

Inner Journeys

Nara's Temples and Shrines

March - September 2019



INNER
JOURNEYS

Opportunities for cultural experiences in Nara

Hidden Treasures & Hidden Buddhas
Special Public Openings

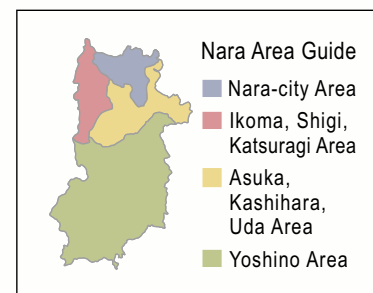
Opportunities for cultural experiences in Nara



Nara is famous for its many traditional crafts, refined over centuries, including sumi ink and bamboo tea whisks. Many of them are still made using original techniques today. Visitors can experience certain aspects of these crafts at one of several workshops. There are also temples where visitors can get glimpses into the spirit of Japan through practices such as zazen meditation. Here we introduce spots in Nara Prefecture which offer such opportunities to see and learn about Japanese culture.

Icons / Temple ¥ Fee ⌚ Time required 📅 Reservation ☎ Telephone 📍 Directions 🌐 URL

*If you need a guidance in English, inquire at NARA Visitor Center & Inn. Please refer to the back page for more information.



Gripped sumi ink experience / Kinkoen 錦光園

¥ 1,500 yen + tax per session (includes a paulownia wood box) ⌚ About 60 minutes
📅 Need to book by midday the day before your session

An opportunity to try making nigiri zumi, which involves squeezing or gripping raw sumi ink (sumi is made using soot). Workshops are held in long-established premises where master craftsmen have been making traditional Nara sumi for generations. You'll have a chance to feel the softness and warmth of the raw ink, all under expert guidance. The precious, finished ink will be put in a paulownia wood box for you to take home.



Craft workshops include explanations about the history of sumi, and the materials used to make it.
Photo: Kinkoen

☎ 0742-22-3319 (In Japanese only)
📍 About 5 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station
🌐 <http://kinkoen.jp/en/>

Making and learning about chasen (bamboo tea whisks) / Wahokudo Tango Tanimura 和北堂 谷村丹後



As well as observing, guests can also take on the challenging task of wrapping threads around the tines of a whisk, the final stage in the process (additional fee required).
Photo: Wahokudo Tango Tanimura



¥ Please enquire ⌚ About 70 to 90 minutes
📅 From 3 to 20 people. Must book at least 10 days in advance.
* Participants must be over 10 years old.

Elegant tea whisks, used in the tea ceremony, are a traditional craft product of Takayama-cho in Ikoma City. Ikoma has been a centre of the tea whisk craft in Japan since the 15th century. These workshops give you detailed insights into Wahokudo Tango Tanimura, a fine whisk maker established 500 years ago and still employing techniques handed down from father to son.

☎ 0743-78-1755 (In Japanese only)
📍 About 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station. From there, about 13 minutes by train to Kintetsu Tomio Station. Then by bus bound for Hoji, get off at Okita bus stop. About 3 minutes' walk.
🌐 <https://www.tango-tanimura.com/en/>

Aizome dyeing / Hakomotokan Konya 箱本館「紺屋」

¥ Handkerchief (45cm x 45cm) from 1,200 yen. Kerchief (50cm x 50cm) 1,400 yen. Scarf (35cm x 135cm) 1,800 yen. ⌚ About 60 to 90 minutes
📅 Booking required, Wed, Sat, Sun, Holidays: from 10:00, 13:00, 15:00 (each session up to 5 people). Tue, Thu, Fri: from 13:00 only (each session up to 3 people)

An opportunity to experience traditional aizome (indigo) dyeing at a restored indigo dyer's house where dyeing has been done for nine generations since the Edo Period. Tying with clothes pegs and rubber bands, and then dyeing, produces vivid, original patterns. There is a roadside canal, used for washing dyed indigo fabrics, adjacent to the building.



