

"5 Remarkable Religious Sights in Japan"

Japan is a land renowned for its cultural institutions and remnants of time which exemplify its history. No trip to the Land of the Rising Sun is complete without a temple and shrine-hopping spree across some of its most ethereal and spectacular religious sights, some of which astound visitors with unique features and quirky aspects sure to etch themselves in their memory.

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 5 Locations Bookmarked



 by Jordy Meow 

Itsukushima Shrine

"Miyajima's Waterborne Shrine & Gate"

Much of Hiroshima was reconstructed following the 1945 atomic attacks; few buildings of historical and/or cultural interest remain intact. An exception, along with Mitaki and Fudoin Temples, is Itsukushima Shrine on nearby Miyajima island. Suspended over the blue waters of the Seto Inland Sea, Itsukushima Shrine is traditional Shinto Japan at its best, blending unique architecture with the natural environment to create an aesthetic and spiritual whole. Its vermilion torii gate is a national treasure, its "floating" form an ethereal beauty that welcomes visitors into a world of serenity. The existing shrine dates back to the mid-16th Century but was constructed upon a design conceived of in the 12th Century. Built upon a pier, the temple seems to be afloat on the waters of the Bay, adding to its wholesome appeal. It was established by Kiyomori and dedicated to the goddesses he believed he owed his success to. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is also home to several national treasures, such as the Heike Nōkyō, a set of thirty-two scrolls, each completed by a member of Kiyomori's family.



www.en.itsukushimajinja.jp/index.html



Miyajima-cho, Hatsukaichi

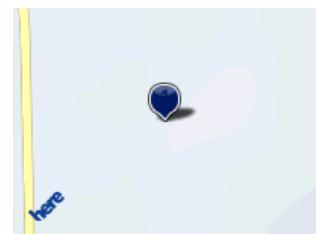


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Kiyomizu-Dera

"Buddhist Shrine"

With origins dating back more than 1200 years, Kiyomizu-dera is a timeless shrine to the Buddhist faith associated with the Hosso School. Recognized by UNESCO as part of the larger Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto UNESCO World Heritage Site, this temple complex has a rich cultural and historical legacy that's tied to the city of Kyoto. The Main Hall with its tall pillars and pagoda roof is a beautiful example of traditional temple architecture and soars above the grounds overlooking the verdant hillside. The temple's Shinto Jishu Shrine is very popular for those seeking love who come to pray for success in finding a suitable partner. Translating as 'Temple of Pure Water', the complex also features a waterfall revered for its sacred health-giving waters.



 +81 75 551 1234



www.kiyomizudera.or.jp/



1-294 Kiyomizu, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto



Gōtokuji Temple

"Home of the Beckoning Cat"

An array of endearing maneki-neko renditions greet visitors to this quiet temple located in Tokyo. Gōtokuji is hailed not only for its subtle architecture but also for its expansive collection of the calico cats traditionally believed to bring luck. Raising a beckoning paw as befitting their moniker, these delightful figures evoke vivid images of the legend associated with them, one which features a feudal lord and a cat which assisted him during a storm, thus immortalizing these creatures as harbingers of good fortune and prosperity.



+81 3 5478 8038 (Tourist Information)



[www.city.setagaya.lg.jp/theme/kan
ko/002/003/002/d00006127.html](http://www.city.setagaya.lg.jp/theme/kan/ko/002/003/002/d00006127.html)



2-24-7 Gotokuji, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo

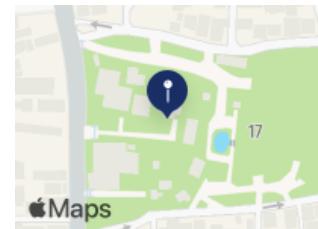


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Tsuki Shrine

"Rabbits on the Moon"

Located off the beaten path, this remarkable shrine is watched over by an army of bunnies, a clever nod to its name which literally translates into 'moon'. This pertains to many East Asian legends which allude to the presence of rabbits on the moon, thus making this religious site a fascinating one to visit. Apart from the presence of these creatures, Tsuki Shrine is also hailed for its striking architectural details, some of which deviate from the norm as made evident by the absence of traditional features such as a torii gate.



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+81 48 822 2254 (Tourist Information)



www.stib.jp/info/data/tsuki.html



3-17-25 Kishi-cho, Urawa-ku, Saitama

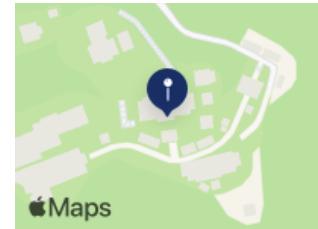


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Takao-san Yakuo-in Temple

"Splendid Architecture and Fascinating Inhabitants"

There is something inherently ethereal about Japanese shrines and temples come cherry blossom season, and the same is true of Yakuo-in Temple. Located on the inclines of Mount Takao, this splendid religious site and its expansive grounds are bathed in soulful nuances during Spring and magical hues come Autumn. Featuring intricate architectural details which accentuate its history, the temple is also hailed for its tengu statues. These figures pertain to supernatural beings commonly found in Japanese folklore, and the imposing renditions which guard Yakuo-in are vividly evocative of these mystic creatures.



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2177 Takao-machi, Hachiōji

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