

Japanese Art, Gardens & Culture Tour

9 - 24 May, 2025



Traditional houses in a street, Takayama



Tweed Regional Gallery
Foundation Ltd



FRIENDS

Tweed Regional Gallery &
Margaret Olley Art Centre Inc.



Kenroku-en Gardens in Kanazawa, courtesy of Kim Woods Rabbidge



TOUR LEADER

Kim Woods Rabbidge

behind the popular 'Our Australian Gardens' Instagram, is an award winning garden writer and photographer. Her articles and photographs appear in several garden books and publications including House & Garden, Gardening Australia, RM Williams Outback magazine and the Weekend Australian magazine. For several years she was Qld Coordinator and National Newsletter editor for Open Gardens Australia and has held executive positions on the Horticultural Media Association Australia. As well as leading garden tours both in Australia and overseas, she consults, and speaks at garden events on garden edits and design elements. Kim and her husband have recently begun converting a 'cow paddock' into a garden at Eltham in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales.

Join supporters of the Tweed River Gallery Foundation Ltd. plus Friends of Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Alley Art Centre Inc. on tour in Japan, a vibrant, contemporary country honouring an immensely rich cultural heritage. Its people are welcoming, respectful and friendly. Revered, centuries old temples and gardens will leave you spellbound as will avant-garde architecture, stunning art museums, chic retail centres and fabulous restaurants. We travel comfortably via coach and very fast trains.

Features include:

- **GARDENS** Golden Pavilion - Kinkakuji, Silver Pavilion – Ginkakuji, Sagano Bamboo Grove, Koishikawa, Korakuen – Kenrokuen, and Korakuen in Okayama
- **TEMPLES** Sensoji, Ryoanji and market at Toji Temple
- **CULTURAL** Ginza district, Japanese tea ceremony, local produce, traditional foods
- **ART & ARCHITECTURE** Miho Museum, Hosomi Museum, National Museum, Mori Art Museum, Itkushima Shrine, Naoshima Art Island and Benesse House Museum



Day 1 Fri 09 May

Arrive Tokyo

Arrive in Tokyo and join your tour convenor and meet fellow travellers in the hotel lobby tonight for a group dinner. (D)

Day 2 Sat 10 May

Tokyo

This morning we visit one of Japan's oldest gardens, **Koishikawa Korakuen**, built during the Edo period at the Tokyo residence of the ruling Tokugawa family. In typical Japanese style Korakuen seeks to replicate, in miniature, famous landscapes using man-made hills, ponds, rocks, stones and trees. Next, we head to one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods, Asakusa, to visit Tokyo's oldest temple and one of its most significant, the Buddhist **Sensō-ji temple**. Previously associated with Buddhism's Tendai sect, it became independent after World War II. We'll lunch in a neighbourhood restaurant before visiting the **National Museum of Western Art**, home to significant collections of Japanese artwork and centuries-old cultural artefacts. (B)

Day 3 Sun 11 May

Roppongi & Harajuku

Morning visit Roppongi Hills, where one of the best contemporary art museums **the Mori Art Museum** is located and gaze out from **Tokyo City View Observation Deck** at the awesome skyscraper 'forest' of Tokyo laid out below. Also visit the **National Art Centre** and **21_21 Design Sight**. Afternoon visit to the beautiful **Nezu Museum** in the chic suburb of Harajuku. It's not just the impressive collection of calligraphy, painting, sculpture, textiles, ceramics and tea-ware on offer; the surrounding gardens and tea houses are also delightful. Ends our day with a stroll in **Takeshita and Omotesando Street**. (B)

Day 4 Mon 12 May

Hakone

Today we travel to the beautiful Fuji area and visit the **Open Air Museum in Hakone**. Make a stop to visit a studio for **Yosegi zaiku** (wood marquetry). This evening enjoy the view of Mt. Fuji from your onsen resort. (B, D)

Day 5 Tue 13 May

To Takayama via Matsumoto

After breakfast, enjoy a scenic drive through the Japanese Alps en route to Takayama. Known for its merchant houses, temples and strong craft traditions this 16th century town is a delight. On the way, we stop at **Matsumoto Castle**. Tonight enjoy **Hida Beef dinner**. (B, D)

Day 6 Wed 14 May

Takayama

Morning visit to **Hida Folk Village** an open-air museum exhibiting over 30 traditional houses from the Hida region, the mountainous district of Gifu Prefecture around Takayama. The rest of the day is at leisure. (B)

