

## **Nakanoshima Park**

(target: 250–500 ww, actual: 497)

Nakanoshima Park is an island oasis of green between cool, flowing rivers at the heart of the city. It is the oldest public park in Osaka but continues to evolve along with changing expectations of what public spaces should be.

### *From Daimyo District to Public Park*

The island of Nakanoshima is a natural sandbank, three kilometers long but only a few hundred meters across at its widest. Beginning in the seventeenth century, daimyo lords from all over Japan built warehouses on Nakanoshima to participate in the rice market across the river that also served as the world's first futures exchange.

The Meiji government that replaced the shogunate in 1868 abolished the country's rice-based economy, rendering these warehouses obsolete. In the decades that followed, the Osaka city government set about acquiring the land to create public spaces for the growing metropolis.

The eastern tip of Nakanoshima island had been used for recreation and sightseeing since the eighteenth century. The city extended the island half a kilometer to the east, just beyond Tenjin-bashi Bridge, and formally declared the resulting space a public park in 1899. Today, Nakanoshima Park covers over 10 hectares on the eastern half of the island.

### *The Rose Garden, East of the Lions*

Most of Nakanoshima Park's green space lies east of Naniwa-bashi Bridge, which is also known as "Lion Bridge" for the stone lions at its corners. There are around 100 cherry trees in the park, which are illuminated at night when in bloom; however, the main floral attraction is the Rose Garden, which was founded in 1980.

The Rose Garden lies just east of Naniwa-bashi Bridge. It is divided into two sections by a picturesque canal with an arched bridge and contains 3,700 rose bushes of 310 varieties. The roses bloom twice each year: once in mid- to late May and once in October. There is a small cafe/restaurant just north of the garden, and accessible restrooms are nearby.

East of the Rose Garden is a grassy lawn used for morning exercises, family picnics under parasols, sunbathing, and recreation in general. Tour boats and standup paddleboarders regularly ply the sparkling waters on either side. On July 25, the river fills with dozens of craft carrying worshipers, drummers, and other performers as part of the Tenjin Festival, the largest summer festival in Osaka.

#### *West of Naniwa-bashi Bridge*

Green spaces are fewer to the west of Naniwa-bashi Bridge, but the area has been redeveloped to create a more pleasant riverside atmosphere. Points of interest include the outdoor theater on the southern shore of Nakanoshima, the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, the Children's Library designed by noted architect Ando Tadao, with its famous green apple sculpture, and the Nakanoshima Ryokudo ("Green Path"), which is lined with camellias, azaleas, and other flowering plants. The west side of the island is also known for its European-style architecture, including the Osaka Prefectural Nakanoshima Library (completed in 1904) and Osaka City Central Public Hall (1918).