

JAPAN'S HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

ADORNED BY PLANTS IN SPRING

Colorful flowers bloom gorgeously in the spring. Historical buildings full of ancestral sentiments become even more attractive when adorned by flowers and plants in their season. To experience such living history and tradition, why not visit Japan during the spring?



SHRINE WITH WISTERIA

Nara is famous as the ancient capital of Japan. Here, Kasuga Taisha Shrine was founded in 768 by order of the ruling empress of the time. Both the shrine and the sacred old-growth forest behind it constitute part of the “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara” UNESCO World Heritage Site. The emblem of the shrine depicts wisteria, a vine growing naturally within the shrine grounds since ancient times. Near the main building, one special tree, purported to be over seven centuries old, extends its flower bunches over one meter in early May, creating a splendid contrast with the bright vermilion of the shrine.



BRIDGE IN SPRING

Near the western tip of Honshu can be found Kintaikyō Bridge—one of the world’s rare five-arch wooden bridges—situated in Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. First built in 1673, it measures approximately 193 meters long and five meters wide. The bridge, embodying both the passion of those of the past, who wanted “a sturdy bridge to withstand floods,” and the skills of successive craftsmen, charms sightseers with its wooden arches and beauty. In spring, the bridge offers wonderful views of cherry blossoms and rapeseed flowers blooming along the riverbank. Excursion riverboats are also popular for enjoying both the bridge and flowers from the river.



WATERED RICE PADDIES

The period extending from May into June is the best time of year to visit the countryside and glimpse scenes of traditional Japanese life. Rice paddies filled with water are neatly planted with rows of seedlings, whose vibrant green adorns the reflection of the surrounding scenery and blue skies on the water surface. Rice planting is a special yearly event in all parts of Japan, as the grain is a staple food. The photo here shows a minuscule temple nestled amidst paddies in Nagaoka City, Niigata Prefecture, which boasts the highest volume of rice production in the country. Such a sight can be considered true to Japan’s original landscape.