Tea Ceremony
Japanese tea ceremony, or *chanoyu*, came about when Japan adopted both Chinese practices of drinking powdered green tea and Zen Buddhist beliefs.

The traditional Japanese tea ceremony became more than just drinking tea; it is a spiritual experience that embodies harmony, respect, purity and tranquility.
Steps of a formal tea ceremony

Before a Japanese tea ceremony begins, guests may stay in a waiting room (machiai in Japanese) until the host is ready for them. The guests will walk across roji, Japanese for dewy ground, symbolically ridding themselves of the dust of the world in preparation for the ceremony. Then, the guests will wash their hands and mouths from water in a stone basin (tsukubai in Japanese) as a last purifying step.

The host receives the guests through a small door or gate which is short, forcing the guests to bow upon entry. The host greets each guest with a silent bow. For an informal gathering, or chakai, guests are served Wagashi (sweets) and then the tea. Alternatively, a full three course meal is first served for a formal Japanese tea ceremony, known as chaji. This type of ceremony, complete with sake and intermission before the tea is served, can take up to four hours.
The Japanese tea ceremony steps begin with cleaning and preparation of the tea serving utensils.

- The host cleans the tea bowl, tea scoop, and tea whisk with concentrated and graceful movements.

- Next, the host prepares the tea by adding three scoops of matcha green tea powder per guest to the tea bowl.

- Hot water is ladled into the bowl and whisked into a thin paste. More water is added as needed to create a soup-like tea.

- The host presents the prepared tea bowl to one of the guests and they exchange bows.

- This first guest admires the bowl then rotates it before taking a drink.

- The guest wipes the rim of the tea bowl then offers it to the next guest who repeats these movements.
After all the guests have taken a drink of tea, the bowl is rinsed clean by the host.

The host will also rinse and clean the tea whisk and scoop again.

The guests now have an opportunity to inspect the utensils used during the ceremony.

They carefully and respectfully examine the utensils, perhaps even using a cloth when delicately handling them.

The host gathers the utensils and the guests exit with a bow completing the ceremony.