Stunning colours produced using traditional techniques involving natural fermentation of the dye.
Photo: Hakomotokan Konya

☎ 0743-58-5531 (In Japanese only)
📍 About 4 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Koriyama Station. About 8 minutes' walk from JR Koriyama Station.
🌐 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/S01210/>

Making hand-made washi (Japanese paper) / Fukunishi Washi Honpo 福西和紙本舗

¥ 1,500 yen ⌚ About 60 minutes (about 15 minutes per person)
📅 Booking accepted from 10 people. Must book in advance.

In spite of being thin, washi paper is resilient and lasts a long time. Recently, it has been used for the conservation and repair of cultural treasures and fine art works. You can try making this paper at Fukunishi Washi Honpo, where traditional Japanese paper-making methods are carefully kept alive. You can make your own original Japanese paper, adding colours.



☎ 0746-36-6513 (In Japanese only)
📍 About 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station. About 80 minutes by train from Kintetsu Nara Station to Kintetsu Yamato Kamiichi Station (Change twice, at Kintetsu Yamato Saidaiji Station and Kintetsu Kashiwara Jingumae Station). About 15 minutes by taxi from Kintetsu Yamato Kamiichi Station.
🌐 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A01475/>



Choose from: 8 postcards, A4 size sheet, or B4 size sheet.
Photo: Fukunishi Washi Honpo

Meditation, Sutra copying / Shigisan Gyokuzo-in 信貴山玉蔵院



Visitors can also try wearing monk's robes.
Photo: Shigisan Gyokuzo-in

¥ Meditation 1,000 yen. Sutra copying 1,500 yen
⌚ About 60 minutes 📅 Booking required

Meditation, sutra copying, and other practices can be experienced at Gyokuzo-in, one of several temple buildings in the precincts of Chogonshiji Temple, located half way up Shigisan, a sacred mountain in the western part of Nara Prefecture. They also have shukubo temple accommodation which welcomes visitors to stay. Overnight stays, as well as shorter, day visits, are therefore possible.



☎ 0745-72-2881 (In Japanese only)
📍 About 15 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Oji Station. About 10 minutes by bus, bound for Shigi Sanmon, from JR Oji Station to Shigi Ohashi.
🌐 <https://www.gyokuzo.com/english.html>

A bowl of matcha tea at Jikoin Temple 慈光院

¥ 1,000 yen contribution
📅 Booking not required

A temple built by Katagiri Sekishu of the Yamato Koizumi domain, founder of the Sekishu school of tea. All visitors are welcomed with a cup of matcha tea and a Japanese sweet in the Shoin building, designated an Important Cultural Property. The garden is simply beautiful. If you book the day before your visit, you can also enjoy a shojin ryori lunch (vegetarian cuisine) at 6,300 yen.

☎ 0743-53-3004 (In Japanese only)
📍 About 8 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Yamato Koizumi Station. About 20 minutes' walk from JR Yamato Koizumi Station, or about 5 minutes by taxi.
🌐 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A00505/>



The motif on the sweet served with the green tea is the Katagiri family Warihachigai crest, a design of crossed hawk feathers. Photo: Jikoin Temple



Hidden Treasures and Hidden Buddhas

Special Public Openings

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

● Navigator / Yoko MATSUMURA
Representative of Nara
Prefecture Authorized Tour
Expert Group (NATEX)
Guiding overseas visitors in
Nara for more than 30 years.



Icons / Temple Other useful information Opening hours Telephone Admission
 High school student Jr. Junior high school student Elem. Elementary school student Directions URL

3 MARCH

Tsubosakadera Temple 壺阪寺

① Daihina Mandala ② Tsubosakadera Temple O-minugui Kechien Sanpai, a devotional ceremony for receiving the providence of Buddha

① Friday 1 March – Sunday 31 March ② Saturday 6 April – Sunday 30 June

A famous temple, constructed at the beginning of the 8th century, located in the centre of Nara Prefecture. The main object of worship is a seated eleven-faced Senju Kannon statue. Known as the Buddha healing eye diseases, people continue to visit from all over the country. A 20m tall standing Dai-Kannon statue and what is reputed to be one of the world's largest stone images, the Tenjiku Torai Dai-Shakanyorai statue, are also wonderful sights. During the special opening, both the eleven-faced Senju Kannon statue, and more than 1,500 hina-dolls, will be on display to the public.

