

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2027 GARDEN AND ART SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN (COMFORT)

START: **(Refer to website for date) from Tokyo**

FINISH: at Kyoto

DURATION: **15 days**

PRICE: **AUD \$15,870 per person**

GROUP size: **8 people**

SINGLE SUPP: **AUD \$3,580 per person**

REF: GAG-27

TOUR OVERVIEW

Discover the beauty, culture, and artistry of Japan in autumn on the 2027 Garden and Art Spectacular Tour, a 15-day small group journey curated for travellers who appreciate Japanese gardens, traditional crafts, and world-class art. This November tour is timed for the peak of autumn foliage, when Japan's landscapes are ablaze with vibrant reds, oranges, and golds, offering some of the year's most photogenic scenery.

This tour is deliberately small and intimate, with a maximum of 8 travellers, ensuring personalised attention and immersive experiences. The Comfort style itinerary emphasises luxury and ease, featuring:

- 4 to 5-star accommodations with western beds and private en-suite bathrooms
- Extensive use of private minivans for convenient and relaxed transfers
- A pace that allows for unhurried exploration of gardens, art galleries, and cultural sites

Whether wandering through historic districts, contemplative Japanese gardens, or contemporary art installations, this tour offers a luxurious, enriching, and unforgettable journey through Japan at its most spectacular season.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Airport meet and greet on arrival	Welcome to Japan in autumn - when maple leaves glow in crimson and gold, and traditional gardens are at their most breathtaking. Upon arrival at Narita or Haneda International Airport, you will be warmly met by your Journey to the East guide and transferred by private vehicle to your hotel in Tokyo. From the very beginning, your journey is designed for comfort and ease - ideal for mature travellers who appreciate a relaxed, well-paced start. Today is an arrival day with no scheduled group activities, allowing you time to unwind after your international flight. Your Tokyo hotel features a beautiful Japanese garden - an elegant introduction to the refined landscapes you will experience throughout this tour. Take a gentle	No meals	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]

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		stroll along winding paths, admire sculpted pines and seasonal blooms, and soak in the serenity of autumn in Japan. Many of our guests choose to arrive a day or two early to adjust to the time difference and fully relax before the tour begins. We would be delighted to arrange additional nights' accommodation to ensure a smooth and enjoyable start to your Japanese garden and art adventure.		
2	Guided tour of Tokyo	On this first day in 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 have a "welcome Japan" dinner at a restaurant where you will get to know your guide and fellow travellers on the tour.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]
3	Guided tour of Tokyo	Begin your morning in the gracious heart of Tokyo, where you will explore the historic precinct surrounding the Imperial Palace, including the expansive Palace Plaza and a view of the iconic Nijubashi Bridge, the famous "Double Bridge". Stroll through the beautifully landscaped Imperial Palace East Garden, where seasonal plantings and centuries-old stone walls tell the story of Edo-era Japan. You will also visit historic Tokyo Station, a striking red-brick landmark that blends Meiji-era architecture with modern vitality. For lunch, step into everyday Tokyo life at a local restaurant in Marunouchi, dining alongside office workers - the city's energetic "salarymen." In the afternoon, immerse yourself in one of Japan's most revered garden arts: bonsai. Admire an exquisite collection of masterfully cultivated trees that reflect patience, discipline and artistic vision. You will then participate in a hands-on bonsai workshop led by an expert instructor. Learn about shaping techniques, pruning, wiring, and the philosophy behind these living sculptures. While biosecurity regulations prevent you from taking your bonsai home, you will leave with a deeper understanding of this timeless art form. This evening, enjoy a relaxed and convivial dinner at a traditional izakaya (Japanese-style pub). Share small seasonal dishes and conversation with your fellow travellers - a perfect way to reflect on a day rich in history, design, and living artistry.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo [Prime Superior King / Twin City View]

