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TOKYO

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ePocket **GUIDES**

Lonely Planet **ePocket Guides** are designed to get you to the heart of a destination, with all the must-see sights and tips to make your visit really memorable. We've split the city into easy-to-navigate neighborhoods and provided offline maps to help you get around easily. Our authors have searched out the best walks, food, nightlife and shopping, and our Local Life features will help you experience the real city. This guide is your guarantee of a great travel experience.

In This Guide

QuickStart

Everything you need to understand the city quickly: tips, itineraries, top sights and the essential neighborhood map

Explore

In each area of the city we'll help you to discover the top sights and the best ways to experience local life

The Best Of

The city's highlights in handy lists, to make sure that you get the most out of your precious time in the city

Survival Guide

We help you to get around like a local and give you the information you need for a hassle-free trip

The key to the perfect trip

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Links to the best business and travel websites bring all the info you need into one place.

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Map links to reviews mean you can find info quickly.



Zoom-in maps make it easy to navigate in a new place.



Offline maps mean no data-roaming charges.

To get the most out of the maps in this guide, use the zoom function on your device, or visit <http://media.lonelyplanet.com/ebookmaps> to grab a PDF of the maps.

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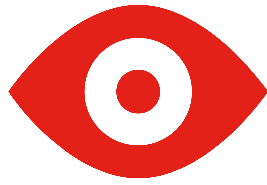
[Our Writers](#)

Welcome to Tokyo

Tokyo is a city forever reaching into the future, resulting in sci-fi streetscapes of crackling neon and soaring towers. Yet it is also a city steeped in history, where you can find traces of the shogun's capital on the kabuki stage or under the cherry blossoms. It's a tapestry of sensorial madness unlike anywhere else in the world.



Kabukichō | SEAN PAVONE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Tokyo Top Sights

Tsukiji Outer Market

An early morning trip to this warren of stalls is a classic Tokyo experience.



F11PHOTO / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tokyo Top Sights

Meiji-jingū

Tokyo's most famous Shintō shrine is a peaceful haven that feels worlds away from the city.



COWARDLION / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Sumo at Ryōgoku Kokugikan

Catch a tournament or morning practice session of Japan's ancient, traditional sport at the national stadium in Ryōgoku.



J. HENNING BUCHHOLZ / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Sensō-ji

This temple's alluring, lively atmosphere is redolent of Edo (old Tokyo under the shogun).



B. TANAKA / GETTY IMAGES ©

Tokyo Top Sights

Ghibli Museum

The magical world of master animator Miyazaki Hayao.



COLOBUSYETI / GETTY IMAGES ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Tokyo National Museum

The world's largest collection of Japanese art and antiquities.



GREG ELMS / GETTY IMAGES ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Mt Fuji

Japan's national symbol is a perfect, snow-capped cone.



AEYPIX / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Imperial Palace

Stroll along the ancient moat and climb an old castle keep in the garden.



GOLAIZOLA / GETTY IMAGES ©

Tokyo Top Sights

Kabuki-za

For a traditional kabuki performance, featuring dramatic make-up and decadent costumes.



MIXA / GETTY IMAGES ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Roppongi Hills

No ordinary mall but a utopian microcity with a world-class art museum.



JENNY JONES / GETTY IMAGES ©

Tokyo **Top Sights**

Ōedo Onsen Monogatari

A combination of public bathhouse and theme park – oh-so-Japanese.



MARK BASSETT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO ©



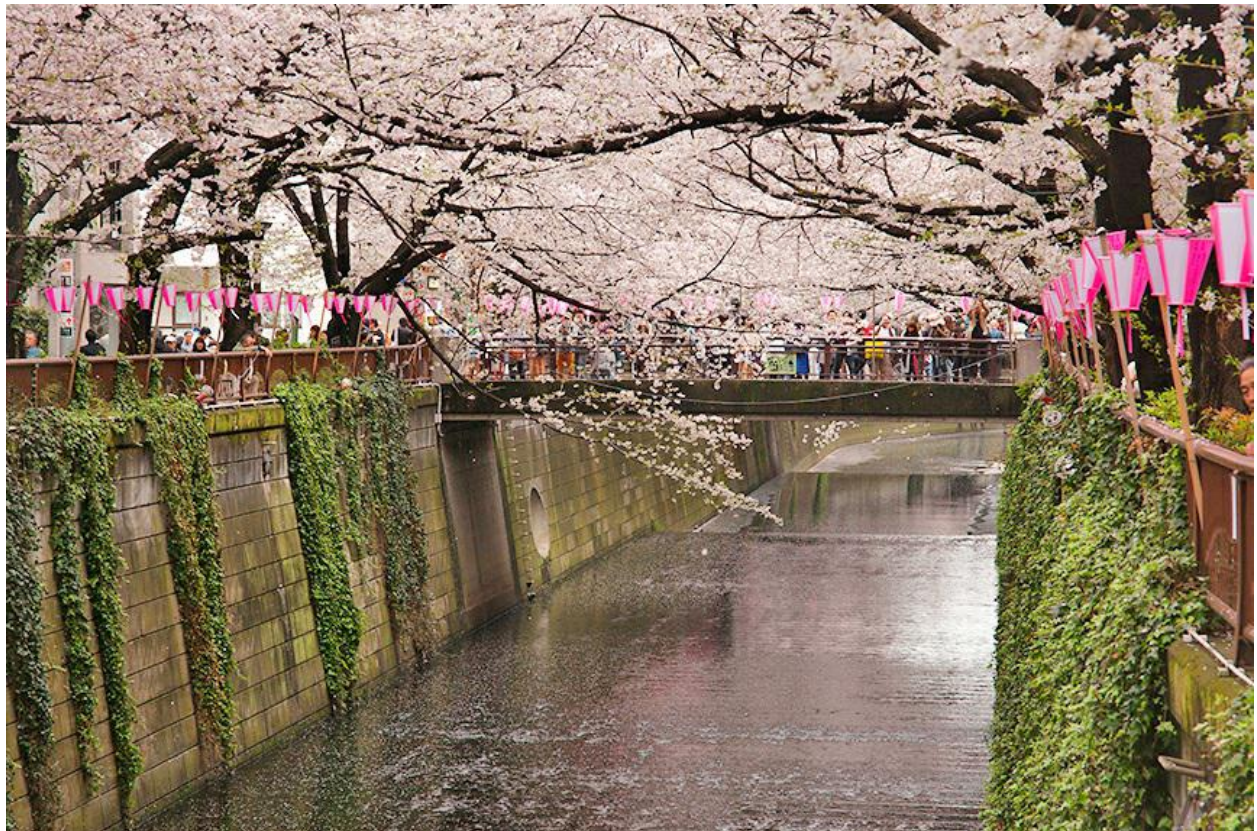
Tokyo Local Life

Insider tips to help you find the real Tokyo

Get beyond the big-ticket sights and see Tokyo from a local's point of view. Explore the city's artsy enclaves, fascinating subcultures, eccentric hangouts and sublime nightlife.

Exploring Daikanyama & Naka-Meguro

- ☑ Fashionable boutiques
- ☑ Canalside strolls



CHIMOL / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

A Night Out in Shimo-Kitazawa

- ☑ Eccentric bars
- ☑ Bohemian vibe



WORLD DISCOVERY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO ©

Shinjuku After Dark

- ☑ Colourful nightlife
- ☑ Late-night eats



VASSAMON ANANSUKKASEM / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

An Afternoon in Akihabara

- Pop culture
- Retro cool



TOMML / GETTY IMAGES ©

A Ramble through Historic Yanaka

- Art galleries
- Winding lanes



PHILLIP MAGUIRE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Other great places to experience the city like a local:

[Weekend markets in Harajuku](#)

[Ebisu-yokochō](#)

[Ginza promenades](#)

[Hoppy-dōri](#)

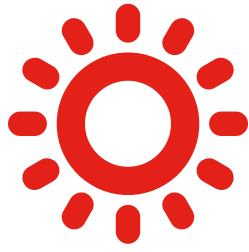
[Purikura no Mecca](#)

[Nishi Azabu](#)

[Book Town Jimbōchō](#)

[Manpuku Shokudō](#)

[Yebisu Garden Place](#)



Tokyo Day Planner

Short on time?

We've arranged Tokyo's must-sees into these day-by-day itineraries to make sure you see the very best of the city in the time you have available.

Day One



Start with a visit to [Meiji-jingū](#), Tokyo's signature Shintō shrine. Then walk down [Omote-sandō](#) to check out the jaw-dropping contemporary architecture along this stylish boulevard. Work (and shop) your way back through the side streets of [Ura-Hara](#), and then up [Takeshita-dōri](#), the famous teen fashion bazaar. Stop for dumplings at local fave [Harajuku Gyōza-rō](#).



Head down to Shibuya (you can walk) and continue your schooling in Tokyo pop culture by wandering the lanes of this youthful neighbourhood. Don't miss [Shibuya Center-gai](#), the main drag, and the mural, [Myth of Tomorrow](#), in the train station. Stick around Shibuya until dusk to see [Shibuya Crossing](#) all lit up.



Take the train to Shinjuku and immerse yourself in the swarming crowds and neon lights of this awesome nightlife district. The [Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building](#) observatories

stay open until 11pm for free night views. Have dinner at classic *izakaya* [Donjaca](#) or go for *yakitori* in retro [Omoide-yokochō](#). From around 9pm the shanty bars of [Golden Gai](#) come to life.

Day Two



Skip breakfast and head to [Tsukiji Outer Market](#), where you can cobble together a morning meal from the food vendors here. There are also stalls selling kitchen tools, tea and more. From Tsukiji it's an easy walk to the landscape garden [Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien](#), where you can stop for tea in [Nakajima no Ochaya](#) teahouse.



Walk (or take a taxi) to [Ginza](#), home to department stores, art galleries and luxury boutiques. Go for broke at Ginza sushi counter [Kyūbey](#); reservations are a must. Continue walking as far as Hibiya, to see the edge of the [Imperial Palace](#), with its moats and keeps. Then hop on the subway and ride back to [Kabuki-za](#) in Higashi-Ginza, to see a kabuki act (check the schedule online beforehand).



After dark, walk up [Namiki-dōri](#), home to high-end hostess bars, and pretty, tree-lined [Naka-dōri](#) to Marunouchi. In nearby Yūrakuchō, you can stop for sake, beer and small plates of food under the elevated train tracks at Manpuku Shokudō.

Day Three



Spend the morning exploring the many attractions of [Ueno-kōen](#), home to the [Tokyo National Museum](#), centuries-old temples and shrines, and Tokyo's biggest zoo. Then take a stroll through the old-fashioned, open-air market, [Ameya-yokochō](#).



Have lunch at historic Hantai and then meander through the neighbourhood of [Yanaka](#) where you'll find art galleries and studios. By the late afternoon, catch the subway for Asakusa to visit the temple complex [Sensō-ji](#) and the maze of old-world alleys that surround these sights. There are lots of shops selling traditional crafts and foodstuffs around here, too (though most close at 6pm). Don't miss the temple complex all lit up at dusk.



For dinner fill up on steaming *oden* (stew) at 100-year-old [Otafuku](#) or splurge on premium beef at [Asakusa Imahan](#). Asakusa has some fun, unconventional nightlife, from the historic beer hall [Kamiya Bar](#) to the folk music pub [Oiwake](#).

Day Four



Take the train west to the magical [Ghibli Museum](#) (reservations required; we recommend getting in early at 10am). Afterwards walk through woodsy park [Inokashira-kōen](#) to Kichijōji. There are cafes and restaurants here if you need a pick me up. Or spend the morning relaxing in the pools at [Ōedo Onsen Monogatari](#).



Spend your last afternoon exploring one of the neighbourhoods loved by locals. For example, you could head to pop culture centre [Akihabara](#), with its theme cafes and retro arcades. Alternatively go for a low-key stroll through boutique-laden [Daikanyama and Naka-Meguro](#).



In the evening head for Roppongi to check out [Roppongi Hills](#), the first of Tokyo's new breed of live-work-and-play megamalls. On the top floor of a tower here is the excellent Mori Art Museum, which stays open until 10pm. Then head out into the wilds of Roppongi's infamous nightlife. Make sure to get in a round of karaoke. Popular ramen shop [Gogyō](#) is open all night.

Need to Know

Currency

Japanese yen (¥)

Language

Japanese

Visas

Citizens of 61 countries, including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, UK, USA and almost all European nations do not require visas to enter Japan for stays of 90 days or fewer.

Money

Post offices and some convenience stores have international ATMs. Credit cards are accepted at major establishments, though it's best to have cash on hand.

Mobile Phones

Local SIM cards cannot be used in overseas phones and only 3G phones will work in Japan; rental phones are available.

Time

Japan Standard Time (GMT plus nine hours)

Plugs & Adaptors

Plugs have two flat pins; electrical current is 100V. North American appliances will work; others will require an adaptor.

Tipping

Tipping is not common practice in Japan, though top-end restaurants will add a 10% service charge to your bill.

1 Before You Go

Your Daily Budget

Budget: less than ¥8000

- ➔ Dorm bed: ¥3000
- ➔ Free sights
- ➔ Bowl of noodles: ¥750
- ➔ 24-hour subway pass: ¥600

Midrange: ¥8000–20,000

- ➔ Double room at a business hotel: ¥14,000
- ➔ Museum entry: ¥1000
- ➔ Dinner for two at an *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eatery): ¥6000

Top End: more than ¥20,000

- ➔ Double room in a four-star hotel: ¥35,000
- ➔ Sushi-tasting menu: ¥15,000
- ➔ Taxi ride back to the hotel: ¥3000

Useful Websites

Go Tokyo (www.gotokyo.org) The city's official website includes information on sights, events and suggested itineraries.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com/tokyo) Destination information, hotel bookings, traveller forum and more.

Time Out Tokyo (www.timeout.jp) Arts and entertainment listings.

Tokyo Cheapo (<https://tokyocheapo.com>) Hints on how to do Tokyo on the cheap.

Advance Planning

Three months before Purchase tickets for the Ghibli Museum; book a table at your top splurge restaurant.

One month before Book any tickets for sumo, kabuki and Giants games online, and a spot on the Imperial Palace tour; scan web listings for festivals, events and exhibitions.

2 Arriving in Tokyo

Narita Airport is 66km east of Tokyo; the more convenient Haneda Airport is on the city's southern edge. However, some flights to Haneda arrive in the middle of the night when a taxi (budget around ¥6000) is your only option.



From Narita Airport

Destination	Best Transport
Marunouchi (Tokyo Station), Shinjuku, Shibuya	Narita Express
Ginza, Roppongi, Ebisu	Keisei Skyliner to Ueno, then subway (Hibiya line)
Ueno	Keisei Skyliner
Asakusa	Keisei Skyliner to Ueno, then subway (Ginza line)



From Haneda Airport

Destination	Best Transport
Marunouchi (Tokyo Station), Ueno	Tokyo Monorail to Hamamatsuchō, then JR Yamanote line
Ebisu, Shibuya, Shinjuku	Keikyū line to Shinagawa, then JR Yamanote line

Roppongi	Tokyo Monorail to Hamamatsuchō, then subway (Ōedo line from Daimon Station)
Ginza, Asakusa	Keikyū line to Sengakuji, then subway (Asakusa line)



From Tokyo Train Station

Tokyo Station, the *shinkansen* (bullet train) terminus, is serviced by the JR Yamanote line and the Marunouchi subway line. There are taxi ranks in front of both the Marunouchi Central and Yaesu Central exits.

3 Getting Around

Tokyo's public transport system – a tourist attraction in its own right – is excellent. It's a good idea to get a prepaid Suica or Pasma pass (they're interchangeable). These work on all trains and subways and mean you won't have to worry about purchasing paper tickets.



Train

The rail network, which includes 13 subway lines (run by either Tokyo Metro or Toei) and Japan Rail (JR) lines, will take you pretty much anywhere you need to go. It's the quickest and easiest way to get around, though it doesn't run between midnight and 5am. With a Suica or Pasma pass you can transfer seamlessly between lines. All train stations have English-language signage and the lines are conveniently colour coded. The most useful line is the JR Yamanote line, an elevated loop line that runs through many key sightseeing areas.



Taxis only make economic sense if you've got a group of four; additionally, taxi drivers rarely speak English and know only major destinations. Still, they're your only option after midnight.

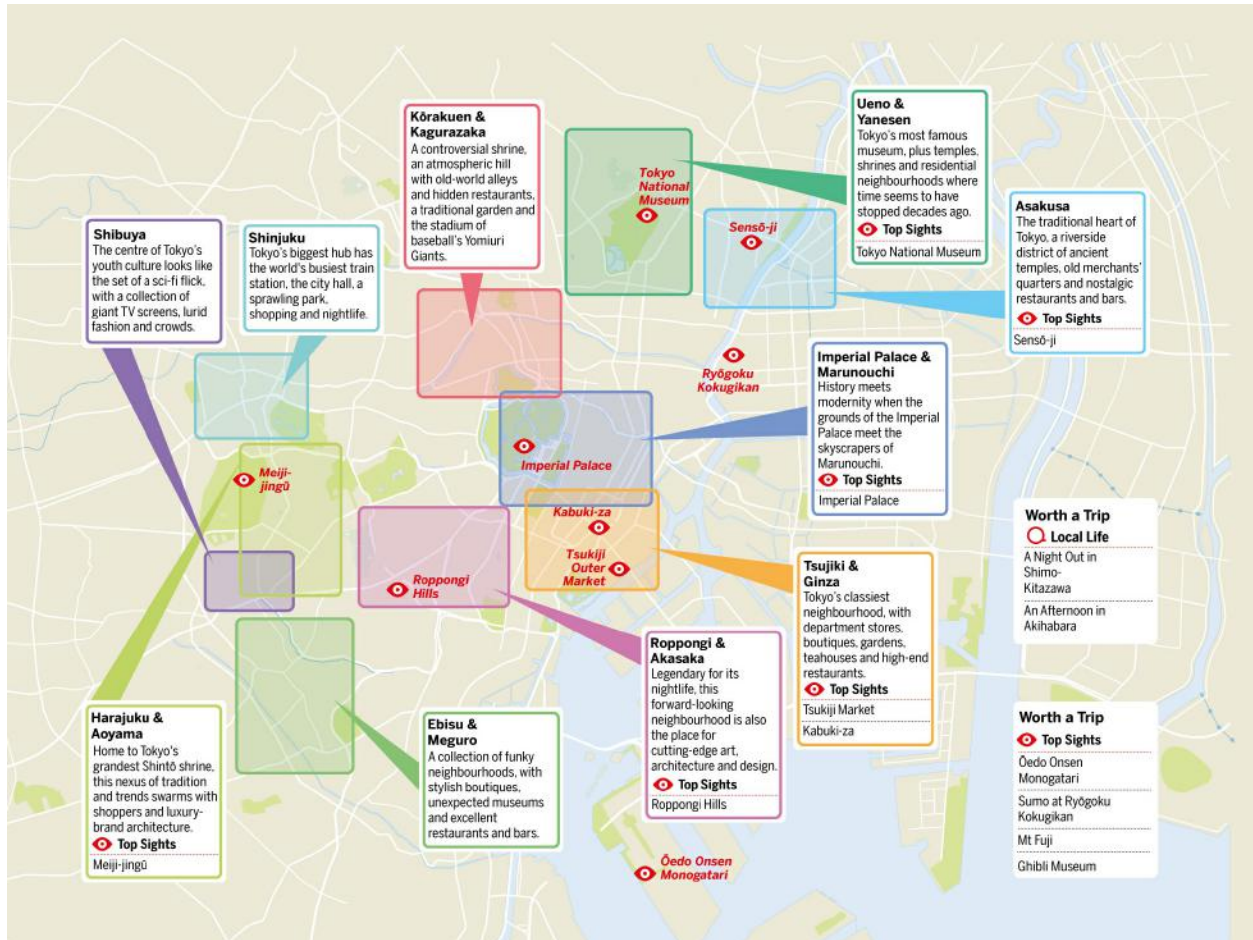


Bicycles are good for getting around quieter neighbourhoods where traffic is thinner; some guesthouses have bicycles to lend.



Tourist boats run up and down the Sumida-gawa; they're not cheap or efficient, but the views are lovely.

Tokyo Neighbourhoods



[Imperial Palace & Marunouchi](#)

[Tsukiji & Ginza](#)

[Sumo at Ryōgoku Kokugikan](#)

[Roppongi & Akasaka](#)

[Ebisu & Meguro](#)

 [Shibuya](#)

 [A Night Out in Shimo-Kitazawa](#)

 [Harajuku & Aoyama](#)

 [Shinjuku](#)

 [Ghibli Museum](#)

 [Kōrakuen & Kagurazaka](#)

 [An Afternoon in Akihabara](#)

 [Ueno & Yanesen](#)

 [Asakusa](#)

 [Ōedo Onsen Monogatari](#)

 [Mt Fuji](#)

Imperial Palace & Marunouchi



WIBOWO RUSLI / GETTY IMAGES ©

The Imperial Palace is Tokyo's geographic centre, a sprawling green space that includes the now public park, Kitanomaru-kōen, home to museums. Nearby Marunouchi is a high-powered business district; it's Tokyo's establishment at its finest, with glossy skyscrapers and monumental architecture, but also restaurants, bars and shops for the office workers who hold it all together.

The Sights in a Day



Take the train to [Tokyo Station](#) to see the recently restored 100-year-old building, then head to the [Imperial Palace](#). A tour of the grounds begins at 10am (you'll need to book ahead), otherwise, you can just stroll along the moat. No reservations are necessary for the excellent [Imperial Palace East Garden](#).



Grab a light lunch at [Rose Bakery](#) or head to the architecturally impressive [Tokyo International Forum](#) where food trucks happen to congregate at lunch time (on weekdays only). In the afternoon check out some of the excellent museums in the area: the [Intermediatheque](#), the [National Museum of Modern Art](#) or the [Crafts Gallery](#) – the last two are in lovely Kitanomaru-kōen. There are also two top-class shopping malls nearby: [Kitte](#) and [Coredo Muromachi](#).



Nihombashi, a historic neighbourhood with shops and restaurants that date to the era of the shogun, is where you want to head for dinner. [Hōnen Manpuku](#), which serves classic Japanese, is an easy choice. Alternatively, head to the smokey *yakitori* (grilled chicken skewer) [stalls in Yūrakuchō](#) for a truly local experience.



Top Sights

[Imperial Palace](#)



Best of Tokyo

Museums & Galleries

[Intermediatheque](#)

[National Museum of Modern Art \(MOMAT\)](#)

Architecture & Design

[Tokyo International Forum](#)

[Mitsukoshi](#)


Parks & Gardens


[Imperial Palace East Garden](#)

Shopping

[Coredo Muromachi](#)

Getting There

 **Train** The Yamanote and other JR lines, including the Narita Express and *shinkansen* (bullet train) services, stop at Tokyo Station. Yūrakuchō Station, one stop south, is also convenient for the area.

 **Subway** The Marunouchi line connects with Tokyo Station. The Mita, Chiyoda and Hanzōmon lines also have stops nearby. The Ginza line is handy for Kyōbashi and Nihombashi.




Top Sights Imperial Palace

Japan's Imperial Palace occupies the site of the original Edo-jō, the castle of the Tokugawa shogunate (who ruled from 1603 to 1868). In its heyday this was the largest fortress in the world, though little remains of it today apart from the moat and stone walls. The present palace (Kyūden) is home to Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. It was completed in 1968, replacing the one built in 1888, which was largely destroyed during WWII.

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

皇居; Kōkyo  03-5223-8071; <http://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/english/guide/koukyo.html>; 1

Chiyoda, Chiyoda-ku; tours usually 10am & 1.30pm Tue-Sat;  Chiyoda line to Ōtemachi, exits C13b & C10



Imperial Palace East Garden | MATTEO_DUDEK - MATTEO DE SANCTIS - PHOTOS / GETTY IMAGES ©

✔ Top Tips

- ➔ If you haven't booked an Imperial Palace tour, you can show up at least 30 minutes before the start of one at the tour office at Kikyō-mon – if there is space you'll be able to register and take part. Bring photo ID.
- ➔ Every Sunday (bar rainy days), 150 free bicycles are provided for use along the 3.3km Imperial Palace cycling course between Iwaida Bridge and Hirakawa-mon. Bikes are given on a first-come, first-served basis and can be picked up next to the Babasakimon police box at Imperial Palace Plaza.

🍴 Take a Break

Not far from Nijū-bashi, [Rose Bakery](#) does light lunches, coffee and cakes.

Or hit up the lunchtime food trucks around nearby [Tokyo International Forum](#).

Palace Tours

Most of the 3.4 sq km palace is off-limits, as this is the emperor's home, but you can join one of the free tours organised by the Imperial Household Agency to see a small part of the inner compound. Tours (lasting around 1¼ hours) run at 10am and 1.30pm usually on Tuesday through to Saturday, but not on public holidays nor afternoons from late July through to the end of August (check the website for a complete schedule). Reservations are taken – via the website, phone or by post – up to a month in advance.

Imperial Palace Plaza

If you're not on the tour, two palace bridges – the iron **Nijū-bashi** and the stone **Megane-bashi** – comprise a famous landmark that can be viewed from the southwest corner of Imperial Palace Plaza. Behind the bridges rises the Edo-era **Fushimi-yagura** watchtower.

Imperial Palace East Garden

Crafted from part of the original castle compound, the **Imperial Palace East Garden** (東御苑; Kōkyo Higashi-gyoen [GOOGLE MAP](#));

<http://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp>; 1 Chiyoda, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 9am-4pm Nov-Feb, to 4.30pm Mar–mid-Apr, Sep & Oct, to 5pm mid-Apr–Aug, closed Mon & Fri year-round; 🚉 **S** Chiyoda line to Ōtemachi, exit C13b or C10) allows you to get close-up views of the massive stones used to build the castle walls. You can even climb the ruins of one of the keeps, off the upper lawn. The number of visitors at any one time is limited, so it never feels crowded. Entrance is via the gate **Ōte-mon** (大手門), near Tokyo Station, and it was once the principal entrance to Edo-jō. Take a token when you enter and return it when you leave.



📍 **Top Sights**

[Imperial Palace](#)

Sights

1	Intermediatheque	C3
2	National Museum of Modern Art (MOMAT)	B1
3	Crafts Gallery	A1
4	Tokyo International Forum	C4
5	Tokyo Station	D3

Eating

6	Hōnen Manpuku	E2
7	Taimeiken	E2
8	Tokyo Rāmen Street	D3
9	Rose Bakery Marunouchi	C3

Drinking

10	Nihombashi Toyama	E2
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Shopping

11	Coredo Muromachi	E2
12	Mitsukoshi	E2
13	KITTE	C3
14	Ōedo Antique Market	C4
15	Takashimaya	E3




Sights

Intermediatheque

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Dedicated to interdisciplinary experimentation, Intermediatheque cherry picks from the vast collection of the University of Tokyo (Tōdai) to craft a fascinating, contemporary museum experience. Go from viewing the best ornithological taxidermy collection in Japan to a giant pop art print or the beautifully encased skeleton of a dinosaur. A handsome Tōdai lecture hall is reconstituted as a forum for events, including the playing of 1920s jazz recordings on a gramophone or old movie screenings.



( 03-5777-8600; www.intermediatheque.jp; 2nd & 3rd fl, JP Tower, 2-7-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku;
 11am-6pm Sun & Tue-Thu, to 8pm Fri & Sat;  JR Yamanote line to Tokyo, Marunouchi exit)

National Museum of Modern Art (MOMAT)

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Regularly changing displays from the museum's superb collection of more than 12,000 works by both local and international artists are shown over floors four to two; special exhibitions are mounted on the ground floor. All pieces date from the Meiji period onward and impart a sense of how modern Japan has developed through portraits, photography, contemporary sculptures and video works. Don't miss the 'Room with a View' for a panorama of the [Imperial Palace East Garden](#).

(国立近代美術館; Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan  03-5777-8600; www.momat.go.jp/english; 3-1 Kitanomaru-kōen, Chiyoda-ku; adult/student ¥430/130, extra for special exhibitions;  10am-5pm)



Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, to 8pm Fri;  Tōzai line to Takebashi, exit 1b)

Crafts Gallery

MUSEUM

Housed in a vintage red-brick building, this annexe of [MOMAT](#) stages excellent changing exhibitions of *mingei* (folk crafts): ceramics, lacquerware, bamboo, textiles, dolls and much more. Artists range from living national treasures to contemporary artisans. The building was once the headquarters of the imperial guard, and was rebuilt after its destruction in WWII.

(東京国立近代美術館 工芸館 www.momat.go.jp/english; 1 Kitanomaru-kōen, Chiyoda-ku; adult/child ¥210/70, 1st Sun of month free;  10am-5pm Tue-Sun;  Tōzai line to Takebashi, exit 1b)

Tokyo International Forum

ARCHITECTURE

This architectural marvel designed by Rafael Viñoly houses a convention and arts centre, with eight auditoriums and a spacious courtyard in which concerts and events are held. The eastern wing looks like a glass ship plying the urban waters; take the lift to the 7th floor and look down on the tiny people below. Also look out for the statue of Ōta Dōkan, the samurai who first built the Edo Castle in 1457.

(東京国際フォーラム  03-5221-9000; www.t-i-forum.co.jp; 3-5-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku;  JR Yamanote line to Yūrakuchō, central exit)



Tokyo International Forum | ESB PROFESSIONAL / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tokyo Station

LANDMARK

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tokyo Station celebrated its centenary in 2014 with a major renovation and expansion. Kingo Tatsuno's original elegant brick building on the Marunouchi side has been expertly restored to include domes faithful to the original design, decorated inside with relief sculptures. It's best viewed straight on from the plaza on Miyuki-dōri, the rooftop garden of the [KITTE](#) shopping mall or the terrace on the 7th floor of the Shin-Maru Building.

