

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2025 GARDEN AND ART SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN (COMFORT)

Start: Tuesday, 11 November 2025 from Tokyo
Finish: Wednesday, 26 November 2025 at Kyoto
Duration: 16 days
Group size: 8 people
Cost estimate: AUD \$13,160 per person
Single supplement: AUD \$3,540 per person
Ref: GAG-25

TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2025 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour of Japan is a specifically designed 16 day tour 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 in particular you stay two nights at Naoshima Island.

As with the most other Journey to the East's popular Small Group Tours, this 16-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 and ensembles.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Tue 11/11/2025	Airport meet and greet on arrival	<p>Welcome to Japan it is autumn and the gardens are spectacular!</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 2025 Garden & Art Spectacular Tour of Japan in Autumn.</p> <p>*Many of our guests arrive a day or so early to settle in before the tour starts. We can arrange your additional nights accommodation for you.</p>	No meals	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
2	Wed 12/11/2025	Guided tour of Omiya Bonsai Village	<p>This morning, you waste no time and go straight into learning about one of the most important elements of Japanese gardening, bonsai. You will travel by a private minivan to an outer suburb of Tokyo metropolitan, Omiya. Visiting an outer suburb away from central Tokyo is an interesting experience in itself, seeing how ordinary Japanese people live. Here you will firstly stop at the Omiya Bonsai Museum. Later, you have an opportunity to participate in a hands-on bonsai workshop 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. (*You can't take it home for biosecurity reasons, but the skills are yours to keep.)</p> <p>In the afternoon, you will visit 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 back to your hotel in central Tokyo.</p> <p>Tonight, you have a "welcome Japan" dinner at a restaurant near your hotel.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]
3	Thu 13/11/2025	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>On this second day of Tokyo, you will see a mix of old and modern-day Japan. The highlights include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. <p>Tonight, you will experience more casual dining at one of the endless choices of restaurants in upmarket Ginza, near your hotel.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]

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4	Fri 14/11/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Kawaguchiko (Mt Fuji)	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 views 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 kaiseki dinner. 	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Mizno Hotel [Nagomi - Twin room with terrace]
5	Sat 15/11/2025	Guided tour of Kawaguchiko and transfer to Tokyo	<p>After a Japanese style breakfast, you will enjoy a few more moments at Kawaguchiko before making your trip back to Tokyo by highway coach.</p> <p>This morning you will visit Oishi Park, another vantage point to view Mt Fuji against autumn colours and Lake Kawaguchiko. You will also visit a traditional local sake brewery for a tour and tasting.</p> <p>After arriving back to Tokyo, the rest of the afternoon and evening is free, offering you a chance to 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.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]
6	Sun 16/11/2025	Guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>Another shinkansen ride will take you 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 among others;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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, - A traditional tea house in a beautiful Japanese garden where you experience 'The Way of Tea' (commonly known as tea ceremony in English), one of the most well-known aspects of Japanese culture. <p>After briefly resting back at your hotel, you will sample wagyu beef at a teppanyaki restaurant for dinner tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel [Deluxe Twin/Double]

