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Enjoy the Four Seasons at Showa Memorial Park!

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Whereas spring in Tokyo often gets the most attention for its iconic cherry blossoms, autumn enchants with colorful leaves at the end of the long, scorching summer. This magnificent sight of leaves in vibrant shades of orange, red, yellow, and brown has inspired Japanese poets and artists for centuries.



One of the best locations for appreciating the effervescent whisper of seasonal change is Showa Memorial Park, in Tachikawa City, just 30 minutes from central Tokyo by train.

Also known as Showa Kinen Park, it covers more than 160 hectares (395 acres)--so vast that exploring it on foot would take at least an entire day.

The leaves in the park tend to change color in early-November--a week or two earlier than trees in central Tokyo.

From the moment you enter, a variety of seasonal flowers, spacious lawns, lush greenery, fountains, and sports facilities will take your breath away.



The 200-meter stretch of ginkgo trees along the main canal is one of the most popular attractions.



The Japanese garden, with its many maple trees, is also a great place to engage in *momijigari* (red leaf hunting), the Japanese pastime of searching for the most striking shades of red leaves!



The park is also well known for its many kinds of seasonal flowers that bloom throughout the year, including *nanohana* (rapeseed), tulips, hydrangeas, sunflowers, cosmos, camellias, and, of course, *sakura* (cherry blossoms).

Showa Memorial Park--opened in 1983 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of Emperor Showa's reign--is majestically laid out with seemingly endless grounds to explore. Canals, fountains and other water features, as well as sculptures found in the gardens give the park a grand ambience reminiscent of European estates. Impressive features, such as a huge circular fountain crowned with intricate statues complete the sense of grandeur.



The park has numerous grassy lawns, including the vast 11-hectare (27-acre) recreational centerpiece Minna no Harappa (Open Field), where visitors can freely play sports, have a picnic, or relax under a tree.

There are also woodlands with walking trails, picturesque gardens, and the large Waterfowl Lake.



The five-hectare (12-acre) Waterfowl Lake is where visitors can rent row or pedal boats to enjoy the sight of the tree- and flower-lined banks from the water.



Visitors can also say "hello" to the friendly ducks by Waterfowl Lake!

Other recreational activities available at Showa Memorial Park include a barbecue area and adjoining sports facility, the Rainbow Pool waterpark (open July-September), and even a folk village with a traditional farmhouse.



A few cafés and food stalls are scattered around the park, so visitors can relax with something to eat or drink.

Dog owners will be happy to learn that the park is very dog friendly with a dog run amongst other facilities. You can enjoy a day of walking or jogging with your furry friends!



Enjoy sunset over Waterfowl Lake.

Located a short train ride from Tokyo, Showa Memorial Park is a great getaway from the crowded capital. While getting around the lush natural landscape on foot may involve walking many kilometers, rental bicycles or the park train provide convenient alternatives. The park is a multipurpose recreational playground full of charms that attract adults, children, and pets alike! No matter what time of year you visit, there are sure to be natural highlights!

Showa Memorial Park

Address: 3173 Midoricho, Tachikawa City, Tokyo 190-0014

Phone: 042-528-1751

Admission: ¥450

Hours:

9:30-17:00 (March-October)

9:30-18:00 (weekends and holidays, April-September)

9:30-16:30 (November-February)

* Closed December 31, January 1, and the fourth Monday of February as well as the day after (if Monday is a national holiday, the park will be closed the next working day and the day after).

Access: 15-minute walk from Tachikawa Station on the JR Chuo Line or a 2-minute walk from Nishi-Tachikawa Station on the JR Ome Line.

This article was written by Rachel Leng.

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