



Special Scenic Spot

OKAYAMA KORAKUEN GARDEN



Yearly Events

WINTER

January 1~3: New Year Festival
Early February: Grass Burning Ceremony
Late February: Protective straw coverings are removed from pine trees and burned.

SPRING

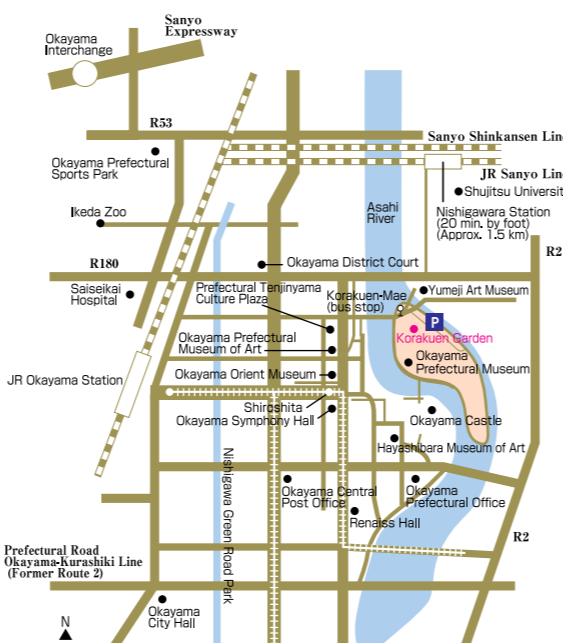
March 2: Day commemorating the Opening of the Garden
1st Sunday of April: Goshinko Festival
Late April: Eisai Tea Ceremony
3rd Sunday of May: Tea Picking Festival

SUMMER

2nd Sunday of June: Rice Planting Festival
1st Sunday of July: Lotus Flower Viewing
August: Garden Illumination

AUTUMN

August 15 (according to old lunar calendar): Moon Viewing Ceremony
1st Saturday of October: Noh Theater Performance
Late October: Pine trees are fitted with protective straw coverings.
Late October~Mid November: Chrysanthemum Exhibition
November 3: Koraku Noh Performance



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) ¥400
Children (elementary and junior high school students) ¥260
Senior (65~) ¥260
Groups (min. 20 people) 20% discount

Combined Admission

Korakuen & Okayama Prefectural Museum Adults ¥520
Korakuen & Okayama Castle Adults ¥560 Children ¥260
Korakuen, Okayama Castle and Hayashibara Museum of Art Adults ¥960
(Combination tickets are not available on days when the museum(s) is closed or during special exhibits including the installation period.)

Year-Long Passport

Adults ¥2,050 Children ¥820 Senior (65~) ¥820

- 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 ¥610/once a day

OKAYAMA KORAKUEN GARDEN

1-5 Korakuen, Kita-ku, Okayama City 703-8257
Phone: 086-272-1148 Fax: 086-272-1147
http://www.okayama-korakuen.jp/

Korakuen, one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan, is a cultural heritage site for the world to treasure

In 1687, Ikeda Tsunamasa, daimyo (Japanese feudal lord), ordered Tsuda Nagatada to begin construction of Korakuen. It was completed in 1700, and has retained its original appearance down to the present day, except for a few changes by various daimyo. Korakuen is one of the few Daimyo gardens in the provinces where historical change can be observed, thanks to the many Edo Period paintings and Ikeda Family records and documents left behind. The garden was used as a place for entertaining important guests and also as a spa of sorts for daimyo, although regular folk could also visit on certain days. In 1884, ownership was transferred to Okayama Prefecture and the garden was opened to the public. The garden suffered severe damage during the floods of 1934 and during WWII bombing in 1945, but has been restored based on Edo Period paintings and diagrams. In 1952, Korakuen Garden was designated as a Special Scenic Location 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 Koen ("back garden") because it was built behind Okayama Castle. However, since the garden was built in the spirit of "sen-yu-ko-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





Ryuten and the Japanese Iris Garden

A three-century history alive in Korakuen

Okayama's 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 daimyo (Japanese feudal lord), as were Enyo-tei, the Noh stage, and other buildings. The garden was designed in the Kaiyu ("scenic promenade") style which presents the visitor with a new view at every turn of the path which connects the vast lawns, ponds, hills, tea houses, and streams.



