

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2026 GARDEN AND ART SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN (COMFORT)

Start: Saturday, 14 November 2026 from Tokyo

Finish: Saturday, 28 November 2026 at Kyoto

Duration: 15 days

Group size: 8 people

Cost estimate: AUD \$13,948 per person

Single supplement: AUD \$4,000 per person

Ref: GAG-26

TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2026 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour of Japan is a specifically designed 15 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 most other Journey to the East's popular Small Group Tours, this 15-day tour accepts only 8 travellers per tour. The "Comfort" style tour leans towards luxury with its superior comfort in accommodation, an easier pace and with extensive use of private minivans. The accommodation is all 4- to 5-star hotels with western beds and en-suite.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Sat 14/11/2026	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 Tokyo hotel has a lovely Japanese garden. Why not take a stroll, relax and be ready to start the first full day of your 2026 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 night's accommodation for you.</p>	No meals	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
2	Sun 15/11/2026	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>On this first day in 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 have a "welcome Japan" dinner at a restaurant where you will get to know your guide and fellow travellers on the tour.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]
3	Mon 16/11/2026	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>This morning, 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 to the central Tokyo.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you will immerse yourself in the world of bonsai, which is one of the most important elements of Japanese gardening. You will see the collection of superb bonsai by professionals, and later have an opportunity to participate in a hands-on bonsai workshop. You will learn about the art of bonsai, the care and preservation of these beautifully manicured miniature trees, and try your hand at some techniques. You cannot take the bonsai home for biosecurity reasons, but the skills are yours to keep.</p> <p>Tonight, you will experience more casual dining at one of the endless choices of restaurants in Tokyo.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]

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4	Tue 17/11/2026	Transfer to and guided tour of Kawaguchiko (Mt Fuji)	<p>Pack an overnight bag the night before and leave your main luggage at the hotel. Today, 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. After arrival, you have lunch of Hoto noodle, a local specialty hearty soup noodle.</p> <p>In the afternoon, the first stop is the Fujisan World Heritage Centre to learn about the formation of this beautiful mountain and the surrounding region. While driving around Lake Kawaguchiko, you will have plenty of opportunities to absorb the superb views of iconic Mt Fuji and Lake Kawaguchiko against the backdrop of peak autumn colours.</p> <p>Tonight, you will 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 dinner.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Mizno Hotel [Nagomi - Twin room with terrace]
5	Wed 18/11/2026	Guided tour of Kawaguchiko and transfer to Tokyo	<p>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 worth of visit in their own right, especially in autumn.</p> <p>After lunch, you will travel back to Tokyo, and the rest of the afternoon and evening is free, offering you a chance to take in some personal preferences and try some of the amazing restaurants of your choice. We are also happy to make recommendations and offer directions.</p>	Breakfast	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]
6	Thu 19/11/2026	Transfer to and guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>A Shinkansen ride will take you to the city of Kanazawa on the shores of the Japan Sea this morning. 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. You will spend this afternoon in the garden, originally designed as a castle garden dating back to the 17th century and regarded as one of the three great gardens of Japan.</p> <p>After briefly resting back at your hotel, you will sample wagyu beef at a teppanyaki restaurant for dinner tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hotel Nikko Kanazawa [Comfort or Stylish room]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
7	Fri 20/11/2026	Morning guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>This morning, your guide will take you on a backstreet walking tour of Kanazawa's art district, exploring some prominent small art galleries, including D.T. Suzuki Museum and Nakamura Memorial Museum. The museum focuses on tea ceremony arts, displaying calligraphic works, paintings, lacquer ware, and pottery.</p> <p>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, 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	Hotel Nikko Kanazawa [Comfort or Stylish room]
8	Sat 21/11/2026	Transfer to and guided tour of Okayama	<p>After a couple of days in Kanazawa, you get back on the express trains and head for Okayama, home of magnificent Koraku-en Garden. The garden, another of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan, was 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>After a long day of travelling, you will relax in your hotel room until dinner at a local restaurant.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Hotel Granvia Okayama [Western style room]
9	Sun 22/11/2026	Guided tour of Adachi 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 Okayama for a free evening tonight.</p>	Breakfast	Hotel Granvia Okayama [Western style room]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
10	Mon 23/11/2026	Guided tour of Imbe (Bizen) and transfer to Naoshima	<p>A minibus ride will take you to the small regional town of Imbe, which has been producing Bizen ceramics 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 the Seto Inland Sea to an art island, Naoshima.</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	Tue 24/11/2026	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, after seeing Ando Tadao Museum and some of the House Project works, it is time for eagerly awaited free time to explore the island's narrow paths at your own pace.</p> <p>You will stay one more night at this magical Naoshima island and have dinner at the ryokan.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Roka [Deluxe Suite]
12	Wed 25/11/2026	Transfer to and guided tour of Kyoto	<p>This morning, you will take a ferry back to the mainland and ride the Shinkansen to Kyoto.</p> <p>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, we will take you to the hidden gems of Kyoto at the peak of autumn colours, which are not open to the large tour groups.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Kyoto [Superior Double / Superior Twin]

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13	Thu 26/11/2026	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, and - You stop at Kinkakuji, known as the Golden Pavilion, framed by the autumn leaves. <p>Back in central Kyoto, you will have a free evening tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Kyoto [Superior Double / Superior Twin]
14	Fri 27/11/2026	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. 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 civilisations.</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> <p>Back in Kyoto tonight, you will gather together one last time for a "farewell Japan" dinner with the group.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Kyoto [Superior Double / Superior Twin]
15	Sat 28/11/2026	Departure	<p>After breakfast, your 2026 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 inspiration!</p> <p>HINT - There are limited spots on this tour, so connect with our tour specialists today to discuss your trip to Japan.</p>	Breakfast	

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
		Inclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 14 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns) ■ Airport meet & greet and hotel transfer by private transport on arrival ■ Transfer from the hotel to the airport on departure ■ All local transport (trains, coaches and private minivans) ■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (locally licensed) ■ Cultural activities and entry fees are included in the itinerary ■ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person) ■ Meals as specified 		
		Exclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated) ■ Travel insurance ■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except the 1st drink at each meal) ■ Tips and gratuities ■ Transport during free time ■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-locker, internet, telephone etc.) ■ Visa (if required) 		