

# Exploring Japan

## A Pacific Horticulture Society tour

October 18-31, 2018  
Escorted by Greg Graves

Join us for this exploration of the must-see highlights emphasizing the long history of horticultural tradition in Japan through a visit to some of the best gardens Japan has to offer while traveling through the landscape that has inspired garden designers for generations. We visit Tokyo, Hakone, Matsumoto, Takayama, Shirakawago, Kanazawa, Kyoto, Awaji, Takamatsu, Kurashiki, Okayama, Matsue, and Osaka.

### Oct. 18 – Depart USA or Canada for Tokyo, Japan

#### Oct .19 -- Yokoso! Welcome to Japan!

Having crossed the International Date Line and lost a day enroute, make your way to our Tokyo hotel to meet your guide, escort and fellow travelers for a 7:30pm welcome dinner and short orientation at the hotel. Royal Park Hotel The Shiodome (D)



#### Oct. 20 –Tokyo – Gardens and culture

Following breakfast at the hotel, we will depart with our private guide to spend the day exploring some of the main gardens of the city, including Kiyosumi Garden, New Otani Garden (subject to permission),and Hamarikyu Garden. We'll have time for lunch on our own in the bustling Ginza district, returning to the hotel where your evening is at leisure as Tokyo reveals yet another side with its neon signs brightening the sky.

*Royal Park Hotel The Shiodome (B)*

#### Oct. 21 – Tokyo – Hakone – Mt Fuji

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll say "Sayonara" to Tokyo and travel by private coach to Hakone - a nature reserve and hot springs area with great museums, as well as the possibility, on a clear day, to enjoy one of the best views of Mt. Fuji. We'll visit the Hakone Open-Air Museum, a renowned museum of contemporary art, which uses the beauty of the surrounding nature as a backdrop for its exhibits. We'll stop for lunch and then venture closer to legendary Mt Fuji, passing by lakes on our way to the Ichiku Kubota Museum, featuring colorful silk kimono dyed in a unique style by a modern-day master craftsman. The museum is housed in a unique structure made from hand-hewn timbers and is surrounded by a peaceful forest garden. From there you will continue to our nearby hotel where buffet dinner is included. This evening perhaps enjoy a dip in hot springs, a quintessential Japanese experience!

*Fuji Premium Resort. (B,L,D)*

### **Oct. 22 – Matsumoto - Takayama: The Japan Alps with an Aura of Feudal Times**

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel, then drive to Matsumoto, famous for its castle, one of the very few that have remained complete from the feudal era. From Matsumoto, you will head towards Takayama, driving down a breathtakingly beautiful road, stopping along the way at several different scenic spots, including a wasabi farm where you'll learn the life cycle and many uses of this amazing plant and have time for lunch on your own. Arrive in Takayama, a small town which has kept the charms of olden days with preserved areas from the feudal period, inviting you to soak in an atmosphere reminiscent of past centuries. Stroll the old part of the town at your leisure, before we gather for an early dinner at a local restaurant where you will have the opportunity to try one of Takayama's delicacies – Hida beef, a high quality marbled beef equal to the famous Kobe beef. *Hotel Associa Takayama Resort (B,D)*

### **Oct. 23 - Shirakawa-go and Kanazawa – From Ancient Hamlet to Artisan City**

Following breakfast at the hotel, we'll first stroll through the morning outdoor market in Takayama, before we continue to Shirakawa-go, a delight for photographers. A World Heritage Site, Shirakawa-go is best known for its Gassho-zukuri farmhouses -- a traditional mountain farmhouse style featuring steep, thatched roofs designed to withstand heavy snow. Apart from taking in the beautiful view from the overlook point, you can also visit the inside of one of the houses to see the architecture and lifestyle of the locals who still live in the village. After walking along the town's small streets and charming shops, we'll enjoy lunch before we head to Kanazawa, a charming and lively countryside city. Kanazawa has a rich artisan and crafts heritage, ranging from gold leaf production to kimono dyeing, ceramics, lacquer ware decoration and more. It also boasts one of Japan's most renowned gardens, the Nomura Samurai House. If time permits, we'll visit the preserved Geisha district before arriving at our hotel, located next to the striking rail station. Evening at leisure, multiple dining options nearby.

*ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa (B, L)*

### **Oct. 24 - Kyoto- The Heart of Traditional Japan**

After breakfast we'll enjoy a morning stroll through Kanazawa's famous Kenrokuen Garden before heading by coach on a long drive to the old capital of Japan - Kyoto. On the way, we'll visit our first highway rest stop, a Japanese oddity you may come to enjoy. These highway rest stops feature multiple food venues, ranging from yakitori over a hot grill to sit-down restaurants to push-button fast food—plus very clean bathrooms decorated with blooming potted plants. After lunch on your own, we continue to Kyoto - the hub of traditional culture in Japan. Kyoto gardens are at the pinnacle of the rich Japanese horticultural tradition. Kyoto is a city that for hundreds of years has been an island of tradition in a swirling whirlpool of progress. Kyoto has 17 World Heritage Sites – the most in any one city – each a representative masterpiece of the era in which it was constructed. Over the next few days you will encounter the daily tales that make up the Japanese story. Check in to our hotel for the next 3 nights and enjoy evening at leisure.

*Daiwa Roynet Hotel Shijo (B)*

### **Oct. 25 - Kyoto's Classic Sights**

After breakfast, we'll explore Zen culture and gardens, architecture, and horticulture through visits to famous places such as the distinguished stone garden at Ryoanji Temple, the spectacular Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji), and the Shogun's Castle. We'll wander Nishiki Market for lunch on our own and then visit a garden that is not open to the public and enjoy a lecture by its designer. We will complete the day with an intimate meeting with the Japanese culture by having dinner with a Geisha.

*Daiwa Roynet Hotel Shijo (B, D)*

### **Oct. 26 – Kyoto Gardens – Simple Tranquility**

Following breakfast at the hotel, we'll visit the temple complex of Daitokuji with some of the best Zen gardens in Japan: Daitokuji, Daisen-in, Zuihoin and Kotokuin (If time permits). We'll have a brief urban lunch on our own, then we hope to visit Saiho-ji (the Moss Garden) but permission is not granted more than 30 days in advance so please be patient (good Zen training!). This afternoon you have the option to experience Sado, The Way of Tea, in a private home (extra cost) or enjoy the afternoon at leisure to shop, stroll, or relax. Evening at leisure.

*Daiwa Roynet Hotel Shijo (B)*

### **Oct. 27 – Awaji and Takamatsu**

Following breakfast at the hotel, we'll depart Kyoto for Awaji Yumebutai, visiting Kiseki no Hoshi Botanical garden (aka Miracle Planet Museum of Plants). Enjoy lunch on your own at the museum café or at several nearby venues, then continue to Honpuku Temple (water temple) designed by Tadao Ando. Next we head for the delightful city of Takamatsu, where we'll check into our hotel for an evening at leisure.

*JR Hotel Clement Takamatsu (B)*

### **Oct. 28- Takamatsu, Kurashiki, and Okayama**

After breakfast, we'll visit the famous Ritsurin Garden for a long stroll before we visit a nearby bonsai master who will show us his wares and give a brief description of his art and craft. We'll enjoy a lunch featuring the local specialty, udon noodles, and continue to Okayama, a middle size city with a traditional "landscape garden", one of the three most renowned gardens in Japan, offering an interesting comparison to the gardens visited earlier in our adventures. We'll continue by coach to the lakeside city of Matsue, where we will enjoy dinner before retiring for the evening. *Hotel Ichibata (B,L,D)*

### **Oct. 29- Yasugi and Izumo Taisha**

Following breakfast, we will tour a critically acclaimed garden called by many experts Japan's Best Garden -the Adachi Museum garden – a perfect example of Shake, borrowed landscape, a well-known element in Japanese gardens. Our next stop is the Yuushien Garden, featuring Japanese peonies and Korean ginseng in a delightful and expansive garden setting.

We'll enjoy lunch at one of the restaurants in the garden and have time for shopping before we continue to historic Matsue Castle, an impressive structure which has survived most of its counterparts, providing us with another rare glimpse into feudal architecture. It's easy to visualize the time of samurai and rickshaws while strolling along the glassy moat around the castle. Return to the hotel with evening at leisure.

