



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cheekwood's 12th Annual Japanese Moon Viewing Festival Returns Sept. 27

The celebration features Japanese music, tea ceremonies, taiko drumming, a kimono fashion show, mochi pounding and more

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Experience the beauty and traditions of Japan during Cheekwood Estate & Gardens' 12th annual **Japanese Moon Viewing Festival**, or *Otsukimi*, on Sunday, September 27, from 4–9 p.m. Held near the date of the Harvest Moon, the celebration invites guests to enjoy an evening of Japanese art, music, food, storytelling and cultural traditions throughout Cheekwood's gardens.

Held in partnership with the Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville and the Japan-America Society of Tennessee, the festival will feature tea ceremony demonstrations, taiko drumming, shamisen and shakuhachi performances, a kimono fashion show, mochi pounding, kamishibai storytelling, Ikebana and bonsai displays, Japanese-inspired art activities and tours of the Blevins Japanese Garden. Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell is expected to attend the 6 p.m. Welcome Ceremony and deliver remarks.

"The celebration of the Harvest Moon is a time of reflection and appreciation," said Shinji Watanabe, Consul-General of Japan in Nashville. "The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival at Cheekwood is an extraordinarily unique event in our region with Japanese cultural performances and demonstrations that are hard to find anywhere else. We hope everyone will enjoy the event."

Japanese Moon Viewing is the third of four multicultural festivals celebrated throughout the year at Cheekwood, highlighting the cultural traditions and communities that enrich Nashville.

Schedule of Events

Main Stage | Arboretum Lawn

- **5 p.m.** – Nashville Taiko and Shamisen Knoxville performances
- **5:30 p.m.** – Nashville Taiko performance
- **6 p.m.** – Welcome Ceremony and Haiku Contest winners
- **6:30 p.m.** – Kimono Fashion Show

- 7 p.m. – Tea Ceremony
- 7:30 p.m. – Shakuhachi Performance
- 8 p.m. – Tea Ceremony
- 8:30 p.m. – Closing Ceremony featuring a reading of the Japanese folktale "The Bamboo Cutter"

Tea Ceremony

7 p.m. and 8 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn

Guests can experience the centuries-old Japanese tea ceremony through demonstrations by a tea master, who will prepare and present green tea using traditional techniques.

Nashville Taiko

5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn

Tennessee's first taiko group will bring the power and precision of traditional Japanese drumming to the stage. Nashville Taiko combines Japanese tradition with modern innovation through dynamic music, movement and choreography.

Shamisen Knoxville

5 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn

Shamisen Knoxville will take guests on a musical journey through Japan with performances on the shamisen, a traditional three-stringed Japanese instrument. The group is made up of University of Tennessee-Knoxville students and community members who perform throughout the Southeast.

Choir SAKURA Performance

7:15 p.m. | Herb Garden

Choir SAKURA was founded in 2008 to perform traditional Japanese songs and educate children who live in middle Tennessee about the music. The group sings seasonal songs, and popular Japanese songs from movies and anime. The choir has attended international festivals and Japanese events throughout Tennessee.

Shakuhachi Performance

7:30 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn

New this year, Shaun Tairyu Head will perform on the shakuhachi, a traditional Japanese bamboo flute known for its rich, breathy sound. The performance will take place between the evening tea ceremonies.

Kimono Fashion Show

6:30 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn

Guests can learn about the history and artistry of the kimono while viewing a variety of traditional garments during a special fashion show celebrating the beauty, craftsmanship and cultural significance of Japanese dress.

Kamishibai

4:45 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. | Herb Garden

Experience kamishibai, a traditional Japanese form of storytelling that combines illustrated paper cards with live narration. Two performances will bring Japanese stories to life for festival guests.

Mochi Pounding

4:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. | Herb Garden

Watch the traditional process of making mochi, a Japanese rice cake created by steaming and pounding rice into a smooth paste before shaping it. Guests will have the opportunity to see the process firsthand and sample the finished treat.

Tours of Blevins Japanese Garden (Shōmu-en)

4:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

Throughout the festival, guests can explore Cheekwood's Blevins Japanese Garden through guided tours. Created by landscape designer David Harris Engel, the garden blends elements of Eastern garden design with the native Tennessee landscape. Known as *Shōmu-en*, or "pine-mist forest," the garden's history began in 1977, and it was transformed into its present design in 1990.

Haiku Contest

The public is invited to participate in Cheekwood's annual haiku contest. Entries must be received by **11:59 p.m. on September 13**, with winners announced during the 6 p.m. Welcome Ceremony. Entries can be submitted online: <https://cheekwood.org/calendar-events/japanese-moon-viewing/>

Ikebana Display and Demonstration

4 p.m. - 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard Classroom

Discover ikebana, the traditional Japanese art of flower arranging. Carefully selected flowers, branches and greenery are arranged to express beauty, emotion and a

connection to nature. The display will be available throughout the festival, with a live demonstration from **6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Nashville Bonsai Society Display
4 p.m. – 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Great Hall

The Nashville Bonsai Society will showcase a collection of meticulously cultivated bonsai trees, offering guests an opportunity to learn more about the artistry, patience and tradition behind this centuries-old practice.

Art Activities
4 p.m. – 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard

Guests of all ages can explore Japanese art and traditions through hands-on activities, including:

- **Japanese Calligraphy:** Learn about traditional Japanese calligraphy and create a phrase to take home.
- **Write Your Own Kanji:** Use brush and ink to create an imaginative symbol inspired by Japanese writing.
- **Japanese Luna Moth:** Create a pop-up luna moth inspired by the connection between the moon, nature and transformation.
- **Rabbit in the Moon Banner:** Create a banner inspired by the classic Japanese folktale.

Vendors
4 p.m. – 9 p.m. | Lot B

Enjoy Asian food and drinks from local food trucks and chefs as well as displays by local organizations including the Japan-America Society of Tennessee and Sister Cities Nashville.

Ticket Information

The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival is free for Cheekwood members. For not-yet members, tickets for adults cost \$23, and \$16 for youth (3-17). Children two and under are free. Tickets are on sale now and can be reserved at <https://cheekwood.org/calendar-events/japanese-moon-viewing/>

Japanese Moon Viewing is supported by Mitsui and HCA.

About Cheekwood Estate & Gardens

With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th to mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including Cheekwood in Bloom, Summertime at Cheekwood, Cheekwood Harvest and Holiday LIGHTS. Cheekwood is a 501c3 nonprofit charitable organization. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a four-time voted USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden, named the Most Beautiful Garden in Tennessee in 2025 by HGTV, in 2024 and 2025 received a Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award, and in 2021 was named by Fodors as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South. Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. It is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended days and hours of operation depending on the season. Visit cheekwood.org for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

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Images for Media

<https://show.pics.io/press-images/collection/663944ec34093454e5b4cc90>

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