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# A trip to Osaka

by Gary Boyle



Photo by Karnjana Karnjanatawe

Read the following story by Karnjana Karnjanatawe from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Osaka is always listed among the top leisure destinations for Asian travellers to Japan. Japan's third largest city after Tokyo and Yokohama, Osaka is filled with cultural and historical sites. It also buzzes with modern lifestyles and countless choices of food and shopping outlets.

### HISTORY BIT

Located in the Kansai Region, Osaka is one of the country's ancient capitals like Kyoto and Nara. First-time travellers often start in Dotonbori, a hub of entertainment and eateries. Dotonbori's origins date back to 1612 when a local businessman named Yasui Doton created a canal for transportation and trading. Unfortunately, Doton died, but the canal project was carried on by Doton's cousins. The canal thus was named Dotonbori, or Doton Canal.

Dotonbori was designated as the entertainment district of Osaka. At present, restaurants and pubs line both sides of the canal and on small alleys in Dotonbori. The place is more crowded at night. Neon lights and large billboards covering the buildings of Dotonbori brighten up the area.

Among those billboards, one of the highlights seems to be the Glico Man, a 20m sign erected in 1935. The billboard shows a running man in a victory pose on a blue racetrack. It faces Dotonbori canal next to the Ebisu Bridge. Visitors to the area like to take pictures of and with the Glico Man. The billboard is one of Osaka's popular landmarks.

## MUST-SEE STUFF

Another must-see is Osaka Castle. The building was constructed in 1583. Although the five-storey castle was destroyed and rebuilt several times because of wars and fire, its history and the beauty of the structure live on today. Historical records and old items are on show in the museum zone inside the castle.

Osaka is also the birthplace of Bunraku, Japanese traditional puppet theatre. Each half-life-size doll is played by up to three puppeteers. The puppets perform along with a chanted dramatic narrative accompanied by shamisen, a three-stringed traditional Japanese lute. One of the best places to experience Bunraku is in the National Bunraku Theatre in the city.

Food in Osaka is second to none. In fact, the choices are plenty and contribute to the city's reputation as the Kitchen of Japan. People in Osaka are also passionate about food. There is a word to describe the culture as *kuidaore*, meaning "eat until you drop". Mouth-watering meals can be seen everywhere, especially sashimi, ramen or popular local specialities like takoyaki (octopus dumplings) and okonomiyaki (pan-fried pancake). Prepare to gain weight even on a short trip to Osaka.

Kuromon Ichiba Market in Osaka is always crowded. Known for its abundance of fresh seafood and local meals, the market is about 600m long and features more than 150 food stalls and restaurants that offer various choices of sashimi and freshly cooked meals. Prices are clearly shown on the menu or on large labels put on top of each raw food. The market also has stalls offering dried and fresh fruits, snacks, grilled sweet potatoes and beverages like green tea. It is a place where visitors can enjoy the ambience of street food.

A trip to Osaka would not be complete without a visit to nearby cities. Within a short drive, one can even visit popular attractions of the two old capitals, Nara and Kyoto, in a day.

Osaka is a destination where visitors can easily fall in love with Japanese culture, heritage sites and eateries. A one-time trip is never be enough.

### Section 1: Read through the story and answer the following questions.

1. How many Japanese cities are bigger than Osaka? .....
2. Yasui Doton created and completed the Doton Canal. True or false? .....
3. Which Osaka billboard attracts tourists? .....

4. What was built in 1583? .....
5. What musical instrument is played at puppet shows? .....
6. Which Japanese word means 'eat until you drop'? .....
7. Where can you buy sashimi? .....
8. According to the writer, one trip to Osaka is enough. True or false? .....

**Section 2: Write the noun form of the following words.**

9. buzzes ..... 10. brighten ..... 11. destroyed ..... 12. perform..... 13. popular .....

**Section 3: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.**

From the outside, Osaka Aquarium does not look ...14..., but it is home to more than 30,000 creatures including penguins, dolphins and two whale sharks. Visitors enter through an underwater tunnel and ...15... inside, the ...16... is the huge Pacific Ocean tank. Visitors can view from the 8th floor to the 4th floor to see the whale sharks from every ...17.... They ...18... among other creatures like hammerhead sharks and schools of mackerel, while other fish were ...19... on the sand bed.

- |                  |             |             |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 14. a. that big  | b. this big | c. bigger   |
| 15. a. now       | b. once     | c. be       |
| 16. a. highlight | b. best     | c. most     |
| 17. a. angle     | b. angle    | c. view     |
| 18. a. swimming  | b. swim     | c. swims    |
| 19. a. sleep     | b. slept    | c. sleeping |

**Section 4: Find words that match the following definitions.**

20. very old .....
21. a long passage dug in the ground and filled with water .....
22. a model of a person that can be made to move.....
23. a large quantity .....
24. the history, traditions and qualities of a country .....

For the answers, find the story online at [www.bangkokpost.com/learning](http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning). If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at [garyb@bangkokpost.co.th](mailto:garyb@bangkokpost.co.th)