

# Fall Foliage and Gardens of Japan

With Ciscoe Morris

November 11<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Thirteen nights in Japan featuring gardens and historic sites in Tokyo, Kyoto, Nara, and Hiroshima

Includes accommodations, transportation, admission to listed sites, all breakfasts, most dinners.

Day 1                      Osaka Kansai Airport

Welcome to Osaka! You will be picked up from the Airport and taken to the hotel.

[Imperial Hotel Osaka or similar class](#)

NOTE 1: If you wish to stay extra nights before the tour starts, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.

Day 2                      Himeji (Himeji Castle / Koko-en Garden), Matsue (Adachi Art Museum and Garden)

Travel to Himeji Castle, one of Japan's few remaining original castles and a World Cultural Heritage Site. Following a long winding road, you'll view its magnificent castle tower. Elegant from the outside, the interior quickly changes to a more masculine yet simple aesthetic highlighting its beautifully preserved wooden structures. Next to the castle is Koko-en Garden, which features a large pond full of colorful carp. Then, you will make your way to Adachi Art Museum and Garden. This garden has been rated among the finest Japanese-styled gardens by JOJG for 14 years in a row. It stands one of the most sophisticated gardens and museums in Japan. Tonight, you will experience staying at a ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) at Tamatsukuri Spa in Matsue City, a famous spa in Japan.

[Breakfast / Dinner](#)

[Kasuien Minami or similar class](#)

Day 3                      Matsue (Matsue Castle / Horikawa Moat Boat Cruise / Matsue Samurai District / Yushien Garden), Izumo (Izumo Grand Shrine)

Today, you will visit the areas surrounding Matsue City, a city near the Sea of Japan and Lake Shinji-ko. First, tour the Matsue Castle, another original castle in Japan and a designated National Treasure. Enjoy the atmosphere of an old castle town, taking a small boat tour along the castle moat and walking around the former residential area of samurai warriors. Next, visit the Yushi-en Garden, a small, but lovely garden on an island in the middle of Lake Nakaumi, where you will also have today's lunch. The last attraction for today will be Izumo Taisha Shrine. This is one of Japan's most ancient Shinto shrines and has played a prominent role in Japanese mythology.

Breakfast / Dinner

Kasuien Minami or similar class

Day 4 Seto Ohashi Bridge, Takamatsu (Bonsai Village / Ritsurin Koen Garden)

After leaving Tamatsukuri Spa in the morning, continue to Takamatsu City on Shikoku Island via Seto Ohashi Bridge, an outstanding bridge with views of the Seto Inland Sea. Takamatsu City is famous for its tradition of producing a beautiful display of pine trees. There, you will tour a bonsai village where 80 percent of pine tree bonsai are produced in Japan. Afterwards, enjoy a stroll through Ritsurin Koen Garden, one of the best gardens in Japan. Taking 150 years to complete, this garden has since been well-maintained by gardeners for more than 250 years. Tonight, you will stay at a hotel next to Takamatsu Station and have dinner on your own.

Breakfast / Dinner

JR Hotel Clement Takamatsu or similar class

Day 5 Awaji Island (Miracle Planet Botanical Museum and the 100 Stepped Garden at Yumebutai), Akashi Ohashi Bridge, Kobe (Ikuta Shrine and its shopping area / Wagyu Beef Dinner)

This morning, transfer from Takamatsu City to Kobe, a lovely international port town. On the way, you will stop by Yumebutai on Awaji Island to see the Miracle Planet Botanical Museum, a large greenhouse popular among floral designers. You will also visit the complex 100 Stepped Garden, a distinctive platform of 100 flower beds. Lunch will be offered there. Next, travel through Akashi Ohashi Bridge, the world longest suspension bridge, and arrive in Kobe. Kobe is the 6th largest city in Japan, an exotic port city famous for its marbled beef. Take a short walking tour around Ikuta Shrine and its bustling shopping area around it, located in the center of Kobe City. Tonight, you will have the opportunity to savor a delicious Wagyu beef dinner.

