



Special Place of Scenic Beauty

OKAYAMA KORAKUEN GARDEN



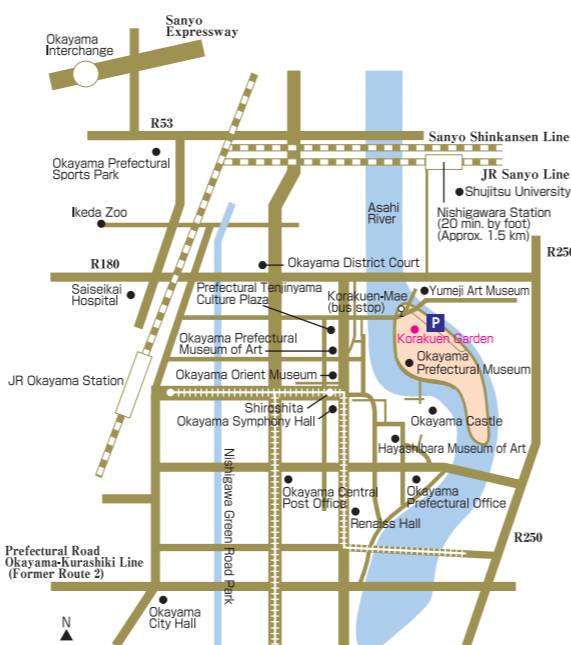
Annual Events

WINTER
January 1-3: New Year Celebration
Early February: Grass Burning
Late February: *Komo* Straw Belts Bonfire

SPRING
March 2: Garden Opening Anniversary
1st Sunday of April: Goshinkō Festival
Late April: Yōsai Tea Ceremony
3rd Sunday of May: Tea Picking Festival
Late May: En'yō-tei House Special Opening

SUMMER
2nd Sunday of June: Rice Planting Festival
1st Sunday of July: Lotus Viewing Festival
August 1-31: "Summer Fantasy Garden"
Night Opening and Illumination Event

AUTUMN
15th day of the 8th month in the lunar calendar: Harvest Moon Viewing Ceremony
Late October: *Komo* Straw Belts Wrapping
Late October: En'yō-tei House Special Opening
Late October - Mid-November: Okayama Prefecture Chrysanthemum Convention
November 3, Culture Day: Korakunō (Nō Theater performances)
Mid-November - Late November: "Autumn Fantasy Garden" Night Opening and Illumination Event



Hours
March 20~September 30: 7:30am~6:00pm
October 1~March 19: 8:00am~5:00pm
● Entrance allowed until 15 minutes before closing

Admission
Adults (15~64 not including junior high school students) ¥410
Children (elementary and junior high school students) ¥140
Senior (65~) ¥140
Groups (min. 20 people) 20% discount

Combined Admission
Korakuen & Okayama Prefectural Museum Adults ¥520
Korakuen & Okayama Castle Adults ¥640
Korakuen, Okayama Castle and Hayashibara Museum of Art Adults ¥1,040
Combination tickets are not available on days when the museum(s) is(are) closed or during special exhibits including the installation period.

Year-Long Passport
Adults ¥2,080 Children ¥830 Senior (65~) ¥830
● 20 min. by car from Okayama IC (Approx. 8km)
● 25 min. by foot from JR Okayama Station (Approx. 1.8km)
- 4 min. by Higashiyama-bound local trains and 10 min. by foot from Shiroshita Station
- Next to Korakuen-mae stop, 15 min. by Okaden Bus bound for Fujiwara Danchi stop.

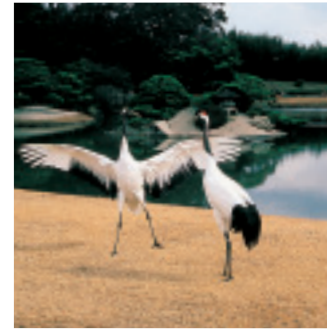
Parking
Standard-sized car ¥100/hour
Bus ¥620/once a day

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Korakuen, one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan, is a cultural heritage site for the world to treasure.

