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Autumn & the Art of the Japanese Garden 2026

4 NOV – 16 NOV 2026

Code: 22641

Tour Leaders Jim Fogarty

Fitness Level

Level 1 - Active

For people with active lives and good mobility

Jim Fogarty explores the many different meanings of traditional & modern Japanese gardens. The tour is timed for November, when the countryside explodes into symphonies of glorious autumnal colour.

Overview

Travel with Jim Fogarty, award-winning landscape architect and author, and one of Australia's most knowledgeable experts on Japanese gardens. He won the award for Best Design at the 2009 World Garden Competition in Shizuoka Prefecture, and Gold and Best in Show at the 2011 Gardening World Cup Nagasaki. Over many years Jim has carried out his own research into Japan's most iconic gardens uncovering layers of fascinating history not widely known, and has a passionate interest in contemporary influences of Japanese garden design.

- Visit Japan in autumn, when the countryside explodes into symphonies of glorious colour.
- Visit a diverse range of Japan's traditional gardens including: Kinkaku-ji (the Golden Pavilion) & Ryoan-ji (Dragon Peace Temple) in Kyoto, Kenroku-en in Kanazawa and Koraku-en in Okayama. We also visit a number of small gardens by special appointment. Each garden follows a spiritual and artistic tradition and demonstrates the incredible diverse artistry of the Japanese garden.
- Explore some of Japan's splendid art collections, including Tokyo's National Museum, the magnificent collection of kimonos at Itchiku Kubota Art Museum and Hakone's Open-Air Museum containing sculptures by Rodin, Miro and Henry Moore, and over 300 works by Pablo Picasso.
- Stroll along Kyoto's charming Philosopher's Walk and visit historic homes in Tokyo and Kanazawa.
- Visit the Jiyu Gakuen School in Tokyo, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright when he lived in Japan.
- Walk the Kiso Valley's historic Nakasendo Highway, passing through wooden groves and villages with the distinctive wooden architecture of the Edo era. Enjoy a reviving green tea in a wayside teahouse and enjoy the glorious views over the countryside.
- Experience Japan's unique culture at a tea ceremony in Kanazawa, sample Japanese sake and an array of traditional cuisine including the delicious small dishes presented as a *kaiseki* feast.
- Conclude with a visit to the Adachi Museum of Art, where a collection of contemporary Japanese art is harmoniously set within one of the most beautiful and admired contemplative gardens in the country.

Overnight Tokyo (3 nights) • Hakone (1 night) • Matsumoto (2 nights) • Kanazawa (1 night) • Kyoto (6 nights) • Matsue (1 night)

Testimonial

This was a wonderful tour which fulfilled our hopes and expectations. Perfectly timed and with very good tour leaders and Japanese guides. Jenny, NSW.

Overview

The tour has been timed to visit Japan when its countryside explodes into symphonies of glorious autumnal colour. In Tokyo and in historic centres like Kyoto we'll discover how Japan's gardens can be experienced on many levels and are renowned for subtly combining artifice and nature, blurring the boundaries between garden and landscape. Some gardens are tiny and minimalist, conveying subtle meanings through ingenious combinations of moss, stones, rock and water. Others are grand, framing rich palaces and temples. We combine garden visits with expressions of traditional Japanese culture like tea ceremonies, historic crafts and cuisine. Kyoto gardens include extensive, ancient temple and garden complexes such as Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavilion), Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion) and Ryoan-ji – the famed Dragon Peace Temple. Throughout, garden visits are also combined with an appreciation of Japan's traditional architecture and great museums to enrich your understanding of Japanese aesthetics. At Kanazawa we explore traditional construction techniques at Kanazawa Castle, Nagamachi Samurai Residence and Higashichaya District's

many old Samurai houses. Kanazawa's Kenrokuen Garden is the 'garden of the six sublimities'. We make a very special day tour to villages in Kiso Valley, walking a section of the Nakasendo Highway to encounter carefully preserved monuments to Japan's feudal past. In Tokyo highlights include Koishikawa Koraku-en, a rare surviving 17th-century strolling garden, and the beautifully restored residence and garden that belonged to Kusuo Yasuda. Our tour finishes with a visit to the Adachi Museum of Art. In addition to its stunning collection of contemporary Japanese art, the museum is renowned for its beautiful contemplation garden which visitors enjoy through large picture windows.

Leaders

Jim Fogarty

Award-winning landscape designer and gardening media personality, with an extensive knowledge of Japanese garden design. Jim is a graduate of Burnley Horticultural College (Uni. Melb), and has led tours to Japan since 2017.

Jim Fogarty is an award-winning landscape designer and gardening media personality based in Melbourne, who is one of Australia's most knowledgeable experts on Japanese gardens. A graduate of Burnley Horticultural College (University of Melbourne), he won the award for Best Design at the 2009 World Garden Competition in Shizuoka Prefecture, and Gold and Best in Show at the 2011 Gardening World Cup Nagasaki. Over many years Jim has carried out his own research into Japan's most iconic gardens uncovering layers of fascinating history not widely known. He also has a passionate interest in contemporary influences of Japanese garden design.

