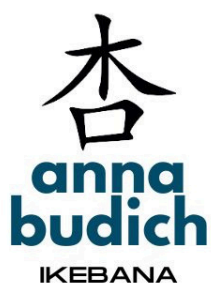


# Introduction to **IKEBANA** The Japanese Art of Flower Arrangement



## A Beginner's Guide



[www.wandersandflowers.de](http://www.wandersandflowers.de)

# 01 INTRODUCTION

## What is Ikebana?

Ikebana, also referred to as “kado” or the way of the flower, is regarded in Japan as a disciplined art form rooted in the belief that an arrangement is a living entity — one that brings nature and humanity into balance. This philosophy fosters a deeper sense of closeness with the natural world.

Far from simply placing flowers in a vase, Ikebana follows established styles that carefully consider color combinations, natural forms, distinctive lines, and the symbolic meaning each element contributes to the overall composition.

What sets Ikebana apart from other floral traditions is its intentional use of negative space as an active part of the design. Equal importance is placed on achieving harmony between the materials, the container, and the surrounding environment.

*Ikebana is rooted in Buddhist principles and the Japanese aesthetic of wabi-sabi — finding beauty in imperfection, impermanence, and simplicity. An arrangement is never "finished"; it reflects the season, the day, and the arranger's state of mind.*

# 02 SOGETSU SCHOOL OF IKEBANA

*"Ikebana can be created by anyone, at any time, in any place, using any material."  
— Sofu Teshigahara.*

Founded in 1927 by Sofu Teshigahara, Sogetsu is one of Ikebana’s most progressive schools. It takes a modern, creative approach — welcoming anyone, anywhere, using any material, from flowers to metal, glass, driftwood, or everyday objects.

Unlike traditional schools, Sogetsu treats Ikebana as a contemporary art form driven by personal expression, making it a natural fit for modern interiors and aesthetics.

## Basic Styles of Arrangement

There are two basic styles of Ikebana following the Sogetsu curriculum:

Moribana - materials are placed in a shallow container with wide opening and are supported by kenzan or needle-point holder.

Nageire - materials are arranged in a tall cylindrical or urn-shaped vase without a kenzan.



## The Three Main Stems

In Ikebana, the measurement and placement of the main stems are carefully observed to establish balance and harmony between the materials and the container.

Using the container as reference, the three main stems — Shin, Soe, and Hikae — are measured as follows:

Regular Container:

- Shin — (diameter + height) × 1.5
- Soe —  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Shin
- Hikae —  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Soe

Large Container:

- Shin — (diameter + height) × 2
- Soe —  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Shin
- Hikae —  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Soe

In addition to the three main stems, Jushi or subordinate stems are added to provide depth and complete the arrangement. These may vary in length and number, but should always complement the main stems without overpowering them.

*The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak. — Hans Hofmann*

You do not need much to begin. A single kenzan, a pair of good scissors, and any container you already own is enough for your first ten arrangements.

## Plant Materials

- Fresh: flowers, leaves, stems, fruits, or vegetables
- Dry: dried leaves, flowers, bleached stems, paper

## Tools

- Hasami – scissors or any cutting tool (knife, cutter)
- Kenzan – needle point holder to secure plants; floral foam works as a substitute (soak 20–30 mins before use)

## Containers

Any vessel that holds water — ceramic, glass, metal, plastic, or repurposed items like bowls, bottles, or jars. The container is part of your design, so choose it thoughtfully.

## Extras

Stapler, thin wire, double-sided tape, and barbecue sticks for binding or supporting stems.

As you advance, feel free to experiment with other materials to make your arrangements unique.

## **Ready to arrange?**

**This guide gives you the foundation. The next step is placing your first stem in a kenzan – and that changes everything.**

Book an online workshop with Anna Budich.  
Small groups. Beginners welcome. All materials guided step by step.

**[www.wandersandflowers.de](http://www.wandersandflowers.de)**

**Visit the website to see details of the classes and  
how you can book your place.**