

## lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to [lonelyplanet.com/hotels](https://lonelyplanet.com/hotels) and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

## SLEEPING

### top picks

- **Tour Club** (p148)
- **Budget Inn** (p148)
- **Utano Youth Hostel** (p154)
- **Ryokan Uemura** (p152)
- **Ryokan Shimizu** (p148)
- **Ryokan Motonago** (p152)
- **Hotel Unizo** (p150)
- **Palace Side Hotel** (p151)
- **Karasuma Kyoto Hotel** (p149)
- **Hyatt Regency Kyoto** (p152)

# SLEEPING

When it comes to accommodation, you're spoiled for choice in Kyoto. Want to try a night in a traditional ryokan (Japanese-style inn)? This is the place to do so and you'll find ryokan in all budget ranges. How about a night in a world-class hotel? Again, you've got plenty to choose from in Kyoto, and the service at a good Japanese hotel is unrivalled. If you're on a tight budget, you'll still find lots of comfortable options in Kyoto – the city accommodates backpackers from all over the world and there are plenty of guesthouses, youth hostels and cheap ryokan at ease with foreign guests.

Bear in mind that much of Kyoto's accommodation can be booked out during Kyoto's two tourist high seasons: the early-April cherry-blossom season and the November autumn-foliage season. It can also be hard to find rooms during Golden Week (29 April to 5 May) and O-bon (mid-August). Whatever you do, try to reserve as early as possible if you plan to be in town during these times.

Credit cards are accepted at most hotels but don't expect to pay with plastic at any of the budget places. As for ryokan, the higher the price, the better your chances of being able to use a credit card.

## ACCOMMODATION STYLES

The following are the most common accommodation types you will encounter in this book and on your travels.

### Business Hotels

A very common form of midrange accommodation is the so-called 'business hotel'. Generally these are economical and functional places geared to the lone traveller on business, although most in Kyoto also take couples. In Kyoto, a room in a business hotel will have a pay TV and tiny bathroom, and cost between ¥6000 and ¥12,000. As is the case with various ryokan, some business hotels accept credit cards, but you should always ask when you check in. There is no room service and you will usually be required to check out at 10am or 11am and check in after 3pm or 4pm. At some of the nicer business hotels, there are large shared baths and saunas in addition to the private ones in the guest rooms.

Business hotels are identifiable by their small size (usually three to five floors), their

### PRICE GUIDE

The following is a guide to the pricing system in this chapter. Prices are per room per night, including bathroom and air-con (unless otherwise stated).

¥¥¥	over ¥15,000
¥¥	¥6000-15,000
¥	under ¥6000

simple (often concrete) exteriors, and a sign (usually in both English and Japanese) out the front. Although you can't expect much English from the front desk clerk, if you smile and speak slowly you should be okay.

### Standard or Luxury Hotels

In addition to business hotels, you will find a variety of standard/luxury hotels in Kyoto. These will be similar to standard/luxury hotels anywhere else in the developed world, although, this being Japan, you can expect the service to be on a superior level. English is spoken at these hotels, and the rooms are usually very well maintained and larger than business-hotel rooms. In addition, most standard/luxury hotels in Kyoto have several good restaurants and bars on their premises, some of which offer outstanding views over the city.

### Ryokan

Although some ryokan will allow you to pay by credit card, you should always ask when you make reservations.

### Youth Hostels

Kyoto's youth hostels are much like youth hostels that you'll find elsewhere: not much atmosphere and a mixture of dorms and private rooms. They can also be noisy. On the plus side, they are used to foreigners and are cleaner than many of their overseas counterparts. A room in a typical youth hostel costs

## STAYING IN A RYOKAN

Let's face it: a hotel is a hotel wherever you go. Just as you want to try local food when you're on the road, you probably also want to try a night in traditional local accommodation. If so, then you'll definitely want to spend at least one night in a ryokan.

Ryokan (written with the Japanese characters for 'travel' and 'hall') are usually fine old wooden Japanese buildings, with tatami mats, futons, gardens, deep Japanese bathtubs, traditional Japanese service and kitchens that turn out classic Japanese cuisine.

Due to language difficulties and unfamiliarity, staying in a ryokan is not as straightforward as staying in a Western-style hotel. It's not exactly rocket science, however, and with a little education it can be a breeze, even if you don't speak a word of Japanese. Here's the basic drill:

When you arrive, leave your shoes in the *genkan* (the entrance/foyer) and step up into the reception area. Here, you'll be asked to sign in and perhaps show your passport (you pay when you check out). You'll then be shown around the place and then to your room, where you will be served a cup of tea, or shown a hot-water flask and some tea cups so you can make your own. You'll note that there is no bedding to be seen in your room – your futon are in the closets and will be laid out later. You can leave your luggage anywhere except the *tokonoma* (sacred alcove), which will usually contain some flowers or a hanging scroll. If it's early enough, you can then go out to do some sightseeing.

When you return, you can change into your *yukata* (lightweight Japanese robe) and be served dinner in your room or in a dining room. In a ryokan, dinner is often a multicourse feast of the finest local delicacies. After dinner, you can take a bath. If it's a big place, you can generally bathe anytime in the evening until around 11pm. If it's a small place, you'll be given a time slot. While you're in the bath, some mysterious elves will go into your room and lay out your futon so that it will be waiting for you when you return all toasty from the bath.

In the morning, you'll be served a Japanese-style breakfast (some places these days serve a simple Western-style breakfast for those who can't stomach rice and fish in the morning). You pay on check-out, which is usually around 11am. The only problem with staying in a good ryokan is that it might put you off hotels for the rest of your days! Enjoy.

about ¥3200, cash only. Membership might not be necessary.

### Guesthouses

Guesthouses are similar to youth hostels, without the regimented atmosphere and without any need for membership. With a long history of hosting foreign travellers, Kyoto has far more guesthouses than most Japanese cities, including Tokyo. There are still a few notorious flea pits left over from the days when Japan was a stop on the hippy trail, but these days clean, modern, well-maintained guesthouses are the norm. Guesthouses usually have both dorms, which average ¥2500 per person, and a variety of private rooms, which average ¥3500 per person.

