

Simply

NARA

Vol. 1

- ① **Night time Nara light-up - Wander the ancient capital during events and special openings of temples and shrines**
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2016
SUMMER
EDITION



NARA PREFECTURE

奈良県

NIGHT TIME NARA LIT-UP

Nara Toka-e

August 5th – 14th

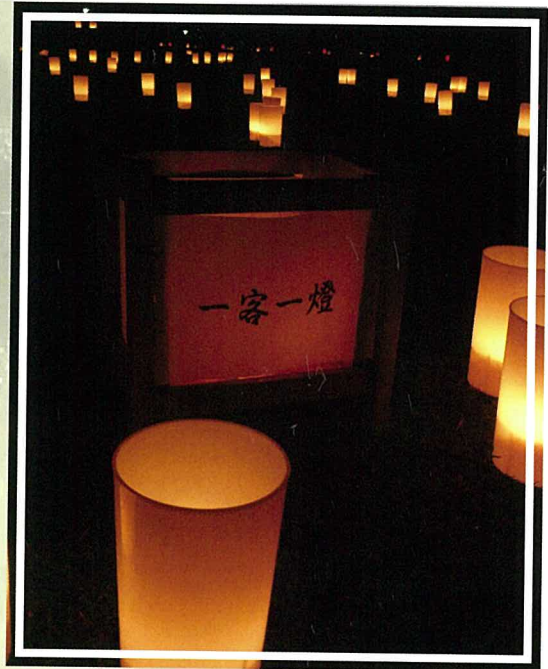
Light-up: 19:00-21:45

www.toukae.jp

Nara Park is one of the most popular tourist sites in Nara. What many visitors fail to see however, is that the park and the surrounding buildings still somewhat depict what the old capital was once like. We would love to you to wander around on a summer evening and discover this for yourself.

During the Nara Toka-e candle light illumination, Nara Park and its surroundings, including some World Heritage sites, will be beautifully illuminated with 20,000 candles. Started in 1999, this event has become one of Nara's most attractive and fascinating summer night time events.

There are ten main illumination venues around Nara Park. Every candle light represents someone's wish. Anyone can buy a cup and a candle, and then place their own wish on site.



Light-up Promenade Nara

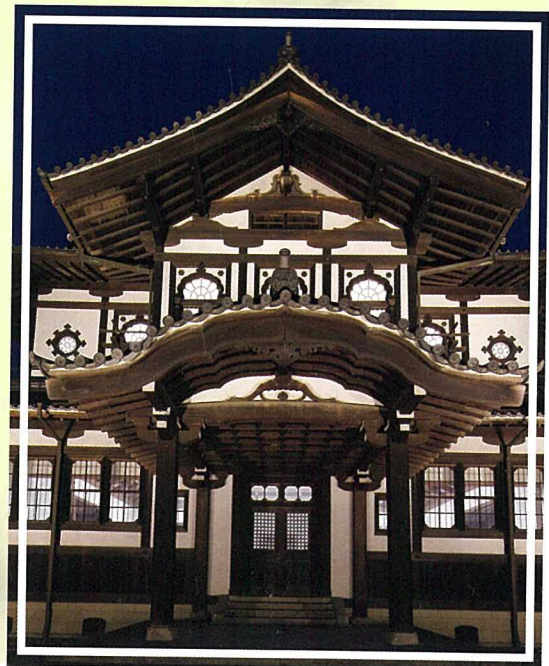
July 16th – September 25th

Light-up: 19:00-22:00

(Sept: 18:00-22:00)

www.lightup-nara.jp

A popular annual summer evening event is the Light-up Promenade. For 72 days from mid July to the end of September, major sites including World Heritage sites such as Todai-ji Temple, The Shrine Gate of Kasuga Taisha, the Five-story Pagoda of Kohfuku-ji Temple and other historical locations will be illuminated. Take a stroll and feel Nara's 1300 years of history.



Note: Entry not permitted inside of Todai-ji Temple, Yakushi-ji Temple and other venues.



WANDER THE ANCIENT CAPITAL DURING EVENTS AND SPECIAL OPENINGS OF TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Toka-e and Light-up Promenade Nara Main Venues.

<Both Events>

Todai-ji Temple (Daibutsu-den Hall, Nandai-mon Gate, Kagami Pond)

One of the best known Buddhist temples which was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1998. The Daibutsu-den Hall is the largest wooden structure in the world. The statues of Kongo Rikishi housed in the Nandai-mon Gate emanate a dignified appearance when lit-up at night.