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel Okura Kobe or similar class

Day 6 Kyoto (Heian Shrine / Daitokuji Temple / Machiya Townhouse / Kimono Experience)

Today you will travel to Kyoto, an ancient city that was once the capital of Japan for more than 1,000 years until 1869. Home to many cultural legacies, Kyoto was the center of Japanese culture and religion of its time. First head to Heian Shrine (if time permits), where you will be greeted by a massive torii gate. Then, visit Daitokuji Temple, one of the best places to see a variety of Zen gardens. Next, visit a Machiya townhouse, a traditional dwelling of Kyoto people that features a miniature garden. After lunch, enjoy the experience of trying on and wearing a kimono. You will also have the special chance to visit a private Kyoto garden for a unique look that is not open to the public.

Note: From Day 6 to Day 10, you will be staying at the same hotel in Kyoto.

### Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel Okura Kyoto or similar class

## Day 7      Kyoto (Daikakuji Temple / Tenryuji Temple / Bamboo Groves / Ryoanji Temple / Kinkakuji Temple)

We will spend today sightseeing the highlights of Kyoto. Three out of the four Buddhist temples we will visit are World Cultural Heritage Sites. Each temple has its own unique gardens with special beauty. First, you will visit Daikakuji Temple, a large, peaceful temple that was once a former residence to ex-emperors. It is also one of the headquarters of Japanese-styled flower arrangement schools, so beautifully arranged flowers are always seen near the entrance. Continue to Tenryuji Temple, which features a magnificent garden built in the 14th century and gorgeous bamboo groves. After lunch, you will drive through a conserved area that retains the scenery of old Sagano. From there, visit Ryoanji Temple, the site of Japan's world-famous stone landscape garden. Finally, reach the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion), the #1 sightseeing destination in Kyoto. This impressive structure highlights its two top floors covered entirely in gold leaf.

### Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel Okura Kyoto or similar class

## Day 8      Kyoto (Nijo Castle / Myoshinji Temple / Nishiki Market / Zen Meditation & Tea Ceremony at Kodaiji Temple / Gion - Kyoto Cuisine with Maiko Dinner)

Today, you will get to meet a professional Japanese garden builder and designer. Together, you will visit Nijo Castle and Myoshinji Temple for fascinating garden critique and insight. You will learn the principles of building a Japanese garden, the cost to maintain it, and any further questions you have. At Nijo Castle, a World Cultural Heritage Site, you will not only see a 17th century garden, but also an original palace where you can appreciate its architecture. Continue to Myoshinji Temple with the garden designer and enjoy a stroll along its large and peaceful precinct. Then, visit the Nishiki Market, a lively marketplace in downtown Kyoto, where you can try some of the delicious food on your own. Afterwards, you will participate in a special Zazen

meditation and tea ceremony class. At the end of the day, enjoy dinner with entertainment provided by an apprentice geisha (maiko).

### Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel Okura Kyoto or similar class

## Day 9 Nara (Todaiji Temple / Isuien Garden / Kofukiji Temple / Higashimuki Shopping Street / Nara Deer Park)

Travel to Nara, an ancient city steeped in Buddhist history and former capital during the 8th century before Kyoto. The first attraction for today is Todaiji Temple, famous for holding the world's largest bronze statue of Buddha, the Great Buddha. Nearby is the Isui-en Garden, meaning "garden founded on water". View the Kofukiji Temple, the second tallest pagoda in Japan at five stories high. Then, make your way to the Higashimuki shopping area, where you will have lunch on your own. End your day at Nara Park, where more than 1,000 freely roaming Sika deer can be found.

### Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel Okura Kyoto or similar class

## Day 10 Kyoto (Kyoto Imperial Palace / Flower Arrangement Class / Nanzenji Temple / Sanjo Ohashi Bridge Area)

This morning you will visit the old Imperial Palace, the former residence of the Emperor of Japan before moving to Tokyo after the Meiji Restoration in 1869. Next, experience a Japanese-styled flower arrangement class, also known as "ikebana". Afterwards, walk through the spacious precinct of Nanzenji Temple and see the enormous Sanmon gate. Then, transfer to the Sanjo Ohashi Bridge area, where you can explore its variety of restaurants and shops. You will have lunch on your own and have the freedom to decide what to do afterwards. You may either take a Keihan train to the Fushimi Inari Shrine with your guide, go straight to your hotel on the private coach, or take your time at the shopping area before heading back to the hotel on your own.