### Shukubō

Staying in a *shukubō* (temple lodging) is one way to experience another facet of traditional Japan. Sometimes you are allocated a simple room in the temple precincts and left to your own devices. At other times, you may be asked to participate in prayers, services or *zazen* (seated meditation). Nightly rates hover at around ¥4000 per person (most with breakfast

included), and guests usually use public baths near the temples.

A number of *shukubō* in Kyoto are hesitant to take foreigners who cannot speak Japanese, although those listed in this chapter have English speakers on hand and are used to having non-Japanese guests. At the TIC (p199) you can also pick up a copy of *Shukubōs in Kyoto*, which has a list of local temple lodgings.

## RESERVATIONS & INFORMATION

Making phone reservations in English is usually possible; providing you speak clearly and simply, there will usually be someone around who can get the gist of what you want.

The [International Tourism Center of Japan](http://www.itcj.jp/) (www.itcj.jp/), formerly the Welcome Inn Reservation Center, is a free reservation service that represents hundreds of *minshuku* (Japanese-style B&Bs), ryokan, inns and *pensions* in Japan. In Kyoto it operates a counter at the TIC (p199) and at the main tourist information counters in Narita and Kansai airports. You can also make reservations online through its website (which is also an excellent source of information on member hotels and inns).

## KYOTO STATION AREA

The area around Kyoto Station is thick with hotels, ryokan and guesthouses, including one hotel right above the station itself. There is no question that this is a convenient place to be based in terms of transport and shopping, and there are a fair number of dining options in and around the station. It's a bit of a hike from the main sightseeing districts, but since the station is the transport hub of Kyoto, it should take less than 30 minutes to reach them by bus, subway or taxi.

### HOTEL GRANVIA KYOTO

Map p46 Hotel ¥¥¥  
 ☎ 344-8888; [www.granvia-kyoto.co.jp/e/](http://www.granvia-kyoto.co.jp/e/);  
 Shimogyō-ku, Karasuma-dōri, Shioikōji Sagaru; d/tw  
 ¥23,100/25,410; 🕒 Kyoto Station; 📍

Imagine being able to step out of bed and straight into the *shinkansen* (bullet train). This is almost possible when you stay at the Hotel Granvia, a fine establishment located directly above Kyoto Station. The rooms are clean, spacious and elegant, with deep bathtubs. This is a very professional operation with some decent on-site restaurants, some of which have good views over the city.

### RIHGA ROYAL HOTEL KYOTO

Map p46 Hotel ¥¥¥  
 ☎ 341-1121; [www.rihga.com/kyoto/](http://www.rihga.com/kyoto/); Shimogyō-ku,  
 Horikawa-dōri-Shioikōji; d/tw ¥23,100/25,410;  
 🕒 10min walk from Kyoto Station; 📍

Though a little dated, and too busy and large for some people's taste, this long-running hotel has all the facilities that you'd expect from a first-class hotel, including a revolving rooftop restaurant. The location is convenient to Kyoto Station, but a little distant from the Higashiyama sightseeing district.

### APA HOTEL

Map p46 Business Hotel ¥¥  
 ☎ 365-4111; [ahkyoto@apa.co.jp](mailto:ahkyoto@apa.co.jp); Shimogyō-ku,  
 Nishinotōin-dōri, Shioikōji sagaru, Minami Fudōdō-  
 chō 806; s/tw from ¥10,500/20,000; 🕒 5min walk  
 from Kyoto Station; 📍

Only five minutes on foot from Kyoto Station, this excellent business hotel is a good midpriced hotel choice. Rooms are on the large size, with firm, clean beds and unit bathrooms. The staff are professional and seem at ease dealing with foreign guests.

### BUDGET INN

Map p46 Guesthouse ¥  
 ☎ 344-1510; [www.budgetinn.jp.com](http://www.budgetinn.jp.com); Shimogyō-ku,  
 Shichijō sagaru, Aburanokōji, Aburanokōji-chō  
 295; dm/tr/q ¥2500/10,980/12,980; 🕒 7min walk  
 from Kyoto Station; 📍

This well-run guesthouse is excellent. It has two dorm rooms and six Japanese-style private rooms, all of which are clean and well maintained. All rooms have their own bath and toilet, and there is a spacious quad room that's good for families. The staff here is very helpful and friendly, and internet access, laundry and bicycle rental are available. All in all, this is a great choice in this price range. It's a seven-minute walk from Kyoto Station; walk west on Shioikōji-dōri and turn north one street before Horikawa and look for the English-language sign out front.

### TOUR CLUB

Map p46 Guesthouse ¥  
 ☎ 353-6968; [www.kyotojp.com](http://www.kyotojp.com); Shimogyō-ku,  
 Shōmen-sagaru, Higashinakasuj, Momiji-chō 362;  
 dm ¥2450, d ¥6980-7770, tr ¥8880-9720; 10min  
 walk from Kyoto Station; 📍

Run by a charming and informative young couple, this clean, well-maintained guesthouse is a favourite of many foreign visitors. Facilities include internet access, bicycle rentals, laundry, wireless LAN, and free tea and coffee. Most private rooms have a private bath and toilet, and there is a spacious quad room for families. This is probably the best choice in this price bracket. It's a 10-minute walk from Kyoto Station; turn north off Shichijō-dōri at the Second House coffee shop (looks like a bank) and keep an eye out for the English sign.

### RYOKAN SHIMIZU

Map p46 Ryokan ¥  
 ☎ 371-5538; [www.kyoto-shimizu.net](http://www.kyoto-shimizu.net); Wakamiya  
 Shichijō agaru; r per person from ¥5250; 🕒 Kyoto  
 Station; 📍 🚻

A short walk north of Kyoto Station's Karasuma central gate, this fine new ryokan is quickly building a loyal following of foreign and Japanese guests, and for good reason: it's clean, well run and friendly. Rooms are standard ryokan style with one difference: all have attached bathrooms and toilets. Bicycle rental is available.

