

Osaka

Osaka Prefecture · Japan

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Osaka is Japan's third-largest city, built where the Yodo River meets Osaka Bay. It grew for centuries as the country's trading and merchant capital, and it still feels less formal and more food-focused than Tokyo.

A few days here mix a real castle, dense shopping streets, and a canal-side entertainment district that never fully quiets down. The 16th-century warlord *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* built his base of power here, and Osaka Castle still marks the spot. Osaka suits travelers who want a big city with an easy, informal feel, and who plan to eat as much as they sightsee.

When to visit

Spring (March–May) and autumn (October–November) are mild and the best times to visit. Summer is hot and humid, with occasional typhoons in September. Winter is cold but rarely freezing, and stays dry.

Plan around the **cherry blossoms** in late March and early April, when parks across the city fill with visitors for hanami season. Days get long and busy, so book accommodation well ahead.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 13° Feels like 5°	1° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	9° / 16° Feels like 6°	1° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Fair Fair for sightseeing	13° / 19° Feels like 10°	4° / 0°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 24°	9° / 4°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 27°	14° / 10°	Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 30°	19° / 15°	14 rainy days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
July	Fair Fair for sightseeing	30° / 34° Feels like 34°	23° / 20°	15 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · Calm winds
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	32° / 35° Feels like 35°	25° / 21°	13 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · Calm winds
September	Good Good for sightseeing	28° / 32°	21° / 16°	13 rainy days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 27°	15° / 10°	Calm winds
November	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 21°	9° / 4°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Fair Fair for sightseeing	11° / 16° Feels like 8°	3° / -1°	Dry air · Calm winds

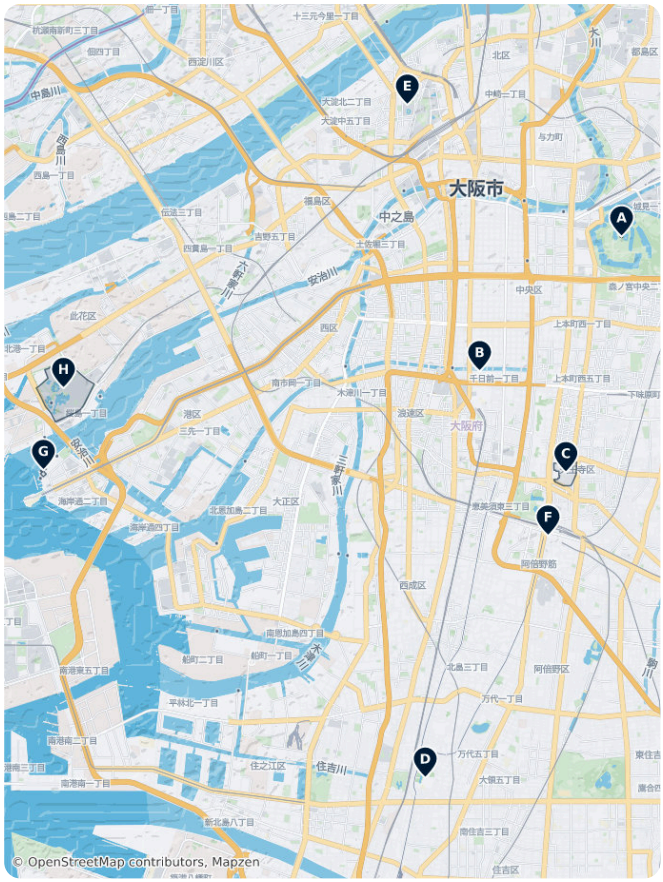
Best months: May, October

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

A Osaka Castle is Osaka's most recognizable landmark, rebuilt in concrete in the 1930s on the site of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's 16th-century fortress. The surrounding park is one of the best spots in the city for

cherry blossoms.



B Dotonbori is the canal-side district that defines Osaka's nightlife, lined with neon signs, street food stalls, and the giant Glico running-man billboard.

C Shitennoji is one of Japan's oldest Buddhist temples, first built in 593 by *Prince Shotoku*. Its five-story pagoda and gates have been rebuilt several times but follow the original 6th-century layout.