### Breakfast

Hotel Okura Kyoto or similar class

## Day 11 Bullet Train to Shin-Fuji Station, Mt Fuji (5th Station / Itchiku Kubota Art Museum), Hakone (Lake Ashi Cruise)

Before traveling to Mt. Fuji, you will first aboard one of Japan's high-speed bullet trains for a "local" experience. Afterwards, visit the Mt. Fuji 5th Station, the most popular way to see Japan's iconic peak (depending on weather conditions). Continue to the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum located near Lake Kawaguchi. This art museum is devoted to silk-dyeing artist Kubota Itchiku, who devoted his life to recreating elaborate kimonos using the lost art of silk-dyeing. Finally, enjoy a scenic cruise along Lake Ashinoko, which borrows scenery from the stunning Mt. Fuji.

### Breakfast / Dinner

Laforet Club Hakone Gora Yunosumika or similar class

#### Day 12 Hakone (Hakone Open Air Museum), Tokyo (Meiji Shrine / Rikugien Garden)

Your first attraction for today will be the Hakone Open-Air Museum, which displays abstract sculptures and exhibitions from various artists. It is recognized for successfully balancing its outdoor exhibits with the surrounding mountains and valley. Next, head to Tokyo to visit the peaceful Meiji Shrine, dedicated to Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. Continue to Rikugi-en Garden, one of Tokyo's most beautiful landscape gardens. Built in 1700, the garden is an excellent example of Edo Period strolling gardens with pathways leading to teahouses and a central pond.

### Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel New Otani Tokyo or similar class

#### Day 13 Tokyo (New Otani Hotel Garden / Imperial Palace East Gardens / Tsukiji Fish Market / Hama Rikyu Garden / Sumida River Cruise / Asakusa Sensoji Temple)

After breakfast, we will make our way to the garden of the hotel we are currently staying at. This beautiful garden is steeped in 400 years of samurai lord history and possesses a peaceful ambience while nestled in the heart of Tokyo. Afterwards, make your way to the Imperial Palace East Gardens. Located at the foundation of the former Edo Castle tower, the garden was created in place of the fallen castle tower. Next, visit the famous Tsukiji Fish Market, home to an assortment of freshly caught fish and various food options. Continue to Hama Rikyu, a traditionally-styled landscape garden that stands near the skyscrapers of the Shiodome District, which brings a sense of calmness in the midst of a bustling city. Then, aboard a Sumida River Cruise, where you can enjoy the scenery of the city's most famous river. Your last attraction of the tour is Asakusa Sensoji Temple, Tokyo's oldest and most colorful temple.

### Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel New Otani Tokyo or similar class

#### Day 14 Tour Ends

After breakfast, our tour officially ends. Checkout time is 11 am, free for leisure until transfer to Tokyo Narita Airport or Haneda Airport for departure.

### Breakfast

This tour is fully escorted by a local guide and is limited to 16 participants.

Price is \$7600 per person, based on double occupancy. We have room for only 2 singles with a supplemental cost of \$2200. A deposit of \$2500 confirms your reservation. Guests paying for this tour by check will save \$230 per person. This amount is deducted from the final payment.

**Flights to Japan are not included.** Round trip fare estimates from Seattle are between \$1,000 and \$1,400, depending on the airline and number of stops.

Flights should be booked to depart Seattle on November 10<sup>th</sup>, arriving Osaka November 11<sup>th</sup>. Return flights from Tokyo's Narita Airport may be booked at any time on the 24<sup>th</sup>, but an afternoon departure is preferred.

Flight schedules will be able to book at the end of December. Flight schedules are typically published 330 days from travel date.