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4	Transfer to and guided tour of Kawaguchiko (Mt Fuji)	Your adventure continues with a scenic train journey to Kawaguchiko, a peaceful hot springs resort set at the foot of majestic Mount Fuji. Travelling by rail offers a relaxed way to enjoy the changing landscapes as you leave the city behind. Upon arrival, enjoy lunch featuring hōtō - a hearty local noodle soup made with thick wheat noodles and seasonal vegetables, a comforting regional specialty. In the afternoon, visit the Fujisan World Heritage Centre to gain insight into the formation, cultural significance and enduring spiritual importance of Japan's most iconic mountain. Later, drive around Lake Kawaguchi, where - weather permitting - you will enjoy superb views of Mount Fuji reflected in the lake, framed by brilliant autumn foliage. Before settling into your accommodation, visit the remarkable Itchiku Kubota Art Museum. Here, admire an exquisite kimono created using a revived centuries-old tie-dye technique, painstakingly developed by master artist Itchiku Kubota. The museum's architecture and beautifully designed garden are attractions in their own right, particularly during the autumn season. Tonight, stay at an elegant boutique hotel overlooking the lake with views towards Mt Fuji. Experience refined Japanese hospitality, relax in a soothing onsen hot-spring bath, and savour a beautifully prepared multi-course dinner featuring seasonal ingredients.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Mizno Hotel [Nagomi - Twin room with terrace]
5	Guided tour of Kawaguchiko and transfer to Kanazawa	Enjoy a relaxed morning in Kawaguchiko, breathing in the crisp mountain air as you take a final scenic drive around Lake Kawaguchi. Late morning, you travel by private minibus toward Matsumoto, located in the heart of Japan and framed by the majestic Japan Alps. Once a thriving feudal castle town, Matsumoto developed around its most famous landmark, the national treasure Matsumoto Castle. On arrival, visit this remarkable original castle, often called the "Black Crow Castle" for its striking dark exterior. Unlike many reconstructed castles in Japan, Matsumoto Castle has survived for over 400 years and retains its authentic wooden interiors and steep staircases. From the upper floors, enjoy views across the city to the surrounding alpine peaks. After the visit, you continue your journey by express train to Kanazawa. Known for its refined culture, traditional arts and beautifully preserved districts, Kanazawa will be a highlight of your journey. Arriving in Kanazawa this evening, settle into your elegant hotel - your home for the next three nights. Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant near your hotel, offering a relaxed introduction to the region's seasonal cuisine.	Breakfast, Dinner	The Hotel Sanraku Kanazawa [Superior Twin]

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6	Guided tour of Kanazawa	Kanazawa, perched on the shores of the Japan Sea, is famously known as “Little Kyoto”. This cultural gem is celebrated for its samurai-era history, thriving traditional arts, and one of the country’s most exquisite Japanese gardens. Today, immerse yourself in the beauty, artistry, and serenity that make Kanazawa a must-visit destination for lovers of Japanese culture. Your morning begins at the legendary Kenrokuen Garden, considered one of Japan’s three greatest gardens. Originally designed as a castle garden in the 17th century, Kenrokuen is a masterpiece of Japanese landscape design. Wander along winding paths past elegant ponds, flowing streams, and seasonal blooms. The perfectly placed stone lanterns, teahouses, and flowering trees offer endless photo opportunities and a calming connection to Japan’s traditional aesthetics. After soaking in the garden’s beauty, step off the beaten path on a guided walking tour through Kanazawa’s charming art district. Explore boutique galleries and historic museums that highlight the city’s rich artistic heritage: - D.T. Suzuki Museum - A tranquil space honouring the Zen philosophy of Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, inviting reflection and contemplation. - Nakamura Memorial Museum - Showcasing the refined arts of the Japanese tea ceremony, including calligraphy, paintings, lacquerware, and pottery, this museum offers a window into centuries of meticulous craftsmanship. Back at your hotel late afternoon, and have another enjoyable dinner with the group tonight.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Hotel Sanraku Kanazawa [Superior Twin]

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7	Morning guided tour of Kanazawa	Today, dive deeper into Kanazawa's rich heritage as a centre of traditional Japanese arts and crafts. Known for its meticulous craftsmanship and refined cultural experiences, the city offers a rare glimpse into the skills that have been honed over centuries. Begin the day with a visit to Kanazawa's artisan studios, where skilled craftspeople continue time-honoured traditions. Gain exclusive insights into the creation of Kaga Yuzen kimono fabric, celebrated for its intricate hand-painted designs, and Kutani-yaki pottery, distinguished by its vibrant colours and exquisite detailing. These encounters provide a unique opportunity to appreciate the artistry and patience required to produce these iconic Kanazawa crafts. The afternoon is yours to explore at leisure. Stroll through the city's charming streets lined with craft shops offering handmade kimonos, gilded lacquerware, and local sake products. Consider a visit to the Higashi Geisha District, a beautifully preserved area of narrow lanes where, in days gone by, geisha would entertain in slatted wooden tea houses. Here, you can also explore the Gold Leaf Museum, showcasing Kanazawa's renowned gold-leaf artistry, one of the city's most celebrated traditional crafts. Your evening is also free to relax. Our team is happy to recommend restaurants where you can savour local Kanazawa cuisine, from fresh seafood to modern meals, perfectly complementing a day steeped in cultural exploration.	Breakfast	The Hotel Sanraku Kanazawa [Superior Twin]
8	Transfer to and guided tour of Kurashiki	Today, journey from Kanazawa to the picturesque town of Kurashiki in Okayama Prefecture, renowned for its charming canals, historic architecture, and vibrant art scene. Travelling by a series of comfortable express trains, you'll experience Japan's efficient rail system while taking in the scenic landscapes along the way. After arriving and enjoying a leisurely lunch, explore Kurashiki's Bikan Historical Quarter, a beautifully preserved district where white-walled storehouses and willow-lined canals transport you back to the Edo period. Stroll along cobblestone streets, admire traditional merchant homes, and browse local artisan shops showcasing handcrafted textiles, pottery, and lacquerware. Next, visit the Ohara Museum of Art, Japan's first museum dedicated to Western art. Its distinguished collection includes impressionist masterpieces, modern European paintings, and traditional Japanese art, offering a unique dialogue between East and West in a serene, culturally rich setting. As the day winds down, enjoy an elegant dinner of French-inspired cuisine, beautifully prepared and served in a restored old storehouse.	Breakfast, Dinner	Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel [Corner Deluxe]