D Sumiyoshi Taisha is a Shinto shrine dating back over 1,800 years, known for architecture that predates Buddhist influence on Japanese shrine design.

E Floating Garden Observatory, the observation deck atop the Umeda Sky Building, connects two towers with a glass walkway 170 meters up, with wide views over the city.

F Harukas 300, the observation deck near the top of Abeno Harukas — Japan's tallest building until 2023 — gives a similar view from the south side of the city.

G Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan is one of the world's largest aquariums, built around a central tank that recreates the Pacific Ocean, with whale sharks as the main draw.

H Universal Studios Japan is a full-day theme park built around Hollywood franchises, with dedicated lands for Harry Potter, Super Nintendo World, and Minions.

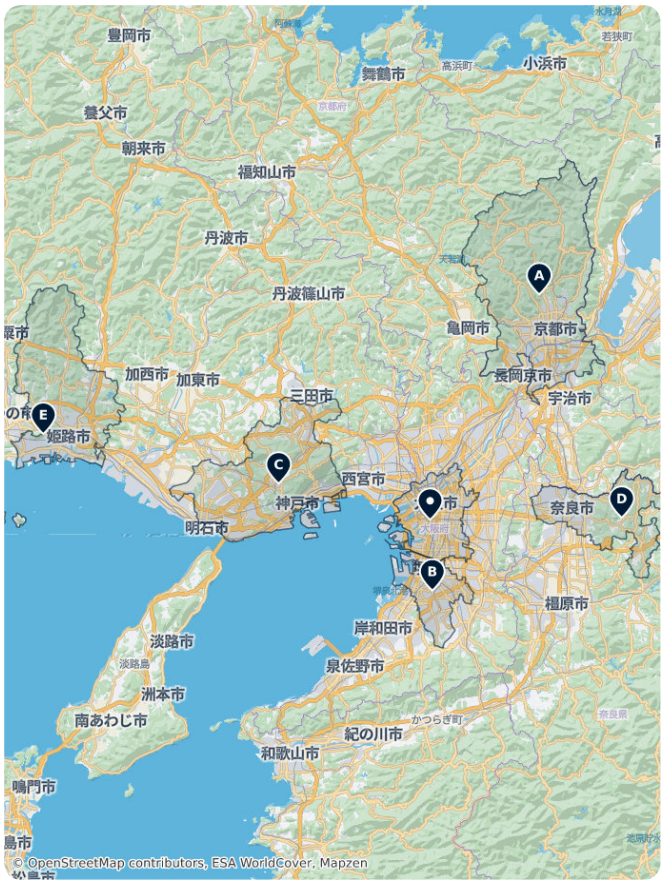
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What to experience

- Take an evening cruise on the Tombori River Cruise to see the Dotonbori canal's neon signs from the water.
- Join the crowds for hanami (cherry blossom viewing) along the Okawa River at Kema Sakuranomiya Park in late March and early April.
- Soak in the themed baths at Spa World, a bathhouse complex with pools styled after different countries.
- Catch a Grand Sumo Tournament, held at Osaka's EDION Arena every March — one of only six such tournaments held nationwide each year.

Day trips

Osaka sits close to several of Japan's most famous historic destinations, so day trips are easy by train.



- A Kyoto — Japan's former imperial capital, about 15 minutes away by Shinkansen or 30 minutes by regular train. Come for temples, shrines, and the geisha district of Gion.
- B Sakai — a quieter city about 30 minutes away by train, home to the Mozu-Furuichi kofun tomb cluster, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that includes the largest keyhole-shaped tomb in Japan.
- C Kobe — a port city about 30 minutes away, known for Kobe beef, a compact Chinatown, and views from Mount Rokko.
- D Nara — Japan's first permanent capital, about 40 minutes away by train, with a park full of free-roaming deer and a giant bronze Buddha at Todai-ji temple.
- E Himeji — home to Himeji Castle, Japan's best-preserved original castle and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, about 50 minutes away by direct train.

