

Shotoen Museums and Gardens

Ceramics Museum

◆ **Exhibition Title:** The Birth of Imari Ware

Event Period: April 9th, 2025 to June 23th.

◆ **Exhibition Overview**

About 400 years ago, the first domestically produced porcelain was born in the area around Arita Town in Saga Prefecture, and it has been called Imari Ware ever since. Porcelain had been brought to Japan from China and Korea as "white porcelain" since ancient times, but it was not produced domestically and imported porcelains were highly valued. In the 1500s, "white pottery" called Shino ware was born, but this was pottery with a white glaze, and it did not reach the porcelain that people longed for.

◆ **Highlights**

Imari ware has fascinated not only Japan but the world. We explore the appeal of Japan's first domestically produced porcelain, which was arrived at as a result of the pursuit of white pottery. Please take a look at the various white pottery pieces and compare them. Also, please take a look at the colorful decorations that decorate the white surface.

◆ **Recommended works**



Ewer with Underglaze Cobalt-blue Design of Flower Vase and Arabesque Pattern

Imari ware ・ 1660-80s

Although this water pitcher is painted entirely in blue with a transparent white porcelain, it features intricate arabesque patterns and delicate depictions.

This piece is thought to have been made to order by the Ottoman Empire. It appears that it originally came with a

water basin.

Following Islamic customs, Ottoman people served food on large plates or bowls, and it was customary for people to serve themselves directly with their fingers or spoons, which led to a demand for water pitchers for washing and purifying the food.

At the time this piece was made, the vast Ottoman Empire stretched between Europe and Asia. This country was also in need of porcelain, and like Western countries, imports of porcelain from China came to a halt due to civil war in China, so it imported porcelain from Japan. This masterpiece offers a glimpse into foreign trade 350 years ago.

◆Introduction about Imari ware

Imari ware is a type of porcelain that originated around 400 years ago in the area of present-day Arita-cho, Saga Prefecture, and is still being produced today. It was also exported to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, attracting much royalty and aristocracy.

Even today, Imari ware continues to have many fans.

◆Others

Imari Porcelain: Japan's First Porcelain

Imari ware was born in the 1610s as Japan's first porcelain. This exhibition introduces the history leading up to the creation of Imari porcelain and the admiration for white ceramics in Japan. We'll also explore how Chinese and Korean porcelain, along with Shino ware, influenced its development.