



An Urban Art Museum with a Garden of Beautiful Autumn Leaves



Water flowing from a well head in the garden of Nezu Museum, surrounded by colorful autumn leaves



Garden view from the entrance hall

Nezu Museum, located in Omotesando in central Tokyo, is an art museum that houses pre-modern art pieces from Japan and other parts of Asia, including National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties. The museum also features a vast Japanese garden and beautiful colored leaves in autumn.

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NEZU Museum, with its 17,000 square meter verdant Japanese garden, is located in a corner of the city in the Omotesando area of Minato City, Tokyo. Stepping into the garden, you feel as if you are deep in the mountains. There are four tea houses for authentic tea ceremonies in a garden that takes advantage of its terrain’s many variations in height, and which is shaped like a basin with a long, narrow pond at its center. Garden features such as a waterfall, bamboo grove and shrine (Kitano Tenjin enshrined at Hibaishi), collectively known as the Eight Views of the Nezu Museum, show off the elegance of the four seasons. The varied scenery and tranquility of the garden can lead visitors to forget that they are in the heart of Tokyo.

The garden is a famous spot within Tokyo for its autumn leaves, and there are many people who visit the museum in fall to appreciate the art exhibitions and to walk among the changing leaves in the garden.

A spokesperson for Nezu Museum says, “In autumn, the ginkgo trees start to change to yellow near the museum building and gradually the Japanese maples change to red usually from the second half of November until around the start of December. I recommend the view of the crimson Japanese maples located around the Hikinsai tea house.”

Nezu Museum opened in 1941 in the former residence of Nezu Kaichiro (1860-1940), an entrepreneur known as the “Railway King,” to exhibit the pre-modern art works he had collected. Originally a samurai residence, the garden was worked on by Nezu himself. The museum’s main building was renovated in 2009 by architect Kuma Kengo, who is known for such works as the Japan National Stadium.

When standing in the entrance hall, the Buddhist stone statues dating from the third to eighth centuries on display in front of the glass wall seem to meld into the garden beyond. This view symbolizes the museum, a fusion of art and garden views.

Nezu Museum houses over 7,400 pre-modern art works in a wide range of genres from Japan and other parts of Asia. The museum holds seven exhibitions each year, each with different themes. Suzuki Kiitsu’s (1796-1859) *Mountain Stream in Summer and Autumn*, a work owned by the museum and designated as an Important Cultural Property last year, will be featured in the special exhibition planned for November and December of this year. This painting on a folding screen features a pair of scenes of a mountain stream flowing among rocks and a cypress forest: a summer scene with blooming golden-rayed lilies and an autumn scene with the changing leaves of a cherry tree. The white lily flowers and red cherry leaves are realistically painted with fine brush strokes among the bold composition and vivid color scheme of green, azurite blue, and golden yellow.

Nezu Museum offers a chance to escape from the bustle of everyday life and experience the Japanese autumn through art and a garden—pleasures even to be found in the heart of Tokyo. 🍁



Important Cultural Property *Mountain Stream in Summer and Autumn* by Suzuki Kiitsu, 19th century, Nezu Museum