

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2026 GARDEN AND ART TOUR OF JAPAN (SIGNATURE)

START: (Refer to website for date) from Tokyo

DURATION: 15 days

PRICE: AUD \$12,680 per person

SINGLE SUPP: AUD \$2,800 per person

FINISH: at Kyoto

GROUP size: 8 people

REF: GGA-26a

TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2026 Garden and Art Tour of Japan visits a selection of wonderful Japanese gardens and international standard art museums, both traditional and contemporary. The 15-day fully escorted tour will give you a great grounding in Japan as you visit Tokyo, Hakone, Kanazawa, Okayama, Bizen, Naoshima and Kyoto. The tour also includes a variety of accommodations and food styles, along with excellent cultural experiences, which are the main attractions of people visiting Japan.

The tours take place in May, October and November – ideal times of year to visit Japan. The weather is typically warm and sunny, and the gardens are at their best. The tours are not designed specifically for horticulturists or garden experts (though always welcome), but rather for general lovers of gardens and art who want to explore Japan and learn more about its deeply fascinating culture.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Airport meet and greet on arrival	<p>Welcome to Japan! 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 public transport.</p> <p>Today is an arrival day for this small group journey, 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 2026 Garden and Art Tour of Japan.</p> <p>*Many of our guests arrive a day or so early to settle in before the tour starts. We can try arranging your additional night's accommodation in the same room as the tour.</p>	No meals	Park Hotel Tokyo [Queen/Twin]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
2	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>After meeting your guide and fellow travellers at the hotel lobby, your Japanese garden and art adventure starts.</p> <p>On the first day of Tokyo, you will see a mix of old and modern-day Japan. The highlights include high-quality small art museums which are seldom included in large size tours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visiting Meiji Jingu Shrine, a historically significant and magnificent shrine in the thick forest, most surprisingly in the middle of busy Tokyo, - Wander through Ota Memorial Museum, which specialises in ukiyo-e (wood print) art, and - Amble through the wonderful Nezu Museum of Art, 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.⇒明治神宮ミュージアムとサントリー美術館に変更してください <p>Enjoy a "Welcome to Japan" dinner at a local Japanese restaurant near your hotel.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Park Hotel Tokyo [Queen/Twin]
3	Guided tour of Tokyo and Omiya	<p>This morning, you will first visit Hamarikyu Garden, Tokyo's pre-eminent Japanese garden. It was built by the ruling Tokugawa family during the Edo era in the 17th century remodeled as a public garden and opened to the public in 1946. There are many points of interest including an impressive 300-year-old pine tree very carefully pruned over the centuries into an impressive weeping expanse.</p> <p>After strolling the relaxing garden, you catch a suburban train northwest, to arrive at the suburb of Omiya in Greater Tokyo. Visiting an outer suburb away from central Tokyo is an interesting experience in itself seeing how ordinary Japanese people live.</p> <p>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 create your own bonsai in the friendly bonsai workshop. (*You cannot take your work home for biosecurity reasons, but the skills are yours to keep.)</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Park Hotel Tokyo [Queen/Twin]

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4	Guided tour of Hakone	<p>Pack a small bag the night before to take with you for an overnight trip to Hakone and leave your main luggage at the hotel when you check out. Start with a ride on Japan's impressive shinkansen, the bullet train, for a lovely overnight trip to Hakone, a scenic hot springs resort area located in the mountains near Mt Fuji.</p> <p>With its proximity to Tokyo, Hakone has been a popular destination for Tokyoites seeking rest and rejuvenation for centuries. You tour the general Hakone region by private vehicle, travelling through the Izu-Hakone National Park and, depending on the weather, catching glimpses of Mt Fuji up close. Hakone has some outstanding world-class museums and galleries. You will first visit the Okada Museum of Art, a private art museum, the largest in Hakone by floor area, exhibiting Japanese paintings, oriental ceramics, Asian art and religious art. As well as the artworks, enjoy the beautiful garden and natural surroundings.</p> <p>The next stop is, the outstanding Hakone Open-Air Museum with its amazing outdoor sculptures from the likes of Henry Moore and Rodin set against a spectacular backdrop of maple and cherry trees.</p> <p>Tonight, you will stay at one of Hakone's exquisite ryokan with a superb collection of artwork. Featuring onsen hot spring mineral baths, you'll experience Japan's onsen culture firsthand and understand why an onsen visit remains one of the top pastimes of the Japanese.</p> <p>The ryokan will serve a kaiseki multi-course banquet of beautifully presented fresh local produce for dinner.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hakone Nanase [Superior Twin]
5	Morning guided tour of Hakone and transfer to Tokyo	<p>This morning, you will enjoy a relaxing breakfast at your ryokan before embarking on another day in Hakone.</p> <p>Firstly you visit the Hakone Museum of Art to admire the beautiful moss garden. You then take a ropeway over the Owakudani to witness the geothermal activity below which is the source of healing in hot spring spa baths. You will also cruise on Lake Ashi. While you are here, you will visit Narukawa Art Museum, which is dedicated to Japanese-style paintings (Nihonga).</p> <p>After lunch, you will get back on the shinkansen heading back to Tokyo. This evening is free for you to enjoy the last night in this mega city.</p>	Breakfast	Park Hotel Tokyo [Queen/Twin]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
6	Transfer to and 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 magnificent Kenrokuen Japanese Garden. Today you will visit;</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, and - 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	Mitsui Garden Hotel Kanazawa [Superior King or Deluxe Twin]
7	Morning guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>This morning, your guide will take you on a backstreet walk of the Kanazawa art district exploring some prominent small art galleries including the D.T. Suzuki Museum. Kanazawa is renown for high quality Japanese crafts such as pottery, silk fabric for kimono and lacquerware. The walking art tour also covers the local arts and crafts.</p> <p>The rest of the day is free. You can continue your exploration of Kanazawa by checking out exquisite craft shops or Omicho Market for local produce. 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	Mitsui Garden Hotel Kanazawa [Superior King or Deluxe Twin]
8	Transfer to and guided tour of Okayama	<p>After a couple of days in Kanazawa, you head for Okayama, a vibrant regional city in the western area of Honshu island.</p> <p>This afternoon, you have 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>Okayama will be your base for the next couple of days as you continue your Japanese art and garden tour.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Hotel Granvia Okayama [Superior Double/Twin]