Getting there

- **By air**: Kansai International Airport (KIX) is the main gateway for international flights, on an artificial island in Osaka Bay about 40 km from the city center. The Nankai and JR airport express trains reach central Osaka in 35–45 minutes; a limousine bus takes about an hour. Osaka Itami Airport, closer to the center, handles domestic flights only.
- **By train**: Shin-Osaka Station is the city's Shinkansen (bullet train) hub, with frequent high-speed connections to Tokyo (about 2.5 hours), Kyoto (15 minutes), and Hiroshima (about 1.5 hours).
- **By bus**: Long-distance highway buses connect Osaka to most major Japanese cities. They are usually cheaper than the train but slower, and most arrive at or near Osaka Station or Namba.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: A dense subway and JR loop-line network covers the city. Buy a rechargeable **ICOCA** card, or tap in with a contactless credit card or phone at most gates — this is far easier than buying individual tickets. Osaka Metro
- **Taxi**: Widely available and metered, but expensive for longer distances. Useful late at night once trains stop running.
- **On foot**: Central districts like Dotonbori, Shinsaibashi, and Umeda are dense and walkable. Cycling is possible on flat ground but less common among visitors, since traffic and narrow streets make it less comfortable than in other Japanese cities.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The core tourist districts (Dotonbori, Shinsaibashi, Umeda, Namba) are compact and easy to cover on foot, with the subway filling in for longer hops.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The city center is flat, but heavy traffic and narrow streets mean cycling is less common among visitors than in some other Japanese cities.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: No. Japan drives on the **left**, and Osaka's public transit covers the city better than a car could. Save a rental for day trips into rural Kansai.
- **Parking**: Multi-story car parks near stations charge by the hour and fill up fast; look for blue "P" signs. Street parking is scarce.
- **Restrictions**: None specific to tourists, but many older central streets are too narrow for comfortable driving.

Food & drink

Osaka is known across Japan as the city of "kuidaore" — roughly, "eat until you drop." Street food and casual dining are taken as seriously here as fine dining is elsewhere.

This is the birthplace of **takoyaki**, battered octopus balls, and okonomiyaki, a savory grilled pancake. For a concentrated taste of local food culture, browse the stalls at Kuromon Ichiba Market, a covered market known for fresh seafood and quick bites. For deep-fried kushikatsu skewers, head to the old-fashioned streets of Shinsekai.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Sushi · 寿司 (Sushi)
Vinegared rice paired with raw fish, seafood, or vegetables; ranges from casual conveyor-belt shops to high-end counters.

Ramen · ラーメン (Ramen)
Wheat noodles in a meat or fish-based broth, with countless regional styles.

Tempura · 天ぷら (Tempura)
Lightly battered, deep-fried seafood and vegetables.

Okonomiyaki · お好み焼き (Okonomiyaki)
A savory grilled pancake with cabbage and a choice of fillings, popular in Osaka and Hiroshima.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Onigiri · おにぎり (Onigiri)
Rice balls wrapped in seaweed, often with a savory filling; a everyday convenience-store staple.

Yakitori · 焼き鳥 (Yakitori)
Grilled skewers of chicken, popular at izakaya alongside beer or sake.

DRINKS

Green Tea · 緑茶 (Ryokucha)
The everyday non-alcoholic drink, served hot or cold.

Sake · 日本酒 (Nihonshu)
Rice wine served warm or chilled, a traditional accompaniment to a meal.

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Safety & health

Osaka is very safe for tourists, including at night. Violent crime is rare, and it's common to see people leave bags or laptops to reserve seats in cafes.

The main risks are petty: pickpocketing in crowds like Dotonbori on weekend nights, and touts in Shinsekai and parts of Namba trying to lead tourists to overpriced bars. Politely decline and keep walking.

History

Osaka's history starts with its water. It sat at the mouth of the Yodo River, and briefly served as Japan's imperial capital in the 7th century. It later grew into the country's main trading port, moving rice, sake, and goods from across Japan.

The city's turning point came in 1583, when the warlord *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* built Osaka Castle as his base for unifying Japan. After his death, the Tokugawa shogunate besieged and destroyed the castle in 1615, ending the Toyotomi line. Rebuilt over the centuries, today's structure dates mostly from a 1931 reconstruction.