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7	Mon 17/11/2025	Guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>This morning you will stroll around the Nagamachi samurai resident district then move onto the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, noteworthy for the unusual glass cylinder structure which envelopes the building to reduce its environmental footprint designed by SANAA. Your guide will continue taking you on a backstreet walk of Kanazawa art district exploring some prominent small art galleries including D.T. Suzuki Museum.</p> <p>The rest of the day is free. You can continue your exploration of Kanazawa checking out many craft shops offering exquisite kimono, 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.</p> <p>The evening is also free tonight. We are more than happy to make dinner recommendations.</p>	Breakfast	Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel [Deluxe Twin/Double]
8	Tue 18/11/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Okayama and Kurashiki	<p>After a couple of days in Kanazawa, you head for Kurashiki, which was a prosperous trading town during the feudal era.</p> <p>On the way, you stop at Okayama, for a guided tour of the magnificent 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.</p> <p>Finally, you will arrive at Kurashiki, your base for the next two days. It is delightfully historic and picturesque town 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.</p> <p>You will have a French style dinner at your hotel tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel [Corner Deluxe]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
9	Wed 19/11/2025	Guided tour of Adachi Museum and Shoji Ueda Museum	<p>Today's outing is 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.</p> <p>You will also visit the Photography Museum of an award-winning photographer, Shoji Ueda.</p> <p>You return to Kurashiki to have a casual local dinner tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel [Corner Deluxe]
10	Thu 20/11/2025	Guided tour of Bizen	<p>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 will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage first hand with one of Imbe's most awarded potters in his own studio and private garden, - Visit the ancient 'climbing' kilns, and - Wander through the galleries and craft shops. <p>Potentially the biggest surprise of your trip awaits this afternoon. You hop on a ferry across Seto Inland Sea to an art island, Naoshima. This afternoon, you spend time at Ando Tadao Museum and the House Project.</p> <p>Tonight, you stay at a sublime Japanese style ryokan on the island and experience Japanese hospitality at its best!</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Roka [Deluxe Suite]
11	Fri 21/11/2025	Guided tour of Naoshima	<p>This morning you are off to Benesse Art Site including Valley Gallery, Chichu Art Museum, Benesse House Museum and the Lee Ufan Museum. Don't forget to walk around the area between excellent outdoor installations including Yayoi Kusama's trademark pumpkin sculpture, all superbly blending into the island environment.</p> <p>This afternoon, it is time for eagerly awaited free time to explore the island's narrow paths at your own pace.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Roka [Deluxe Suite]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
12	Sat 22/11/2025	Guided tour of Naoshima and transfer to Kyoto	<p>This morning, you will ferry across back to the mainland and take the shinkansen to 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.</p> <p>Kyoto has many iconic sites and flaming autumn colours accentuate them. This afternoon, you will visit a select garden at the peak of autumn colours. After checking into your hotel, you will also amble around Gion area where your base in Kyoto is.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin]
13	Sun 23/11/2025	Guided tour of Miho Museum	<p>This is another very special day. Past guests have said this visit ranks as one of the most impressive days of the tour.</p> <p>Today you visit the stunning Miho Museum. Here you can experience a thorough immersion into the world of art, architecture and landscape design.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Breakfast	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin]
14	Mon 24/11/2025	Guided tour of Kyoto	<p>This morning, your guided tour of Kyoto will focus on hidden treasures not often found in a guide book away from the crowd (only if it is possible in Kyoto in autumn!). Those small temple gardens are at their peak in late autumn.</p> <p>After another sophisticated Kyoto lunch, you will have free time this afternoon and evening. Please talk to us if you have somewhere you would like to visit, or perhaps a hands-on experience such as a cooking class.</p> <p>In the evening try superb selections of restaurants in Kyoto.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
15	Tue 25/11/2025	Guided tour of Arashiyama	<p>It is time to explore Kyoto's western suburb, Arashiyama in the peak of autumn colours. At Arashiyama you will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 Ryoanji, well known for its stone garden. <p>Back in Kyoto tonight you will gather together one last time for a "farewell Japan" dinner with the group.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin]
16	Wed 26/11/2025	Departure	<p>This morning after breakfast, your 2025 Garden and Art spectacular Tour of Japan concludes.</p> <p>You can return to Tokyo by train or air to fly home, or depart from Osaka's Kansai International Airport.</p> <p>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 on Private Tour page for inspirations!</p> <p>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.</p>	Breakfast	
		Inclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 15 nights accommodation listed above with daily breakfast ■ All breakfasts ■ 8 lunches (6 free choice lunches) ■ 10 dinners (4 free choice dinners) ■ Airport meet & greet and hotel transfer by public transport on arrival ■ Private guide as specified ■ All public and private transport for the group itinerary ■ Cultural activities and entry fees as included in the group itinerary ■ Pre-paid IC card for local transport with 4,500 yen initial credit ■ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person) 		

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		Exclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated) ■ Travel insurance ■ Transfer on the last day ■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages ■ Tips and gratuities (not routinely expected in Japan) ■ Transport during free time ■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-locker, internet, telephone etc.) ■ Visa (if required) 		