



THE JAPAN-AMERICA
SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON DC

Presents



さくら祭り

SAKURA MATSURI
JAPANESE STREET FESTIVAL

Participant Information Packet

Saturday, April 11, 2026

10:30 AM – 6:00 PM

&

Sunday, April 12, 2026

10:30 AM – 4:00 PM Sunday

Rain or Shine!

Pennsylvania & Constitution Avenues
Between 3rd & 7th Streets NW, Washington, DC

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General Information

The Sakura Matsuri – Japanese Street Festival, produced by the Japan-America Society of Washington DC (JASWDC), is the largest celebration of Japanese culture in the United States.

- **Location:** The festival takes place along Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues NW, between 3rd and 7th Streets NW, in the heart of downtown Washington, DC. The site is adjacent to the Archives–Navy Memorial Metro station (Green & Yellow lines) and Judiciary Square Metro station (Red line).
- **Festival Format:** The Matsuri is a ticketed, fenced-in, outdoor event that takes place rain or shine. Children ages 10 and under receive free admission. Ticket prices are available on our website.
- **Attendance:** Attendance varies with weather conditions. In 2024 and 2025 despite a forecast for strong winds and/or rain, the festival welcomed approximately 40,000 attendees.
- **Participation:** All pricing and information in these guidelines reflect participation for both festival days. One-day participation requests may be considered on a case-by-case basis by emailing kmclain@linderglobal.com. Please note that preference is given to vendors and exhibitors who can participate both days.

Categories of Participation

- **Local Community Exhibitors:** Local groups and organizations showcasing their activities and community impact.
- **Commercial Vendors:** Sellers of Japanese or Japanese-style merchandise, featured in either the Ginza Marketplace or Japan Now areas.
- **Artisan Vendors:** Creators of handmade items inspired by Japanese design or culture.
- **Food Vendors:** Providers of freshly prepared Japanese and international foods, as well as select packaged goods. Preference is given to Japanese food vendors.
- **Special Cultural Exhibitors:** Nonprofits, academic institutions, and NGOs sharing their role in U.S.–Japan relations.
- **Performers & Martial Arts Demonstrators:** Artists and groups presenting Japanese music, dance, theater, martial arts, and cultural demonstrations.

Visitors to the Matsuri

- **Profile:** The typical Matsuri attendee is college-educated, employed, single, under 35 years old, and has an annual income between \$25,000 and \$75,000. Women outnumber men.

- **Diversity:** Only about 5% of attendees are Japanese or Japanese American, making the Matsuri a truly broad cultural showcase that attracts a wide cross-section of the public.
- **Geography:** Approximately 70% of attendees come from the Washington, D.C.–Maryland–Virginia (DMV) region, while 30% travel from outside the greater Washington, D.C. area.
- **Engagement:** In 2025, the average attendee spent more than three hours enjoying the festival, demonstrating a high level of interest and engagement with the event's programming, vendors, and activities.

Guidelines for Participants

All participants in the 2026 Sakura Matsuri must read and agree to follow both these General Guidelines and the Area-Specific Guidelines for the area that they are applying for. All applications to participate must be submitted online at sakuramatsuri.org.

General Guidelines

- **Cultural Representation:** All participants must showcase aspects of Japan and Japanese culture.
- **Appearance & Signage:** Exhibitors/vendors must create an attractive, Japanese-inspired appearance for their space.
 - This includes printed signs, posters, and decorations.
 - Handwritten signs are not permitted.
- **Tents, Tables & Chairs:**
 - Tents are provided for all exhibitors/vendors.
 - Tables and chairs are provided as outlined in the section-specific guidelines.
 - JASWDC is not responsible for overnight security or for the set-up and takedown of merchandise, displays, equipment, or supplies within your booth.
- **Placement & Scheduling:**
 - JASWDC will determine the location for each exhibitor/vendor.
 - JASWDC will assign stages and times for performers and martial arts demonstrations.
- **Nobori Banners:**
 - Each vendor/exhibitor will receive an individually numbered and color-coded Nobori banner, attached to one corner of your tent.
 - The color/number will be listed in the festival app and can be used to promote your exact location to attendees.
- **Compliance:**
 - All participants must comply with District of Columbia laws and regulations.
 - On festival days, participants must follow all instructions from the Matsuri Management Team and volunteers.
- **Sales Tax:**
 - Vendors selling goods must file and pay sales tax to the Washington, DC government.
 - JASWDC will submit vendor information to DC and provide guidance, but vendors are responsible for submitting their own sales tax payments.
- **Program Listings:**
 - All exhibitors, vendors, and performers will be listed in the electronic program and on the festival website, based on information provided in the contract.
- **Application & Contract Process:**
 - Step 1: Submit application.
 - Step 2: If accepted, you will receive a contract and invoice requesting additional required details (e.g., tax ID, proof of insurance, payment).