In 1687, *daimyō* (Japanese feudal lord) Ikeda Tsunamasa ordered to his retainer Tsuda Nagatada to begin the construction of a new garden. It was completed in 1700, and has kept its original appearance down to the present day, except for a few changes by various *daimyō*s. Korakuen is one of the few *daimyō* gardens in the province where historical change can be observed, thanks to the many Edo Period (1603-1868) illustrations and plans and Ikeda Clan's records and documents left behind. The garden was used as a place for entertaining important guests and also as a spa of sorts for the *daimyō*s, although common people too could visit it on certain days. In 1884, the ownership was transferred to Okayama Prefecture and the garden was opened to the general public. The garden suffered severe damage during a flood in 1934 and during WW2 bombing in 1945, but has been restored based on Edo Period drawings and documents. In 1952, Korakuen Garden was designated as a Special Scenic Location (now Special Place of Scenic Beauty) under the Cultural Properties Protection Law, and is managed as a historical cultural asset to be passed to future generations.



The garden was originally called Kōen ("back garden") because it was built behind Okayama Castle. However, since the garden was built in the spirit of "sen-yū-kō-raku" (literally, "grieve earlier than others, enjoy later than others"), the name was later changed to Korakuen in 1871.



Okayama Korakuen awarded three stars by Michelin Green Guide Japan





Ryūten Rest House and the Japanese Iris Garden.

A three-century history alive in Korakuen

Okayama Korakuen has been considered one of the most famous gardens in Japan since the Edo Period. The tea houses located throughout the garden were built for each succeeding *daimyō* (Japanese feudal lord), as were En'yō-tei House, the Nō Theater Stage, and other buildings. The garden was designed in the *kaiyū* ("scenic promenade") style, which presents the visitor with a new view at every turn of the many paths connecting the vast lawns, ponds, hills, tea houses and streams.



A view overlooking the garden from the South Gate.

Summer

9 Ryūten Rest House

Stones of beautiful colors are placed in the stream flowing through the center of the building - a unique design in Japan. It has a simple appearance and was used as a resting place by *daimyōs* (Japanese feudal lords) during their strolls in the garden.

10 Yatsunashi Bridge

Iris are planted all along the bridge, after the *Azuma kudari* chapter in *The Tales of Ise*, an ancient collection of Japanese poems.

11 Kakō-no-ike Pond

Originally designed with mountain cherry trees and other blossoming trees incorporated into the view around the pond. Many *tanka* (traditional Japanese poetry) have been passed down through time portraying how the waterfall reflects the beauty of the flowers. The stream running across the garden meets this pond and then flows into the Asahi River.



12 Chaso-dō Tea House

This building was originally called Rikyū-dō, one part of a villa belonging to a high-ranking vassal towards the end of the Edo Period, and was taken apart and rebuilt here around 1887. Restored after the war, it was re-entitled to Yōsai, the Okayama-born priest said to have brought tea to Japan from China, from which the building gets the name Chaso-dō: "house of the forefather of tea."

Autumn



Maple trees on the Yuishinzan Hill.

7 Renchi-ken Rest House

It is said that this was Lord Ikeda Tsunamasa's favorite of all the buildings in the garden. It has a magnificent view on the pond.

8 Yuishinzan Hill

A manmade hill, approximately 6 m high, built by Lord Ikeda Tsugumasa, son of Tsunamasa, offers a panoramic view of the entire garden. The hill itself becomes spectacular when azaleas are in bloom.

13 Plum Grove

In late winter, ahead of the other flowers, about 100 red and white, single and double-flowered plum trees blossom and fill the garden with their elegant fragrance.

14 Chishio-no-mori Grove

The nearly 100 maple trees are beautiful in spring, when their leaves are green, and in autumn, when their vivid tapestry of auburn hues is like a Japanese brocade. This is one of the most famous scenic spots in the garden.