Day 7 Thu 15 May

Kanazawa

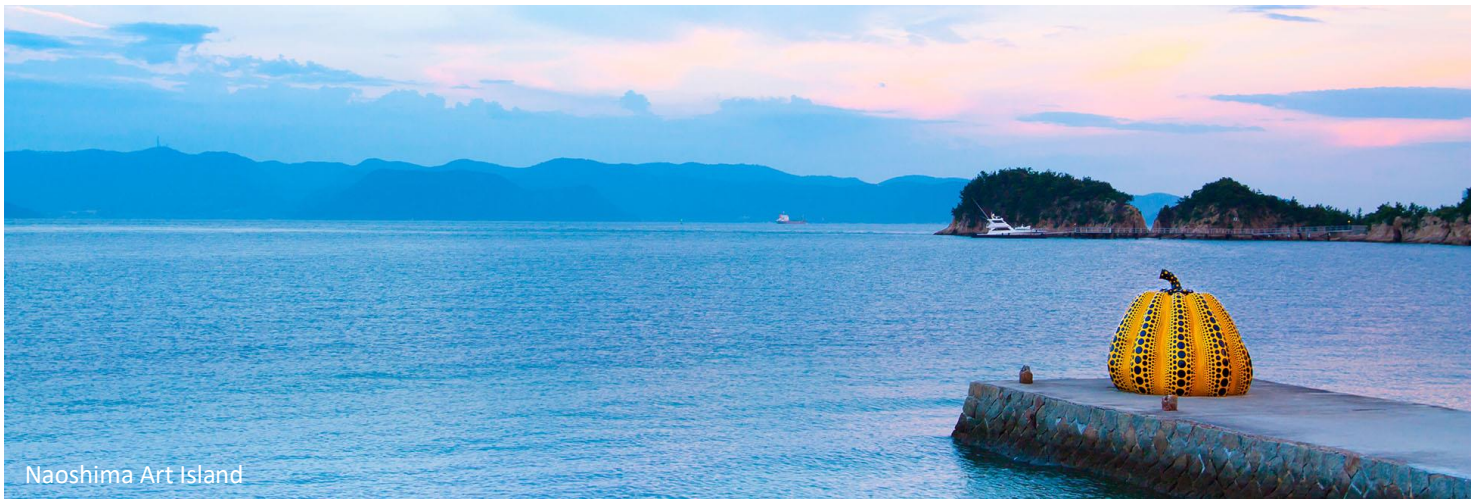
Today we travel to Kanazawa. In a traditional samurai district with cobbled laneways, wooden houses, earthen walls with private entrances, and canals, we stop by **Nomura house**. The home and garden was the domain of a prosperous samurai family before the end of feudalism and the rise of wealthy merchants. Then onto the **Higashi Chaya teahouse** and entertainment district, where we may see elegant geisha. (B)

Day 8 Fri 16 May

Kanazawa

This morning's visit is to **Kenrokuen**, considered one of the finest examples of daimyo gardens, and one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan. The garden was developed over two hundred years by the Maeda clan, rulers of the Kaga district in the Edo period. It became a public park in 1871. 'Kenrokuen' means garden displaying six qualities: spaciousness, seclusion, human artistry, maturity, plentiful water and fine vistas. Next door we'll see the Maeda clan's **Kanazawa Castle**. After several fires, the last in 1881, only two storehouses and the gate are surviving but a restoration process is underway. We will also visit the elegant **D.T. Suzuki Museum** and nearby **21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art**. (B)





Naoshima Art Island

Day 9 Sat 17 May

Okayama

Our Limited Express Thunderbird train takes us to Osaka where we change for the bullet train to Okayama. In the afternoon, we visit **Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter**, known for the characteristically Japanese white walls of its residences and the willow trees lining the banks of the Kurashiki River. Along the canal, many former storehouses have been converted into cafes, boutiques, souvenir shops and a number of museums such as **Ohara Museum of Art**, the first privately operated museum of Western art in Japan. (B)

Day 10 Sun 18 May

Naoshima Island

Today we take an excursion to explore **Naoshima Island** that is known for its modern art museums, architecture, and sculptures. Sometimes it's also called "Ando Island" since most of the structures on the island were designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tadao Ando. Visit **Benesse House Museum** where nature, art and architecture combine. (B, L)