### K'S HOUSE KYOTO

Map p46 Guesthouse ¥  
 ☎ 342-2444; [kshouse.jp/index.html](http://kshouse.jp/index.html); Shimogyō-ku,  
 Dotemachi-dōri Shichijō agaru, Naya-chō 418; dm/  
 s/d per person from ¥2500/3500/2900; 🕒 10min  
 walk from Kyoto Station; 📍

K's House is a large 'New Zealand-style' guesthouse with both private and dorm rooms. The rooms are simple but adequate and there are spacious common areas. It's a sociable place that is currently in the process of building a large, new building next door.

## DOWNTOWN KYOTO

If you want easy access to an incredible variety of dining, entertainment and shopping options, staying in Downtown Kyoto is a good idea. Although there are relatively few ryokan and no guesthouses, there are plenty of hotels in this area. Kyoto's two subway lines converge here and plenty of buses run through, so it's convenient in terms of transport as well. You can get to the main sightseeing districts from Downtown Kyoto in less than half an hour. On the downside, it can be a little busy and not particularly scenic. If you're after soothing Kyoto cityscapes, you might prefer to try the Higashiyama districts.

### HIIRAGIYA RYOKAN

Map p50 Ryokan ¥¥¥  
 ☎ 221-1136; [www.hiiragiya.co.jp/en/](http://www.hiiragiya.co.jp/en/); Nakagyō-ku,  
 Fuyachō, Aneyakōji-agaru; r per person incl  
 meals ¥30,000-90,000; 🕒 10min walk from Shijō  
 Station, Karasuma subway line; 📍

This elegant ryokan has long been favoured by celebrities from around the world. Facilities and services are excellent and the location is hard to beat. Ask for one of the newly redone rooms.

### HIIRAGIYA RYOKAN ANNEXE

Map p50 Ryokan ¥¥¥  
 ☎ 231-0151; fax 231-0153; Nakagyō-ku, Nijō  
 kudarū, Gokomachi-dōri; r per person incl meals  
 from ¥15,000; 🕒 10min walk from Karasuma-Oike  
 Station, Karasuma subway line; 📍

Not far from the Hiiragiya Ryokan (above) main building, the Hiiragiya Ryokan Annexe offers the traditional ryokan experience at slightly more affordable rates. The *kaiseki* (Japanese *haute cuisine*) served here is delicious, the gardens are lovely and the bathtubs are wonderful. Service is professional, if a little cool.

### TAWARAYA RYOKAN

Map p50 Ryokan ¥¥¥  
 ☎ 211-5566; fax 221-2204; Nakagyō-ku, Fuyachō-  
 Oike kudarū; r per person incl meals ¥35,000-  
 75,000; 🕒 10min walk from Karasuma-Oike  
 Station, Karasuma subway line; 📍

Tawaraya has been operating for more than three centuries and is one of the finest places to stay in the world. From the decorations to the service to the food, everything at the Tawaraya is simply the best available. It's a very intimate, warm and personal place that has many loyal guests. It's centrally located within easy walk of two subway stations and many good restaurants.

### KYOTO HOTEL ŌKURA

Map p50 Hotel ¥¥¥  
 ☎ 211-5111; [www.kyotohotel.co.jp/khokura/english/index.html](http://www.kyotohotel.co.jp/khokura/english/index.html); Nakagyō-ku,  
 Kawaramachi-dōri-Oike; s/tw/d from ¥20,212/28,875/37,537;  
 🕒 1min walk from Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae Station,  
 Tōzai subway line; 📍

This towering hotel in the centre of town commands an impressive view of the Higashiyama Mountains. Rooms here are clean and spacious and many have great views, especially the excellent corner suites – we just wish we could open a window to enjoy the breeze. You can access the Kyoto subway system directly from the hotel, which is convenient on rainy days or if you've got luggage.

### HOTEL FUJITA KYOTO

Map p50 Hotel ¥¥  
 ☎ 222-1511; [information@fujita-kyoto.com](http://information@fujita-kyoto.com);  
 Nakagyō-ku, Kamogawa Nijō-Ōhashi Hotori;  
 s/tw/d from ¥10,395/16,170/26,565; 🕒 10min  
 walk from Kyoto-Shiyakusho-mae Station, Tōzai  
 subway line; 📍

Located on the banks of the Kamo-gawa, this hotel has rooms of an acceptable to decent standard and a great on-site bar. The hotel is usually rather quiet and has a restful feeling. It's a short walk to the Downtown Kyoto entertainment district. Japanese-style rooms are available.

### KARASUMA KYOTO HOTEL

Map p50 Hotel ¥¥  
 ☎ 371-0111; [www.kyotohotel.co.jp/karasuma/index\\_e.html](http://www.kyotohotel.co.jp/karasuma/index_e.html); Nakagyō-ku, Karasuma-dōri-  
 Shijō kudarū; s/tw/d ¥10,164/18,480/23,100;  
 🕒 5min walk from Shijō Station, Karasuma  
 subway line; 📍

This busy place occupies the middle ground between a business hotel and a standard hotel, with clean, well-maintained rooms. It's very popular with business people and travellers, many of whom enjoy the convenience of a Starbucks right in the lobby.

## STAY IN A MACHIYA

*Machiya*, Kyoto's traditional town houses, are the wooden heart of the city. Built entirely of traditional materials, they are naturally soothing and incredibly pleasing to the eyes. Now, thanks to Alex Kerr's *lori* ([www.kyoto-machiya.com/www\\_english/index.html](http://www.kyoto-machiya.com/www_english/index.html)); per person per night ¥5700-65,000, it is possible to spend the night in a *machiya*.

