

COMFORT TOUR

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2024 GARDEN AND ART SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN

Visit internationally renowned Japanese gardens and art museums during the blazing autumn colours. A cultural experience with a touch of luxury and an easy pace.

"The tour exceeded our expectation and will be remembered for the best tour of our lives."

— Ian Woodroffe



DURATION

15 days



THEME

Autumn Tours, Garden & Art Tours



GROUP SIZE

Min 4 - Max 8



TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Japanese gardens at autumn's peak

Visit Japan's best gardens including Rikugi-en in Tokyo, Koraku-en in Okayama and Kenroku-en in Kanazawa for the best autumn displays.



Travel at a slower pace with a touch of luxury

Japan's best international-standard art museums such as Miho Museum and Adachi Museum of Art as well as small boutique galleries including Nezu Museum of Art and Itchiku Kubota Museum.



A visit to one of Japan's most highly prized pottery towns, Bizen

You will spend time at highly awarded potter's studio and have conversations with the artists.



Overnight stay at Naoshima

Experience magical moments at an outstanding contemporary art island of Naoshima and stay at a sublime ryokan.



Mt Fuji at Kawaguchiko

Visit some exquisite art museums with a background of Mt Fuji in autumn leaves in Kawaguchiko.

Ancient capital Kyoto

Visit some of the iconic sites of Kyoto such as the Pavilion at autumn's peak.

[SEE FULL TOUR ITINERARY](#)

TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2024 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour of Japan is specifically designed to showcase exquisite Japanese gardens against the background of gorgeous autumn colours. This tour has its origins in our well-regarded May & October garden and art tours. However, it is conducted in November, at the peak of autumn foliage, with a higher level of comfort, and at a more relaxed pace.

As with the other Journey to the East's popular small group tours, this 15-day tour accepts only 8 travelers per tour. The "Comfort" style tour leans towards luxury with its superior comfort in accommodation, easier pace and with extensive use of private minivans. The accommodation is all 4-to-5-star hotels with western beds.

ITINERARY

[DOWNLOAD FULL ITINERARY](#)

▼ Day 1: Arrival

Welcome to Japan it is Autumn and the Gardens are spectacular!

On arrival at **Narita** or **Haneda International Airport**, you will be met by a Journey to the East guide and escorted to your hotel by private transport.

Today is an arrival day and no group program is scheduled. Your hotel is located right in the middle of Tokyo near the glitzy **Ginza**. Why not take a stroll, relax and be ready to start the first full day of your **2024 Garden & Art Spectacular Tour of Japan in Autumn**.

*Many of our guests arrive a day or so early to settle in before the tour starts. We can arrange your additional nights accommodation in the same room as the tour.

 **Tokyo (Imperial Hotel Tokyo)**

 **No Meals**

▼ Day 2: Tokyo & Omiya



This morning, you waste no time and go straight into visiting one of the best autumn gardens in Tokyo, **Rikugi-en**. After strolling the magnificent garden at peak of its fall colours, you continue your journey northwest, to arrive at a suburb in Greater Tokyo, Omiya.

Here you will stop at the **Omiya Bonsai Village**. Visiting an outer suburb away from the central Tokyo is an interesting experience in itself seeing how ordinary Japanese people live.

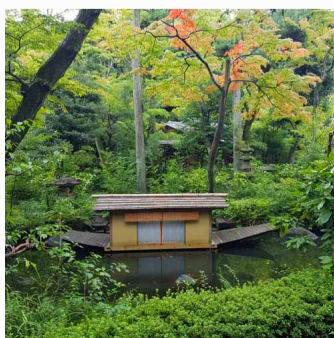
After the visit to the **Omiya Bonsai Museum**, an opportunity opens up where you can learn more about the art of bonsai, the care and preservation of these beautifully manicured miniature trees, and creating your own bonsai in the friendly **bonsai workshop**. (*You can't take it home for a biosecurity reason, but the skills are yours to keep.)

Tonight, we have a "welcome Japan" dinner is at your hotel.

 **Tokyo (Imperial Hotel Tokyo)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 3: Tokyo



On this second day of Tokyo, you will see a mix of old and modern-day Japan. The highlights include;

- Visit **Meiji Jingu Shrine**, a historically significant and magnificent shrine in the thick forest, most surprising in the middle of busy Tokyo,
- Stroll along **Omotesando** avenue, arguably the most fashionable street in Japan with cutting-edge architecture and the top brands of the world,
- Wander through **Ota Memorial Museum** which specialises in **ukiyo-e (wood print) art**, and
- Amble through the wonderful **Nezu Museum**, designed by **Kengo Kuma**, where you can enjoy the contemplative Japanese garden and take in one of the finest collections of Japanese and East-Asian pre-modern art.

