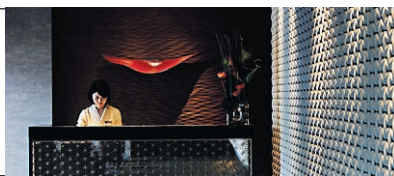


HIGHLIGHT

The myriad works of local artisans that grace the hotel provide a real sense of being part of a unique city, something many other establishments around the world fail, or don't bother, to achieve.

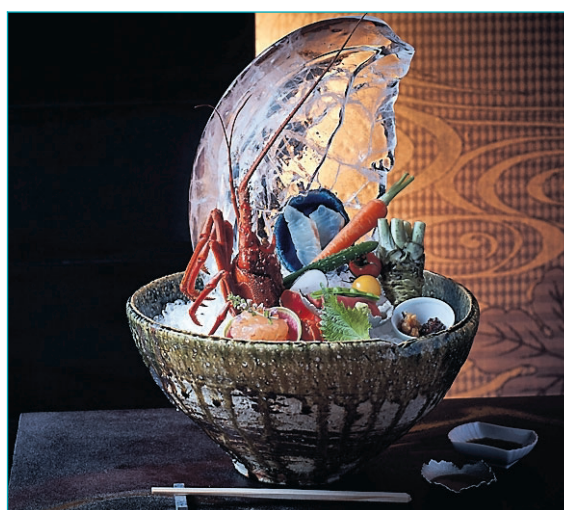


LOWLIGHT

The giddily high tariffs for a room at the hotel may be out of reach of most travellers, unless they're willing to splurge, though those who can afford it will be well pleased.

THE HOTEL

Review



THE FOOD

In a city renowned for its cuisine there's no shortage of dining options but the Ritz-Carlton Kyoto's refined in-house Mizuki restaurant, encompassing kaiseki, teppanyaki, tempura and sushi in one elegant and sizeable space, represents a worthy match for external eateries. If you do hanker for western food there's the stylish La Locanda, an Italian restaurant and, more casually, the Lobby Lounge, specialising in teas and exquisite cakes, pastries and other treats from Pierre Herme Paris.

STEPPING OUT

Many of the city's main attractions are nearby, such as Pontocho, a pedestrianised laneway traditionally frequented by geisha, and Gion in the historic Higashiyama district, its atmospheric, dimly lit streets lined with well-preserved machiya, or traditional townhouses. Both districts feature some of the city's finest restaurants and bars. Elsewhere, Kawaramachi, the city's vibrant main shopping district is within walking distance of the hotel.

THE VERDICT

Not unlike Kyoto itself, this well-located Ritz-Carlton is all class, even though such panache in this part of Japan tends to come with a matching price-tag. The hotel's commitment to local art provides it with a distinct sense of place from the moment you arrive. A stay here, let alone a visit to Kyoto, can be difficult to forget.

ESSENTIALS

Doubles start from ¥68,000 a night. 543 Hokodencho, Nakagyo Ward, Kyoto. See ritzcarlton.com/kyoto

Anthony Dennis visited as a guest of the Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto, Visit Kyoto (kyoto.travel/en), ANA All Nippon Airways (ana.co.jp) and Experience Japan Travel (experiencejapan.travel.com).



TripAdvisor Traveller Rating



Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto

By Anthony Dennis

THE PLACE

The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto, self-styled as Japan's first "luxury urban resort", is one of the former ancient Japanese capital's ritziest hotels, with room rates to match. This outwardly unremarkable, low-level and boutique-like establishment, at a relatively meagre 134 guest rooms, opened almost four years ago. Its arrival roughly coincided with a surge in foreign visitor numbers to Kyoto.

But a combination of factors such as building restrictions, with modern structures unable to surpass the height of the city's historic temples, has meant the hotel has faced relatively little competition since its opening, allowing for high room rates.

THE LOCATION

The hotel's location is one of the best in Kyoto, nestled beside the Kamogawa River, which flows through Kyoto with the contiguous Higashiyama mountains, and Shinto Buddhist temple spires, as its captivating backdrop. Nearby are some of the city's most popular attractions as well as some of the best shopping in Japan.

THE SPACE

Kyoto, with its irresistible human scale, cultivated cuisine, deep culture and multiple UNESCO World Heritage-listed sites, remains the essence of Japan. The owners of the Ritz-Carlton are to be commended for the effort made to commission Kyoto's wealth of

artisans to design and create the hotel's sumptuous decorations and fittings, including some impressive sculptural and traditional lighting.

THE ROOM

Hotel rooms in Japan can be notoriously small but that's not the case at the Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto. The dimensions of the luxuriously appointed rooms and suites begin at a generous 45 square metres. Many of the rooms feature pleasing views of the river and mountains while others look out to a Japanese Zen garden. For the more adventurous guest, traditional tatami-matted suites with futons are available, an experience all western visitors really should try at least once.

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