

祭り

Matsuri-Japan Festival

Saturday 9 December 2017

Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour

Taiken—Experience

That's the theme of this year's Matsuri-Japan Festival. If you've been to Matsuri-Japan Festival before, then you know that there is a lot to experience with hands-on workshops and entertainment around the festival ground. You can also enjoy great performances and demonstrations on the main stage. Of course, there will be food stalls with festival favourites for people to try.



The organisers hope people will *learn, try & love Japan!* Last year, more than 30,000 joined the festival fun. We hope to see you there!

www.matsurisdney.com



Congratulations

to all the organisers and volunteers behind Matsuri-Japan Festival in Willoughby on 9 September.

Autumn in Japan

"When's a good time to visit Japan, apart from the cherry blossom season?" This is a question we are hearing more frequently from people in Australia. Many Australians have already discovered the beauty of Japan in spring and the great skiing in winter is also no longer a secret. For those in the know, autumn is one of the best times to explore Japan. Here are some reasons why.

Weather

Let's be practical. Travelling can be tiring and it's nice to be as comfortable as possible. Autumn weather is great for travelling. The humidity of summer has passed and clear, crisp days are the rule.

A season to savour

Eating in Japan is a pleasure year round, but in autumn there are some special delicacies. Like many of the good things in life, they are best kept simple. *Sanma* fish are at their peak and are enjoyed just salted and grilled. When written in Japanese, the fish is literally the autumn knife fish—秋刀魚. The highly-prized *matsutake* (pine mushroom) grows wild in red-pine forests and being difficult to cultivate it has become an autumn favourite for mushroom lovers. Again grilling is a wonderful way to enjoy the flavours, but another popular way is to create a simple broth called *matsutake dobin mushi*, which is prepared in a small teapot (a *dobin*).



Sanma



Matsutake dobin mushi



Ginkgo trees tint Tokyo yellow

A time for art and culture

Many cultural activities are held during autumn. Traditionally schools have their cultural festivals (*bunkasai*) around the third of November which is Japan's 'Culture Day' public holiday to promote cultural pursuits. For travellers to Japan it means that galleries often hold top exhibitions (including of international art) at this time of year. Of course, there will be many Japanese art lovers joining you because that's what happens in autumn.

Its very autumn-ness

For centuries Japanese people have enjoyed the passing of the seasons and autumn has been appreciated for its beautiful colours. Hikers trek to mountains that turn into glorious patchworks of blazing red, orange and yellow. Certain temples are famous for gardens which seem to flame with colour and are crowded with autumn-leaf pilgrims. Central Tokyo has boulevards of ginkgo trees that turn a glorious yellow and carpet the footpaths.

And at night, don't forget to look at the moon. The full autumn moon is thought to be particularly beautiful and people still enjoy *otsukimi* or moon-viewing, even without the traditional dumplings.



Otsukimi dumplings and autumn flowers

JNTO's autumn travel tips: www.jnto.org.au/plan-your-trip/seasonal-attractions/autumn/

PHOTO CREDITS: header image (cropped) & top left © Yasufumi Nishi / © JNTO