



When you close your eyes and think of Japan, you're probably picturing Kyoto: sublime Zen gardens, mysterious Buddhist temples, colorful Shinto shrines, graceful geisha. The fact is, Kyoto is the most rewarding city in Japan and a place all travelers should visit at least once in their lives.



KYOTO is considered the cultural capital of Japan and a major tourist destination. It is home to numerous Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, palaces and gardens, some of which are listed collectively by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Located in west-central Honshu, in the picturesque valley of the Kamo River with surrounding mountains, it is one of the most historic and attractive of the world's cities.

#### HERE ARE 10 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT KYOTO THAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ...



• The original name of Kyoto was Heiankyo – the Capital of Peace! Then the city got its second name "Kyoto", which simply means "the Capital".

• Kyoto preserves much of its historical charm and beauty in it many temples and shrines, its parks and gardens, and its old wooden houses with their gray tile roofs.

• Kyoto has several hundred Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, a castle, three palaces, beautiful parks and gardens, numerous museums, and more than 30 colleges and universities.

• The Western part of Kyoto is surrounded by the hills of Arashiyama!

This is probably one of the most beautiful parts of Kyoto, as it is full of natural and historical sights. Here you can visit the most Instagrammed Bamboo Grove!



- Kyoto is largely untouched by war because the city was excluded by the American war plans. The Americans were planning to drop the atom bomb of Nagasaki here in Kyoto, but after considering the fact that Kyoto has some of the most important historical buildings in Japan they left the city without bombing it!
- When the people of Kyoto talk about war, they don't really mean the WWII but the Onin War. Onin War was a civil war between two families of samurai warriors in the 15th century which took 11 years.
- Kyoto has more than 1650 temples, 400 Shinto Shrines, 800 shrines, a castle, 3 palaces, and countless city parks and gardens!
- The Golden Pavilion and Silver Pavilion are also located in Kyoto. The Golden Pavilion is covered with gold, but the Silver Pavilion is not covered with silver.
- Nintendo was born in Kyoto in the year of 1889. Nintendo first started with producing playing cards for Japanese card games.



• It is believed that there are over 1000 Buddhist temples in Kyoto. The mother of all shrines,-Fushimi-Inari-Taisha, has mesmerizing arcades of vermilion torii (entrance gate to a Shintō shrine) spread across a mountainside.



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CAPITAL **BAMBOO FOREST BUDDHIST** BULLET TRAIN CEREMONY **CULTURE** DESTINATION FUSHIMI **GEISHA IMPERIAL** JAPAN KINKAKUJI KYOTO BASIN MONKEY PARK MONKS NINTENDO PALACE **SHINTO** SHRINE **TRAVELS** 

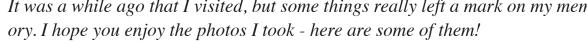
## in my own words:

photos and travel essay by Kimberly -Activity Assisant Editor & Manager

It was 2018 when I visited Japan. I was lucky enough to travel with my husband who was attending a conference in Yokohama. We extended our trip to make time to also visit Tokyo and of course, Kyoto.

When I try to explain to people what Kyoto is like, it is difficult to put into words. "Majestic," I say. "Ancient", "A walking city that reminded me of an Asian Paris", "The most Japanese place we visited" ... I could go on. The point is, it was, and has been to this day - the most beautiful place I have ever visited. It is modern and ancient all at once. I felt like I was walking around in a dream that resembled one of their famous custard pastries filled with rich culture and deep spirituality, and sprinkled with whimsical anime and Hello Kitty!® pink.

It was a while ago that I visited, but some things really left a mark on my mem-





Kinkakuji Temple sits amidst a placid lake and is surrounded by trees. It is a Zen temple wrapped in gold leaf, with the top floor gilded both inside and out. It was originally built as a retirement home for a famous shogun, who sanctioned the building to become a temple after his death. It is surrounded by gardens and water. It was peaceful, and we definitely got a workout walking around!

