

## Kobe, Japan



Kobe is the fifth-largest city in Japan and is the capital city of Hyogo Prefecture on the southern side of the main island of Honshu. Its name comes from "kanbe", an archaic title for supporters of the city's Ikuta Shrine. With a population of about 1.5 million, the city is part of the Keihanshin (Keihanshin) metropolitan area along with Osaka and Kyoto.

The earliest written records regarding the region come from the Nihon Shoki, which describes the founding of the Ikuta Shrine by Empress Jingu in AD 201. For most of its history the area was never a single political entity, even during the Tokugawa Period, when the port was controlled directly by the Tokugawa Shogunate. Kobe did not exist in its current form until its founding in 1889.

Kobe was one of the cities to open for trade with the West following the end of the policy of seclusion and has since been known as a cosmopolitan port city. While the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake diminished much of Kobe's prominence as a port city, it remains Japan's fourth busiest container port. The city is the point of origin and namesake of Kobe beef as well as the site of one of Japan's most famous hot spring resorts, Arima Onsen. Kobe is also your gateway to Kyoto, Japan's ancient imperial capital and the nation's cultural and spiritual center.

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### Show Points of Interest

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## 1 Golden Pavilion (Kyoto)

The Golden Temple is considered the premier example of Muromachi Era (1337 - 1573) design.

## 2 Ryoanji Temple (Kyoto)

Ryonanji famous Zen rock garden features 15 rocks set in meticulously raked white gravel.

## 3 Nijo Castle

Built by Tokugawa's first shogun, the majestic 410-year-old castle is the site of two lavish palaces.

## 4 Kitano-cho (Kobe)

Explore the former mansions of foreign merchants that are now preserved as museums in this city district nestled at the foot of the Rokko Mountains. The cafés and shops you will see are converted from these homes.

## 5 Mt Rokko

Climb to the highest peak for panoramic views of Kobe from this 3,000-foot vantage point. A botanical garden, observation deck, aerial cable car and other outdoor activities can be enjoyed.

## 6 Sake Brewery Museum

Tour an original museum, showcasing Kobe's excellence in sake production. Here, you'll learn the history and production of this rice-based liquor through life-size exhibits.

## 7 Awajishima Island

At this largest island in the Seto Inland Sea, visitors marvel at the natural scenery, including the whirlpools of the Naruto Strait. The longest suspension bridge in the world links the island with Kobe.

## 8 Ishiyama-dera Temple

Founded in 749 as the headquarters of one of the Shingon Buddhist sects, this magnificent temple complex is situated on a mountaintop.

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