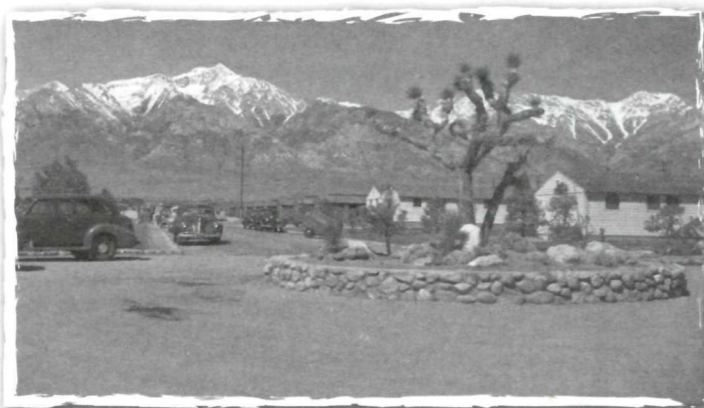




Administration Area Gardens

1/4 mile - 15 minutes

Many of Manzanar's War Relocation Authority staff lived with their families—400 people—within the barbed wire security fence. The administration area had expansive grass lawns and rock-lined pathways that were painted white, demonstrating the contrast between Western military style and the Japanese natural aesthetic. There were fenced yards, lath-shaded patios, and abundant trees and flowers. This landscaping was mostly built and maintained by incarcerated. In addition to the lawns, there was a rock and cactus garden below the entrance sign and a circular rock garden with Joshua trees at the traffic circle.



Administration Traffic Circle

The "Essential Trio" Route

1/2 mile - 30 minutes

The earliest and most common gardens were small and personal, decorating the exterior of living spaces. This can be seen with the Arai Fish Pond in Block 33. The elaborate Japanese garden at Merritt Park (on the cover), named for the camp director, Ralph P. Merritt, was developed by the community for the community. Gardens were also constructed east of some mess halls, including Block 34, to provide pleasant surroundings for people waiting in line for meals three times a day.



Block 34 Mess Hall Garden



Arai Fish Pond at Block 33

The "Express" Garden Route

3/4 mile - 45 minutes

The physical changes the incarcerated made in their environment were important ways of taking control of their lives. The gardens at Manzanar, which symbolize normalcy and beauty, highlight the distinctions between the reality of incarceration and the desire to create a "home." Make your way to these gardens near the visitor center to see the incarcerated's legacy of creating beauty in their bleak surroundings.



Block 15 Garden, near barracks 7



Block 9 Mess Hall Garden

The "Comprehensive" Garden Route

2 1/2 miles - 2 hours

This walk offers an in-depth exploration of several key gardens. It includes gardens in blocks 15, 22, 33 as well as Merritt Park. Along the way, see the site of the Children's Village, the only orphanage among the ten war relocation centers. Visit the hospital to see an exquisite rock garden with walkways and pool. Continue to Block 12 to see one of the most well-preserved gardens at Manzanar. On the way back to the visitor center, you'll see the Block 9 garden and the site of the Judo Dojo.



Block 12 Mess Hall Garden



The hospital garden

Japanese Garden Tour Guide

Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar left a lasting legacy here by creating more than 100 gardens. The gardens varied in size from a few square feet to five acres, and in design from simple rock outlines to elaborate landscapes. After Manzanar closed in 1945, many of the gardens disappeared as debris from demolished barracks, sand, and vegetation obscured traces of the more than 11,000 persons once confined here. Recent archeological excavations have uncovered gardens built by people for their barracks, block mess halls, and the larger community.



Merritt Park

Ansel Adams, 1943

Most of the excavated gardens have been stabilized rather than restored. Former incarcerated have repeatedly stressed the importance of the gardens they, their parents, and their grandparents built to improve their stark surroundings. Choose from one of the walking routes to explore the gardens of Manzanar; lasting symbols of beauty and the resilience of the human spirit.



A home movie still of Merritt Park, 1944



- Main driving route
- Boundary road
- Historic road grid
- Building no longer present or present as foundation
- Building and/or exhibit

- Information
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Outdoor exhibit
- Japanese garden
- Wheelchair-accessible

Garden Tour Guide

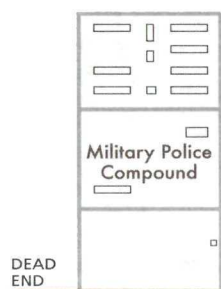
- Comprehensive Garden Route
2 1/2 miles - 2 hours
- "The Essential Trio" Garden Route
3/4 mile - 45 minutes
- The Express Garden Route
1/2 mile - 30 minutes
- Administration Circle Route
1/4 mile - 15 minutes

Walking routes mostly follow abandoned roads, watch your step!

Elevation 3900 ft.

- Carry water.
- Wear sturdy walking shoes, a hat, and sunscreen.
- Know your limits!

Please do not collect or disturb anything.



"Six months ago Manzanar was a barren, uninhabited desert. Today, green lawns, picturesque gardens with miniature mountains, stone lanterns, bridges over ponds where carp play, and other original decorative ideas that attest to the Japanese people's traditional love of nature and ingenuity in reproducing beauty in miniature."

- "Best Garden Contest" Manzanar Free Press, Fall 1942

