

Spring in Northern Japan & Kyoto with Pacific Horticulture
April 13-24/27, 2019
Escorted by Greg Graves

Join us for an in-depth exploration of Japanese gardens, culture and cuisine. Beginning in Tokyo, we will venture north and west to areas off the normal Western tourist route where we can enjoy the beautiful countryside, see lovely gardens and experience exotic cuisine. Guests will also have the opportunity to experience Japanese-style accommodations and warm up in one of several *onsen* (hot springs) along the way. We return to Tokyo, with an optional extension to Kyoto, a UNESCO World Heritage city.

April 13 – Depart USA/Canada for Japan

April 14 – Yokoso! Welcome to Japan! Crossing the international dateline enroute, arrive at Tokyo Narita or Haneda airport and make your way to the hotel in Tokyo in time for our 7:00pm welcome dinner at a nearby restaurant. We will have a short orientation before getting a good night's rest.

Accommodation: The Royal Park Shiodome. Included meals: Dinner

April 15 – Japan's Bonsai Today, with a guide and private coach, we'll enjoy a panoramic drive through Tokyo before heading outside the city to the neighboring Omiya Bonsai Village. With several private nurseries and a dedicated Bonsai Museum, today will provide an eye-opening introduction to the unique Japanese art form of Bonsai. In the afternoon, we return to Tokyo and enroute stop at one of its most famous gardens.



Accommodation: The Royal Park Shiodome Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

April 16 – Nikko



We depart Tokyo by coach to Nikko, the famous World Heritage temple complex of the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, who unified Japan around 1600. The splendor of this lavishly decorated mausoleum is the origin of the noted Japanese saying - "Never say you're content until you've seen Nikko." Drive up and around the

thrilling Irohazaka Driveway to Lake Chuzenji, formed by the eruption of Mt. Nantai, before continuing to Mito City for the night. Dinner will be in a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Mets Mito Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 17 – Kairakuen – Sendai

The 3 symbols that make up the name Kai-Raku-En translates to Everyone-Enjoyment-Park. This reflects the spirit of the feudal lord when he had the garden constructed over 150 years ago, as he wanted an area that everyone could appreciate. After visiting the garden, we will continue to Hitachi Seaside Park notable for its year-round blooming flowers. Enjoy lunch at your leisure in the park. After lunch, we board our private coach to Sendai to visit the famous Rinnoji Temple, housing its own beautiful garden and 5-story pagoda. Afterwards, transfer to the hotel in Sendai. Dinner this evening is at leisure to explore the lively downtown. We recommend you try the city's delicacy: Grilled Cow Tongue served with Cow Tail Soup.



Accommodation: Hotel Metropolitan Sendai Included meals: Breakfast

April 18 – Matsushima

Today we visit Matsushima Bay, considered one of Japan's top three scenic sites. The stunning collection of small islands and pine trees once rendered the famous haiku poet Matsuo Basho speechless. He wrote the only Haiku he could to describe its beauty:



Matsushima, Ah! A-ah Matsushima Ah! Matsushima Ah! Explore the Zuiganji temple and Godaido Hall, enjoy a local lunch, and experience a scenic cruise around the bay in the afternoon before returning to Sendai in the evening.

Accommodation: Hotel Metropolitan Sendai Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

April 19 – Hiraizumi and Tono

In the morning we depart Sendai by private coach and drive north to Hiraizumi. Hiraizumi is home to Choson-ji, one of Japan's most significant temple complexes, housing the small golden Amida Hall, which was the first structure designated a Japanese National Treasure. We will also visit a garden designed to represent the Buddhist afterlife. In the afternoon, we drive to Naruko Onsen for an evening in a Japanese ryokan. We may enjoy a zen meditation lesson and the famous the hot springs. Dinner will be a Japanese meal prepared by the Ryokan.



