



Tour Name

Western Kyoto: Forest Spirits of Bamboo and Zen

Tour City

Kyoto

Tour Snapshot

Journey to the outskirts of ancient Kyoto to admire the stunning natural beauty of the Hozu river, surrounded by lush mountains and whispering bamboo groves. Visit dazzling ancient temples and embrace the spiritual and cultural side of Japan with a lesson in Zen meditation from a resident monk followed by a traditional matcha green tea ceremony. Spiritual enlightenment is (almost) guaranteed!

Highlights

- Marvel at the magnificent panorama of the Kyoto and Sagano valleys from an ancient mountain-top temple
- Get instructed in the art of Zen meditation with a real Buddhist monk
- Participate in a time-honoured green tea ceremony in a Zen temple
- Wander through an ancient, towering bamboo grove

Inclusions: Local English-speaking guide, Zen meditation instruction, matcha green tea ceremony and cup of tea

Exclusions: Additional food and drink, souvenirs and any additional transportation

Schedule details

- Duration: 3.5 hours
- Meeting point:
JR Saga-Arashiyama Station, in front of the ticket gates.

View on [Google Maps](#).
- Find the exact meeting point with what3words: <///results.cross.tempting>
- Starting time: 2.00 PM
- Ending point:
Randen Keifuku Arashiyama Station.

Full Itinerary

Our cultural and spiritual tour of the city will begin with a walk through the cosy and tranquil residential streets of Saga Arashiyama. This quaint suburban village was originally outside of Heiankyo — the name given to ancient Kyoto — and functioned as a restful resort for the city's noble families.

We'll cross the main street, which is brimming with colourful craft shops and mouth-watering street food stalls and make our way to the famous Bamboo Grove of Arashiyama. Often mistakenly referred to as a forest, it is in fact a 'grove,' as bamboo is not a tree, it's actually a type of grass.

As we stroll, the bamboo gently sways in the breeze, with dramatic streaks of sunlight shimmering through the tall emerald stalks, giving you a sense of slipping back in time or entering into another world.

Halfway through the bamboo grove, we'll reach the compact but highly detailed Nonomiya Shrine. This ancient 9th-century structure was originally a sacred site for the purification and preparation of the priestesses of the Ise Grand Shrine. Today, it is a

peaceful place where believers quietly ask their deities for a happier domestic life.

At the top of the grove we'll wander through pretty Kameyama Park before reaching the mighty Hozu river valley. We'll walk along the river, enjoying its lush surroundings, passing quirky shops, restaurants and historical sites as we go.

We'll stop on Togetsukyo Bridge, which literally means 'Moon Crossing Bridge,' where we can take in pretty vistas and admire the swooping cormorant birds. During the summer months, trained cormorants are used in a method of fishing called *ukai*, where the birds catch the fish for the fishermen.

Next up, we'll stroll along the river until the end of the footpath. We then continue our way up the winding, ancient stone steps of Daihikaku Senkoji Temple. It's located on the side of a scenic mountain with panoramas of the Hozu River valley, Arashiyama area, and Kyoto City on the horizon. On clear days you can even see to the top of the five-tiered Pagoda of Ninnaji Temple, far into the distance.

Here you will have a unique opportunity to encounter Zen by engaging in authentic Zen meditation under the guidance of a resident monk. We'll also partake in a traditional matcha green tea ceremony, one of the hallmarks of Zen Buddhist culture.

After your Zen experience, we'll leave the temple grounds and head back along the Hozu riverside to the lively main road of Arashiyama where our tour ends, outside the Randen Keifuku Arashiyama station, which is the terminus for the old tram or streetcar.

The station area provides an assortment of eating and shopping options for you to indulge in. There is also a glowing display of beautiful Kimono fabric patterns in transparent tubes, known as the Kimono forest. We also recommend the foot spa, where natural spring water can soothe your weary feet. Don't forget to ask your guide for further recommendations on what else to see and do during your stay in Kyoto.

Additional information

Inclusions: Local English-speaking guide, Zen meditation instruction, matcha green tea ceremony and cup of tea

Exclusions: Additional food and drink, souvenirs and any additional transportation

Dress standard: Please wear modest, casual dress and comfortable walking shoes.

Your Trip: For your Urban Adventure you will be in a small group of a maximum of 12 people.

Confirmation of booking: If you have your voucher, your booking is confirmed. We'll see you at the start point. Get in touch if you have any concerns or require more information via the email address or phone number (business hours only) on your voucher.

Additional Information: In severe weather conditions some of the walks may be slippery in case of rain.

Closure of sites: In case of closure of the temple the tour will not run. The booking can then either be changed to an alternative date or otherwise we will partially refund the customer.

Child Policy: Children between the ages of 6 and 11 inclusively are permitted on this tour at the rate listed above. Please select 'child' above when booking. Children below the age of 6 are not permitted on this tour.

Dietary Notes

We can accommodate vegetarian and other dietary restrictions. Please notify us in advance if you have any dietary requests. You can do so in the 'Additional information' box at checkout, or by emailing us at info@kyotourbanadventures.com

Local contact

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