Jim has twice presented at the Chelsea Flower Show in London as well as successfully exhibiting in the USA, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. His many awards include a gold medal at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2011, and Gold & Best in Show at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2014. Jim is a past National President and Life Member of the Horticultural Media Association of Victoria. He has written for the Melbourne *Age* newspaper and was a contributor for *Burke's Backyard Magazine* in Australia. In 2006 he wrote the garden design chapter in the 42nd edition of the *Yates Garden Guide*, which continues to be republished. Jim runs a successful company in Melbourne designing residential gardens. Project sizes range from small front gardens and outdoor rooms to coastal gardens and larger estates. His work has enabled him to travel extensively throughout Asia, the USA and Europe. He has been leading ASA tours to Japan since 2017.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWfYuUWoYVM

Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of gardens, museums and other sites which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight and train schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Tokyo - 3 nights

Day 1: Wednesday 4 November, Arrive Tokyo

- Tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of the Tokyo Prince Hotel
- Welcome Meeting
- Japanese Imperial Palace Plaza
- Koishikawa Koraku-en Garden
- Welcome Dinner

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of the Tokyo Prince Hotel. Check-in time is not until 3.00pm, however your luggage may be securely stored until we return from our day's program late this afternoon.

We then visit a rare surviving 17th-century strolling garden, located in the west of the city. Koishikawa-korakuen was designed in part by Zhu Shun Shui, a Ming dynasty refugee from China, and the garden recreates both Japanese and Chinese landscapes. Here we will find waterfalls, ponds, stone lanterns, a small lake with gnarled pines and humped bridges.

Tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner together at our hotel. (Overnight Tokyo) D

Day 2: Thursday 5 November, Tokyo

- Teien Metropolitan Art Museum – Visit and lunch
- Meguro Gajoen: Private Art Collection and Garden
- Ekouin Nenbutsudo Temple by Yutaka Kawahara Design Studio

We begin today with a visit to an Art Deco building that houses the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum. Commissioned by Prince Asaka and completed in 1933, the building's interiors were designed by Henri Rapin and features decorative glass work by René Lalique. The museum's collection focuses on Art Deco decorative art and furniture from the 1920s and 1930s.

After lunch at the museum we transfer to Meguro Gajoen, an exclusive hotel that is home to a private art collection. Usually only seen by the hotel residents, we will be given a tour of the collection, followed by a visit to the hotel's lovely garden.

During our travels we'll encounter many traditional and historic temples and explore a variety of gardens that play such an important role in these complexes. This afternoon we visit a contemporary temple – the Ekouin Nenbutsudo Temple by Yutaka Kawahara Design Studio. Completed in 2013, in the lively heart of Tokyo, this Buddhist complex is intended to represent the 'Gokuraku' or 'Paradise in the Sky' and is comprised of the three traditional structures associated with Buddhist architecture – the *vihara* (monastery), the *stupa* (pagoda), and the shrine – stacked one atop the other in response to its compact site. In place of a small stroll garden using moss, stone or sand, here bamboo is used to create a green space for contemplation in this busy metropolis. (Overnight Tokyo) BL

Day 3: Friday 6 November, Tokyo

- Jiyu Gakuen School
- Tokyo National Museum
- Nezu Museum

We begin our day with a visit to the Jiyu Gakuen School. This is a beautifully preserved building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1921, one of 12 buildings the American designed during the two years he lived in Japan. Only three of Wright's buildings survived the 20th century, and we shall be taken on a tour of this very special building.

Established in 1872, the Tokyo National Museum is the oldest and largest museum in Japan. The museum, which holds over 110,000 objects, focuses on ancient Japanese art and Asian art along the Silk Road. There is also a large collection of Greco-Buddhist art.

The day concludes with a visit to the Nezu Museum, showcasing traditional Japanese and Asian works of art once owned by Kaichiro Nezu, a railroad magnate and politician. Architect Kengo Kuma designed an arched roof that rises two floors and extends roughly half a block through the Minami Aoyama neighbourhood. At any one time the vast space houses some of the collection's 7000 works of calligraphy, paintings, sculptures, bronzes, and lacquer ware. (Overnight Tokyo) B

Hakone - 1 night

Day 4: Saturday 7 November, Tokyo – Yokohama – Hakone

- Sankei-en (Sankei's Garden)

- Hakone Open-Air Museum
- Hakone Jinja Shrine

This morning we depart Tokyo and drive to southern Yokohama. Here we visit the beautiful Sankei-en, a spacious garden in which are set a number of historic buildings from across Japan. There are a pond, small rivers, a profusion of flowers and wonderful scrolling trails. The garden, built by Hara Sankei, was opened to the public in 1904. Among the historic buildings in the park are the elegant residence of a *daimyo* (feudal lord), several teahouses, and the main hall and three storied pagoda of Tomyo-ji, the abandoned temple of Kyoto.