During this period, local townhouses in Takatori-cho, where Tsubosakadera Temple is located, will be open and can be visited to see hina-dolls.



① Daihina Mandala
Photo: Tsubosakadera Temple

8:30 – 17:00 (last entry 16:30) 0744-52-2016 (In Japanese only) ① Adults 600 yen, Children up to High 100 yen ② Special admission 500 yen plus usual admission 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station. About 50 minutes by train from Kintetsu Nara Station to Kintetsu Tsubosakayama Station (Change twice, at Kintetsu Yamato Saidaiji Station and Kintetsu Kashihara Jingumae Station). About 10 minutes by bus from Kintetsu Tsubosakayama Station to Tsubosakaderamae bus stop. <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A00875/>



Bato Kannon Bosatsu standing statue (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Askaen Co. Ltd.

Daianji Temple 大安寺

Hidden Buddha – Bato Kannon Bosatsu standing statue (Important Cultural Property)

Friday 1 March – Sunday 31 March

Built in the 7th century. Many overseas monks who travelled with envoys from Tang China in the 8th century stayed here. The main image is an eleven faced standing Kannon statue, but apart from special opening days it remains hidden. During this special opening, the oldest Bato Kannon in Japan will be open to the public.

Bato Kannon usually have a horse's head over their heads, but this Bato Kannon has the characteristic Bato decorations on its chest and around the ankles, and is extremely rare. Daianji Temple is renowned as a temple to which people from all over the country come to pray for the prevention and healing of cancer. Many still come to offer prayers to ward off evil spirits.

9:00 – 17:00 (last entry 16:00) 0742-61-6312 (In Japanese only)
 Adults 500 yen, High 400 yen, Jr. 300 yen, Elem. 200 yen
 6 minute bus ride from JR Nara Station to Daianji bus stop, then 10 minutes' walk.
 <http://www.daianji.or.jp/en/>

Hasedera Temple 長谷寺

① Main object of worship Dai Kannon Sonzo statue (Important Cultural Property)
② Spring Special Temple Treasures Exhibition (Treasure Storehouse) (Important Cultural Properties etc.)

①② Friday 1 March – Sunday 30 June

Built in the 7th century. The current Main Hall, which features a large verandah, was rebuilt in the 17th century. Beautiful peonies arranged on both sides of the corridor, which have 399 steps leading to the Main Hall, add colour in April and May. During the special opening, the main statue, said to be 12m tall, will be on view to the public.

Visitors will have the opportunity, during this period only, to touch the feet of the main statue, something which is usually not possible.

9:00 – 16:30 (last entry 16:00) 0744-47-7001 (In Japanese only) ① Special admission 1,000 yen plus usual admission for Jr. and older 500 yen, Elem. 250 yen ② Jr. and older 500 yen, Elem. 250 yen
 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station, then about 40 minutes by train (Change twice, at Kintetsu Yamato Saidaiji Station and Kintetsu Yamato Yagi Station) to Kintetsu Hasedera Station. 15 minutes' walk.
 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A00517/>



Standing eleven-faced Kannon statue (Main image) (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Hasedera Temple

4・5 APRIL and MAY

Kinpusenji Temple 金峯山寺

The largest in Japan. Hidden Standing Zao Gongen statue, the main object of worship (Important Cultural Property)

Saturday 30 March – Monday 6 May (Public Holiday)

Built on Yoshinoyama, the centre of the Shugendo Sect of Buddhism. En no Gyoja, the founder of Shugendo, realising profound significance in Zao Gongen, had a statue made from cherry wood erected and worshipped in the Main Hall. This is how Kinpusenji Temple began. The principal object of worship is a standing Kongo Zao Gongen. For the special opening, visitors will be able to see the 7m tall three main statues. They have wrathful, scowling faces. However, they are simply manifestations of Shaka Nyorai, Senju Kannon and Miroku Bosatsu (otherwise known as Maitreya). These forms are taken purely to help guide people along the right path in life.

