



The Kyoto Loop

Local Kyoto based artist Ki-Yan's work is displayed in the Agora Place Kyoto Nijo lobby

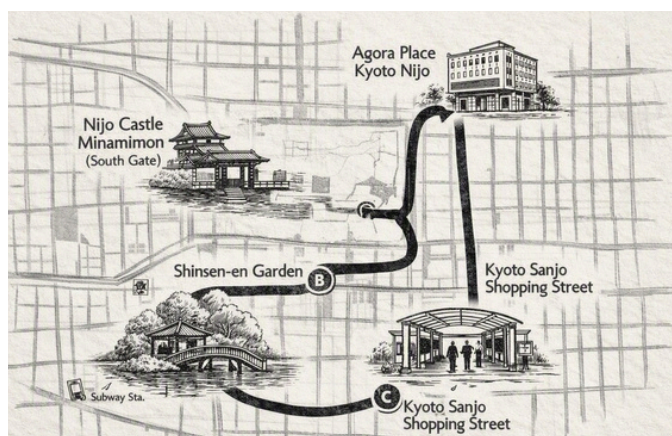
The author was a guest of the hotel: <https://agoraplace-kyoto-nijo.com/en/>

Everybody loves a loop while they travel. The idea of going back the same way you came when you're in a new place is counterintuitive, especially when that new place is Kyoto, Japan.

Kyoto is a traveller's city. In geographical terms, it's not as big as Japan's other main cities, however it still supports around 50 million tourists per year.

The city served as the capital of Japan for over 1000 years and as such, is bursting with culture and traditional industry shops selling goods like kimonos and tea bowls, as well as 14 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites.

In aid of our Senior's Special this month, we teamed up with Agora Place Kyoto Nijo Hotel to bring you an easy, low effort walking loop which you can do starting from the doorstep of your hotel.



Agora Place Kyoto Nijo

Practicality first, a so-called 'essential stay'. The goal here is to diminish the idea of 'heading out for the day', carrying a backpack of supplies, then coming back late at night exhausted and with blistered feet. The hotel offers breakfast bread boxes and coffee and is designed to be frequented throughout the day, and the rooms are set up as such too, minimal and efficient. There are a few other main cultural/attraction hubs in Kyoto like Shijo and Gion, but Nijo is where we will be heading, so Nijo is where we are staying.

Total loop walking time:
45 minutes, approx 3-3.5km

Nijo Castle

One of Kyoto's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Nijo Castle is no more than a ten-minute walk from the hotel. The site has several gardens with a corresponding number of photographers crouching for the perfect flow of water coming from the ponds, and of course Ninomaru Palace (no photos are allowed inside), both beautiful and informative, detailing samurai life and many depictions of tigers and leopards. It opens at 8:45am and gets busy fairly quickly, with many guided tour groups operating within. To break away, some skilful and elegant sidestepping should do the trick, or if the tour group is in your language, surely there is no harm in trailing behind and listening in. For example, a fun fact is many of the artworks of tigers in the palace were based purely on other depictions, as Japan didn't have tigers for firsthand sources.



Sanjo Shopping Street

A few streets down from the gardens you will find Sanjo Shopping Mall, running for about 800m undercover. There are a few great coffee houses and antique stores, but actual antique stores – not curated or attractive, ones where you literally have to dig for treasure. Indoor shopping malls are very common in Japan; however, Sanjo is different in that it's not crowded at all. It seems like a place local people do everyday shopping for bakeries, cafes, fruit, vegetables, and fish, and not for photos or to soak up the usual chaotic market atmosphere – for this, head to Nishiki Market. This will extend the loop an extra thirty minutes (not including shopping time); however, it is well worth it.



Shinsen-en Garden

While it's only small, perhaps taking a few minutes to walk around, these gardens historically hosted ceremonies and rituals for rainfall during droughts. If you could only see one Japanese Garden, Shinsen-en Garden has all the quintessential aspects covered: a vibrant red bridge, murky green ponds, wooden shrines, and fish that open their mouths at you expecting some of your bread box.