(東京駅 www.tokyostationcity.com/en; 1-9 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku;  JR lines to Tokyo Station)



Local Life

Dinner Under the Tracks

Under the elevated Yamanote line tracks in Yūrakuchō are numerous *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eateries) and *yakitori* (grilled chicken skewer) stalls. All are tiny; some have seats (err, often overturned beer cartons) on the pavement outside. One place to try is Manpuku Shokudō.

Eating

Hōnen Manpuku

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Hōnen Manpuku's interior is dominated by giant *washi* (Japanese handmade paper) lanterns, beneath which patrons tuck into bargain-priced beef or pork sukiyaki and other traditional dishes. Ingredients are sourced from gourmet retailers in Nihombashi. Lunchtime set menus are great value, and there's a riverside terrace in the warmer months.

(豊年萬福  03-3277-3330; www.hounenmanpuku.jp; 1-8-16 Nihombashi-Muromachi, Chūō-ku; mains ¥1280-1850;  11.30am-2.30pm & 5-11pm Mon-Sat, 5-10pm Sun; ;  Ginza line to Mitsukoshimae, exit A1)

Taimeiken

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Yoshoku, Western cuisine adapted to Japanese tastes, has been the draw here since 1931, in particular its borscht and coleslaw (a bargain ¥50 each). For the food movie *Tampopo* (1985), directed by Itami

Jūzō, it created *Tampopo omuraisu* (an omelette wrapped around tomato-flavoured rice) and it's been a signature dish ever since.

(たいめいけん 📞 03-3271-2464; www.taimeiken.co.jp; 1-12-10 Nihombashi, Chūō-ku; lunch from ¥800, omelette ¥1950; 🕒 11am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm Sun; 🏠; 📍 Ginza line to Nihombashi, exit C5)

Tokyo Rāmen Street

RAMEN \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Eight hand-picked *ramen-ya* operate branches in this basement arcade on the Yaesu side of [Tokyo Station](#). All the major styles are covered – from *shōyu* (soy-sauce base) to *tsukemen* (cold noodles served on the side). Long lines form outside the most popular shops, but they tend to move quickly.

(東京ラーメンストリート www.tokyoeki-1bangai.co.jp/ramenstreet; B1 First Avenue Tokyo Station, 1-9-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; ramen from ¥800; 🕒 7.30am-10.30pm; 🚶 JR lines to Tokyo Station, Yaesu south exit)

Rose Bakery Marunouchi

BAKERY \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tokyo has taken to Paris' Rose Bakery style of dining. Branches of this delicious organic cafe have popped up here in the *Comme des Garçons* boutique and at other fashionable spots. Vegetarians are well served here, as are those with a sweet tooth.

(ローズベーカリー 丸の内 📞 03-3212-1715; <http://rosebakery.jp>; Meiji-Yasada Bldg, 2-1-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; cakes & quiches from ¥410, lunch set ¥1250; 🕒 11am-7pm; 🍴 🏠; 📍 Chiyoda line to Nijūbashimae, exit 3)





Drinking

Nihombashi Toyama

BAR

Scattered around central Tokyo you'll find many places like this that promote the products of a region of Japan. At this slickly designed outlet, there's a great bar offering a selection of Toyama's best sakes from 17 different breweries. A set of three 30mL cups costs a bargain ¥700 (90mL cups from ¥600 each). English tasting notes are available.

(日本橋とやま館  03-6262-2723; <http://toyamakan.jp>; 1-2-6 Nihombashi-muromachi, Chūō-ku;  11am-9pm; ;  Ginza line to Mitsukoshimae, exit B5)

Understand

The Meiji Restoration

For 250 years the Tokugawa shoguns kept Japan almost entirely isolated. Then, in 1853, the black ships under the command of US Navy Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay demanding that Japan open itself to foreign trade. The humiliating acquiescence that followed fanned existing flames of antigovernment sentiment: a coalition of southern Japan *daimyō* (feudal lords) founded a movement (and army) to restore the emperor to power. In 1868, after months of civil war, the shogun stepped down and the 16-year-old Emperor Meiji was named head of state. Meiji moved the seat of imperial power from Kyoto to Edo, renaming the city Tokyo (Eastern Capital).

The Meiji Restoration had far-reaching social implications, as Japan opened up to the world and began to adopt technology as well as political and social ideas from the West. Marunouchi was established as the first business district in the modern sense, and a culture of white-collar workers in suits and ties commuting by streetcar grew up around it.

Shopping

Coredo Muromachi

MALL

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Spread over three buildings, this stylish development hits its stride at Coredo Muromachi 3. This section houses several well-curated floors of top-class, Japanese-crafted goods including cosmetics, fashion, homewares, eyeglasses and speciality food.

(コレド室町 <http://31urban.jp/lng/eng/muromachi.html>; 2-2-1 Nihonbashi-Muromachi, Chūō-ku;



 most shops 11am-7pm;  Ginza line to Mitsukoshimae, exit A4)

Mitsukoshi

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Mitsukoshi's venerable Nihombashi branch was Japan's first department store. It's a grand affair with an entrance guarded by bronze lions and a magnificent statue of Magokoro, the Goddess of Sincerity, rising up from the centre of the ground floor. For the full effect, arrive at 10am for the bells and bows that accompany each day's opening.

(三越  03-3241-3311; www.mitsukoshi.co.jp; 1-4-1 Nihombashi-Muromachi, Chūō-ku;  10am-7pm;

 Ginza line to Mitsukoshimae, exit A2)

KITTE

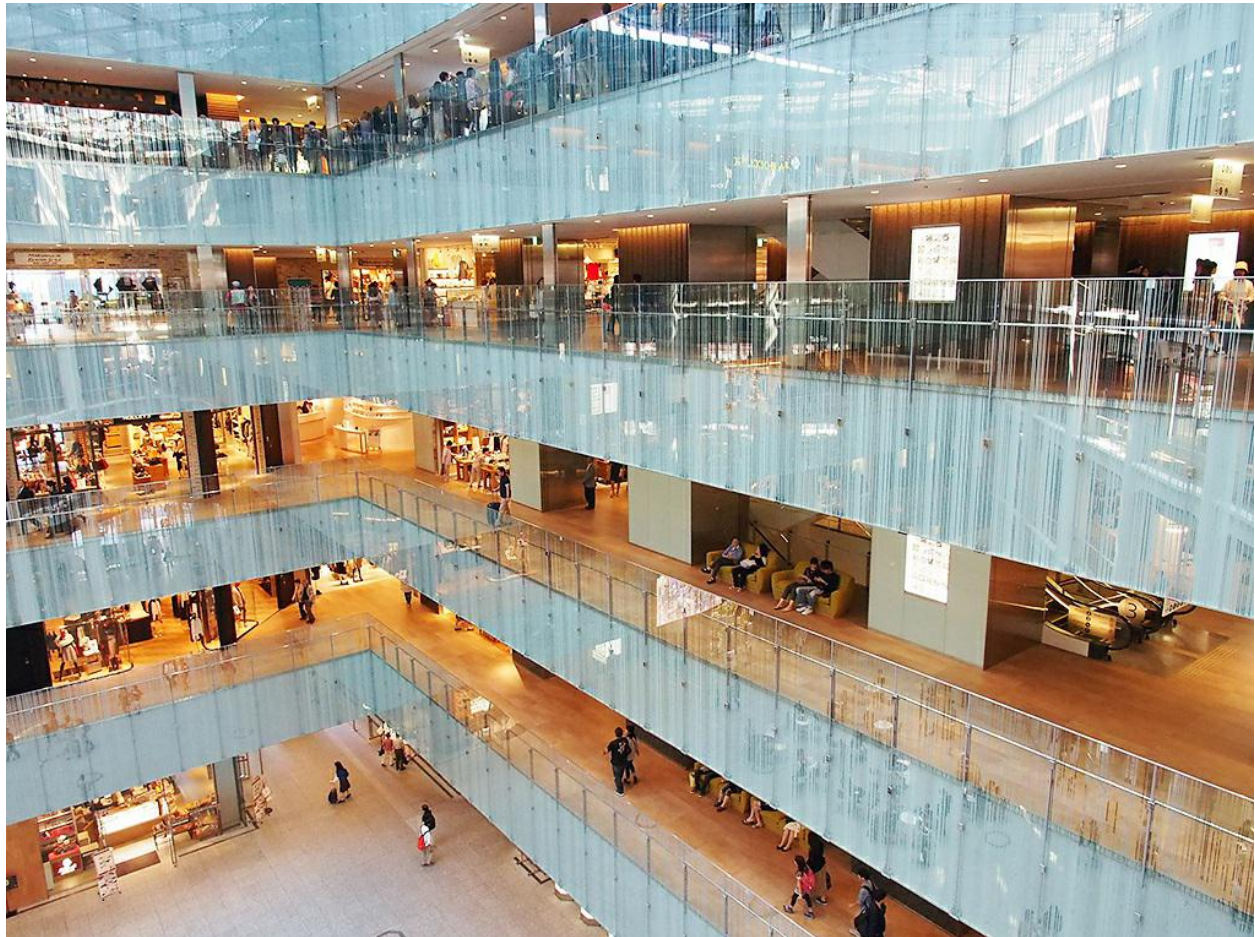
MALL

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This well-designed shopping mall at the foot of JP Tower incorporates the restored facade of the former Tokyo Central Post Office. It is notable for its atrium, around which is arrayed a quality selection of

craft-orientated Japanese brand shops selling homewares, fashion, accessories and lifestyle goods.

(<https://jptower-kitte.jp/en>; 2-7-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 11am-9pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm Sun; 🚉 JR lines to Tokyo, Marunouchi south exit)



Kitte | TAKASHI IMAGES / SHUTTERSTOCK ©




🔒 Ōedo Antique Market

ANTIQUES

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Held in the courtyard of [Tokyo International Forum](#), usually on the first and third Sunday of every month (check the website before you head out), this is a colourful event with hundreds of dealers and a good chance to bargain for retro and antique Japanese goods, from old

ceramics to kitsch plastic figurines.

(大江戸骨董市  03-6407-6011; www.antique-market.jp; 3-5-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku;  9am-4pm 1st & 3rd Sun of month;  JR Yamanote line to Yūrakuchō, Kokusai Forum exit)



Takashimaya

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

The design of Takashimaya's flagship store (1933) tips its pillbox hat to New York's Gilded Age with marble columns, chandeliers and uniformed female elevator operators announcing each floor in high-pitched sing-song voices.

Bring your passport for tax-free purchases of over ¥5000 and to receive a Shopper's Card, which provides an extra 5% discount on many items if you spend ¥3000 or more.

(高島屋 www.takashimaya.co.jp/tokyo/store_information; 2-4-1 Nihombashi, Chūō-ku;  10am-8pm;  Ginza line to Nihombashi, Takashimaya exit)

Tsukiji & Ginza



GUILLERMO OLAIZOLA / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Ginza is Tokyo's most polished neighbourhood, a fashion centre resplendent with department stores, galleries, gardens and teahouses. The city's kabuki (traditional Japanese performing art) theatre is here, as are many of Tokyo's most celebrated restaurants. A short walk away is a luxury commercial centre of a different sort: Tsukiji, with its famous food markets.

The Sights in a Day



Grab a latte from [Turret Coffee](#) and then set out for Tsukiji's colourful [Outer Market](#). You can easily pull together breakfast from the many vendors here, selling grilled oysters, sweet omelets and more. Between 10am and 11am, the public is allowed into the [Seafood Intermediate Wholesalers' Area](#), where the pros pick up their seafood.



From Tsukiji, walk over to the landscaped garden [Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien](#) and have tea in the garden's teahouse. Then gallery-hop and window-shop your way through Ginza, starting in the heart of the district at Ginza Yon-chōme Crossing, the intersection of Harumi-dōri and Chūō-dōri, right in front of [Mitsukoshi](#) department store. Follow Chūō-dōri past some of the area's finest shops, including the new [Ginza Six](#) mall. Have a late lunch of top grade sushi at [Kyūbey](#) – it's cheaper than dinner.



It's worth seeing at least one act of kabuki at Tokyo's famed [Kabuki-za](#). Ginza's nightlife is notoriously high-brow (read: expensive), so if you get shooed away consider yourself lucky. But you can't go wrong with a visit to performance art pub [Kagaya](#), which also serves food. Or try your luck getting a seat at ramen shop of-the-moment [Kagari](#).



Top Sights

[Tsukiji Outer Market](#)

[Kabuki-za](#)



Best of Tokyo

Food

[Kagari](#)

[Kyūbey](#)

Architecture

[Nakagin Capsule Tower](#)

Parks & Gardens

[Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien](#)


Shopping


[Takumi](#)


[Itōya](#)

[Akomeya](#)

Getting There

 **Train** The JR Yamanote line stops at Shimbashi Station and Yūrakuchō Station.

 **Subway** The Ginza, Hibiya and Marunouchi lines connect at Ginza Station, in the heart of Ginza. For Tsukiji, take either the Hibiya line to Tsukiji or the Ōedo line to Tsukijishijō.

 **Boat** Ferries stop at [Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien](#) and go to Asakusa and Odaiba.



Top Sights

Tsukiji Outer Market

Tsukiji Outer Market (*jōgai-shijō*) is a one-stop shop for anything you need to prepare and serve a great Japanese meal. It's also a fantastic place to eat, with great street food and a huge concentration of small restaurants and cafes, most specialising in seafood. When (or even if) the neighbouring wholesale market moves on, this atmospheric and justifiably popular area will remain a top attraction for food lovers.

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

場外市場; Jōgai Shijō 6-chōme Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; 🕒 5am-2pm; 📍 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1



✓ Top Tips

- ➔ Pick up an area map in English from **Information Centre Plat Tsukiji** (ぷらつと築地 [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.tsukiji.or.jp; 4-16-2 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; 🕒 8am-2pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun; 🚉 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1), where you can also buy unique Tsukiji souvenirs.
- ➔ Come early as most shops in the Outer Market close by 2pm.
- ➔ The outer market can get very crowded – avoid the narrow lanes if you're pushing a stroller or pulling luggage.

🍴 Take a Break

Grab a latte before or after at [Turret Coffee](#).

Return to the area at night for great seafood pasta at the charming [Trattoria Tsukiji Paradiso](#).

Street Food

Rows of vendors hawk delicacies from dried fish and seaweed to green tea and pickles. Come hungry because there are plenty of snack foods sold to go, too. Our favourites include the fat slices of *tamago-yaki* (sweet and savoury rolled omelettes) on a stick from **Yamachō** (山長



[GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3248-6002; 4-16-1 Tsukiji; omlette slices ¥100; 🕒 6am-3.30pm; 🚉 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1); the delicious fish-paste treats from **Tsukugon** (つくごん

[GOOGLE MAP](#); www.tsukugon.co.jp; 4-12-5 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; snacks from ¥210; 🕒 6.30am-2pm Tue-Sun; 🚉 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1); and the *maguro-yaki* (tuna-shaped pancakes, filled with sweet beans) from **Sanokiya** (さのきや [GOOGLE MAP](#); 4-11-9 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; pancakes ¥200-220; 🕒 8.30am-2pm Thu-Tue; 🚉 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1).




Kitchenware

The market is also well stocked with nonedible goods, including crockery, bamboo mats for rolling sushi and fine-quality kitchen

knives: try **Tsukiji Hitachiya** (つきじ常陸屋 [GOOGLE MAP](#); 4-14-18 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku;

 8am-3pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun;  Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1) for a great selection of useful kitchen implements.

Tsukiji's Shrine

Before leaving, drop by **Namiyoke-jinja** (波除神社 );  03-3541-8451; www.namiyoke.or.jp; 6-20-37 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku;  Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1), the Shintō shrine where Tsukiji's workers and residents come to pray. Giant lion masks used in the area's annual festival flank the entrance and there are dragon-shaped taps over the purification basins.



Top Sights Kabuki-za

Dramatic, intensely visual kabuki is Japan's most recognised art form. It developed during the reign of the shogun and was shaped by the decadent tastes of the increasingly wealthy merchant class of Edo (old Tokyo under the shogun) resulting in the breathtaking costumes and elaborate stagecraft that characterise the form. Kabuki-za is Tokyo's kabuki theatre. Established in 1889, the theatre was reconstructed in 2013 to incorporate a tower block and a flamboyant facade (designed by architect Kuma Kengo).

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

歌舞伎座  03-3545-6800; www.kabuki-bito.jp/eng; 4-12-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku; tickets ¥4000-21,000, single-act tickets ¥800-2000;  Hibiya line to Higashi-Ginza, exit 3



YURIZ / GETTY IMAGES ©

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ If you purchased a ticket online, look for the ticket dispensers in front of the theatre and in the basement passage from the subway station. Just insert the credit card you used to purchase the ticket.
- ➔ Rent a headset for explanations in English; the recording begins 10 minutes before each act, with background information about the play.
- ➔ As some acts are more popular than others, check at the theatre what's available and arrive at least 1½ hours before the start of the performance to be sure of getting a ticket.

✂ Take a Break

It's tradition to eat a *bentō* (boxed meal) at the theatre during the intermission. Purchase one (around ¥1000) inside the theatre or at stalls outside.

Offering a view of Kabuki-za's roof garden is the tea salon [Jugetsudo](#).

The Plays

Kabuki developed over several centuries during the reign of the shogun, amassing a repertoire of popular themes, such as famous historical accounts, the conflict between love and loyalty and stories of love-suicide. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724) is kabuki's most famous playwright, even though he originally wrote most plays for bunraku puppetry.

The Performance

There is no pretense of reality in kabuki; it's ruled by aesthetics and plays to the senses rather than the intellect. Kabuki has been likened to a moving woodblock print, and when the actors pause in dramatic poses – called *mie* – the whole stage really does look fit to be framed.

The kabuki stage employs a number of unique devices, such as the *hanamichi* (the walkway that extends into the audience), which is used

for dramatic entrances and exits. Naturally the best seats are those that line the *hanamichi*.

The Actors

Kabuki actors train from childhood and descendants of the great Edo-era actors still grace the stage, as sons follow their fathers into the *yago* (kabuki acting house). These stars enjoy a celebrity on par with screen actors; some have earned the status of 'living treasure'. Only men appear in kabuki, and actors who specialise in portraying women are called *onnagata*.

At pivotal moments in a performance, enthusiastic fans shout out the actor's *yago* – an act called *kakegoe*.



📍 Top Sights

[Tsukiji Outer Market](#)

 **Sights**

- | | | |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien | B4 |
| 2 | Seafood Intermediate Wholesalers' Area | D4 |
| 3 | Nakagin Capsule Tower | B3 |
| 4 | Shiseido Gallery | B2 |
| 5 | Ginza Graphic Gallery | B2 |

 **Eating**

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 6 | Kagari | C1 |
| 7 | Kyūbey | B2 |
| 8 | Apollo | B1 |
| 9 | Trattoria Tsukiji Paradiso! | D4 |
| 10 | Maru | C2 |
| 11 | Sushikuni | D3 |

 **Drinking**

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|
| 12 | Turret Coffee | D2 |
| 13 | Cafe de l'Ambre | B3 |
| 14 | Jugetsudo | C2 |
| 15 | Kagaya | A3 |
| 16 | Bistro Marx | C2 |

 **Shopping**

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 17 | Itōya | C1 |
| 18 | Takumi | B2 |
| 19 | Dover Street Market Ginza | B2 |
| 20 | Akomeya | C1 |
| 21 | Ginza Six | B2 |
| 22 | Uniqlo | B2 |

23 [Mitsukoshi](#)

C2

24 [Matsuya](#)

C1

Sights

Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien

GARDENS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This beautiful garden, one of Tokyo's finest, is all that remains of a shogunal palace that once extended into the area now occupied by Tsukiji Market. The main features are a large duck pond with an island that's home to a charming tea pavilion, **Nakajima no Ochaya** (中島の御茶屋 [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/format/restaurant028.html); 1-1 Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien, Chūō-ku; tea set ¥500; 🕒 9am-4.30pm; 📷; 🚶🏻‍♂️ (Ōedo line to Shiodome, exit A1), as well as some wonderfully manicured trees (black pine, Japanese apricot, hydrangeas etc), some of which are hundreds of years old.

(浜離宮恩賜庭園; Detached Palace Garden www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/format/index028.html; 1-1 Hama-rikyū-teien, Chūō-ku; adult/child ¥300/free; 🕒 9am-5pm; 🚶🏻‍♂️ (S) Ōedo line to Shiodome, exit A1)



Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien | NADEZDA ZAVITAEVA / SHUTTERSTOCK ©


Seafood Intermediate Wholesalers' Area

MARKET

This area of the Tsukiji Market is where local chefs and fishmongers come to purchase all manner of sea creatures, though much of the action has cooled by the time the public is allowed in at 10am. Before setting off, check the market's online calendar to make sure it's open, and for instructions on attending the tuna auctions, a classic Tokyo experience, which start around 5am. Once inside, be mindful of the handcarts, forklifts and motorised vehicles.

(水産仲卸業者売場  03-3261-8326; www.tsukiji-market.or.jp; 5-2-1 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku;  10-11am;


 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1)

Nakagin Capsule Tower

ARCHITECTURE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

A Facebook campaign has been started by some residents and fans to save Kurokawa Kishō's early-1970s building, which is a seminal work of Metabolist architecture. The tower's self-contained pods, which can be removed whole from a central core and replaced elsewhere, are in various states of decay and the building is swathed in netting, but it's still a very impressive design.

(中銀カプセルタワー 8-16-10 Ginza, Chūō-ku;  Ōedo line to Tsukijishijō, exit A3)

Shiseido Gallery

GALLERY

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

The cosmetics company Shiseido runs its experimental art space out of the basement of its Shiseido Parlour complex of cafes and restaurants. An ever-changing selection, particularly of installation pieces, lends itself well to the gallery's high ceiling.




(資生堂ギャラリー  03-3572-3901; www.shiseido.co.jp/e/gallery/html; basement fl, 8-8-3 Ginza, Chūō-ku;  11am-7pm Tue-Sat, to 6pm Sun;  Ginza line to Shimbashi, exit 1 or 3)

Ginza Graphic Gallery

GALLERY

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This gallery features monthly changing exhibits of graphic arts – focusing on advertising and poster art – by mostly Japanese artists but with the occasional Western artist. The annual Tokyo Art Directors Conference exhibition takes place here in July.

(ギンザ・グラフィック・ギャラリー  03-3571-5206; www.dnp.co.jp/gallery/ggg; 7-7-2 Ginza, Chūō-ku;  11am-7pm Tue-Fri, to 6pm Sat;  Ginza line to Ginza, exit A2)

Understand

Tsukiji Market Move

Tsukiji Market, which replaced the original Nihombashi Market in 1935, has long been slated to move to a new facility, the New Toyosu Market, on an artificial island on Tokyo Bay. The move has proved controversial: the site was formerly occupied by a gas refinery and environmental reports indicate that pollutants are still present despite an extensive clean up. At the time of research the market's fate was still up in the air. Either way, it is just the [Seafood Intermediate Wholesalers' Area](#) that would make move; the [Outer Market](#) will remain in Tsukiji.

Eating



Kagari

RAMEN \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Don't get confused – even though the English sign outside Kagari says 'Soba', this stands for *chūka soba*, meaning Chinese noodles, ie ramen. Kagari's luscious, flavoursome chicken broth makes all the difference here and has earned the shop a cult following; there's sure to be a long queue trailing from its tucked-away location on a Ginza alley.

(箸 4-4-1 Ginza; small/large ramen ¥950/1050; 🕒 11am-3.30pm & 5.30-10.30pm; 🚉 **S** Ginza line to Ginza, exit A10 or B1)



Kyūbey

SUSHI \$\$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Since 1936, Kyūbey's quality and presentation has won it a moneyed

and celebrity clientele. Even so, this is a supremely foreigner-friendly and relaxed restaurant. The friendly owner Imada-san speaks excellent English as do some of his team of talented chefs, who will make and serve your sushi, piece by piece.

(久兵衛 📞 03-3571-6523; www.kyubey.jp; 8-7-6 Ginza, Chūō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥4000/10,000; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 5-10pm Mon-Sat; 📍; 🚶 Ginza line to Shimbashi, exit 3)

Apollo

GREEK \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Ginza's glittering lights are the dazzling backdrop to this ace import from Sydney with its delicious take on modern Greek cuisine. The Mediterranean flavours come through strongly in dishes such as the grilled octopus and fennel salad, taramasalata, and kefalograviera cheese fried in a saganaki pan with honey, oregano and lemon juice. Portions are large and meant for sharing.

(📞 03-6264-5220; www.theapollo.jp; 11th fl, Tōkyū Plaza Ginza, 5-2-1 Ginza, Chūō-ku; mains ¥1800-5800; 🕒 11.30am-10pm; 🚶 Ginza line to Ginza, exits C2 & C3)

Trattoria Tsukiji Paradiso!

ITALIAN \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Paradise for food lovers, indeed. This charming, aqua-painted trattoria serves seafood pasta dishes that will make you want to lick the plate clean. Its signature linguine is packed with shellfish in a scrumptious tomato, chilli and garlic sauce. Lunch (from ¥980) is a bargain, but you may well need to wait in line; book for dinner.



(📞 03-3545-5550; www.tsukiji-paradiso.com; 6-27-3 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; mains ¥1500-3600; 🕒 11am-2pm & 6-10pm; 🚶 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 2)

Maru

JAPANESE \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Maru offers a contemporary take on *kaiseki* (Japanese haute cuisine) fine dining. The chefs are young and inventive and the appealing space is dominated by a long, wooden, open kitchen counter across which you can watch them work. Its good-value lunches offer a choice of mainly fish dishes.




(銀座區  03-5537-7420; www.maru-mayfont.jp/ginza; 2nd fl, Ichigo Ginza 612 Bldg, 6-12-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥1100/4800;  11.30am-2pm & 5.30-9pm Mon-Sat; ; **S** Ginza line to Ginza, exit A3)

Sushikuni

JAPANESE \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Specialising in bowls of sushi rice topped with seafood, this low-key spot is the place to indulge in the freshest of melt-in-the-mouth *uni* (sea urchin) and the salty pop of *ikura* (salmon roe) straight from the market. It's also open in the evenings.

(鮫國  03-3545-8234; 4-14-15 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; seafood rice bowls from ¥3000;  10am-3pm & 5-9pm Thu-Tue; ; **S** Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1)



Top Tip

Gourmet Shopping

Explore the *depachika* (basement food halls with a huge variety of gourmet options to sample and takeaway) at department stores like

[Mitsukoshi](#). New mall [Ginza Six](#) also has an excellent food hall.

Drinking

Turret Coffee

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Kawasaki Kiyoshi set up his plucky indie coffee shop next to Starbucks. It takes its name from the three-wheeled delivery trucks that beetle around Tsukiji Market – there's one on the premises. Ideal for an early-morning espresso en route to or from the outer market area.

(<http://ja-jp.facebook.com/turretcoffee>; 2-12-6 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; 🕒 7am-6pm Mon-Sat, noon-6pm Sun;

📍; 🚉 Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 2)

Cafe de l'Ambre

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

The sign over the door here reads 'Coffee Only' but, oh, what a selection. Sekiguchi Ichiro started the business in 1948 and – remarkably at the age of 100 – still runs it himself, sourcing and roasting aged beans from all over the world. It's dark, retro and classic Ginza.

(カフェ・ド・ランブル 📞 03-3571-1551; www.h6.dion.ne.jp/~lambre; 8-10-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku; coffee from

¥650; 🕒 noon-10pm Mon-Sat, to 7pm Sun; 📍; 🚉 Ginza line to Ginza, exit A4)

Jugetsudo

TEAHOUSE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This venerable tea seller's main branch is closer to Tsukiji, but this classy outlet in the Kabuki-za Tower has a Kengo Kuma–designed cafe where you can sample the various Japanese green teas, including

matcha, along with food. Book for its tea-tasting experience (¥4000), which covers four different types of tea and runs from 10am to noon.

(寿月堂 📞 03-6278-7626; www.jugestudo.fr; 5th fl, Kabuki-za Tower, 4-12-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku;

🕒 10am-5.30pm; 📍; 🚶 Ginza line to Higashi-Ginza, exit 3)

🍷 Kagaya

PUB

MAP GOOGLE MAP

It is safe to say that there is no other bar owner in Tokyo who can match Mark Kagaya for brilliant lunacy. His side-splitting antics are this humble *izakaya*'s star attraction, although his mum's nourishing home cooking also hits the spot. Bookings are essential.

(加賀屋 📞 03-3591-2347; <http://kagayayy.sakura.ne.jp>; B1 fl, Hanasada Bldg, 2-15-12 Shimbashi,

Minato-ku; 🕒 7pm-midnight Mon-Sat; 📍; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shimbashi, Shimbashi exit)

🍷 Bistro Marx

CAFE

MAP GOOGLE MAP

As well as French chef Thierry Marx' restaurant here, there's his casual bistro-bar where the outdoor terrace has a dress-circle view across to Ginza's iconic Wako department store. It's a fancy spot for an afternoon coffee and dessert above the throng, or a romantic setting for a drink later at night when it morphs into a bar.

(📞 03-6280-6234; www.thierrymarx.jp; 7th fl, Ginza Place, 5-8-1 Ginza, Chūō-ku; 🕒 11am-11pm, bar to

2am; 📍; 🚶 Ginza line to Ginza, exit A2)

Local Life

Promenades



Every weekend from noon to 5pm (until 6pm, April to September) a long section of Ginza's main drag, **Chūō-dōri**, is blocked off to traffic creating what is known in Japanese as a 'pedestrian heaven'.

