PRINTABLE ITINERARY

A 4-Day Kyoto Itinerary

From our guide **Top 10 Things to Do in Kyoto**. Print it or save it to your phone.



Four days lets you see Kyoto's highlights at a calm pace and add a day trip.

Day 1: Higashiyama and Gion

Visit Kiyomizu-dera early, walk down Sannenzaka and Ninenzaka, and spend the evening in Gion.

Day 2: Fushimi Inari and Central Kyoto

Hike Fushimi Inari at sunrise, then explore Nishiki Market and Nijo Castle in the afternoon.

Day 3: Arashiyama and the Golden Pavilion

Start early at the bamboo grove and Tenryu-ji, then head across the city to Kinkaku-ji and Ryoan-ji.

Day 4: Nara or Uji

Take a day trip to Nara for the deer and Todai-ji, or to Uji for tea and Byodo-in.

The 10 places at a glance

1. Walk Through Fushimi Inari Taisha

Getting there: Inari station on the JR Nara line is a few minutes from Kyoto Station, right in front of the shrine.
Time needed: Two to three hours to walk well beyond the crowds.
Best time to go: Sunrise or early evening.
Insider tip: Keep climbing past the first section of gates. The crowds thin out quickly higher up the mountain.
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2. See the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku-ji)

Getting there: City buses run from Kyoto Station in around 40 minutes.
Time needed: About an hour, or half a day with Ryoan-ji and Ninna-ji.
Best time to go: At opening time, before the tour groups arrive.
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3. Explore Arashiyama

Getting there: Take the JR Sagano line from Kyoto Station to Saga-Arashiyama, around 15 minutes.
Time needed: Half a day to a full day.
Best time to go: Before 8am for the bamboo grove.
Tickets: Book the Sagano Romantic Train in advance in autumn, when it sells out.
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4. Visit Kiyomizu-dera

Getting there: City buses stop at Gojo-zaka or Kiyomizu-michi, followed by a 10 to 15-minute walk uphill.
Time needed: One to two hours, including the lanes below.
Best time to go: Early morning, as the temple opens before most other sights.
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5. Wander Through Gion

Getting there: Gion-Shijo station on the Keihan line, or a short walk from Kawaramachi.
Time needed: An evening.
Good to know: Some private lanes are closed to tourists, and visitors can be fined for ignoring the signs.
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6. Eat Your Way Through Nishiki Market

Getting there: Shijo or Karasuma stations, or Kawaramachi on the Hankyu line.
Time needed: One to two hours.
Best time to go: Late morning, before the lunchtime rush.
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7. Stroll the Philosopher's Path

Getting there: City buses run to Ginkakuji-michi at the northern end of the path.
Time needed: Two to three hours with temple visits.
Best time to go: Early April for cherry blossom, or November for autumn leaves.
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8. Experience a Tea Ceremony

Getting there: Uji is around 20 to 30 minutes from Kyoto by JR or Keihan train.
Time needed: About an hour for a ceremony, or half a day for Uji.
Tickets: Book ceremonies in advance, especially in busy seasons.
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9. Tour Nijo Castle

Getting there: Nijojo-mae station on the Tozai subway line is right outside.
Time needed: One and a half hours.
Best time to go: Early morning or late afternoon.
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10. Take a Day Trip to Nara

Getting there: JR or Kintetsu trains from Kyoto take around 35 to 45 minutes.
Time needed: A full day.
Insider tip: Visit the peaceful Isuien Garden, close to Todai-ji, for a quieter break from the crowds.
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Getting Around Kyoto

Kyoto's subway, trains and buses cover the city well, and a rechargeable IC card such as ICOCA works on almost all of them. Buses reach many temples but get very crowded, so use the subway and trains where you can.

Walking is often the best way to explore neighbourhoods like Higashiyama and Gion. Bike rental is popular, but only park in designated bicycle parking areas, as bikes left elsewhere can be removed.

Opening times, prices and transport change often, so check with each venue or operator before you go. For the full guide, photos and FAQs, see https://toptravelinsider.com/top-10-things-to-do-in-kyoto/.