Osaka's merchant class thrived under Tokugawa rule, even without high social status, and shaped the city's food-first, informal culture that still defines it. Shitennoji, founded in 593, and the ancient shrine Sumiyoshi Taisha predate all of this, tying the city to Japan's earliest recorded history.

Country facts

Here are the essentials for traveling in Japan:

CURRENCY
JPY ¥

EMERGENCY
118

ELECTRICITY



Type A / Type B
100 V · 60 Hz

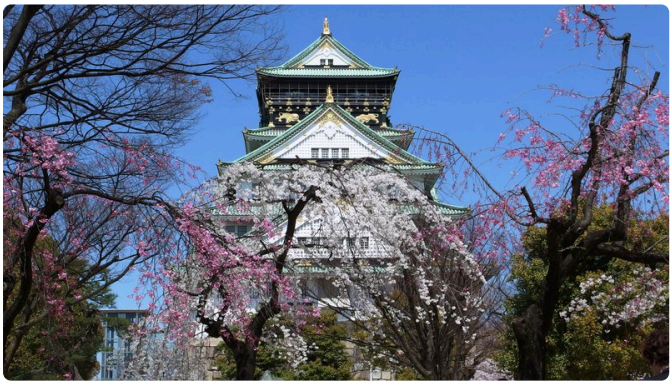
LANGUAGES
Japanese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Osaka Essentials

Osaka features a mix of 16th-century history at Osaka Castle and ancient spiritual sites like Sumiyoshi Taisha and Shitennoji. Modern landmarks include the 300-meter Abeno Harukas and the Umeda Sky Building's circular observatory. For entertainment, the city offers Universal Studios Japan and the Kaiyukan aquarium. Culinary and shopping hubs center on the neon-lit canals of Dotonbori, the traditional stalls of Kuromon Ichiba Market, and the retro atmosphere of Shinsekai.





A Osaka Castle

Historic castle and museum featuring a five-story main keep built atop a stone foundation and surrounded by moats and fortifications. Originally established in 1583, the current tower houses a collection of cultural assets and an observation deck on the eighth floor.

1, 540-0002 大阪市, JP (34.68728, 135.52584)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00

osakacastle.net/english/, +81 6 6941 3044



B Dotonbori

Lively entertainment, dining, and shopping district known for vibrant neon lights and iconic signboards. Features numerous restaurants serving traditional Japanese cuisine along a canal.

(Unnamed Road), Osaka, Japan (34.66869, 135.50205)



C Universal Studios Japan

Universal Studios in Japan is one of only four theme parks the studios own across the whole world.

Sakurajima 2-1-33, 55-0031 Konohana Ward
(34.66636, 135.43230)

usj.co.jp, +81 570-200-606



D Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan

One of the most popular aquariums in the world. It is home to more than 15 tanks, each representing a different region with various kinds of...

1-1-10 Kaigandori, Minato-ku, Osaka City 552-0022 Japan
(34.65503, 135.42894)

Mo–Su 10:00–20:00

kaiyukan.com/language/eng/, 0665765501



E Glico Man Sign

Iconic neon billboard in Dotonbori depicting a runner crossing a finish line. Originally installed in 1935 as an advertisement for Glico confectionery, the current LED version is the sixth iteration of this landmark.

Osaka, Japan (34.66893, 135.50106)



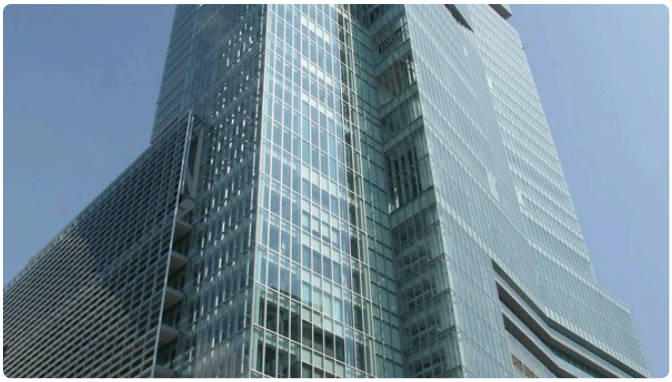
F Floating Garden Observatory

More than 170 meters tall and 40 storeys high, this architectural wonder is one of the most imposing sights in Osaka.

