Inner Journeys
Nara’s Temples and Shrines
September 2018 - March 2019

Morning Worship & Devotions
Hidden Treasures & Hidden Buddhas
Special Public Openings
Morning Worship & Devotions

Since the earliest times there have been many shrines and temples in Nara, and they have always been popular with visitors. There will be special opportunities on this occasion to experience aspects of Buddhist and Shinto which visitors are rarely introduced to. In particular, morning worship and devotions. Monks and priests, through their sacred practices, can help us realize an inner peace. Simply visiting shrines and temples early, when there are few people around, one can experience the sacred.

Morning Prayers / Kasuga Taisha Shrine / 春日大社

- Every day from 9:00 (excluding days when there are liturgical events) * Booking not necessary * Free * Lasts about 30 minutes

Kasuga Taisha Shrine is the head of about 3,000 Kasuga Shrinesthroughout the country. The veneration of deer in Nara Park originates in tales surrounding Kasuga, a Shinto deity who appeared from where it is about a 3-minute walk.

Directions: About 8 minutes by bus from JR Nara Station. Get off at Kasuga Taisha Honden bus stop. The shrine is immediately adjacent to the bus stop. Or get off at Kasuga Taisha Omotesando bus stop, from where it is about a 10-minute walk.

Tel: 0744-71-7001 (In Japanese only)  
Directions: About 30 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Sakuragawa Station. About 6 minutes by train from Kinikitsu Sakuragawa Station to Kinikitsu Kasuga Taisha Station. About a 15-minute walk from Kinikitsu Kasuga Taisha Station.  
https://www.visitors.jp/en/venue/A02517/

Morning Devotions / Chogosonshiji Temple (Shigisan) / 朝霧山寺

- From 5:45 (1 April - 30 September), from 6:15 (1 October - 31 March)  
  * Booking not necessary * Free * Lasts about 30 minutes

Located on the slopes of sacred Mt. Shigisofto the west of Nara, where Prince Shotoku is said to have encountered Shishamonti, the god of war. Held in the Main Hall in the early morning, visitors can take part in the morning devotions. The sunrises, on clear days, is a beautiful sight from in front of the hall. Visitors can see the papier-mâché tiger, the symbol of the temple, as well as a white tiger statue, the mythical guardian protecting the western direction. There is a dormitory where visitors can stay, and various other activities in which they can participate.

Tel: 0745-72-2277 (main office)(In Japanese only)  
Directions: About 15 minutes by bus from JR Nara Station to JR Oji Station. About 6 minutes by train from Kinikitsu Sakuragawa Station to Kinikitsu Kasuga Taisha Station. About a 15-minute walk from Kinikitsu Kasuga Taisha Station.  
https://www.visitors.jp/en/venue/A02500/

Morning Devotions / Kinpusenji Temple (Yoshinoyama) / 石上神宮

- Every day from 6:30 * Booking not necessary  
- During special opening only - Adults 1,000 yen, Junior High School & High School Students 800 yen, Elementary School Students 600 yen * Lasts about 45 minutes

Kinpusenji Temple is located in Yoshinoyama, the spiritual home of the ancient Shugendo Sect of Buddhism, a sect which originated in Japan. The Zaodo Hall (National Treasure), which stands at the centre, welcomes visitors to the morning devotions. There is a lively ethony of sound with giant conch shell horns and drums accompanying the chanting voices. On the giant platform in the Main Hall there are three very large standing statues, manifestations of Kongosuo Gogou (Important Cultural Properties) These are only opened to the public at certain times of year.

Tel: 0744-32-8371 (In Japanese only)  
Directions: About 15 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Tenri Station. About 10 minutes by taxi from JR Tenri Station, or about a 30-minute walk from JR Tenri Station.  
https://www.visitors.jp/en/venue/A02513/

Morning Seat devotions / Jurin-in Temple / 朱雀院

- Excluding Mondays (or the next day in case of Monday holidays), every morning from 8:30 (preparations in the precincts start from 8:00) * Booking not necessary * Free * Lasts about 30 minutes

Jurin-in Temple, located in Naramachi, the old part of Nara, is famous for its various carved stone Buddhas (Important Cultural Properties) enshrined in dome-shaped stone altars. Morning devotions focus on rituals, observed by the monks every morning, carried out in the equal Rain Main Hall (National Treasure), a building reminiscent of a traditional Japanese villa of the Middle Ages. Visitors can participate in reciting the Heart Sutra with the monks. The voices of all the participants filing the hall is a deeply moving experience. If you arrive by 8:00, it is also possible to take part in the cleaning and sweeping around the temple.

