

Nonomiya-jinja Shrine

An ancient shrine with a black torii gate, a reminder of its Heian past. Pray to the miraculous divine stone.

The shrine has a black “kuroki” torii that is unusual even for Japan, made of unbarked sawtooth oak.

The Saga Arashiyama region on the west side of Kyoto is one of the country’s most popular sightseeing spots, with many visitors all year round. The area around the foot of Mount Ogura is covered with bamboo trees, and the green that fills your field of view combined with the peaceful rustling of leaves is sure to soothe the soul.

Nonomiya-jinja Shrine is an ancient shrine at the start of the “Chikurin no Michi” (Bamboo Forest Path) where visitors inevitably take photos. Various deities are enshrined here, including the god of health and learning, the god of matchmaking, the god of fertility and safe childbirth, and the god of economic fortune and entertainment. “Nonomiya” was the name of the place where imperial princesses, known as “Saigu”, stayed to purify themselves before being sent to serve at Ise-jingu Shrine on behalf of the emperors. This location was chosen as that sacred site at the beginning of the Heian Period (794–1185). Its black torii gate and surrounding brushwood fencing was also mentioned in “The Tale of Genji”, a Japanese literary classic. The black torii, representative of ancient times, has lasted to the present day. It is treasured as the oldest style of torii in Japan that still retains its bark.

Beside the main hall is a “Divine Stone” (Kameishi Turtle Stone); it is said that if you rub the stone and pray, your wish will be granted. Numerous people visit the shrine looking for a miracle and have rubbed the stone so much that it has become smooth. The grounds are an easy size to walk around. A visit to Nonomiya-jinja Shrine will take up little of your time, and with the view of its beautiful moss garden, will leave a lasting impression.



A divine stone that hears your wishes is called the “Kameishi” (Turtle Stone). Behind it hang wooden plaques with prayers for matchmaking or success in love.



This amulet features a woman dressed in the junihitoe kimono worn by court ladies in the Heian period, ¥1,000. This and all other shrine goods are blessed with the divine favor of the enshrined deities. (As amulets are sacred, please be careful not to touch them before you buy.)



The roughly 200m path between Okochi Sanso Villa and Nonomiya-jinja Shrine is called “Chikurin no Michi” (Bamboo Forest Path). Many people, impressed by the beautiful bamboo scenery along the path, post their photos online.

Annual events

Jan 1 Saitan-sai New Year Ceremony
0:00 Pray for peace and the safety of the region and family.

Feb 3 Setsubun-sai Festival
14:00 Ward off evil and bring in good fortune. From 11:00–14:00, sweet red bean soup is served (admission fee required).

May 19 Saga-matsuri Festival (Shinko-sai Festival)
10:00 Held at the otabisho (place for portable shrines to rest).

May 26 Saga-matsuri Festival (Kanko-sai Festival)
10:00 A parade of mikoshi (portable shrine) and kenboko (decorated spear) from Atago-jinja and Nonomiya-jinja Shrines through Arashiyama's Sagano region.

Jun 30 Summer Purification
15:00 Pray for a summer of good health and wash away evil and sins.

Oct 20 Saigu Procession
12:00 A procession of people in historical costumes starts at the shrine, passing JR Saga-Arashiyama Station, and then to Togetsukyo Bridge. Purification ritual at 14:00.

Nov 12 Momiji (Autumn Leaves) Festival

Nov 23 Niiname-sai Festival
15:00 Give thanks to the harvest and wish for a prosperous business.

Mid Dec Kyoto Arashiyama Hanatouro
Illuminations and special evening viewings of shrines and temples until 20:00

Dec 31 Joya-sai New Year's Eve Ceremony
23:50 To wash away evil and sins, and to give thanks for making it through the year unharmed.



Oct 20, Saigu Procession

*The shrine is a place for prayer, so please do not disturb others, take home your trash and follow the etiquette of worship.

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