15 Seiden Fields

These six rice paddies are here to remind us of older times when rice cultivation was spread throughout the garden. They were made at the end of the Edo Period and modeled after the Zhou Dynasty system for taxing rice paddies. Next to them, the two fields of Ōga Lotus, which returned to life after 2000 years, are in bloom in June and July. Finally, the ninth field houses peony flowers.

A garden carpeted with grass

Korakuen is a bright and open garden, originally incorporating native Japanese lawns only in the space between En'yō-tei House and the west bank of Sawa-no-ike Pond, while the rest of the garden was used as arable land. Grass was extended to the rest of the garden since the Meiji Period (1868-1912).

Statistics ■ Total area: 144,000 m² ■ Yuishinzan Hill: approx. 6 m
■ Grassy area: 19,600 m² ■ Length of stream: approx. 640 m



Kyokusui (Meandering Stream)
In the past, water running in the nearby Korakuen irrigation channel extending from approximately 4 km up the Asahi River to the other side of the river, was siphoned into the garden. Nowadays around water is pumped up to the surface, skillfully designed and created to flow into ponds and waterfalls for a beautiful effect.

Spring

1 En'yō-tei House

Used as a place to receive *daimyōs* (Japanese feudal lords) when they visited Korakuen, this house is the central structure in the garden, offering a broad vista of Sawa-no-ike Pond, Yuishinzan Hill, and Mount Misao in the background.

2 Nō Theater Stage

Lord Ikeda Tsunamasa was not only an enthusiastic devotee of Nō, but himself also an accomplished performer, known for the extensive collection of priceless Nō costumes he left behind. Townspeople were sometimes allowed to visit this stage. The present structure is a post-WW2 restoration.

3 Nishiki-ga-oka Grove

Although originally designed as a thicket of mountain cherry blossom trees that would bloom in spring, and maple trees whose leaves would turn red in autumn, Japanese cypress trees took their place after the war. Wild birds visit this place in large numbers - quite rare for a metropolitan location.

4 Kayō-no-ike Pond

To the east is Kayō-no-taki Falls, while on the southwest bank is found Ōdateishi Rock, which was cut into over 90 pieces, brought to Korakuen, and rebuilt in the Genroku Era (1688-1704). Ittenshikai Lotus can be seen in its full glory between June and August here.

5 Jizō-dō Temple

A tree of the elm family called "muku", which is believed to date back to the time when the garden was originally built, stands next to the small building.

6 Ofuna-iri-ato Dock Remains

Remains of a landing dock for boats that carried feudal lords from the castle. Stone steps leading to the gate of honor have been unearthed and are now on display.

18 Sawa-no-ike Pond

The largest pond in the garden, Sawa-no-ike contains the three islands Naka-no-shima, Mi-no-shima with the beautiful fishing pavilion, and Jari-jima, with its beautiful white sand and green pine trees.

19 Crane Aviary

Cranes have been kept in the garden since the Edo Period, but they died out after the Second World War. Later on, Guō Mōruo, Chairman of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who once attended Dairōku Senior High School in Okayama under the prewar education system, presented the garden with two cranes. Afterwards, in collaboration with Kushiro City, Hokkaido, the garden succeeded in hatching and raising many cranes, bringing back their once lost beauty to the garden.



Sawa-no-ike Pond in the snow.

All photograph are ©Yukio Nanba

Winter

16 Tea Plantation

Beautifully trimmed tea trees stand in rows. This is an ancient variety of tea which has a slightly bitter flavor.

17 Jigen-dō Temple

This is a temple dedicated to Kan'on (Buddhist Goddess of Mercy), built by Lord Ikeda Tsunamasa with the goal of bringing peace to the clan and stability to the domain. Although the temple is no longer in use, the successive lords of the clan were devoted to its worship until the end of the Edo Period.

- Car Park
- Restroom
- Public Telephone
- Taxi Stand
- Restaurant
- Coin-operated Locker
- Bus Stop
- Shop
- Multipurpose Restroom
- Crane Aviary