- **Insurance Requirements:**
 - All vendors and exhibitors must carry general liability and product/completed operations insurance with coverage of at least \$1 million per occurrence.
 - The following must be listed as an additional insured:
Japan-America Society of Washington, DC
1819 L Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
 - Your Certificate of Insurance (COI) must be submitted along with your contract and payment.
 - Alternatively, you may purchase a rider on JASWDC's event insurance for \$130 (available as part of your contract).
- **Pricing Tiers:**
 - Early Bird Pricing: Applications submitted on or before December 1, 2025.
 - Regular Pricing: Applications submitted after December 1, 2025.
- **Refundable Deposit:**
 - All vendors and exhibitors (except Local Community Exhibitors) have a \$200 deposit included in their fee.
 - This deposit will be refunded after the Matsuri if you:
 - Do not sell items after the Matsuri closes each day
 - Follow all subcommittee instructions
 - Properly dispose of trash from your tent area
- **Refund Policy:**
 - **Acts of God/Unforeseen Circumstances:** The Matsuri is held outdoors on private, leased, and public land. JASWDC and vendors share the risk of weather, acts of war/terrorism, government decisions, and other force majeure events. Neither party is obligated to compensate the other if such events cancel or amend participation.
 - **Late Cancellation:** If you cancel less than three weeks before the Matsuri for reasons not covered above, JASWDC is not obligated to refund any payment.
- **Generator Policy:**
 - Vendors may bring their own generators.
 - Generators under 1,100 watts do not require a permit.
 - Generators requiring a permit must be registered with the DC government and JASWDC notified at least 30 days before the Matsuri.
 - Only diesel generators are allowed, and refueling during the event is strictly prohibited.
 - If the DC government requests vendor-supplied generators be shut down or removed, JASWDC is not responsible for any halt in operations.

Overall Timeline

Pre-Event Timeline

- January 31, 2026 – Exhibitor, Vendor, and Performer Application Deadline
 - All applications must be submitted by this date and the application period will close.
- January 2026 – Acceptances & Contracts
 - Acceptances and contracts for exhibitors, vendors, and performers are issued on a rolling basis during this period.
- February 16, 2026 – Contract & Payment Deadline
 - All contracts must be signed and invoices paid in full by this date. If your signed contract and payment are not received by February 16, and you have not contacted the Sakura Matsuri team with questions or concerns, your contract will be discarded and your space forfeited.
- February – March 2026 – Volunteer Subcommittee Connections
 - Participants are connected with their volunteer subcommittee, who will:
 - Serve as your primary contact leading up to the festival
 - Assist with any questions or needs
 - Act as your area's on-site coordinator during the event
- April 1, 2026 – Pass Distribution
 - Participant passes and on-site vehicle access passes will be issued.

On-Site Timeline

- Saturday, April 11
 - 6:00 a.m. Exhibitors/Vendors may enter the Matsuri grounds to begin set-up.
 - 9:00 a.m. All vehicles must be removed from the Matsuri grounds.
 - 10:00 a.m. Tent setup must be completed.
 - 10:30 a.m. The Matsuri opens to attendees.
 - 6:00 p.m. The Matsuri closes and all sales must conclude.
 - 6:30 p.m. Exhibitor/Vendor vehicles allowed onto Matsuri grounds once permission is given by DC Metro Police Department.
 - 8:00 p.m. All Exhibitors/Vendors must leave Matsuri grounds.
- Sunday, April 12
 - 7:00 a.m. Exhibitors/Vendors may enter the Matsuri grounds to begin set-up.
 - 9:00 a.m. All vehicles must be removed from the Matsuri grounds.
 - 10:00 a.m. Tent setup must be completed.
 - 10:30 a.m. The Matsuri opens to attendees.
 - 4:00 p.m. The Matsuri closes and all sales must conclude.
 - 4:30 p.m. Exhibitor/Vendor vehicles allowed onto Matsuri grounds once permission is given by DC Metro Police Department.
 - 7:00 p.m. All Exhibitors/Vendors must leave the Matsuri grounds.