1-1-88, Oyodonaka, Kita-ku, Osaka, Japan
(34.70545, 135.48994)

Mo–Su 09:30–22:30

skybldg.co.jp/en/, +81 6 6440 3855



G Abeno HARUKAS

With its 60 floors, this is the tallest building in Japan. Occupying top three floors, Harukas 300 is an observation deck offering...

545-0052 大阪市 (Osaka) (34.64592, 135.51413)

Mo–Su 09:00–22:00

abenoharukas-300.jp, +81 6 6624 1111



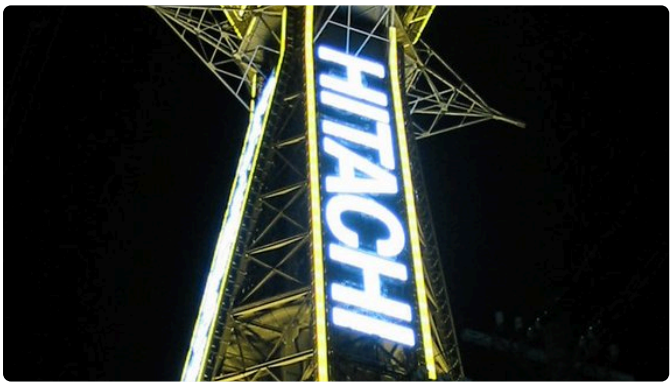
H Kuromon Ichiba Market

If you're looking for the freshest ingredients, this is the place to go. Whether it's meat, vegetables, fish, eggs, they have it all.

542-0073 2-4-1, Nipponbashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi, Osaka (34.66533, 135.50698)

Su Closed

kuromon.com, +81-6-6631-0007



I Tsutenkaku

One of the best-known landmarks in Osaka, this 103-meter-high tower provides amazing views of the city.

(34.65254, 135.50631)

Mo–Su 09:00–21:00

tsutenkaku.co.jp



J Shinsekai

A very atmospheric part of Osaka, this district was built in style of Western cities, mainly Paris and New York.

Osaka, Japan (34.65209, 135.50619)



K Sumiyoshi Taisha

Founded in 211 AD, this magnificent shrine is dedicated to three deities protecting the nation, sea voyagers and celebrating waka poetry.

2 Chome-9-89 Sumiyoshi, Sumiyoshi Ward, Osaka, Osaka Prefecture 558-0045, Japan (34.61256, 135.49294)

sumiyoshitaisha.net, +81 6 6672 0753



L Shitennoji

One of the oldest Buddhist temples in Japan. The temple was completely rebuilt in 1963, but it still retains its former charm.

Osaka, Japan (34.65473, 135.51651)

Apr-Sep Mo–Su	08:30–16:30
Oct-Mar Mo–Su	08:30–16:00

shitennoji.or.jp, +81 667710066



M Shinsaibashi Suji Shopping Street

A 600-meter-long covered shopping arcade featuring boutiques, department stores, and pharmacies. This retail district has served as a commercial center for over 380 years, connecting the Shinsaibashi and Namba areas.

Osaka, Japan (34.67422, 135.50137)

shinsaibashi-noh.jp



N Namba Yasaka Shrine

Shinto shrine notable for its 12-meter-high stage shaped like a massive lion's head. The lion's open mouth is symbolically believed to swallow evil spirits, attracting visitors seeking success in business or education.

(Unnamed Road), Osaka, Japan (34.66146, 135.49671)

Editor's Choice

This curated selection features Osaka's diverse cultural and recreational landmarks. It includes the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art's extensive collections and Sakuya Konohana Kan, one of the world's largest greenhouses. The list also highlights Tsurumi Ryokuchi Park, the site of the 1990 International Garden and Greenery Exposition, and the educational Tsunami and Storm Surge Disaster Prevention Station. For relaxation, Spa World offers themed international baths, while Ōgimachi Park provides centrally located green space and large-scale playground facilities.





