

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

SOUTHERN CLASSIC
GETTING TO GRIPS
WITH GUMBO

FOOD

£4.80 • SPRING 2022



AROUND THE WORLD IN SEVEN SPICES

SAFFRON • PAPRIKA • ALLSPICE • CINNAMON
GREEN CARDAMOM • SICHUAN PEPPERS • VANILLA

NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/FOOD-TRAVEL





Stay & eat Kyoto

Kyoto prefecture stretches inland from the Sea of Japan towards the city of Kyoto, the country's former capital. Inns along the coast serve up platters of sashimi, while hotels in the city offer modern takes on traditional Japanese cuisine. Further south, visitors can explore tea country, stopping at roadside stations to sample brews including matcha, gyokuro and sencha. Wherever you stay, a trip through Kyoto is a feast for the senses

KAISEKI CUISINE IN THE TRADITIONAL STYLE

STAY: A stone's throw from the Sea of Japan, in the small town of Amino, the real draw of Ichiboukan Hotel is the adjacent beach and, of course, the seafood. Spend the day exploring the coast before watching the sun dip below the horizon from an ocean-view room or from the white sands of Yuhigaura beach. End the day with a soak in the hotel's open-air natural hot spring bath.

EAT: Dinner is served in traditional Japanese fashion: in-room, in kaiseki style, with dish after dish of fresh, seasonal ingredients. The star of the meal is undoubtedly funamori, a colourful platter featuring five kinds of sashimi, as well as a sukiyaki hot pot with pungent matsutake mushrooms and marbled Wagyu beef. Wash it all down with sake from award-winning local brewery Takeno Shuzo. ichiboukan.co.jp/english



CHICKEN HOT POT IN A THATCHED COTTAGE

STAY: Making your way inland, discover ancient Japanese heritage among the forests and villages of Miyama. The age-old tradition of thatching still thrives here, and at Miyama Futon & Breakfast Thatched Cottages, with the guidance of owner and craftsman, Mr Nishio, guests can even try their hand at it. The pretty thatched houses here are spacious and welcoming, with tatami mats lining the floors and long, wooden dining tables designed for dinner parties. After you've tried your hand at thatching and relaxed with some evening yoga, make the most of the sumptuous food on offer.

EAT: The chicken hot pot prepared over an open fire is a must-have while in Miyama. This rich, warming dish is served with fluffy rice and sesame tofu, alongside grilled ayu fish and amago (masu salmon), a delicacy in the region. Persimmons grow wild here, and you'll often find a hint of its smooth, caramel-like flavour in local dishes. miyamafandb.jp





JAPANESE-FRENCH FUSION IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

STAY: Acclaimed Japanese architect Togo Murano is to thank for the The Westin Miyako Kyoto, a sleek, understated hotel in the heart of the city. The exterior, inspired by the tea ceremony with its rock-garden landscaping, leads to exquisite rooms; all earthen tones and intricate paper screens. In the spirit of *omotenashi* (traditional Japanese hospitality), an on-site concierge sees to guests' every comfort, from tea and flowers to arranging meals at the city's exclusive restaurants. Indulge in an in-room spa treatment from Sothys, a Parisian beauty company known for its organic products.

EAT: Watch as French and Japanese cuisine is fused together in an intricate dance of ingredients and flavours at the open kitchen of Dominique Bouchet Kyoto 'Le Teppanyaki'. The head chef serves elegant French-style hors d'oeuvres alongside dishes of prime beef from Kyoto and Kobe. Vegetables — grilled to perfection — include Horikawa burdock, Tamba Shimeji mushrooms, and Fushimi chillies. global.miyakohotels.ne.jp/westinkyoto/room/kasuien-japanese-annex/



GREEN TEA FROM THE WORLD'S FINEST TEA FIELDS

STAY: Japanese tea culture goes back centuries, originating in the rolling hills of Yamashiro, to the south of Kyoto city. The tiny village of Minamiyamashiro is particularly famous for its matcha green tea, and guests at the Fairfield by Marriott Kyoto Minamiyamashiro can stay among the plantations themselves. Rooms look out on rolling fields, are full of modern conveniences, and have a hint of modern Japanese aesthetic. Wake up early with a steaming cup of green tea and watch the mist hovering over the fields like a white blanket, before heading out on a cycling tour.

EAT: It will come as little surprise that tea features heavily on local menus. Before a day of exploring, pop next door to the *michino-eki* to fuel up on chagayu, steaming rice porridge cooked with roasted tea. These roadside stations are ubiquitous in Japan and sell a mind-boggling array of local snacks; try the green tea soft-serve ice cream and stock up on green tea sweets. marriott.com.au/hotels/travel/ukyfi-fairfield-kyoto-minamiyamashiro



FROM LEFT: The Westin Miyako Kyoto, with its beautiful rock garden; French-Japanese fusion fare at Dominique Bouchet Kyoto 'Le Teppanyaki'; Fairfield by Marriott, Kyoto Minamiyamashiro, surrounded by tea fields; green tea ice cream
PREVIOUS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Ichiboukan hotel; chicken hot pot; Miyama Futon & Breakfast Thatched Cottages; kaiseki-style cuisine

PLAN THE TRIP

Getting there: Japan Airlines and British Airways fly direct to Kansai International Airport from Heathrow. From there, trains and buses take travellers on to Kyoto.

Best time to visit: Seasonality is central to Japanese dishes. Spring and autumn, when the landscape explodes with colour, and dishes with flavour, are ideal.

 **KANSAI Tourism Bureau**
The Exciting Journey, KANSAI
Kinki District Transport Bureau