Namiki-dōri, is Tokyo's most exclusive nightlife strip, where elegant women dressed in kimonos wait on company execs and politicians in members-only bars. Stroll through in the evening and you might catch a glimpse of this secretive world.

Shopping

Itōya

ARTS & CRAFTS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Nine floors (plus several more in the nearby annexe) of stationery-shop love await visual-art professionals and seekers of office accessories with both everyday items and luxury, such as fountain pens and Italian leather agendas. You'll also find *washi* (fine Japanese handmade paper), *tenugui* (beautifully hand-dyed thin cotton towels) and *furoshiki* (wrapping cloths).

(伊東屋 www.ito-ya.co.jp; 2-7-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku; 🕒 10.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, to 7pm Sun; 🚉 Ginza line to Ginza, exit A13)

Takumi

ARTS & CRAFTS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

You're unlikely to find a more elegant selection of traditional folk crafts, including toys, textiles and ceramics from around Japan. Ever thoughtful, this shop also encloses information detailing the origin and background of the pieces if you make a purchase.

(たくみ 📞 03-3571-2017; www.ginza-takumi.co.jp; 8-4-2 Ginza, Chūō-ku; 🕒 11am-7pm Mon-Sat;

 Ginza line to Shimbashi, exit 5)


Dover Street Market Ginza

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

A department store as envisioned by Kawakubo Rei (of Comme des Garçons), DSM has seven floors of avant-garde brands, including several Japanese labels and everything in the Comme des Garçons line-up. The quirky art installations alone make it worth the visit.

(DSM;  03-6228-5080; <http://ginza.doverstreetmarket.com>; 6-9-5 Ginza, Chūō-ku;  11am-8pm;



 Ginza line to Ginza, exit A2)


Akomeya

FOOD

Rice is at the core of Japanese cuisine and drink. This stylish store sells not only many types of the grain but also products made from it (such as sake), a vast range of quality cooking ingredients and a choice collection of kitchen, home and bath items.

( 03-6758-0271; www.akomeya.jp; 2-2-6 Ginza, Chūō-ku;  shop 11am-9pm, restaurant 11.30am-

10pm;  Yūrakuchō line to Ginza-itichōme, exit 4)



High-end brands on Chūō-dōri | KORKUSUNG / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Ginza Six

MALL

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Ginza's largest mixed-use development dedicated to maintaining and improving the area's luxury cachet includes international and local top-brand shops, restaurants, a superior food hall, a 4000-sq-m rooftop garden and the **Kanze Nōgakudō**, a theatre specialising in *nō* (stylised dance-drama). Digital and contemporary art features in the public areas.

(<http://ginza6.tokyo>; 6-10 Ginza, Chūō-ku; 🕒 10am-10pm;  Ginza line to Ginza, exit A2)

Uniqlo

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This now-global brand has made its name by sticking to the basics and tweaking them with style. Offering inexpensive, quality clothing, this is the Tokyo flagship store with 11 floors and items you won't find elsewhere.

(ユニクロ www.uniqlo.com; 5-7-7 Ginza, Chūō-ku; 🕒 11am-9pm; 🚶🏻♂️ Ginza line to Ginza, exit A2)

Mitsukoshi

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

One of Ginza's grande dames, Mitsukoshi embodies the essence of the Tokyo department store. Don't miss the basement food hall.

(三越 www.mitsukoshi.co.jp; 4-6-16 Ginza, Chūō-ku; 🕒 10am-8pm; 🚶🏻♂️ Ginza line to Ginza, exits A7 & A11)

Matsuya

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

One of Ginza's top department stores is packed with designer brands. Look out for the section on the 7th floor showcasing household products chosen by the Japan Design Committee, a group of leading designers, architects and critics.

(松屋 📞 03-3567-1211; www.matsuya.com; 3-6-1 Ginza; 🕒 10am-8pm; 🚶🏻♂️ Ginza line to Ginza, exit 12A)

Understand

Trendsetting Ginza

In the 1870s, Ginza was the first neighbourhood in Tokyo to modernise, welcoming Western-style brick buildings, the city's first department stores, gas lamps and other harbingers of globalisation – and it's been a fashion centre ever since. In the 1920s, *moga* (modern girls) cut their hair short, wore trousers and walked arm in arm with *mobo* (modern boys) through Ginza.

Today, other shopping districts rival Ginza in opulence, vitality and popularity, but it retains a distinct snob value: all the major international fashion houses have lavish boutiques here. The district has also been upping its game of late: in spring 2017, the neighbourhood welcomed its newest shopping centre, Ginza Six, following the openings of Ginza Sony Park, Ginza Place and Tōkyū Plaza Ginza.



Top Sights

Sumo at Ryōgoku Kokugikan

Travellers visiting Tokyo in January, May or September should not miss the opportunity to attend one of the 15-day sumo tournaments at the national stadium, Ryōgoku Kokugikan. Never mind if you're a sports fan or not, ancient sumo is just as captivating for its spectacle and ritual. Ringside tickets cost ¥14,800, but reserved arena seats start from ¥3800. Same-day unreserved seats can be bought from the stadium box office for only ¥2200. During the rest of the year, catch the big boys in action at one of the neighbourhood stables.

Getting There

 Take the JR Sōbu line to Ryōgoku and use the west exit; the stadium is a two-minute walk away.

 The Ōedo line also stops at Ryōgoku.



J. HENNING BUCHHOLZ / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

GOOGLE MAP

両国国技館; Ryōgoku Sumo Stadium 📍03-3623-5111; www.sumo.or.jp; 1-3-28 Yokoami, Sumida-ku; ¥2200-14,800; 🚶 JR Sōbu line to Ryōgoku, west exit

✔ Top Tips

- ➔ On the last days of the tournament, get in line by 6am to score a same day ticket.
- ➔ You can rent a radio (¥100 fee, plus ¥2000 deposit) to listen to commentary in English.

🍴 Take a Break

Stop by the basement banquet hall to sample *chanko-nabe* (the protein-rich stew eaten by the wrestlers) for just ¥300 a bowl.

Or go for a meal at *chanko-nabe* restaurant **Kappō Yoshiba** (割烹吉葉 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); 📍03-3623-4480; www.kapou-yoshiba.jp/english/index.html; 2-14-5 Yokoami, Sumida-ku; dishes ¥600-6600; 🕒11.30am-2pm & 5-10pm Mon-Sat; 🚶; 🚶 S Ōedo line to Ryōgoku Station, exit 1) afterwards.

The Ritual of Sumo

Sumo was originally part of a ritual prayer to the gods for a good harvest. While it has obviously evolved, it remains deeply connected to Japan's Shintō tradition. You'll see a roof suspended over the *dōyo* (ring) that resembles that of a shrine. Before bouts, *rikishi* (wrestlers) rinse their mouths with water and toss salt into the ring – both are purification rituals.

Rising Through the Ranks

Doors open at 8am, with the first matches fought by lower ranking wrestlers. The pageantry (and the stakes) begin in earnest in the afternoon, when the *makuuchi* (top-tier) wrestlers perform their ceremonial entrance, followed by that of the *yokozuna* (the top of the

top) complete with sword-bearing attendants.

In order to achieve this highest rank a wrestler must win two consecutive tournaments and be considered, in the eyes of the Sumo Association, to embody certain traditional values. While sumo is very Japanese in origin, in fact many of the top wrestlers are foreign-born (Mongolia is a sumo powerhouse). The *yokozuna* wrestle in the final, most exciting, bouts of the day. You'll also see portraits of past champions hanging around the stadium and at the Sumo Museum attached to the stadium.

Nearby: Sumo Practice

If you're not visiting during a tournament, you can watch an early-morning practice at **Arashio Stable** (荒汐部屋, Arashio-beya [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 03-3666-7646; www.arashio.net/tour_e.html; 2-47-2 Hama-chō, Nihombashi, Chūō-ku; **S** Toei Shinjuku line to Hamachō, exit A2), one of several stables where wrestlers sleep, eat and train. See the website for information about visiting and etiquette.

Roppongi & Akasaka



TAKASHI YASUI / 500PX ©

Legendary for its nightlife, Roppongi has reinvented itself in the last decade via architecture, with the addition of the chic Roppongi Hills and Tokyo Midtown complexes and with the establishment of several excellent art museums. A short walk northeast is Akasaka; the proximity of Japan's parliament in Nagatachō and numerous embassies has long given this district an upmarket cachet.

The Sights in a Day



Come for brunch. The terrace at [Lauderdale](#) is nice on a warm day. Then begin your exploration of 'Roppongi Art Triangle'. At Tokyo Midtown, one of Roppongi's upscale multifunction complexes, you can peruse decorative arts at the [Suntory Museum of Art](#) or cutting-edge design at [21_21 Design Sight](#). From here it is a short walk to the [National Art Center Tokyo](#), recognised as much for its contemporary art exhibitions as for its architecture.



Take the Chiyoda line one stop to Nagatachō for [Tokyo Garden Terrace](#), to see the public art at one of the city's newest developments (lots of cafes here, too). Then hop on the Ginza line (from Akasaka-Mitsuke Station) for the brilliant (and all but secret) [Canadian Embassy Stone Garden](#). It's a quick subway ride (on the Ōedo line) – or taxi – back to Roppongi, where you can catch sunset from atop [Roppongi Hills](#).



Start your night out at fun *izakaya* [Jōmon](#), then catch an event at [SuperDeluxe](#). You could easily bar-hop until morning in Roppongi. Should you need to refuel, locals love 24-hour ramen joint [Gogyō](#). Alternatively, go quiet and refined with a meal to remember at [Kikunoi](#).



Top Sights

[Roppongi Hills](#)



Best of Tokyo

Food

[Kikunoi](#)

[Gogyō](#)

Museums & Galleries

[Mori Art Museum](#)

[Complex 665](#)

Architecture & Design

[21_21 Design Sight](#)

Drinking & Nightlife

[SuperDeluxe](#)

Entertainment

[National Theatre](#)

Shopping

[Souvenir from Tokyo](#)

Getting There

S **Subway** The Hibiya and Ōedo subway lines run through Roppongi. For Akasaka the Yūrakuchō, Hanzōmon, Namboku, Chiyoda, Marunouchi and Ginza subway lines all converge in and around Akasaka.



Top Sights

Roppongi Hills

Roppongi Hills sprawls over more than 11 hectares and is home to the city's leading contemporary art museum, Mori Art Museum; a sky-high observatory; shops galore; dozens of restaurants; and even a formal garden. It's imposing, upmarket and polarising – an architectural marvel, a grand vision realised or a crass shrine to conspicuous consumption? Explore the towers and corridors of this urban maze and decide for yourself, but you can't understand contemporary Tokyo without stopping here.

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

六本木ヒルズ www.roppongihills.com/en; 6-chōme Roppongi, Minato-ku; 🕒 11am-11pm; 📍 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 1



The pedestrian area between Mori Tower and the TV Asahi building | COWARDLION / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ Save your ticket stub from the Mori Art Museum to get discounted admission at the [Suntory Museum of Art](#) or the [National Art Center Tokyo](#).
- ➔ Unlike most museums, Mori Art Museum is open late – until 10pm every day except Tuesdays.
- ➔ Keep an eye out for events, especially in summer, at Roppongi Hills Arena, an open-air space nestled in the middle of the complex.
- ➔ In winter months, look for beautiful illuminations along the street Keyaki-zaka, on the southern edge of the complex.

🍴 Take a Break

Start the day with brunch at [Lauderdale](#) on Keyaki-zaka.

Hip night spot [SuperDeluxe](#) is just down the street.

Mori Art Museum

The Mori Art Museum occupies the 52nd and 53rd floors of Mori Tower. There's no permanent exhibition, instead, large-scale, original shows introduce major local and global artists and movements. Past exhibitions have focused on the works of Chinese artist and dissident Ai Weiwei and native son Murakami Takashi.

Tokyo City View

Admission to the Mori Art Museum is shared with Tokyo City View, the observatory that wraps itself around the 52nd floor, 250m high. The view is particularly spectacular at night. Weather permitting, you can also pop out to the rooftop Sky Deck for alfresco views.

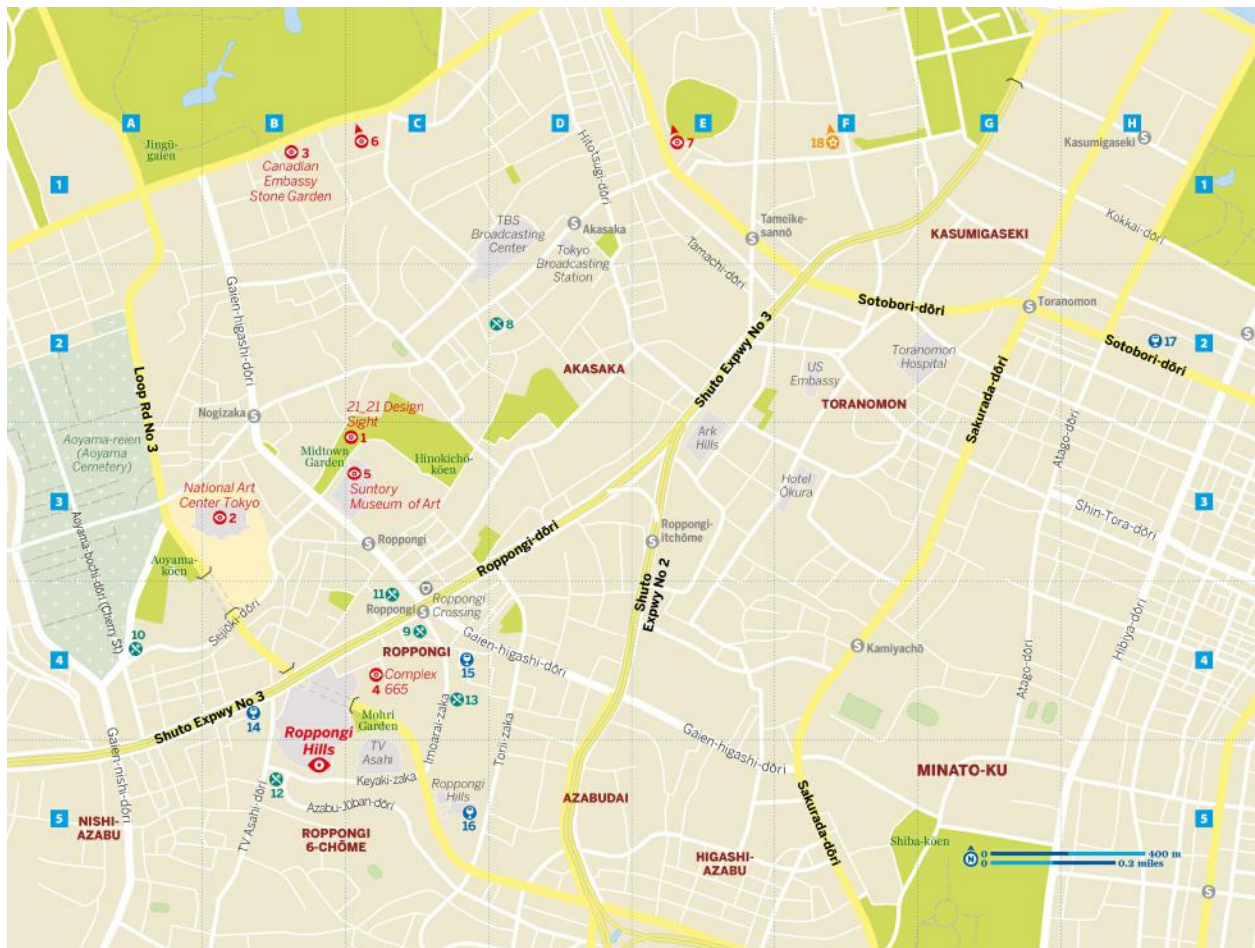
Public Art

The open-air plaza near the street entrance is the lucky home of one of Louise Bourgeois' giant Maman spider sculptures. It has an amusing

way of messing with the scale of the buildings, especially in photos. There are other sculptural wonders scattered around the complex, too.

Mohri Garden

This landscaped garden is modelled after those popular during the Edo period. When juxtaposed with the gleaming towers, it creates a fascinating study of luxury then and now. Look for the cherry trees in spring.



📍 Top Sights

[Roppongi Hills](#)

B5

📍 Sights

1	21_21 Design Sight	C3
2	National Art Center Tokyo	B3
3	Canadian Embassy Stone Garden	B1
4	Complex 665	C4
5	Suntory Museum of Art	C3
6	State Guest House, Akasaka Palace	C1
7	Tokyo Garden Terrace	E1

Eating

8	Kikunoi	D2
9	Sougo	C4
10	Gogyō	A4
11	Honmura-An	C4
12	Lauderdale	B5
13	Jōmon	C4

Drinking

14	SuperDeluxe	B4
15	Brewdog	C4
16	The Garden	C5
17	Sake Plaza	H2

Entertainment

18	National Theatre	F1
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Shopping

	Souvenir from Tokyo	B3
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Sights

21_21 Design Sight

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

An exhibition and discussion space dedicated to all forms of design, the 21_21 Design Sight acts as a beacon for local art enthusiasts, whether they be designers themselves or simply onlookers. The striking concrete-and-glass building, bursting out of the ground at sharp angles, was designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architect Andō Tadao.




(21_21デザインサイト  03-3475-2121; www.2121designsight.jp; Tokyo Midtown, 9-7-6 Akasaka, Minato-ku; admission varies;  11am-8pm Wed-Mon;  Ōedo line to Roppongi, exit 8)

National Art Center Tokyo

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Designed by Kurokawa Kishō, this architectural beauty has no permanent collection, but boasts the country's largest exhibition space for visiting shows, which have included titans such as Renoir and Modigliani. Apart from exhibitions, a visit here is recommended to admire the building's awesome undulating glass facade, its cafes atop giant inverted cones and the great gift shop [Souvenir from Tokyo](#).

(国立新美術館  03-5777-8600; www.nact.jp; 7-22-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku; admission varies by exhibition;  10am-6pm Wed, Thu & Sat-Mon, to 8pm Fri;  Chiyoda line to Nogizaka, exit 6)

Canadian Embassy Stone Garden

GARDENS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Bring photo ID, sign in and take the escalator up to the entrance to the Canadian Embassy, which is fronted by this stark and brilliant stone sculpture garden. Designed by the Zen priest Shunmyō Masuno, natural and cut stones from the Hiroshima region are used to represent Canada's geological character. Over the balcony, the trees of the Akasaka Palace and the distant skyscrapers provide *shakkei*, the 'borrowed scenery' that's a key principle of Japanese garden design.

(www.canadainternational.gc.ca/japan-japon/index.aspx?lang=eng; 7-3-38 Akasaka, Minato-ko;

 garden 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri;  Ginza line to Aoyama-itchōme, exit 4)

Complex 665

GALLERY



 

Opened in October 2016, this new three-storey building tucked on a backstreet is the location of three major commercial art galleries:

Taka Ishii (www.takaishiigallery.com), **ShugoArts**

(<https://shugoarts.com>) and **Tomio Koyama Gallery**

(www.tomiokoyamagallery.com). The free shows gather up an eclectic selection of Japanese contemporary works and are generally worth a look.

(6-5-24 Roppongi, Minato-ku;  11am-7pm Tue-Sat;  Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 1)

Suntory Museum of Art

MUSEUM

Since its original 1961 opening, the Suntory Museum of Art has subscribed to an underlying philosophy of lifestyle art. Rotating exhibitions focus on the beauty of useful things: Japanese ceramics, lacquerware, glass, dyeing, weaving and such. Its current Tokyo Midtown digs, designed by architect Kuma Kengō, are both

understated and breathtaking.

(サントリー美術館 📞 03-3479-8600; www.suntory.com/sma; 4th fl, Tokyo Midtown, 9-7-4 Akasaka, Minato-ku; admission varies, child free; 🕒 10am-6pm Sun-Wed, to 8pm Fri & Sat; 🚉 S Ōedo line to Roppongi, exit 8)



Suntory Museum of Art | TK KURIKAWA / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

📍 State Guest House, Akasaka Palace

PALACE

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Check online for the opening schedule and somewhat complex admission details for this imperial palace and garden. Outside it's a dead ringer for London's Buckingham Palace. Inside, the tour route passes through four grandly decorated rooms – the most impressive being the **Kacho-no-Ma** (Room of Flowers and Birds), with Japanese ash panels inset with cloisonné panels – plus the entrance hall and

main staircase.

(迎賓館, 赤坂離宮 📞 03-3478-1111; www8.cao.go.jp/geihinkan/index-e.html; 2-1-1, Moto-Akasaka, Minato-ku; front garden free, palace & main garden adult/student ¥1000/500; 🕒 10am-5pm according to opening schedule; 🚶 JR lines to Yotsuya)



State Guest House, Akasaka Palace | APPLE1966 / SHUTTERSTOCK ©


🎯 Tokyo Garden Terrace

LANDMARK

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This new mixed-use development is best visited for its pleasant surrounding gardens and public art, including *White Deer* by Nawa Kōhei and the giant metallic flowers of Ōmaki Shinji. Opened in 2016, on the former site of the Akasaka Grand Prince Hotel, the only piece remaining of the old complex is the restored Kitashirakawa Palace.

Originally built in 1930 for the Korean Crown Prince Yi Un, this baronial-style mansion is now a restaurant and bar.

(www.tgt-kioicho.jp.e.yu.hp.transer.com; 1-2 Kioi-chō, Chiyoda-ku;  Namboku line to Nagatachō, exit 9A)



Top Tip

Tokyo Tower Views

Tokyo Tower, built in 1958 and painted bright orange (to comply with international aviation safety regulations), remains a beloved symbol of the city's post-WWII rebirth. At 333m, it doesn't rise above the landscape like it used to; still, you can catch glimpses of it all lit up at night from various spots in Roppongi. The best view is on Gaien-higashi-dōri, east of Roppongi Crossing.




Eating

Kikunoi

KAISEKI \$\$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Exquisitely prepared seasonal dishes are as beautiful as they are delicious at this Michelin–starred Tokyo outpost of a three-generation-old Kyoto-based *kaiseki* (Japanese haute cuisine) restaurant. Kikunoi's chef Murata has written a book translated into English on *kaiseki* that the staff helpfully use to explain the dishes you are served, if you don't speak Japanese. Reservations are necessary.

(菊乃井  03-3568-6055; <http://kikunoi.jp>; 6-13-8 Akasaka, Minato-ku; lunch/dinner set menu from ¥5940/17,820;  noon-1pm Tue-Sat, 5-8pm Mon-Sat;  Chiyoda line to Akasaka, exit 7)

Sougo

VEGETARIAN \$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Sit at the long counter beside the open kitchen or in booths and watch the expert chefs prepare delicious and beautifully presented *shōjin-ryōri* (vegetarian cuisine as served at Buddhist temples). Reserve at least one day in advance if you want them to prepare a vegan meal. Look for it in the building opposite the APA Hotel.

(宗胡 📞 03-5414-1133; www.sougo.tokyo; 3rd fl, Roppongi Green Bldg, 6-1-8 Roppongi, Minato-ku; mains ¥600-2000, set lunch/dinner from ¥1500/5000; 🍴 🏠; 🅊 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 3)

Gogyō

RAMEN \$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Keep an eye on the open kitchen: no, that's not your dinner going up in flames but the cooking of *kogashi* (burnt) ramen, which this dark and stylish *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eatery) specialises in. It's the burnt lard that gives the broth its dark and intense flavour. There are plenty of other dishes on the menu, and a good range of drinks, too.

(五行 📞 03-5775-5566; www.ramendining-gogyo.com; 1-4-36 Nish-Azabu, Minato-ku; ramen from ¥1290; 🕒 11.30am-4pm & 5pm-3am, to midnight Sun; 🅊 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 2)

Honmura-An

SOBA \$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This fabled soba shop, once located in Manhattan, now serves its handmade buckwheat noodles at this rustically contemporary noodle shop on a Roppongi side street. The delicate flavour of these noodles is best appreciated when served on a bamboo mat, with tempura or with dainty slices of *kamo* (duck).

(本むら庵 📞 03-5772-6657; www.honmuraantokyo.com; 7-14-18 Roppongi, Minato-ku; soba from

¥900, set lunch/dinner ¥1600/7400; 🕒 noon-2.30pm & 5.30-10pm Tue-Sun, closed 1st & 3rd Tue of month; 🚫 📶 📄; 📍 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 4)

Lauderdale

INTERNATIONAL \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Just off chic Keyaki-zaka and sporting a spacious outdoor terrace, this is an on-trend, all-day dining space that works as well for breakfast as it does for dinner. Weekend brunch is very popular here, particularly the egg dishes.

(📞 03-3405-5533; www.lauderdale.co.jp; 6-15-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku; mains from ¥1400; 🕒 7am-midnight Mon-Fri, from 8am Sat & Sun; 📶 📄; 📍 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 1)

Jōmon

IZAKAYA \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This wonderfully cosy kitchen has bar seating, rows of ornate *shochu* (liquor) jugs lining the wall and hundreds of freshly prepared skewers splayed in front of the patrons – don't miss the heavenly *zabuton* beef stick. It's almost directly across from the Family Mart – look for the name in Japanese on the door.

(ジョウモン 📞 03-3405-2585; http://teyandei.com/?page_id=18; 5-9-17 Roppongi, Minato-ku; skewers ¥300-1000; 🕒 6pm-5am; 📶 📄; 📍 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 3)



Top Tip **Play It Safe**

Pickpocketing is rare in Tokyo, but if it is going to happen, it will happen in Roppongi. Note that shadier bars have been known to overcharge credit cards; drink spiking has also been reported. Be particularly wary of

places that employ street touts.




Drinking

SuperDeluxe

CLUB

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This groovy basement performance space, also a cocktail lounge and club of sorts, stages everything from electronic music to literary evenings and creative presentations in the 20 x 20 PechaKucha (20 slides x 20 seconds) format. Check the website for event details. It's in a brown-brick building by a shoe-repair shop.






(スーパー・デラックス  03-5412-0515; www.super-deluxe.com; B1 fl, 3-1-25 Nishi-Azabu, Minato-ku; admission varies; ;  Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 1B)

Brewdog

CRAFT BEER

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This Scottish craft brewery's Tokyo outpost is nestled off the main drag. Apart from its own brews, there's a great selection of other beers, including Japanese ones on tap, mostly all served in small, regular or large (a full pint) portions. Tasty food and computer and board games to while away the evening round out a class operation.

( 03-6447-4160; www.brewdog.com/bars/worldwide/roppongi; 5-3-2 Roppongi, Minato-ku;  5pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 3pm-midnight Sat & Sun;  ;  Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 3)

The Garden

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Stare out from this serene tea lounge across the beautiful late-16th-century garden, hidden behind International House of Japan. There are plenty of tempting pastries and cakes, as well as more substantial meals should you wish to linger – and who could blame you.

(☎03-3470-4611; www.i-house.or.jp/eng/facilities/tealounge; International House of Japan, 5-11-16 Roppongi, Minato-ku; 🕒7am-10pm; 📶📺; 📍 Ōedo line to Azabu-Jūban, exit 7)

Sake Plaza

SAKE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Sake Plaza isn't a bar, but who cares when you can get 30mL thimbles of regionally brewed sake (some 36 types) or *shōchū* (16 types) for as little as ¥100 a shot. There are four tasting sets of three glasses from ¥200 to ¥500. This showroom and tasting space is an ideal place to learn about the national drink.

(日本酒造会館 www.japansake.or.jp; 1-6-15 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku; 🕒10am-6pm Mon-Fri; 📍 Ginza line to Toranomom, exit 9)



Local Life

Nishi-Azabu

A world away from brash Roppongi but just down the road, Nishi-Azabu is the sophisticated haunt of Tokyo's rich and famous. Many bars have a members-only policy, but fortunately not **These** (テーゼ [GOOGLE MAP](#)); (☎03-5466-7331; www.these-jp.com; 2-15-12 Nishi-Azabu, Minato-ku; cover charge ¥500; 🕒7pm-4am, to 2am Sun; 📍 Hibiya line to Roppongi, exit 3). Nicknamed the 'library bar' (and pronounced tay-zay), These is full of nooks and crannies, cosy sofas and, yes, books. Look for the torches out front; reservations recommended.

Entertainment

★ National Theatre

THEATRE

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This is the capital's premier venue for traditional performing arts with a 1600-seat and a 590-seat auditorium. Performances include kabuki, *gagaku* (music of the imperial court) and *bunraku* (classic puppet theatre). Earphones with English translation are available for hire (¥650 plus ¥1000 deposit). Check the website for performance schedules.

(国立劇場, Kokuritsu Gekijō 📞 03-3265-7411; www.ntj.jac.go.jp/english; 4-1 Hayabusa-chō, Chiyoda-ku; tickets from ¥1500; 🚶 Hanzōmon line to Hanzōmon, exit 1)

Shopping

🛒 Souvenir from Tokyo

GIFTS & SOUVENIRS

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This shop, in the basement of the [National Art Center Tokyo](#), sells an expert selection of home-grown design bits and bobs that make for perfect, unique souvenirs: a mobile by Tempo, a bag made from fabric dyed using the *shibori* technique or a fun face pack with a kabuki design.