Day 11 Mon 19 May

To Kyoto

Morning visit to **Koraku-en Garden**. This quintessential Japanese garden was created roughly 300 years ago by the area's daimyo (domain lord). A symbol of the power of the samurai, Korakuen Garden is considered one of the three great gardens of Japan alongside Kanazawa City's Kenroku-en and Mito City's Kairakuen. Later take bullet train to Kyoto. (B)

Day 12 Tue 20 May

Arashiyama

Today we travel west to a 'Place of Scenic Beauty', Arashiyama mountains. We walk through the ethereal Sagana **Bamboo grove** to a charming garden developed by Japanese jidaigeki actor **Denjiro Okochi**. Next we'll be treated to a traditional monks' lunch in **Tenryuji Temple**. Return to Kyoto we visit **Nijo Castle** built in 1603 for the first shogun of the Edo Period. It's considered the best surviving example of castle palace architecture from Japan's feudal era. (B)

Day 13 Wed 21 May

Golden Pavilion

Enjoy a visit to the **Toji Temple Flea Market!** This famous market offers a wide selection of second-hand kimonos and Japanese collectables. Next visit is **Kinkakuji**, the **Golden Pavilion**, an impressive structure built overlooking a large pond, and the only building left of Yoshimitsu's retirement complex. It's burned down numerous times throughout history including twice during the Onin War that destroyed much of Kyoto. Then, in 1950 it was burnt by a fanatic monk, and rebuilt in 1955. Nearby is Japan's most famous Zen rock garden, **Ryoanji temple**. We'll have time to contemplate our own interpretation of this space. Does it represent infinity, or a tiger carrying her cubs? To conclude the day, we'll join in, and begin to understand the nuances of a traditional **Japanese tea ceremony**. (B)



Image courtesy of Kim Woods Rabbidge



Traditional tea ceremony in Japan



Bamboo Forest in Arashiyama

Day 14 Thu 22 May

Silver Temple

This morning, we visit ceramic artist **Kanjiro Kawai's House** and the **Kyoto Museum of Crafts and Design** (formerly the Kyoto Museum of Traditional Crafts Fureaikan). Familiarize yourself with the techniques and history of local handicrafts, and admire exhibits covering dozens of categories and over 500 samples of traditional crafts. Next we visit the Temple of the **Silver Pavilion, Ginkakuji**, originally designed to be covered in silver foil but instead it's covered in black lacquer. Mossy woodlands border a groomed sand garden with a mound representing Mt Fuji. Tonight we enjoy a **geisha show** at Gion Corner. (B)

Day 15 Fri 23 May

Miho Museum

Today we visit the stunning I. M. Pei-designed **Miho Museum**. The semi-underground building, in perfect harmony with the landscape, is approached via an avenue of sakura trees, a tunnel through the mountain and a suspension bridge. Inside, the ethereal light-filled foyer, overlooking valleys and distant hills, is a perfect entry to architecture of steel, glass and contrasting warm stone. Miho houses a significant collection of artworks acquired by museum founder, the late Koyama Mihoko, one of the richest women in Japan, and her daughter Hiroko. **Farewell dinner** tonight. (B, D)

Day 16 Sat 24 May

Depart Kyoto

Your tour concludes after breakfast. Shared departure transfer to the airport. (B)

Price per person (land only)

The tour price is \$10,625 per person, twin share (land content only). Single supplement is \$1,630 per person. A deposit of \$800 per person is required to secure a place on the tour.

Tour price includes

15 nights in well-appointed hotels in twin share; all meals as per itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner); shared arrival and departure transfer; all transport and excursions in bullet train or air-conditioned coach as per itinerary; entrance fees for all sights as per itinerary; luggage transfer (one piece per person) from Kanazawa to Kyoto; English-speaking guides throughout the trip.

Tour price does not include

International flights; travel insurance; portage & gratuities; personal expenses; and anything not mentioned in the itinerary.

To Make a Booking

As all our tours are bespoke we aim to provide a seamless, individual service to you. We are aware you may have many questions about the tour and are very happy to assist, so please contact us directly.

Fitness Level - Moderate

Arrival/departure transfers: Arrival/departure shared transfers are included, please contact Opulent Journeys for more information.

Hotel Rooms in Japan: Please note that there are limited 'double-bedded' rooms available in most Japanese hotels. Most rooms for two persons are 'twin-bedded'. Most hotels in Japan have single rooms which are smaller rooms with a single bed and private facilities.

For further information please contact Opulent Journeys

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