Famous for its cherry blossom, a thousand or more trees in bloom cloak the mountain ridge. Viewing points offer stunning panoramas.

8:30 – 16:30 (last entry 16:00)
 0746-32-8371 (In Japanese only)
 Adults 1,000 yen, Jr. and High 800 yen, Elem. 600 yen
 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station. About 90 minutes by train from Kintetsu Nara Station to Kintetsu Yoshino Station. (Change twice, at Yamato Saidaiji Station and Kashihara Jingumae Station). About 30 minutes' walk from Kintetsu Yoshino Station. There is also a bus.
 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A00532/>



Hidden standing statue of Kongo Zao Gongen (Central image) (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Kinpusenji Temple

Gansenji Temple 岩船寺

Hidden Buddha – Nyoirin Kannon (Bodhisattva of Compassion), Benzaiten, Rasetsuten

Monday 1 April – Friday 31 May

Built in the 8th century. The main object of worship is a seated Amida Nyorai statue (Important Cultural Property). The temple is much loved as the 'Hydrangea Temple', one of Kansai's 'Flower Temples'. Benzaiten is the god of learning, wealth, and treasure. Rasetsuten, originally an Indian spirit, in Buddhist form became a benign goddess. Nyoirin Kannon Bosatsu, through the powers of the Nyoiohoju (wish-fulfilling stone), and the Buddha's teachings, bring salvation to all sentient beings. These three images will be open to the public.

Famous for its hydrangeas, the fresh spring foliage is also well worth seeing

8:30 – 17:00 (last entry 16:45)
 0774-76-3390 (In Japanese only)
 Adults 500 yen, Jr. and High 400 yen, Elem. 200 yen
 About 15 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Kamo Station. 16 minutes by bus to Gansenji bus stop. Temple is immediately adjacent to the bus stop.



Photo: Nobuaki Koshinuma

Shoryakuji Temple 正暦寺

Main object of worship seated Yakushi Nyorai (Important Cultural Property)

Thursday 18 April – Wednesday 8 May

At the time when the temple was built in the 10th century, the temple precincts were large, with 80 sub-temples and other buildings covering the mountain. Many of these were lost in fires, but the surrounding nature remains beautiful. Today the temple is famous for its autumn maple tree tints. The main object of worship, specially open to the public at this time, is a statue seated on a plinth, in a unique posture with its knees apart and feet resting on lotuses.

From the Reception Hall of Fukujuin Temple, rebuilt in the 17th century, you can enjoy beautiful views in all four seasons.

9:00 – 17:00 (last entry 16:30) 0742-62-9569 (In Japanese only)
 Jr. and older 500 yen, Elem. 200 yen
 About 25 minutes by taxi from JR Nara or Kintetsu Nara Station.
 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A00546/>



Photo: Shoryakuji Temple



Main object of worship seated Yakushi Nyorai (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Shoryakuji Temple

🏯 Sekkoji Temple 石光寺

The oldest Miroku stone statue in Japan

Saturday 20 April – Monday 20 May

Built in the 7th century. Otherwise known as Somedera Temple. There is a well in which it is said that Chujohime (legendary princess who, in the 8th century, wove the Taima Mandala with lotus threads), dyed threads from the lotus in five colours. The oldest stone Buddha in Japan, discovered in 1991, will be on display in the Mirokudo Hall during the special opening.

🌸 The temple is famous for its peonies in spring.

🕒 8:30 – 17:00 (last entry 17:00)
☎ 0745-48-2031 (In Japanese only)
💰 [Jr.] and older 400 yen, [Elem.] 200 yen
🚶 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station. About 60 minutes by train from Kintetsu Nara Station to Kintetsu Nijojinjaguchi Station (Change twice, at Kintetsu Yamato Saidaiji Station and Kintetsu Kashihara Jingumae Station). About 13 minutes' walk.



1 Miroku Nyorai Stone Buddha
Photo: Sekkoji Temple
2 Spring peony
Photo: Sekkoji Temple



Zuto, National Historic Site (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Askaen Co. Ltd.

