



American Horticultural Society  
Travel Study Program

# SPRINGTIME IN JAPAN: INSPIRING GARDENS & LANDSCAPES

April 4 – 17, 2017

WITH AHS TOUR HOSTS HOLLY AND OSAMU SHIMIZU  
AND TOUR LEADER FRANCES ROXBURGH  
OF SPECIALTOURS





Announcing the American  
Horticultural Society  
Travel Study Program

American Horticultural Society  
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## SPRINGTIME IN JAPAN: INSPIRING GARDENS & LANDSCAPES

Join us for extraordinary horticultural and cultural experiences:

- Explore Tokyo's Imperial Palace gardens
- Admire living masterpieces in the Shunka-en bonsai garden and museum
- Behold the world's largest bronze statue of the Buddha
- Experience Kenroku-en, one of Japan's finest landscape gardens
- Be entertained by geisha in the ancient city of Kyoto – a rare opportunity
- Learn about traditional Japanese philosophies and landscape design sensibilities

Look inside for more details on this cultural adventure...

Please refer to the enclosed reservation form for pricing and instructions to reserve your place on this AHS Travel Study Program tour. For more information about AHS Travel Study Program tours, please contact [development@ahsgardening.org](mailto:development@ahsgardening.org) or (703) 768-5700, ext. 127. Information is also available at [www.ahsgardening.org/travel](http://www.ahsgardening.org/travel).

Designed with the connoisseur of garden travel in mind, the American Horticultural Society Travel Study Program offers exceptional itineraries that include many exclusive experiences and unique insights. Your participation benefits the work of the American Horticultural Society and furthers our vision of "*Making America a Nation of Gardeners, a Land of Gardens.*"



Dear Friends,

This itinerary is like no other. We'll see iconic majestic vistas, experience gardens that capture the essence of the Japanese culture, witness rare and exclusive cultural events, marvel at bonsai masterpieces, visit 1,300-year-old cities and see 1,000-year-old trees, and get an insight into the intricate landscape and design philosophies of this ancient and exotic culture. And, this only begins to describe the delights awaiting us in our "Springtime in Japan: Inspiring Gardens & Landscapes" Travel Study Program planned for April 4-17, 2017.

Our American Horticultural Society hosts for this trip will be Holly and Osamu Shimizu. It would be difficult to find two more eminently qualified hosts for a trip like this. Holly is a current member of our AHS Board of Directors and recently retired from her position as Executive Director of the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. Holly's husband, Osamu, was born in Japan and is an accomplished landscape architect. He studied landscape design and spent the early years of his career in Japan. Both Holly and Osamu have traveled extensively visiting gardens around the world – including trips to visit family and friends in Japan – and have a wealth of horticultural knowledge and experience to share.

Frances Roxburgh of London-based Specialtours will be our tour leader for this extraordinary program. Frances has been working closely with Holly and Osamu over the past year to craft an exceptional itinerary exclusively for our AHS Travel Study Program. Frances has been with Specialtours since 1990 and is one of the founding partners of the company. She has extensive travel experience to draw upon and in addition to having led other AHS tours in the past, has created many custom-designed programs for European and American museums, garden groups, and private clients. You will be sure to appreciate her attention to detail and gracious style.

Our highly rated accommodations will include: the Ana Intercontinental Hotel in Tokyo; the Nikko Hotel in Kanazawa; the Hyatt Hotel in Kyoto; the Swissotel in Osaka; and, the Benesse House Hotel in Naoshima. In addition, our travels will include stays at *ryokan* inns in Hakone and Takayama where we have the opportunity to relax and enjoy traditional Japanese hospitality and culture.

As you might imagine, space on this most unusual and intriguing program is limited, so early reservations are advised. A convenient reservation form is enclosed with this brochure. Please take a few moments to review the details outlined on the following pages and then contact us to reserve your place on this once-in-a-lifetime garden travel experience.

Most sincerely,



Tom Underwood  
Executive Director



## WITH AHS HOSTS HOLLY AND OSAMU SHIMIZU AND TOUR LEADER FRANCES ROXBURGH OF SPECIALTOURS



Join AHS Hosts Holly and Osamu Shimizu  
and tour leader Frances Roxburgh  
for this once-in-a-lifetime garden travel experience.