Five-story Pagoda of Kohfuku-ji Temple

The Five-story Pagoda is one of the symbolic historical assets of Nara (World Heritage). Surrounded by tall pine trees, the pagoda standing dignifiedly will impress every visitor.

Ukimi-do

Ukimi-do is a spectacular floating pavilion standing over the Sagi Pond.

Sarusawa Pond

A symbolic landmark of Nara. The Sarusawa Pond was originally made as part of the Kohfuku-ji Temple grounds in order to release small creatures such as fish and turtles. Candle lit reflections on the pond's surface create a romantic walking path.

<Toka-e>

Ukigumo Enchi Field

Countless candle lights create a superb view at the Ukigumo Enchi field, as if you were standing in the middle of the Milky Way.

Asajigahara Field

Asajigahara is adorned with large handmade bamboo art decorations that emanate a romantic atmosphere.

IRAKA

A variety of food and drink stalls are open at the IRAKA venue, romantically lit-up with candles. Special lighting decorations also adorn the gardens.

The Nara National Museum

The architecture of the Nara National Museum is another illuminating charm of Toka-e.

Kasuga Taisha Shrine

Kasuga Taisha Shrine is the most celebrated shrine in Nara. Hundreds of bronze lanterns can be found hanging from the buildings, while many stone lanterns line its approaches. The lanterns are only lit twice a year, once in early February, the other in mid August.

Kasugano Enchi Field

An open field in Nara Park that accommodates open-air events. With Mt. Wakakusa to the east, Daibutsu-den Hall of Todai-ji Temple to the northwest, and the Nandai-mon Gate to the west, the field's elegant atmosphere with the thousands of candle lights is special.

continued overleaf

NIGHT TIME EVENTS

<Light-up Promenade Nara>

Nara National Museum Buddhist Sculpture Hall (Main Hall)

The Nara Buddhist Sculpture Hall is a brick building completed in 1894. The building is an outstanding example of mid-Meiji period architecture adopting the peak architectural style of the French Renaissance.

Yakushi-ji Temple

The West Pagoda and Kon-do Hall (part of the World Heritage) are lit-up beautifully in the evening and cut a majestic sight in the night sky of the Nishinokyo area. The view across the Oike Pond is particularly breathtaking.

Note: The East Pagoda is currently under renovation and not lit-up.

Buddhist Art Library

The Buddhist Art Library was founded in 1902. It is built of wood and roofed with a type of corrugated roof tile that uses western-style architectural techniques on its roof trusses and walls, although the exterior is primarily Japanese style. Today it is open as a library of the Nara National Museum.

Suzaku Gate

Recreated in 2010 on the commemoration of the 1300th anniversary of the Nara Period, Nara Palace Site was originally fenced by earthen walls and 12 gates. The largest gate and main entrance to the palace was the Suzaku Gate. This huge two-story gate is 22 meters high by 25 meters wide.

Daigoku-den Hall

The Daigoku-den Hall, or the Former Imperial Audience Hall, opened in 2010 on the 1300th anniversary of the Nara Period. The interior contains the Imperial Throne and wondrous art work by contemporary Japanese painters using traditional techniques to mirror the original designs.

The Great Farewell Bonfire Event in Nara

Daimonji Okuribi in Nara started in 1960, and is a fire festival to honour the war dead and pray for world peace. A unique memorial service held from 18:50 in Tobihino, is carried out in both Shinto and Buddhist styles and in order to comfort the 29,243 spirits of Nara-born soldiers.

First, Shinto priests perform their ritual and then Buddhist priests, gathered from 30 temples around Nara city, hold a Buddhist ceremony at the same altar.



Lighting of the character 'dai' on the hillside immediately follows the memorial service at 20:00. In Tobihino, a bonfire is lit as a sign to show that the memorial service has ended, and then the Japanese character 'dai,' meaning universe, made from piled firewood, is lit on the side of Mt. Takamado. 108 pieces of firewood are used to represent people's worldly desires according to Buddhist doctrine. The character 'dai' in fire can be seen on Mt. Takamado from far and wide and burns for about 30 minutes.

The first stroke (the horizontal line) is 109 meters long, the second stroke (the line from the top to the bottom left) is 164 meters, and the third stroke (the line from the top to the bottom right) is 128 meters. It is the biggest in Japan. The best viewing spot from Nara City is Tobihino. The view of beautiful character 'dai' can also be enjoyed from farther away, for example, from Nishi-no-kyo or the Heijo Palace site.