Tonight, you will experience more casual dining at one of the endless choices of **restaurants in upmarket Ginza**, near your hotel.

 **Tokyo (Imperial Hotel Tokyo)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 4: Kawaguchiko



Your adventure begins with a scenic train ride for a lovely overnight trip to **Kawaguchiko**, a hot springs resort area located at the foot of **Mt Fuji**. Today you will;

- Visit **Muse Museum** displaying adorable traditional Japanese dolls produced by Yuki Atae.
- Admire amazing **kimonos made from centuries old tie-dye technique** excellently reproduced by master Itchiku at our top pick art venue of Kawaguchiko. The **museum building and the garden of the Itchiku Kubota Museum of Art are also worthy of visit in their own right**, especially in autumn.
- Have plenty of opportunities to absorb the superb views of iconic **Mt Fuji and Lake Kawaguchiko against the backdrop of peak autumn colours**.
- Stay at an **exquisite boutique hotel** with view across the lake to Mt Fuji and experience the best form of Japanese hospitality, **soak in a hot-spring onsen bath** and a multi course dinner.

 **Kawaguchiko (Mizuno Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 5: Kawaguchiko to Tokyo

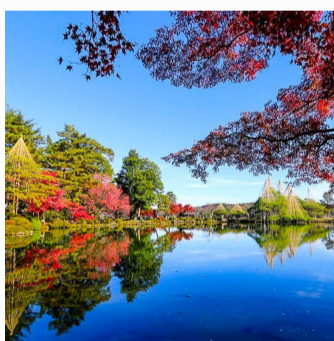
After a Japanese style breakfast, you will enjoy a few more moments at Kawaguchiko before making your trip back to Tokyo by highway coach.

The rest of the afternoon and evening is free in Tokyo, offering you a chance take in some personal preferences and to try some of the amazing restaurants of your choice. We are also happy to make recommendations and offer directions.

 **Tokyo (Imperial Hotel Tokyo)**

 **Breakfast**

▼ Day 6: Kanazawa



This morning you will take Japan's impressive shinkansen (bullet train) to the city of **Kanazawa** on the shores of the Japan Sea.

Kanazawa is commonly known as "Little Kyoto" and is home to many traditional Japanese arts and cultures, history from the samurai era and the outstanding **Kenrokuen Japanese Garden**. Today you will visit;

- **Kenrokuen Garden**, originally designed as a castle garden dating back to the 17th century and regarded as **one of the three great gardens of Japan**,
- **21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art**, **noteworthy for the unusual glass cylinder structure which envelops the building** to reduce its environmental footprint designed by SANAA,
- a tea house in a beautiful Japanese garden to experience '**The Way of Tea**' one of the most well-known aspects of Japanese culture.

Tonight, you will sample **wagyu beef at a teppanyaki** restaurant.

 **Kanazawa (Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 7: Kanazawa





This morning you will stroll around the **Nagamachi samurai resident district**. Your guide will continue taking you on a backstreet walk of Kanazawa exploring some prominent small art galleries including **D.T. Suzuki Museum**.

Later on, you will **visit a tea house in a beautiful Japanese garden** to experience **'The Way of Tea'** (commonly known as a **tea ceremony** in English), one of the most well-known aspects of Japanese culture.

The rest of the day is free. You can continue your exploration of Kanazawa checking out many craft shops offering **exquisite kimonos, gilded lacquerware and local sake products**. You may like to visit the **Higashi Geisha District, a well-preserved area of narrow streets**. In days gone by, immaculately presented geisha would have entertained wealthy patrons in slatted wooden tea houses. Here you can visit the **Gold-leaf Museum**, the Kanazawa's number one traditional craft.

The evening is free tonight. We are more than happy to make dinner recommendations.

 **Kanazawa (Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 8: Okayama and Kurashiki



After a couple of days in Kanazawa, you head for **Kurashiki**, which was **once a prosperous trading town during the feudal era**.

On a way, you stop at Okayama, for a guided tour of the sublime **Koraku-en Garden, another one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan**.

Initially completed in 1700, Koraku-en is prized for being a great example of the “scenic promenade” garden style, which reveals a new view to the visitor on every turn along its meandering path.

In the afternoon, you will arrive at **Kurashiki**. It is **delightfully historic and picturesque village to walk around**.

It has maintained its charming streetscape of traditional black-and-white storehouses, merchant residences and canals lined with willow trees. Here you visit the **Ohara Museum of Art, with a superb collection of ceramics, paintings and antiquities from Japan, China and other ancient civilizations**.