Accommodation: Ryokan Onuma Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 20 – Yamadera Temple



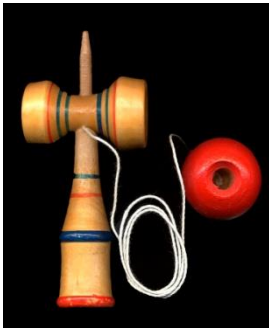
Today, we will visit a 6th generation Kokeshi (Japanese wood dolls) maker in his workshop, to see how he carries on the spirit of his traditional craft. Afterwards, we will stop at a local community-run cafe. In the afternoon, we will drive to the city of Yamadera. This time of year can boast impressive displays of cherry blossoms along the river and at the base of the temple complex. One of the oldest

temples in Japan, Yamadera has several temple halls and rich pine forests. Following Yamadera, we will continue to Yamagata for the evening. Dinner this evening is at leisure.

Accommodation: Hotel Metropolitan Yamagata Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

April 21 – Yamagata - Niigata

In the morning, we will visit another traditional workshop, which makes the “Kendama”, similar to the western “stick and ball” toy. You’ll be able to try your skill with a master



craftsman. For lunch, we will continue to a local farming community. They have a proud tradition of farming and bear-hunting as the key industries, and the village elders will share their tales and folklore over a fresh lunch. After lunch, we continue on to Niigata for the evening. Our accommodation is in an area of hot spring resorts famous for their mineral waters which promote “eternal youth, longevity and beauty”. We will visit Tsukioka hot springs before transferring to the hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel Seifuen Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

April 22 – Niigata

(Note: Large luggage will be sent ahead. Please pack a light bag for the next 2 nights—see Note # 1 below). In the morning, we depart Yamagata and drive to Niigata, about 3 hours away, on the Western coast of Northern Japan. Niigata is a city famous for its sake, seafood, and hot springs. Today we will visit one of its famous gardens, including the former private garden of one of Niigata’s lords, designated as an important historical garden. For lunch, we visit a local seafood market (please purchase on the spot) and then visit the Echigo Tsumari Art Fields, a melting pot of classic and contemporary art, after which we return to our hotel.



Accommodation: Hotel Seifuen Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 23 – Niigata



We will start with a visit to one of Niigata's most notable gardens, on the grounds of a stunning summer villa. Following the villa is the Northern Culture museum, a former merchant's house converted into a museum showing displays of the living style unique to Northern Japan. The museum also contains its own landscape garden

designed by a Kyoto gardener; pay careful attention to the placement of the moss-covered rocks within the garden. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure for shopping and exploring Niigata, before returning to the hotel for our farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Hotel Seifuen Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 24 – Return to USA/Canada or continue to Kyoto

This morning we transfer by coach to Niigata station and board the *Shinkansen* (bullet train) to Tokyo Station. (See Note 2 below regarding luggage).

Guests heading home today: Upon arrival at Tokyo Station, meet the assistant guide at the Tokoyo station for transfer to the Narita Express train to the airport where you will be reconnected with your main luggage. *Sayonara!*

Guests continuing to Kyoto, transfer to the *Shinkansen* bullet train to Kyoto with your guide to the hotel where your main luggage will be waiting. The afternoon and dinner in Kyoto are at leisure.

Accommodation: Daiwa Roynet Shijo-Karasuma Included meals: Breakfast

April 25 – Classic Kyoto Sites Today we will visit Kyoto's sights by private coach, deepening our knowledge of Kyoto and Japan. We will be exposed to the fundamentals of aesthetics, Zen, architecture, and horticulture through visits to famous places such as the distinguished stone garden at the Ryoanji temple, the spectacular Golden Pavilion, the Shogun castle, and a downtown market. We will also have the chance to experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, as well as take a stroll along the picturesque streets of Gion, where we just might catch a glimpse of a geisha on her way to work.



