



One-day Tour



Disclaimer

Please kindly note that the conference is only responsible for organizing the one-day tour. We do not assume any liability for the personal safety and property of individuals during the tour. It will be appreciated for your kind understanding.

Time

9:30-19:30, April 10, 2025

Gathering Time & Point

Please wait for further notice.

Classic One-day Tour Route

Nakatanidou / Kofukuji Temple / Todaiji / Nara Park / Mizuyachaya / Kasuga Taisha / Mt. Wakakusayama / Harukas

(Notice: The tour order and duration depends on the day's traffic conditions. Thanks for your kind understanding.)

One-day Tour Cost

90 USD per person

Include: Transportation, Tour Guide

Exclude: Meals and Self-funded Projects

(Notice: The minimum size of our group is 6 guests. If there is less than 6 people applying to join in, we will cancel the one-day tour and you can reschedule your time.)

Itinerary

Nakatanidou

Nakatanidou is a must-visit destination in Nara, Japan, renowned for its freshly made mochi, a traditional Japanese rice cake. This small shop, located near Nara Park, offers a delightful and immersive experience for both locals and tourists alike. What makes Nakatanidou truly stand out

is not just the quality of its mochi, but the mesmerizing mochi-pounding demonstration that takes place right in front of the shop.

The place is easy to identify: it is the one surrounded by a small crowd intent on taking photos with their cell phones, while a zealous employee compresses it to prevent some customers from being overwhelmed by the traffic before having consumed.

The process of making mochi, called "mochitsuki," involves pounding steamed glutinous rice into a sticky, smooth dough. At Nakatanidou, this age-old tradition is turned into an almost



theatrical performance. Using large wooden mallets, the staff work in perfect sync to pound the rice dough in rapid succession, with a skill and speed that is astonishing. This display draws crowds who are captivated by the precise coordination and the effort that goes into making each piece of mochi. What's even more impressive is that Nakatanidou holds a Guinness World Record for its mochi-pounding speed.

Kofukuji Temple

Kofukuji Temple was built in 669 by the aristocratic and politically powerful Fujiwara family. Later, it was moved to Asuka when the capital was relocated, and was named Umayasakadera Temple. It was moved to Nara when the capital was relocated to Heijo-kyo (present-day Nara), and renamed Kofukuji Temple.



If you like pagodas, you will love Kofukuji Temple. At 50.1 meters tall, the five-story pagoda is the second tallest wooden pagoda in Japan, and a symbol of the ancient capital of Nara. The tallest five-story pagoda can be found in neighboring Kyoto .

The pagoda was built around 730, and rebuilt five times after being destroyed by fire. The current pagoda, which dates from around 1426, creates an impressive atmosphere with its long history.

Two of the curiosities of the site are the octagonal halls, which attract many visitors. The Hokuendo was built in 721, and is said to be the most beautiful octagonal hall in Japan. The Nananendo was built about 100 years after the Hokuendo.

The Chukondo is a central building of Kofukuji, and one of the most important. It was a temporary hall for a long time, but in 2000 it was dismantled and restored in the style of its original construction, a process that was completed in 2018.

Todaiji

Todaiji (東大寺, Tōdaiji, "Great Eastern Temple") is one of Japan's most famous and historically significant temples and a landmark of Nara. The temple was constructed in 752 as the head temple of all provincial Buddhist temples of Japan and grew so powerful that the capital was moved away from Nara in 784 in order to lower the temple's influence on government affairs.



Until recently, Todaiji's main hall, the Daibutsuden (Big Buddha Hall), held the record as the world's largest wooden building, despite the fact that the present reconstruction of 1692 is only two thirds of the original temple hall's size. The massive building houses one of Japan's largest bronze statues of Buddha (Daibutsu). The 15 meters tall, seated Buddha represents Vairocana and is flanked by two Bodhisattvas. Several smaller Buddhist statues and models of the former and current buildings are also on display in the Daibutsuden Hall. Another popular attraction is a pillar with a hole in its base that is the same size as the Daibutsu's nostril. It is said that those who can squeeze through this opening will be granted enlightenment in their next life.

Along the approach to Todaiji stands the Nandaimon Gate, a large wooden gate watched over by two fierce looking statues. Representing the Nio Guardian Kings, the statues are designated national treasures together with the gate itself. Temple visitors will also encounter some deer from the adjacent Nara Park, begging for shika senbei, special crackers for deer that are sold for around 200 yen.