You will have a French style dinner at your hotel tonight.

 **Kurashiki (Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 9: Yasugi (Adachi Museum)



Today you take a day trip to Yasugi, a rural town on the western coast of Japan's main island, to visit the **garden at the Adachi Museum of Art**.

This garden **has been nominated Japan's most popular garden for 17 consecutive years**. Designed in the “borrowed scenery” style, the mountainous backdrop to this extensive garden makes it appear that the mountains are a seamless part of the garden itself.

You will also visit the **Photography Museum of an award-winning photographer, Shoji Ueda**.

You return to stay in Kurashiki tonight

 **Kurashiki (Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 10: Imbe (Bizen)



A minivan ride will take you to the small regional town of **Imbe**, which has been producing **Bizen** ceramic for some 1,000 years.

Bizen-ware is still highly prized among pottery enthusiasts both in Japan and overseas. Today you;

- Engage first hand with one of Imbe's most prominent potters in his own studio and private garden,
- Visit the ancient climbing kilns, and
- Wander through the galleries and craft shops.

Potentially the biggest surprise of your trip awaits this afternoon. You hop on a ferry **across Seto Inland Sea to the art island of Naoshima**.

Tonight, you stay at a sublime Japanese style ryokan on the island and experience Japanese hospitality at its best!

 **Naoshima (Roka)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 11: Naoshima



Once home to just a few remote fishing villages, **Naoshima** is now **known as the "Art Island" in Japan's magical Seto Inland Sea**.

Thanks to the Benesse Corporation and the visionary Naoshima Art Project, Naoshima has been transformed into a cutting-edge contemporary art island and it is visited by leading architects and artists from all over the world. Today you;

- Spend time on the island visiting **Chichu Museum, Lee Ufan Museum, and Ando Tadao Museum** and his **House Projects**,
- Also enjoy the laid-back atmosphere and **stunning natural scenery of the Seto Inland Sea**,

This evening you will cross back to the mainland, and take a shinkansen to your final destination, **Kyoto**.

 **Kyoto (The Thousand Kyoto)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 12: Kyoto



With **17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites** (at last count!), **Kyoto** is the **historical heart of Japan's culture and the guardian of many of its ancient traditions**.

Originally made capital way back in 794, present-day Kyoto offers an incredible range of contemplative gardens often associated with the ancient temples and shrines.

Kyoto has many iconic sites and flaming autumn colours accentuate them. Our walking guided tour today will focus on hidden treasures not often found in a guide book.

Tonight, a **maiko (young geisha)** joins us for a **private performance during dinner** at a shabu shabu hot pot restaurant serving **premium wagyu beef**.

 **Kyoto (The Thousand Kyoto)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 13: Arashiyama



It is time to explore Kyoto's western suburb, **Arashiyama in the peak of autumn colours**. At Arashiyama you will;

- Visit **superb examples of Japanese gardens** at Tenryuji Temple,
- Take a **rickshaw**, a two-passenger wagon pulled by energetic young men in traditional garb, to go **through the iconic bamboo grove**,



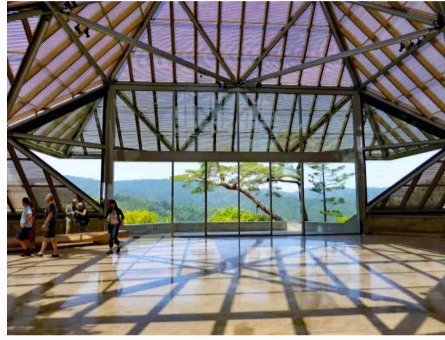
- Lunch is a classic lunch of **tofu**, a Kyoto specialty,
- You stop at Kinkakuji Temple, better known as **Golden Pavilion**. The temple is a **stunning three-storied pavilion covered in dazzling gold leaf**.

This evening is at your leisure to explore superb selections of restaurants in Kyoto.

 **Kyoto (The Thousand Kyoto)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 14: Kyoto (Miho Museum)



This is another very special day. **Past guests have said this visit ranks as one of the most impressive days of the tour.**

Today you visit the **stunning Miho Museum**. Here you can **experience a thorough immersion into the world of art, architecture and landscape design.**

Renowned architect **I.M. Pei** designed this museum with much of the site built into a forested hillside. **Miho was built to house an extensive private collection of some 2,000 antiquities from ancient civilizations.**

The **contrast of the glass and steel structure** of the museum's roof **against the surrounding natural environment is spectacular.** It is this seamless integration of the man-made and the natural which creates today's indelible memory.