*lori* has purchased and completely renovated seven beautiful *machiya* in various parts of Kyoto and turned them into elegant accommodation. Each is available for exclusive rental to groups or individuals – kind of like having your own private *machiya* for a night or longer.

The *machiya* have been updated for comfort and include showers, Western-style toilets and beds. The decorations are beautiful and the buildings themselves are stunning. This is a great chance to experience a night in a bit of living Kyoto history. For more information on *machiya*, see the boxed text, p34.

### HOTEL UNIZO Map p50 Hotel ¥¥

☎ 241-3351; [www.hotelunizo.com/eng/kyoto/index.html](http://www.hotelunizo.com/eng/kyoto/index.html); Nakagyō-ku, Kawaramachi-dōri-Sanjō kudarū; s/d ¥8505/12,810; 🕒 5min walk from Sanjō Station, Keihan line; 🚶

They don't get more convenient than this business hotel: it's smack in the middle of Kyoto's nightlife, shopping and dining district – you can walk to hundreds of restaurants and shops within five minutes. It's a standard-issue business hotel, with tiny but adequate rooms and unit baths. Nothing special here, but it's clean, well run and used to foreign guests. Front rooms can be noisy, so see if you can get something on an upper floor or at the back.

### MATSUI HONKAN Map p50 Ryokan ¥¥

☎ 221-3535; [www.matsui-inn.com/index\\_english.php](http://www.matsui-inn.com/index_english.php); Nakagyō-ku, Yanaginobanba Rokkaku kudarū; r per person incl breakfast from ¥11,000; 🕒 8min walk from Shijō Station, Karasuma subway line; 🚶

This is the main branch of the [Hotel Matsui](#) (below). It's slightly more elegant and Japanese in style but essentially offers the same experience. Rates per person rise to ¥16,000 if you'd prefer to be served both breakfast and dinner.

### HOTEL MATSUI Map p50 Ryokan ¥¥

☎ 221-6688; [www.matsui-inn.com/index\\_english.php](http://www.matsui-inn.com/index_english.php); Nakagyō-ku, Rokkaku Takakura Higashi iru; r per person incl breakfast from ¥8000; 🕒 5min walk from Karasuma-Oike Station, Karasuma subway line; 🚶

This centrally located ryokan-style hotel has spacious Japanese-style rooms and a friendly staff, some of whom speak English. It's getting more popular with foreign guests, who appreciate the reasonable rates. For ¥14,000 per person you can have dinner as well as breakfast at the hotel.

## CENTRAL KYOTO

The area we refer to as Central Kyoto in this guide covers a huge section of the city. The neighbourhoods contained here vary tremendously from relatively quiet residential areas to busy Downtown commercial districts. We try to give some idea of the location in the following reviews.

### KYOTO BRIGHTON HOTEL

Map pp54–5 Hotel ¥¥¥

☎ 441-4411; [www.kyotobrighton.com](http://www.kyotobrighton.com); Kamigyō-ku, Shinmachi-dōri, Nakatachiuri; tw/d/tr from ¥38,115/34,650/49,665; 🕒 8min walk from Imadegawa Station, Karasuma subway line; 🚶

The Brighton is a large hotel located on the west side of the Kyoto Imperial Palace, something of an out-of-the-way location. The lobby here is vast, with a couple of restaurants. The rooms are similarly large and well appointed, and service is good. We reckon the rooms here are bit overpriced, but if you can get a good rate, you might consider it. Take exit 6 from the station.

### HOTEL NIKKO PRINCESS KYOTO

Map pp54–5 Hotel ¥¥¥

☎ 342-2111; [www.princess-kyoto.co.jp/en/index.html](http://www.princess-kyoto.co.jp/en/index.html); Shimogyō-ku, Karasuma Takatsuji Higashi iru; s/d from ¥20,790/34,650; 🕒 3min walk from Shijō Station, Karasuma subway line; 🚶

Nikko's entry into the Kyoto market is a welcome addition and maintains the chain's high standards. Centrally located only a short walk from most Downtown attractions, this smart, understated hotel has excellent service and good on-site restaurants. The standard rooms here are on the small side, as is common in Japan, but they are clean and well outfitted. All in all, this is a great choice if you want to be downtown. Take exit 5 as you leave Shijō Station.

### HOLIDAY INN KYOTO Map pp54–5 Hotel ¥¥

☎ 721-3131; [netoone@hi-kyoto.co.jp](mailto:netoone@hi-kyoto.co.jp); Sakyo-ku, Takano, Nishihiraki-chō 36; tw/d ¥9000/12,000; 🕒 5min walk from Takano-bashi-Higashizume bus stop, Kyoto bus 17 from Kyoto Station; 🚶

Up in the north end of town, near Takano, this hotel has good facilities but is a bit of a hike to the major attractions. The rooms are pretty standard, with nice bathtubs and windows that open to let in the north Kyoto breezes. A short walk away you'll find a large American-style shopping mall with loads of restaurants. There's a shuttle bus to and from Kyoto Station.

### RYOKAN HINOMOTO

Map pp54–5 Ryokan ¥¥

☎ 351-4563; fax 351-3932; Shimogyō-ku, Kawaramachi-dōri, Matsubara agaru; d/tr from ¥8000/12,000; 🕒 1min walk from Kawaramachi-Matsubara bus stop, bus 17 or 205 from Kyoto Station

This cute little ryokan is very conveniently located for shopping and dining in Downtown Kyoto, as well as sightseeing on the east side of town. It has a nice wooden bathtub and simple rooms. It's not the most private place in town, but it's decent value.

### RYOKAN RAKUCHŌ Map pp54–5 Ryokan ¥

☎ 721-2174; [www.003.upp.so-net.ne.jp/rakucho-ryokan/indx.html](http://www.003.upp.so-net.ne.jp/rakucho-ryokan/indx.html); Sakyo-ku, Shimogamo, Higashi hangi chō 67; s/tw/tr from ¥5300/8400/12,600; 🕒 7min walk from Kitaōji Station, Karasuma subway line; 🚶

There is a lot to appreciate about this fine little foreigner-friendly ryokan in the northern part of town: it's entirely nonsmoking; there is a nice little garden; and the rooms are clean and simple. Meals aren't served, but staff can provide you with a good map of local eateries. The downside is the somewhat out-of-the-way location.

