Nara | Visits by available time

Todaiji and Wakakusayama - confirm the day's schedule

Visits depend on the time available in your itinerary. Confirm the schedule and meeting points with your driver.

01 · Todaiji

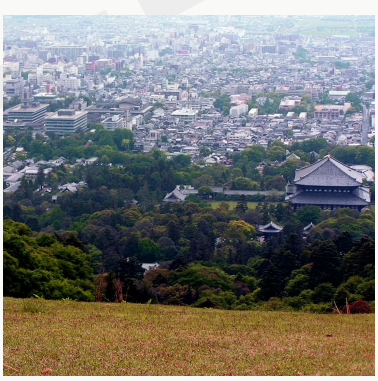
Start at the drop-off point confirmed by your driver, walk to the Great Buddha Hall, then return to the agreed pickup point.

02 · Wakakusayama to Todaiji by car

Allow about 60 minutes at Wakakusayama, then travel by car to Todaiji. Buy deer crackers to feed the deer and save some for those near Todaiji; use only deer crackers and do not chase the animals. If you stay at the foot of the hill without climbing, about 30 minutes is enough before continuing to the next stop. Entry to the hillside is ticketed; check seasonal opening and local conditions. The 60-minute stop does not guarantee reaching the summit.



Wakakusayama slopes and deer - Christophe95 / CC BY-SA 4.0



View from the hillside; climbing required - OhMyDeer; colour correction: FlyingToaster / CC BY-SA 2.1 JP

These are itinerary segments, not freely selectable tours. Confirm vehicle pickup before leaving the stop. Keep leftover deer crackers safely stored.

Nara | Todaiji & mochi

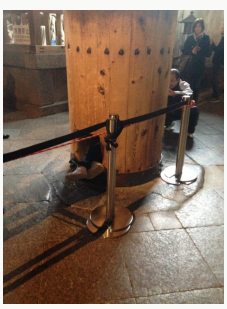
Temple discoveries, mochi and shopping streets

03 · Mochi & shopping streets

For visitors with time to spare, for example those planning lunch in Nara. Include this stop when the day’s schedule allows; confirm the timing with your driver. Visit Nakatanidou, then browse the nearby Mochiidono and Higashimuki shopping arcades. Return to the driver-confirmed meeting point by the agreed time.

Mochi pounding has no fixed timetable

The shop makes mochi according to sales, so pounding is not continuous and there are no guaranteed show times. Ask at the shop; if the wait is too long, enjoy the shopping streets instead. Keep to the meeting time agreed with your driver.



Pillar opening - Soramimi / CC BY-SA 4.0



Binzuru - Netherzone / CC BY-SA 4.0

How big is the Great Buddha?

The statue is almost 15 metres tall. Look up at the face and hands before stepping back to appreciate its scale.

Find the pillar with a hole

Inside the Great Buddha Hall, a hole in a pillar is traditionally compared to the Buddha’s nostril. Watch the experience or try only if appropriate and permitted; queues can take up your walking time.

Binzuru: the wooden figure by the entrance

Look for the wooden statue of Binzuru outside the Great Buddha Hall entrance. He is an arhat, a disciple of the Buddha, rather than a bodhisattva. A traditional prayer for health involves touching the corresponding part of the statue and then your own body. This is a religious custom, not a promise of healing. Touch only where current temple rules permit; do not climb on the statue.

Deer are part of the visit

Enjoy watching and photographing them at a little distance. Feed only deer crackers intended for them; keep bags and paper out of reach and do not tease or chase them.

Sources: todaiji.or.jp; pref.nara.lg.jp/site/park/2585.html; nakatanidou.jp. Images: Wikimedia Commons; resized to WebP. Licences: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/ and /by-sa/2.1/jp/.