Back in Kyoto tonight you will gather together one last time for a "farewell Japan" dinner with the group.

 **Kyoto (The Thousand Kyoto)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 15: Bon Voyage

This morning after breakfast, your **2024 Garden and Art spectacular Tour of Japan** concludes.

You can return to **Tokyo** by train or air to fly home, or depart from Osaka's **Kansai International Airport**.

Perhaps you might like to linger in Japan for a little longer. We will be delighted to plan your personal post-tour extension to show you a different part of Japan. Please see our Model Extension Itineraries for inspirations!

Note: The cost of an escorted transfer to your departure airport is not included in our Small Group Tours (as we found many guests choose to stay in Japan a bit longer), but we will be happy to arrange your transfer to next destination or to exit airport. Please see our FAQ for more details.



 **Breakfast**

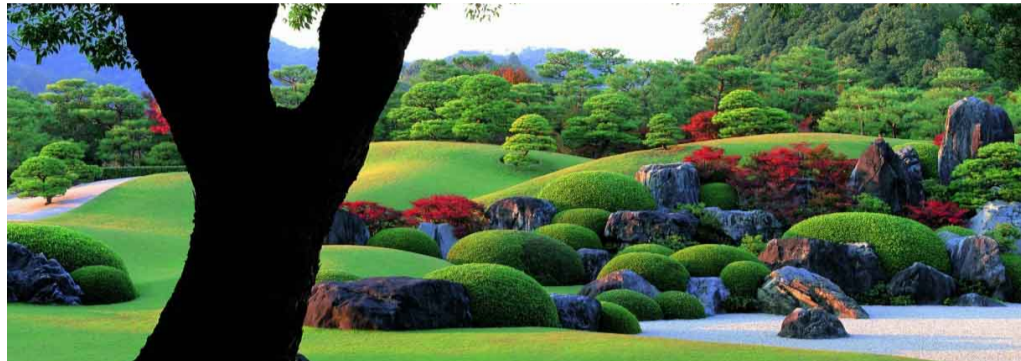


DATES & PRICES

2024 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour of Japan

TOUR CODE	STARTS	DEPARTS FROM	AVAILABLE PLACES <small>?</small>	CURRENCY	PP TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT <small>?</small>		
GAG-24	Nov 17, 2024	Tokyo	Fully Booked	AUD\$	12,250	3,300	ASK A QUESTION	WAIT-LIST
GAG-24a	Nov 10, 2024	Tokyo	Fully Booked	AUD\$	12,250	3,300	ASK A QUESTION	WAIT-LIST

Choose a different currency at the very top right of the page.



INCLUSIONS

Each guest is personally looked after with one-on-one interactions with our hand-picked, expert tour guides. As part of your investment, this tour includes:

- ✓ First-class wisdom and higher standard of individual care and attention
- ✓ 14 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ 8 lunches (5 free choice lunches)
- ✓ 10 dinners (3 free choice dinners)
- ✓ Airport meet & greet on arrival
- ✓ Hotel transfer by private transport on arrival
- ✓ All local transport (trains, coaches and private minivans)
- ✓ Pre-loaded Suica card
- ✓ Expert English speaking tour guides (locally licensed)
- ✓ Cultural activities and entry fees included in itinerary
- ✓ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person)

DISCLAIMER: Unless otherwise stated, this tour does not include the costs of international and domestic airfares, transfers on the last day, travel insurance, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, transport during free time, personal expenses (laundry, internet, telephone, coin lockers etc.) and Visa (if required).

WHO THIS JAPAN TOUR IS FOR...

This is a perfect tour for people who:

- ▶ Want to visit the best **Japanese gardens** and **art museums** both traditional and contemporary



- ▶ Wish to cover the **iconic cities** like Tokyo, Mt Fuji, Kanazawa, Kyoto in 15 days at the peak of **autumn colours**
- ▶ Join a superbly-organised tour packed with **visits and cultural experiences** as well as some free time
- ▶ Enjoy comfortable accommodation (4 star +) including **ryokans but all with western beds**
- ▶ Prefer an organised tour with most **activities and meals included**
- ▶ Like the use of **minivan** which gives you greater access and comfort

REVIEWS



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We were delighted with the Journey to the East's Garden and Art Tour. We have no hesitation in recommending JTTE to anyone considering a visit to the best of Japanese Gardens and Art Museums. The tour exceeded our expectations in different ways.

★★★★★ | Trip date: November 2023

John Day - UK

Have a question about this tour? Get in touch with our staff directly.

[CONTACT US](#)

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[Northern Kansai Region of Japan](#)

[Top 5 unusual things you can find in Japan](#)

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