### PALACE SIDE HOTEL Map pp54–5 Hotel ¥

☎ 415-8887; [www.palacesidehotel.co.jp/english/fr-top-en.html](http://www.palacesidehotel.co.jp/english/fr-top-en.html); Kamigyō-ku, Karasuma-dōri, Shimotachiuri agaru; s/tw/d from ¥5040/7350/6825; 🕒 3min walk from Marutamachi Station, Karasuma subway line; 🚶

Overlooking the Kyoto Imperial Palace Park, this excellent-value budget hotel has a lot going for it, starting with a friendly English-speaking staff, great service, washing machines, an on-site restaurant,

well-maintained rooms and free internet terminals. The rooms are small but serviceable.

### SHŌHŌ-IN Map pp54–5 Shukubō ¥

☎ /fax 811-7768; Shimogyō-ku, Matsubara-dōri, Ōmiya Nishi iru, Bōmon-chō 845; r per person incl breakfast ¥4725; 🕒 5min walk from Ōmiya-Matsubara bus stop, bus 6 or 206 from Kyoto Station

If you want a break from the usual hotel/ryokan experience, try this *shukubō*, which offers clean rooms and a decent location. The temple also offers lessons in Japanese calligraphy. You must have at least two people in your party to stay here. To inquire in English, call Ms Katō (☎ 090-3947 4520).

### TANI HOUSE Map pp54–5 Guesthouse ¥

☎ 492-5489; Kita-ku, Murasakino, Daitokujichō 8; dm ¥1800, d ¥4200-4600; 🕒 5min walk from Kenkunjinmae bus stop, bus 206 from Kyoto Station; 🚶

This place is an old favourite for both short-term and long-term visitors on a tight budget. There is a certain charm to this fine old house with its warren of rooms and quiet location next to [Daitoku-ji](#) (p53). You might have to ask at the police box near the temple for directions once you get into the area.

### CASA DE NATSU Map pp54–5 Guesthouse ¥

☎ 491-2549; [natu@sa3.so-net.ne.jp](mailto:natu@sa3.so-net.ne.jp); Koyamamoto-machi Kita-ku; r per person incl breakfast ¥4500; 🕒 Kitayama Station, Karasuma subway line, exit 4; 🚶

Up in the north of town, this cosy little Japanese-style guesthouse is a good spot for those who want to escape the hubbub of Downtown. There are two rooms, each decorated in the traditional style, and a fine little garden.

### CROSSROADS INN Map pp54–5 Guesthouse ¥

[www.rose.sannet.ne.jp/c-inn/](http://www.rose.sannet.ne.jp/c-inn/); Shimogyō-ku, Banba-chō, Ebisu 45-14; r per person from ¥4000; 🕒 20min walk from Kyoto Station; 🚶

Crossroads Inn is a charming little guesthouse with clean, well-maintained rooms and a friendly owner. The entire inn is nonsmoking. It's good value but a little hard to find: turn north off Shichijō-dōri just west of the Umekōji-kōen-mae bus stop across from the Daily Yamazaki convenience store. Reservations are by email only.

## SOUTHERN HIGASHIYAMA

Southern Higashiyama, in the southeast of Kyoto, is an excellent place to be based if you're keen to have easy access to the city's most important sightseeing areas. The other bonus is that it's also quieter and more attractive than Downtown or the Kyoto Station area.

### HYATT REGENCY KYOTO

Map p62 Hotel ¥¥¥

☎ 541-1234; [www.hyattregencykyoto.com/english/index.php](http://www.hyattregencykyoto.com/english/index.php); Higashiyama-ku, Sanjūsangendō-mawari 644-2; r ¥22,000-43,000, deluxe ¥26,000-49,000; ☎ 5min walk from Shichijō Station, Keihan line; ☑ ☒

The new Hyatt Regency is an excellent, stylish foreigner-friendly hotel at the southern end of Kyoto's Southern Higashiyama sightseeing district. Many travellers consider this to be the best hotel in Kyoto, and almost all mention the great restaurants and its fabulous **Tōzan bar** (see the boxed text, p140). The rooms and bathrooms have lots of neat touches. The concierges are helpful and they'll even lend you a laptop to check your email if you don't have your own (the hotel has wi-fi). The only downside we can see is the location – it's a bit of a hike to the main sightseeing district. However, there are plenty of transport options nearby, including the Keihan train line down the hill and buses that ply Higashiōji-dōri.

### SEIKORŌ Map p62 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 561-0771; [www.seikoro.com/top-e.htm](http://www.seikoro.com/top-e.htm); Higashiyama-ku, Toiyamachi-dōri, Gojō kudaru, Nishi Tachibana-chō 3 chō-me 467; r per person incl meals from ¥31,500; ☎ Kawaramachi-Gojō bus stop, bus 17 or 205 from Kyoto Station; ☒ ☑ The Seikōrō is a classic ryokan that welcomes foreign guests. It's a fairly spacious place, with excellent, comfortable rooms and attentive service. The location is a bit odd – next to the river a little south of Gojō-dōri, but it's only a short walk to Keihan line Gōjo Station and Gion.

### RYOKAN MOTONAGO Map p62 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 561-2087; [www.motonago.com](http://www.motonago.com); Higashiyama-ku, Kōdaiji-michi, Washio-chō 511; r per person incl meals from ¥21,000; ☎ Gion bus stop, bus 206 from Kyoto Station; ☒ ☑

This ryokan may have the best location of any in the city, and it hits all the right notes for one in this class: classic Japanese décor, friendly service, nice bathtubs and a few small Japanese gardens.