Accommodation: Daiwa Roynet Shijo-Karasuma Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

April 26 – Kyoto This morning we hope to confirm a visit to the famous Saihoji Moss Garden. We can receive acceptance only 2 months in advance, so we ask for your



patience as we arrange this very exclusive visit. The remainder of the afternoon will be spent at leisure, perhaps exploring Kyoto's small streets and shopping arcades, and enjoying its unique atmosphere. In the evening, as the closing event for the tour, we'll visit a local restaurant for a Japanese multi-course dinner and a private Geisha meeting and performance (subject to confirmation). The Geisha will perform before sitting with us to discuss the life of a Geisha, giving us a window into Japanese culture that many

foreigners can never see.

Accommodation: Daiwa Roynet Shijo-Karasuma Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 27 – Sayonara! See you again! Today, you start your way back home. We wish you a pleasant and safe trip. A private departure has been arranged to Osaka Kansai airport for flights departing 4pm or later. *Breakfast*

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 a Welcome Dinner near our hotel in Tokyo; meet in the hotel lobby at 700pm April 14 for a short stroll. 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 either at Narita Airport Tokyo April 24 (flights departing 330pm or later) or Kyoto on April 27.

Transfers from Kyoto to Osaka Kansai Airport (flights departing 4pm and later) will be provided for guests taking the Kyoto extension.

Guests are also welcome to arrange private airport transportation at their own expense, although no credit will be given for unused airport transfers.

We suggest contacting [Leslie Garber](#) of Cadence Travel for assistance booking flights and travel insurance. 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.

HOTELS: Onuma Ryokan (April 19) is Japanese type bedding. Niigata Seifuen (April 21-23) is Japanese type; a few Western beds are available on request

TRAVEL INSURANCE: As your deposit and final payment are both non-refundable, we wish to make you aware that individual travel insurance is available to protect you against cancellation penalties as well as provide coverage should an incident occur during the trip. Note that pre-existing conditions may be covered if the insurance is purchased within a short time after trip deposit.

LAND COST PER GUEST:

- *Including Kyoto extension*; \$6430.00 per person for members of Pacific Horticulture Society*, \$6530 for non-members. Single supplement \$820.
 - *Not including Kyoto extension*: \$4995 per person for members of Pacific Horticulture Society*, \$5095 for non-members. Single supplement \$640.
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- Pricing based on exchange rate in effect as of May 2018 and is subject to change based on significant currency fluctuations.
 - Main tour price is based on a minimum of 20 guests,
 - Kyoto extension based on a minimum of 15.
 - A \$400 per person non-refundable deposit is required to hold a space on this tour.
 - Final payment is due 60 days prior to departure.
 - You must have a paid membership in Pacific Horticulture Society in order to receive the membership discount. If you are unsure of your current status, contact PHS at office@pacifichorticulture.org. If you are not a member, sign up now at <https://pacifichorticulture.org/join-renew>.

THE PRICES INCLUDE

- 13 nights with Kyoto extension, 10 nights without---superior hotel accommodations
- \$350 tax-deductible donation to Pacific Horticulture Society
- Porterage of one piece of luggage, where offered. See also notes 1 & 2 *below*
- Services of an English-speaking local guide throughout the tour
- Escorted by Greg Graves, past president of Pacific Horticulture Society
- Transportation by private motorcoach, driver gratuity included
- Main tour: 10 breakfasts (B), 4 lunches (L) 6 dinners (D) *See note 3 below*
- Additional with Kyoto extension: 3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner.
- Admission fees for all visits as stated in itinerary
- Bottled water on the motorcoach

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. Luggage: We will be traveling on the Shinkansen “bullet train” on April 24 and this train only has room for one carry-on size bag per passenger. Therefore, on the morning of April 22, please pack a light bag to take with you for the next 2 nights and then onto the train. Your larger piece of luggage will be sent ahead via postal service. For guests departing Apr 24 from Narita, the luggage will be sent ahead to the airport. For guests continuing to Kyoto, the luggage will be sent ahead to our hotel in Kyoto. For guests staying independently after the tour, luggage will be sent ahead to the

appropriate hotel. In true Japanese fashion, this luggage delivery service is highly efficient and reliable.

2 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 and train stations when porter service is not available. We encourage all guests to travel lightly.

3 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.