



Nara City Tourist Information Centers —

Nara City Tourist information Center —— Tel:(0742)22-3900 Hours: 9:00-21:00 (Closed for the year-and new-year holidays) J R Nara Station -Tel:(0742)22-9821 Hours: 9:00-17:00 (Closed for year-end) Kintetsu-Nara Station --Tel:(0742)24-4858 Hours: 9:00-17:00 (Closed for year-end) -Tel:(0742)26-1991 Sarusawa Information -Hours: 9:00-17:00 (Closed for year-end and new-year holidays)

Free Tours in English

Nara S.G.G Club Tel:(0742)22-5595 Fax:(0742)22-5595 Nara Student Guide Tel:(0742)26-4753 Fax:(0742)26-1991 Nara YMCA Goodwill Guides Tel:(0742)45-5920 Fax:(0742)47-6459

Nara was the capital of Japan, called Heijokyo, from 710 to 784. It was considered the cradle of Japanese culture, arts, and crafts. Buddhism first flourished here under the strong patronage of successive emperors and empresses. Major cultural heritage in Nara have been registered on the UNESCO's World Heritage List as an irreplaceable part of the cultural heritage of all humanity.

SIGHTSEEING SPOTS

Nara National Museum (奈良国立博物館)

9:30~17:00

A museum, specializing in Buddhist arts, stands in Nara Park.

The West Gallery, the original building, was opened in 1995, while the East Gallery was constructed in 1973. Apart from the regular exhibition of Buddhist relics such as sculptures, paintings, applied arts, calligraphy, and archaeological objects, there are also several special exhibitions throughout the year, such as the special exhibition of treasures from the Shoso-in Repository in Todaiii Temple ground for two weeks in

Isuien Garden(依水園)

9:30~16:30

The garden, which represents the acme of garden engineering of the Meiji period (1867-1912) has been designated as a scenic spot by the nation With an area of 13,481m2, the garden consists of the front yard on the west (right

side) of the entrance and back yard to the east of the porch. It is a unique combination of two promenade-type gardens of distinctly different characteristics.

This landscape garden makes use of the views of Wakakusavama Hill and Mt. Kasuga in the background. It is a vast garden covered with greenery, and the Neiraku Art Museum has been erected as an annex to the garden

Nara Park(奈良公園)

This park was designated as a scenic spot in 1922. In this park famous temples and shrines designated as the World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, such as Kofukuii Temple, Todaiji Temple and Kasuga Grand Shrine, are located. There is no doubt that such scenic spots, with their special history and nature, are to be seen nowhere else. The tame deer, which are one of the symbols of Nara, are roaming around

Nara City Museum of Photography (奈良市写真美術館) 9:30~17:00 The first museum of photography in western Japan. In addition to a permanent exhibition of masterpieces of the late Taikichi Irie, a photographer who took many pictures of objects in Nara, it occasionally organizes special exhibitions.

Nara City Tourist Center (奈良市観光センター)

The Center is thoroughly furnished with information facilities that provide an introduction to fascinating aspects of the ancient city of Nara, including traditional craftwork, souvenirs, and exhibitions of cultural properties.

The Center is offered as your sightseeing base for further understanding, and as a travel base for your convenience

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Byakugoji Temple (白毫寺) Founded in 715 by the priest Gonso.

9:00~17:00

The site is said to have been a part of the villa of Shiki-no-miko, the seventh prince

The Temple was restored by the priest Eison in the Kamakura period (1192-1333). Even after the rise and fall of the temple's power, the Hondo (Main Hall) and the Miedo (Founder's Hall) still remain.

The city of Nara can be seen far off in the distance, as you pass through the main gate of the temple. This temple is famous for its five-colored camellia in spring, and bush clover in early autumn.