### RYOKAN UEMURA Map p62 Ryokan ¥¥

☎ /fax 561-0377; Higashiyama-ku, Shimogawara, Ishibe-kōji; r per person incl breakfast ¥9000; ☎ 5min walk from Higashiyama-Yasui bus stop, bus 206 from Kyoto Station

This beautiful little ryokan is at ease with foreign guests. It's on a quaint cobblestone alley, just down the hill from Kōdai-ji (p64). Book well in advance, as there are only three rooms. Note that the manager prefers bookings by fax and asks that cancellations also be made by fax – with so few rooms, it can be costly when bookings are broken without notice. There's a 10pm curfew.

### HIGASHIYAMA YOUTH HOSTEL Youth Hostel ¥

Map p62

☎ 761-8135; fax 761-8138; Higashiyama-ku, Sanjō-dōri Shirakawabashi, Goken-chō 112; dm from ¥3360; 3min walk from Higashiyama-Sanjō bus stop, bus 5 from Kyoto Station; ☎

This spiffy hostel is an excellent base for the sights in eastern Kyoto. Unfortunately, it's also rather regimented and certainly not a good spot to stay if you want some nightlife (there is a 10.30pm curfew). You can walk here from the Sanjō Keihan area. Bicycle rental is available.

## NORTHERN HIGASHIYAMA

The northeast of Kyoto is another excellent area in which to be based. Northern Higashiyama is much quieter than bustling Downtown Kyoto, and you will benefit from the convenience of being near the main sightseeing spots of the Higashiyama district, such as Ginkaku-ji and Nanzen-ji.

### WESTIN MIYAKO KYOTO Hotel ¥¥¥

Map pp68-9

☎ 771-7111; [www.westinmiyako-kyoto.com/english/index.html](http://www.westinmiyako-kyoto.com/english/index.html); Higashiyama-ku, Sanjō-dōri, Keage; s/tw/deluxe from ¥26,600/32,400/52,000; ☎ 1min walk from Keage Station, Tōzai subway line; ☎

This sprawling complex is perched atop the Higashiyama area, making it one of the best

locations for sightseeing in Kyoto. The hotel is at home with foreign guests. Rooms are clean and well maintained, but some visitors complain that the standard rooms are getting a little scruffy. The deluxe rooms are a major step up and Japanese-style rooms are available, starting at ¥52,000. On the downside, the main breakfast restaurant is dimly lit and some complain about the level of service, which isn't helped by the usually busy scene at the front desk.

### YACHIYO RYOKAN Map pp68-9 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 771-4148; [www.biwa.ne.jp/~yachiyo/oideyasu-e.html](http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~yachiyo/oideyasu-e.html); Sakyō-ku, Nanzen-ji, Fukuchi-machi 34; r incl meals from ¥18,000; ☎ 5min walk from Keage Station, Tōzai subway line

Located just down the street from Nanzen-ji (p66), this large ryokan is at home with foreign guests. Rooms are spacious and clean, and some look out over private gardens. English-speaking staff are available.

### HOTEL HEIAN NO MORI KYOTO Hotel ¥¥¥

Map pp68-9

☎ 761-9111; fax 761-1333; Sakyō-ku, Okazaki, Higashitenno-chō 51; d/tw from ¥15,750/16,800; ☎ 2min walk from Higashi-Tennō-chō bus stop, bus 5 from Kyoto Station

This large, pleasant hotel is located close to Ginkaku-ji, Nanzen-ji and the Tetsugakuno-michi (Path of Philosophy). The hotel is getting a little long in the tooth, but the location is excellent. The rooftop beer garden has a great view of the city in summer.

### THREE SISTERS INN MAIN BUILDING Ryokan ¥¥

Map pp68-9

Rakutō-sō; ☎ 761-6336; fax 761-6338; Sakyō-ku, Okazaki, Higashi-Fukunokawa-chō 18; s/d/tr from ¥8900/13,000/19,500; ☎ 5min walk from Kumanoinjin-mae bus stop, bus 206 from Kyoto Station

Perfectly situated for exploration of eastern Kyoto, this long-time favourite of foreign travellers is a good choice for those who want to try a ryokan without any language difficulties. It's very close to the interesting Yoshida-Yama area and not far from Heian-jingū (p72) and Okazaki-kōen (p72).

### THREE SISTERS INN ANNEX Ryokan ¥¥

Map pp68-9

Rakutō-sō Bekkan; ☎ 761-6333; fax 761-6335; Sakyō-ku, Okazaki, Irie-chō 89; s/d/tr ¥10,810/18,170/23,805; ☎ 5min walk from Dōbutsu-en-mae bus stop, bus 5 from Kyoto Station

An annex of the **Three Sisters Inn** (left), this ryokan is well run, comfortable and used to foreigners. It has a pleasant breakfast nook that overlooks a wonderful Japanese garden. The bamboo-lined walkway is another highlight. It's right behind **Heian-jingū** (p72) and relatively close to the sights of Northern Higashiyama.

### KYOTO TRAVELLER'S INN Business Hotel ¥¥

Map pp68-9

☎ 771-0225; [traveler@mbox.kyoto-inet.or.jp](mailto:traveler@mbox.kyoto-inet.or.jp); Sakyō-ku, Okazaki, Enshō-ji-chō; s/tw ¥5775/10,500; ☎ 2min walk from Kyotokaikan/Bijyutsukan-mae bus stop, bus 5 from Kyoto Station; ☎

This small business hotel is very close to **Heian-jingū** (p72) and offers Western- and Japanese-style rooms (the latter getting better reviews by readers). The restaurant on the 1st floor is open till 10pm. It's good value for the price and the location is dynamic for exploring the Higashiyama area.