Important Notes

- Tents will remain in place overnight from Saturday into Sunday.
- Vendors should bring material to wrap or drape their tent before leaving on Saturday evening.
- JASWDC will have hired professional security personnel and members of the festival subcommittee on-site overnight Saturday. All gates and entrances will be closed and locked overnight.
- All vending MUST stop at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Violation of this rule could result in not being able to participate in future Matsuris and a forfeit of any security deposit.

Local Community Exhibitor Guidelines & Pricing

- **Purpose:** The Local Community Exhibitor area is dedicated to the edification and education of Matsuri attendees.
- **Eligibility:** Local cultural organizations, charities, and community event organizers are invited to apply.
- **Sales & Donations:** Local Community Exhibitors are not permitted to sell items or collect donations at their booth (Donation collection is specifically prohibited by the District of Columbia government). You may direct attendees to your organization's website for sales or donations via flyers or QR codes. If you wish to sell artwork, crafts, or other goods onsite, please submit an Artisan or Commercial Vendor application instead.
- **Participation Requirements:** An exhibitor representative must be present for the entire event to demonstrate and/or explain your exhibit. We encourage you to provide an interactive activity or hands-on component related to your group or event to attract and engage visitors to your tent.
 - To offset the costs of participation, Local Community Exhibitors will receive up to the value of your participation payment worth of Sakura Matsuri entry tickets for you to sell within your community at a fixed price equal to the lowest cost of any sale tickets. You will receive an individualized discount code to distribute, and after the Matsuri, your organization will be credited the income from those tickets against your participation payment.
 - Example: if you Early Bird register, you will receive an individualized discount code for 30 Matsuri tickets at the fixed price of \$10 each. If 15 tickets are purchased using your code, \$150 will be credited back to you.

Early Bird Price (valid before or on Dec 1, 2025):	\$330
Regular Price (valid after Dec 1, 2025):	\$415
Equipment Included:	(1) 10'x10' Tent with backwall (2) 8' tables (2) chairs
Additional Equipment Available: • Tent sidewalls • 6' table • 8' table • Folding Chair • Electricity	Cost Per Additional Item: • \$30 each / up to 3 • \$18 each • \$18 each • \$8 each • \$475 for a 20amp circuit

Commercial Vendor Guidelines & Pricing

- **Product Requirements:** Products must be Japanese or Japanese-style. (Items do not need to be “Made in Japan.”)
- **Commercial Vendors** will be divided into two areas at the Matsuri based on merchandise type:
 - Ginza Marketplace – Traditional Japanese products and items
 - Japan Now – Modern and youthful Japanese products
- **Placement Decisions:** JASWDC will make the final determination regarding which area your tent will be located.
- **Content Standards:** All items sold must be family-friendly. JASWDC reserves the right to determine whether items meet this standard.
- **Food & Beverage:** You may not sell Japanese food, snacks, or beverages without advance written permission from JASWDC.
- **Legal Compliance:** JASWDC generally prohibits the sale of “fanart,” defined as artwork created by fans or other persons who do not hold the official license for a particular character, anime, or series.
 - Under DC law, it is illegal to sell or display counterfeit or pirated merchandise.
 - Vendors found displaying such items will be asked to remove them.
 - Continued sale of prohibited items may result in revocation of your contract and removal from the festival.

Early Bird Price (valid before or on Dec 1, 2025):	\$2,420
Regular Price (valid after Dec 1, 2025):	\$2,640
Equipment Included:	(1) 10'x10' Tent with backwall (2) 8' tables (2) chairs
Additional Equipment Available: • Tent sidewalls • 6' table • 8' table • Folding Chair • Electricity	Cost Per Additional Item: • \$30 each / up to 3 • \$18 each • \$18 each • \$8 each • \$475 for a 20amp circuit

Artisan Vendor Guidelines & Pricing

- **Sales & Educational Component:** Artisan Vendors must sell goods that they have personally created. You should also be prepared to:
 - Discuss and educate attendees about your craft and the skills involved
 - Share the cultural background of your work
 - Display examples of pieces you have produced
- **Application Type:** If you do not plan to sell your art, please submit a Local Community Exhibitor application instead.
- **Permitted Sales:** You may sell only your own work or items that are necessary to enjoy them (e.g., a doll case for a hand-made doll, or a frame for a painting you created).
- **Prohibited Items:** JASWDC generally prohibits the sale of “fanart,” defined as artwork created by fans or other persons who do not hold the official license for a particular character, anime, or series.
 - If it appears that you are selling products made by others, Matsuri Management and volunteers may require you to stop selling those items and remove them from your tent.
 - Vendors who continue to sell ineligible items may be reclassified as Commercial Vendors for future events, which is subject to a higher fee.

