



Cherry Blossoms of Kyoto: A Seasonal Portfolio

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Each year, cherry trees, the symbol of springtime in Japan, burst into a riotous blaze of floral glory. The peak cherry-viewing season, however, is extremely short -- from late March through early April -- and the exquisite blossoms scatter without trace in little over a week. Despite, or perhaps because of, the fleeting nature of the spectacle, cherry blossoms have occupied a special place in the hearts of the Japanese since earliest times.

Cherry blossoms are seen as an ideal model for life and death, emblematic of both the glorious and ephemeral natures of human existence, dazzling during a short life before falling gracefully to the ground. For this reason, they have provided inspiration for poets, painters, artisans and many others over the centuries. Identifying in nature a sublime spirituality transcending external beauty, and elevating that spirituality to an art form lies at the core of Japanese culture. For over a millennium, the city of Kyoto has made this aesthetic sensibility its own.

This book, a companion to the recent *Autumn Colors of Kyoto*, features 48 outstanding cherry blossom-viewing locations photographed by three lifelong Kyotoites who have made it their mission to convey the beauty of their remarkable city.

A bilingual map section provides address information and contact details for each location.

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