

Excursion ①: Lake Biwa: A 4-Million-Year-Old Ancient Lake

[Overview]

Lake Biwa, Japan's largest lake and one of the world's few ancient lakes (ca. 4 million years), supports rich biodiversity and serves as a vital water source for 14 million people. It has long sustained local culture and livelihoods, while facing environmental challenges such as eutrophication driven by human activities. This tour combines a cruise on the southern basin and a visit to the Lake Biwa Museum. Guided by researchers, participants will explore nitrogen cycling in the watershed, the mechanisms of eutrophication, and efforts toward sustainable environmental management.

Excursion ②: Ashiu Forest Research Station and Miyama Kayabuki-no-Sato

[Overview]

The Kyoto University Ashiu Forest Research Station, located in northern Kyoto Prefecture, is a historic site of forest science encompassing rare and pristine forests. Guided by researchers, participants will explore forest ecosystems, human-nature relationships, and current challenges such as the impacts of overabundant deer on biodiversity. The tour also visits Miyama Kayabuki-no-Sato, a traditional village with thatched-roof houses. Through this experience, participants will gain insights into satoyama culture and the coexistence of people and nature.

Excursion ③: Discover Another Kyoto: Experiencing Local SDGs in Keihoku

[Overview]

Keihoku, located within Kyoto City yet largely forested, has supported the capital for over 1,300 years through timber production and cultural traditions. Today, the region faces sustainability challenges driven by social change and globalized markets. Recognized as a model of satoyama landscapes, Keihoku hosts "local SDGs" initiatives for regional sustainability. In this tour, participants will visit these sites with local residents and experts, exploring another side of Kyoto through perspectives of past and present, and urban and rural life.

Excursion ④: Kyoto Sightseeing

[Overview]

On this excursion, we will visit Nijo Castle, a popular sightseeing spot in Kyoto that was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1994. Built by the first Tokugawa Shogun, Ieyasu, the castle served both to protect the nearby Imperial Palace and as a residence for the Shogun during his visits to Kyoto. It is strategically located to the southwest of the Imperial Palace, a direction traditionally known as the Ura-kimon (rear demon gate). Interestingly, while the castle saw the rise of the Tokugawa Shogunate, it also marked its end, as it was the very place where the 15th Shogun, Yoshinobu, declared the restoration of imperial rule (Taiseihokan).

Next, we will visit Yatsushashi-an & Shishu-yakata for a cultural workshop and lunch. In this hands-on experience, you will make Nama-yatsushashi (unbaked yatsushashi) starting from the dough. You are welcome to take your handmade creations home as a souvenir. Yatsushashi is one of Kyoto's most iconic Japanese sweets, primarily made from rice flour, sugar, and nikki (cinnamon). For lunch, a delicious grilled beef meal (Gyuniku Tetsumiyaki) will be served.

Finally, we will visit the world-renowned Kinkaku-ji Temple. Although officially named Rokuon-ji, it is widely known as Kinkaku-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) because of its stunning reliquary hall, the "Kinkaku," which is covered in gold leaf. The pavilion and its surrounding gardens are said to represent the Pure Land (Buddhist paradise) on Earth, as envisioned by Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the third Shogun of the Muromachi Shogunate. The distinctive culture of this period is known as the Kitayama Culture.

※ Course details are subject to change. We appreciate your understanding in advance.