

January 16, 2017

Cherry Blossoms, Wisteria, and Other Springtime Flower-Viewing Information Around Tokyo: This Will Tempt Visitors to Snap Photos

Tobu Railway Co., Ltd.

Many flowers including cherry trees, azaleas, and wisteria come to full bloom when spring arrives at areas along Tobu Railway, a line straddling four prefectures near Tokyo, in turn bringing about scores of spots that tempt visitors to capture in photos. Shared below are six destinations that enable people to make the most of *hanami* (flower-viewing) in Japan—don't forget to bring your cameras along.

Tobu Railway will debut its new limited express in the spring of 2017. Take this special express that offers improved convenience and comfort, and enjoy Japan's cherry blossom-appreciating culture.



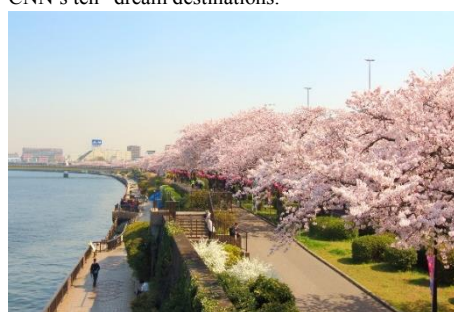
Ashikaga Flower Park

Complimented for its scenery resembling the Tree of Souls from the movie "Avatar," this park was chosen as one of CNN's ten "dream destinations."



Tsutsujigaoka Park

This is a venerable park of azaleas, administrated from around the year 1600. It features azaleas estimated to have lived for over 800 years.



Sumida Park

This park is one of the best areas in Tokyo to cherish blooming flowers. About 640 cherry trees, stretching over around a kilometer, blossom along both banks of Sumida River.



Tobu Treasure Garden

Moss phloxes bloom at this park. Visitors can enjoy a view that's almost like a vast pink carpet.



Satte Gongendo's bank of cherry trees

When the approximately 1,000 cherry trees go into full bloom, this area provides a splendid contrast between the faint pink and yellow of cherry and rape blossoms.



Tsurugajo Castle Park

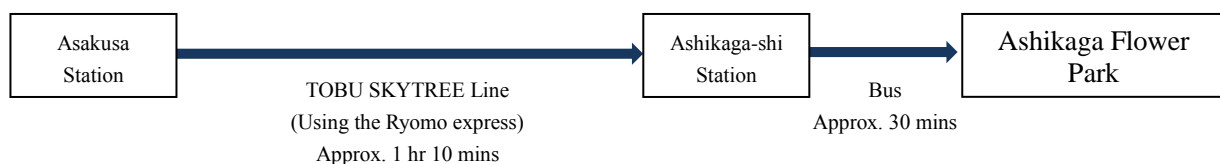
As night falls upon this park, cherry blossoms reflect on the moat's water, offering visitors a magical scene accompanied by Tsurugajo castle.

Ashikaga Flower Park's wisteria: Chosen as one of CNN's ten "dream destinations"

Complimented for its magical scenery resembling the Tree of Souls from the movie "Avatar," this park was the only Japanese site chosen in 2014 as one of US television station CNN's ten "dream destinations." A major feature of this venue is its 150-year old wisteria. A decade ago, the park's wisteria trellises spanned across an area of 72 m²; now it has expanded more than ten times to a whopping 1,000 m², with its beautiful, otherworldly appearance and its vitality capturing the gaze of onlookers. The park is lit up during the night—the light-veiled, mystical spectacle of the wisteria is a must-see too.



Venue name	Ashikaga Flower Park
When flowers are in bloom	Wisteria: Late April to early May 2017 ("The Great Wisteria Festival 2017" will be held from Saturday, April 15 through Sunday, May 21, 2017)
Ashikaga Flower Park URL:	http://www.ashikaga.co.jp/english/index.html
Open hours	7:00-21:00 (7:00-18:00 during non-illuminated periods. Enter by 30 minutes before closing time.)
Entrance fee	Daytime: ¥900-1,700; Nighttime: ¥600-1,400 (Fees change depending on how the flowers are blooming)
Location	Ashikaga Flower Park, Ashikaga-shi, Gunma • Go to TOBU Isesaki Line's Ashikaga-shi Station (approx. 1 hr 10 mins from Asakusa Station, TOBU SKYTREE Line). Take the bus and get off at "Ashikaga Flower Park" (approx. 30 mins from the station).