Gangoji Temple (元興寺) World Heritage Site

9:00~17:00

Originally founded by Sogano-Umako at Asuka (south of Nara city) as the first Buddhist temple in Japan and was called Hokoji Temple. After the capital was transferred to Heijo-kyo (present-day Nara City) in 710, it was moved to the present site in 718 and renamed as Gangoji Temple. The Gokurakubo Hall, originally used as a part of monks' dormitory, still remains. However, it was repaired and made over into the Gokurakubo Hondo (Main Hall) and the Zenshitsu (Meditation Hall) in 1244.

Hannyaji Temple (般若寺)

Said to have been founded in about 630 by the priest Ekan from Korea.

Later in 735, Emperor Shomu built the pagoda and hall of this temple.

The Hannyaji Temple has an abundance of various flowers blooming in each of the four seasons, some of which are yellow roses, hydrangea, and cosmos

Jurin-in Temple (十輪院)

9:00~16:30

Said to have been founded in the early 8th century by Asano Nakai, son of the Right Minister Kibi-no-makibi at the wishes of Empress Gensho.

The site of this temple was the former palace of Empress Gensho.

The stone image of Jizo Bodhisattva in the stone chamber, (Sekibutsugan), is the chief object of worship in this temple

Kasuga Grand Shrine (春日大社) World Heritage Site 9:00~16:00 Generally believed to have been founded by the Fujiwara Family (the most powerful imperial court nobles in the 8th century), to their tutelary deity, after the capital was moved to Heijo-kyo (present-day Nara City). The architectual style of the sanctuary is called the "Kasuga style", because of the characteristic shape of its roof. This shrine is famous for about 1000 bronze lanterns and about 2000 stone lanterns. Al of them are lit twice a year.

The Garden of Kasuga Grand Shrine (春日大社神苑) 9:00~16:00 It is a lovely garden with a pond in the center, covering an area of about 1.5 hectares. In this garden about 900 plants of 300 varieties are grown. These plants

are mentioned in the Man'yoshu the oldest Japanese anthology, compiled by Otomo-no Yakamochi in the Nara period (645-704), the Gagaku (court music) and Bugaku (court dance) are performed on May 5 and November 3 every year on a stage set up in the pond. Throughout the year the garden is bright with seasonal

Kofukuji Temple (興福寺) World Heritage Site

With the establishment of the new capital, Heijo-kyo, in 710, the UmayasakaTemple was moved from Asuka to its present site and was given its present name. In addition to the five-story pagoda, which is well known as a symbol of Nara, various buildings and historic Buddhist statues remind us of the long, impressive history of

Shin-yakushiji Temple (新薬師寺)

9:00~17:00

9.00~21.00

Founded in 747 by Empress Komyo with the prayer that her husband, Emperor Shomu, would recover from his illness.

All the structures except the Hondo (Main Hall) were destroyed by fire during the

The Main Hall and the several Buddhist statues housed here date back to the early 8th century, and are designated as National Treasures.

Todaiji Temple (東大寺) World Heritage Site

Founded by Emperor Shomu to enshrine the Great Image of Buddha (Vairocana Buddha) and as the General Head-temple of all provincial temples in Japan. It was completed in 752. Unfortunately, fire destroyed the edifice twice, and the present structure, which was rebuilt in 1709, was scaled down to two-thirds of the original

Nevertheless, it is the largest wooden building in the world and the magnificent structure is sure to fill its visitors with awe.

This temple's main gate is the Great South Gate. Inside this gate, two beva kings

stand guard.

April~September 7:30~17:30 October 7:30~17:00 November~February 8:00~16:30 March 8:00~17:00

Akishinodera Temple(秋篠寺)

9:30~16:30

Founded in about 770 by the huddhist hishon Zenshu in compliance with the wishes of Emperor Konin.

The construction was completed in about 780.

In 1135, however, almost all the buildings except the Kodo (Lecture Hall) were burnt down by war fires.