Tel: 0744-32-8353 (In Japanese only)  
Directions: About 5 minutes by bus from JR Nara Station. Get off at the Tanakacho bus stop, from where it is about a 5-minute walk.  
http://www.jurin-in.com/sound.html

Morning Prayers / Isonokami Jingu Shrine / 八幡宮

- Every day from 8:30 * Booking not necessary. However, it may not be held on days when there are other shrine events. * Free * Lasts about 20 minutes

A sacred sword, said to have helped Emperor Jimmu, is enshrined in Isonokami Jingu Shrine. The shrine is also dedicated to Futsu- no-mitama-no-Omi. The grounds have towering Japanese cedar trees which add an air of mystery. Morning prayers start at 8:30 when, on the sound of a great drum, participants approach the main shrine building (National Treasure), and there is a purification ritual. Together with the priests, participants bow twice, then clap twice, and Shinto prayers are offered. Supplicants are sure to receive the blessings of the sacred sword.

Tel: 0744-32-8353 (In Japanese only)  
Directions: About 15 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Tenri Station. About 10 minutes by taxi from JR Tenri Station, or about a 30-minute walk from JR Tenri Station.  
https://www.visitors.jp/en/venue/A02513/

Morning Devotions / Hasedera Temple / 長谷寺

- From 6:30 (1 April - 30 September), from 7:00 (1 October - 31 March)  
  * Go to the reception window in the Main Hall, 30 minutes prior to start of ritual (booking not necessary) * Groups must book in advance  
- 500 yen * Lasts about 30 minutes

Hasedera Temple, located in the mountains in the eastern part of Nara Prefecture, is a large temple with 5,000 affiliated sub-temples around Japan. Held at the Main Hall on the slopes of Hatada-san, visitors can participate in morning devotions, focusing on the very large 10m tall eleven-faced Kannon Bodhisattva statue. It is a sublime experience being surrounded by peace and quiet, with just the voices of the gathering of monks echoing around the surrounding hills. This is a solemn rite, with prayers being offered to the main eleven-faced Kannon Bodhisattva. Short skirts and shorts should not be worn. Please dress in suitably respectful attire.

Tel: 0744-47-7001 (In Japanese only)  
Directions: About 30 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Sakuragawa Station. About 6 minutes by train from Kinikitsu Sakuragawa Station to Kinikitsu Hasedera Station. About a 15-minute walk from Kinikitsu Hasedera Station.  
https://www.visitors.jp/en/venue/A02517/
**Hidden Treasures & Hidden Buddhas**

**Special Public Openings**

Introducing the special opening to the public of hidden treasures and hidden Buddhas from September 2018 to March 2019.

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**Kasuga Taisha Shrine**

Celebrating the 1,250th Anniversary of the Founding of Kasuga Taisha Shrine: The Beautiful World of the Kasuga Faith – Tales of the Gods and Sacred Treasures

**Kasuga Taisha Museum**

More than 1,300 treasures which were worshipped by the nobility and warriors at the Kasuga Taisha Shrine. Many of the finest jewels which were dedicated to the Kasuga gods and beautiful images depicting the Kasuga world view will be on public display.

**Abe-Monjuin Temple**

Established in the 7th century. One of the 3 most famous Monju in Japan. The main Monju-sama image is a Monju crossing the sea mounted on a lion, accompanied by four attendants. They are all National Treasures. This Monju crossing the sea is a figure of Monju-sama setting out on a journey to spread the Buddhist scriptures, depicted traveling over a sea of clouds.

**Matsuo-dera Temple**

Built in 873. The oldest site in the country for praying for protection from evil spirits, regularly visited by numerous people from all over Japan. The main image is a Yakuyo Kannon, a merciful deity for driving away evil spirits. The statue is a Hani Sojenso Kannon Bosatsu, known as the 1,000-armed Kannon Bosatsu. It has been designated as a National Treasures, and it is worth seeing.

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**Kairyu-ji Temple**

Standing Eleven-faced Kannon Statue, Temple Treasure Exhibition

**Kinkaku-umiko Reihokan Treasure House, Autumn Exhibition of Temple Treasures**

Established in the 7th century. The Main Hall is sited, can be seen a three-storey pagoda housing, on the 8th of every month, Saturday 27 October – Sunday 4 November, 2018.

