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## 5 blooming great flower festivals

*From the lavender routes of Provence to the peach blossoms of Shanghai, now's the perfect time to plan a floral excursion*

By **Hiufu Wong** 29 March, 2012

### 1. Keukenhof, Lisse, Holland



**When:** March 22-May 20.

*Tulips come in 100 varieties.*

### 2. Nanhui peach blossoms, Shanghai, China



**When:** Late March to late April for peach flower blossoms. Peach tasting in August.

*Good for both flower lovers and lovebirds.*

### 3. Takada Castle cherry blossoms, Jōetsu, Japan



When: April 6-22.

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*Viewing blossoms is not just a daytime activity.*

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Takada Park in Niigata prefecture offers a romantic option for nocturnal visitors. Cherry blossom viewing in Takada Castle is one of the three biggest night hanami events in Japan.

The [tourism website](#) shows you how to hanami like a Japanese.

Takada Park's 4,000 blooming cherry trees will be lit up by thousands of bombori lanterns (traditional small oval-shaped lanterns) along the "Sakura road."

"Because of cooler weather this year, cherry blooms will start a little bit later than usual," Kazuyuki Akiyama from International Tourism Office of Niigata Prefecture estimates. "I would say mid-to-late April will be the best time to see cherry blossom at Takada Castle."

Traditional Japanese food and local food specialties like yakitori and takoyaki will be sold from 300 outdoor stalls at the event during the festival.

Also, don't miss the firework on the final day.

*Takada Park. Opens daily until 10 p.m. (evening hanami starts after sunset). Free (within the park) and ¥200 (US\$2.4) for entering Takada Castle's turret; [enjoyniigata.com](#)*

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#### 4. Royal Botanic Gardens, London, England



When: Year round, but best in April.

*The physical encyclopedia of the plants kingdom.*

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#### 5. Lavender routes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France



When: June-September.

*Just follow your nose.*

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