

Life in Miyama

The town of Miyama is located in a mountainous, once largely isolated area roughly 50 kilometers north of the city of Kyoto. The town encompasses dozens of small villages and hamlets across the Yura River valley with a combined population of around 3,500. Miyama is famous for the traditional thatched-roof houses that were once common throughout the area and remain in residential use in places such as the historic Kayabuki no Sato village.

Miyama is no longer as secluded as in past centuries and can be easily reached by train and bus from Kyoto. The near-to-nature, sustainable, and community-focused way of life long practiced in the area remains very much alive. Much of the food produced in Miyama is consumed locally, natural resources are managed with future generations in mind, and customs and rituals are maintained by local communities. The town's residents are committed to protecting this lifestyle while sharing it with travelers through a variety of experiential programs.

Miyama has been recognized for encouraging environmentally conscious living through safeguarding its heritage, including practices such as traditional agriculture. In addition, the town is internationally noted for its sustainability initiatives. In 2021, Miyama was named one of the world's Best Tourism Villages by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in recognition of the municipality's efforts to promote sustainable tourism that preserves culture, traditions, and biodiversity while empowering its residents.