FLOWER CALENDAR OF THE ANCIENT CAPITAL

SEASONAL BEAUTY

Lotus: Yakushi-ji Temple

Many potted lotuses are on display around the belfry. Late June to mid August

Access: Short walk from Nishinokyo Station on the Kintetsu Line. Tel: 0742-33-6001. www.nara-yakushiji.com

Lotus: Toshodai-ji Temple

Toshodai-ji lotus and various other types of lotus bloom magnificently. Late June to mid August.

Access: 8-minute walk from Nishinokyo Station on the Kintetsu Line. Tel: 0742-33-7900. www.toshodaiji.jp

Crepe Myrtle: Sekko-ji Temple

Pretty red flowers bloom on a 250 year-old tree. End of July to mid September.

Access: 13-minute walk from Nijo-jinja-guchi Station on the Kintetsu Line. Tel: 0745-48-2031. www.sekkouji.or.jp

Balloon Flower: Gango-ji Temple

White and purple balloon flowers bloom among stone Buddha statues. Early July to early August.

Access: 12-minute walk from Kintetsu Nara Station or 20 minutes from JR Nara Station.

Tel: 0742-23-1377. www.gangoji.or.jp

Balloon Flower: Enjo-ji Temple

Purple Balloon flowers bloom around the oldest temple on the old Yagyū road. Throughout August.

Access: Take the bus bound for Yagyū from JR Nara Station or from Kintetsu Nara Station to the Nin-nikusen bus stop.

Short walk from the bus stop. Tel: 0742-93-0353. www.enjoyouji.jp

Confederate Rose: Tachibana Temple

About 100 young trees bloom in the temple grounds. Early September to late October.

Access: Asuka excursion bus from Kashihara Jingumae Station. Tel: 0744-54-2026

Red Spider Lily: Asuka Village

See terraced paddy fields decorated with red spider lilies. Mid to late September.

The red spider lily festival is held from September 19 to September 20.

Access: Asuka excursion bus from Kashihara Jingumae Station or Kintetsu Asuka Station to the Ishibutai bus stop.

20-minute walk from the bus stop. Tel: 0744-54-4577. www.asukamura.com

Red Spider Lily: Gango-ji Temple

About 100 red and white flowers bloom in the temple grounds. Mid to late September.

Access: 12 minute walk from Kintetsu Nara Station or 20-minutes from JR Nara Station.

Tel: 0742-23-1377. www.gangoji.or.jp

Bush Clover: Toshodai-ji Temple

Bush clover flowers bloom all over the temple grounds. Mid August to early October.

Access: 8-minute walk from Kintetsu Nishinokyo Station. Tel: 0742-33-7900. www.toshodaiji.jp

Bush Clover: The Museum Yamato Bunkakan

Bush clover is one of the seven autumn flowers. Late August to mid October.

Access: 7 minute walk from Kintetsu Gakuemae Station. Tel: 0742-45-0544.

Cosmos: Abe Monju-in Temple

About 30 kinds of Cosmos in various colours decorate the temple grounds. The cosmos maze will be open from mid September to late October.

Access: 20-minute walk from either Kintetsu or JR Sakurai Stations. Tel: 0744-43-0002. www.abemonjuin.or.jp

Cosmos: Hannya-ji Temple

Stone Buddha statues surrounded by about 150,000 cosmos flowers.

Late September to late October (Cosmos Hana-akari light-up October 17&18)

Access: Bus from Kintetsu Nara Station or JR Nara station to Hannya-ji bus stop. Tel: 0742-22-6287. www.hannyaji.com

SEASONAL TREATS

DELICIOUS

Miwa Somen

Japan's oldest noodles, born in Nara.

Somen is a popular noodle in Japan which people enjoy in summer. Historical records indicate that noodles may have come from somen, which began in the Miwa province. Somen are extra-thin noodles made from flour, water and salt. After the extremely thin noodles are formed, they're kept and dried under the winter sunshine for several months. Somen are boiled, chilled with cold water and ice, dipped into a soy based stock, and are enjoyed with toppings such as chopped vegetables, and strips of fried egg.

Particular to Nara is Miwa Somen™ along with an association that strictly checks quality and preserves tradition. A record left at Omiwa Shrine, the oldest Shinto shrine in Japan, says that over 1200 years ago, famine and disease were rife. The second son of an Omiwa Shrine priest prayed and received word from the deity to grow wheat and make noodles in Miwa. He obeyed, and served such noodles to the famished people, saving them. This is said to have been the origin of somen.