## Itinerary Highlights

**MONDAY, APRIL 3 – TRAVEL DAY, DEPART THE U.S. FOR TOKYO, JAPAN**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 4 – TOKYO (D)**

After touch down at Narita International Airport we transfer by private coach to the Ana Intercontinental Hotel. We get acquainted this evening with welcome drinks and dinner at the hotel. The Ana has a shopping arcade and a spa called THANN Sanctuary where you can unwind after your long journey.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5 – TOKYO (B, L, D)**

Our amazing tour starts with none other than the Imperial Palace gardens. Situated in a magnificent park in the center of Tokyo, the Imperial Palace is the residence of Japan's Emperor. The surrounding gardens have been created on the former site of the Edo Castle. While none of the main buildings of this massive fortress remain today, the impressive moats and stone walls that still exist give a feel for the grand scale of the castle structures. Our day continues with more visions of serenity at Shunka-en, a garden and museum set up by bonsai master Kunio Kobayashi (three-time winner of the Prime Minister's Award, the most prestigious prize a bonsai professional can win in Japan). After lunch at a local restaurant, our next stop is Rikugien garden, considered one of Tokyo's most beautiful Japanese landscape gardens. Rikugien means "six poems garden" and reproduces in miniature 88 scenes from famous poems. We'll walk around the large central pond, and if we are fortunate, we will see flowering cherry trees and shrubs in full bloom. Tonight, a *teppanyaki*-style dinner satisfies our quest to sample a variety of Japanese cuisines.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 6 – TOKYO (B, L, D)**

This morning we anticipate permission for an early morning visit to the famous Tokyo fish market – the largest fish market in the world (we'll be watching closely for details on the planned relocation of the market in 2017 that could impact our visit). We continue to the Meiji shrine where we'll see the shrine maidens' dance and explore the gardens. Weather permitting, our timing could be right to see the gardens awash with cherry blossoms. We'll finish our morning with an architecture and design walking

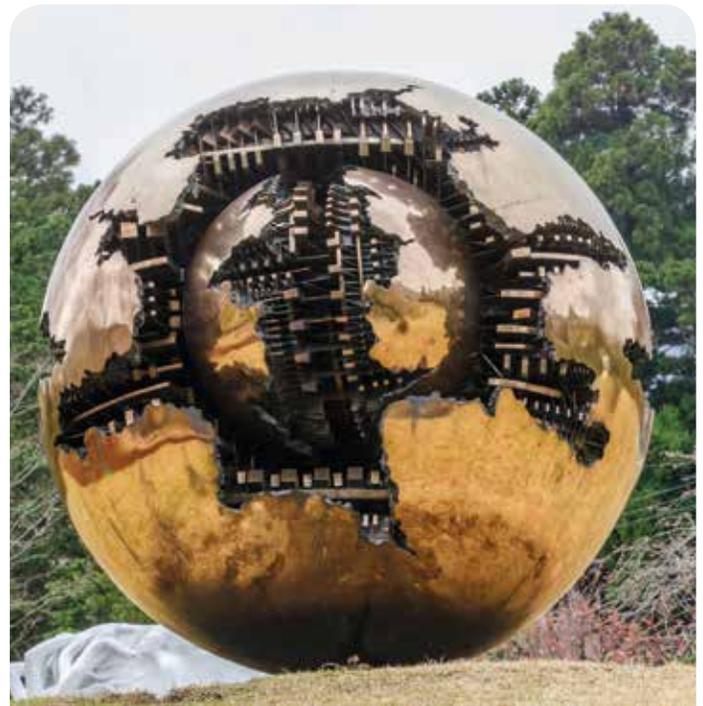
tour, followed by a delightful soba lunch on Omotesando, Tokyo's grand avenue. Whatever direction we face, we see that Japanese architecture and design has a look and feel that's very much its own. We'll learn about this first hand from the director of the Future Design Institute who will discuss influential design concepts behind the trendy Harajuku and Omotesando shopping areas. To keep us in a creative mood we go next to the Nezu Museum with its impressive collection of Asian art, as well as its traditional Japanese garden. We'll enjoy afternoon tea in the museum's café to finish our wonderful day. Tonight we'll be treated to a private dinner at a sushi restaurant with a top chef. We'll hear all about Tokyo's sushi culture while sampling the finest fresh fish from the market.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7 – HAKONE (B, L, D)**

