



- Explore the regions -

Distinct Recognition as World Heritage Sites

To be inscribed by the United Nations as a World Heritage site requires extensive preparation by the applicant as well as rigorous examination by UN appointees who oversee the process. Inscription includes distinct recognition of temples, shrines, mausoleums, and other outstanding icons of culture and historical value. Each prefecture of the Kansai region has its own World Heritage site, as described below.

Osaka Pref.

Mausoleum of Emperor Nintoku

Located in Sakai City, the Tomb of Emperor Nintoku is one of the world's three great tombs, along with Egypt's pyramid of Khufu and China's Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor. It is a keyhole-shaped burial ground in the center of the Mozu area, Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group, inscribed as a World Cultural Heritage site in July 2019. The tomb, said to be the largest of its kind in Japan, has a burial mound 486 meters long, totaling 840 meters including its three-layer moat.



Photo courtesy of Sakai City

Kyoto Pref.

Nijo Castle

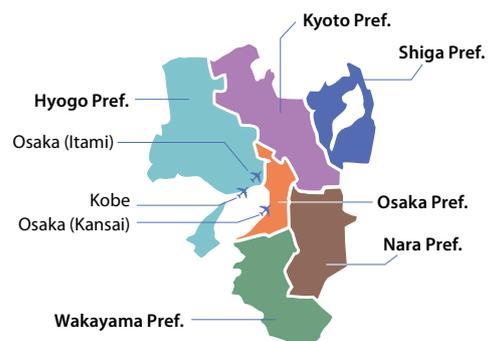
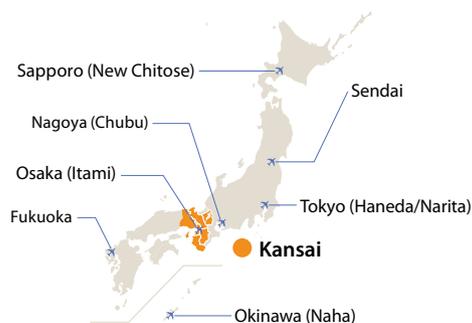
The castle was built in 1603 by first Edo shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to guard the Kyoto Imperial Palace and to lodge shoguns who stayed in Kyoto. Ninomaru Palace, intact from the past and a National Treasure, has six wings and is an important representative site of the *shoin* architectural style perfected at the beginning of the Edo period (1603–1868). The interior includes a massive wall painting by the renowned Kano school and a lavish space adorned with elaborate *ranma* engravings and decorative ornaments.



Convenient Access

Getting to and around Kansai region couldn't be easier, with three airports served by ANA and many direct flights from

airports around Japan. Flight time from Tokyo, for example, is a little over 1 hour.



Hyogo Pref. Himeji Castle

Inscribed as Japan's first World Heritage site in December 1993, Himeji Castle is one of 12 castles whose main tower remains intact as first erected. It also is one of five among those 12 deemed a National Treasure of Japan as well. Its construction took eight years, from 1601. This magnificent castle of white plaster has been acclaimed a masterpiece of wood structure. It is also called Shirasagi (white heron) Castle for its resemblance to the majestic bird in flight.



Photo courtesy of Himeji City

Shiga Pref. Hieizan Enryakuji Temple

Hieizan Enryakuji is the headquarters of the Tendai Buddhist sect and its temple grounds include the whole of 848-meter-high Mt. Hiei, a mountain covering Otsu and the city of Kyoto. The temple was built around the end of the eighth century by Saicho, Tendai sect's founder. Lake Biwa is viewable to the east and Kyoto to the west. The temple was inscribed for its outstanding 1,200-year history as a sanctuary on well-preserved natural grounds for educational pursuits and discipline.



Photo courtesy of Biwako Otsu Tourism Association

Nara Pref. Kasuga Taisha

Some 1,300 years ago, when Nara was Japan's capital, four gods were summoned from across the country and Kasuga Taisha shrine built on sacred Mt. Mikasa to guard the capital. It is the head of some 3,000 Kasuga Shrines, and the inscribed area of about 100 hectares comprises the first *torii* gate, Nara Park, and Mt. Mikasa. The deities are said to have arrived in Nara on deer, which is why those in Nara Park are deemed messengers of the gods.



Wakayama Pref. Kumano-Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine

The three Grand Shrines known as Kumano Sanzan are Hongu Taisha, Nachi Taisha, and Hayatama Taisha and have been central to the Kumano faith since ancient times. Nachi Taisha is the head of some 4,000 Kumano Shrines. Nachi Falls, home to the resident deity of Hirou Shrine, associated with Nachi Taisha, is 133 meters high, Japan's tallest single-tiered waterfall with the most volume. Its water, said to be the stuff of youth and longevity, is at the core of Nachi faith and may be drunk from the waterfall basin.



Photo courtesy of Wakayama Tourism Federation

Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Kansai is "Food," set for January 2021, when we feature such dining pleasures in Kyoto Pref. as *yudofu* (simmered tofu) and *obanzai* (side dishes).

Handy URL

Visit the special website of Tastes of JAPAN by ANA Kansai.



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