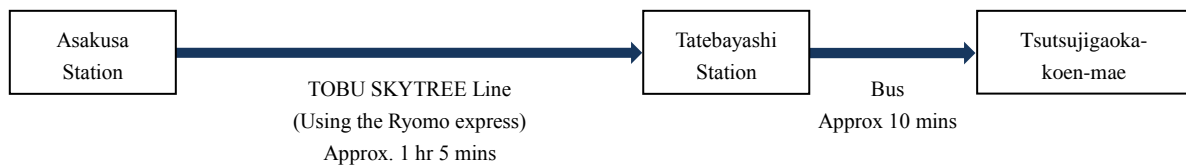
*Ashikaga Flower Park is at area (1) of the map on page 7.

Tsutsujigaoka Park: Feel its long-standing history and the over-800-year-old azalea

This venerable park known for its azaleas is situated at an area where, from ancient times, wild torch azaleas have been growing in colonies. The park has long been administrated while actively increasing azaleas from around the year 1600. In addition to towering, massive azaleas estimated to have lived for over 800 years, some 50 kinds and about 10,000 shrubs are planted within the venue. Tsutsujigaoka Park is acknowledged for its wonderful scenery—so much so that in 1934, the Japanese government approved the site as a place of scenic beauty with highly artistic and ornamental value. Similarly, David Leach, President of the American Rhododendron Society, rated the park as "the world's best" in 1977. Enjoy the Tsutsujimatsuri festival held from Monday, April 10 through Wednesday, May 10, 2017.



Venue name	Tsutsujigaoka Park
When flowers are in bloom	Azalea: Mid-April to early May 2017
Tsutsujigaoka Park URL:	http://www.utyututuji.jp/world/en.html
Open hours	8:00-17:00
Entrance fee	¥310-620 (Fees change depending on how the flowers are blooming)
Location	<p>Tsutsujigaoka Park, Tatebayashi-shi, Gunma</p> <p>・Go to TOBU Isesaki Line's Tatebayashi Station (approx. 1 hr 5 mins from Asakusa Station, TOBU SKYTREE Line). Take the bus and get off at "Tsutsujigaoka-koen-mae" (approx. 10 mins from the station). It's approximately a five-minute walk from there.</p>



*Tsutsujigaoka Park is at area (1) of the map on page 7.

Sumida Park: One of Tokyo's best cherry blossom spots, presenting different moods during night and day

The history of Sumida Park's cherry trees dates back to around the year 1700, when Tokugawa Yoshimune, the eighth shogun of the Edo era, was in power. He planted the trees as a flood control project, hoping to have many people walk on the riverbank's surface—in turn firming up the embankment and keeping it from collapsing. Today, about 640 cherry trees burst into its elegant colors along approximately one kilometer along both sides of Sumida River. The area has been selected as one of the 100 best spots for cherry blossoms in Japan, and is well known as Tokyo's top places for appreciating the pink flowers. The park is located near Senso-ji temple and TOKYO SKYTREE, the world's highest tower, and is a destination visitors can drop by along with other tourist spots.

Many food stalls are set up while the cherry trees are in bloom, allowing people to munch on something while strolling and admiring the pink flowers. Don't miss traditional confectionery, which are the favorite delicacies of Japanese people—they go perfectly well with cherry blossom-viewing. Some examples include *Sakura-mochi*, a pink rice cake with salt-pickled leaves from a cherry tree, and *Kototoi-dango*, a traditional Japanese treat offering a mild sweet taste that sweeps through your mouth.

Appearing after sunset is the illuminated cherry blossoms and TOKYO SKYTREE. This park is a spot that would make visitors want to snap photos.