We then continue to Hakone, located on the shore of Lake Ashi with views across to the iconic Mt Fuji, arguably Japan's most important landmark, which stands as the symbol of the nation's identity. It has been pictured countless times, not least in Katsushika Hokusai's *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (1826-1833).

We visit the Hakone open-Air Museum, where sculptures by Rodin, Miro and Bourdellemare are exhibited within the garden. The museum has one of the largest collections of work by Henry Moore and over 300 works by Pablo Picasso.

The beautiful Shinto Hakone Shrine sits on the shore of Lake Ashi. Its buildings are hidden within the forest but its presence is announced by huge *torii* gates at the lake's edge, and a path leads visitors up lantern-flanked stone steps to the shrine.

Tonight we dine together at the hotel and enjoy a glass of sake with a *keiseki* dinner of many small and beautifully presented dishes. (Overnight Hakone) BLD

Matsumoto - 2 nights

Day 5: Sunday 8 November, Hakone – Kawaguchiko – Matsumoto

- Itchiku Kubota Art Museum, Kawaguchiko
- Nakamachi Street and Kurassic-kan, Matsumoto
- Matsumoto Rising Castle (exterior only)

In Kawaguchiko we will visit the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum. When the artist Itchiku Kubota was young, he encountered an example of 'Tsujigahana' at the Tokyo National Museum. 'Tsujigahana' was a technique used in dying kimonos during the 15th and 16th century, an art that was later lost. Kubota-san revived the art and created a series of kimonos decorated with mountain landscapes in all four seasons and Mount Fuji. These kimonos are displayed in a breathtaking setting. The main building is a pyramid-shaped structure supported by sixteen *hiba* (cypress) beams more than 1000 years old. Other parts of the museum are constructed of Ryukyu limestone. The museum's unique architecture is set against a lovely garden and red pine forest.

We then focus upon Matsumoto and its surrounds for the next two days. On arrival in the town, we walk through the historic Nakamachi-dori, a street lined with white-walled traditional inns, restaurants and antique shops. We cross the river to walk to Matsumoto-jo, the imposing castle approached across a moat. Matsumoto-jo was founded by the Ogasawara clan in 1504 but it was another lord, Ishikawa, who remodelled the fortress in 1593 and built the imposing black five-tier donjon that is now the oldest keep in Japan. (Overnight Matsumoto) B

Day 6: Monday 9 November, Matsumoto – Kiso Valley – Matsumoto

- Nakasendo Highway Walk
- Magome Village
- Tsumago Village

Today we drive out of Matsumoto and head to the Kiso Valley for a taste of how Japan looked prior to urbanisation. Developed by Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu as one of the five main highways linking his capital Edo (Tokyo) with the rest of Japan, the valley contains eleven post towns and several have been preserved as a virtual museum of the feudal past.

As we follow the valley we'll enjoy features of the Nakasendo route, including Kiso Fukushima, the gateway to the sacred mountain of Ontake.

We first visit Magome, which means 'horse-basket', because this is where travellers were forced to leave their horses before tackling the mountainous roads ahead. The highway route continues to Tsumago and we will walk part of the way, along the cobbled path that winds through the forested hills, over streams and past charming hamlets.

Tsumago was a ghost town 30 years ago, with its traditional Edo-era houses on the point of collapse. Its restoration sparked the idea of cultural preservation in Japan. The pedestrian-only street is similar to that once encountered by lords and their samurai centuries ago. Preserved are the Okuya Kyodokan, a designated post inn, where the *daimyo's* (feudal lord) retinue rested. On the opposite side of the street the Kyu-honjin is where the *daimyo* used to stay.

Our final visit for the day is to the Nagiso Town Museum. Opened in 1995, the museum has three divisions: Tsumago Post Town Honjin, a *sub-honjin*, and a history museum. (A *honjin* is a temporary residence for a lord or dignitary to stay in when travelling to and from the shogunate capital of Edo.) The present building of the *subhonjin* was built in 1878 utilising Japanese cypress throughout, a type of wood proscribed for ordinary construction during the Edo period (1600-1868). The History Museum contains historical materials of Nagiso Town and history of the trust organisation dedicated to the preservation of historic towns, villages, and neighbourhoods. (Overnight Matsumoto) B

Kanazawa - 1 night

Day 7: Tuesday 10 November, Matsumoto – Kanazawa

- Shinkansen train Nagano to Kanazawa
- Oumi-cho Ichiba Market
- Nomura-ke (restored samurai residence & house garden)
- Ishikawa-ken History Museum
- Higashi-Chayagai District

This morning we travel by coach to Nagano, where we board the Shinkansen Superexpress train to Kanazawa, considered one Japan's best-preserved Edo-period cities. Kanazawa is a popular place for the Japanese to visit but perhaps because of its remote location and very cold winters few foreigners make the journey to experience its rich cultural legacies.