(スーベニアフロムトーキョー 📞 03-6812 9933; www.souvenirfromtokyo.jp; basement fl, National Art Center Tokyo, 7-22-2 Roppongi, Minato-ku; 🕒 10am-6pm Sat-Mon, Wed & Thu, to 8pm Fri; 🚶 Chiyoda line to Nogizaka, exit 6)

Ebisu & Meguro



YUKIKAE4B / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Ebisu – named for the beer Yebisu that was once brewed here – and Meguro represent Tokyo on a more human scale. There’s a smattering of small but significant museums, such as the city’s photography museum, plus excellent restaurants and bars. Nearby, the fashionable residential neighbourhoods Daikanyama and Naka-Meguro are resplendent with stylish boutiques and cafes.

The Sights in a Day



Start the day in Ebisu and spend the morning at Yebisu Garden Place (follow the ‘Skywalk’ from the east exit of the JR train station). Here catch a photography exhibition at the [TOP Museum](#) and trace the history of beer in Japan at the [Beer Museum Yebisu](#). Then join the local office workers in the queue at [Afuri](#) for a bowl of ramen (soup and noodles with a sprinkling of meat and vegetables).



After lunch, pay a visit to the [Yamatane Museum of Art](#), which specialises in traditional Japanese styles of paintings. If you need a pick-me-up, swing by [Sarutahiko Coffee](#) or ice-cream shop [Ouca](#) on the way. Then take the JR Yamanote line one stop south to Meguro to visit the [Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum](#) – a decorative arts museum in a fabulous art deco mansion.



A short walk down Meguro-dōri takes you to [Tonki](#), which serves superlative *tonkatsu* (deep-fried pork cutlet). Then take the train back to Ebisu and hit that neighbourhood’s lively bar scene, starting at [Buri](#).



Local Life

[Exploring Daikanyama & Naka-Meguro](#)



Best of Tokyo

Food

[Tonki](#)

[Ebisu-yokochō](#)

Galleries & Museums

[TOP Museum](#)

Drinking & Nightlife

[Buri](#)

[Nakame Takkyū Lounge](#)

Entertainment


[Unit](#)


Shopping

[Kapital](#)

[Daikanyama T-Site](#)

Getting There

 **Train** The JR Yamanote line stops at Ebisu and Meguro. The Tōkyū Tōyoko line runs from Shibuya to Daikanyama and Naka-Meguro; some Fukutoshin subway trains continue on the Tōyoko line.

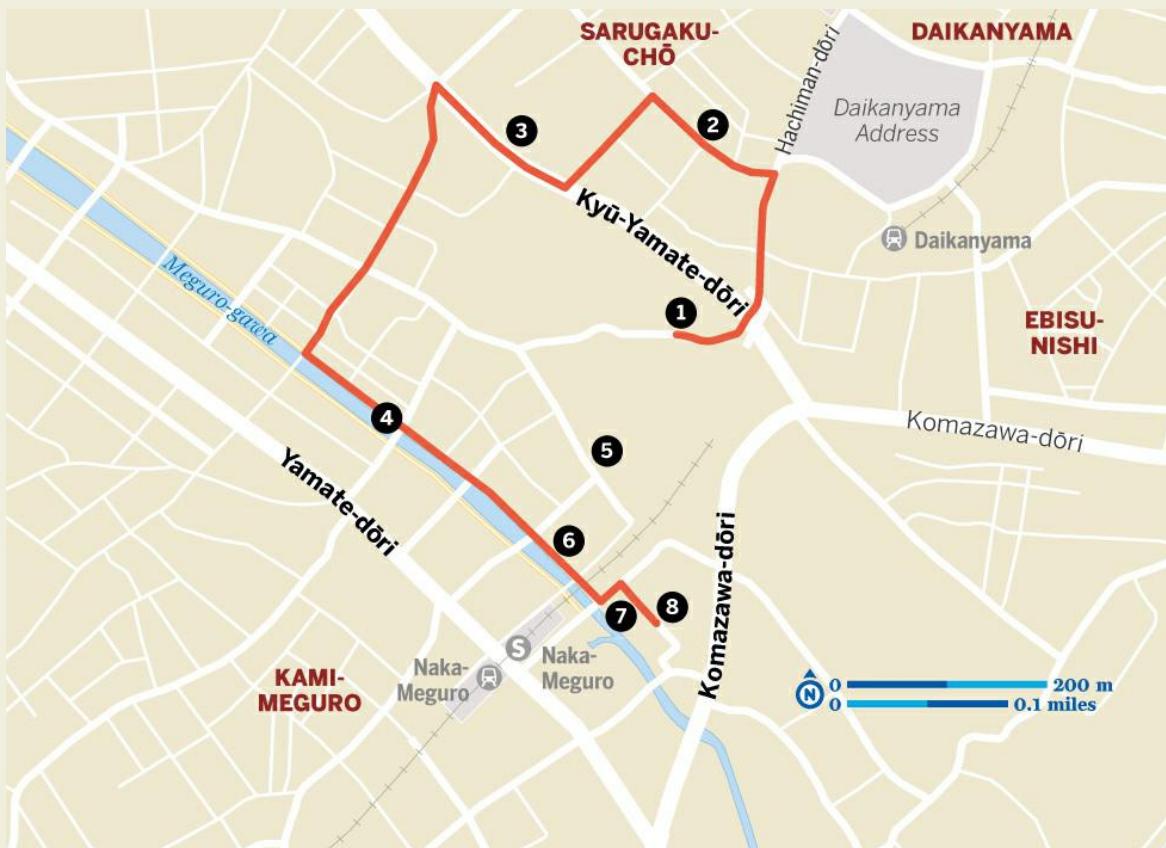
 **Subway** The Hibiya line runs through Ebisu to Naka-Meguro. The Namboku and Mita lines stop at Meguro.



Local Life

Exploring Daikanyama & Naka-Meguro

Just one stop from Shibuya, but a world away, Daikanyama is an upscale residential enclave with sidewalk cafes, fashionable boutiques and an unhurried pace. Neighbouring Naka-Meguro is Daikanyama's bohemian little sister, home to second-hand shops and secret lounge bars. At the heart of the neighbourhood is the Meguro-gawa, a canal with a leafy promenade.



1 Kyū Asakura House

The **Kyū Asakura House** (旧朝倉家住宅; Kyū Asakura-ke Jūtaku) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

; [03-3476-1021](tel:03-3476-1021); 29-20 Sarugaku-chō, Shibuya-ku; adult/child ¥100/50; 🕒 10am-6pm Mar-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Feb; 🚶 Tōkyū Tōyoko line to Daikanyama) is a rare example of early-20th-century villa architecture (so hidden that many locals don't even know it exists) with tatami (reed mat) rooms and a garden with stone lanterns you can explore.

2 Okura

Okura (オクラ [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.hrm.co.jp/okura; 20-11 Sarugaku-chō, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 11.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 11am-8.30pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Tōkyū Tōyoko line to Daikanyama), though it may seem out of place in trendy Daikanyama (the shop looks like a farmhouse), is actually a neighbourhood landmark. It specialises in modern classics: wardrobe staples like jeans, T-shirts and work shirts dyed in traditional indigo.

3 Daikanyama T-Site

Locals love **Daikanyama T-Site** (代官山T-SITE [GOOGLE MAP](#); <http://tsite.jp/daikanyama>; 17-5 Sarugaku-chō, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 7am-2am; 🚶 Tōkyū Tōyoko line to Daikanyama). This stylish shrine to the printed word has fantastic books on travel, art, design and food (some in English). You can even sit at the in-house Starbucks and read all afternoon – if you can get a seat.

4 Meguro-gawa

Lined with cherry trees and a walking path, the **Meguro-gawa** (目黒川 [GOOGLE MAP](#); 🚶 Hibiya line to Naka-Meguro), not so much a river as a canal, is what gives the neighbourhood Naka-Meguro its unlikely village vibe. On either side you'll find boutiques and a handful of eating and drinking spots.

5 The Container

Possibly the city's tiniest art gallery, the **Container** ([GOOGLE MAP](#); <http://the-container.com>; 1-8-30 Kami-Meguro, Meguro-ku; 🕒 11am-9pm Wed-Mon, to 8pm Sat & Sun; 🚉 Hibiya line to Naka-Meguro) is literally a shipping container within a hair salon. It doesn't get much more Tokyo than that.

6 Vase

A perfect example of Naka-Meguro's tiny, impeccably curated boutiques, **Vase** ([GOOGLE MAP](#); vasenakameguro.com; 1-7-7 Kami-Meguro, Meguro-ku; 🕒 noon-8pm; 🚉 Hibiya line to Naka-Meguro) stocks avant-garde designers and vintage pieces (for men and women). It's in a little white house set back from the Meguro-gawa (the name is on the post box).

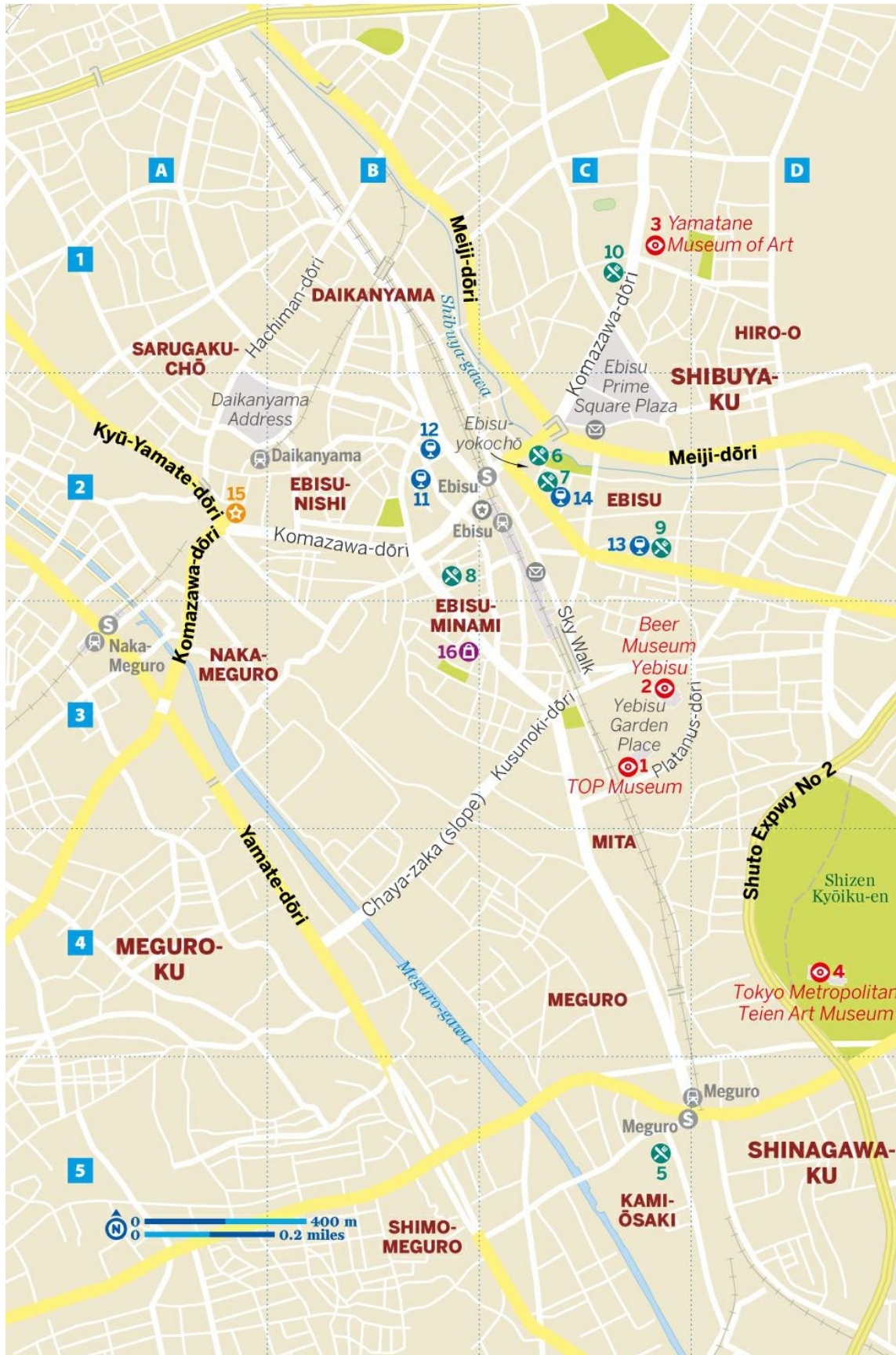
7 Ōtaru

Ōtaru (おおたる [GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3710-7439; 1-5-15 Naka-Meguro, Meguro-ku; dishes ¥330-600; 🕒 11.30am-2am) isn't winning any Michelin stars, but we're giving it three stars of our own for atmosphere. In increasingly redeveloped Naka-Meguro, this *izakaya*, in an old wooden building festooned with lanterns, stands out. Locals and visitors alike love it for its reasonable prices, canalside location and the fact that it opens before noon.

8 Nakame Takkyū Lounge

Call it a day with a round of *takkyū* (ping pong) at **Nakame Takkyū Lounge** (中目卓球ラウンジ [GOOGLE MAP](#); 2nd fl, Lion House Naka-Meguro, 1-3-13 Kami-Meguro, Meguro-ku; cover before/after 10pm ¥500/800; 🕒 6pm-2am Mon-Sat; 🚉 Hibiya line to Naka-Meguro) – the neighbourhood's best-known 'secret'

bar (in an apartment complex); ring the doorbell for entry.



Sights

1	TOP Museum	C3
2	Beer Museum Yebisu	C3
3	Yamatane Museum of Art	C1
4	Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum	D4

Eating

5	Tonki	C5
6	Afuri	C2
7	Ouca	C2
8	Yakiniku Champion	B2
9	Ippo	C2
10	Megutama	C1

Drinking

11	Buri	B2
12	Bar Trench	B2
13	Bar Martha	C2
14	Sarutahiko Coffee	C2

Entertainment

15	Unit	A2
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Shopping

16	Kapital	B3
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Sights

TOP Museum

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tokyo's principal photography museum reopened in 2016 after a two-year overhaul. In addition to drawing on its extensive collection, the museum also hosts travelling exhibitions. In the fall, it curates a show of up-and-coming Japanese photographers. Usually several exhibitions happen simultaneously; ticket prices depend on how many you see.


(東京都写真美術館; Tokyo Photographic Arts Museum  03-3280-0099; <http://topmuseum.jp>; 1-13-3 Mita, Meguro-ku; ¥500-1000;  10am-6pm Tue, Wed, Sat & Sun, to 8pm Thu & Fri;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)

Beer Museum Yebisu

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Photos, vintage bottles and posters document the rise of Yebisu, and beer in general, in Japan at this small museum located where the actual Yebisu brewery stood until 1988. At the 'tasting salon' you can sample four kinds of Yebisu beer (¥400 each). It's behind the Mitsukoshi department store at Yebisu Garden Place.

(エビスビール記念館  03-5423-7255; www.sapporoholdings.jp/english/guide/yebisu; 4-20-1 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku;  11am-7pm Tue-Sun;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)






Beer Museum Yebisu | JOINTSTAR / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Yamatane Museum of Art

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

When Western ideas entered Japan following the Meiji Restoration (1868), many artists set out to master oil and canvas. Others poured new energy into *nihonga* – Japanese-style painting, usually done with mineral pigments on silk or paper – and the masters of this latter movement are represented here. From the collection of 1800 works, a small number are displayed in thematic exhibitions.

(山種美術館  03-5777-8600; www.yamatane-museum.or.jp; 3-12-36 Hiroo, Shibuya-ku; adult/student/child ¥1000/800/free, special exhibits extra;  10am-5pm Tue-Sun;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, west exit)

Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Although the Teien museum hosts regular art exhibitions – usually of decorative arts – its appeal lies principally in the building itself: it's an art deco structure, a former princely estate built in 1933, designed by French architect Henri Rapin. A lengthy renovation (in 2014) saw the addition of a modern annexe designed by artist Sugimoto Hiroshi.

(東京都庭園美術館 www.teien-art-museum.ne.jp; 5-21-9 Shirokanedai, Minato-ku; adult/child ¥1100/800; 🕒 10am-6pm, closed 2nd & 4th Wed each month; 🚉 JR Yamanote line to Meguro, east exit)



Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum | JOHN S LANDER / CONTRIBUTOR / GETTY IMAGES ©

Eating

Tonki

TONKATSU \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tonki is a Tokyo *tonkatsu* (crumbed pork cutlet) legend, deep-frying pork cutlets, recipe unchanged, for nearly 80 years. The seats at the counter – where you can watch the perfectly choreographed chefs – are the most coveted, though there is usually a queue. There are tables upstairs.

(とんき 1-2-1 Shimo-Meguro, Meguro-ku; meals ¥1900; 🕒 4-10.45pm Wed-Mon, closed 3rd Mon of month; 🚫 📺 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Meguro, west exit)

Afuri

RAMEN \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Hardly your typical, surly *rāmen-ya*, Afuri has upbeat young cooks and a hip industrial interior. The unorthodox menu might draw eye-rolls from purists, but house specialities such as *yuzu-shio* (a light, salty broth flavoured with yuzu, a type of citrus) draw lines at lunchtime. Order from the vending machine.

(あふり 1-1-7 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; noodles from ¥880; 🕒 11am-5am; 🚫 📺 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)


Ouca

ICE CREAM \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Green tea isn't the only flavour Japan has contributed to the ice-cream playbook; other delicious innovations available (seasonally) at Ouca include *kuro-goma* (black sesame), *kinako kurosato* (roasted soy-bean flour and black sugar) and *beni imo* (purple sweet potato).

(櫻花 www.ice-ouca.com; 1-6-6 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; ice cream from ¥400; 🕒 11am-11.30pm Mar-Oct,





noon-11pm Nov-Feb;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)

Yakiniku Champion

BARBECUE \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Ready for an introduction into the Japanese cult of *yakiniku* (Korean barbecue)? Champion's sprawling menu includes everything from sweetbreads to the choicest cuts of grade A5 *wagyu* (Japanese beef); the menu even has a diagram of the cuts. You can't go wrong with popular dishes such as *kalbi* (short ribs, ¥980). It's very popular, best to reserve ahead.





(焼肉チャンピオン  03-5768-6922; www.yakiniku-champion.com; 1-2-8 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; dishes ¥780-3300, course from ¥5250;  5pm-12.30am Mon-Fri, to 1am Sat, 4.30pm-midnight Sun; ;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, west exit)

Ippo

IZAKAYA \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This mellow little *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eatery) specialises in simple pleasures: fish and sake (there's an English sign out front that says just that). The friendly chefs speak some English and can help you decide what to have grilled, steamed, simmered or fried (or if you can't decide, the ¥2500 set menu is great value). The entrance is up the wooden stairs.

(一歩  03-3445-8418; 2nd fl, 1-22-10 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; dishes ¥500-1500;  6pm-3am; ;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)

Megutama

SHOKUDO \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Megutama calls itself a 'photo books diner' – because thousands of photo tomes are shelved on its walls. Diners are free to flip through them (use the coloured card as a placeholder). The food here is good, too: classic home-cooking from a trio of very able women in aprons and kerchiefs. It's a modern wooden building with a red awning.

(めぐたま <http://megutama.com/>; 3-2-7 Higashi, Shibuya-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥1000/1500;

🕒 11.30am-2pm & 5-11pm Mon-Fri, noon-10pm Sat & Sun; 📍; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)



Local Life

Ebisu Food Stalls

Locals love **Ebisu-yokochō** (恵比寿横町 [GOOGLE MAP](#));

www.ebisu-yokocho.com; 1-7-4 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; dishes ¥500-1500;

🕒 5pm-late; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit), a retro arcade chock-a-block with food stalls dishing up everything from humble *yaki soba* (fried buckwheat noodles) to decadent *hotate-yaki* (grilled scallops). It's a loud, lively (and smoky) place, especially on a Friday night; go early to get a table. Look for the rainbow-coloured sign marking the entrance.

Drinking





🍷 Buri

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Buri – the name means 'super' in Hiroshima dialect – is one of Ebisu's most popular *tachinomi-ya* (standing bars). On almost any night you can find a lively crowd packed in around the horseshoe-shaped counter here. Generous quantities of sake (more than 40 varieties;

¥770) are served semifrozen, like slushies, in colourful jars.


(ぶり  03-3496-7744; 1-14-1 Ebisu-nishi, Shibuya-ku;  5pm-3am; ;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, west exit)

Bar Trench

COCKTAIL BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

One of the pioneers in Tokyo's new cocktail scene, Trench (named for the trench-like alley in which it is nestled) is a tiny place with the air of old-world bohemianism. It has a short but sweet menu of original tipples. Highlights include the 'Shady Samurai' (green-tea-infused gin with elderflower liquor, egg white and lime; ¥1620).



(パートレンチ  03-3780-5291; <http://small-axe.net/bar-trench/>; 1-5-8 Ebisu-Nishi, Shibuya-ku; cover ¥500;  7pm-2am Mon-Sat, 6pm-1am Sun; ;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, west exit)

Bar Martha

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

It's hard to say which is more impressive at this dim, moody bar: the whiskey list or the collection of records. The latter are played on spot-lit turntables, amplified by a 1m-tall vintage Tannoy speaker. The cocktails, especially the *nama shōga mosuko myūru* (生生姜モスコミュール; fresh ginger moscow mule) are excellent, too. Drinks from ¥800.

(バー・マーサ www.martha-records.com; 1-22-23 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; cover incl bar snacks ¥800;  7pm-5am;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)

Sarutahiko Coffee

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Even though it has only a few seats inside, Sarutahiko Coffee is Ebisu's

most popular caffeine pit stop, thanks to its aromatic, well-chosen beans. Both hand-drip and espresso drinks (from ¥400) are served.

(猿田彦珈琲 <http://sarutahiko.co>; 1-6-6 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 8am-12.30am Mon-Fri, 10am-12.30am Sat & Sun; 📍; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, east exit)

Entertainment

★ Unit

LIVE MUSIC

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

On weekends, this subterranean club has two shows: live music in the evening and a DJ-hosted event that gets started around midnight. The solid line-up includes Japanese indie bands, veterans playing to a smaller crowd and overseas artists making their Japan debut. Unit is less grungy than other Tokyo live houses and, with high ceilings, doesn't get as smoky.

(ユニット 📞 03-5459-8630; www.unit-tokyo.com; 1-34-17 Ebisu-nishi, Shibuya-ku; ¥2500-5000; 🚶 Tōkyū Tōyoko line to Daikanyama)



Local Life

Yebisu Garden Place

Yebisu Garden Place (恵比寿ガーデンプレイス [GOOGLE MAP](#)); www.gardenplace.jp; 4-20 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to

Ebisu, east exit), a shopping and cultural centre, was built on the site of the original Yebisu Beer Brewery (1889) that gave the neighbourhood its name. The large central plaza regularly hosts events, including a farmers market on Sundays.

Shopping

Kapital

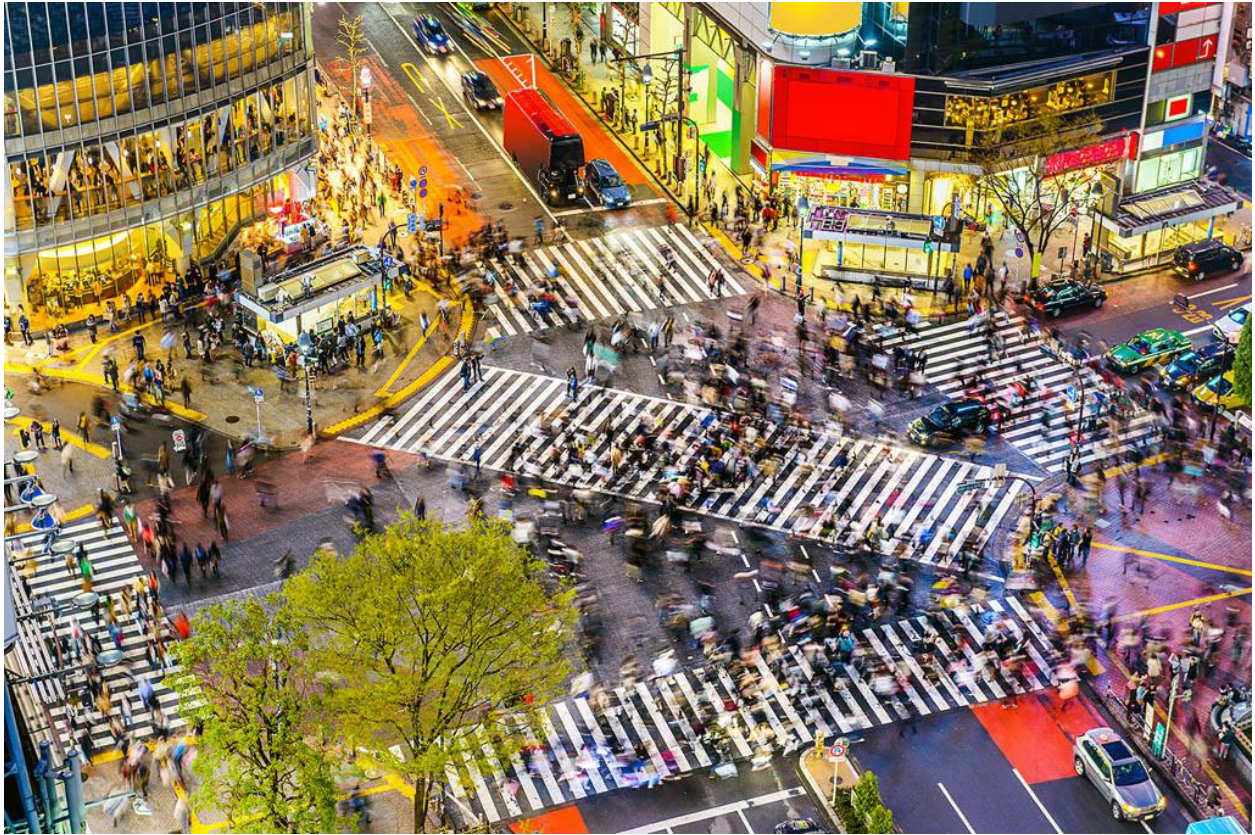
FASHION & ACCESSORIES

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Cult brand Kapital is hard to pin down, but perhaps a deconstructed mash-up of the American West and the centuries-old Japanese aesthetic of *boro* (tatty) chic comes close. Almost no two items are alike; most are unisex. The shop itself is like an art installation. The staff, not snobby at all, can point you towards the other two shops nearby.

(キャピタル  03-5725-3923; <http://kapital.jp>; 2-20-2 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku;  11am-8pm;  JR Yamanote line to Ebisu, west exit)

Shibuya



SEAN PAVONE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Shibuya hits you over the head with its sheer presence: the continuous flow of people, the glowing video screens and the tangible buzz. This is the beating heart of Tokyo's youth culture, where the fashion is loud, the street culture vivid and the nightclubs run until dawn. It is a must-see for anyone interested in Tokyo pop culture.

The Sights in a Day



Shibuya is a neighbourhood that gets a late start – after all it was partying until the first trains started running in the morning. Come for lunch. The light and airy Shibuya Hikarie complex, connected to Shibuya Station, has an interesting design museum, [d47 Museum](#); an excellent restaurant, [d47 Shokudō](#); and views over the neighbourhood. While in the station, look out for the mural [Myth of Tomorrow](#).



Then head down into the fray. That's the iconic intersection [Shibuya Crossing](#) just in front of the station plaza (return at night, to see it all lit up). Be sure to pay your respects to the loyal dog, [Hachikō](#), while you're here. Then follow the pedestrian traffic down [Shibuya Center-gai](#), the neighbourhood's main drag, with lots of shopping opportunities. Careful, or you could lose a half-day in [Tokyu Hands](#).



For dinner, feast on top-grade sukiyaki at [Matsukiya](#) or fresh seafood at [Kaikaya](#). Check in with Tokyo's craft-beer scene at [Good Beer Faucets](#), squeeze into a spot at [Tight](#) or mingle at [Rhythm Cafe](#). Still got energy? Hit a club, like [Womb](#) or [Contact](#).