**Monju-sama image is a Monju crossing the seas mounted on a lion, accompanied by four attendants. They are all National Treasures. This Monju crossing the sea is a figure of Monju-sama setting out on a journey to spread the Buddhist scriptures, depicted traveling over a sea of clouds.**

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**Joruriji Temple**

Hidden Statue of Standing Kissho Tenno

Opening of the First Floor of Three-storey Pagoda and Seated Yakushi Nyorai Statue

Hidden Statue of Seated Dainichi Nyorai (at Kanjodo Hall)

**Chogakuji Temple**

Screens Depicting Hell on Show to the Public

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**Chogakuji Temple**

Standing Kannon statue (Important Cultural Property)

A beautiful Indo-style garden depicting Paradise

**Kinkaku Ukimido Reihokan Treasure House, Autumn Exhibition of Treasures**

Established in the 7th century. The Main Hall houses three Amida statues from the 12th century. Said to be the oldest statues in Japan with eyes made from crystal. Screen depicting hell, 3.5m tall and 11m wide, housed in Chogakuji about 400 years ago, will be on display to the public. Unmissable, it is truly frightening.
Nakanobo Sutra Copying Hall, 150 ceiling designs, and in the Saina-in, the main eleven-faced Kannon, Sho Kannon, National Treasures, the East pagoda dates from the latter half of the 8th century, and the West pagoda from the beginning of the 9th century. Since the Middle Ages, the temple has been associated with the well-known Legend of Chujohime, and the Taima Mandala. Each of the three sub-temples in the precinct are opened to the public.

Askaen Co. Ltd.

Special Opening of Kichijo Tennyo Image (National Treasure and Heisei-no Kichijoten)

Tuesday 1 January (Public holiday) – Thursday 10 January, 2019

Murouji Temple 本対寺

Special Opening of the Daito Saiiki Wall Paintings at Genjo Sanzo-in Garan Building

Tuesday 1 January (Public holiday) – Thursday 8 January, 2019

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Yakushiji Temple 薬師寺

Special Opening of the Daito Saiiki Wall Paintings at Genjo Sanzo-in Garan Building

Tuesday 1 January (Public holiday) – Thursday 8 January, 2019

Bishamon-o (a Statue Occasionally Revealed)

Tuesday 1 January (Public holiday) – Thursday 10 January, 2019

Friday 1 January – Thursday 28 February 2019

Shugendo is an esoteric religion with a long history which fuses mountain beliefs, Shintoism, and Buddhism. The temple was one of the places in the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes of Shugendo. The temple was designated a UNESCO World Heritage in 1998, as one of the “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara.” The Hakuro Garan area with the Golden Hall, the Lecture Hall, and East and West three-storey pagodas; as well as the Genjo Sanzo-in Garan area are open to the public. The East Pagoda is being dismantled and repaired, to be completed by 2020. The hidden Kichijo Tennyo image will be on display to the public in the Golden Hall.

Saidaiji Temple 西大寺

Seated status of Genji Sanzo (Photograph: Askaen Co. Ltd.)

C. Shogun (Shigisan) 金峯山寺 (青龍寺)

Telephone: 0745-48-2202 (In Japanese only)

Three Kannon (Important Cultural Properties) Photograph: Taimadera Saina-in

Special Public Exhibition of the Woven Fabric Relostrd in the Current Heike Period

Saturday 6 October – Sunday 2 December

Saturday 6 October – Sunday 2 December

Tel : 0745-48-2008 (In Japanese only)

Bishamon-o is a large, black 4.8-meter statue. The image has two sets of gloves: one set of gold gloves, which is on special display at the current exhibition, and another set of silver gloves, which is usually kept in the temple. The statue is a National Treasure and considered an Important Cultural Property. The statue is currently being displayed in the Nakanobo Sutra Copying Hall, with other important items such as the Heiseibon Taima Mandala, the Sainain Main Hall, and the Golden Hall Inner Sanctum.

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The official website featuring all you need to know about travel in Nara
visitnara.jp is the official travel guide presented by Nara Prefecture, providing comprehensive information on events, tourist attractions, restaurants, shopping and accommodation in the Nara region.

Customised Tours
http://nara-sightseeing.com/
nara-sightseeing.com presents a wide range of tours and authentic cultural experiences where you can feel, touch and taste the unique history of Nara and the Kansai region.

Experience Program
http://nara-experience.com/
nara-experience.com is a booking and reservation service for optional tour activities, including special visits to shrines and temples, enjoyable outdoor activities and inspiring local experiences in Nara.