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9	Guided tour of Adachi Museum	Today, embark on a cultural journey to Yasugi, a serene rural town on the western coast of Japan's main island. Start with a visit to the Shoji Ueda Photography Museum, dedicated to the life and work of the award-winning photographer Shoji Ueda. Known for his striking compositions and surreal yet serene landscapes, Ueda's photography captures the spirit of rural Japan with elegance and imagination. You will then proceed to the Adachi Museum of Art, celebrated for its award-winning Japanese garden, consistently ranked Japan's most popular garden for 17 consecutive years. The garden is designed in the "borrowed scenery" (shakkei) style, where the surrounding mountains appear as an integral part of the garden itself. As you stroll along meticulously maintained pathways, admire the harmonious blend of pools, carefully pruned trees, seasonal flowers, and stone arrangements - a living masterpiece that changes with every season. Return to Kurashiki for a free evening, allowing you to explore its historic streets or enjoy a meal at one of the town's excellent local restaurants.	Breakfast	Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel [Corner Deluxe]
10	Guided tour of Imbe (Bizen) and transfer to Naoshima	Today, you'll explore Imbe, a small regional town famed for producing Bizen ceramics for over 1,000 years. Revered by pottery enthusiasts both in Japan and abroad, Bizen ware exemplifies the beauty of unglazed, high-fired stoneware that evolves naturally in the kiln. Your experience in Imbe includes: - Meeting an award-winning potter in his private studio and garden, gaining firsthand insight into the artistry and techniques behind Bizen ware. - Visiting ancient "climbing" kilns, where generations of potters have fired their works using traditional methods. - Exploring local galleries and craft shops, discovering unique ceramics and handcrafted treasures. After this hands-on ceramic experience, embark on a ferry ride across the Seto Inland Sea to Naoshima, an island transformed into a modern art haven. Your guided tour will focus on the Honmura area today, including Ando Tadao Museum and selected works from the House Project, where traditional homes are reimagined as immersive art installations. Tonight, experience the ultimate in Japanese hospitality at a sublime ryokan on Naoshima. Relax in traditional rooms, enjoy serene surroundings, and savour the attention to detail that makes staying in a ryokan a cultural highlight of any trip.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Roka [Deluxe Suite]

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11	Guided tour of Naoshima	Today is dedicated to Naoshima, Japan's world-renowned Art Island in the Seto Inland Sea, celebrated for its seamless integration of contemporary art, architecture, and nature. The island is a living museum, where sculptures, installations, and galleries coexist with serene landscapes, traditional homes, and the sparkling coastline. Your morning begins with a guided exploration of the Benesse Art Site, a network of museums and outdoor installations designed to harmonise with Naoshima's natural environment. Highlights include: - Valley Gallery - A striking architectural space that blends indoor and outdoor experiences, featuring rotating exhibitions by contemporary artists. - Chichu Art Museum - Designed by Tadao Ando, this subterranean museum houses masterpieces by Claude Monet, James Turrell, and Walter De Maria, using natural light to enhance the viewing experience. - Benesse House Museum - A unique fusion of hotel and museum, showcasing works by international and Japanese artists amid landscaped surroundings. - Lee Ufan Museum - Dedicated to the minimalist and contemplative works of Lee Ufan, this museum encourages reflection and quiet appreciation. The tour naturally includes a walk through the island's outdoor art installations, where striking works such as Yayoi Kusama's iconic pumpkin sculpture are thoughtfully placed within the coastal scenery, creating a perfect dialogue between art and nature. After the guided tour, enjoy free time to wander Naoshima's narrow streets and scenic paths at your own pace. Discover hidden galleries, quaint cafés, and subtle outdoor installations tucked between traditional houses. The island invites leisurely exploration, offering moments of surprise and serenity around every corner. You will spend another night at your ryokan on Naoshima, where dinner is served in a traditional setting. Relax and reflect on the day's artistic discoveries while enjoying Japanese hospitality at its finest, surrounded by the calm beauty of the island.	Breakfast, Dinner	Roka [Deluxe Suite]