The feudal atmosphere of Kanazawa still lingers in the Nagamachi district, where old houses of the Nagamachi Samurai line the streets that once belonged to Kaga Clan. The T-shaped and L-shaped alleys are distinct characteristics of the feudal town, and the mud doors and gates of the houses remain as they were 400 years ago. The houses with their samurai windows (*bushimado*) and mud walls under the yellow

Kobaita wooden roofs, which were protected from snow by straw mats (*komo*), evoke a bygone era.

During the Edo Period (1603-1867), the scale and dispensation of land to samurai families who lived in this district, and others in the city, was a fairly accurate indicator of rank. One of the larger Nagamachi estates was assigned to Nomura Denbei Nobusada, a senior official in the service of the first feudal lord of the Kaga domain. The reforms that accompanied the Meiji Restoration in 1868 decimated the lifestyles of the socially privileged. The samurai, whose social class was nulified, not only had their stipends terminated, but their estates were also appropriated by the state. Consequently, the Nomura family, whose considerable land holdings dated back 12 generations, lost their home and were reduced to turning a section of the remaining part of their property over to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Though they were discouraged from public displays of ostentation, merchant families and those of former samurai were not prohibited from commissioning the construction of exquisite gardens.

After time to explore the Oumi-cho Ichiba Market, we visit the restored residence of Nomura, displaying the lifestyle and artifacts of the era, and explore its garden which features trees that are over 400 years old. Broad, irregularly shaped stepping stones provide access to the inner garden whose attractive entrance is flanked by a Chinese maple tree with leaves that turn a brilliant red in autumn. We also visit the Ishikawa-ken History Museum that is dedicated to the history of this prefecture.

Across the Asano River is the district of Higashi-Chayagai, Kanazawa's most famous geisha district. Many of the tall wooden-latticed houses on the narrow streets are still used by geisha for high-class entertainment as they have done since 1820 when the area was established as a geisha quarter. Geishas are young girls or women extensively trained as entertainers and skilled in a number of traditional Japanese arts such as classical music and dance as well as the performance of the exacting rituals of a Japanese tea ceremony. This district has been designated as one of Japan's cultural assets. (Overnight Kanazawa) B

Note: Our luggage will be transported directly from Matsumoto to our hotel in Kyoto. An overnight bag will be needed for use in Kanazawa.

Kyoto - 6 nights

Day 8: Wednesday 11 November, Kanazawa – Kyoto

- Kanazawa Castle (exterior)
- Kenroku-en, Kanazawa
- Tea Ceremony at the Nishida Family Gardens 'Gyokusen-en'
- Train from Kanazawa to Kyoto

Our first destination this morning is Kanazawa Castle, the seat of power of the local Maeda clan, hereditary feudal lords (*daimyo*) of the Kaga province from 1583. Burnt down on a number of occasions, only the superb Ishikawa Gate and the Sanjikken Nagaya samurai dwelling survive from the original construction.

Kenroku-en is Kanazawa's prime attraction and one of the three most famous gardens in Japan, along with Koraku-en (Okayama) and Kairaku-en (Mito). Kenroku-en was once the outer garden of Kanazawa Castle and there has been a garden on the site since the late 1600s. The original garden, begun by the fifth Maeda lord, Tsunonori Maeda, was called 'Renchi tei' but it was almost entirely burnt out in 1759. It was restored in the 1770s and in 1822 became known as Kenroku-en, a name that means 'the garden of six sublimities' or, 'a garden combining the six aspects of a perfect garden'. These six features were what the Chinese traditionally believed were necessary for the ideal garden – spaciousness and seclusion, artifice and antiquity, water-courses and panoramas: all these characteristics are to be found in the 25 acres of this

beautiful garden. Beside the garden is a former samurai residence belonging to the Nishida family with a beautiful charming garden 'Gyokusen-en', where we shall partake in a traditional tea ceremony.

We then transfer to the train station to take the train south to Kyoto. Kyoto was the capital of Japan from the late 8th century (c.794 AD) until 1868, when the court was moved to Tokyo. It is home to 17 World Heritage Sites, 1600 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines, yet much of the city centre is modern. One of the finest of its contemporary buildings is its dramatic railway station.