🏯 Zuto 頭塔

Zuto, National Historic Site, Buddhist stone relief carvings (Important Cultural Property)

Saturday 27 April – Monday 6 May (Public Holiday)

Remains of a pyramidal structure built in the 8th century by the Todaiji Temple priest Jicchu as an expression of a desire for peace in the land. The sides of the pyramid are about 32m square, and height 10m, making it the largest of its type in Japan, and quite rare. On each side there are multiple stone Buddhist relief carvings, line engravings, such as Nyorai triptychs.

🌸 In an urban area, the pyramid is popular as a 'spiritual place'.

🕒 9:00 – 17:00 (last entry 16:30)
☎ 0742-22-2857 (Hotel Wellness Asukaji)
💰 300 yen
🚶 About 20 minutes from JR Nara Station on the city circular bus to Wariishicho bus stop.

6・7 JUNE and JULY

🏯 Yatadera Temple 矢田寺

Jizo Bosatsu standing statue, Enmado Hall (Important Cultural Property)

Saturday 1 June – Sunday 30 June

Built in the 7th century. Stone Buddha statues can be seen scattered across large areas around the temple precincts on Yatayama. The main object of worship is a most unusual standing statue of Jizo Bosatsu with thumb and forefinger forming a circle (Important Cultural Property, Hidden Buddha). With no staff in its right hand, the image is known as the 'Yata Form Jizo'. The Enmado Hall will also be opened up. The structure houses, among others, Enma-O, one of the Ten who stands in judgment on crimes committed by people.

🌸 Also popular as a 'Hydrangea Temple', with more than 10,000 hydrangea bushes.

🕒 9:30 – 16:30 (last entry 16:00)
☎ 0743-53-1522 (Nenbutsuin) (In Japanese only)
💰 500 yen plus separate entry fee to temple: [Jr.] and older 500 yen, [Elem.] 200 yen
🚶 About 8 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to Yamato Koizumi Station. Then by bus to Yokoyamaguchi bus stop. About 20 minutes' walk. When the hydrangeas are in bloom, a special bus runs from JR Horyuji Station.
🌐 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A01198/>



Jizo Bosatsu standing statue (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Yatadera Temple

🏯 Kikohji Temple 喜光寺

Hidden Ugajin Statue

Friday 7 June – Sunday 18 August

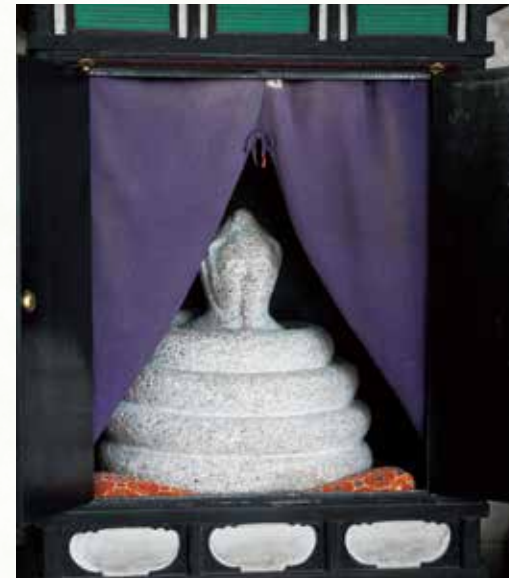
Built at the beginning of the 8th century. The main object of worship is a seated Amida Nyorai Buddha statue. The Main Hall is said to have been modelled on Todaiji Temple's Daibutsuden (Great Buddha Hall), and is also referred to as the 'Great Hall of Aspiration'. It is said that Ugajin was transferred from Kohfukuji Temple and worshipped here when the priest Eison (early 13th century) built the Bentendo Hall. Ugajin has a mysterious form, with a coiled snake up to his neck and the face of an old man with long beard.

🌸 One of the sites on the Nara City Lotus Road, there are 250 lotuses planted in large pots.