Best of Tokyo

Architecture & Design

[d47 Museum](#)

Pop Culture

[Shibuya Crossing](#)

[Purikura no Mecca](#)

Drinking & Nightlife

[Good Beer Faucets](#)

[Womb](#)

Entertainment



[WWW](#)

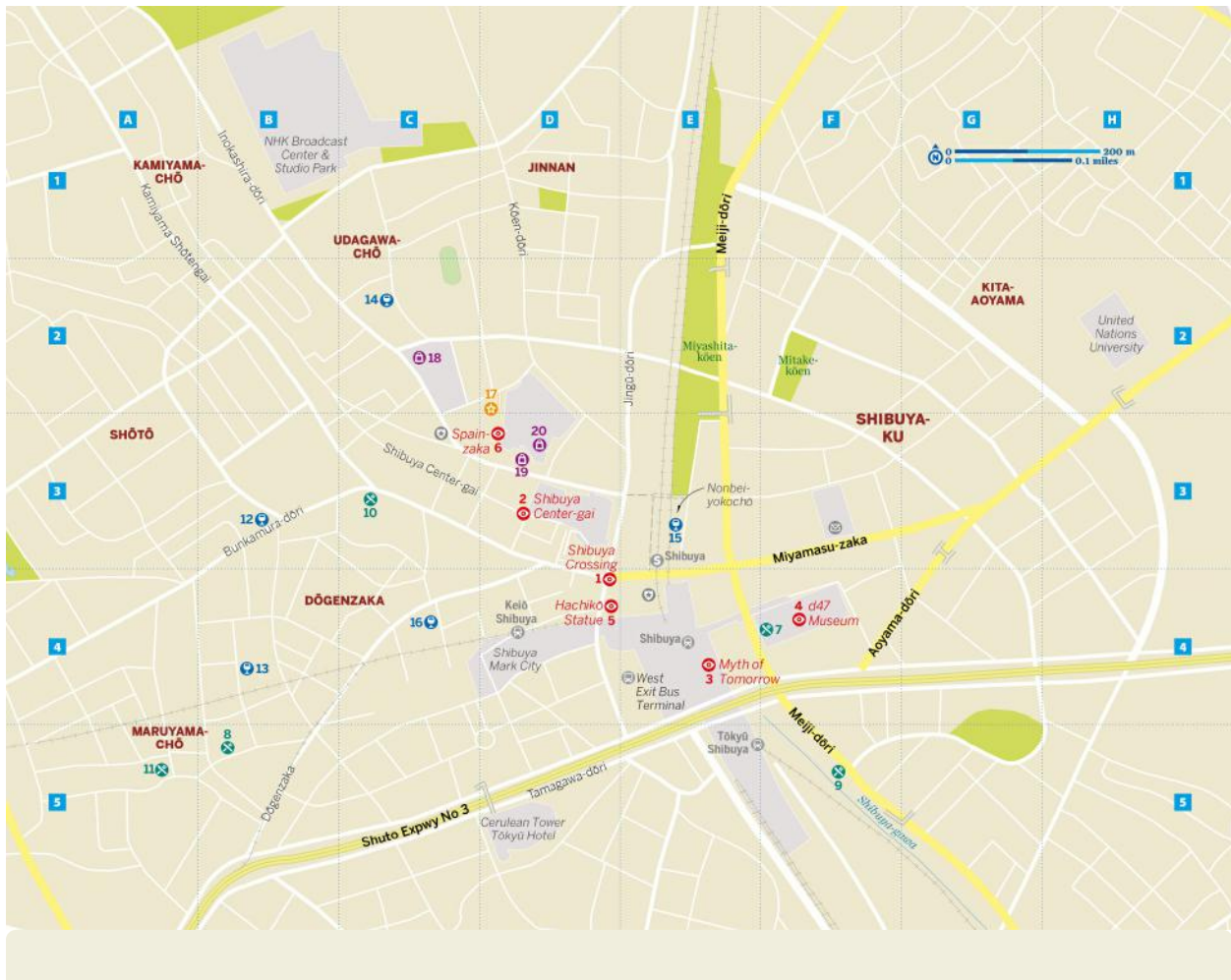
Shopping

[Tokyu Hands](#)

[Fake Tokyo](#)

Getting There

-  **Train** The JR Yamanote line stops at Shibuya Station.
-  **Subway** The Ginza, Hanzōmon and Fukutoshin lines stop in Shibuya.



Sights

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | Shibuya Crossing | D4 |
| 2 | Shibuya Center-gai | D3 |
| 3 | Myth of Tomorrow | E4 |
| 4 | d47 Museum | F4 |
| 5 | Hachikō Statue | D4 |
| 6 | Spain-zaka | D3 |

Eating

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| 7 | d47 Shokudō | F4 |
| 8 | Matsukiya | B5 |
| 9 | Gyūkatsu Motomura | F5 |
| 10 | Sagatani | C3 |
| 11 | Kaikaya | A5 |

Drinking

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| 12 | Good Beer Faucets | B3 |
| 13 | Womb | B4 |
| 14 | Rhythm Cafe | C2 |
| 15 | Tight | E3 |
| 16 | Contact | C4 |

Entertainment

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|
| 17 | WWW | D2 |
|----|---------------------|----|

Shopping

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----|
| 18 | Tokyu Hands | C2 |
| 19 | Fake Tokyo | D3 |
| 20 | Loft | D3 |

Sights

Shibuya Crossing

STREET

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Rumoured to be the busiest intersection in the world (and definitely in Japan), Shibuya Crossing is like a giant beating heart, sending people in all directions with every pulsing light change. Perhaps nowhere else says ‘Welcome to Tokyo’ better than this. Hundreds of people – and at peak times said to be over 1000 people – cross at a time, coming from all directions at once yet still managing to dodge each other with a practised, nonchalant agility.

(渋谷スクランブル交差点; Shibuya Scramble  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)



Shibuya Crossing | SEAN PAVONE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Shibuya Center-gai

AREA

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Shibuya's main drag is closed to cars and chock-a-block with fast-food joints and high-street fashion shops. At night, lit bright as day, with a dozen competing soundtracks (coming from who knows where), wares spilling onto the streets, shady touts in sunglasses, and strutting teens, it feels like a block party – or Tokyo's version of a classic Asian night

market.

(渋谷センター街; Shibuya Sentā-gai  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)




Shibuya Center-gai | SEAN PAVONE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Myth of Tomorrow

PUBLIC ART

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Okamoto Tarō's mural, *Myth of Tomorrow* (1967), was commissioned by a Mexican luxury hotel but went missing two years later. It finally turned up in 2003 and, in 2008, the haunting 30m-long work, which depicts the atomic bomb exploding over Hiroshima, was installed inside Shibuya Station. It's on the 2nd floor, on the way to the Inokashira line.

(明日の神話; Asu no Shinwa  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

d47 Museum

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Lifestyle brand D&Department combs the country for the platonic ideals of the utterly ordinary: the perfect broom, bottle opener or salt shaker (to name a few examples). See rotating exhibitions of its latest finds from all 47 prefectures at this one-room museum. The excellent d47 Design Travel shop is next door.

(www.hikarie8.com/d47museum; 8th fl, Hikarie bldg, 2-21-1 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 11am-8pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, east exit)

Hachikō Statue

STATUE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Come meet Tokyo's most famous pooch, Hachikō. This Akita dog came to Shibuya Station everyday to meet his master, a professor, returning from work. The professor died in 1925, but Hachikō kept coming to the station until his own death 10 years later. The story became legend and a small statue was erected in the dog's memory in front of Shibuya Station. The surrounding plaza is Tokyo's most popular rendezvous point and is always abuzz.


(ハチ公像 Hachikō Plaza; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Spain-zaka

AREA


[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Shibuya's most atmospheric little alley is typical Tokyo bricolage, with a Mediterranean flavour, a mismatch of architectural styles, cutesy clothing stores and a melting pot of restaurants all along a narrow, winding brick lane.

(スペイン坂  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)



Local Life Print Club

It's easy to see why teens get sucked into the cult of *purikura* ('print club', aka photo booths): the digitally enhanced photos automatically airbrush away blemishes and add doe eyes and long lashes for good measure (so you come out looking like an anime version of yourself). After primping and posing, decorate the images on screen with touch pens. **Purikura no Mecca** (プリクラのメッカ [GOOGLE MAP](#)); 3rd fl, 29-1 Udagawa-chō, Shibuya-ku; purikura ¥400; 🕒 24hr;  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit) has the best selection of booths. Note that all-guy groups aren't allowed in.




Eating

d47 Shokudō

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

There are 47 prefectures in Japan and d47 serves a changing line-up of *teishoku* (set meals) that evoke the specialities of each, from the fermented tofu of Okinawa to the stuffed squid of Hokkaido. A larger menu of small plates is available in the evening. Picture windows offer bird's-eye views over the trains coming and going at Shibuya Station.

(d47食堂 www.hikarie8.com/d47shokudo/about.shtml; 8th fl, Shibuya Hikarie, 2-21-1 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; meals ¥1200-1780; 🕒 11am-2.30pm & 6-10.30pm; 🚫    JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, east exit)

Matsukiya

HOTPOT \$\$\$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Matsukiya has been making sukiyaki (thinly sliced beef, simmered and then dipped in raw egg) since 1890, and the chefs really, really know what they're doing. It's worth upgrading to the premium course (¥7500) for even meltier meat. Prices are per person and for a full course that includes veggies and finishes with noodles cooked in the broth.

(松木家 📞 03-3461-2651; 6-8 Maruyama-chō, Shibuya-ku; sukiyaki from ¥5400; 🕒 5-11pm Mon-Sat; 🏠; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Gyūkatsu Motomura

TONKATSU \$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

You know *tonkatsu*, the deep-fried breaded pork cutlet that is a Japanese staple; meet *gyūkatsu*, the deep-fried breaded beef cutlet that is Tokyo's latest food-craze. At Motomura, the beef is super-crisp on the outside and still very rare on the inside; diners get a small individual grill to finish the job to their liking. Set meals include cabbage, rice and soup.

(牛かつもと村 📞 03-3797-3735; basement fl, 3-18-10 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; set meal ¥1200; 🕒 10.30am-10.30pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-8.30pm Sun; 🚫🍷; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, east exit)

Sagatani

SOBA \$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Proving that Tokyo is only expensive to those who don't know better, this all-night joint serves up bamboo steamers of delicious noodles for just ¥290. You won't regret 'splurging' on the *goma-dare soba* (ごまだれそば; buckwheat noodles with sesame dipping sauce) for ¥390. Look for the stone mill in the window and order from the vending machine.

(嵯峨谷 2-25-7 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku; noodles from ¥290; 🕒 24hr; 🚫📱; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Kaikaya

SEAFOOD \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Traveller favourite Kaikaya is one chef's attempt to bring the beach to Shibuya. Surfboards hang on the walls and much of what's on the menu is caught in nearby Sagami Bay. Seafood is served both Japanese- and Western-style. One must-try is the *maguro no kama* (tuna collar; ¥1200). Reservations recommended; there's a table charge of ¥400 per person.

(開花屋 📞 03-3770-0878; www.kaikaya.com; 23-7 Maruyama-chō, Shibuya-ku; lunch from ¥850, dishes ¥850-2300; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 5.30-10.30pm Mon-Fri, 5.30-10.30pm Sat & Sun; 🚫📱; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)



Top Tip **Food on the Go**

For an easy meal, head to take-away paradise **Food Show** (フードショー [GOOGLE MAP](#)); basement fl, 2-24-1 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 10am-9pm; 📍; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit) in the basement of Shibuya Station. A green sign pointing downstairs marks the entrance at Hachikō Plaza.

Drinking

Good Beer Faucets

CRAFT BEER

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

With 40 shiny taps, Good Beer Faucets has one of the city's best selections of Japanese craft brews and regularly draws a full house of locals and expats. The interior is chrome and concrete (and not at all grungy). Come for happy hour (5pm to 8pm Monday to Thursday, 1pm to 7pm Sunday) and get ¥200 off any pint.

(グッドビアフォウセツ <http://shibuya.goodbeerfaucets.jp>; 2nd fl, 1-29-1 Shōtō, Shibuya-ku; pints from ¥800; 🕒 5pm-midnight Mon-Thu & Sat, to 3am Fri, 4-11pm Sun; 🚶📶📧🚶; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Womb

CLUB

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

A long-time (in club years, at least) club-scene fixture, Womb gets a lot of big-name international DJs playing mostly house and techno on Friday and Saturday nights. Frenetic lasers and strobes splash across the heaving crowds, which usually jam all four floors. Weekdays are quieter, with local DJs playing EDM mix and ladies getting free entry (with flyer).

(ウーム 📞 03-5459-0039; www.womb.co.jp; 2-16 Maruyama-chō, Shibuya-ku; cover ¥1500-4000; 🕒 11pm-late Fri & Sat, 4-10pm Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)


Rhythm Cafe

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Run by a record label, fun and funky Rhythm Cafe often draws more customers than it can fit, meaning the party spills into the street. It's known for having offbeat event nights (such as the retro Japanese pop night on the fourth Thursday of the month). Drinks start at ¥700; when DJs spin, the cover is around ¥1000.

(リズムカフェ 📞 03-3770-0244; <http://rhythmcafe.jp>; 11-1 Udagawa-chō, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 6pm-2am;



 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Tight

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This teeny-tiny bar is wedged among the wooden shanties of Nonbei-yokochō, a narrow nightlife strip along the elevated JR tracks. Like the name suggests, it's a tight fit, but the lack of seats doesn't keep regulars away: on a busy night, people line the stairs. Look for the big picture window. No cover charge; drinks around ¥700.




(タイト 2nd fl, 1-25-10 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku;  6pm-2am Mon-Sat, to midnight Sun;  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Contact

CLUB

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This is Tokyo's newest hot spot, a stylish underground club that's keen on keeping up with the times (even if that means it's a little heavy on rules): the dance floor is no smoking and no photos (so you can dance with abandon). Weekends see big international names and a young, fashionable crowd. Under-23s get in for ¥2000. ID required.

(コンタクト  03-6427-8107; www.contacttokyo.com; basement, 2-10-12 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku; ¥2000-3500; ;  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Entertainment


WWW

LIVE MUSIC


[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

In a former arthouse cinema (with the tell-tale tiered floor still intact),

this is one of those rare venues where you could turn up just about any night and hear something good. The line-up varies from indie pop to punk to electronica. Upstairs is the new WWW X, with more space.

(www.shibuya.jp/index.html]; 13-17 Udagawa-chō, Shibuya-ku; tickets ¥2000-5000;  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Understand Love Hotels

Sky-high residential rents mean many young people live at home until marriage; consequently, *rabuho* ('love hotels' for amorous encounters) have become a crucial part of modern courtship rituals. They're notorious for their fantastical decor – intended to evoke distant palaces or exotic islands. Shibuya's **Dōgenzaka** (道玄坂; Love Hotel Hill [GOOGLE MAP](#));  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit) has one of the largest collections of love hotels in the city. If you're travelling as a couple, a *rabuho* can be a cheap alternative to a business hotel: an all-night 'stay' starts around ¥6500 (a three-hour daytime 'rest' costs about ¥4000).


Shopping


Tokyu Hands

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This DIY and *zakka* (miscellaneous goods) store has eight fascinating floors of everything you didn't know you needed. Like reflexology slippers, bee-venom face masks and cartoon-character-shaped rice-ball moulds. Most stuff is inexpensive, making it perfect for souvenir- and gift-hunting. Warning: you could lose hours in here.

(東急ハンズ <http://shibuya.tokyu-hands.co.jp>; 12-18 Udagawa-chō, Shibuya-ku;  10am-8.30pm;




 JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Fake Tokyo

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This is one of the best places in the city to discover hot underground Japanese designers. It's actually two shops in one: downstairs is Candy, full of brash, unisex streetwear; upstairs is Sister, which specialises in more ladylike items, both new and vintage. Look for the 'Fake Tokyo' banners out front.




( 03-5456-9892; www.faketokyo.com; 18-4 Udagawa-chō, Shibuya-ku;  noon-10pm;  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

Loft

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This emporium of homewares, stationery and accessories specialises in all that is cute and covetable. The 1st floor, which stocks seasonal stuff and gifts, is particularly ripe for souvenir hunting.

( 03-3462-3807; www.loft.co.jp; 18-2 Udagawa-chō, Shibuya-ku;  10am-9pm;  JR Yamanote line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)



Loft store in Shibuya | USJ / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



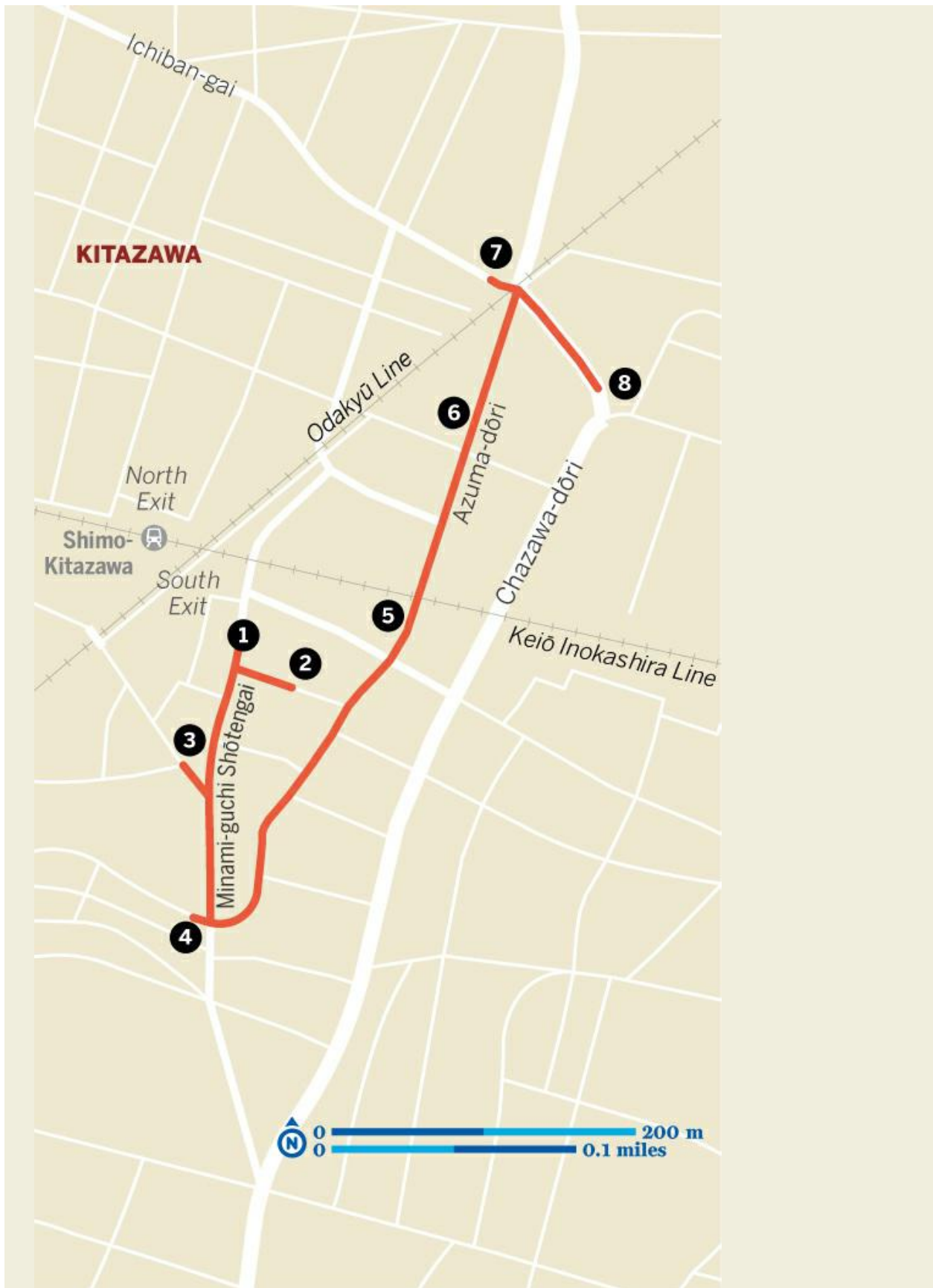
Local Life

A Night Out in Shimo-Kitazawa

For 50 years, Shimokita (as it's called here) has been a prism through which to see the city's alternative side. While other neighbourhoods go big, Shimokita fiercely defends its small stature, its narrow, crooked roads (the bane of taxi drivers) and its analogue vibe. Spend an evening here and raise your glass to (and with) the characters committed to keeping Shimokita weird.

Getting There

- 🚆 Shimo-Kitazawa is a seven-minute train ride from either Shibuya or Shinjuku.
- 🚆 From Shibuya, take the Keiō Inokashira line to Shimo-Kitazawa; from Shinjuku, take the Odakyū line to Shimo-Kitazawa.



1 Minami-guchi Shōtengai

The **Minami-guchi shōtengai** (南口商店街), marked by an arch, is the main drag heading south from the station. It's here where the crowds get so thick that cars can't pass (though even without people it's still barely wide enough for cars to pass). As you walk, look out for the colourful murals on the shutters of shops that have closed for the day.

2 Books and Beer

First stop: happy hour with the bookish crowd. **B&B** ([GOOGLE MAP](#); <http://bookandbeer.com>; 2nd fl, 2-12-4 Kitazawa, Setagaya-ku; 🕒 noon-midnight; 📍; 🚶 Keiō Inokashira line to Shimo-Kitazawa, south exit) – which stands for books and beer – represents the new wave of Shimokita: a painfully hip bookstore that serves craft beer (from ¥500; or coffee, if that's how you roll). There is a small but good selection of English books on Tokyo here. Readings and acoustic performances take place some evenings.

3 Shirube

Duck down a side street and look for the white door curtains that mark the entrance to **Shirube** (汁べろ [GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3413-3785; 2-18-2 Kitazawa, Setagaya-ku; dishes ¥730-1060; 🕒 5.30pm-midnight; 📍; 🚶 Keiō Inokashira line to Shimo-Kitazawa, south exit), a lively *izakaya* (Japanese-style pub) that is pretty much always packed. You'll want to book ahead if you've got a group or are out on a Friday or Saturday night.

4 Mother

Step into **Mother** (マザー [GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3421-9519; www.rock-mother.com;

5-36-14 Daizawa, Setagaya-ku; 🕒 5pm-2am Sun-Thu, 5pm-5am Fri & Sat; 📍; 🚶 Keiō Inokashira line to Shimo-Kitazawa, south exit), **classic Shimo-Kitazawa** and a work of art itself. The space, with undulating, mosaic walls, is definitely womb-like (the better to incubate future rock-n-rollers); the soundtrack is '60s and '70s. Don't miss the made-in-house 'mori' liquor, served from a glass skull (drinks from ¥600).

5 Azuma-dōri

Azuma-dōri (東通り), with its low-slung buildings, faux stained-glass street lamps and arching street signs, contains many of the elements that make up Shimokita's charmingly retro visual identity. As you turn on to the road, look to your left for the tiny shrine, Kōshindō (庚申堂), which is lovingly kept up by anonymous residents.

6 Trouble Peach

Pretty much everything at **Trouble Peach** (トラブル・ピーチ [GOOGLE MAP](#)); 📞 03-3460-1468; 2nd fl, 2-9-18 Kitazawa, Setagaya-ku; cover ¥400; 🕒 7pm-7am; 📍; 🚶 Keiō Inokashira line to Shimo-Kitazawa, south exit) is chipped, frayed or torn – and none of it is artifice. This is a well-worn and well-loved bar, open for some 40-odd years, and still playing vinyl. It looks primed for demolition but has somehow managed to survive. Look for the neon sign by the tracks. Cover ¥400; drinks from ¥500.

7 Never Never Land

Twinkling lights mark the entrance of late-night haunt **Never Never Land** (ネヴァーネヴァーランド [GOOGLE MAP](#)); 2nd fl, 3-19-3 Kitazawa, Setagaya-ku; cover ¥200 per person; 🕒 6pm-2am; 📍; 🚶 Keiō Inokashira line to Shimo-Kitazawa, north exit), a long-running Shimokita bar that's consistently smoky, loud

and filled with bohemian characters. The bar serves tasty Okinawan dishes along with beer and cocktails (food and drink from ¥500; cover charge ¥200 per person).

8 **The Suzunari**

The Suzunari (ザ・スズナリ) is one of the neighbourhood's landmark fringe theatres. The sprawling (and rather dilapidated) building also includes a dozen or so tiny bars, like Ghetto.

Harajuku & Aoyama



MAREMAGNUM / GETTY IMAGES ©

Harajuku is one of Tokyo's biggest draws, thanks to its grand shrine, Meiji-jingū, outré street fashion, impressive contemporary architecture and art museums. Neighbouring Aoyama is a shopping and dining district for the city's fashionable elite. You can spend a rewarding day here bouncing between the traditional and the modern while indulging in excellent restaurants, cafes and boutiques.

The Sights in a Day



Harajuku is a neighbourhood that rewards an early start: start with the famous Shintō shrine, [Meiji-jingū](#) – you'll beat the crowds this way. Then make your way along [Omote-sandō](#), before the shopping starts in earnest – the better to see the striking contemporary buildings that line the boulevard. Stop for a bite to eat at local fave [Harajuku Gyōza-rō](#), or any of the excellent lunch stops in the district.



After lunch, step into the hushed environs of one of the excellent art museums here, like the [Ukiyo-e Ōta Memorial Museum of Art](#), for woodblock prints, or the [Nezu Museum](#), for antiquities. Harajuku is a world-renowned shopping destination and it's worth weaving through the side streets (where the looks are edgier) en route to [Takeshita-dōri](#). This trendy shopping strip, beloved by teens all over, should be heaving by now.



Once the shops close, Harajuku becomes eerily quiet. At dusk, there's no better spot to be than the terrace at [Two Rooms](#) in Aoyama. There are some excellent (and not unreasonable) dinner options here, like [Yanmo](#), if you've planned for a splurge night.



Top Sights

[Meiji-jingū](#)



Best of Tokyo

Museums & Galleries

[Nezu Museum](#)

Parks & Gardens

[Yoyogi-kōen](#)

Pop Culture

[Kawaii Monster Cafe](#)

[Takeshita-dōri](#)



Drinking & Nightlife

[Two Rooms](#)

Best Shopping

[Sou-Sou](#)

Getting There

-  **Train** The JR Yamanote line stops at Harajuku Station.
-  **Subway** The Chiyoda line runs beneath Omote-sandō, stopping at Meiji-jingūmae (for Harajuku) and Omote-sandō (for Aoyama). The Ginza and Hanzōmon lines also stop at Omote-sandō Station.



Top Sights Meiji-jingū

If you visit only one Shintō shrine in Tokyo, make it this one. Meiji-jingū is dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, whose reign (1868–1912) coincided with Japan's transformation from isolationist, feudal state to modern nation. The shrine is undergoing renovation in preparation for its centennial in 2020; some structures may be under wraps, but as a whole it will remain open.

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

明治神宮 www.meijijingu.or.jp; 1-1 Yoyogi Kamizono-chō, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 dawn-dusk; 🚉 JR

Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit



Wooden torii (gate) at Meiji-jingū | BEIBAOKE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

✔ Top Tips

- ➔ Time your visit for 8am or 2pm to catch the twice daily *nikkusai*, the ceremonial offering of food and prayers to the gods.
- ➔ If you're lucky, you may catch a traditional wedding procession (just try not to get in the way).
- ➔ You'll likely attract guards if you get your camera out too close to the main shrine. The rule of photo-taking here is this: if there's a roof over your head, it's a no-go.

🍴 Take a Break

Coffee shop **Mori no Terrace** (社のテラス [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎03-3379-9222; 1-1 Yoyogi Kamizono-chō, Shibuya-ku; 🕒9am-dusk) is right on the gravel path leading into the shrine grounds.

Ramen shop [Kyūsyū Jangara](#) is a short walk away.

The Gates

Several wooden *torii* (gates) mark the entrance to Meiji-jingū. The largest, created from a 1500-year-old Taiwanese cypress, stands 12m high. It's the custom to bow upon passing through a *torii*, which marks the boundary between the mundane world and the sacred one.

The Font

Before approaching the main shrine, visitors purify themselves by pouring water over their hands at the *temizuya* (font). Dip the ladle in the water and first rinse your left hand then your right. Pour some water into your left hand and rinse your mouth, then rinse your left hand again. Make sure none of this water gets back into the font!

Main Shrine

Constructed in 1920 and destroyed in WWII air raids, the shrine was rebuilt in 1958; however, unlike so many of Japan's postwar

reconstructions, Meiji-jingū has an authentic old-world feel. The main shrine is made of cypress from the Kiso region of Nagano. To make an offering, toss a ¥5 coin in the box, bow twice, clap your hands twice and then bow again. To the right, you'll see kiosks selling *ema* (wooden plaques on which prayers are written) and *omamori* (charms).

Meiji-jingū Gyoen

The shrine itself occupies only a small fraction of the sprawling forested grounds, which contain some 120,000 trees collected from all over Japan. Along the path towards the main shrine, is the entrance to Meiji-jingū Gyoen, a landscaped garden. It once belonged to a feudal estate; however, when the grounds passed into imperial hands, the emperor himself designed the iris garden to please the empress.



Sake barrels at Meiji-jingū | WIBOWO RUSLI / GETTY IMAGES ©



📍 Top Sights

[Meiji-jingū](#) A2

📍 Sights

1 [Omote-sandō](#) D6

2 [Yoyogi-kōen](#) A5

3 [Nezu Museum](#) E7

4 [Ukiyo-e Ōta Memorial Museum of Art](#) B5

5 [Takeshita-dōri](#) B4

6 [Design Festa](#) C4

7 [Watari Museum of Contemporary Art](#) D4

8 [Kawaii Monster Cafe](#) C4

🍴 Eating

9 [Harajuku Gyōza-rō](#) B5

10 [Maisen](#) D5

11 [Yanmo](#) D7

12 [Commune 246](#) D6

13 [Higashiya Man](#) D6

[Sakura-tei](#) C4

14 [Kyūsyū Jangara](#) B5

🍷 Drinking

15 [Two Rooms](#) D7

16 [Oath](#) C8

17 [Montoak](#) B5

🛍 Shopping

18 [Sou-Sou](#) E7

19 [Dog](#) C4

20 [Musubi](#) C4

21	Laforet	B5
22	Bedrock	C5
23	Comme des Garçons	D7
	KiddyLand	B5
24	Chicago Thrift Store	B5



Sights

Omote-sandō

AREA

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This regal boulevard was originally designed as the official approach to Meiji-jingū. Now it's a fashionable strip lined with high-end boutiques. Those designer shops come in designer buildings, which means Omote-sandō is among the best places in the city to see contemporary architecture.


(表参道  Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exits A3 & B4,  JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Yoyogi-kōen

PARK

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

If it's a sunny and warm weekend afternoon, you can count on there being a crowd lazing around the large grassy expanse that is Yoyogi-kōen. You can also usually find revellers and noisemakers of all stripes, from hula-hoopers to African drum circles to a group of retro greasers dancing around a boom box. It's an excellent place for a picnic and probably the only place in the city where you can reasonably toss a frisbee without fear of hitting someone.