The quality of somen depends how thin each noodle is: the thinner the noodle, the higher the quality. Nowadays, somen is produced both by machines and hand. Making it by hand takes an considerable amount of time and experience, so only experienced somen masters can produce it. Top quality somen noodles can be as thin as 0.3mm!

Somen production takes place during the severe cold winter months in Nara. Hanging noodles out in the cold north winds rids moisture quickly and naturally. Only the combination of fine ingredients and a good natural environment can produce quality noodles.

Recommended Places for Miwa Somen

Miwa Chaya by Miwa Somen Yamamoto
880 Hashinaka, Sakurai City, Nara. Open: 11:00-16:30
Tel: 0744-43-6661. www.miwayama.co.jp

Senjutei by Miwa Somen Ikeri
29 Shiba, Sakurai City, Nara. Open: 11:00-17:00, Closed Fri.
Tel: 0744-45-0626. www.ikerishop.com

Kakinoha-Zushi

Local food of Nara combining the blessings of the ocean, mountains and the soil.

During the Edo period (17-19th century) when people had poor transportation and poor technology to keep food cool, seafood and salt brought to Nara were exclusive items. The southwestern areas of Nara prefecture, such as Gojo and Yoshino, had large persimmon production areas. People in those days thought about how they could preserve seafood, and came up with Kakinoha-zushi.

Kakinoha-zushi is a type of pressed sushi, popular in the Kansai area. Toppings are mackerel and salmon. Each piece of rice is topped with a slice of salted fish, then individually wrapped in a persimmon leaf. The wrapped leaf along with salting the fish, preserves the sushi and prevents it from drying.

The people of those times understood the special properties of persimmon leaves and recent scientific studies have shown that they are rich in vitamin C as well as tannin, which has highly effective antibacterial and antioxidant properties. The leaves prevent the sushi rice from drying as well as improving health.

Traditionally, Kakinoha-zushi is a special dish for celebratory occasions in the Yoshino area. Several hundred years on, it is still cherished as a special local food of Nara.

Recommended Places for Kakinoha-zushi*Hiraso Nara Store*

30-1 Imamikado-cho, Nara
Open: Shop: 10:00-20:30, Restaurant: 11:00-20:00, closed Mon.
Tel: 0742-22-0866. www.hiraso.jp

Tanaka Nara Store

5-2 Higashimuki Naka-machi, Nara
Open: 9:30-19:30
Tel: 0742-81-3651

<https://www.kakinohasushi.co.jp>

Izasa Yume Kaze Plaza Store

16 Kasugano-cho, Nara
Open: Shop: 9:30-19:00, Restaurant: 11:00-19:00
Tel: 0742-22-8133. www.izasa.co.jp

NARA

Photo courtesy of Hiraso

Shaved Ice

The deity who loves ice is enshrined in Nara.

Himuro Shrine, established in 710, enshrines the guardian deity responsible for the pond used for making ice. People made thick ice in the ponds during the cold winter months and kept it in special storage buildings called Himuro. Every year on the spring equinox, the storage buildings were opened and the ice was offered to the imperial court until summer's end.

In the hope of educating people about this, shrine staff and local volunteers started the "Himuro Shirayuki Festival" three years ago. The festival consists of a ceremony for the deity of ice, a panel discussion, and a gathering of famous shaved ice shops from around Japan. In addition, shrine and volunteer members have released a guide map featuring shaved ice shops in Nara (in Japanese, English and Chinese) available at Himuro Shrine, Tourist Information Centers, and shaved ice shops in Nara.

www.nara-kakigori.com

Recommended Places for Shaved Ice

Hosekibako

In the Yume Cube, 12 Mochiidono-cho, Nara
Open: 11:00-19:00, Closed: Thurs. Tel: 0742-93-4260

Ochanoko

In the COTO Mall, 35-2 Konishi-cho, Nara
Open: 10:00-20:00, Closed: 3rd Wed. of Jan., Feb., May, June, July, Aug., Nov. Tel: 0742-24-2580

Himuro Shrine

1-4 Kasugano-cho, Nara
Tel: 0742-23-7297. www.himurojinja.jp

MEET THE TRANSLATORS

Yumiko Kikyo

I am very happy and proud to be involved in producing this sightseeing brochure for overseas tourists. Translating the Kojiki was very challenging. I believe translating is not simply replacing words with another language's, but understanding what the author meant, the background of a text, and selecting the best expressions and words on the basis of it. I'm seeing again how difficult it is to handle a foreign language, but I am enjoying it thoroughly.

