

CHINESE DESIGN

Grid pattern becomes Kyoto's infrastructure

By Kaylie Kruk

Kyoto has perfectly set up their city to establish a beautiful co-habitation of [natural and historical landscapes](#) with business and city structures. Since the Heian period in 794 when Kyoto was the capital of Japan, the city has maintained their grid pattern to fit the needs of the people.

During the Heian era, the layout of the city consisted of two symmetrical cities: Sakyo and Ukyo. These cities were laid out in a grid pattern which was modeled after a Chinese design and eventually became the foundation for Kyoto's infrastructure today.

This way of laying out the city was based on the system of "jobosei" and allowed for the division of the grid to create smaller streets. The Sakyo part of the city gradually became the town's center for residents' housing and some agriculture. They also constructed new streets called 'zushi' which extended into square blocks in the city to make rooms for even more housing and side streets.

From the Edo period under the Tokugawa Shogunate, the government started to notice the value of beautiful landmarks coinciding with natural landscapes. The popularity of visiting shrines and temples developed over time which established Kyoto's tourism pull.

To keep the coordination between the natural surroundings and city development, the government enforced laws maintaining the height and size of houses and office buildings to be no higher than two stories and no larger than three ken—a traditional way of measuring surface area.

After World War II, Kyoto did not suffer as much damage as other Japanese cities and most of its historical landmarks survived. However, the city started a project to improve roads, squares and main streets but kept the grid pattern of the infrastructure intact.

Today, the infrastructure and grid pattern that was meticulously planned thousands of years ago continues to thrive. Because of this, the city map is separated by perfectly squared sections making it easy for tourists or new people to the area to navigate the city.

To combat the growth and prosperity of Kyoto, the government of the city promotes the Kyoto Revitalization initiative. The goal of this initiative is the conserving natural landscapes, promoting culture and tourism, cherishing all the most attractive features of Kyoto as treasures of Japan and sharing them with the next generation.

Kyoto's traditional infrastructure has supported the city and its essentials for hundreds of years and, with everyone's help – tourists, visitors and residents alike – will continue to do so for hundred years to come.





Miffy Sakura Kitchen



The perfect shopping stop in Arashiyama

[The Miffy Sakura Kitchen](#) in Arashiyama has a great assortment of goods, from useful daily necessities to fun keepsakes. The Miffy Sakura Kitchen opened in 2018 and has a lot of fun features, like a cute store with a lot of unique products with Miffy themes. The store offers an array of exquisitely crafted products that are sure to delight both fans of the well-known Dutch figure and tourists wishing to take home a memento of their trip. Here's a closer look at some of the highlights.

Every Miffy lover should visit this store, which sells a wide selection of plush toys and dolls in different sizes. Both kids and adults will love these plush toys, which range in size from tiny, hand-sized to big, cuddly varieties. These stuffed animals are unique mementos that capture the essence of the café during specific seasons. Many of them are decked out in seasonal clothes, such as kimonos with cherry blossoms or autumnal leaf attire.

The Miffy Sakura Kitchen shop is also a haven for stationery lovers. Beautiful Miffy designs decorate a variety of stationery items, such as notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers and stickers. These things bring a whimsical and charming twist to everyday duties, whether they are used for work, school or personal purposes. The notebooks are fun to journal in or take notes in because they frequently have Miffy pictures on the covers and interior pages.

The store also sells a variety of accessories and clothing with Miffy themes. Popular products featuring seasonal designs include scarves, t-shirts and tote bags. Fans may flaunt their affection for Miffy wherever they go with these fashionable and entertaining wearable souvenirs. Particularly popular are the tote bags because of their adorable patterns and usefulness they're great for transporting books, groceries or personal stuff.

For those looking to add a touch of Miffy to their home decor, the shop offers a variety of options. From cushions and blankets to wall art and decorative figurines, there are plenty of items to choose from. These decor pieces not only brighten up living spaces but also serve as reminders of the joyful experience at Miffy Sakura Kitchen.

One of the most exciting aspects of shopping at the Miffy Sakura Kitchen is the availability of seasonal and limited edition items. During special times of the year, such as cherry blossom season, New Year, and other Japanese festivals, the shop releases exclusive merchandise that reflects the theme of the season. These limited edition items are highly sought after and make for unique souvenirs that capture the essence of a specific time and

place.