(代々木公園 www.yoyogipark.info;  JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)



Blossom viewing, Yoyogi-kōen | WILLIAM ALLUM / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Nezu Museum

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Nezu Museum offers a striking blend of old and new: a renowned collection of Japanese, Chinese and Korean antiquities in a gallery space designed by contemporary architect Kuma Kengo. Select items from the extensive collection are displayed in seasonal exhibitions. The English explanations are usually pretty good. Behind the galleries is a woody strolling garden laced with stone paths and studded with teahouses and sculptures.

(根津美術館)  03-3400-2536; www.nezu-muse.or.jp; 6-5-1 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku;

adult/student/child ¥1100/800/free, special exhibitions extra ¥200;  10am-5pm Tue-Sun;  Ginza




line to Omote-sandō, exit A5)

Ukiyo-e Ōta Memorial Museum of Art

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Change into slippers to enter the peaceful, hushed museum that houses the excellent *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints) collection of Ōta Seizo, the former head of the Toho Life Insurance Company. Seasonal, thematic exhibitions are easily digested in an hour and usually include a few works by masters such as Hokusai and Hiroshige. It's often closed the last few days of the month.


(浮世絵太田記念美術館  03-5777-8600; www.ukiyoe-ota-muse.jp; 1-10-10 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; adult ¥700-1000, child free;  10.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun;  JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Takeshita-dōri

AREA

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This is Tokyo's famously outré fashion bazaar, where trendy duds sit alongside the trappings of decades of fashion subcultures (plaid and safety pins for the punks; colourful tutus for the *decora*; Victorian dresses for the Gothic Lolitas). Be warned: this pedestrian alley is a pilgrimage site for teens from all over Japan, which means it can get packed.

(竹下通り  JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Takeshita exit)

Design Festa

GALLERY

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Design Festa has been a leader in Tokyo's DIY art scene for nearly two

decades. The madhouse building itself is worth a visit; it's always evolving. Inside there are dozens of small galleries rented by the day. More often than not, the artists themselves are hanging around, too.

Funky *okononiyaki* restaurant Sakuratei is here.

(デザインフェスタ 📞 03-3479-1442; www.designfestagallery.com; 3-20-2 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku;

🕒 11am-8pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Takeshita exit)

👁️ **Watari Museum of Contemporary Art**

MUSEUM

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This progressive and often provocative museum was built in 1990 to a design by Swiss architect Mario Botta. Exhibits range from retrospectives of established art-world figures (such as Yayoi Kusama and Nam June Paik) to graffiti and landscape artists – with some exhibitions spilling onto the surrounding streets. 'Pair' tickets cost ¥1600 for two.

(ワタリウム美術館; Watari-Um 📞 03-3402-3001; www.watarium.co.jp; 3-7-6 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku;

adult/student ¥1000/800; 🕒 11am-7pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 9pm Wed; 🚶 Ginza line to Gaienmae, exit 3)

👁️ **Kawaii Monster Cafe**

NOTABLE BUILDING

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Lurid colours, surrealist installations and out-of-this world costumes – this is the vision of Sebastian Masuda, stylist to pop star Kyary Pamyu Pamyu, who designed this new cafe. It's an embodiment of the now-reigning aesthetic of *guro-kawaii* (somewhat grotesque cuteness). Food and drink (not what you're here for, but you have to order something) are coloured to match the decor.

(📞 03-5413-6142; <http://kawaiimonster.jp/pc/>; 4th fl, YM Bldg, 4-31-10 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; cover

charge ¥500, drinks from ¥800; 🕒 11.30am-4.30pm & 6-10.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-8pm Sun; 🚆 JR
Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Understand

Religion Today

Visit Omote-sandō – originally designed as the official approach to Meiji-jingū – on a weekend and you'll see Tokyoites lining the pavements, waiting for a seat at the latest hot restaurant. Meanwhile, Meiji-jingū is full of tourists. Yet over the first three days of the New Year, about three million people visit the shrine to ring in the New Year. While religion may play little part in the daily lives of most Tokyoites, when tradition calls they turn out in a big way.

Annual Observances

Ganjitsu (New Year's Day) is the most auspicious day of the Japanese calendar. At midnight on 1 January, crowds convene at temples (where bells are rung 108 times to cast off the worldly desires of the previous year) and at shrines (where people pray for health, happiness and prosperity for the year to come). In Tokyo, [Meiji-jingū](#) is the most popular shrine to visit and [Sensō-ji](#) is the most popular temple. (Neither is for the crowd-adverse).

Another important annual event is **O-Bon**: three days in mid-August to honour the dead, when their spirits are said to return to the earth. Many Tokyoites return to their home towns to sweep the graves of their ancestors and to participate in *bon-odori* (folk dances), which have ancient roots. [Yasukuni-jinja](#) celebrates O-Bon in July with thousands of lanterns.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage are marked, as for centuries, with a visit to a shrine or temple. Japan's two religious institutions – its native Shintō, an animist belief system that sees godliness in trees, rocks and animals, and Buddhism, which arrived via China in the 7th century – have long coexisted.

Generally, Shintō concerns itself with this life: births and marriage, for example, are celebrated at shrines. If you're lucky, you might catch such a ceremony, where celebrants wear elaborate kimonos. Meanwhile, Buddhism deals with the afterlife: funerals and memorial rites take place at temples.

Eating

Harajuku Gyōza-rō

DUMPLINGS \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Gyōza (dumplings) are the only thing on the menu here, but you won't hear any complaints from the regulars who queue up to get their fix. Have them *sui* (boiled) or *yaki* (pan-fried), with or without *niniku* (garlic) or *nira* (chives) – they're all delicious. Expect to wait on weekends, but the line moves quickly.

(原宿餃子楼 6-4-2 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 6 gyōza ¥290; 🕒 11.30am-4.30am; 🏠; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Maisen

TONKATSU \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

You could order something else (maybe fried shrimp), but everyone else will be ordering the famous *tonkatsu* (breaded, deep-fried pork cutlets). There are different grades of pork on the menu, including prized *kurobuta* (black pig), but even the cheapest is melt-in-your-mouth divine. The restaurant is housed in an old public bathhouse. A takeaway window serves delicious *tonkatsu sando* (sandwich).

(まい泉 <http://mai-sen.com>; 4-8-5 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥995/1680; 🕒 11am-10pm; 🚶; 🏠; 🚶 Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit A2)

Yanmo

SEAFOOD \$\$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Freshly caught seafood from the nearby Izu Peninsula is the speciality at this upscale, yet unpretentious restaurant. If you're looking to

splash out on a seafood dinner, this is a great place to do so. The reasonably priced set menus include sashimi and steamed and grilled fish. Reservations are essential for dinner. Lunch is a bargain, but you might have to queue.

(やんも 📞 03-5466-0636; www.yanmo.co.jp/aoyama/index.html; basement fl, T Place bldg, 5-5-25 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; lunch/dinner set menu from ¥1100/7560; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 6-10.30pm Mon-Sat; 🚫; 📍 Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit A5)

Commune 246

MARKET \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Commune 246 is one of the rare alfresco dining spots in Tokyo. It's really more like a semipermanent food-truck gathering (no one knows how long it will last; the land is incredibly valuable). There are a dozen or so vendors offering inexpensive curries, hotdogs, beer and the like. You can put together a meal for around ¥1000, then grab a bench.

(<http://commune246.com/>; 3-13 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; 🕒 11am-10pm; 🚫 🍷 🏠; 📍 Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit A4)

Higashiya Man

SWEETS \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Manjū (まんじゅう) – that's where the shop's name comes from; it's not just for men! – are hot buns stuffed with sweetened red-bean paste. They're steamed fresh at this takeaway counter, a popular pit-stop for Aoyama shoppers. Inside the tiny shop, there's a greater selection of traditional Japanese sweets, many packaged beautifully for gifts.







(ひがしやまん 📞 03-5414-3881; www.higashiya.com/shop/man/; 3-17-14 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; sweets ¥300; 🕒 11am-7pm; 🍷; 📍 Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit A4)

Sakura-tei

OKONOMIYAKI \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Grill your own *okonomiyaki* at this funky place inside the gallery [Design Festa](#). In addition to classic options (with pork, squid and cabbage), there are some wacky innovations (like taco or carbonara *okonomiyaki*). There's also a great value 90-minute, all-you-can-eat plan (lunch/dinner ¥1250/2100).






(さくら亭  03-3479-0039; www.sakuratei.co.jp; 3-20-1 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; okonomiyaki ¥950-1500;  11am-midnight;    ;  JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Takeshita exit)

Kyūsyū Jangara

RAMEN \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Come sample the elegantly thin noodles, silky *chāshū* (roast pork) and righteous *karashi takana* (hot pickled greens) for which Kyūshū-style ramen is famous. You can't go wrong with ordering *zembu-iri* (everything in). Vegetarians and vegans take note: Kyūsyū Jangara recently debuted a bowl just for you, which, against all odds, is actually pretty good.



(九州じゃんがら 1-13-21 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; ramen ¥630-1130;  10.45am-midnight Mon-Fri, from 10am Sat & Sun;   ;  JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)



Local Life

Aoyama Markets

On weekends the most popular lunch spot is the cluster of food trucks at Aoyama's **farmers market** ([GOOGLE MAP](#));

www.farmersmarkets.jp; 5-53-7 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku;  10am-4pm Sat & Sun;  Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit B2). Events pop up here, too, including the hipster flea market **Raw**

Tokyo (www.rawtokyo.jp) – with DJs and live painting – on the first weekend of the month.





Drinking

Two Rooms

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Expect a crowd dressed like they don't care that wine by the glass starts at ¥1600. You can eat here, too, but the real scene is at night by the bar. Call ahead (staff speak English) on Friday or Saturday night to reserve a table on the terrace, which has sweeping views towards the Shinjuku skyline.



(トゥールームス  03-3498-0002; www.tworooms.jp; 5th fl, AO bldg, 3-11-7 Kita-Aoyama, Minato-ku;  11.30am-2am Mon-Sat, to 10pm Sun; ;  Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit B2)

Oath

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

A tiny space along a somewhat forlorn strip of highway, Oath is a favourite after-hours destination for clubbers – helped no doubt by the ¥500 drinks and lack of cover charge. Underground DJs spin here sometimes, too.

(<http://bar-oath.com>; 4-5-9 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku;  9pm-5am Mon-Thu, to 8am Fri & Sat, 5-11pm Sun;  Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit B1)

Montoak

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This stylish, tinted-glass cube is a calm, dimly lit retreat from the busy

streets. It's perfect for holing up with a pot of tea or carafe of wine and watching the crowds go by. Or, if the weather is nice, score a seat on the terrace. Drinks from ¥700.

(モントーク 6-1-9 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 11am-3am; 🚫📺; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Shopping

Sou-Sou

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Kyoto brand Sou-Sou gives traditional Japanese clothing items – such as split-toed *tabi* socks and *haori* (coats with kimono-like sleeves) – a contemporary spin. It is best known for producing the steel-toed, rubber-soled *tabi* shoes worn by Japanese construction workers in fun, playful designs, but it also carries bags, tees and super-adorable children's clothing.

(そうそう 📞 03-3407-7877; <http://sounsounetshop.jp>; 5-3-10 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; 🕒 11am-8pm;  Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit A5)

Dog

FASHION, VINTAGE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Club kids and stylists love the showpiece items at legendary Ura-Hara boutique Dog. The store itself, which is decorated to look like a derelict carnival funhouse, is much of the appeal: it looks like an art installation.

(ドッグ www.dog-hjk.com/index.html; basement fl, 3-23-3 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 noon-8pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Takeshita exit)

Musubi

ARTS & CRAFTS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Furoshiki are versatile squares of cloth that can be folded and knotted to make shopping bags and gift wrap. This shop sells pretty ones in both traditional and contemporary patterns. There is usually an English-speaking clerk who can show you how to tie them. You can also pick up one of the English-language books sold here.

(むす美 <http://kyoto-musubi.com>; 2-31-8 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 11am-7pm Thu-Tue; 🚉 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Takeshita exit)

Laforet

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Laforet has been a beacon of cutting-edge Harajuku style for decades and lots of quirky, cult favourite brands still cut their teeth here (you'll find some examples at the ground floor boutique, Wall). A range of looks are represented here from *ame-kaji* (American casual) to gothic (in the basement).

(ラフォーレ www.laforet.ne.jp; 1-11-6 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 11am-8pm; 🚉 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Bedrock

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Walking into Bedrock is like stepping into Keith Richards' boudoir, or the costume closet for *Pirates of the Caribbean* – all leather, feathers and lace. Enter through a secret staircase in the back of the Forbidden Fruit juice bar.

(ベッドロック 4-12-10 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 11am-9pm, to 8pm Sun; 🚉 S Ginza line to Omote-sandō,

exit A2)

Comme des Garçons

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

Designer Kawakubo Rei threw a wrench in the fashion machine in the early '80s with her dark, asymmetrical designs. That her work doesn't appear as shocking today as it once did speaks volumes for her far-reaching success. This eccentric, vaguely disorienting architectural creation is her brand's flagship store.

(コム・デ・ギャルソン www.comme-des-garcons.com; 5-2-1 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; 🕒 11am-8pm;


 Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit A5)

KiddyLand

TOYS

This multistorey toy emporium is packed to the rafters with character goods, including all your Studio Ghibli, Sanrio and Disney faves. It's not just for kids either; you'll spot plenty of adults on a nostalgia trip down the Hello Kitty aisle.

(キディランド www.kiddyland.co.jp/en/index.html; 6-1-9 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 10am-9pm;  JR

Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)



Kiddyland | MARTIN MOOS / GETTY IMAGES ©

Chicago Thrift Store

VINTAGE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Chicago is crammed with all sorts of vintage clothing, but best of all is the extensive collection of used kimonos and yukata (light cotton kimonos), priced very low, in the back.

(シカゴ 6-31-21 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; 🕒 10am-8pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

Understand

Harajuku Style

Harajuku is the city's living catwalk. It's also that rare place in Japan where unconventionality is rewarded: a country girl can get off a train, get a job at a local boutique and – with enough moxie and sartorial innovation – find herself on the pages of a national magazine within a year. Every time someone declares Harajuku dead, another trend is born, inspiring a whole nation of teens. Ura-Hara (literally 'behind Harajuku') is the nickname for the maze of backstreets behind Omote-sandō, where you'll find the tiny, eccentric shops and second-hand stores from which Harajuku hipsters cobble together their head-turning looks.

Shinjuku



SEAN PAVONE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Here in Shinjuku, much of what makes Tokyo tick is crammed into one busy district: upscale department stores, anachronistic shanty bars, buttoned-up government offices, swarming crowds, streetside video screens, leafy parks, racy nightlife, hidden shrines and soaring skyscrapers. It's a fantastic introduction to Tokyo today, with all its highs and lows.

The Sights in a Day



Shinjuku works neatly as a day-to-night destination. Morning – usually the clearest time of day – is the best time to visit the [Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building](#), for views over the city from the 45th-floor observatory (otherwise come back for the night view). Back on the ground, wind your way through the skyscraper district of Nishi-Shinjuku, west of Shinjuku Station, checking out the art at [Shinjuku I-Land](#). There are many cheap eateries here, around an open courtyard, that are popular with local office workers.



Otherwise, head over to department store [Isetan](#) – walk or take the Marunouchi subway line – and pick up a *bentō* (boxed meal) from the *depachika* (department store basement food hall) to eat in grassy [Shinjuku-gyoen](#). Isetan, one of Shinjuku's many department stores, is also excellent for shopping.



Shinjuku really shines at night – quite literally, with myriad bars, *izakaya* (Japanese-style pubs), karaoke parlours, and jazz haunts that await. Beware the crush of the last train – around midnight – when packed in like sardines is an understatement.



Local Life

[Shinjuku After Dark](#)



Best of Tokyo

Architecture & Design

[Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building](#)

Parks & Gardens

[Shinjuku-gyoen](#)

Pop Culture

[Robot Restaurant](#)

Drinking & Nightlife

[BenFiddich](#)


Entertainment


[Shinjuku Pit Inn](#)

Shopping

[Isetan](#)

Getting There

 **Train** The JR Yamanote line stops at Shinjuku.

 **Subway** The Marunouchi line runs east–west, stopping at Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku, Shinjuku-sanchōme and Shinjuku-gyoenmae. The Fukutoshin line runs north–south, stopping at Shinjuku-sanchōme and Higashi-Shinjuku. The circuitous Ōedo line stops at Tochōmae, Shinjuku and Higashi-Shinjuku.



Local Life

Shinjuku After Dark

Shinjuku is Tokyo's largest – and liveliest – nightlife district. The size and depth means there is truly something for everyone, from flashy cabarets to bohemian hole-in-the walls, neon-lit karaoke parlours to bars for every fetish under the sun. Come dark, a motley cast of characters hits the town to shed the day's anxieties and let loose. While Friday nights are the most crowded, Shinjuku buzzes every night of the week.



1 Stroll Down Memory Lane

Since the postwar days, smoke has been billowing night and day

from the rickety, wooden *yakitori* (meat or vegetable skewer) stalls that line **Omoide-yokochō** (思い出横丁 [GOOGLE MAP](#); Nishi-Shinjuku 1-chōme, Shinjuku-ku; skewers from ¥150; 🕒 noon-midnight, vary by shop; 🏠; 🚗 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, west exit). The name translates literally as ‘Memory Lane’ (it’s less politely known as Shonben-yokochō, or ‘Piss Alley’). Several stalls have English menus.

② Bask in the Lights

Yasukuni-dōri (靖国通り) is east Shinjuku’s main drag, where *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eateries) are stacked several stories high, along with karaoke joints, all-night noodle shops, convenience stores and acres of neon.

③ Tiptoe through Kabukichō

North of Yasukuni-dōri is **Kabukichō** (歌舞伎町), Tokyo’s most notorious red-light district. Here, it’s wall-to-wall hostess (and host!) clubs (bars where pretty people are employed to heap compliments and expensive drinks on customers), cabarets and love hotels. It’s generally safe to walk through, though we don’t recommend going alone.

④ Greet Godzilla

Kabukicho's newest landmark – and proof that the neighbourhood is trying for a more family-friendly vibe – is the **Shinjuku TOHO** building topped by an enormous Godzilla statue.

⑤ Meet Robots

Robot Restaurant (ロボットレストラン [GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3200-5500;

www.shinjuku-robot.com; 1-7-1 Kabukichō, Shinjuku-ku; tickets ¥8000; 🕒 shows at 4pm, 5.55pm, 7.50pm & 9.45pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit) glows brightly enough to light up all of Shinjuku. Inside you can watch a wacky cabaret spectacle with giant robots manned by bikini-clad women (look for discount fliers around town), or just pose for a photo-op with two of the robots parked outside.

6 Rummage through Don Quijote

Fluorescent-lit bargain castle **Don Quijote** (ドン・キホーテ [GOOGLE MAP](#)); 📞 03-5291-9211; www.donki.com; 1-16-5 Kabukichō, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 24hr; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit) is filled to the brim with weird loot. Though it's now a national chain, it started as a rare (at the time) 24-hour store for the city's night workers.

7 Raise a Glass in Golden Gai

Golden Gai (ゴールデン街) is a warren of tiny alleys and narrow, two-storey wooden buildings filled with more than a hundred closet-sized bars. Each is as unique and eccentric as the 'master' or 'mama' who runs it. The best way to experience Golden Gai is to stroll the lanes and pick a place that suits your mood. Note that many charge a cover (usually ¥500 to ¥1500).

8 Go for Late-Night Ramen

A late-night bowl of ramen (soup and noodles with a sprinkling of meat and vegetables) is a beloved Tokyo tradition. **Nagi** (📍 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); www.n-nagi.com; 2nd fl, Golden Gai G2, 1-1-10 Kabukichō, Shinjuku-ku; ramen from ¥850; 🕒 24hr; 📍; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit), in Golden Gai, serves highly addictive noodles in a dark broth deeply flavoured with *niboshi* (dried sardines). Look for the red sign then head up the

treacherous stairs.



📍 Sights

- | | | |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building | B3 |
| 2 | Shinjuku-gyoen | E4 |
| 3 | Shinjuku I-Land | B2 |
| 4 | Hanazono-jinja | D1 |
| 5 | Thermae-yu | D1 |

🍴 Eating

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| 6 | Donjaca | E2 |
| 7 | Nakajima | D2 |
| 8 | Kozue | A4 |
| 9 | Numazukō | D2 |

10 [Tsunahachi](#) D2

Drinking

11 [BenFiddich](#) C2

12 [Zoetrope](#) C1

13 [New York Bar](#) A4

Entertainment

14 [Shinjuku Pit Inn](#) E2

15 [Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall](#) A4

Shopping

16 [Isetan](#) D2

17 [Beams](#) D2

18 [Bicqlo](#) D2

Sights

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building NOTABLE BUILDING

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tokyo's seat of power, designed by Tange Kenzō and completed in 1991, looms large and looks somewhat like a pixelated cathedral (or the lair of an animated villain). Take an elevator from the ground floor of Building 1 to one of the twin 202m-high observatories for panoramic views over the never-ending cityscape (the views are virtually the same from either tower). On a clear day (morning is best), you may catch a glimpse of Mt Fuji to the west.

(東京都庁; Tokyo Tochō <http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/english/offices/observat.htm>; 2-8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 observatories 9.30am-11pm; **S** Ōedo line to Tochōmae, exit A4)

Shinjuku-gyoen PARK

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Though Shinjuku-gyoen was designed as an imperial retreat (completed 1906), it's now definitively a park for everyone. The wide lawns make it a favourite for urbanites in need of a quick escape from the hurly-burly of city life. Don't miss the greenhouse, with its giant lily pads and perfectly formed orchids, and the cherry blossoms in spring.

(新宿御苑 📞 03-3350-0151; www.env.go.jp/garden/shinjukugyoen; 11 Naito-chō, Shinjuku-ku; adult/child ¥200/50; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; **S** Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-gyoenmae, exit 1)



Shinjuku-gyoen | SEAN PAVONE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Shinjuku I-Land

PUBLIC ART

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

An otherwise ordinary office complex, Shinjuku I-Land (completed in 1995 but conceived before the bursting of the economic bubble) is home to more than a dozen public artworks, including one of Robert Indiana's *Love* sculptures and two *Tokyo Brushstroke* sculptures by Roy Liechtenstein. The open-air courtyard, with stonework by Giulio Paolini and several reasonably priced restaurants, makes for an attractive lunch or coffee stop.

(新宿アイランド 6-5-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku;  Marunouchi line to Nishi-Shinjuku)

Hanazono-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

MAP GOOGLE MAP

During the day, merchants from nearby Kabukichō come to this Shintō shrine to pray for the solvency of their business ventures. (Founded in the 17th century, the shrine is dedicated to the god Inari, whose specialities include fertility and worldly success). At night, despite signs asking revellers to refrain, drinking and merrymaking carry over from the nearby bars onto the stairs here. Most Sundays, the shrine hosts a flea market.

(花園神社 www.hanazono-jinja.or.jp; 5-17-3 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 24hr; 🚉 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exits B10 & E2)

Thermae-yu

ONSEN

MAP GOOGLE MAP

The best (and most literal) example to date that red-light district Kabukichō is cleaning up its act: the 2016 opening of this gleaming onsen complex. The tubs, which include several indoor and outdoor ones (sex-segregated), are filled with honest-to-goodness natural hot-spring water. There are several saunas, including a hot-stone sauna (*ganbanyoku*, ¥810 extra). Sorry, no tattoos allowed.

(テルマー湯 📞 03-5285-1726; www.thermae-yu.jp; 1-1-2 Kabukichō, Shinjuku-ku; weekdays/weekends & holidays ¥2360/2690; 🕒 11am-9am; 🚉 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit)



Top Tip

Navigating Shinjuku

Even Tokyoites get confused in Shinjuku Station. While it might seem natural to go with the flow, when it comes to reaching your intended destination, your battle begins on the platform. Make sure you pick the right

exit, otherwise you could wind up completely on the other side of the neighbourhood, having to circumnavigate the huge train station.


Eating

Donjaca

IZAKAYA \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

The platonic ideal of a Shōwa-era (1926–89) *izakaya*, Donjaca, in business since 1979, has red pleather stools, paper-lantern lighting and hand-written menus on the wall. The food is equal parts classic (grilled fish and fried chicken) and inventive: house specialities include *natto gyoza* (dumplings stuffed with fermented soy beans) and *mochi* gratin. Excellent sake is served in convenient tasting sets.

(呑者家  03-3341-2497; 3-9-10 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; dishes ¥350-850;  5pm-7am; );

 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit C6)





Nakajima

KAISEKI \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

In the evening, this Michelin-starred restaurant serves exquisite *kaiseki* (Japanese haute cuisine) dinners. On weekdays, it also serves a set lunch of humble *iwashi* (sardines) for one-tenth the price – in the hands of Nakajima's chefs, they're divine. The line for lunch starts to form shortly before the restaurant opens at 11.30am. Look for the white sign at the top of the stairs.

(中嶋  03-3356-4534; www.shinjyuku-nakajima.com; basement fl, 3-32-5 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku;






lunch/dinner from ¥800/8640;  11.30am-2pm & 5.30-10pm Mon-Sat;  ;  Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit A1)

Kozue

JAPANESE \$\$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

It's hard to beat Kozue's combination of well-executed, seasonal Japanese cuisine, artisan crockery and soaring views over Shinjuku from the floor-to-ceiling windows. As the (kimono-clad) staff speak English and the restaurant caters well to allergies and personal preferences, this is a good splurge spot for diners who don't want to give up complete control. Reservations are essential.





( 03-5323-3460; <http://tokyo.park.hyatt.jp/en/hotel/dining/Kozue.html>; 40th fl, Park Hyatt, 3-7-1-2 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; lunch set menu ¥2850-12,400, dinner set menu ¥12,400-27,300;  11.30am-2.30pm & 5.30-9.30pm;  ;  Ōedo line to Tochōmae, exit A4)

Numazukō

SUSHI \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Shinjuku's best *kaiten-sushi* (conveyor-belt sushi) restaurant is pricier than many, but the quality is worth it. It's popularity means that few plates make it around the long, snaking belt without getting snatched up (you can also order off the menu, if you don't see what you want). This is a good choice if you don't want a full meal.

(沼津港 3-34-16 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; plates ¥100-550;  11am-10.30pm;   ;  JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit)




Tsunahachi

TEMPURA \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tsunahachi has been expertly frying prawns and vegies for more than 90 years and is an excellent place to get initiated in the art of tempura (foreign tourists get a handy cheat sheet on the different condiments).



Set menus (except for the cheaper ones at lunch) are served piece by piece, so everything comes hot and crisp. Indigo *noren* (curtains) mark the entrance.

(つなハ  03-3352-1012; www.tunahachi.co.jp; 3-31-8 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥1512/2484;  11am-10.30pm;  ;  JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit)



Top Tip

Meals Made Easy

Should you want to grab a quick bite to eat – without having to brave the crowded streets – head to one of the food courts on the top floors of the shopping centres in and around Shinjuku Station. **Takashimaya Times Square** (高島屋タイムズスクエア [GOOGLE MAP](#) ; 5-24-2 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku;  11am-11pm;  JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, New South exit), reached via the New South exit, has the nicest one.




Drinking

 **BenFiddich**

COCKTAIL BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Step into the magical space that is BenFiddich. It's dark, it's tiny and vials of infusions line the shelves, while herbs hang drying from the ceiling. Classical music simmers and soars. The barman, Kayama Hiroyasu, in a white suit, moves like a magician. There's no menu, but cocktails run about ¥1500; service charge is 10%.

(ベンフィディック  03-6279-4223; 9th fl, 1-13-7 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku;  6pm-3am Mon-Sat;  JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, west exit)




Zoetrope

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

A must-visit for whisky fans, Zoetrope has some 300 varieties of Japanese whisky behind its small counter – including hard-to-find bottles from cult favourite Chichibu Distillery. The owner speaks English and can help you pick from the daunting menu. Cover charge is ¥1000; whisky by the glass from ¥400 to ¥19,000, though most are reasonable.

(ゾートロープ <http://homepage2.nifty.com/zoetrope>; 3rd fl, 7-10-14 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku;





 7pm-4am Mon-Sat; ;  JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, west exit)

New York Bar

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Head to the Park Hyatt's 52nd floor to swoon over the sweeping nightscape from the floor-to-ceiling windows at this bar (of *Lost in Translation* fame). There's a cover charge of ¥2400 if you visit or stay past 8pm (7pm Sunday); go earlier and watch the sky fade to black. Cocktails start at ¥2000. Note: dress code enforced and 20% service charge levied.

(ニューヨークバー  03-5323-3458; <http://tokyo.park.hyatt.com>; 52nd fl, Park Hyatt, 3-7-1-2 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku;  5pm-midnight Sun-Wed, to 1am Thu-Sat; ;  Ōedo line to Tochōmae, exit A4)

Understand

Tokyo Today

Tokyo has reinvented itself countless times in the four centuries since its founding. With the 2020 Summer Olympic Games on the horizon, it hopes to do so again, with plans for a greener, friendlier city. With a stubborn economy and a soon-to-be-shrinking workforce, the stakes are high. Does Tokyo have what it takes to pull off another reincarnation?

Tokyo 2020

Since it was announced in 2013 that Tokyo would hold the 2020 Games, the city has gone into full preparation mode. The 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics – the first to be held in Asia – marked Tokyo's big comeback after the city was all but destroyed in WWII. The powers that be are hoping that the 2020 games will again be a symbolic stimulus. The most dramatic redevelopment is taking place around Tokyo Bay, where many of the events will be held. Other positive changes that are already starting to happen: a more accessible Tokyo, better English signage and tourist information and expanded wi-fi networks.