In the evening you may choose to make an optional visit to the Gion district of Kyoto for a glimpse of a vanishing world – home to geisha houses and traditional teahouses. Although the number of geishas has declined over the last century the area is still famous for the preservation of forms of traditional architecture and entertainment. To experience the traditional Gion, stroll along Hanami-koji, a street lined by beautiful old buildings, including teahouses, where you may be able to glimpse a geisha apprentice. Contrary to popular belief Gion is not a red-light district, nor are geishas prostitutes. Geishas are young girls or women extensively trained as entertainers and skilled in a number of traditional Japanese arts such as classical music and dance as well as the performance of the exacting rituals of a Japanese tea ceremony. (Overnight Kyoto) B

Day 9: Thursday 12 November, Kyoto

- Ryoan-ji (Dragon Peace Temple)
- Kinkaku-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion)
- Daitoku-ji Buddhist Complex incl. the Ryogen-in

Kyoto is notable for its extraordinary diversity of Japanese gardens, including many of the finest traditional temple gardens.

We first visit Ryoan-ji – the Dragon Peace Temple. No other garden in the world is so simple, elegant and refined. The garden comprises 15 rocks in a sea of raked gravel surrounded by a compacted mud wall coated in oil that is in itself a national treasure. The garden dates from 1500 as part of a temple of the Renzai sect of Zen Buddhism. The temple burned but was reconstructed in its original form. The garden constitutes the supreme example of a dry garden where gravel and rock symbolise plant and water elements. Indeed, apart from the moss on the rocks, no other plants grow in it. The meaning of the garden remains unknown. It might symbolise islands in a sea, mountains seen through clouds or tigers and cubs crossing a river, but this doesn't matter since this is a garden to encourage contemplation, the enclosing wall separating the visitor from the world outside, and the verandah creating a horizontal boundary.

We then visit the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku-ji). During the 15th century the Chinese Sung Dynasty exercised an enormous influence in Japan as artists, poets and Zen priests were gathered together by Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun (1358-1409). Yoshimitsu began construction of the Golden Pavilion just before he retired in 1394, handing power to his nine-year-old son so that he could move to his estate. Little of his work remains but we can sense the character of the garden in its pond, rockwork and extensive plantings.

The pavilion at Kinkaku-ji recalls Sung period architecture but it is a recreation, having been burned down in the 1950s. The present building is an exact replica, except that where Yoshimitsu proposed only to gild the ceiling of the third storey with gold, now the whole building is gilded. Yoshimitsu positioned his palace on the edge of a lake. The ground floor was a reception room for guests and departure point for leisure boating, the first storey was for philosophical discussions and panoramic views of the lake while the upper floor acted as a refuge for Yoshimitsu and was used for tea ceremonies. The size of the gardens is increased visually by the water's convoluted edge, the use of rocks and clipped trees and by visually 'borrowing' a

distant view of Mt Kinugasa that creates a sense of gradation between foreground, middle-ground and deep distance.

We conclude the day with a visit to Daitoku-ji, a large complex of Zen temples with prayer halls, religious structures and 23 sub-temples with some of the most exquisite gardens in Kyoto, some quite small, including raked gravel gardens and, in the Daisen-in, one of the most celebrated small rock gardens in Japan. The Japanese consider Daitoku-ji one of the most privileged places to study and it is associated with many of Japan's most famous priests. Unlike many of the larger public Buddhist temples of earlier sects, the Rinzai sect monasteries were intimate, inward looking and remained isolated from the outside world.

The temple received imperial patronage and grew out from its centre in an organic way. A transition occurred as the complex expanded from a formal centre to semiformal and informal precincts. The central north-south walkway is most formal with wide paths to accommodate processions and ceremonies, while to the side are sub-temples with gates. As you walk through one of these gates you immediately come upon a less formal world with narrow paths, turns and walkways. The temple site contains a number of notable gardens including Daisen-in, Zuiho-in and Ryogen-in. (Overnight Kyoto)

Day 10: Friday 13 November, Kyoto

- Enko-ji
- Shisen-do
- Renge-ji
- Dinner at a traditional *Izakaya* restaurant

Today we will visit a number of Kyoto's great gardens. Our first visit for the day is to Enko-ji, located in northern Kyoto. A temple of the Rinzai Zen Sect, this temple was founded in 1601 and is particularly famous for the autumn colours of the maple trees in its beautiful garden. Visitors view the garden from the temple.

The intimate gardens of Shisen-do are considered masterworks of Japanese gardens. Its street walls mask the tranquillity and beauty to be found within. Raked sand, clipped azaleas and the tree covered hillsides of Higashiyama form the main components of this garden designed by Ishikawa Jozan (1583-1672). Clipped azaleas give way to natural vegetation beyond the garden boundary but it is the close harmony between the indoor spaces of the pavilion and the garden beyond that is most striking. The verandah offers a transition between its dark interior and the light-filled garden.

This afternoon visit Renge-ji. The temple is known for its garden, which reflects the beauty of seasonal change. Autumn when the maple leaves change colour, is the best season to visit. Capturing the essence of Japanese gardens, it includes a central pond surrounded by plantings linking to the hillside beyond. Stones, bridge and plantings are all reflected on the water-surface, giving a sense of spaciousness.