Nara Park

As one of Japan's oldest and most famous parks, Nara Park is not only home to deer and ancient relics, but also a magical place where tradition and modernity converge. Founded in 1880 and located in the heart of Nara City, Nara Park is one of Japan's oldest parks.

However, its roots can be traced back to the early 8th century, as the surrounding attractions bear deep connections to the politics, culture, and religion of the Nara period (710-794). The renowned Todai-ji Temple and Kasuga Taisha Shrine were constructed during this period.



Today, Nara Park spans 660 hectares. It is not only a great place to relax but also a must-visit spot for tourists traveling from Kyoto.

But what truly sets Nara Park apart is its over 1,200 freely roaming deer. Considered messengers of the gods in Shintoism, these deer have become symbols of harmony between humans and nature in the city. If you happen to have deer crackers in hand, don't be surprised they will approach you for a delightful treat. All the deer in Nara Park are wild and can be freely observed. The deer also have learned to bow as a trick for food. Interestingly, they are especially fond of deer crackers or shika senbei. When a deer wants food, it will bow its head to you. Simply hold the deer crackers and bow gently to the deer, signaling friendliness. Then you can give the deer crackers to the deer. More often than not, once you've fed one to the deer they'll bow back in response.

Mizuyachaya

This small, charming teahouse (officially named Mizuyachaya but often mistakenly referred to as Mizutani chaya), between Kasugataisha Shrine and Todaiji Temple, looks like a traditional road-side stop from a Samurai drama. Sitting by a small river just off the road, it looks spectacular in autumn, but it offers refreshments in all seasons, from hot udon and soba noodles in winter to shaved ice in summer, along with traditional sweets. There are a few tables inside, or you can take a seat on the red-covered benches outside, shaded by parasols on sunny days.



Kasuga Taisha

Kasuga Taisha is Nara's most celebrated shrine. It was established at the same time as the capital and is dedicated to the deity responsible for the protection of the city. Kasuga Taisha was also the tutelary shrine of the Fujiwara, Japan's most powerful family clan during most of the Nara and Heian Periods. Like the Ise Shrines, Kasuga Taisha had been periodically rebuilt every 20



years for many centuries. In the case of Kasuga Taisha, however, the custom was discontinued at the end of the Edo Period.

Beyond the shrine's offering hall, which can be visited free of charge, there is a paid inner area which provides a closer view of the shrine's inner buildings. Furthest in is the main sanctuary, containing multiple shrine buildings that display the distinctive Kasuga style of shrine architecture, characterized by a sloping roof extending over the front of the building.

Kasuga Taisha is famous for its lanterns, which have been donated by worshippers. Hundreds of bronze lanterns can be found hanging from the buildings, while as many stone lanterns line its approaches. The lanterns are only lit twice a year during two Lantern Festivals, one in early February and one in mid August.

There are many smaller auxiliary shrines in the woods around Kasuga Taisha, twelve of which are located along a path past the main shrine complex and are dedicated to the twelve lucky gods. Among them are Wakamiya Shrine, an important cultural property known for its dance festival, and Meoto Daikokusha, which enshrines married deities and is said to be fortuitous to matchmaking and marriage.

Mt. Wakakusayama

Mount Wakakusayama is the grass covered mountain behind Nara Park, located between Todaiji Temple and Kasuga Shrine. The mountain is about 350 meters tall and affords unobstructed views over Nara City. Tourists are allowed to climb Mount Wakakusayama all year round except during winter. A small entrance fee is charged.

The grassy slope of the mountain is lined by cherry trees that are usually in full bloom around early April. A steep trail leads along the leftmost edge of the slope to a plateau halfway up the mountain with great views over the city. A traditional shopping street, lined with sakura cherry trees, opens towards the entrance. Wakakusa is divided into several levels and an important number of visitors seem to choose not to tread the walking trail, but rather stay on this vast expanse of steep grass just past the entrance.



Harukas

Standing 300 meters tall, Abeno Harukas in Osaka was the tallest skyscraper in Japan from its completion in 2014 until 2023. The building stands on top of the Kintetsu Osaka Abenobashi Station and is conveniently located across from JR Tennoji Station. It houses a department store, an art museum, a hotel and an observation deck.

The observation deck is called "Harukas 300" and occupies the building's top three floors (floors 58 to 60). It is accessed by elevator from the 16th floor. With large floor-to-ceiling glass panels all around, the 60th floor offers 360 degree views of Osaka, while the 58th floor features an attractively designed inner court with a wooden deck and cafe. A souvenir shop and restrooms with views are also available.

