

COMFORT TOUR

[Home](#) / [Small Group Tours](#) / 2025 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour of Japan

2025 GARDEN AND ART SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN

A 16 day visit to 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

16 days



THEME

Autumn Tours, Garden & Art Tours



GROUP SIZE

Min 2 - Max 8



TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Japanese gardens at autumn's peak

Stroll around Japan's best gardens including Rikugien in Tokyo, Koraku-en in Okayama and Kenroku-en in Kanazawa for the best autumn displays



International standard art museums

Visit Japan's best art museums such as Miho Museum and Adachi Museum of Art as well as small boutique galleries



Japan's most highly prized pottery towns, Bizen

Spend time at a highly awarded potter's studio and have conversations with the artists



Mt Fuji across lake Kawaguchiko

Admire the mighty Mt Fuji and the exquisite Itchiku Kubota Kimono Museum in Kawaguchiko

The 'Art Island' of Naoshima

Immerse in the magical moments while you stay two nights at Naoshima



Ancient capital Kyoto

Experience some of the iconic sites of Kyoto such as the Arashiyama Bamboo Forest and Fushimi Inari Shrine

[SEE FULL TOUR ITINERARY](#)

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 ensuites.

*From 2025 all our 8-member Small Group Tours will have guaranteed departure from 2 guests.

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 **2025 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 arranging your additional nights accommodation for you.

 **Tokyo (The Gate Hotel Tokyo or similar)**

 **No Meals**

▼ Day 2: Tokyo & Omiya





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.)

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.

Tonight, you have a "welcome Japan" dinner at a restaurant near your hotel.



Tokyo (The Gate Hotel Tokyo or similar)



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 (The Gate Hotel Tokyo or similar)



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;



- 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**.

 **Kawaguchiko (Mizno 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.

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.

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.

 **Tokyo (The Gate Hotel Tokyo or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 6: Kanazawa



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;

- 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.

After briefly resting back at your hotel, you will sample **wagyu beef at a teppanyaki** restaurant for dinner tonight.

 **Kanazawa (Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 7: Kanazawa



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 envelops 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**.



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.

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

 **Kanazawa (Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast**

▼ Day 8: Okayama and Kurashiki



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

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.

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.

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

 **Kurashiki (Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 9: Yasugi (Adachi Museum)



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.

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

You return to Kurashiki to have a casual local dinner tonight.

 **Kurashiki (Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel or similar)**

 **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 will;

- 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.

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**.

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

 **Naoshima (Roka or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 11: Naoshima



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.

This afternoon, it is time for eagerly awaited free time to explore the island's narrow paths at your own pace.

 **Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto Gion or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 12: Kyoto



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.

Kyoto has many iconic sites and flaming autumn colours accentuate them. This afternoon, you will visit a select gardens at the peak of autumn colours. After checking into your hotel, you will also amble around **Gion** area where your base in Kyoto is.



 Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto Gion or similar)

 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 13: Shiga (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.**

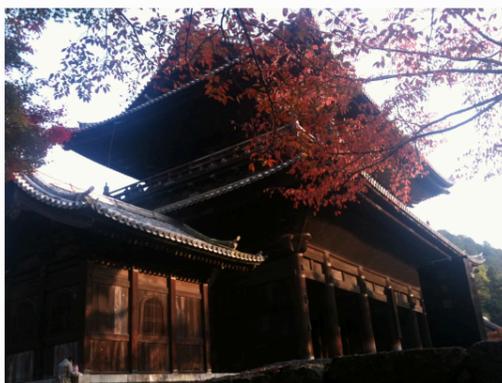
Renowned architect **I.M. Pei** designed this museum with much of the site built into a forested hillside. **Miho was built to house an extensive private collection of some 2,000 antiquities from ancient civilizations.**

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.

 Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto Gion or similar)

 Breakfast

▼ Day 14: Kyoto



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.

After a another sophisticated Kyoto lunch, you will have free time this afternoon and evening. Please talk to us if you would have somewhere you would like to visit, or perhaps and hands-on experience such as a cooking class.

In the evening try superb selections of restaurants in Kyoto.

 Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto Gion or similar)

 Breakfast, Lunch

▼ Day 15: 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 **Ryoanji**, well known for its stone garden.

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

 **Kyoto (The Thousand Kyoto)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ **Day 16: Goodbye in Kyoto**

This morning after breakfast, your **2025 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** on Private Tour page for inspirations!



DATES & PRICES

2025 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour of Japan

TOUR CODE	STARTS	DEPARTS FROM	AVAILABLE PLACES (?)	CURRENCY	PP TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (?)		
GAG-25	Nov 11, 2025	Tokyo	Available	AUD\$	13,160	3,540	ASK A QUESTION	BOOK NOW
GAG-25a	Nov 18, 2025	Tokyo	Available	AUD\$	13,160	3,540	ASK A QUESTION	BOOK NOW

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
- ✓ 15 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ 8 lunches (6 free choice lunches)
- ✓ 10 dinners (4 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 16 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 to 5 star) including **ryokans but all with western beds and ensuites.**



- ▶ Prefer an organised tour with most **activities and meals included**
- ▶ Like the use of **minivan** which gives you greater access and comfort

REVIEWS



My Garden and Art Tour of Japan in Autumn with Journey to the East was first class. Excellent and diverse itinerary, English speaking guide knowledgeable and helpful, comfortable western style accommodation with some French and Italian influences and everything went like clockwork. The autumn awash with colours and the museums and art works are simply superb. Naoshima and Mt Fuji was spectacular. Cannot fault this tour or Journey to the East. A truly and memorable experience.



Trip date: November 2022

Roslynn Hansen - NSW, Australia

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

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