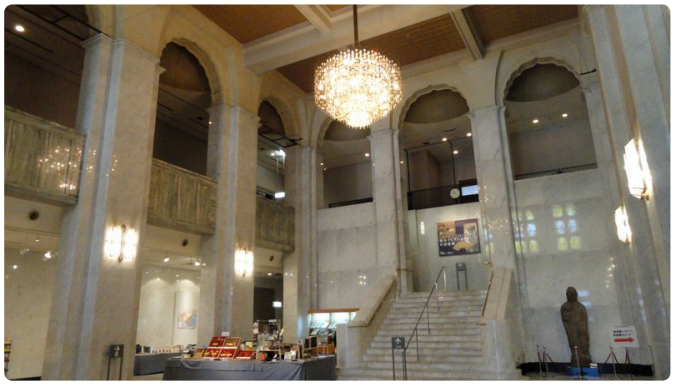
A Spa World

A large indoor spa that offers every treatment imaginable, hot bathing areas, refreshments, and even an overnight stay.

Janjan alley, Naniwa Ward, Osaka, Ebisu-higashi 3-chome 556-0002, Japan (34.64990, 135.50562)

Mo–Su 10:00–08:45

spaworld.co.jp, +81 6 6631 0001



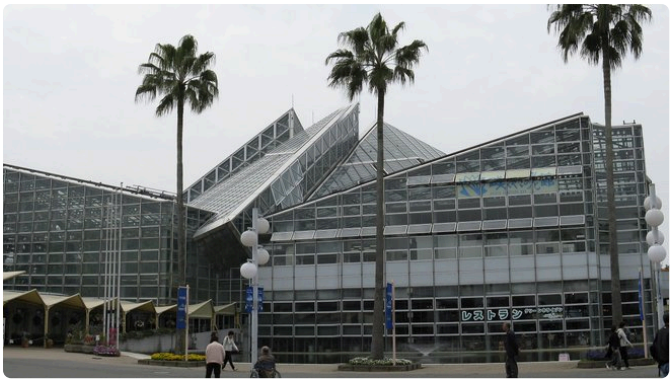
B Osaka Municipal Museum of Art

The Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts is a museum located in Tennōji Park, Tennōji-ku, Osaka, Japan.

Osaka, Japan (34.65006, 135.51054)

Tu–Su 09:30–17:00

osaka-art-museum.jp, +81 6-6771-4874



C Sakuya Konohana Kan

The Sakuya Konohana Kan is a botanical garden set within one of the world's largest greenhouses, located in Tsurumi Ryokuchi park at 2-163...

Osaka, Japan (34.71006, 135.57353)

Tu–Su 10:00–16:30



D Tsurumi Ryokuchi Park

Site of the 1990 International Garden and Greenery Exposition, this expansive park features a central pond, a landmark windmill, and international garden displays representing various countries.

Osaka, Japan (34.71339, 135.57474)



E Tsunami and Storm Surge Disaster Prevention Station

An educational center and museum which seeks to educate the general public about the natural disasters that have occurred in Osaka.

(Unnamed Road), Osaka, Japan (34.68215, 135.48490)