Kyoto's most iconic treasure, the **Fushimi Inari-taisha Shrine** is located at the end of a flamed colored walkway made up of thousands of traditional torii gates. We spent a whole day wandering through the trails surrounding the network of ornate shrines. Half way up the mountain, there are incredible views of Kyoto at the Yotsutsuji Intersection. Even with all of the visitors, I managed to get a photo that makes it look like we had it all to ourselves.





My favorite experience was getting to take part in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Though tea ceremonies, known as chado or sado, are available all throughout Japan, experiencing one in Kyoto felt especially sacred due to its strong Zen Buddhist roots of the area. During a tea ceremony, the cup of tea is prepared artfully and carefully before serving it. The ceremony is meant to acknowledge the utensils, each other's company, and the tea itself all while being mindful of the present moment and how every one of your senses is involved. One of the things I took back from my trip, and still try to do this day is to do as much as I can with mindfulness instead of rushing about. Being here, you cannot help but slow down and savor every moment.

I will admit, I was like an excited kid waiting for our times in the Gyon District. Gion is Kyoto's entertainment district, known for being a hub for artists, theatres, and of course, geishas. It's easy to spend sun-up to sun-down in this area, exploring all that it has to offer. Gion hosts the Minamiza Theater, renowned for featuring kabuki shows – a genre of theater that features dance, dramatic make-up, and bright colors. Visitors can also walk down Hanami-koji, the cherry tree lined main street, and write down their hopes and dreams to place upon the Yasui Kompira-gu Shrine's magical stone. In between cultural attractions are hundreds of cafes, food stalls, and perfectly placed benches. The food was incredible. This was the most bustling place we visited in Kyoto.

> And then, there were the SWEETS! Soft, buttery, light, flaky, pink, or rich, decadent custards - I was in HEAVEN!



### JAPANESE FOOD QUIZ Impress others with your culinary knowledge of Japan!

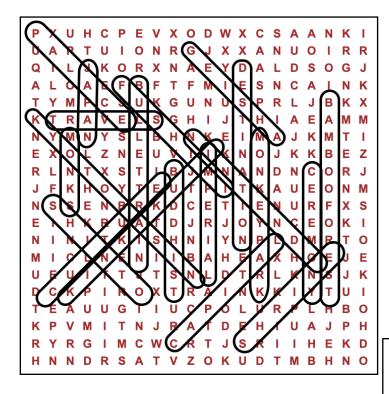
- 1. People in Kyoto Prefecture consume more and spend more money on what than people in any other prefecture in Japan do?
  - A. Tea and riceB. SushiD. Bottled water
- 2. In downtown Kyoto McDonald's and Seven Eleven have what color signs instead of signs in their original colors used elsewhere?
  - A. PurpleB. GrayC. Black and WhiteD. Brown
- 3. What seafood is popular in the US for sushi, but isn't as used in Japan?
  - A. SalmonB. TunaC. CrabD. Shrimp
- 4. What condiments are typically served with sushi and sashimi?
  - A. Pickled ginger, wasabi, and pickled radish
  - B. Sesame seeds, wasabi, and soy sauce
  - C. Wasabi, pickled ginger, shiso and myoga (Japanese ginger)
  - D. Wasabi and soy sauce only
- 5. Conveyor belt sushi (called kaitenzushi in Japan) was invented by Yoshiaki Shiraishi, who reportedly had the idea after seeing what?
  - A. Dry cleaner sorting machines C. Luggage turnstyles at airports
  - B. Beer bottles on a conveyor belt D. Wheels on a wagon

