





## ***ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE WOOD FIRING WORKSHOP!***

***Bizen, Japan. April 20th to May 2nd, 2025***

### **Discover the Art of Wood-Fired Kilns in Bizen: A Hands-On Workshop**

Step into the heart of traditional Japan, and immerse yourself in the beautiful world of Bizen pottery. This unique workshop invites you to experience the deep-rooted heritage of this town's pottery while learning about the fascinating techniques behind wood firing—a method that has been passed down from generation to generation for centuries.

#### **What You'll Experience:**

- **Hands-On Kiln Firing:** Learn the intricate process of preparing and firing a wood kiln. You'll help stack the kiln, understand wood selection, and experience the mesmerizing stages of firing.
- **Traditional Bizen Techniques:** Discover the classic methods that give Bizen pottery its distinct character—unadorned, raw beauty, achieved through natural ash glazing.
- **Guidance from Local Masters:** Work alongside Master Taiga Mori, third-generation ceramic artist from Bizen, as well as other seasoned Bizen potters who will guide you through the art of clay preparation, shaping, kiln preparation (packing, stacking, etc) and firing. You'll gain insights from local potters deeply rooted in this very unique technique.
- **Community and Connection:** Join fellow pottery enthusiasts in this intimate setting. Together, you'll share knowledge, stories, and a passion for the age-old tradition of pottery.

#### **Who This Workshop Is For:**

The number of participants is limited to 12 people. This workshop is perfect for potters and ceramic enthusiasts of all levels who want to deepen their understanding of wood-firing techniques and the Bizen style. Whether you are a beginner or have experience in pottery, you'll leave with a richer appreciation of this time-honored craft.

#### **Why Bizen?**

Bizen is one of Japan's oldest pottery towns, renowned for its unglazed, earthy ceramics that are fired over long durations in traditional kilns. There's something truly magical

about creating pottery in a place where history and innovation come together, surrounded by a community of potters keeping this craft alive.

**IMPORTANT:** Please keep in mind that firing a kiln is a team effort and can be quite labor-intensive and physically demanding throughout the entire process—before, during, and after. It's all about coming together as a community to make it happen!

We will work around the clock in up to 6-hour shifts to feed the kiln and other related work - please keep it in mind as you approach this unique but challenging experience.

Good communication and teamwork go a long way in keeping things running smoothly and tackling any challenges with ease.

### **Your Artwork or Pottery**

**You can bring up to 2 shoe boxes of your work to be fired!** Make sure your pieces are made from high-fire stoneware clay and/or porcelain. For this firing (a high-fire glaze firing), stoneware with a high iron content isn't ideal. If you are coming to the wheel-throwing course you don't need to bring any pieces as we will be making them there! There will be an opportunity for those who only come to the wood firing course to make some small pieces the first 2 days. Remember, smaller or delicate pieces might be at risk of cracking, warping, or tipping over, so if possible, try to bring a mix of sizes for flexibility during the stacking process.

### **Wild Clay work**

We are likely to have access to local masters who work with wild clay, and might be able to make a few pieces with it - ***To Be Confirmed nearer the date as the process of harvesting wild clay is very weather-dependent.***

### **Other Things to Bring**

#### **Warm, Natural Fiber Clothing**

Make sure to pack warm clothes made strictly from natural fibers—synthetic fabrics can be dangerous around the fire, as they're highly flammable. Comfortable shoes are also a must for those long hours of work.

### Safety Gear

If you'd like, bring a dust mask with a respirator for the cleaning phase after the firing. Eye protection, such as dark glasses or welding goggles, can also come in handy.

### Personal Tools & Extras

Feel free to bring your favorite apron and any special tools you enjoy working with. A notebook or sketchbook, along with things for writing or drawing, can be great for capturing ideas and notes during the process.

## Meals and Dietary Needs

Please let us know if you have any dietary needs or restrictions—we're happy to accommodate where possible!

Lunch will be provided daily, featuring simple yet delicious Japanese-style meals. We'll be enjoying our lunches together as a group, which is always a great time to connect and share.

For dinner (not included), there are a few local options in town, as well as a supermarket just a few blocks from the workshop where you can pick up food. Keep in mind that Bizen is a small town, so choices are limited—but rest assured, they're tasty!

## Accommodation during the Workshop:

The workshop does not include accommodation, but we're collaborating with local hotels to secure discounts for our participants. If you're interested in sharing a room to help keep costs down, let us know, and we'll do our best to match **you** with someone and accommodate your budget.

Selected accommodation options in Bizen:

<https://bizenhotel.jp/rooms/>

1 minute walk from the workshop (Western style hotel)

<http://www6.plala.or.jp/tobihotel/>

15-minute walk (3 star hotel)

<https://tokiwa-ryokan.jimdosite.com/>

3-minute walk (Japanese-style inn)

## Workshop Costs and Details

### Cost of the Workshop

- 4000€ (10% Special discount if you book it before Feb 1st!)

### Included:

- Wood fired materials and clay for small pieces (if desired)
- Welcome dinner, all lunches and daily snacks
- Travel chaperone to the optional activities

### Not Included:

- Accommodation (see options provided)
- Flights to and from Japan
- Transfers to and from Bizen (nearest train station is Inbe)
- Alcohol and other spirits during lunches

### Payment Details:

- A **non-refundable** deposit of **500€** is required to secure your spot.
- The final balance must be paid by March 15th.
- If the workshop is canceled, you will receive a **100% refund**.