This evening we have dinner at a traditional and lively *izakaya* restaurant. (Overnight Kyoto) D

Day 11: Saturday 14 November, Kyoto

- Fushimi Inari Taisha
- Murin-an Gardens
- Afternoon at leisure

This morning we visit one of the most famous and spectacular sites in Kyoto, the Fushimi Inari Taisha. We

will set off from the hotel early to avoid the crowds who come to see the thousands of beautiful vermilion *torii* (gates) that line the paths to the main buildings of the complex, creating extraordinary tunnels. The shrine is the principal residence of the *kami* Inari, the Shinto god of rice and commerce, and throughout the complex are numerous statues of foxes, believed to be Inari's messengers.

We then visit the beautiful Murin-an gardens, a strolling garden of the Meiji Period. The garden was created by Japanese master gardener Ogawa Jihee in 1894. The garden uses the eastern hills of Kyoto as a viewpoint, which allow it to appear as an extension of the mountain scenery. It has a small stream that is fed by the waters of Lake Biwa, Japan's biggest lake. Large parts of the garden are lawn, probably an influence of English landscape gardens.

The afternoon is at leisure to explore Kyoto. (Overnight Kyoto)

Day 12: Sunday 15 November, Kyoto

- Tenryu-ji
- Nanzen-ji
- Philosopher's Path
- Ginkaku-ji (Temple of the Silver Pavilion)

We first visit the Tenryu-ji, which dates from the period of shogun Ashikaga Takauji (1339). He commissioned the priest Muso Kokushi – one of Japan's best known garden designers, who also designed the moss garden at Saiho-ji – to create this garden. Kokushi's work modified an estate of Emperor Gosaga from 1270. He changed its form to include an Heian-style pond garden with popular, contemporary Chinese aspects. These included most notably a group of seven vertical rocks near the rear shore of its pond. These contrast markedly with Japanese rock work that takes a more horizontal form. This is one of the earliest gardens to show *shakkei*, the incorporation of borrowed landscape into a garden's design.

Nanzen-ji is one of the most famous Rinzai Zen temples in Japan. It was founded in 1291 by Emperor Kameyama, and was rebuilt several times after devastating fires. At the entrance to the complex one passes through the huge Imperial gate, built in 1628 by Todo Takatora, and into the complex with its series of sub-temples. We will see the *hojo*, or abbot's quarters, which is notable for both it's beautiful golden screen paintings and the tranquil sand and rock garden. We will also explore the sub-temple Konchi-in which was added to the complex in 1605.

We stroll along the charming Philosophers Way – a footpath that follows a canal lined with cherry trees. It is named for Nishida Kitaro, one of Japan's most famous philosophers, who walked this route to Kyoto University each day.

The Philosopher's Path ends at Ginkaku-ji. Originally constructed as the retirement villa of the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1435-1490), the Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavilion) became a Zen temple upon his death. The garden is complex, comprising two distinct sections, a pond area with a composition of rocks and plants, and a sand garden with a truncated cone, the 'Moon-Viewing Height, suggesting Mt Fuji; and a horizontal mound, the 'Sea of Silver Sand' named for its appearance by moonlight. (Overnight Kyoto)

Day 13: Monday 16 November, Kyoto

- Heian Shrine
- Tofuku-ji
- Afternoon at leisure

We begin the day with a visit to one of the newest religious sites in Kyoto, the Heian Shrine, which boasts the largest *torii* (sacred gate) in Japan and lovely gardens. The shrine was built in 1896 to commemorate the city's 1100th anniversary and to honour its founder, Emperor Kammu, and also to celebrate the culture and architecture of the city's Heian-past. It is constructed on the site of the original Heian Hall of State but is a smaller and somewhat imperfect recreation of this earlier building. Four gardens surround the main shrine buildings on the south, west, middle and east, covering an area of approximately 33,000 square metres. The gardens are designated as a national scenic spot representative of Meiji-era (1868-1912) garden design.

We then visit the superb Tofuku-ji Hojo, a garden designed in 1939 by Shigemori Mirei. This will be familiar to many who have read books on Japanese gardens for it combines 20th-century design with elements from Japanese tradition. Mirei implements subtle, restrained design themes such as chequer-boards of stone in moss to allow the natural form and colour of maples on the surrounding hills to make full impact.

The afternoon is at leisure to further this city's rich culture. (Overnight Kyoto)

Matsue - 1 night

Day 14: Tuesday 17 November, Kyoto – Okayama – Matsue

- Shinkansen train Kyoto to Okayama
- Kouraku-en Gardens, Okayama
- Adachi Museum of Art
- Farewell Dinner at a Local Restaurant

Today we depart Kyoto and travel by train to Okayama where we visit another of the country's so-called 'Three Great Gardens of Japan', Kouraku-en. This garden dates from the Edo period when the *daimyo* (feudal lord) Ikeda Tsunamasa ordered its construction in 1687. Completed in 1700, it has retained its overall appearance with only a few minor changes made over the centuries. The garden was used for entertaining guests and also as a retreat for the *daimyo*.