A view overlooking the garden from the south gate

Summer

9 Ryuten Pavilion
Pebbles of beautiful colors are scattered throughout the stream which passes through the center of the building - a rare design in Japan. It has a simple appearance and was used as a resting place for daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) on his strolls through the garden.

10 Yatsunashi Bridge
Iris are planted all along the bridge, after the azumakudari chapter in the Tale of Ise.

11 Kako-no-ike Pond
Originally designed with mountain cherry and other blossoming trees incorporated into the view around the pond, tanka (traditional Japanese poetry) has been passed down through time portraying how the waterfall reflects the beauty of the flowers. The stream wandering through the park passes through this pond and flows back into the Asahi River.



12 Chaso-do Hall
This building was originally the Rikyu-do, 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 Meiji 20 (1887). Restored after the war, it is also dedicated to Eizai Zenshi, the Okayama-born priest said to have brought tea to Japan from China, from which the building gets the name Chaso-do: house of the father of tea.

Autumn



Maple trees in the Yuishinzan Hill

7 Renchi-ken Teahouse
It is said that this was Ikeda Tsunamasa's favorite of all the teahouses in the garden. It has a magnificent view of the pond.

8 Yuishinzan Hill
A manmade hill, approximately 6m high, built by Ikeda Tsugumasa, son of Ikeda Tsunamasa, affords a panoramic view of the entire garden. The view from the hill proves spectacular when azaleas are in bloom.

13 Plum Grove
In early spring, ahead of the other flowers, around 100 red, white, single and double-petal plum trees bloom and fill the garden with an elegant fragrance.

14 Chishio-no-mori Grove
The nearly 100 maple trees are beautiful in spring, when they bud, 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.

A garden carpeted with grass

Korakuen is a bright and open garden, originally incorporating native Japanese lawns only in the space visible from Enyo-tei on the west bank of Sawa-no-ike Pond, with the rest of the garden used as arable land. Grass was extended to the rest of the garden starting in the Meiji Period.

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

15 Seiden (Rice Fields) - The Lotus of Seiden
These rice fields are here to remind us of older times when rice fields were spread throughout the garden. They were made at the end of the Edo Period and modeled after the Zhou Dynasty system for taxing rice fields. The Oga Lotuses, which are said to have returned to life after 2000 years, are best viewed in June and July.



Spring

1 Enyo-tei House
Used as a place to receive daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) when he visited Korakuen, this house is a central structure in the garden, commanding a broad vista of Sawa-no-ike, Yuishinzan Hill, and Mt. Misao in the background.

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

3 Nishiki-ga-oka Hill
Although the original design was for a thicket of cherry trees that would bloom in spring and maple trees whose leaves would turn in autumn, Japanese cypress trees took their place after the war. Wild birds visit in large numbers - rare for a metropolitan location.

4 Kayo-no-ike Pond
To the east is Kayo-no-taki Falls and on the southwest bank is found Odateishi, said to have been broken into over 90 pieces, brought to Korakuen, and rebuilt in the Genroku Era. Daimyo lotuses can be seen in their full glory between June and August here.

5 Jizo-do Shrine
A tree of the elm family called "muku," which is believed to date back to the time when the garden was originally built, stands beside the shrine.

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 discovered and are exhibited.

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

19 Crane Aviary
Cranes had been kept in the garden from the Edo period but they died out after the Second World War. Later on, Guo Moruo, Chairman of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who once attended Dairoku 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.

20 Paddock - Archery Range
Korakuen was built not only as a place for feudal lords to enjoy the scenery but also as a training ground for practicing both the literary and military arts. Events for vassals to display their skills in military art were also held, which the lords used to observe from Kanki-tei or Kansha-tei.

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

17 Jigen-do Hall
This is a temple dedicated to Kannon (Goddess of Mercy), built by Ikeda Tsunamasa with the goal of bringing peace to the clan and stability to the Ikeda family. Although the temple is no longer in use, the successive lords of the clan were devoted to the worship of the temple until the Edo period.

18 Sawa-no-ike Pond
The largest pond in the garden, Sawa-no-ike contains a naka-no-shima, Mino-shima with the beautiful fishing palace, and Jarijima, with its beautiful white sand and green pine trees.

Sawa-no-ike in snow



Photograph taken by Yukio Nanba

Winter