The nicely balanced main hall, (designated as a national treasure), was rebuilt in the Kamakura period (1192-1333). The temple is famous for its standing statue of

Daianji Temple(大安寺)

9:00~17:00

Said to have been founded by Prince Shotoku as the Kumagori Shoja Temple. The temple was moved several times until it was finally set up at the present site after the capital transfer to Heijo-kyo (present-day Nara city). All the original temple buildings were lost. In the temple festival held on January 23, worshippers are served with sacred Japanese Sake called SASA-ZAKE in bamboo cup and which is said to have miraculous power to prevent cancer

Hokkeii Temple (Nunnery)(法華寺)

9:00~17:00

Founded in the 8th century by Empress Komyo as the center of all national nunneries.

The temple, which had been the residence of her father, Fujiwara Fuhito, was made into a convent.

The principal object of worship is the Juichimen Kannon (an Eleven-faced Bodhisattva a national treasure) which is regarded as the image of Empress Komyo. The garden of this temple, with its atmosphere of tranquility and serenity, is open to the public twice a year in spring and fall.

Ryosenii Temple (霊山寺)

10:00~16:00

Said to have been founded by buddhist Saints Bodaisenna and Gyoki in compliance with the wishes of Emperor Shomu.

About 300 types of plants and over 100 kinds of roses are grown in the garden.

Saidaiji Temple (西大寺)

8:30~16:30

Founded in 765 at the wish of Empress Shotoku.

Since 846, its buildings have been repeatedly destroyed by fires.
The existing buildings, the Hondo (Main Hall) and the Aizendo Hall, were, rebuilt in

the Edo period (1603-1867).

Today, this temple is widely known for the Ochamori tea ceremony, in which overly large-sized tea utensils are used to serve tea.

Toshodaiji Temple (唐招提寺) World Heritage Site

Founded by the Chinese priest Ganiin in 759 as the headquaters of the Ritsu Sect of Buddhism. He underwent tremendous hardships in his attempts to visit Japan and spread Buddhism. This temple has handed down masterpieces of architecture and Buddhist statues in the 8th century

Yakushiji Temple (薬師寺) World Heritage Site

Established by Emperor Tenmu in the Asuka area to pray for healing for the Empress. She later succeeded him to the throne under the name Empress Regnant

Because of the capital transfer to the Heijo-kyo (present-day Nara city), the temple was moved to the present site.

However because of frequent ruinous fires, only the three-story East Pagoda is the original building remaining in the temple ground today. The Golden Hall was constructed in 1976, the Three-story West Pagoda in 1981 and the Lecture Hall in

Chuquii Temple (Nunnery)(中宮寺)

9.00~16:30 Said to have been originated by Prince Shotoku in the 7th century to pray for the

8.00~17.00

8:30~17:00

repose of his parents, the Imperial Princess Hashihito and the Emperor Yomei. The main objects of worldship, such as the statue of Nyoirin Kannon bodhisattva

(popularly known as the Miroku Bodhisattava) and the embroidery of Tenjukoku Mandara, have been well preserved since the foundation

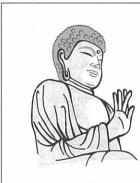
Horyuji Temple (法隆寺) World Heritage Site

Founded by Regent Prince Shotoku in 607 and his aunt, Empress Regnant Suiko, in pursuance of the will of his father. Emperor Yomei.

Burned down in 670, it was reconstructed in the early 8th century. The five-story pagoda, Kondo (Main Hall) and other buildings have been well preserved, and are the oldest wooden structure in the world.

Yumedono Hall (Hall of Dreams) was built in 739.

It is the oldest octagonal building in Japan.



The Buddha Statues in Nara

Nara is also a treasure house of the Japanese arts. Since the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the 6th century, Buddha statues have played an important role in the Japanese arts and culture.

The formative beauty of our country can be seen in historic changes from the youthful appearance of the Hakuho period (7th century), through the gorgeousness and maturity of the Tempyo period (8th century), the delicacy and grace of the Fujiwara period (12th century), and finally to the vigorousness and animation of the Kamakura period (13th century).

Looking at the face of the Buddha, you will get the feeling that the Buddha is about to talk to you at any moment.