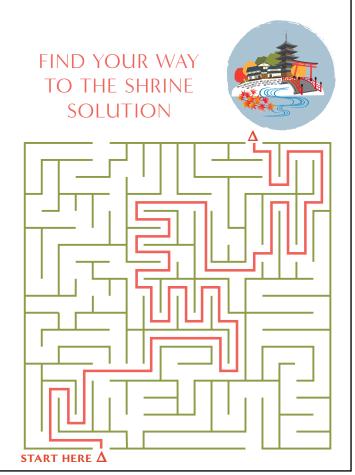
6. Fugu, contains one of the world's most potent toxins, tetrodotoxin. Fugu chefs must be licensed to remove the potentially deadly organs. What is Fugu?				
А.	Electric Eel	C.	Jellyfish	
B.	Toad	D.	Japanese Pufferfish	
7. Which Japanese City has more restaurants than anywhere else in the world?				
А.	Tokyo	C.	Kyoto	
В.	Yokohama	D.	Sapporo	
8. What are Soba made out of?				
А.	Agar	C.	Rice Flour	
В.	Wheat	D.	Buckwheat FLour	
9. What is Mochi?				
А.	A Dessert	C.	Another name for seaweed salad	
В.	A type of soup	D.	A type of flat rice noodle	
10. Yuzu is a type of				
A.	Fish	C.	Citrus	
В.	Rice	D.	Leafy vegetable	
11. It's expected that corporate CEOs in Japan are well versed and trained in what?				
A. Teaching how to use chopsticks		C. Pouring sake		
B. The proper manner of tea preparation and pouring		D. Teaching basic Japanese language		
12. For those who think a watch or expensive pen just won't do for the perfect gift, you can purchase this odd \$200 gift				

A. A monkey	C. A watermelon
B. A sushi boat for serving	D. Ivory chopsticks

# KYOTO

## word search solution





### KYOTO FOOD TRIVIA ANSWERS

- **1. C. Bread and coffee -** It is said that people in Kyoto like eating powdered or milled things. This possibly explains the reason why they like bread and coffee.
- 2. D. Brown This to preserve the city's valuable cityscape
- **3. A. Salmon** Salmon isn't traditionally used for sushi, and many purist sushi shops still won't serve it. Until the 20th century, wild salmon was considered unsafe to eat raw, as it was potentially plagued with parasites. It wasn't until the introduction of refrigeration, controlled farming, and Norwegian imports that salmon began to appear on sushi menus.
- **4.** C. Wasabi, pickled ginger, shiso and myoga (Japanese ginger) are known as yakumi ('medicinal tastes'). Before refrigeration made raw fish safer to eat, yakumi were eaten with sushi to kill bacteria.
- **5. B. Beer bottles on a conveyor belt at a brewery.** He opened his first sushi restaurant with a conveyor belt transporting plates of sushi to diners in 1958 in Osaka.
- 6. **D. Japanese pufferfish** Despite the risks, around 10,000 tons of fugu is eaten annually in Japan, where it is considered a winter delicacy.
- 7. A. Tokyo has more restaurants than any other city in the world, with an estimated 150,000 venues. For comparison, New York has around 27,000 restaurants. Tokyo also has the most Michelin-starred restaurants of any city in the world. In 2019, there were 230 restaurants in the capital honoured by Michelin. The next highest scoring city, Paris, has 113.
- 8. D. Soba noodles are made from buckwheat flour. Authentic varieties are made from 100% buckwheat flour, but some recipes use a blend of buckwheat and wheat flour. These protein-packed noodles are usually served chilled, or in a hot broth.
- **9. A. Mochi is a confection made from glutinous rice, sugar, and water.** The mixture is pounded into a soft, dough-like consistency and molded into the desired shape.
- **10.C. Yuzu is a type of citrus.** It's an aromatic fruit that looks like a grapefruit. The wrinkly skin is used as a garnish, while the juice is used as an ingredient in many sweet and savory dishes. In the United States, bottled yuzu juice is easier to find than the fresh fruit.
- **11.C. Watermelon** A square watermelon can cost you up to \$200, depending on the size, though most hover in the \$100 range. The high price tag is because growing these novelty fruits is pretty labor-intensive. A young watermelon is placed in a square-shaped mold and it's then constantly monitored while it matures to ensure that it grows in its cube shape without any cracking and maintains perfectly vertical stripes (via Post-Gazette). Some melons don't conform to the mold, which means the ones that do are that much more valuable.