🕒 9:00 – 16:30 (last entry 16:00)
☎ 0742-45-4630 (In Japanese only)
💰 [High] and older 500 yen, [Jr.] and younger 300 yen
🚶 About 20 minutes by bus from JR Nara Station to Hanna Sugawara bus stop. Temple is immediately adjacent to the bus stop. Alternatively, the temple is 5 minutes' walk from Horai Higashiguchi bus stop.



Photo: Kikohji Temple



Hidden Buddha Ugajin Statue
Photo: Kikohji Temple

8 AUGUST



Shishikaku Hall Internal (Important Cultural Property)
Photo: Askaen Co. Ltd.

🏯 Hozanji Temple 寶山寺

Shishikaku Hall (Important Cultural Property)

Friday 3 May (Public Holiday) – Monday 6 May (Public Holiday)

Sundays in August (4,11,18 & 25th), Monday 12 August (Public Holiday)

In the 8th century, the place where En no Gyoja and Kukai (also known as Kobo Daishi, the priest who founded Mount Koya) carried out their ascetic practices, it was restored by Tankai in the 17th century. Kangiten is worshipped here. The Shishikaku Hall, which will be opened during this period, was built in 1884 as a guest house, has Western architectural features. Coloured glass used at the time is still in place today and can be seen as a part of the beautiful interior décor.

🌸 Much loved by locals as Shoten-san, it is believed prayers will help bring commercial success, and that he will grant wishes.

🕒 9:00 – 16:00 (last entry 15:30)
☎ 0743-73-2006 (In Japanese only)
💰 500 yen
🚶 15 minutes' walk from JR Nara Station to Kintetsu Nara Station. About 15 minutes by train from Kintetsu Nara Station to Kintetsu Ikoma Station. From there take Ikoma cable to Hozanji Station.
🌐 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/A00502/>

🏯 Ofusa Kannon Temple おふさ観音

Lifelike dolls – Temple treasures

Wednesday 15 May – Saturday 31 August

In the 7th century, Kannon appeared from the pond on a white tortoise. The story goes that Ofusa, a girl living nearby, discovered this, and built a small hall to commemorate the discovery. The main object of worship is a standing eleven-faced Kannon Bosatsu statue (Hidden Buddha). An incredibly lifelike doll, made by Yasumoto Kamehachi—known as a master doll maker, will be on display during the special opening.

🌸 A wind chime festival is held here in the summer. More than 2,500 wind chimes are hung and create a beautiful soundscape in the temple precincts. The temple also has a famous rose garden.

🕒 9:00 – 16:00 (last entry 16:00) ☎ 0744-22-2212 (In Japanese only)
💰 Main Hall 300 yen
🚶 About 35 minutes by train from JR Nara Station to JR Unebi Station. 10 minutes' walk.
🌐 <https://www.visitnara.jp/venues/E02048/>



1 Rose Festival
Photo: Ofusa Kannon Temple

2 Wind Chime Festival
Photo: Kashihara-shi



Kohfukuji Central Golden Hall



Originally built between the years 710 and 714, the Chukondo (Central Golden Hall) of Kohfukuji Temple was lost to fires sparked by warfare or natural disasters a total of seven times. Although it was successfully rebuilt the first six times, the temple lacked the means for a full-scale reconstruction in the wake of the final fire, which occurred in 1717. After a period of more than three centuries, the Central Golden Hall has finally reconstructed, and is now open to the general public following its dedication in October of 2018.

The Official Nara Travel Guide

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.



<https://www.visitnara.jp/>
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<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.

The NARA Visitor Center & Inn

The Nara Visitor Center & Inn is Nara's leading tourist information and visitor center. The comprehensive facility is equipped with information counters manned by multi-lingual staff, a traveler's lounge with free Wi-Fi and internet, a foreign currency exchange machine and a gallery showcasing Nara crafts and products.

With a wide array of services offered, you can book accommodations, sightseeing tours, make transportation arrangements and get useful information throughout Nara. A selection of cultural experience workshops, either free or for a small fee, are also offered on a regular basis.

Address: 3 Ikeno-cho, Nara Phone: 0742-81-7461 (8:00-21:00) <https://www.sarusawa.nara.jp/>

