

EVENTS/CAUSES

Luxury hotels celebrate local traditions with Cherry Blossom Festival

March 27, 2015



Cherry Blossoms in Washington, photographed by Ritz-Carlton

By NANCY BUCKLEY

The annual Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington celebrates a gift from Japan to the United States more than 100 years ago and serves as the unofficial start of spring in the region.

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The Japanese and springtime ties provide an opportunity for luxury hotels to celebrate with special events and packages. Local festivals offer the perfect excuse for hotels to reflect positively upon their neighborhoods and connect with both locals and visitors.

“The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C.’s cherry blossom-themed events embody D.C.’s annual National Cherry Blossom Festival by offering exclusive, one-of-a-kind experiences that celebrate the history and beauty of one of the most exciting times in the nation’s capital,” said George Munz, general manager at [The Ritz-Carlton, Washington D.C.](#)

Spring is here

Fairmont Washington, Georgetown began its Cherry Blossom Package on March 1 and it will continue through May 31. The overnight accommodations include parking and a box of note cards featuring the trees throughout Washington.

Guests are also offered a discount for Segway tours through the city and inside the hotel. The courtyard features many trees, plants and flowers from the region.

Four Seasons Hotel Washington is offering guests a Cherry Blossom Champagne Body Treatment at its spa. This treatment exfoliates the body prior to a soak in the spa's tub and application of Champagne and salt scrub followed by a body wrap and body butter.



Cherry Blossom inspired cocktail at Ritz-Carlton

The hotel's restaurant will offer Japanese-inspired items such as Cherry Blossom-themed French toast made with smashed chocolate croissants served with Nutella and black cherry compote.

Jido cocktail is inspired from the Japanese word meaning vending machine and blends

gin with a homemade popular Japanese vending machine drink, Calpis.



Cherry Blossom treats at Mandarin Oriental

The Ritz-Carlton, Washington incorporates two springtime events into one with a social video that offers tips to having a Cherry Blossom-themed wedding. The director of catering at the hotel speaks about the little things that can incorporate the trees into a wedding reception.

“Full of symbolism and beauty, Washington, D.C.’s National Cherry Blossom Festival inspires some of the most treasured memories,” Mr. Munz said. “The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C.’s wedding video showcases how to bring this experience to life in a truly unique way by offering curated tips from one of our seasoned wedding experts.”

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/SP-5rtGG3xk>

Ritz-Carlton video

Also, the hotel has been building anticipation through Facebook, Pinterest and other social mediums.

Mandarin Oriental, Washington is offering a Cherry Blossom Getaway. Guests will receive a Cherry Blossom pastry as a welcome with a collectable pin and information about the trees in the area. Also, guests will have access to the hotel’s spa’s daily Cherry Blossom Yoga.

The Cherry Blossom Festival runs from March 20 until April 12.

Local beat

Participating in nearby festivals offer a unique chance for hotel brands to connect with locals and provide neighborhood flavor to a guest’s experience.

For instance, Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach hosted the Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival Dec. 11-14 to get local foodies inside its property.

The Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival was in its eighth year, and included tastings, panel

discussions, cooking demonstrations and competitions at the resort, as well as other activities at select other venues around the city. By being a main hub for this festival, Four Seasons was able to showcase its dining spaces to the local crowd ([see story](#)).

Similarly, the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada, teamed with the neighboring tourism office for an annual event at the 21st Ice Magic Festival.

Each year Canada's Banff National Park in Alberta hosts an international ice carving competition that brought competitors from all around the world to Lake Louise to battle for the best structure. Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise is located in the heart of the competition and likely saw a spike in accommodation requests during January as it welcomed repeat visitors, local neighbors and intrigued tourists ([see story](#)).

Local events are an easy and engaging option for hotels.

“At The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C., there is a significant amount of dedication and care that goes into making memories for the discerning world traveler,” Mr. Munz said.

“This is something we kept in mind when creating our cherry blossom events and offerings,” he said. “From our custom Sakura scent inspired by the cherry blossoms, to our exclusive Sakura tea, cocktails and desserts, we look forward to bringing D.C.’s iconic National Cherry Blossom Festival to life through various unique and personalized experiences.”

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/hsxT3Pq1JLY>

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