In the afternoon we travel by train to Matsue, where we shall visit the Adachi Museum of Art, located in the rural landscape of the Sinmane region. This is a contemporary art museum set within a large garden, considered by many to be one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan. The museum was founded by Adachi Zenko who felt a strong resonance between the sublime sensibility of the Japanese-style garden and the paintings of Yokoyama Taikan whose work he collected. This is a contemplation garden which visitors observe from various carefully designed points within the museum. Each season reveals itself through different aspects of the garden, and during our visit we can expect the hills that form the backdrop to the vista before us to be a blaze of autumnal colour while vivid reds enliven the foliage of the garden. After checking in to our hotel we enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (Overnight Matsue) D

Note: As we will be travelling by train today, our luggage will be transferred directly to the Matsue hotel.

Day 15: Wednesday 18 November, Depart Matsue

- Yuushien Garden, Daikonshima
- Transfer to Izumo Airport

Our tour finishes with a trip to the island of Daikonshima, just outside Matsue, where we visit the beautiful Yuushien garden. Each season brings new colour to the garden, and in Autumn we can expect to see

oleaceae and camellias as well as a beautiful display of autumnal foliage.

We then transfer to Izumo Airport with an estimated arrival time of 12.00pm midday. Note: we recommend allowing 4 hours for your flight check-in. B

Accommodation

All hotels are rated 4-star locally (3-star in Kyoto) and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have en suite bathroom.

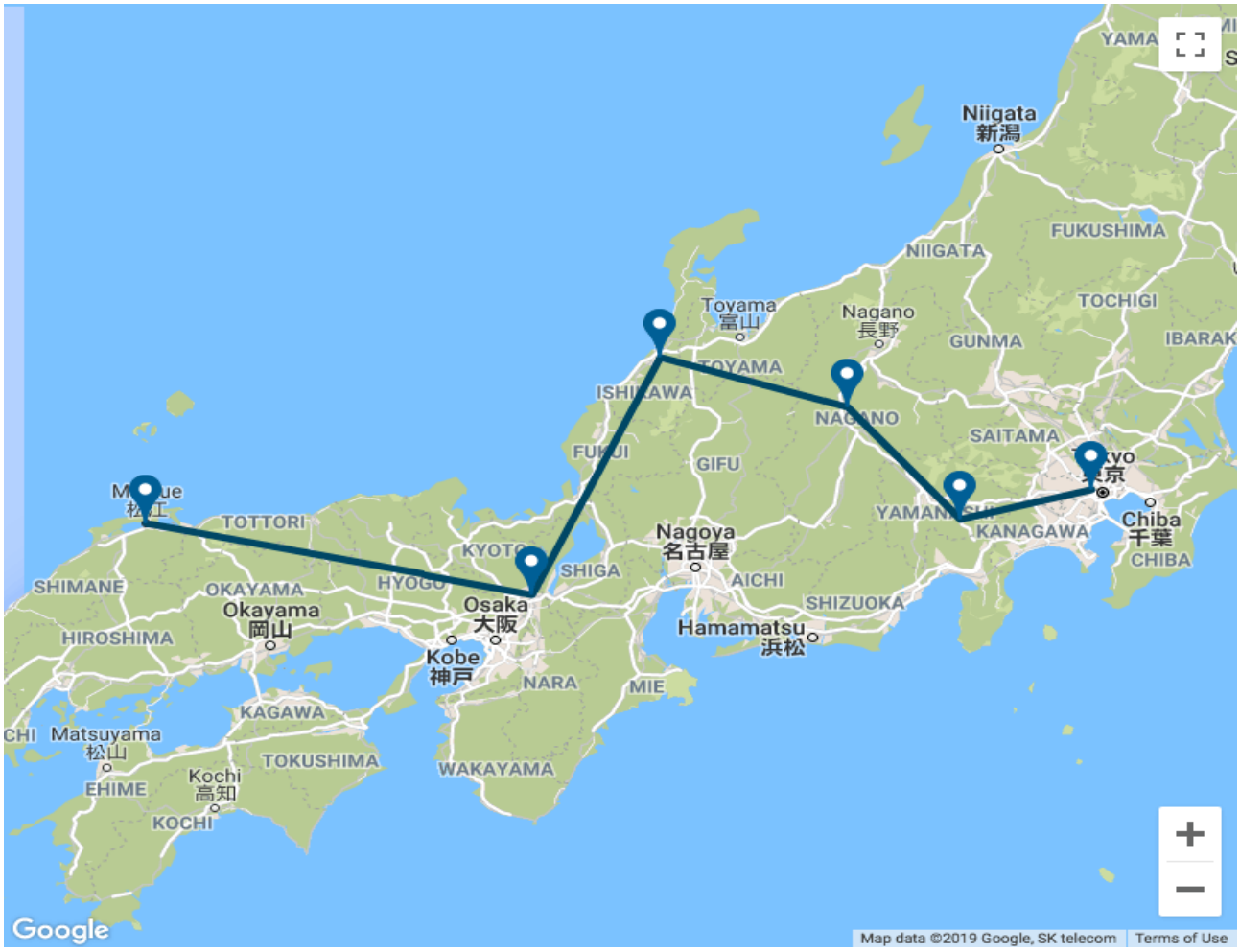
- Tokyo (3 nights): 4-star Tokyo Prince Hotel – a modern hotel in the Minato-ku district.
- Hakone (1 night): The Prince Hakone Lake Ashinoko – a resort hotel on the shores of Lake Ashinoko. The hotel has it's own *onsen* (hot spring baths); on a clear day Mount Fuji can be seen from the garden.
- Matsumoto (2 nights): Hotel Buena Vista – located 1km from Matsumoto Castle in the historic centre of the town.
- Kanazawa (1 night): Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel – a modern hotel conveniently located for visiting the Kenrokuen garden and Kanazawa castle.
- Kyoto (6 nights): Mimaru Kyoto Nijo Castle – a modern apartment hotel located close to supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurants. Each apartment is 40 sqm and includes a small well-equipped kitchen and laundry. Breakfast is not served at the apartment-hotel, but can be purchased from the stores located 50m away.
- Matsue (1 night): Matsue Excel Hotel Tokyu – a comfortable business hotel, a short walk from Matsue station.