Given the café's culinary theme, it's fitting that the shop offers a variety of kitchenware and tableware. Shoppers can find Miffy-themed mugs, plates, bowls and cutlery sets that are perfect for adding a playful element to any meal. These items make excellent gifts and are also practical souvenirs that can be used daily. The designs often incorporate elements of Japanese culture, such as cherry blossoms and traditional patterns, blending the character's Dutch origins with Japanese aesthetics.

One of the best things about visiting Miffy Sakura Kitchen in Arashiyama is the delicious selection of baked goods in the café. Pastry enthusiasts will find paradise in the bakery department, which serves up a wide selection of delectable sweets that are both aesthetically pleasing and tasty. The distinctive Miffy design is carefully incorporated into every baked good, giving the whole eating experience an unique touch.

The fluffy, soft and Miffy-shaped bread rolls give a unique twist to the classic Japanese bread rolls. Red bean paste, chocolate or custard cream are common sweet fillings for these rolls. With each bite, they deliver a wonderful burst of flavor, making them ideal for a light breakfast or a quick snack.

In addition, seasonal baked products that are inspired by Japanese holidays and changing seasons may be found in the bakery department of Miffy Sakura Kitchen. Sakura-flavored delicacies, like cherry blossom cookies and sakura mochi buns, are available at the café during the cherry blossom season. Sweet potato or pumpkin-flavored snacks are available in the fall, and gingerbread Miffy cookies and other festive delicacies are available in the winter.



NISHIKI MARKET

Aromas that guide your senses

As you step into Nishiki Market, you're enveloped by a symphony of aromas that guide your sense. The dominant scent of fresh seafood greets you first, mingling with the subtle hints of grilled meats, soy sauce and pickled vegetables. This vibrant marketplace, affectionately known as Kyoto's kitchen, is a bustling hub where the air is thick with the tantalizing smells of Japan's rich culinary heritage.

This market has a history that dates back over 400 years. Originally a fish market, it grew and evolved, expanding its offerings beyond seafood to become a bustling hub for all kinds of food and culinary goods. This transformation mirrored the city's development, making the market an integral part of Kyoto's cultural and economic life. Beyond the culinary delights, the market also features a variety of shops selling souvenirs, sandals, socks and accessories, reflecting its evolution into a multifaceted destination.

Nishiki Market is a paradise for food lovers. The market spans five blocks and is home to over a hundred shops and restaurants. Here, you can find everything from fresh seafood and traditional Kyoto plates like yuba (tofu skin) and tsukemono (pickled vegetables) to artisanal sweets, coffee and snacks.

The market is a feast for all the senses. The vivid displays of food, the sizzling sounds from grills and the vendors calling out and giving free samples create a lively and immersive atmosphere. Every stall has its own story and unique culinary taste.

Respecting local etiquette

One important aspect of visiting Nishiki Market is understanding and respecting local customs. Unlike many markets around the world where eating while walking is common, Nishiki Market, like most places in Japan, has a strict no-eating-while-walking policy. This measure helps to keep the market clean and pleasant for everyone and also reflects cultural respect for the food being consumed.

On June 7, The New York Times highlighted these challenges in "Japan Likes Tourists, Just Not This Many." The article discusses how the influx of tourists is becoming unsustainable, specifically mentioning complaints from locals about grease stains on their clothing due to

tourists not following the rules. This issue underscores the importance of being a respectful visitor and adhering to the market's guidelines to ensure a harmonious experience for all.

The final stop: discovering Nishiki Tenmangu Shrine

At the end of the market, a hidden gem awaits: [Nishiki Tenmangu Shrine](#). This small temple, with its statue of Nade-ushi, provides a serene respite from the bustling market. The cow statue is believed to bring good luck, and visitors often touch it for blessings. This unexpected blend of spirituality and commerce adds a unique dimension to the market experience.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Nishiki Market is how it blends the old with the new. While many stores preserve traditional methods and recipes, there are also new and innovative shops that reflect contemporary trends. This blend not only attracts a diverse crowd of both locals and tourists but also ensures that the market remains a vibrant and evolving part of Kyoto's cultural landscape.

Nishiki Market is a must-visit destination for anyone traveling to Kyoto. It offers a rich tapestry of flavors, sights and cultural insights that provide a connection to the city's culinary and cultural traditions.

By respecting local customs and engaging with the market's offerings, you can enjoy an authentic and enriching experience that highlights the best of Kyoto.





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Ichigo Ichi

One time, one meeting. A cultural phrase that encourages one to value the unrepeatable nature of each moment