### YONBANCHI Map pp68-9 B&B ¥

[www.thedivvyam.com](http://www.thedivvyam.com); Sakyō-ku, Shinnyō-chō 4; per person ¥5000; ☎ Kinrinshako-mae bus stop, bus 5 or 57 from Kyoto Station; ☒ ☑

Yonbanchi is a charming B&B ideally located for sightseeing in the **Ginkaku-ji** (p71) and Yoshida-Yama area. One of the two guest rooms looks out over a small Japanese garden. The house is a late-Edo-period samurai house located just outside the main gate of Shinnyō-dō, a temple famed for its maple leaves and cherry blossoms. There is a private entrance, wi-fi and no curfew. Reservation by email only.

### B&B JUNO Map pp68-9 B&B ¥

[www.gotokandk.com](http://www.gotokandk.com); Sakyō-ku, Jōdo-ji, Nishida-chō; r per person ¥5000; ☎ Shirakawa-mae bus stop, bus 17 from Kyoto Station

Located close to **Ginkaku-ji** (p71), just east of Kyoto University, facing a green hill park in a quiet traditional neighbourhood, this large B&B, in an old private compound, has three bright Japanese-style rooms. It is run by a charming international couple with a wealth of inside information on Kyoto. B&B Juno also has wi-fi.

## NORTHWEST KYOTO

Northwest Kyoto is no rival for Downtown or the Higashiyama areas in terms of convenience to nightlife and sightseeing. Kyoto's

excellent public transport system, however, means the accommodation in this section is all reasonably handy to other parts of the city. There are two good hotels near Nijō-jō and a few other choices scattered across the area.

### KYOTO ANA HOTEL Map p74 Hotel ¥¥¥

☎ 231-1155; [www.ana-hkyoto.com/](http://www.ana-hkyoto.com/); Nakagyō-ku, Horikawa-dōri, Nijōjō-mae; s/tw/d from ¥15,015/26,565/24,255; ④ 3min walk from Nijōjō-mae Station, Tōzai subway line; ①

Directly opposite Nijō-jō on the west side of Downtown Kyoto, this large hotel gets plenty of foreign guests. Rooms are typical for a hotel of this class, and there are all the usual on-site facilities (pool, restaurants and bars). There's also something you won't find at most other hotels: an on-site fortune-teller. The free shuttle to Kyoto Station is a welcome service for those doing a bit of exploring.

### MYŌREN-JI Map p74 Shukubō ¥

☎ 451-3527; fax 451-3597; Kamigyō-ku, Teranouchi-dōri, Horikawa Nishi-iru; r per person ¥3800; ④ 5min walk from Horikawa-Teranouchi bus stop, bus 9 from Kyoto Station

This pleasant temple is used to dealing with foreign guests. It's right in the heart of the Nishijin area, for those with an interest in Kyoto textiles and *machiya*. The garden here is lovely. There is no air-con.

### UTANO YOUTH HOSTEL

Map p74 Youth Hostel ¥

☎ 462-2288; [web.kyoto-inet.or.jp/org/utano-yh/](http://web.kyoto-inet.or.jp/org/utano-yh/); Ukyō-ku, Uzumasa, Nakayama-chō 29; dm ¥2800; ④ 1min walk from Yūsu-Hosuteru-mae bus stop, bus 26 from Kyoto Station

The best hostel in Kyoto, Utano is friendly and well organised and makes a convenient base for the sights of northwestern Kyoto. If you want to skip the hostel food, turn left along the main road to find several coffee shops offering cheap *teishoku* (set-course meals). There is a 10pm curfew.

## ARASHIYAMA & SAGANO

Nestled at the base of the western mountains, the Arashiyama and Sagano area is one of Kyoto's most important sightseeing areas. It's quite scenic, with lots of bamboo groves and temples. It's something of a hike to the

rest of town, though, so we only recommend staying here if you either want to concentrate your sightseeing in the west of town, or if you don't mind spending a fair bit of time on trains or buses.

### HOTEL RAN-TEI Map p80 Hotel ¥¥¥

☎ 371-1119; [hotelrantei@kyoto-centuryhotel.co.jp](mailto:hotelrantei@kyoto-centuryhotel.co.jp); Ukyō-ku, Saga Tenryū-ji, Susukinobaba-chō 12; r per person ¥16,000-34,000; ④ 10min walk from Keifuku Arashiyama Station, Keifuku Arashiyama line; ①

The excellent Ran-tei has spacious gardens and both Japanese- and Western-style accommodation. The rooms are spacious and quiet here and there is a great view from the bath. The Japanese-style breakfast may not suit all palates but it is filling.

### ARASHIYAMA BENKEI RYOKAN

Map p80 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 872-3355; [www.benkei.biz/](http://www.benkei.biz/); Ukyō-ku, Saga Tenryū-ji, Susukinobaba-chō 34; r per person incl meals from ¥21,000; ④ 15min walk from Keifuku Arashiyama Station, Keifuku Arashiyama line

This elegant ryokan has a pleasant riverside location and serves wonderful *kaiseki* cuisine. The service is kind and friendly and the river view from all rooms is great. The rooms are spacious and the whole place is scented with Japanese incense.

### RANKYŌ-KAN RYOKAN

Map p80 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 871-0001; [yoyaku@rankyokan.com](http://yoyaku@rankyokan.com); Nishikyō-ku, Arashiyama Ganrokuzan-chō 11-2; r per person incl meals from ¥18,000; ④ 7min walk from Keifuku Arashiyama Station, Keifuku Arashiyama line

Sitting in a secluded area on the south bank of the Oi-gawa in Arashiyama, this is a classic Japanese-style inn that boasts manicured gardens, hot-spring baths and river views from most rooms. Walk five minutes up the riverside path or, better still, call ahead and be chauffeured by private boat from *Togetsu-kyō* (p79)!

### MINSHUKU ARASHIYAMA

Map p80 Minshuku ¥

☎ /fax 861-4398; [info@arasiyama.net](mailto:info@arasiyama.net); Ukyō-ku, Saga Kitahori-chō 38; r per person ¥4725; ④ 5min walk from Sogaekimae Station, Keifuku Arashiyama line This little *minshuku* is great for its convenient location and pleasant rooms. It's full of homey atmosphere with home-cooked

meals (rooms per person including breakfast and dinner cost ¥7350). Suitable for long stays.