Venue name	Sumida Park
When flowers are in bloom	Cherry blossoms: Late March to early April 2017
Sumida Park URL:	http://visit-sumida.jp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/sumida_english.pdf
Location	Sumida Park, Taito-ku and Sumida-ku, Tokyo • Five-minute walk from TOBU SKYTREE Line's Asakusa Station, or seven-minute walk from TOBU SKYTREE Line's TOKYO SKYTREE Station (approx. 3 mins from Asakusa Station, TOBU SKYTREE Line)
Fee	Free

*Sumida Park is at area (2) of the map on page 7.

[Information on traditional confectionery offered at Sumida Park]



Name of shop: Chomeiji Sakura-mochi

Product name: Chomeiji Sakura-mochi/¥200 per piece

This is a *Sakura-mochi* rice cake preserving tastes from the Edo era; it's wrapped with salt-pickled cherry tree leaves.

Address: 5-1-14 Mukojima, Sumida-ku, Tokyo



Name of shop: Mukojima Kototoi Dango

Product name: Kototoi Dango/¥630 per three pieces

Three types of rice dumplings are offered, containing red, white, or miso bean paste.

Address: 5-5-22 Mukojima, Sumida-ku, Tokyo

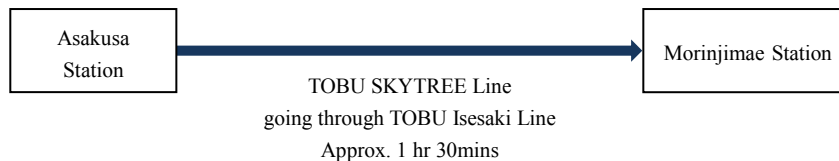
*Both the Chomeiji Sakura-mochi and Kototoi Dango are on sale at the Sumida Industry and Tourism Information Center Sumida City Point, set up on the fifth floor of TOKYO Solamachi, a commercial establishment at the base of TOKYO SKYTREE.

Tobu Treasure Garden's moss phlox: Offering a vast, pink carpet-like view

The approximately 200,000 moss phloxes in this garden bloom in all glory during April. It looks almost like a carpet, making for a vivid gradation of pink. They flower at the same time as cherry blossoms in some years, allowing visitors to feast their eyes on a magical landscape. Moss Phlox & Spring Garden Festival is set to take place from Saturday, March 25 through Sunday, May 7, 2017, complementing the gorgeous nemophila and other blue-hued flowers together with moss phloxes. Visitors can enjoy spring flowers to their heart's content during the event.



Venue name	Tobu Treasure Garden
When flowers are in bloom	Moss phlox: Early to late April 2017 Nemophila: Early April to early May 2017 *Tobu Treasure Garden will open from Saturday, March 25, 2017.
Tobu Treasure Garden URL:	http://treasuregarden.jp/en/
Open hours	9:00-17:00 (Enter by 16:30)
Entrance fee	Junior high school students and above: ¥600-1,000, elementary school students: ¥200-400 (Fees change depending on how the flowers are blooming)
Location	Tobu Treasure Garden, Tatebayashi-shi, Gunma · About a 15-minute walk from TOBU Isesaki Line's Morinjimae Station (approx. 1hr 30mins from Asakusa Station, TOBU SKYTREE Line)



[Recommendations for Tobu Treasure Garden]

Starting the day after the Moss Phlox & Spring Garden Festival ends, Tobu Treasure Garden will host the Rose & Garden Festival from Monday, May 8, through Friday, June 30, 2017—at which 3,000 roses, 1,500 types of them, will come into bloom. Visitors can admire an array of fragrant and vivid roses all at a single occasion. The venue is opening a new “Seasonal Garden” from April to June 2017, where many different flowers will blossom in rich colors. Visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy a field made up of 800,000 flowers.