The spectacular Hakone region is our goal this morning as we leave the hotel with luggage. Famous for hot springs, natural beauty, and the view of nearby iconic Mt. Fuji, Hakone is part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. The Hakone Museum of Art displays mainly Japanese ceramics from prehistoric times through the Edo I. A verdant moss garden with stone paths winding through maple trees shows its vibrant greens on our spring visit. After lunch, we'll enjoy a cruise on Lake Ashi. Tonight we will experience dinner and accommodations at a *ryokan*, an inn that reflects traditional Japanese lifestyle and hospitality; guests are given traditional yukata robes and sleep on futons arranged on tatami mats. The menu is *kaiseki ryori* (Japanese haute cuisine) based on local and seasonal specialties.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 8 – TAKAYAMA (B, L, D)**

We depart with luggage this morning for Nagoya and then on to Takayama. This scenic journey is sure to be a thrilling experience because it's aboard a *shinkansen* train. These high-speed trains (also called bullet trains) run at speeds of up to 200 mph, and, as we will see, they're among the very best in the world for punctuality, comfort, safety and efficiency. We'll enjoy lunch while traveling on the *shinkansen* to Nagoya. We will change trains to continue our journey to Takayama and our stay at a *ryokan* there. We'll have some time to unwind and explore the Old Town in Takayama before we enjoy dinner tonight at the *ryokan*.



### SUNDAY, APRIL 9 – KANAZAWA (B, L, D)

Kanazawa, on the coast of the Japan Sea, is our destination as we leave with luggage. On the way, we stop in Shirakawa-go to explore a traditional thatched village. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Shirakawa-go and neighboring Gokayama regions are famous for their *gassho-zukuri* farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old. We arrive in Kanazawa for our stay at the Nikko Hotel. When we set out again, we'll see horticulture and history combined at the Nomura Samurai house, a restored samurai residence that gives us a taste of the lifestyle of an era when Japan was secluded from the outside world. The grounds' beautiful gardens feature a Japanese bayberry over 400 years old and a meandering stream surrounded by ancient and strangely shaped rocks. After lunch at a restaurant in the Nagamachi district, our busy afternoon begins at Kenroku-en, one of Japan's three finest landscape gardens. Once the garden of Kanazawa Castle, Kenroku-en boasts a central pond and circular walking path. We'll then walk to the D.T. Suzuki Museum, a small space commemorating the life and works of Suzuki Daisetz Teitaro (1870-1966), a prominent Buddhist philosopher and prolific writer. The architecture of the museum and the view of the small lake in the Water Mirror Garden convey the serenity synonymous with Zen philosophy. We dine tonight at a local restaurant.

### MONDAY, APRIL 10 – KYOTO (B, L)

We board our coach with luggage in tow to ultimately depart by train for Kyoto. Despite the wars and environmental damage that Kyoto has incurred over the centuries, many temples, shrines and other historic structures still stand. Why not stop for an *udon* noodle lunch? Then we can walk off lunch as we head to the Kodaiji temple complex for a private introduction to Zen meditation while overlooking the gardens. We just might leave with a new outlook on life. Then we will experience a traditional tea ceremony, a highly refined and ritualistic art form. Afterward, we proceed to our next accommodation, the Hyatt Hotel. We've seen and done so much in the past several days that the Hyatt's spa (it has 10 rooms, two with whirlpool baths) will prove tempting. Tonight we are free to dine on our own in Kyoto.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 11 – KYOTO (B, L, D)

Our day begins in the rural Ohara area in the mountains of northern Kyoto; we're fortunate to be accompanied by a temple

garden architect. On the way we will have a chance to see his paving stone and stone lantern collections and discuss how they're integrated into Japanese gardens. We'll continue on to Sanzen-in, a hilltop temple in Ohara, to see its beautiful natural gardens celebrated for its maples. Neighboring Jikko-in has a viewing garden with a pond representing everyday life in contrast to paradise. Then it's on to Hosen-in to see the 300-year-old Zen garden and a venerable pine tree that's much older. We'll be delighted and surprised to see what exactly is "The Garden of the Crane and the Turtle." Then we will have a traditional bento box lunch. We return in late afternoon for dinner in the garden room of one of the most storied, traditional *ryokan* in Kyoto, and it will become a truly once-in-a-lifetime event. As we enjoy dinner, served over many courses, we will be entertained by Maiko and Geiko geisha. Many Japanese natives will go their entire lives without the opportunity to meet these symbols of their culture, but we will see the Maiko dance as the Geiko plays a three-stringed musical instrument called a *shamisen*.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12 – KYOTO (B, L)