Tu–Su 10:00–16:00

tsunami-osaka.jp/index_en.php



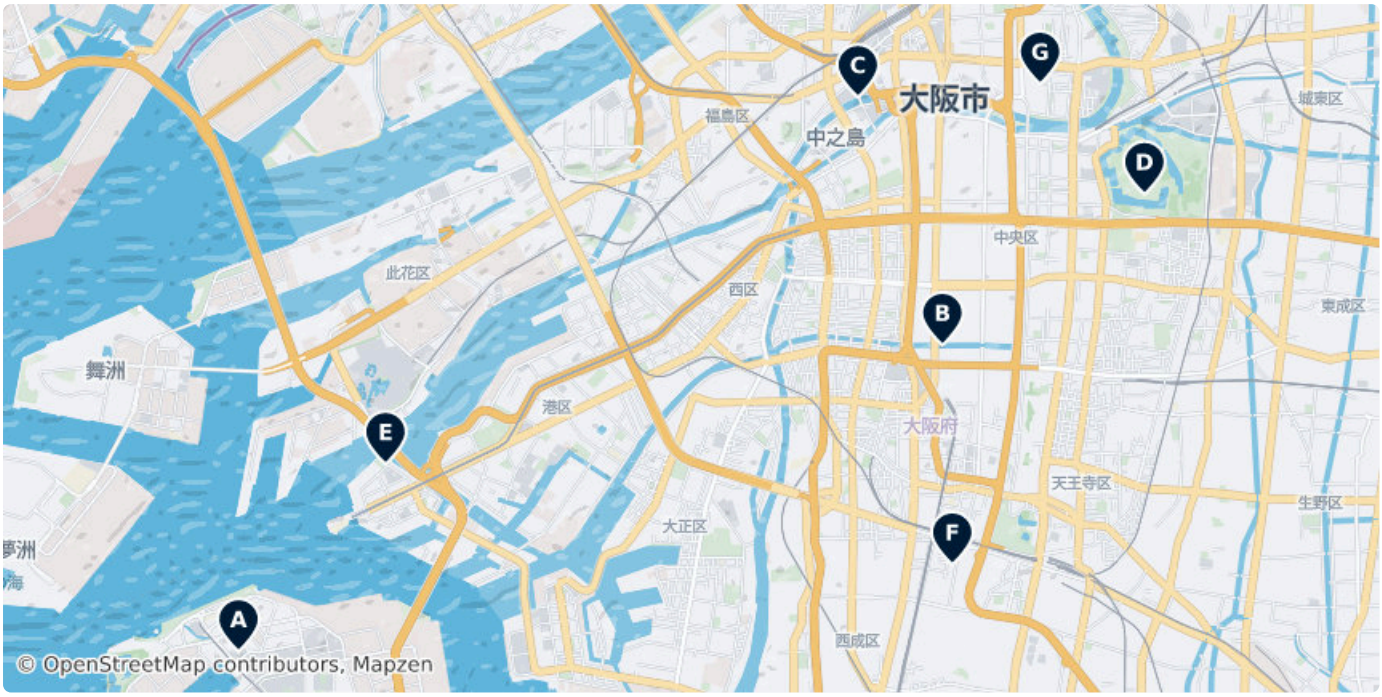
F Ōgimachi Park

An urban green space adjacent to Kids Plaza Osaka featuring large-scale climbing structures, colorful playground equipment, and open lawns for recreation.

(Unnamed Road), Osaka, Japan (34.70402, 135.50899)

Osaka Landmarks

Osaka's landmarks span centuries of history, from the Edo-period Octopus Pine monument to the 252-meter-high Cosmo Tower observation deck. This collection includes the historic Hankai Tramway, the city's last remaining tram line, and sites honoring influential figures like Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Nobel laureate Yasunari Kawabata. Explore the geographical curiosity of Mount Tenpo, once recognized as the world's smallest mountain, and the Ebisubashi Bridge, a central crossing in the Dotonbori district since the early 17th century.





A Observation Deck Cosmo Tower

If you want to enjoy a fascinating view of the whole city and its surroundings, you should visit this building's observation deck.

Japan (34.63808, 135.41472)

wtc-cosmotower.com, +816 6615 6055



B Ebisubashi Bridge

Linking two bustling neighborhoods, this bridge is a popular tourist sight.

Osaka, Japan (34.66906, 135.50129)

city.osaka.lg.jp/kensetsu/page/0000021695.html

C 蛸の松

A stone monument and successor pine tree marking the site of a famous Edo-period landmark near the Dojima River, named for its sprawling, octopus-like branches.

(34.69410, 135.49090)

D 豊臣秀吉像

Bronze statue of the 16th-century warlord and unifier of Japan, located at Hokoku Shrine within the grounds of Osaka Castle.

(34.68431, 135.52614)

E 天保山跡

Site of a man-made hill created in 1831 during river dredging. At 4.53 meters high, it is officially recognized as one of the lowest mountains in Japan.

(34.65701, 135.43280)



F Hankai Line

Hankai Tramway Co., Ltd. is a company which owns two tramway lines in the cities of Osaka and Sakai, Osaka, Japan.

Osaka, Japan (34.64686, 135.50252)

hankai.co.jp

G 川端康成生誕之地

Stone monument marking the 1899 birthplace of Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese author to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature.

(34.69545, 135.51329)

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