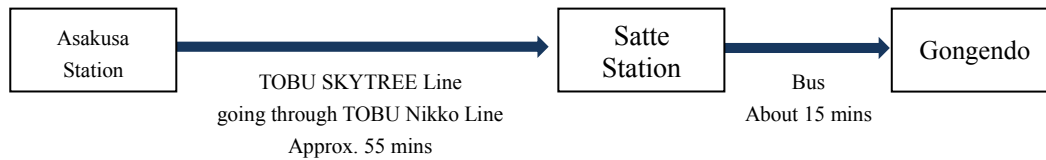
*Tobu Treasure Garden is at area (1) of the map on page 7.

Satte Gongendo's bank of cherry trees: A place boasting around 1,000 cherry trees, where visitors can enjoy a tunnel of cherry blossoms

A tunnel of cherry blossoms appear at this location when the approximately 1,000 cherry trees—lined up along a kilometer-long bank—go into full bloom as springtime arrives. Planted next to the bank are rape blossoms, allowing visitors to take in a splendid contrast between the faint pink and yellow of cherry and rape blossoms. The Sakura Matsuri festival takes place each year from late March to early April, coinciding with the blooming of cherry trees. A number of events are held during the occasion and around 100 stalls are set up too. While the festival is underway, a special shuttle bus runs between Saitama Prefectural Gongendo Park, where Satte Gongendo's bank of cherry trees is at, and Satte, the station nearest to the site.



Venue name Saitama Prefectural Gongendo Park
 When flowers are in bloom Cherry blossoms: Late March to early April 2017
 Saitama Prefectural Gongendo Park URL: <http://www.gongendo.jp/en/>
 Location Satte Gongendo's bank of cherry trees, Satte-shi, Saitama
 • Go to TOBU Nikko Line's Satte Station (approx. 55 mins from Asakusa Station, TOBU SKYTREE Line). Take the bus and get off at "Gongendo" (approx. 15 mins).



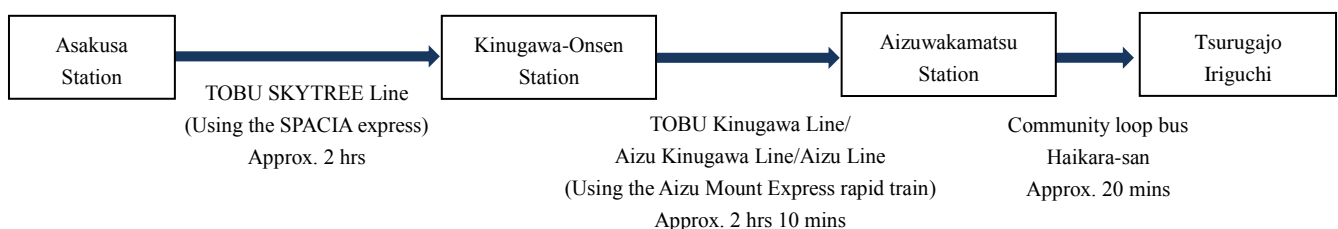
*Saitama Prefectural Gongendo Park is at area (3) of the map on page 7.

Tsurugajo Castle Park: Around 1,000 cherry trees adorning Tsurugajo Castle, with cherry blossoms reflecting on the moat's water at night

Around 1,000 cherry blossoms are planted around Tsurugajo, known as the most renowned castle in the Tohoku region. This park is a popular tourist spot offering a magnificent collaboration between the castle tower and the cherry blossoms bursting in all their beauty, and also has been chosen as one of the 100 best spots for cherry blossoms in Japan. Visitors can enjoy a magical scene as night falls upon this area—which includes reflections of the cherry blossoms on the moat's waters, and the vividly illuminated castle tower.



