**The Gardens of Heian Jingu**

The gardens of Heian Jingu are divided into four areas, each showcasing the aesthetic sensibilities and design features of a different period of Japanese history. With large ponds and meandering streams, water features extensively in their design. The hundreds of varieties of flowering plants provide diverse habitats for wildlife.

*South Garden (Minami Shin’en)*

The South Garden is a classic stroll garden with narrow winding paths and a meandering stream in a style inspired by the Heian period (794–1185). The plants and flowers include double-petaled weeping cherries often mentioned in classical literary works of the Heian period.

*West Garden (Nishi Shin’en)*

The West Garden is tranquil and Zen-inspired, centering around a large pond. A key feature of this garden is the artful placement of rocks. Irises, water lilies, and azaleas bloom in succession here from April through July.

*Middle Garden (Naka Shin’en)*

The Middle Garden is inspired by the *wabi-sabi* (beauty in imperfection) aesthetic of the Muromachi period (1336–1573). It features a large pond with a small island and stepping-stones crossing the pond, as well as a rustic hut serving tea and refreshments.

*East Garden (Higashi Shin’en)*

The East Garden is the grandest in design, following a style popular in the Edo period (1603–1867). It features elegant wooden structures relocated from the Kyoto Imperial Palace and a large pond surrounded with plum trees, cherry trees, maples, and pines.