

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.