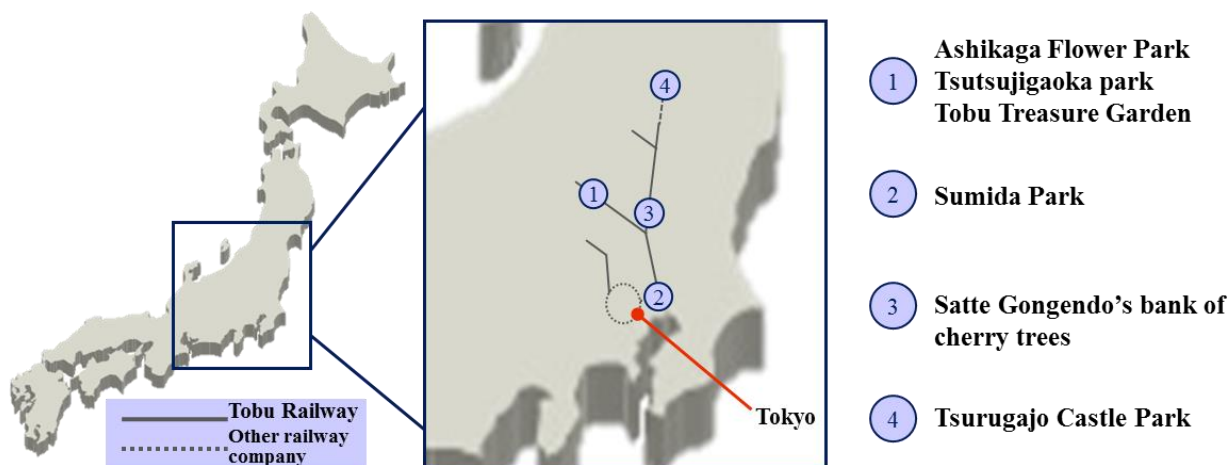
Venue name Tsurugajo Castle Park
 When flowers are in bloom Cherry blossoms: Mid- to late April 2017 (Illumination available between Friday, April 7 to Sunday, May 7 (tentative))
 Tsurugajo URL: <http://www.tsurugajo.com/language/eng/index.html>
 Open hours Free entry (Visitors can enter the castle tower from 8:30 to 16:30. Illuminations start from sunset till 21:30, but ends at 20:30 when the cherry blossoms are out of bloom)
 Entrance fee Free (Visitors will be charged with an extra ¥410 to enter the Tsurugajo castle tower)
 Location Tsurugajo Castle Park, Aizuwakamatsu-shi, Fukushima
 • Go to JR line's Aizuwakamatsu Station (approx. 4 hrs 10 mins from Asakusa Station, TOBU SKYTREE Line). Take the community loop bus Haikara-san, and get off at "Tsurugajo Iriguchi" (approx. 20 mins). It's approximately a five-minute walk from there.



*Tsurugajo Castle Park is at area (4) in the map on page 7.

[Recommended springtime spots in Japan, where cherry trees and wisteria come into full bloom]

Tobu Railway is a mainstay line, which covers the Kanto area extending around Tokyo. Along the line are many attractive tourist destinations popular all year round— TOKYO SKYTREE - the world's tallest tower, Nikko Toshogu shrine, a World Heritage site, and Kawagoe, a town offering a traditional *kura-zukuri* (earthen-wall buildings) streetscape, to name a few.



The three venues in (1) are closely located. You can tour around them in a single day.

Tobu Railway Group's latest information

Tobu Group's official SNS pages

Facebook

Asakusa, Tokyo Skytree Town, Nikko, Kawagoe &

Ikebukuro: Welcome to Tobu!

English:

<http://www.facebook.com/tobugroup.en>



Launch of Mynewsdesk

Tobu Railways has launched a newsroom dedicated to Tobu Group in its corporate news distribution platform Mynewsdesk. Here you can download Tobu Group's latest information and images used in press releases.

<https://www.mynewsdesk.com/tobu-railway>

TOBU FREE Wi-Fi

TOBU FREE Wi-Fi

Some Tobu Group venues, including key Tobu Railway stations, TOKYO SKYTREE TOWN, and Tobu World Square in the Nikko/Kinugawa area, offer free and public wireless LAN service for foreigners visiting Japan.

<http://www.tobu.co.jp/foreign/pdf/FreeWifi.pdf>



Lonely Planet's Nikko edition available

Lonely Planet, a guidebook compiling Nikko's tourist information, is available to the public.

<http://www.tobu.co.jp/foreign/en/news/20161212discover.html>