City of the Future

Something else is slated to happen in 2020: while the population of Japan has been declining since the 2000s, it's predicted that Tokyo's population will peak in 2020 and then also begin to decline. The birth rate for the capital is around 1.1, the lowest in the nation (the national average is 1.4); the labour force is shrinking but the country as a whole remains wary of immigration. The central government has campaigned for more women to enter the workforce to bolster numbers and for families to have more children. Tokyoites vocal on social media say they can't win: the combination of the city's high cost of living, long working hours and waiting lists for daycare means something has to give.

The city's redevelopment initiatives include provisions for making Tokyo a more attractive city in which to live and work – such as job centres for senior citizens, special economic zones for foreign companies and, yes, more childcare facilities. If it works, Tokyo could become a model for cities of the future. For Tokyoites progress can't come soon enough. And the government's back-up plan? Trying to sell residents on moving to the countryside. And robots.

Entertainment

★ Shinjuku Pit Inn

JAZZ

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This is not the kind of place you come to talk over the music. It's the kind of place you come to sit in thrall of Japan's best jazz performers (as Tokyoites have been doing for half a century now). Weekday matinees feature up-and-coming artists and cost only ¥1300.

(新宿ピットイン ☎ 03-3354-2024; www.pit-inn.com; basement, 2-12-4 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; from ¥3000; 🕒 matinee 2.30pm, evening show 7.30pm; 🚉 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit C5)

★ Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This beautiful, oak-panelled, A-frame concert hall, with legendary acoustics, hosts the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra among other well-regarded ensembles, including the occasional *bugaku* (classical Japanese music) group. Free lunchtime organ performances take place monthly, usually on Fridays. Information and tickets can be acquired at the box office next to the entrance to the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery.

(東京オペラシティコンサートホール ☎ 03-5353-9999; www.operacity.jp; 3rd fl, Tokyo Opera City, 3-20-2 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; ¥3000-5000; 🚉 Keiō New line to Hatsudai)

Understand

Karaoke

Karaoke (カラオケ; pronounced kah-rah-oh-kay) isn't just about singing: it's an excuse to let loose, a bonding ritual, a reason to keep the party going past the last train and a way to kill time until the first one starts in the morning. When words fail, it's a way to express yourself: are you the type to sing the latest J-pop hit (dance moves included) or do you go for an Okinawan folk ballad? It doesn't matter if you're a good singer so long as you've got heart.

In Japan, karaoke is sung in a private room among friends. Admission is usually charged per person per half-hour. Food and drinks (ordered by phone) are brought to the room. To choose a song, use the touch screen device to search by artist or title; most have an English function and plenty of English songs to choose from. In Shinjuku, look for branches of major chains like Karaoke-kan (カラオケ館) and Big Echo (ビッグエコー).

Shopping

Isetan

DEPARTMENT STORE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Most department stores play to conservative tastes, but this one doesn't. For an always changing line up of up-and-coming Japanese womenswear designers, check out the Tokyo Closet (2nd floor) and Re-Style (3rd floor) boutiques. Men get a whole building of their own (connected by a passageway). Don't miss the basement food hall, featuring famous purveyors of sweet and savoury goodies.

(伊勢丹 www.isetan.co.jp; 3-14-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 10am-8pm; 📍 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exits B3, B4 & B5)

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Beams, a national chain of boutiques, is a cultural force in Japan. This multistorey Shinjuku shop is particularly good for the latest Japanese streetwear labels and work from designers giving traditional looks a modern twist (including men, women and unisex fashions). Also sometimes available: crafts, housewares and original artwork (the line up is always changing).

(ビームス www.beams.co.jp; 3-32-6 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 11am-8pm; 🚉 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, east exit)



Beams | TAKAMEX / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



CLOTHING, ELECTRONICS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This mash-up store brings two of Japan's favourite retailers – electronics outfitter Bic Camera and budget clothing chain Uniqlo – under one roof. So you can match your new camera to your new hoodie. It's bright white: you can't miss it.

(ビックロ 3-29-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 10am-10pm; **S** Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit A5)




Top Sights

Ghibli Museum

Since 1986, master animator Miyazaki Hayao and his Studio Ghibli (pronounced ji-bu-ri) have been responsible for some of the best-loved films in Japan – and the world. Miyazaki designed this museum himself, and it's redolent of the dreamy, vaguely steampunk atmosphere that makes his animations so enchanting. The only catch: tickets must be purchased in advance, and you must choose the exact time and date you plan to visit.

Getting There

 Take the JR Chūō line from Shinjuku to Mitaka. From the south exit no 9 bus stop, get a shuttle bus (round-trip/one way ¥320/210; every 20 minutes) for the museum.



MAODOLLTEE / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Practicalities

GOOGLE MAP

ジブリ美術館 www.ghibli-museum.jp; 1-1-83 Shimo-Renjaku, Mitaka-shi; adult ¥1000, child ¥100-700; 🕒 10am-6pm, closed Tue; 🚶 JR Sōbu-Chūō line to Mitaka, south exit

✔ Top Tip

➔ Tickets are limited and go fast (especially during the summer holiday). You can buy them up to three months in advance from a travel agent; see the website for details.

🍴 Take a Break

After the museum, stop for Thai at **Pepa Cafe Forest** (ペパカフェオレスト [GOOGLE MAP](#)); www.peppermintcafe.com/forest; 4-1-5 Inokashira, Mitaka-shi; mains from ¥830; 🕒 noon-10pm; 🚶 🚶; 🚶 JR Sōbu-Chūō line to Kichijōji, Kōen exit) in Inokashira-kōen. The museum also has a cafe that serves lunches made with organic veggies, though you'll have to queue.

Get to Know Ghibli

If you've seen a Ghibli movie, odds are it was 2001's *Spirited Away*, which won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature (and remains the only Japanese animated film and only hand-drawn film ever to win). Here's a chance to further explore Ghibli's world: inside the museum is an imagined workshop filled with the kinds of books and artworks that inspired Miyazaki. There's also a small theatre where original animated shorts – which can only be seen here! – are screened (you'll get a ticket for this when you enter).


Meet Friends Old & New

The Ghibli Museum rewards curiosity and play: peer through a small window, for example, and you'll see little soot sprites (as seen in *Spirited Away*). A spiral staircase leads to a purposefully overgrown

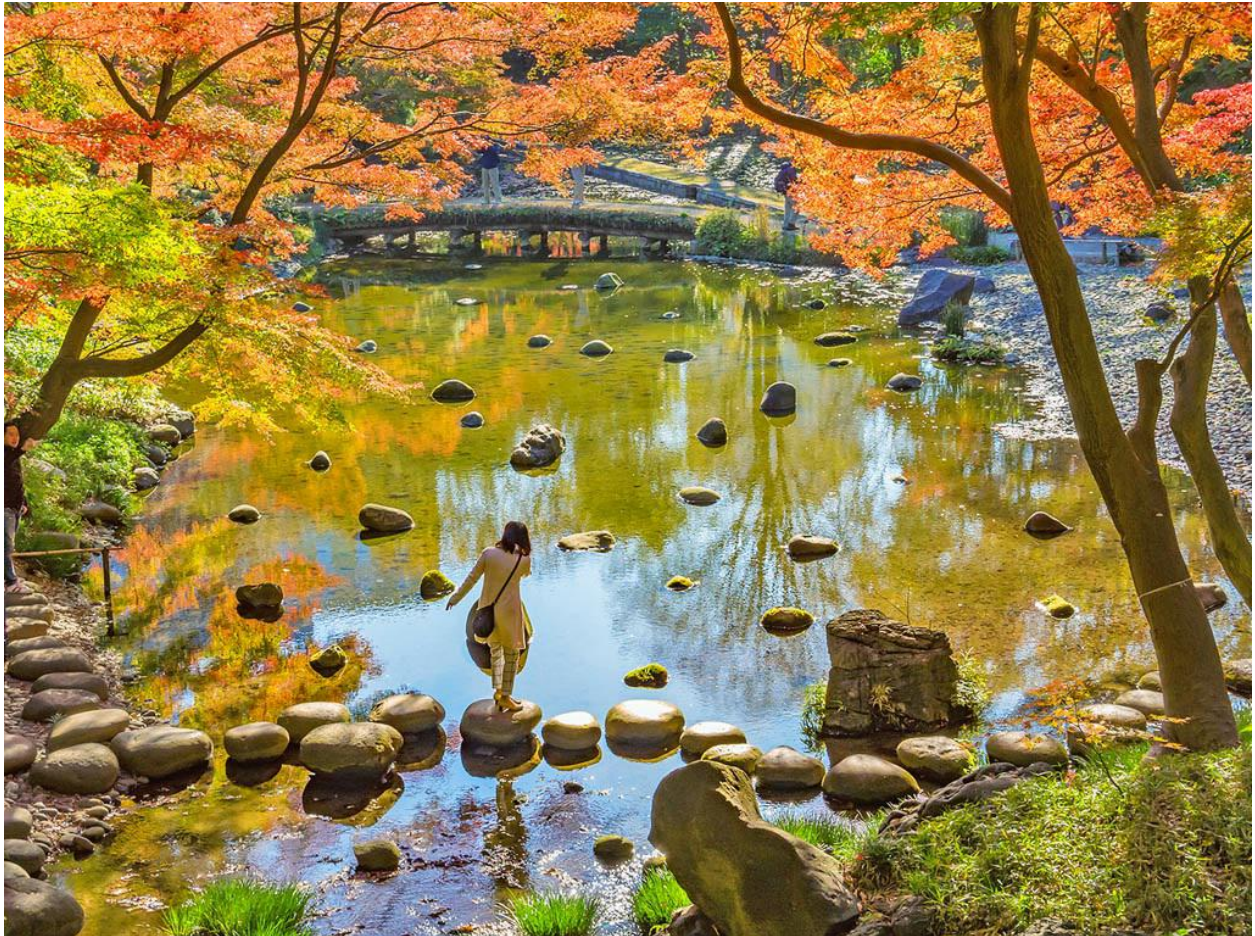
rooftop terrace with a 5m tall statue of the Robot Soldier from *Laputa* (Castle in the Sky; 1986). A highlight for children (sorry, grown-ups!) is a giant, plush replica of the cat bus from the classic *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988) that kids can climb on.

Nearby: Inokashira-kōen

The Ghibli Museum is actually in the corner of one of Tokyo's best parks, **Inokashira-kōen** (井の頭公園 [GOOGLE MAP](#));

www.kensetsu.metro.tokyo.jp/seibuk/inokashira/index.html; 1-18-31 Gotenyama, Musashino-shi;  JR Sōbu-Chūō line to Kichijōji, Kōen exit). Instead of heading back to Mitaka Station, walk through the park to Kichijōji Station (also on the JR Chūō line). The walk takes about 30 minutes; it's signposted in English. Along the way you'll pass a big pond with an island that's home to an ancient shrine to the sea goddess Benzaiten.

Kōrakuen & Kagurazaka



TAKASHI IMAGES / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Northwest of the Imperial Palace, Kōrakuen is off the major tourist trail, yet has a number of fascinating sights. These include the landscaped garden Koishikawa Kōrakuen and the controversial shrine Yasukuni-jinja. Nearby Kagurazaka, an old geisha district now resplendent with shops and cafes, is a wonderful place to wander. And baseball fans will not want to

miss the spectacle at Tokyo Dome.

The Sights in a Day



Start with a morning stroll through the serene traditional garden [Koishikawa Kōrakuen](#). Then walk (or take the Ōedo subway line) to Kagurazaka, a charming neighbourhood that offers an alternative picture of Tokyo – that of a hundred years ago. Have lunch here at [Kado](#) followed by tea at [Mugimaru 2](#). There are lots of boutiques here, too, that shoppers will enjoy.



Walk down Sotobori-dōri, which runs along one of the old moats surrounding the Imperial Palace, to Kudanshita. Here are two controversial sights: the shrine [Yasukuni-jinja](#) and its adjacent museum [Yūshū-kan](#), which covers Japan's warring past. Anyone with an interest in Japanese history (or Asian geopolitics) should make a stop here. Book lovers will want to check out the neighbourhood Jimbochō.



Tokyo Dome City offers the best evening entertainment. Ideally, if you're visiting during baseball season, you'll already have tickets lined up for a Giants game at [Tokyo Dome](#). Otherwise, soak away the day at [Spa LaQua](#) or ride the roller coaster at [Tokyo Dome City Attractions](#). There are plenty of restaurants in Tokyo Dome City.



Best of Tokyo

Food

[Kado](#)

Temples & Shrines

[Akagi-jinja](#)

Parks & Gardens

[Koishikawa Kōrakuen](#)

Entertainment

[Tokyo Dome](#)

Onsen & Sentō

[Spa LaQua](#)

Getting There

T **Train** The JR Sōbu line runs east–west, stopping at Iidabashi (for Kagurazaka) and Suidōbashi (for Kōrakuen).

S **Subway** Useful stations include Iidabashi (Nanboku, Yūrakuchō, Tōzai and Ōedo lines), Kōrakuen (Nanboku and Marunouchi lines), Kagurazaka (Tōzai line) and Kudanshita (Hanzōmon, Tōzai and Shinjuku lines).



Sights

1	Koishikawa Kōrakuen	C1
2	Spa LaQua	D1
3	Yasukuni-jinja	B4
4	Akagi-jinja	A1
5	Yūshū-kan	B3
6	Tokyo Dome City Attractions	D1

Eating

7	Ethiopia	E3
8	Kado	A1
9	Canal Cafe	B2

Drinking

10	Craft Beer Server Land	B2
11	Mugimaru 2	B2

Entertainment

12	Tokyo Dome	D1
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Shopping

13	Baikatei	A1
14	Kukuli	B2




Sights

Koishikawa Kōrakuen

GARDENS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Established in the mid-17th century as the property of the Tokugawa clan, this formal strolling garden incorporates elements of Chinese and Japanese landscaping. It's among Tokyo's most attractive gardens, although nowadays the *shakkei* (borrowed scenery) also includes the other-worldly [Tokyo Dome](#).




(小石川後樂園  03-3811-3015; <http://teien.tokyo-park.or.jp/en/koishikawa>; 1-6-6 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; adult/child ¥300/free;  9am-5pm;  Ōedo line to Iidabashi, exit C3)

Spa LaQua

ONSEN

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

One of Tokyo's few true onsen, this chic spa complex relies on natural hot-spring water from 1700m below ground. There are indoor and outdoor baths, saunas and a bunch of add-on options, such as *akasuri* (Korean-style whole-body exfoliation). It's a fascinating introduction to Japanese health and beauty rituals.

(スパラクーア  03-5800-9999; www.laqua.jp; 5th-9th fl, Tokyo Dome City, 1-1-1 Kasuga, Bunkyo-ku; weekday/weekend ¥2635/2960;  11am-9am;  Marunouchi line to Kōrakuen, exit 2)

Yasukuni-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Literally 'For the Peace of the Country Shrine', Yasukuni is the memorial shrine to Japan's war dead, around 2.5 million souls. First

built in 1869, it is also incredibly controversial: in 1979, 14 class-A war criminals, including WWII general Hideki Tōjō, were enshrined here.

The main approach is fronted by a 25m-tall *torii* (entrance gate) made of steel and bronze; behind the main shrine, seek out the serene grove of mossy trees and the ornamental pond.

(靖国神社 📞 03-3261-8326; www.yasukuni.or.jp; 3-1-1 Kudan-kita, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 6am-5pm;

🚶 Hanzōmon line to Kudanshita, exit 1)

Akagi-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Kagurazaka's signature shrine only bears a passing resemblance to the traditional ones around the city. In 2010 the shrine, which can trace its history back centuries, was completely remodelled by Kengo Kuma, one of Japan's most prominent contemporary architects. The result is a sleek glass box for the main shrine building.

(赤城神社 📞 03-3260-5071; www.akagi-jinja.jp; 1-10 Akagi-Motomachi, Shinjuku-ku; 🚶 Tōzai line to Kagurazaka, exit 1)

Yūshū-kan

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Most history museums in Japan skirt the issue of war or focus on the burden of the common people. Not so here: Yūshū-kan begins with Japan's samurai tradition and ends with its defeat in WWII. It is also unapologetic and has been known to boil the blood of some visitors with its particular view of history.

(遊就館 📞 03-3261-8326; www.yasukuni.or.jp; 3-1-1 Kudankita, Chiyoda-ku; adult/student ¥800/500;





🕒 9am-4pm; 🚶 Hanzōmon line to Kudanshita, exit 1)

Tokyo Dome City Attractions

AMUSEMENT PARK

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

The top attraction at this amusement park next to [Tokyo Dome](#) is the 'Thunder Dolphin' (¥1030), a roller coaster that cuts a heart-in-your-throat course in and around the tightly packed buildings of downtown. There are plenty of low-key, child-friendly rides as well. You can buy individual-ride tickets, day passes, night passes (valid from 5pm) and a five-ride pass (¥2600).

(東京ドームシティアトラクションズ  03-3817-6001; www.tokyo-dome.co.jp/e/attractions; 1-3-61 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; day pass adult/child/teenager ¥3900/2100/3400;  10am-9pm; ;  JR Chūō line to Suidōbashi, west exit)

Understand

The Yasukuni Controversy

Yasukuni-jinja was erected by the Meiji government to honour those who died bringing about the Meiji Restoration. Since then, it has become a shrine to all war casualties, including enlisted men, civilians and, since 1978, 14 class-A war criminals – hence the controversy.

Following the separation of religion and state in 1946 enacted by the American occupation, management of Yasukuni-jinja was transferred to a private religious organisation. Still, leading politicians occasionally visit the shrine to pay their respects, most often on the anniversary of the end of WWII. This angers Japan's Asian neighbours, who suffered greatly in Japan's wars of expansion of the 20th century. As a result, the decision by a sitting prime minister to visit the shrine or not is seen as a strong political statement, and is watched throughout East Asia. No emperor has visited Yasukuni-jinja since 1978.





Eating

Ethiopia

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

In studenty Jimbōchō, Japanese curry cafes are 10 a penny and fiercely competitive. Ethiopia is a seasoned champ, offering jumbo serves and curries packed with meat and vegetables. The spice level goes from zero to a nuclear-thermal 70! Pay at the machine as you enter the wonderfully retro shop.






(エチオピア  03-3295-4310; 3-10-6 Kanda-ogawamachi, Chiyoda-ku; curry from ¥900;  11am-10pm Mon-Fri, to 8.30pm Sat & Sun; ;  Hanzōmon line to Jimbōchō, exit A5)

Kado

JAPANESE \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Set in an old wooden house with a white lantern out front, Kado specialises in *katei-ryōri* (home cooking). Dinner is a set course of seasonal dishes (such as grilled quail or crab soup). At lunch there's no English menu, so your best bet is the カド定食 (*kado teishoku*), the daily house special. Bookings are required for dinner.

(カド  03-3268-2410; <http://kagurazaka-kado.com>; 1-32 Akagi-Motomachi, Shinjuku-ku; lunch/dinner set menus from ¥800/3150;  11.30am-2.30pm & 5-11pm;  ;  Tōzai line to Kagurazaka, exit 1)

Canal Cafe

ITALIAN \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Along the languid moat that forms the edge of Kitanomaru-kōen, this is one of Tokyo's best alfresco dining spots. The restaurant serves tasty wood-fired pizzas, seafood pastas and grilled meats, while over on the

self-service 'deck side' you can settle in with a sandwich, muffin or just a cup of coffee.

(カナルカフェ ☎ 03-3260-8068; www.canalcafe.jp; 1-9 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku; lunch from ¥1600, dinner mains ¥1500-2800; 🕒 11.30am-11pm Tue-Sat, to 9.30pm Sun; 🚫 🍷 📺 🚶 JR Sōbu line to lidabashi, west exit)

Understand Kagurazaka

In the beginning of the 20th century, Kagurazaka was a fashionable *hanamachi* – a pleasure quarter where geisha entertained. Though the geisha have mostly disappeared, the neighbourhood retains the glamour and charm of decades past, with winding cobblestone streets and cosy cafes. Today it's one of Tokyo's top dining destinations and a popular place to stroll.

To access the most enchanting backstreets, walk from lidabashi Station up Kagurazaka-dōri and turn right at the Royal Host restaurant. Don't miss Hyogoyokochō, the neighbourhood's oldest lane and its most atmospheric – it's often used in television and movie shoots.

Drinking

🍷 Craft Beer Server Land

CRAFT BEER

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

With some 14 Japanese craft beers on tap going for a reasonable ¥500/840 a glass/pint, plus good food (the fish and chips is excellent), this brightly lit basement bar with wooden furniture and a slight Scandi feel is a winner.

(☎ 03-6228-1891; Okawa Bldg B1F, 2-9 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku; service charge ¥380; 🕒 5pm-

midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; ;  JR Sōbu line to Iidabashi, west exit)

Mugimaru 2

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This old house, completely covered in ivy, is a charmer, with a welcoming owner and a couple of cats. Seating is on floor cushions; warm, squishy *manjū* (steamed buns) are the house speciality.

(ムギマル2  03-5228-6393; www.mugimaru2.com; 5-20 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku; coffee ¥550;

 noon-8pm Thu-Tue; ;  Tozai line to Kagurazaka, exit 1)


Entertainment

Tokyo Dome

BASEBALL

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tokyo Dome (aka 'Big Egg') is home to the Yomiuri Giants. Love 'em or hate 'em, they're the most consistently successful team in Japanese baseball. If you're looking to see the Giants in action, the baseball season runs from the end of March to the end of October. Tickets sell out in advance; get them early at www.giants.jp/en.

(東京ドーム www.tokyo-dome.co.jp/e; 1-3 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; tickets ¥2200-6100;  JR Chūō line to Suidōbashi, west exit)



Baseball match, Tokyo Dome | PETR SVARC / IMAGEBROKER / AGE FOTOSTOCK ©




Shopping

 **Baikatei**

FOOD

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

See (and sample) humble beans and rice whipped into pastel flowers at this award-winning traditional sweets shop, in business since 1935. There are blue door curtains out front.

(梅花亭  03-5228-0727; www.baikatei.co.jp; 6-15 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku;  10am-8pm, to 7.30pm Sun;  Tōzai line to Kagurazaka, exit 1)

 **Kukuli**

ARTS & CRAFTS

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

One of several shops in Kagurazaka specialising in traditional craftwork. Here it's hand-dyed textiles (such as scarves and tea towels) with a modern touch.

☎ 03-6280-8462; www.kukuli.co.jp; 1-10 Tsukudo-chō, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 11am-7pm; 🚉 JR

Yamanote line to Iidabashi, west exit)



Local Life

Book Town Jimbōchō

Jimbōchō ([GOOGLE MAP](#) ; Kanda-Jimbōchō, Chiyoda-ku;

🚉 Hanzōmon line to Jimbōchō, exits A1, A6 or A7) is home to more than 170 new and secondhand booksellers. Amid tottering stacks you'll find everything from antique guidebooks of the Yoshiwara pleasure district to obscure sheet music from your favourite symphony. There are also lots of cafes and curry shops here. Japanese bibliophiles consider curry the ideal meal, as it's eaten with a spoon (freeing up one hand for a book).



Book browsing in Jimbōchō | OGIYOSHISAN / GETTY IMAGES ©





Local Life

An Afternoon in Akihabara

Akihabara (Akiba to friends) is the centre of Tokyo's *otaku* (geek) subculture. But you don't have to obsess about manga (Japanese comics) or anime (Japanese animation) to enjoy this quirky neighbourhood. It's equal parts sensory overload and cultural mind-bender. In fact, as the *otaku* subculture gains more and more influence on the culture at large, Akiba is drawing more visitors who don't fit the stereotype.

Getting There

-  The JR Yamanote and Sōbu lines stop at Akihabara; Electric Town exit is the most convenient.
-  The Hibiya line stops at Akihabara; take exit 3.



1 Explore 'Electric Town'

Before Akihabara became *otaku*-land, it was Electric Town – the place for discounted electronics and where early computer geeks tracked down obscure parts for home-built machines. **Akihabara Radio Center** (秋葉原ラジオセンター [GOOGLE MAP](#); 1-14-2 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 generally 10am-6pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Akihabara, Electric Town exit), a warren of stalls under the train tracks, keeps the tradition alive.

2 Play Vintage Arcade Games

In Akihabara, a love of the new is tempered with a deep affection for the old. **Super Potato Retro-kan** (スーパーポテトロ口館 [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.superpotato.com; 1-11-2 Soto-kanda, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 11am-8pm Mon-Fri, from 10am Sat & Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Akihabara, Electric Town exit) is a retro video arcade with some old-school consoles.

3 Visit a Maid Cafe

Maid cafes – where waitresses dress as French maids and treat customers with giggling deference as *go-shujinsama* (master) or *o-jōsama* (miss) – are an Akiba institution. Pop into **@Home** (@ほあ〜むカフェ [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.cafe-at-home.com; 4th-7th fl, 1-11-4 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku; drinks from ¥500; 🕒 11.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-10pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Akihabara, Electric Town exit) for a game of *moe moe jankan* (rock, paper, scissors) maid-style.

4 Shop at Mandarake Complex

To get an idea of what *otaku* obsess over, a trip to **Mandarake Complex** (まんだらけコンプレックス [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.mandarake.co.jp; 3-11-2 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 noon-8pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Akihabara, Electric Town exit) will do the trick. It's eight storeys of comic books and DVDs, action figures and cel art.

5 Pop into Yodobashi Akiba

The modern avatar of Akihabara Radio Center is **Yodobashi Akiba** (ヨドバシカメラAkiba [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.yodobashi-akiba.com; 1-1 Kanda Hanaoka-chō, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 9.30am-10pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Akihabara, Shōwa-tōriguchi exit), a monster electronics store beloved by camera junkies. But for all the modern conveniences Yodobashi Akiba feels like an old-time bazaar.

6 Check out an Old Train Station

MAAch ecute ([GOOGLE MAP](#); ☎ 03-3257-8910; www.maach-ecute.jp; 1-25-4 Kanda-Sudachō, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 11am-9pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm Sun; 🚶 Chūō or Sōbu lines to Akihabara, Electric Town exit) is a shopping and dining complex, crafted from the old station and railway arches of Mansei-bashi, selling

homewares, fashion and foods from around Japan.

7 Visit a Trainspotters' Cafe

While mAach ecute mall may have little to do with *otaku* sensibilities, cafe **N3331** ([GOOGLE MAP](#); ☎ 03-5295-2788; <http://n3331.com>; 2nd fl, mAach ecute, 1-25-4 Kanda-Sudachō, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 11am-10.30pm Mon-Sat, to 8.30pm Sun; 🚉 JR Yamamote line to Akihabara, Electric Town exit), on the 2nd floor, will appeal to *densha otaku* (train geeks). From floor-to-ceiling windows, watch commuter trains stream by while sipping on coffee, craft beer or sake.

Ueno & Yanesen



BLUEHAND / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Ueno is the cultural heart of Tokyo. Its central park, Ueno-kōen, has the city's highest concentration of museums, including the Tokyo National Museum. The neighbouring areas of Yanaka, Nezu and Sendagi are collectively known as Yanesen. It's a charming part of Tokyo that feels like time stopped several decades ago.

The Sights in a Day



Start the morning with a visit to the [Tokyo National Museum](#), give yourself at least two hours to explore the highlights of the museum's vast collection of Japanese art and antiquities. Then stroll through leafy [Ueno-kōen](#) to classic Japanese restaurant [Innsyoutei](#) for lunch (book ahead or you'll have to queue).



There's still more to see in the park, such as the centuries-old temple [Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō](#), the gilded shrine [Ueno Tōshō-gū](#) and museums like the [Shitamachi Museum](#), which has walk-through displays of prewar Tokyo. You'll also want to budget some time to stroll through the retro street market [Ameya-yokochō](#) and, if there's some daylight left, for a detour to the elegant shrine, [Nezu-jinja](#).



Mark the end of a day well spent with a round of craft beer at [Yanaka Beer Hall](#) followed by dinner at [Shinsuke](#), one of Tokyo's best *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eateries).



Top Sights

[Tokyo National Museum](#)



Local Life

[A Ramble through Historic Yanaka](#)



Best of Tokyo

Food

[Innsyoutei](#)

[Shinsuke](#)

Temples & Shrines

[Nezu-jinja](#)

[Ueno Tōshō-gū](#)

Parks & Gardens

[Ueno-kōen](#)

Entertainment

[Tokyo Bunka Kaikan](#)

Getting There

R Train The JR Yamanote line stops at Ueno and Nippori (for Yanaka). Keisei line trains from Narita Airport stop at Keisei Ueno Station (just south of JR Ueno Station).

S Subway The Ginza and Hibiya lines stop at Ueno. The Chiyoda line runs along the west side of Ueno-kōen, stopping at Yushima, Nezu and Sendagi; the latter two stops are convenient for Yanaka.






Top Sights

Tokyo National Museum

If you visit only one museum in Tokyo, make it this one. Established in 1872, this unprecedented collection of Japanese art covers ancient pottery, Buddhist sculpture, samurai swords, colourful *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints), gorgeous kimonos and much, much more. The museum is divided into several buildings, the most important of which is the Honkan (Japanese Gallery), which houses the collection of Japanese art.

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

東京国立博物館; Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan  03-3822-1111; www.tnm.jp; 13-9 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child & senior/student ¥620/free/410;  9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun year-round, to 8pm Fri Mar-Dec, to 6pm Sat & Sun Mar-Aug;  JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit



NONNAKRIT / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ Allow two hours to take in the highlights, a half-day to do the Honkan in depth or a whole day to take in everything.
- ➔ For a tour of the highlights, start with the 2nd floor of the Honkan. Pick up the brochure *Highlights of Japanese Art* from room 1-1 here.
- ➔ Exhibits rotate to protect works and present seasonal displays, so there's no guarantee that a particular work will be on display.
- ➔ For a couple of weeks in spring and autumn, the garden behind the Honkan, home to five vintage teahouses, opens to the public.

