi Street (Bamboo Road)

"Otokuni Bamboo Grove (Take no Sato Otokuni)" is a beautiful bamboo forest that reminds us of the birthplace of "Taketori Monogatari (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter)", which is said to be one of Japan's oldest stories. The area is located in the southwestern part of the Kyoto basin, where the capital of Nagaokakyo was once located. Here you can feel the history of Japan through the historic sites, temples, and shrines alongside its rich nature together with the various flowers of the four seasons. Examples of these are the ancient burial mounds, the Nagaoka Palace ruins monument, and Muko Shrine. "Takenomichi Street (Bamboo Road)" is a bamboo forest walkway with a fantastic view created by sunbeams coming down through the canopy of the bamboo trees. Since this place is not particularly crowded, you can enjoy taking photos at your own leisure. Also, make sure to pay attention to the eight types of bamboo fences that can be spotted all around.

Takenomichi Street (Bamboo Road)

Shibayama, Terado-cho, Muko City - in Nakakaido, Nagano, Mozume-cho

OSAKA

Prefecture

Spot

05 Tower of the sun (Expo'70 Commemorative Park)

Located in Suita City in Osaka Prefecture, a park was built on the site of the Japan World Exposition, Osaka 1970 (Osaka Expo), which was the first world exposition to be held in Asia. The Tower of the Sun, which was built in the core of the Symbol Zone of Expo '70, is an impactful work by the avant-garde artist Taro Okamoto, with the inside of the Tower being open for viewing since 2018. *For site viewings, prior online reservations through the official website will be prioritized. You can enjoy the feeling of nature near the city center, as well as experiencing the flowers of the four seasons, alongside the various events in the vast area which is approximately 260 ha. The EXPO heritages, including the Tower of the Sun, still remain in the park, and the EXPO '70 Pavilion, which is the memorial hall for the Osaka Expo, displays the materials and exhibits of the Osaka Expo, helping to recreate the atmosphere and enthusiasm that was felt during the time of the original Osaka Expo.

Tower of the sun(Expo'70 Commemorative Park)
URL:<https://taiyounotou-expo70.jp>

Spot

06 Forest of Osaka Pref. Residents Hoshida- Enchi Park

The Forest of Osaka Pref. Residents Hoshida-Enchi Park is a nature park with 105 ha in size located in Hoshida, Katano City, Osaka Prefecture. The "Hoshi no Buranko (Star Swing Bridge)" is a wooden-floor pedestrian suspension bridge with a total length of about 280 meters and features a maximum height of 50 meters, which is one of the largest suspension bridges in Japan. You can take a stroll up in the clear air while enjoying the thrilling view of the majestic mountain and the seasonal nature. There is a full-scale climbing facility with wall featuring a height of 16.5 meters in the park, and the experience zone for beginners is available at anytime. There are also many hiking trails to be enjoyed alongside forest bathing and bird watching.

Forest of Osaka Pref. Residents Hoshida-Enchi Park
5019-1 Hoshida, Katano City
URL:<http://osaka-midori.jp/mori/hoshida/>