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12	Transfer to and guided tour of Kyoto	After two inspiring days on Naoshima, you return to the mainland and travel to Okayama, home to the celebrated Koraku-en Garden. Completed in 1700, Koraku-en is considered one of Japan's three most beautiful gardens and a superb example of the "scenic promenade" garden style. As you stroll along its meandering paths, each turn reveals a new perspective: elegant ponds, carefully pruned trees, teahouses, and seasonal blossoms that perfectly capture the harmony of Japanese landscape design. The garden is especially enchanting in autumn, when vibrant foliage enhances its timeless beauty. Following your garden visit, board the Shinkansen for the final leg of today's journey, arriving in Kyoto, the historical heart of Japan. With 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Kyoto is a treasure trove of ancient temples, shrines, and contemplative gardens, offering a deep dive into traditional Japanese culture and aesthetics. Originally established as Japan's capital in 794, Kyoto combines centuries-old architecture with seasonal landscapes that delight every visitor. This afternoon, enjoy a private exploration of Kyoto's hidden gems, carefully selected for their beauty at the peak of autumn colours. Unlike the major temples crowded with large tour groups, these serene sites provide an intimate experience of Kyoto's rich cultural heritage. Meander along quiet paths, admire meticulously designed gardens, and soak in the gentle ambience of shrines and temples tucked away from the main tourist routes.	Breakfast, Dinner	Kyoto Brighton Hotel [Superior Twin/Double]
13	Guided tour of Miho Museum	Today promises to be one of the most memorable days of your tour, combining world-class art, visionary architecture, and breathtaking natural landscapes. Your day begins with a visit to the Miho Museum, an extraordinary cultural landmark designed by the renowned architect I.M. Pei. Nestled into a forested hillside, the museum harmoniously blends its glass-and-steel structure with the surrounding natural environment, creating a stunning dialogue between man-made design and nature. Inside, explore a vast private collection of approximately 2,000 antiquities, spanning ancient civilisations from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and beyond. After your visit to the Miho Museum, the rest of the day is free for you to explore Kyoto at your own pace. Wander through charming streets, visit a nearby temple, browse artisan shops, or simply relax in a traditional teahouse. This is your opportunity to personalise your day in Japan's cultural heart. Your evening is also free, allowing you to choose from Kyoto's excellent dining options. Enjoy a kaiseki meal, sample local specialties, or find a cozy restaurant tucked along quiet streets. The choice is yours, and the pace is entirely relaxed, giving you a perfect balance of guided experiences and personal exploration.	Breakfast	Kyoto Brighton Hotel [Superior Twin/Double]

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14	Guided tour of Arashiyama	On your final day of the tour, immerse yourself in the scenic and cultural treasures of Kyoto's western suburb, Arashiyama, at the peak of autumn colours. This area is renowned for its dramatic landscapes, historic temples, and serene natural beauty, making it a fitting conclusion to your journey. Begin the day at Tenryuji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Kyoto's most important Zen temples. Stroll through its meticulously designed gardens, which offer a masterful example of traditional Japanese landscape artistry. Next, experience a traditional rickshaw ride through Arashiyama's iconic bamboo grove. Your two-passenger wagon, pulled by energetic young men in traditional attire, allows you to glide along shaded paths while taking in the towering bamboo stalks and whispering leaves. This is a truly authentic and immersive way to enjoy one of Kyoto's most photographed natural landmarks. Enjoy a classic Kyoto-style tofu lunch, a specialty of the region. Prepared with care and delicacy, this meal highlights the simplicity and elegance of Kyoto cuisine, perfectly complementing the serene morning you've experienced. In the afternoon, visit Kinkakuji (the Golden Pavilion), one of Kyoto's most iconic landmarks. Its gold-leaf exterior, perfectly reflected in the tranquil pond, is even more stunning when framed by the vibrant autumn leaves. Walk around the temple grounds and gardens at a leisurely pace, savouring the harmony of architecture, water, and seasonal beauty - a quintessential Kyoto experience. As the day draws to a close, join your fellow travellers for a "farewell Japan" dinner, celebrating the memories, discoveries, and friendships formed over the journey.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Kyoto Brighton Hotel [Superior Twin/Double]
15	Departure	After breakfast, your 2027 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 talk to our friendly travel consultant if you have any questions.	Breakfast	

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	Inclusions for Group Tour	■ 14 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns) ■ All breakfasts, 6 lunches, 10 dinners ■ Airport meet & greet on arrival ■ Hotel transfer by private transport on arrival ■ Transfer 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)		
	Exclusions for Group Tour	■ 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)		