### ROKUŌ-IN Map p80 Women-Only Shukubō ¥

☎ /fax 861-1645; Ukyō-ku, Saga Kitahori-chō 24; r per person incl breakfast ¥4500; ④ 3min walk from Rokuōin Station, Keifuku Arashiyama line

Close to Arashiyama, this is one of the few women-only *shukubō* in town. It's quiet enough but the rooms are divided only by *fusuma* (sliding doors). You can see the Zen garden from each room, which is lovely. The curfew is 7.30pm.

## KITAYAMA AREA

If you decide you'd like to stay outside Kyoto City proper, there are several choices in the Kitayama Mountains north of town. The two villages of Ōhara and Kibune have a variety of nice places to choose from. It's cooler here in the summer than down in Kyoto, as well as being quieter and more peaceful. You really need to have a reason for staying this far out of town, however, since you'll be facing at least an hour each way to/from the city for sightseeing.

### ŌHARA

The quaint little village of Ōhara would be a charming spot to spend a quiet night or two outside Kyoto City.

### SERYŌ RYOKAN Map p84 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 744-2301; [www.seryo.co.jp/english.htm](http://www.seryo.co.jp/english.htm); Sakyō-ku, Ōhara Sanzen-in hotori; r per person incl meals from ¥19,250; ④ 10min walk from Ōhara bus stop, Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station

A stone's throw from *Sanzen-in* (p83), this would be a good spot to stay for those who really want to linger over the temples of Ōhara. There is a lovely garden and a small, cosy outdoor bathtub. The friendly owner speaks some English.

### ŌHARA SANSŌ Map p84 Ryokan ¥¥

☎ 744-2227; [www.ohara-sansou.com/english/index.htm](http://www.ohara-sansou.com/english/index.htm); Sakyō-ku, Ōhara, Kusao-chō 17; r per person incl meals from ¥9000; ④ 13min walk from Ōhara bus stop, Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station

A pleasant inn, Ōhara Sansō has a soothing outdoor bath. Unfortunately, the rooms are on the small side and the walls are thin. It's just before *Jakkō-in* (p84); look for the large *tanuki* (raccoon dog) figure out the front.

### RYOSŌ CHADANI Map p84 Ryokan ¥¥

☎ 744-2952; [info@r-chatani.com](mailto:info@r-chatani.com); Sakyō-ku, Ōhara, Kusao-chō 160; r per person incl meals ¥6825; ④ 5min walk from Ōhara bus stop, Kyoto bus 17 or 18 from Kyoto Station; ①

Not far from the Ōhara bus stop, Ryosō Chadani is part of the Welcome Inn Group of hotels. The atmosphere is homey and the service is friendly. Free bicycle rental is available. Look for the large stones out the front.

## KURAMA & KIBUNE

Like Ōhara, Kibune is something of a getaway from Kyoto proper. There are several ryokan located along the banks of the Kibune-gawa, most of which offer dining on platforms suspended above the river in summer. Again, as with Ōhara, you'd need a specific reason for staying this far out of town.

## AIRPORT HOTELS

If you find yourself in need of a bed close to your flight from Itami or Kansai airports, there are a couple of decent options.

**Hotel Crevette** (☎ 06-6843-7201; fax 6843-0043; Osaka-fu, Ikeda-shi, Kūkō 1-9-6; s/d from ¥7500/13,860; ①) Right across from the airport (within walking distance – 10 minutes from the south terminal – if you had to), this friendly little hotel is the best deal near Itami. Prices are discounted if you reserve through the main tourist information counter at the airport. Rooms are small but sufficient for a night before an early departure. The helpful folks at the information counter can also arrange for the hotel's shuttle bus to come and pick you up.

**Hotel Nikkō Kansai Airport** (☎ 0724-55-1111; [www.nikkokix.com/e/top.html](http://www.nikkokix.com/e/top.html); Osaka-fu, Izumisano-shi, Senshū Kūkō Kita 1; s/tw/d from ¥21,945/32,340/30,030; ①) The only hotel at the airport is the excellent Hotel Nikkō Kansai Airport, just a five-minute walk from the international arrivals hall. The rooms here are in good condition, are fairly spacious and are comfortable enough for brief stays. It's somewhat overpriced, but you can't beat the convenience. Try to book online or ask for a promo rate.

**RYOKAN UGENTA** Map p85 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 741-2146; Sakyō-ku, Kurama, Kibune-chō 76; r per person incl meals from ¥39,900; 📍 Kibune-guchi Station, Eizan line; 📍

The Ugenta is an attractive old inn with a wonderful stone bathtub. There are only two rooms here, one Japanese-style and one Western-style. Both have private cypress-wood outdoor bathtubs. The Ugenta offers a free shuttle bus to and from the station.

**HIROYA RYOKAN** Map p85 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 741-2401; hiroya-goroh@kyoto.zaq.ne; Sakyō-ku, Kurama, Kibune-chō 56; r per person from ¥33,000; 📍 Kibune-guchi Station, Eizan line

This is a pleasant ryokan famous for its food. In winter it serves either a *kaiseki* or

*botan-nabe* (wild boar cooked in an iron pot) dinner, while in summer the fare is *kawa-doko-ryōri* (rivertop dining). The rooms are very comfortable and the service is good here. There's a free shuttle-bus service to and from the station.

**KIBUNE FUJIYA** Map p85 Ryokan ¥¥¥

☎ 741-2501; fujiya@kibune.or.jp; Sakyō-ku, Kurama, Kibune-chō 40; r per person incl meals from ¥24,675; 📍 Kibune-guchi Station, Eizan line

This is another nice ryokan with a lovely riverside location and a free shuttle-bus service from the station. The food is tasty and the rooms are cosy at this long-running spot. It's right in front of the *torii* (shrine gate) of *Kibune-jinja* (p86).