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9	Guided tour of Adachi Museum	<p>Today, you travel 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 as 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 relax in Okayama, where you have a free evening.</p>	Breakfast	Hotel Granvia Okayama [Superior Double/Twin]
10	Guided tour of Bizen and Naoshima	<p>A minibus 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 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. This afternoon, you will spend time at the 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	Guided tour of Naoshima and transfer to Kyoto	<p>Once home to just a few remote fishing villages, Naoshima is now known as the "Art Island" in Japan's magical Seto Inland Sea.</p> <p>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, after a relaxing breakfast at your ryokan, you;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spend time on the island visiting the Valley Gallery, the Chichu Museum, the Lee Ufan Museum, Benesse House Museum and its surrounding monuments, and - Also enjoy the laid-back atmosphere and stunning natural scenery of the Seto Inland Sea, <p>This evening, you will cross back to the mainland and take a Shinkansen to your final destination, Kyoto.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Cross Hotel Kyoto [Superior King/Twin]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
12	Guided tour of Kyoto	<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>While Kyoto has many iconic sites, our walking guided tour will focus on hidden treasures not often found in a guidebook. You will visit a select temple garden, small galleries of local artists, and walk along the ever-so-attractive backstreets of Kyoto.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you will visit Kiyomizu Temple at the end of Gojo slope, a street filled with Kyoto-style ceramic shops.</p> <p>Tonight is free for you to wander around the atmospheric city of Kyoto.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	Cross Hotel Kyoto [Superior King/Twin]
13	Guided tour of Arashiyama	<p>Today, you explore Kyoto's western suburb, Arashiyama. At Arashiyama, you will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe superb examples of "stroll" style Japanese gardens at Tenryuji Temple, - Wander through the bamboo grove, famous for its extensive forest of thick bamboo stands and ethereal light, - Visit the historic villa of Okochi Sanso, built on a hillside, which offers magnificent views of Kyoto. The sprawling gardens, villa and tea house showcase the Japanese garden aesthetic at its very best, and - Stop at Kinkakuji Temple, better known as the Golden Pavilion. The temple is a stunning three-storied pavilion covered in dazzling gold leaf. <p>Another free evening for you to try the endless choice of restaurants in Kyoto tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	Cross Hotel Kyoto [Superior King/Twin]

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14	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>An internationally acclaimed 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 that creates today's indelible memory.</p> <p>Back in Kyoto, you will have some free time for the rest of the afternoon.</p> <p>Tonight, you will gather one more time for a final meal. Chat about your memories of the tour at a contemporary Kyoto cuisine restaurant that represents the complexity of this fascinating old capital.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Cross Hotel Kyoto [Superior King/Twin]
15	Departure	<p>This morning, after breakfast, your 2026 Garden and Art 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. 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 the Private Tour page for inspiration!</p>	Breakfast	
	Inclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 14 nights' accommodation listed above ■ Airport meet & greet and hotel transfer by public transport on arrival ■ Private guide as specified ■ All local transport (train, bus and taxi) ■ All cultural activities and entry fees included in itinerary ■ Pre-paid IC card for local transport with 4,500 yen initial credit ■ Airport transfer from the hotel to the airport in Tokyo or Osaka by public transport on departure ■ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person) ■ Meals as specified with first drink 		

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Exclusions for Group Tour

- International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated)
- Travel insurance
- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except the first drink at each meal)
- Transport during free time
- Personal expenses (laundry, coin-lockers, internet, telephone etc.)
- Tips and gratuities
- Visa (if required)