Early Bird Price (valid before or on Dec 1, 2025):	\$1,320
Regular Price (valid after Dec 1, 2025):	\$1,485
Equipment Included:	(1) 10'x10' Tent with backwall (2) 8' tables (2) chairs
Additional Equipment Available: • Tent sidewalls • 6' table • 8' table • Folding Chair • Electricity	Cost Per Additional Item: • \$30 each / up to 3 • \$18 each • \$18 each • \$8 each • \$475 for a 20amp circuit

Food Vendor Guidelines & Pricing

- **Booth Location & Priority:**
 - JASWDC will determine the location for each food vendor's booth.
 - Priority placement is given to vendors offering Japanese food.
- **Beverage Sales:**
 - Vendors may not sell bottled beverages that are sold by JASWDC, except for bottled water.
 - JASWDC will provide a list of beverages we are selling by March 1, 2026. Please ask your subcommittee for this information if you need it prior to finalizing your menu.
- **Permits & Fire Marshal Inspection:**
 - Vendors cooking with propane or open-flame grills are required to have a permit.
 - JASWDC will collect all necessary information and apply for permits on behalf of each vendor.
 - Permits will be distributed on Saturday after your booth passes inspection by the DC Fire Marshal.
- **Compliance with DC Regulations:**
 - All vendors must comply with District of Columbia regulations, including those covering:
 - Approved food service ware
 - Permitted menu items
 - Sanitation requirements
- **Menu Categories & Pricing:**
 - Food vendors will be classified into one of three categories for pricing purposes:
 - Japanese Menu
 - East Asian Menu – Chinese, Korean, or Southeast Asian cuisine
 - Western Menu

Early Bird Price: (valid before or on Dec 1, 2025)			Regular Price: (valid after Dec 1, 2025)		
Japanese Food	10x10 \$1,575	10x20 \$2,750	Japanese Food	10x10 \$1,785	10x20 \$2,915
Asian Food	10x10 \$1,785	10x20 \$3,105	Asian Food	10x10 \$1,950	10x20 \$3,300
Western Food	10x10 \$1,925	10x20 \$3,465	Western Food	10x10 \$2,145	10x20 \$3,630
Equipment Included:			(1) 10'x10' Tent with backwall (2) 8' tables (2) chairs		
Additional Equipment Available:			Cost Per Additional Item:		
• Tent sidewalls • 6' table • 8' table • Folding Chair • Electricity			• \$30 each / up to 3 • \$18 each • \$18 each • \$8 each • \$475 for a 20amp circuit		
Permits:			Cost Per Permit:		
• Propane • Open Flame (Grill)			• \$120 • \$170		

Special Cultural Exhibitor Guidelines & Pricing

- **Purpose:** Special Cultural Exhibitors help fulfill the festival's mission of educating and inspiring attendees about Japanese culture, society, and U.S.-Japan relations.
- **Eligibility:** Non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and NGOs that wish to educate attendees about their role in U.S.-Japan relations are encouraged to apply.
- **Expectations for Special Cultural Exhibitors:** Special Cultural Exhibitors should:
 - Use their exhibit to demonstrate and highlight aspects of Japanese society, culture, technology, art, and/or U.S.-Japan collaboration.
 - Inform JASWDC in advance of all proposed exhibit activities so they can confirm alignment with Guidelines for Participants.
 - Certify that any subcontractual or partnership arrangements comply with these guidelines and ensure that any involved entity has signed and submitted this agreement to JASWDC by January 31, 2026.
- **Prohibited Activities:** Special Cultural Exhibitors may not:
 - Collect revenue or compensation (including through sales, fundraising, or subcontractual arrangements) without explicit written approval from JASWDC.
 - Display logos of for-profit entities (on banners, handouts, table displays, etc.) without prior JASWDC approval.
 - Distribute commercial products or corporate literature without explicit permission.
 - Promote their organization outside of their assigned tent area. Any onsite promotion must remain secondary to the cultural exhibit itself.
- **Permitted Activities:** Special Cultural Exhibitors may promote their organization inside their tent if it supports and does not distract from the cultural or educational focus of the exhibit.