Spot

07 Muko Valley Rail Trail

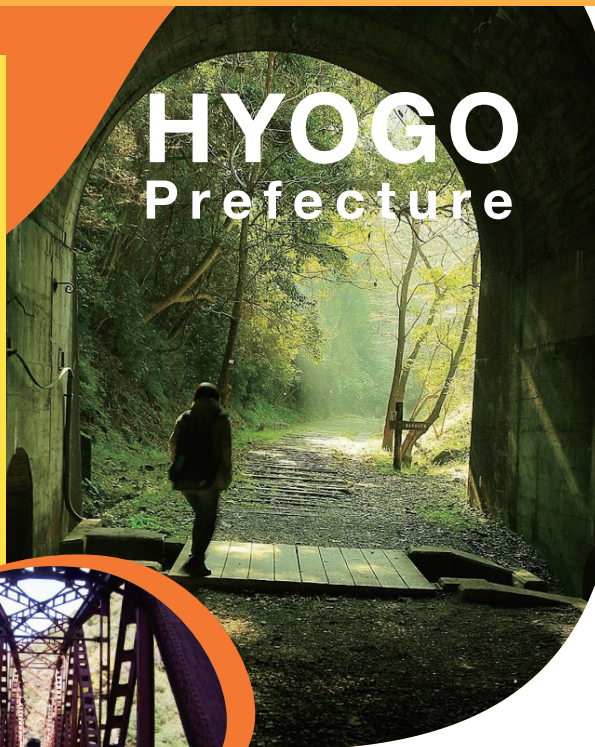
The Muko Valley Rail Trail is a hiking trail situated along a valley, which is a part of the old JR railway line that had been in operation for 87 years. Its total length is 4.7 km, which takes around 2 hours to finish. You can take a walk on the abandoned sleepers in this dynamically beautiful valley. In the tunnel along the route, you can enjoy the thrill of traversing the darkness with a flashlight in hand. It is rated as being an easy trail to walk, with little in the way of upwards or downwards slopes. There is even a hot spring at the end of the trail area in Takedao where you can enjoy bathing during a day trip.

Takarazuka International Tourism Association

Tel: 0797-77-9120

URL:<https://kanko-takarazuka.jp/plan/walking/haisenato/>

HYOGO Prefecture



Spot

08 Kinosaki Onsen

Kinosaki Onsen is a hot spring town that sprawls alongside the Otani River, a tributary of the Maruyama River. Rows of willow and cherry trees line the river, and people wearing yukata kimono can be seen strolling around. There are seven public baths, including the oldest "Ko-no-Yu", which was discovered 1,400 years ago when a stork was spotted there healing its wounds. There is also "Ichi-no-Yu", which was awarded the "No.1 hot spring" title in the Edo period (1603-1867). The public bath tour is a unique way to enjoy the Kinosaki Onsen area. This hot spring resort is loved by literary folk, and has subsequently become famous throughout Japan as the location for SHIGA Naoya's novel "At Kinosaki".

Kinosaki Onsen

Kinosaki-cho, Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture

URL:<https://visitkinosaki.com/>

<https://travelguide.michelin.com/asia/japan/hyogo/kinosaki-onsen>



HYOGO



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NARA

Prefecture

Spot

09 Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail

The Nara basin is surrounded by small mountains. The old trail at the foot of the mountains to the east is called "Yamanobe-no-Michi", and this route is considered to be the oldest road in Japan as has been written in historical records. The total length of the trail is about 26 km, but a particularly popular hiking stretch of this trail is about 16 km, stretching from Sakurai to Tenri. The time required to make the hike is one day, allowing for various detours along the way. There are many old shrines and temples on the path, such as Ohmiwa-jinja Shrine and Isonokami-jingu Shrine, along with burial mounds and ruins along the "Yamanobe-no-Michi" from Sakurai to Tenri. Above all, what is perhaps most charming is to walk in the nostalgic countryside of Japan, which showcases a narrow ridgeway where cars cannot pass, mossy stone Buddha statues, bamboo forests, and unmanned sales stands for local vegetables placed in front of farmhouses. You can enjoy the beauty of Japan's nature at your own pace regardless of the season.

Spot

10 Odaigahara

Mt. Odaigahara is one of Japan's 100 Famous Mountains, and a trip to Odaigahara where you can enjoy the spectacular views and scenery, which seem almost like they're from another world, will certainly be an unforgettable one. You can get there from Nara City by a combination of train and bus. You should take the Kintetsu Yoshino Line bound for Yoshino, get off at Yamato-Kamiichi Station, and then take the bus bound for Odaigahara. The number of buses is once a day on weekdays and twice a day on holidays, departing from Yamato-Kamiichi Station at 9am, and back again from Odaigahara at 3:30pm. It takes a little over 3 hours one way from Nara City, and there is also a visitor center nearby at the bus stop. Be sure to check the timetable and weather forecast when planning a hike. Please be aware that from late November to late April each year, the area is closed for the winter period and you won't be able to enter.

