

## Shukkeien Garden

Shukkeien, a picturesque and tranquil Japanese garden, was originally created in 1620. The Asano family, which ruled over the region for more than 300 years, requested that noted tea master and samurai Ueda Soko (1563–1650) design a “shrunk scenic garden”—as the name Shukkeien translates—encapsulating mountain and river views in a space about the size of Hiroshima’s present-day baseball stadium.

An artificial but entirely natural-looking lake dominates Shukkeien’s center and can be traversed via an arched stone bridge. Fourteen islands of varying size, seven dotted on each side of the bridge, represent those of the Seto Inland Sea. Colorful, boldly patterned carp gather close to the bridge in abundance, aware that this is the place humans tend to toss food into the water. Turtles swim unhurriedly alongside the fish, occasionally venturing onto dry land. Crabs can also be seen scuttling around, and a variety of bird species either inhabit the park or visit seasonally.

The garden is tastefully laid out with valleys, bridges, teahouses, arbors, and other sights for visitors to enjoy. Additional highlights of a circuit around Shukkeien include a small bamboo grove, and an orchard of *ume* plum trees.

Shukkeien was heavily damaged by the atomic bombing. Every structure except for the stone bridge was destroyed, and only three trees survived. All of the buildings, including the pampas-grass-roofed Meigetsutei teahouse, were rebuilt following the war.