## How to Get to Bizen, Japan

Bizen is located in Okayama Prefecture and can be easily reached by plane, train, car, or bus. The nearest major airports are Kansai International Airport (Osaka), Okayama Airport, and Tokyo airports (Haneda or Narita).

### By Plane

The region is served by three main airports:

- Kansai International Airport (KIX): A major hub with international flights from cities worldwide. From here, you can take the Shinkansen (bullet train) to Okayama Station (approximately 2 hours).
- Okayama Airport (OKJ): A smaller regional airport with domestic flights and limited international connections. From Okayama Airport, you can reach Okayama City by bus or taxi and continue to Bizen.
- Tokyo (Haneda or Narita Airports): Both airports offer domestic flights to Okayama Airport (approximately 1.5 hours). Alternatively, you can take the Shinkansen from Tokyo Station to Okayama Station (approximately 3.5–4 hours).

### By Train

- From Tokyo: Take the Shinkansen (bullet train) from Tokyo Station to Okayama Station. The journey takes approximately 3.5–4 hours.
- From Osaka: Take the Shinkansen from Shin-Osaka Station to Okayama Station (approximately 45 minutes).

From Okayama Station, transfer to the JR Ako Line and take a local train to Imbe Station (approximately 30 minutes). Imbe Station is the closest station to Bizen and the heart of the pottery district.

### By Bus or Car

- Long-distance buses are available from major cities to Okayama. From there, you can take a local bus or taxi to Bizen.
- By car, Bizen is accessible via the Sanyo Expressway, making it a convenient drive from cities like Okayama, Kobe, or Osaka.

## About the teachers and program coordinators



Taiga Mori is a third-generation ceramic artist from Bizen, Japan, blending centuries-old pottery traditions with modern innovations. As a community leader, Taiga-san promotes collaboration and openness, redefining the future of Bizen ceramics through international exchanges and creative partnerships. @taiga\_mori



Magali Kivatinetz is a London-based ceramic artist whose work draws inspiration from Japanese philosophies like Mingei and kintsugi. She collaborates with restaurants and individuals to create functional and aesthetically balanced pieces, embracing the beauty of natural materials and the transformative power of wood firing. @mkpotterystudio

**Additional local potters involved in teaching different aspects of wood firing and wild clay work will soon be confirmed**

Any questions you can reach me via IG at @mkpotterystudio or [mkpotterystudio@gmail.com](mailto:mkpotterystudio@gmail.com)



Sunday 20 April 0	Monday 21 April 1	Tuesday 22 April 2	Wednesday 23 April 3	Thursday 24 April 4	Friday 25 April 5	Saturday 26 April 6	Sunday 27 April 7	Monday 28 April 8	Tuesday 29 April 9	Wednesday 30 April 10	Thursday 1 April 11	Friday 2 April 12
Arrival and Welcome	Planning of the course and preparation	Loading the kiln and firewood preparation	Loading and schedule planning	Finishing and starting the fire	Firing the kiln	Firing the kiln	Firing the kiln	Firing the kiln	Cooling down	Cooling down	Unloading and cleanup	Farewell
10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM
Arrive in Bizen and settle in.	Planning, holders preparation, loadning options, different effects	Moritoshiaki - kun's studio visit  Delivery of the wood	Loading the kiln	Finishing loading the kiln	Firing the Kiln (bisque firing)  Taking care of the kiln  Stoking (shifts)	Firing the Kiln (bisque firing)  Taking care of the kiln  Stoking (shifts)	Firing the Kiln  Add charcoal from the side, wood from the side, and ash from the front	Firing the Kiln  Learn about reduction and oxidation phases	Field Trip to Kurashiki (all day activity)	Free day!  Rest up	Unload the kiln and see the results of your work	Final cleanup
1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch	1 pm Lunch
2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm	2:30 pm - 6pm
Unpack and possibly create some small pieces.	Prepare wadding, shells with clay, ash boxes, saggar boxes, coasters, and rice straws,  Learn about ash management	Organize the kiln site by moving and arranging the wood  Learn more about placement in the kiln and how different positions affect the final outcome	Loading the kiln and schedule Planning  Discuss the firing plan and establish shifts for the firing process	Close the kiln and start the fire.  Taking care of the kiln  Stoking	Close the kiln and start the fire.  Taking care of the kiln  Stoking	Close the kiln and start the fire.  Taking care of the kiln  Stoking	Firing the Kiln  Add charcoal from the side, wood from the side, and ash from the front	Closing of the kiln	Field Trip to Kurashiki (all day activity)	Free day!  Rest up	Group Critique and Reflection  Begin cleaning up the kiln site.	Goodbyes
				Optional 2:30 pm - 6 pm  (shifts)	Optional 2:30 pm - 6 pm  Visiting Bizen Ceramic Art Center	Optional 2:30 pm - 6 pm  Visiting Bizen Ware Art Museum	Optional 2:30 pm - 6 pm  Field trip: Okayama city	Optional 2:30 pm - 6 pm  Field trip: Pottery shop				
Alternative 6 pm - 8:30 pm  Enjoy a welcome dinner to get to know your fellow participants	Alternative 6 pm - 8:30 pm  Create some small pieces in the studio	Alternative 6 pm - 8:30 pm  Create some small pieces in the studio									Alternative 6 pm - 8:30 pm  Packing pieces to take home or send by mail	