*Hotel Ichibata (B,L,D)*

**Oct. 30- Matsue Castle and Osaka**

After breakfast, we will make a brief stop at Matsue City Museum to enjoy unique outdoor sculptures, a lovely view, and a charming gift shop. We'll continue by road on the long drive to Osaka, stopping at a highway rest stop for lunch on our own. Osaka, one of Japan's biggest cities, is renowned across Japan as the city of comedians and outgoing people. Walking along the city center is an experience not to be missed – with many shops open late, lively restaurants and bars, and one of the busiest entertainment quarters in Japan, this promises to open another window into Japanese modern culture. We will conclude the journey with a farewell dinner. *Hotel Nikko Osaka (B,D)*

**Oct. 31 – Sayonara, Mata Ne!**

Following breakfast at the hotel, we'll provide transfers to Osaka's Itami and Kansai airports (see "Flights" section below). We hope you take with you lasting memories of places and people you encountered over these all too brief days of adventure in the Land of the Rising Sun. *(B)*

**TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the end of the tour is required for travel to and from Japan. US and Canadian passport holders do not require a visa to enter Japan.

**FLIGHTS--where to meet the tour:** The tour begins with Welcome Dinner at our hotel in Tokyo 730pm October 19. Due to the wide choice of flights to Tokyo's Narita and Haneda airports, arrival transfers are not included, but guidance on getting from your arrival airport to the hotel will be provided with your final itinerary. Our tour ends in Osaka October 31 and transfers will be provided to both Osaka's Itami and Kansai airports for flights departing 130pm and later. Guests are also welcome to arrange private transportation Oct 31 at their own expense, although no credit will be given for unused transfers. We suggest contacting Leslie Garber of Cadence Travel for assistance booking flights. Be sure to ask about business class as there can be attractive sale fares. Leslie charges a fee for her service, but our guests find her service to be of value. [Leslie.garber@cadencetravel.com](mailto:Leslie.garber@cadencetravel.com) (619) 756 7388.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** We strongly encourage all guests to purchase travel insurance in case of injury or illness during the tour and, of equal importance, to protect against cancellation penalties. We have made special arrangements with Leslie Garber of Cadence Travel to provide quotations and assistance acquiring appropriate insurance for this tour. Guests should consider insurance purchase at the time of deposit as certain benefits as to pre-existing conditions are available. Leslie Garber can provide more detailed information. Group travel insurance will not be offered with this tour.

**LAND COST PER GUEST:** Based on a minimum of 20 paying guests, \$4880.00 per person for members of Pacific Horticulture Society, \$4980.00 for non-members. (Membership in PacHort starts at just \$28, join now at [www.pachort.org](http://www.pachort.org)). Single supplement: \$780.00. A nonrefundable deposit of \$400 per person is required to secure a reservation, with balance due 60 days before departure.

## THE PRICES INCLUDES:

- 12 nights superior hotel accommodations -- see note \* below
- \$250 tax-deductible donation to Pacific Horticulture Society
- Porterage of one piece of luggage
- Services of an English speaking guide.
- Transportation by private motorcoach, driver gratuity included.
- 12 breakfasts (B), 4 Lunches (L), 7 dinners (D)
- Admission fees for all visits as stated in itinerary
- Bottled water on the motorcoach

*\* Hotel rooms in Japan tend to much smaller than is standard in the USA. Requests for king bed will be noted but may not always be possible where only rooms with 2 beds are offered.*

## NOT INCLUDED:

- International Airfare
- Meals and drinks not specifically mentioned
- Entrance fees not specifically mentioned
- Room Service
- Excess Baggage Charges & Porterage of more than 1 piece of luggage.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, etc...
- Gratuity for our local guide.
- Trip insurance – strongly suggested.

## NOTES:

**1: Hotel rooms** in Japan tend to be much smaller than in the USA. Requests for one large bed will be noted but may not always be possible where only rooms with 2 beds are offered. Our hotel in Matsue has only two Western style rooms available. These will be allocated on a first come first served basis., Please indicate preference for Western or Japanese style rooms when making your reservation. Both Japanese and Western-style rooms have private bathrooms. Please note: hotel space cannot be confirmed until Oct. 2017. If the stated hotels are not available comparable properties will be substituted.

**2. Luggage:** Please limited your luggage to one checked bag and one carry-on.

**3. Porters:** This service is neither standard nor predictable in Japan so guests should be prepared to handle their own luggage in and out of hotels. We encourage all guests to travel lightly.

**4. Food:** Japan is world-famous for its cuisine, but not well-known for its ability to accommodate special dietary needs. Gluten-free has not made it across the Pacific, in fact you may see a small dish on breakfast buffets offering extra gluten for your meal. Similarly, MSG is still widely used and vegetarian cuisine is often difficult to arrange. If you have food issues, please indicate the details very clearly on your reservation form. If you have severe food issues, this may not be the right tour for you.

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