Note: *Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map


Niigata
新潟
FUKUSHIMA
NIIGATA
TOCHIGI
Toyama
富山
Nagano
長野
GUNMA
TOYAMA
NAGANO
SAITAMA
GIFU
TOTTORI
Nagoya
名古屋
KANAGAWA
Chiba
千葉
CHIBA
SHIMANE
OKAYAMA
Okayama
岡山
HYOGO
SHIGA
AICHI
SHIZUOKA
Osaka
大阪
Hamamatsu
浜松
HIROSHIMA
Kobe
神戸
NARA
MIE
KAGAWA
Matsuyama
松山
TOKUSHIMA
WAKAYAMA
EHIME
Kochi
高知
KOCHI
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Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD $TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 31 December 2025

AUD $TBA Land Content Only

AUD $TBA Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in hotels generally of 4-star standard (3-star apartment-hotel in Kyoto)
- Buffet or served breakfast, lunches & evening meals as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner. Breakfast is not included in Kyoto.
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach and rail as outlined in the itinerary
- Departure airport transfer
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports or train stations)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees to all sites
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tour notes
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- International Airfare: Australia-Tokyo, Matsue-Australia
- Arrival airport transfer in Tokyo
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel Insurance

Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level

Level 1 - Active

For people with active lives and good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular pace up to 5-7km per day on flat or undulating terrain; some stretches include steeper slopes or several flights of stairs (eg at temple complexes).
- keep up with the group at all times.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- board/alight transport including coaches and trains unassisted.
- to carry your hand luggage up and down stairs as you change platforms with a limited time to make the train connection.

Fitness Levels
Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please

read the fitness requirements carefully.

Overnight Bags & Luggage Transfer

This tour involves several journeys on Japan's high-speed bullet trains. Larger suitcases are not permitted on these trains; the group's luggage will therefore be transferred by truck to the hotel. There are three occasions when a small overnight bag will be required rather than a large suitcase:

- Matsumoto-Kanazawa & Kanazawa-Kyoto: these journeys are both by bullet train. The group's luggage will be transferred by truck from Matsumoto directly to Kyoto and will be ready for the group when they arrive in Kyoto. For the one night in Kanazawa, an overnight bag MUST be used – suitcases cannot be taken on the bullet train.
- Kyoto-Okayama-Matsue: this journey is by bullet train. The group's luggage will be transferred by truck from Kyoto directly to Matsue and will be ready for the group when they arrive in Matsue.

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD $200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD $800.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD $1000.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD $200.00 per person deposit, less a $66.00 service fee (including GST).

Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD$800.00 per person applicable for International tours OR AUD$300.00 per person applicable for Australian tours. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your full deposit is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

  OR
- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD$200.00 per person deposit, less a $66.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) ( ) _____ TEL. (BH) ( ) _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth ___/___/___ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products

☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts

☐ Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour.

ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities *without assistance or support:-*

- walk & stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____ Dated _____

Intention to Travel Payment

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of $ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): ☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit (see below) ☐ Credit Card (see below)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- *via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate*
- *via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg.Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.*

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank	ANZ
Branch	420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code	ANZBAU3M
BSB	013-423
Account No	3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

_____

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

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Phone +61 3 9822 6899 Email info@asatours.com.au

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