Early Bird Price (valid before or on Dec 1, 2025):	\$1,210
Regular Price (valid after Dec 1, 2025):	\$1,400
Equipment Included:	(1) 10'x10' Tent with backwall (2) 8' tables (2) chairs
Additional Equipment Available: • Tent sidewalls • 6' table • 8' table • Folding Chair • Electricity	Cost Per Additional Item: • \$30 each / up to 3 • \$18 each • \$18 each • \$8 each • \$475 for a 20amp circuit

Performing & Martial Arts Guidelines

- **Performance Focus**
 - The Matsuri schedules over 50 hours of live performances across four stages that highlight Japanese culture and traditions.
 - All performances must reflect this cultural focus and be family-friendly.
- **Compensation & Scheduling**
 - The Matsuri does not pay performance or transportation fees.
 - JASWDC will determine the stage(s) on which artists perform and will make the final decision on all schedules.
 - JASWDC will make every effort to accommodate performance time requests, but scheduling decisions are final.
- **Promotion & Merchandise**
 - Performers are invited to display information about their group and performance.
 - With advance permission, you may sell your group's merchandise at the "Meet the Artist" tent before or after your performance. Please indicate your interest to do so in your application and contract.
 - JASWDC staff and volunteers will not assist with setup, breakdown, sales, or distribution of materials and are not responsible for lost items or money.
 - Performers are responsible for paying their own DC Sales Tax for any sales made.
- **Waivers & Stage Access**
 - All performers and martial artists are required to sign a waiver of liability (sample provided for review) before performing.
 - Anyone on stage as part of the performance must sign the waiver.
 - Performers should notify the Performing Arts Subcommittee of any additional staff (photographers, managers, etc.) who will be on stage – these individuals must also sign a waiver.
- **Children's Performing Groups**
 - JASWDC provides 1 chaperone pass per 5 children.
 - Additional chaperones or parents must purchase festival tickets through the official website.
- **Applications & Deadlines**
 - Applications are due by January 31, 2026. There is no charge to apply.
 - Performance times may not be available for applications submitted after this date.
 - You will be notified of acceptance on a rolling basis, but no later than February 28, 2026.
- **Technical Requirements**
 - Accepted performers will receive a tech sheet approximately 4 weeks before the Matsuri to specify:
 - Stage setup preferences
 - Special equipment needs
 - Performance set list

- Completed tech sheets must be returned promptly. Stage dimensions will be included on the tech sheet.
- **Performance Duration**
 - Applicants may select a preferred performance duration in the application.
 - Duration must include setup and breakdown time (usually 5 minutes each).
 - If large equipment will require more set-up time, describe this in your application.
- **Special Notice for First-Time Applicants**
 - First-time applicants must include photo or video of prior performances in their application for review.

SAMPLE WAIVER FOR REVIEW

Letter of Consent (Waiver Form)

I, the undersigned, acknowledge and agree to the following:

1. **Event Conditions:** I understand that the Sakura Matsuri – Japanese Street Festival takes place outdoors and is subject to weather and other conditions.
2. **Performance Stage:** I understand that I will be performing on a temporary stage.
3. **Right to Inspect:** I understand that I have the right to inspect the stage and surrounding area prior to performing. If I believe there is a safety issue, I may refuse to perform.
4. **Assumption of Risk:** Should anything happen to me, my equipment, and/or my musical instruments, I agree that I will not sue or bring any legal action against The Japan-America Society of Washington, Inc., its officers, directors, employees, volunteers, or any affiliates.
5. **Release of Liability:** I hereby release, discharge, indemnify, and hold harmless The Japan-America Society of Washington, Inc., its officers, directors, employees, volunteers, and affiliates from any and all liability, loss, cost, claim, or damage whatsoever arising from my participation (in any form or manner) in the Sakura Matsuri – Japanese Street Festival.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understood, and voluntarily agree to the terms of this waiver and release.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____