Ryoanji temple, our first destination today, is the site of Japan's most famous dry landscape rock garden. Ryoanji's temple grounds include an inviting park area featuring a large pond and island shrine. The Abbot's Garden of Ryoanji which was designed in 1473 is considered a textbook example of an abstract dry contemplative garden. Our day continues with a visit to the temples within the Daitoku-ji complex, with a temple gardener guiding us. Daitoku-ji is one of the most important *zazen* temples in Kyoto; the monastery is over 700 years old and features carefully landscaped gardens. We'll get a comprehensive overview of the Zen Buddhist approach and the philosophy underlying the gardens' creation. Our next experience is yet another exclusive event. We will visit some of the gardens of the late Shigemori Mirei, author of the 26-volume *Illustrated Book on the History of the Japanese Garden*. Mirei designed 240 gardens in his career. Our guide will be an individual with first-hand knowledge of the master – his grandson. After lunch, our afternoon will include a visit to the Kiyomizu temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tonight we enjoy dinner on our own.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 13 – KYOTO (B, L, D)

Our day begins with a visit to Sanjyusangendo, or Hall of 1001 Buddhas, housed in the world's longest wooden building. The main





image, of a seated Kan'on bodhisattva, is a national treasure in Japan. The effect is multiplied by the thousand standing statues of Kan'on, which fill the rest of the hall. Then it's on to the Fushimi Inari shrine, founded in 711. It's famous for its thousands of *torii* gates, which straddle a network of trails that lead into the forest of the sacred Mount Inari. We take lunch at the Miho Museum before exploring its collections. This beautiful building, designed by I.M. Pei, houses one of the finest Silk Road art collections in the world. We return to Kyoto for dinner at a traditional regional restaurant with *kappo* cooking, where fresh local ingredients are prepared in front of us and passed across the counter, paired with artisanal sakes.

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 14 – OSAKA (B, L, D)

We depart Kyoto by coach for Japan's old capital of Nara, established in 710. A landmark of Nara and our main stop is Todaiji ("Great Eastern Temple"), one of Japan's most famous and historic temples. In the main hall, Daibutsuden (Big Buddha Hall), we'll see the world's largest gilded bronze statue of the Buddha. After lunch, we'll stroll through Nara Park to one of the most picturesque Shinto shrines in Japan, Kasuga Taisha. It's famous for its lanterns, hundreds of which hang from the buildings. We continue on to Osaka – Japan's second-largest metropolitan area after Tokyo – and check into the Swissotel. We'll dine at a traditional Osaka-style *izakaya* restaurant and later explore the Dotonbori area of downtown before we return to the hotel.

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 15 – NAOSHIMA (B, L, D)

We board a *shinkansen* train as we leave for Okayama, then continue by coach and ferry to Naoshima, an island town on the Seto Inland Sea. We then check into the Benesse House Hotel and visit the superb Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum, which is part of the complex designed by world-renowned architect Tadao Ando. After lunch, an interesting afternoon awaits as we visit the "Art House Project." The project is a collection of old buildings at Honmura that have been renovated and given over to architects and artists to become walk-in life-size works of art. We move on to the Chichu Art Museum, which means "in the earth," because this modern art museum is mostly located underground and solely utilizes natural light. While the museum has a rather small collection of art, it does include large murals from Claude Monet's "Water Lilies" series. Afterwards, we enjoy dinner at the hotel.

#### SUNDAY, APRIL 16 – OSAKA (B, L, D)

We return to Osaka this morning. After lunch we check into the Swissotel for the final night of our tour. We can make the most of some free time exploring Osaka before our farewell dinner, a traditional Osaka-style feast.

#### MONDAY, APRIL 17 – DEPART OSAKA, JAPAN, FOR THE U.S. (B)

We may have more free time before we transfer to Kansai International Airport for return flights home.

*While no revisions of this itinerary are anticipated, the AHS and its travel partners reserve the right to make changes, with or without notice that may become necessary.*

