



p: 847 877 0747 | e: yvonne.liu.wolf@gmail.com

Celebrating the Cherry Blossoms Festival

Japan has been a fascinating American tourist attraction for decades. Educator Yvonne Wolf lived and worked in Japan. She will give a brief overview of Japan's national flower and welcome Spring the Japanese way, through the cherry blossom festivals. Cherry Blossom season is from early March to early May.

- Why the cherry blossom?
 - When does this happen?
 - Where does this happen?
 - What does it represent?
 - What can you do to participate?
1. Cherry Blossoms came from a dynastic Chinese tradition
 - a. The blossom admiring tradition began during the Nara period (710-794 AD) where it was fashionable to assemble to admire blooming flowers, initially focusing on plum blossoms in winter, as was the Chinese tradition from Tang Dynasty.
 - b. Eventually, the shifting to cherry blossoms (sakura) became the central symbol of the practice; this tradition was primarily practiced by the Imperial Court.
 2. Cherry Blossoms are a timely flower
 - a. Its brevity is its essence
 - b. Spring equinox
 - c. Three days at full bloom
 3. Japan is its home location
 - a. The geography crossing several latitudes
 - b. Blooms at the cusp of Spring, temperature driven
 - c. Between March to April, before the equinox to end of April
 4. Represents Japanese identity
 - a. Its location
 - b. A poetic mix of emotions
 - c. Rebirth, renewal, ambivalence, mortals' ephemeral existence
 - d. Marketing and economic vitality
 - e. Cultural identity in its linguistic connections, over 70 cherry blossom related words
 - f. Beginning of the school year, and hence, the subject of academic assignments, ie., poems, history, arts and crafts
 - g. Cherry Blossoms, 20 fruitless species
 - h. A symbol of friendship and a gift to many countries, with a gift to the USA in 1912



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Two Japanese terms:

- Hanami= hana (flower) + mi (see or sight, as in sight-seeing)
- Sakura = cherry blossoms

5. How can you participate?

- See cherry blossoms in Washington DC March 20-April 13, 2025
- See cherry blossoms in Sturgeon Bay, WI, late April to early May

Disclaimer:

This workshop is intended as an introduction to a different cultural perspective of seeing Spring. This experience is designed to bring a cross-cultural view of the Spring season for your consideration. It is not a critique of other philosophies, religions, nor faiths.

About Yvonne:

Intercultural consultant and educator, Yvonne Wolf, delivers presentations that clarify the elements of Chinese culture in an accessible, relatable context. She has given talks at libraries, museums, and community centers. Yvonne's thoughtful consideration serves to enrich her entertaining presentations.


Yvonne generously shares the knowledge and skills she has gained from her experiences living in four different countries where she became fluent in three languages: Chinese (Mandarin), English, and Danish. She worked as a bilingual analyst in a Japanese global corporation in Denmark and served as a global language trainer in Japan. She is also well traveled in the USA and Canada. She has ten years' experience working as an organizational consultant in Los Angeles mediating cross-cultural misunderstandings. She continues her work in the Greater Chicago area.


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Yvonne Wolf
Intercultural Consultant

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