Shigeko Yufu

When I was a high school student, I had the experience of guiding in English at Todaiji Temple. I only spoke broken English however, "May I guide you?" were the first English words I spoke to a tourist. Since then I haven't looked back and it continues to be my motivation to this day. Working on this project is a great opportunity for me, and I am thankful to have come this far!

Sachiyo Uemoto

Deer, traditional art and culture, old temples and green mountainsides. These things come to mind when we think of Nara, my birthplace. After university, I realised that I felt comfortable when bridging differences, therefore translation is an ideal tool to feel that way. As the world continues to become smaller, I think that collaborations like this magazine can be the key to making it a happier and more peaceful place.



Photo courtesy of Miwa Somen Yamamoto



EXPLORE THE WORLD OF KIKI MAN'YO

VOL
ONE

Kashihara Jingu Shrine is dedicated to Emperor Jinmu.

The second volume of the Kojiki (the oldest surviving historical record in Japan) begins with the story of the first emperor of Japan and descendant of the sun goddess' expedition to the east. He started eastwards from what is today's Miyazaki prefecture to find a good place to rule Japan peacefully.

Conquering enemies as he went, he sailed from the southern to the main island following the south east coastline, stopping in at Kumano, Mie prefecture, where he was gifted a sacred sword and a three-legged crow as a guide by the gods of heaven. Guided by the crow, Jinmu continued his journey from Kumano to Yoshino and then to Kashihara in Nara where he encountered two brothers of a local dominant clan. Jimmu defeated the elder brother, Eukashi whereupon the younger brother, Otoukashi obeyed Jinmu without resistance. Emperor Jinmu ruled Japan from Kashihara-no-miya until 137 years of age and 2016 is believed to be the 2,600th anniversary of his death.

Kashihara Jingu Shrine, which enshrines him was built in 1890. The main hall and hall for offering dance and music, is made of unpainted wood which blends naturally into the white pebbles of the gravelled approach way and the deep green of the woods behind it.

In 2000, the treasure house was opened in commemoration of the 110th anniversary of the shrine, containing treasures such as the sword Emperor Meiji donated, and a Chinese mirror as old as the ones in the the Imperial repository.

Lantern Festival - September 9th

About 600 hanging lanterns are lit and hung to pray for happiness and prosperity.

Tel: 0744-22-3271. Address: 934, Kume-cho, Kashihara City, Nara. Access: 10 minute walk from Kintetsu Railway Kashihara Jingu mae Station.
www.kashiharajingu.or.jp

What is "Kiki Man'yo"?

"Kiki Man'yo" is generally used to refer to the three precious records that chronicle the foundation of Japan during the Nara Period (710 - 794 AD)

Manyoshu - The collection of 10,000 leaves. The oldest extant anthology of Japanese songs comprising of 20 volumes and some 4,500 songs.

Kojiki - The Record of Ancient Matters (Completed 712 AD)

The oldest surviving historical record in Japan comprises of 3 volumes:

Volume 1 covers myths related to Japanese deities.

Volumes 2 & 3 cover the Emperor's achievements from Emperor Jinmu (712-585 BC), to Empress, Suiko (554-628 AD).

Emperor Tenmu ordered its creation, but it wasn't completed until 712 AD at the request of Empress Genmei.

Nihonshoki - The Chronicles of Japan (Completed 720 AD)

Comprising of 30 volumes plus the Imperial family tree, its creation is said to have taken about 40 years. It covers Japan's history until Emperess Jito (702 AD). An additional 5 chronicles were added to form "Rikkokushi" - The Six National History of Japan, which was completed in 901 AD.

The Kojiki and Nihonshoki both begin with the Japanese Shinto creation myths. Kojiki was one third myth, however, Nihonshoki has only two volumes out of 30 set aside for myths. Unlike Kojiki, Nihonshoki listed foreign historical books as references as it was written in classical Chinese which was common for the time.

The compilation of the Kojiki and the Nihonshoki started in Nara and we have endeavoured to carry the torch of tradition since then. There is no comparable place with such unique and rich historical materials within Japan. Walking around Nara today, one may still encounter the magical scenery as described in the "Kiki Man'yo".

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「Simply Nara」— シンプルでありながら、深く奈良の魅力を紹介する冊子

奈良県では翻訳者として活躍を目指す女性を対象に、起業・就労などの支援を行っています。「奈良県の女性翻訳者」のアイデアで奈良の魅力を語る、外国人向け観光情報誌「Simply Nara」を創刊しました。奈良のシンプルで奥深い情報をお届けします。

冊子に関するお問い合わせ <Contact> info@english-alternatives.com

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