🍴 Take a Break

The museum complex itself has restaurants in the Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures and in the Tōyōkan.

The charming teahouse [Torindō](#) is a five-minute walk northwest of the museum.

Honkan & Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures

Visitors with only a couple of hours to spare should focus on the **Honkan** and the enchanting **Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures**, which displays masks, scrolls and gilt Buddhas from Hōryū-ji (in Nara Prefecture, dating from 607). The architecture is noteworthy, too: The Honkan building is a classic example of the Imperial Style of the 1930s, with art deco flourishes throughout; the Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures (1999) is in a spare, elegant, box designed by Taniguchi Yoshio.

Tōyōkan & Heiseikan



Visitors with more time can explore the three-storied **Tōyōkan** (Gallery of Asian Art), with its collection of Buddhist sculptures from around Asia and delicate Chinese ceramics. The **Heiseikan**, accessed via a passage on the 1st floor of the Honkan, houses the Japanese

Archaeological Gallery, full of pottery, talismans and articles of daily life from Japan's paleolithic and neolithic periods. Temporary exhibitions (which cost extra), are also held in the Heiseikan; these can be fantastic, but sometimes lack the English signage found throughout the rest of the museum.

Kuroda Memorial Hall

Also worth a visit is the **Kuroda Memorial Hall** (黒田記念室 

;  03-5777-8600; www.tobunken.go.jp/kuroda/index_e.html; 13-9 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku;

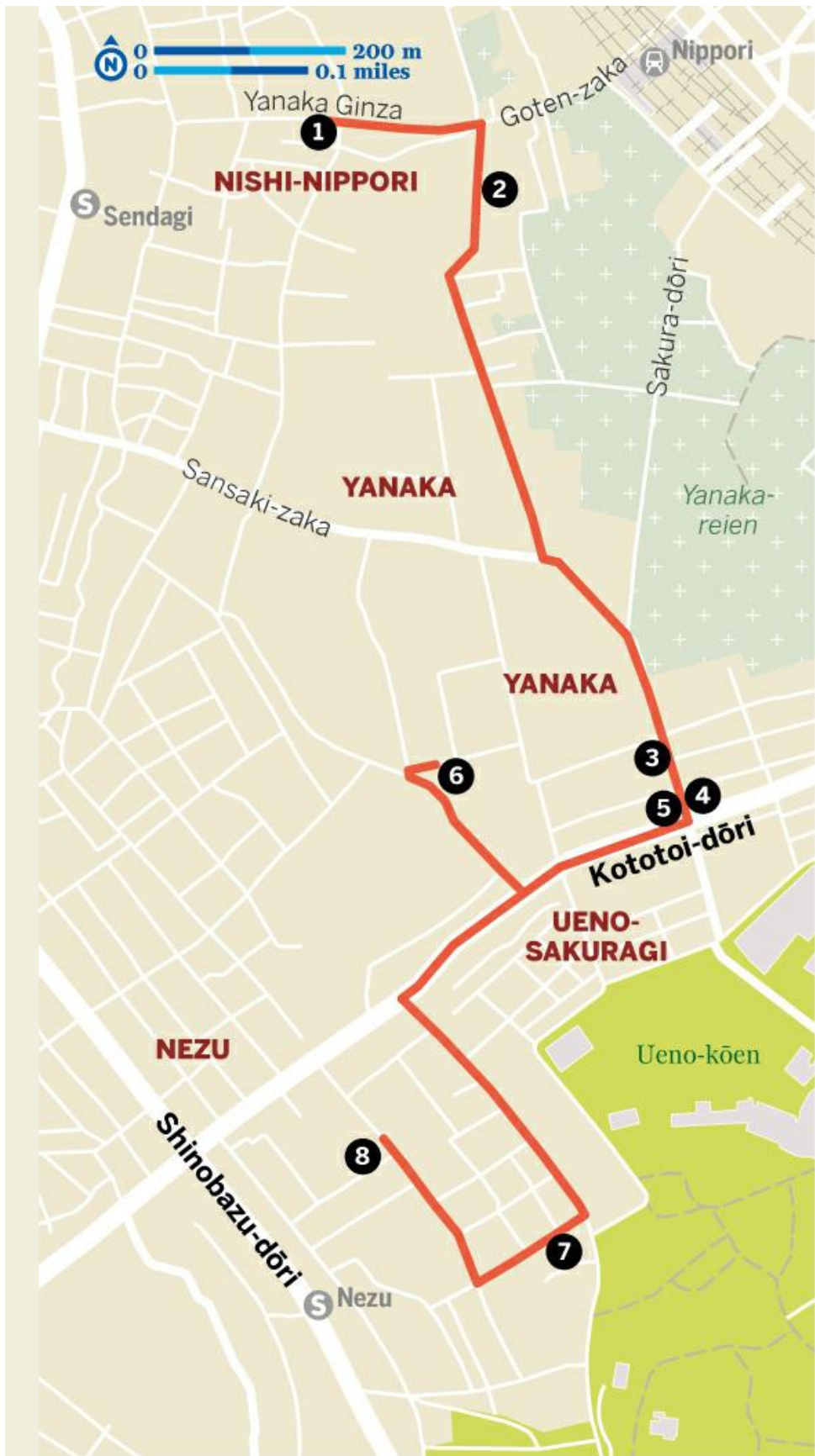
 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun;  JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit). **Kuroda Seiki (1866–1924)** is considered the father of modern Western-style painting in Japan. This 1928-vintage hall, an annexe to Tokyo National Museum, displays key pieces such as *Maiko Girl* and *Wisdom, Impression and Sentiment*, a striking triptych of three nude women on canvases coated with ground gold.



Local Life

A Ramble through Historic Yanaka

In a city where the sentiment ‘new is better’ goes almost unquestioned, Yanaka stands out for having a profound connection to the old. Having survived the Great Kantō Earthquake and the allied firebombing of WWII, Yanaka has a high concentration of vintage wooden structures and temples. The neighbourhood has long been popular with artists and many live and work here.



1 Stroll Yanaka Ginza

Yanaka Ginza is pure vintage, mid-20th-century Tokyo, a cluster of street stalls that feels like a bustling village thoroughfare. Stop in **Yanaka Matsunoya** (谷中松野屋 [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.yanakamatsunoya.jp; 3-14-14 Nishi-Nippori, Arakawa-ku; 🕒 11am-7pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Nippori, west exit), which sells household goods handmade by local artisans.

2 Explore an Artist's Home

Sculptor Asakura Fumio (artist name Chōso; 1883–1964) designed this fanciful house and studio himself. It's now the **Asakura Museum of Sculpture, Taitō** (朝倉彫塑館 [GOOGLE MAP](#); www.taitocity.net/taito/asakura; 7-16-10 Yanaka, Taitō-ku; adult/student ¥500/250; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm Tue, Wed & Fri-Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Nippori, north exit), with a number of the artist's signature realist works on display.

3 See Art in a Bathhouse

For 200 years, this graceful structure with a sloping tile roof was a public bathhouse. In 1993 it became **SCAI the Bathhouse** (スカイザバスハウス [GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3821-1144; www.scaithebathhouse.com; 6-1-23 Yanaka, Taitō-ku; 🕒 noon-6pm Tue-Sat; 📍 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1), a contemporary-art gallery, but retains plenty of original elements, including the wooden lockers and the vaulted ceiling.

4 Visit a 100-Year-Old Shop

Shitamachi Museum Annex (下町風俗資料館 [GOOGLE MAP](#); 2-10-6 Ueno-sakuragi, Taitō-ku; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1) preserves an old liquor shop that operated from 1910 to 1986, complete with

old sake barrels, weights, measures and posters.

5 Hang Out at Kayaba Coffee

Across the street from the Shitamachi Museum Annex is local hang-out **Kayaba Coffee** (カヤバ珈琲 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎03-3823-3545; <http://kayaba-coffee.com>; 6-1-29 Yanaka, Taitō-ku; drinks from ¥450; 🕒8am-11pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun; 📍; 🚶 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1), which has been in business since the 1930s (the building itself dates to 1916) and still has many vintage fixtures.

6 Peek Inside a Working Studio

A long-time Yanaka resident, Allan West paints gorgeous screens in the traditional Japanese style, making his paints from scratch just as local artists have done for centuries. Visitors are welcome to peek inside his studio **Edokoro** (繪処アランウエスト [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎03-3827-1907; www.allanwest.jp; 1-6-17 Yanaka, Taitō-ku; 🕒1-5pm, from 3pm Sun, closed irregularly; 📍 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1) when he's there.

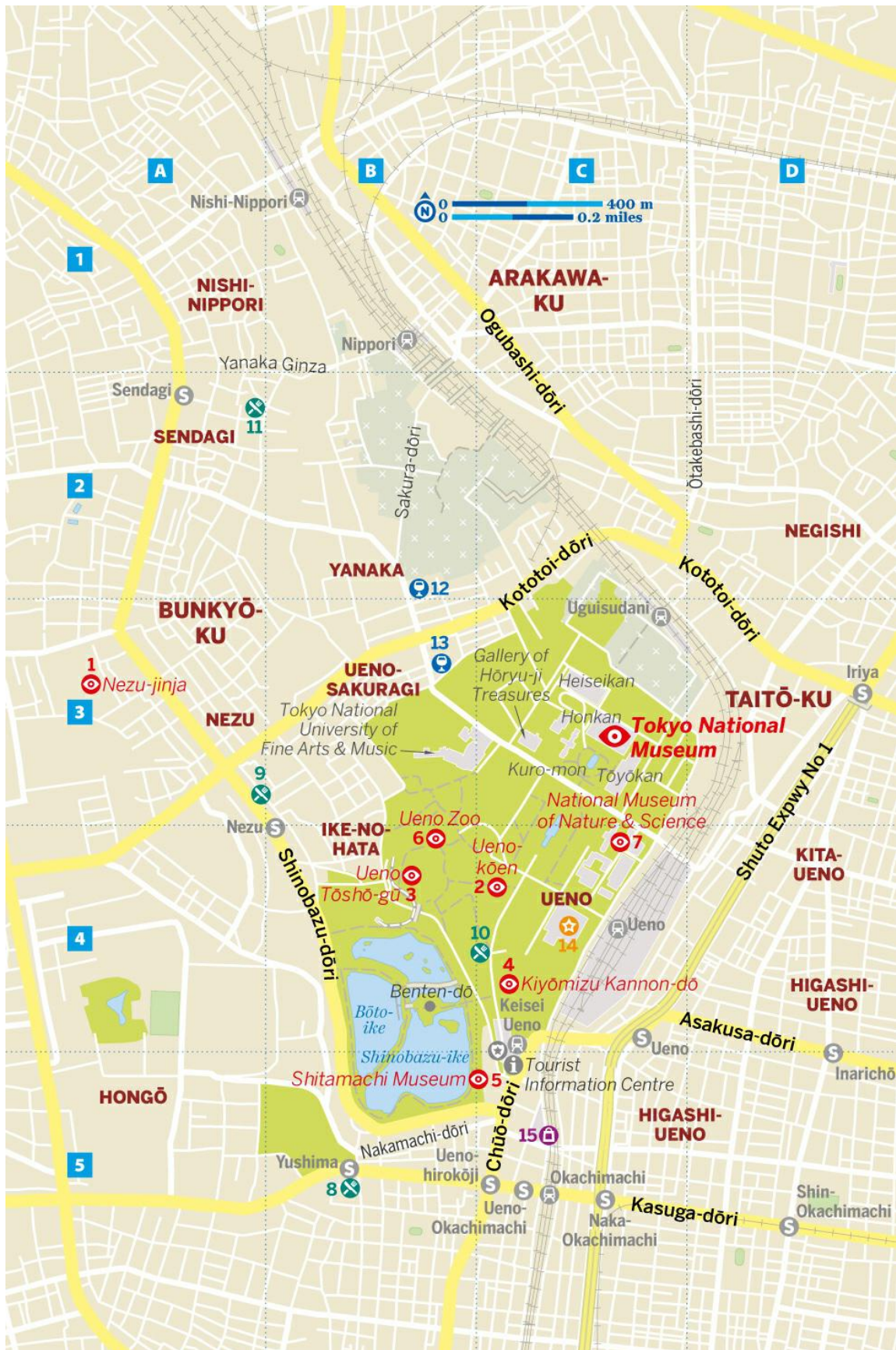
7 Bathe at Rokuryu Kōsen

Join the locals for a soak at **Rokuryu Kōsen** (六龍鉱泉 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎03-3821-3826; 3-4-20 Ikenohata, Taitō-ku; ¥460; 🕒3.30-11pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 2), a public bathhouse since 1931. The amber-hued water is packed with minerals that are reputed to be excellent for your skin, if you can stand the water temperature – a scalding hot 45°C in the cooler of two pools. Don't miss the fantastic traditional wall murals.

8 Noodles at Kamachiku

Udon (thick wheat noodles) made fresh daily is the speciality at

Kamachiku (釜竹 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 03-5815-4675; http://kamachiku.com/top_en;
2-14-18 Nezu, Bunkyo-ku; noodles from ¥850, small dishes ¥350-850; 🕒 11.30am-2pm Tue-Sun,
5.30-9pm Tue-Sat; 🚶; 🚶 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1). **This popular restaurant
fills a beautifully restored brick warehouse from 1910. Expect to
queue on weekends.**



Top Sights

[Tokyo National Museum](#)

C3

Sights

1 [Nezu-jinja](#)

A3

2 [Ueno-kōen](#)

C4

3 [Ueno Tōshō-gū](#)

B4

4 [Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō](#)

C4

5 [Shitamachi Museum](#)

C5

6 [Ueno Zoo](#)

B4

7 [National Museum of Nature & Science](#)

C4

Eating

8 [Shinsuke](#)

B5

9 [Hantei](#)

A3

10 [Innsyoutei](#)

C4

11 [Hagiso](#)

A2

Drinking

12 [Yanaka Beer Hall](#)

B2

13 [Torindō](#)

B3

Entertainment

14 [Tokyo Bunka Kaikan](#)

C4

Shopping

15 [Ameya-yokochō](#)

C5

Sights

Nezu-jinja

SHINTO SHRINE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Not only is this one of Japan's oldest shrines, it is also easily the most beautiful in a district packed with attractive religious buildings. The opulently decorated structure, which dates from the early 18th century, is one of the city's miraculous survivors and is offset by a long corridor of small red *torii* (gates) that makes for great photos.

(根津神社  03-3822-0753; www.nedujinja.or.jp; 1-28-9 Nezu, Bunkyo-ku;  24hr;  Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1)




Nezu-jinja | MAHATIR MOHD YASIN / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Ueno-kōen

PARK

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Best known for its profusion of cherry trees that burst into blossom in spring (making this one of Tokyo's top *hanami* – blossom viewing – spots), sprawling Ueno-kōen is also the location of the city's highest concentration of museums. At the southern tip is the large scenic pond, Shinobazu-ike, choked with lotus flowers.




(上野公園 <http://ueno-bunka.jp>; Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku;  JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen & Shinobazu exits)

Ueno Tōshō-gū

SHINTO SHRINE

MAP GOOGLE MAP

This shrine inside [Ueno-kōen](#) was built in honour of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the warlord who unified Japan. Resplendent in gold leaf and ornate details, it dates from 1651 (though it has had recent touch-ups). You can get a pretty good look from outside the gate, if you want to skip the admission fee.



(上野東照宮  03-3822-3455; www.uenotoshogu.com; 9-88 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; ¥500;  9am-5.30pm Mar-Sep, to 4.30pm Oct-Feb;  JR lines to Ueno, Shinobazu exit)

Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

MAP GOOGLE MAP

[Ueno-kōen's](#) Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō is one of Tokyo's oldest structures: established in 1631 and in its present position since 1698, it has survived every disaster that has come its way. It's a miniature of the famous Kiyomizu-dera in Kyoto and is a pilgrimage site for women hoping to conceive as it enshrines Kosodate Kannon, the protector of childbearing and child-raising.

(清水観音堂  03-3821-4749; 1-29 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku;  9am-4pm;  JR lines to Ueno,




Shinobazu exit)

Shitamachi Museum

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This small museum re-creates life in the plebeian quarters of Tokyo during the Meiji and Taishō periods (1868–1926), before the city was twice destroyed by the Great Kantō Earthquake and WWII. There are old tenement houses and shops that you can enter.




(下町風俗資料館  03-3823-7451; www.taitocity.net/taito/shitamachi; 2-1 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥300/100;  9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun;  JR lines to Ueno, Shinobazu exit)

Ueno Zoo

ZOO

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Japan's oldest zoo, established in 1882, is home to animals from around the globe, but the biggest attractions are two giant pandas that arrived from China in 2011 – Rī Rī and Shin Shin. There's also a whole area devoted to lemurs, which makes sense given Tokyoites' love of all things cute.

(上野動物園; Ueno Dōbutsu-en  03-3828-5171; www.tokyo-zoo.net; 9-83 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥600/free;  9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun;  JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit)

National Museum of Nature & Science

MUSEUM

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

The **Japan Gallery** here showcases the rich and varied wildlife of the Japanese archipelago, from the bears of Hokkaidō to the giant beetles of Okinawa. Elsewhere in the museum: a rocket launcher, a giant squid, an Edo-era mummy and a digital seismograph that charts

earthquakes in real time. There's English signage throughout, plus an English-language audioguide (¥300).

(国立科学博物館 📞 03-5777-8600; www.kahaku.go.jp/english; 7-20 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥600/free; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, to 8pm Fri; 🚉 JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit)



Top Tip Local Bus Loop

While it's possible to get around Ueno and Yanesen on foot, the *tōzai* (東西; east-west) route of the **Megurin community bus** (めぐりん www.city.taito.lg.jp/index/kurashi/kotsu/megurin; 🕒 single ride/day pass ¥100/300) does a helpful loop around the area, running every 15 minutes from 7am to 7pm. Useful stops include: No 2, across from the Ueno Park exit at Ueno Station, and No 12 for Yanaka Ginza (Yanaka Ginza Yomise-dōri).

Eating

🍴 Shinsuke

IZAKAYA \$\$

MAP GOOGLE MAP

In business since 1925, Shinsuke has honed the concept of an ideal *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eatery) to perfection: long cedar counter, 'master' in *happi* (traditional short coat) and *hachimaki* (traditional headband), and smooth-as-silk *dai-ginjo* (premium-grade sake). The food – contemporary updates of classics – is fantastic. Don't miss the *kitsune raclette* – deep-fried tofu stuffed with raclette cheese.





(シンスケ 📞 03-3832-0469; 3-31-5 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku; 🕒 5-9.30pm Mon-Fri, to 9pm Sat; 🚫 📺; 🚉 Chiyoda line to Yushima, exit 3)

Hantei

JAPANESE \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Housed in a beautifully maintained, century-old traditional wooden building, Hantei is a local landmark. Delectable skewers of seasonal *kushiage* (fried meat, fish and vegetables) are served with small, refreshing side dishes. Lunch includes eight or 12 sticks and dinner starts with six, after which you'll continue to receive additional rounds (¥210 per skewer) until you say stop.





(はん亭  03-3828-1440; <http://hantei.co.jp>; 2-12-15 Nezu, Bunkyo-ku; meals from ¥3000;  noon-3pm & 5-10pm Tue-Sun; ;  Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 2)

Innsyoutei

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

In a gorgeous wooden building dating back to 1875, Innsyoutei (pronounced 'in-sho-tei' and meaning 'rhyme of the pine cottage') has long been a favourite spot for fancy *kaiseki*-style (Japanese haute cuisine) meals while visiting [Ueno-kōen](#). Without a booking (essential for dinner) you'll have a long wait, but it's worth it. Lunchtime *bentō* (boxed meals) offer beautifully presented morsels and are great value.

(韻松亭  03-3821-8126; www.innsyoutei.jp; 4-59 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; lunch/dinner from ¥1680/5500;  restaurant 11am-3pm & 5-9.30pm, tearoom 11am-5pm; ;  JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit)

Hagiso

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This attractive new cafe and gallery, run by students from Tokyo University of the Arts (Geidai), is a good all-rounder for meals, drinks

and sweets in the heart of Yanaka. Its Japanese-style breakfast is a great deal at ¥325, while lunch set menus may include a hearty vegetable curry or Japanese-style hamburger steak. Expect to wait on weekends as it's popular.

(☎ 03-5832-9808; <http://hanare.hagiso.jp>; 3-10-25 Yanaka, Taitō-ku; mains ¥815-1300; 🕒 8-10.30am & noon-9pm; 🚶 Chiyoda line to Sendagi, exit 2)



Top Tip

Ueno Free Walking Tour

Free tours ([GOOGLE MAP](#) ; <https://tokyosgg.jp/guide.html>; 7-47 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; 🚶 JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit) of Ueno, conducted in English by volunteer guides, leave from in front of the Green Salon (グリーンサロン) cafe every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday at 10.30am and 1pm. No sign-up is necessary.

Drinking

🍷 Yanaka Beer Hall

CRAFT BEER

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Exploring Yanesen can be thirsty work, so thank heavens for this craft-beer bar, a cosy place with some outdoor seating. It's part of a charming complex of old wooden buildings that also house a bakery-cafe, bistro and events space. It has several brews on tap, including a Yanaka lager that's only available here.

(☎ 03-5834-2381; www.facebook.com/yanakabeerhall; 2-15-6 Ueno-sakuragi, Taitō-ku; 🕒 noon-8.30pm Tue-Fri, 11am-8.30pm Sat & Sun; 📶 📺; 🚶 Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1)

🍷 Torindō

TEAHOUSE

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Sample a cup of paint-thick *matcha* (powdered green tea) at this tiny teahouse on the edge of [Ueno-kōen](#). Tradition dictates that the bitter tea be paired with something sweet, so choose from the artful desserts in the glass counter, then pull up a stool at the communal table. It's a white building on a corner.

(桃林堂 1-5-7 Ueno-Sakuragi, Taitō-ku; tea ¥450; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 S Chiyoda line to Nezu, exit 1)

Entertainment

★ Tokyo Bunka Kaikan

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MAP GOOGLE MAP

The Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo Ballet both make regular appearances at this concrete bunker of a building designed by Maekawa Kunio, an apprentice of Le Corbusier. Prices vary wildly; look out for monthly morning classical-music performances that cost only ¥500. The gorgeously decorated auditorium has superb acoustics.


(東京文化会館 www.t-bunka.jp/en; 5-45 Ueno-kōen, Taitō-ku; 🕒 library 1-8pm Tue-Sat, to 5pm Sun; 🚶 JR lines to Ueno, Ueno-kōen exit)



Local Life Cycle Around

Locals love cycling around Ueno and Yanesen. Hipster bicycle manufacturer **Tokyobike** ([GOOGLE MAP](#)); 📞 03-3827-4819;

www.tokyobike.com/rental; 6-3-12 Yanaka, Taitō-ku; per day ¥2500; 🕒 10am-7pm Wed-Sun;

 JR Yamanote line to Nippori, west exit) in Yanaka rents seven-speed city bikes. Reserve one in advance by sending an email with your name, desired day and height.



Shopping

Ameya-yokochō

MARKET

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Step into this partially open-air market, paralleling and beneath the JR line tracks, and ritzy, glitzy Tokyo feels like a distant memory. It got its start as a black market, post-WWII, when American goods were sold here. Today, it's packed with vendors selling everything from fresh seafood and exotic cooking spices to jeans, sneakers and elaborately embroidered bomber jackets.

(アメヤ横町 www.ameyoko.net; 4 Ueno, Taitō-ku;  10am-7pm, some shops close Wed;  JR lines to Okachimachi, north exit)



Ameya-yokochō | KORKUSUNG / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Asakusa



ZEROSYSTEM / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Asakusa (ah-saku-sah) is home to Tokyo's oldest attraction, the centuries-old temple Sensō-ji. Just across the river is the city's newest: the 634m-tall Tokyo Sky Tree. The neighbourhoods surrounding these sights are known as *shitamachi* (the low city), where the spirit of old Edo (Tokyo under the shogun) proudly lives on in an atmospheric web of alleys, artisan shops and mum-and-dad restaurants.

The Sights in a Day



Begin your journey through this historic district at Asakusa Station, following the signs to Kaminari-mon (Thunder Gate). Just outside, look across the river to the architectural landmark, [Super Dry Hall](#). Then head down the Nakamise-dōri shopping arcade leading to the temple [Sensō-ji](#). Spend an hour exploring the temple, then stop for a lunch of tempura at [Daikokuya](#).



In the afternoon stroll around Asakusa's atmospheric side streets, stopping at the pretty little temple [Chingo-dō](#) and the [Traditional Crafts Museum](#). Asakusa, with its high concentration of traditional crafts shops, like [Kurodaya](#), is an excellent place for souvenir shopping. Stop for a coffee at [Ef](#) or revive yourself in the classic Japanese way – with a soak in the hot-spring tubs at neighbourhood bathhouse [Jakotsu-yu](#).



Splurge on a dinner of premium beef at [Asakusa Imahan](#) or go for the old-school ambience of [Otafuku](#). Then hop on the Tōbu Sky Tree line (or take a taxi) for [Tokyo Sky Tree](#), across the river. Take the lift to the observatories at 350m for dazzling night views over the city.



Top Sights

[Sensō-ji](#)



Best of Tokyo

Food

[Otafuku](#)

Architecture & Design

[Tokyo Sky Tree](#)

[Super Dry Hall](#)

Entertainment

[Oiwake](#)


Best Onsen & Sentō


[Jakotsu-yu](#)


Shopping

[Marugoto Nippon](#)

Getting There

 **Train** The Tōbu Sky Tree line leaves from Tōbu Asakusa Station for Tokyo Sky Tree Station.

 **Subway** The Ginza and Asakusa line stops at separate Asakusa stations. The Asakusa and Hanzōmon lines stop at Oshiage.

 **Ferry** Azuma-bashi is the starting point for Tokyo Cruise water buses heading to Hamarikyū Onshi-teien.



Top Sights Sensō-ji

Founded more than 1000 years before Tokyo got its start, Sensō-ji is the capital's oldest temple and the spiritual home of its ancestors. According to legend, in AD 628 two fishermen brothers pulled a golden image of Kannon (the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy) out of the nearby Sumida-gawa. The temple was built to enshrine it. Today Sensō-ji stands out for its old-world atmosphere – offering a glimpse of a bygone Japan that can be difficult to find in contemporary Tokyo.

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

浅草寺 📞 03-3842-0181; www.senso-ji.jp; 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 24hr; 🚉 **S** Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1



TTSTUDIO / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ The main hall and its gates are illuminated every day from sunset until 11pm.
- ➔ Consider the crowds part of the experience, as there doesn't seem to be a time of day when Sensō-ji isn't packed.
- ➔ Get an *omikuji* (paper fortune; ¥100) at one of the kiosks near the main hall that has them in English. Follow the instructions posted. If you get a bad one, tie the paper on the nearby rack, ask the gods for better luck and try again.

🍴 Take a Break

There are numerous snack vendors along Nakamise-dōri, selling *sembei* (rice crackers), *age-manju* (deep-fried bean-paste buns) and ice cream.

Just off Nakamise-dōri, [Daikokuya](#) serves delicious tempura in an unpretentious setting that is typical of Asakusa.

The Gates

The temple precinct begins at the majestic **Kaminari-mon** (Thunder Gate), with its enormous *chōchin* (lantern) weighing 670kg. On either side are a pair of ferocious protective deities: Fūjin, the god of wind, on the right; and Raijin, the god of thunder, on the left. Beyond, the bustling shopping street, **Nakamise-dōri** – with stalls selling everything from souvenirs to genuine Edo-style crafts – leads to **Hōzō-mon**, another gate with fierce guardians. On the gate's back side are a pair of 2500kg, 4.5m-tall *waraji* (straw sandals) meant to symbolise the Buddha's power.

The Main Hall & Grounds

In front of the grand **main hall** is a large incense cauldron. The smoke is said to bestow health and you'll see people rubbing it into their bodies through their clothes. The ancient image of Kannon is not on public display (and admittedly may not exist at all), but this doesn't

stop a steady stream of worshippers from paying their respects. Off the courtyard stands a 53m-high **Five-Storey Pagoda**, a 1973 reconstruction of a pagoda built by Tokugawa Iemitsu and the second-highest pagoda in Japan. There are also numerous subtemples here to explore.

Asakusa-jinja

On the temple grounds, Asakusa-jinja was built in honour of the brothers who discovered the Kannon statue. The current building, painted a deep shade of red, dates to 1649 and is a rare example of early Edo architecture.



📍 Top Sights

Sensō-ji

B2

Sights

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Sights

Tokyo Sky Tree

TOWER

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tokyo Sky Tree opened in May 2012 as the world's tallest 'free-standing tower' at 634m. Its silvery exterior of steel mesh morphs from a triangle at the base to a circle at 300m. There are two observation decks, at 350m and 450m. You can see more of the city during daylight hours – at peak visibility you can see up to 100km away, all the way to Mt Fuji – but it is at night that Tokyo appears truly beautiful.


(東京スカイツリー www.tokyo-skytree.jp; 1-1-2 Oshiage, Sumida-ku; 350m/450m observation decks ¥2060/3090; 🕒 8am-10pm;  Hanzōmon line to Oshiage, Sky Tree exit)

Super Dry Hall

ARCHITECTURE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Also known as Asahi Beer Hall, the headquarters of the brewery was designed by Philippe Starck and completed in 1989. It remains one of the city's most distinctive buildings. The tower, with its golden glass facade and white top floors, is supposed to evoke a giant mug of beer, while the golden blob atop the lower jet-black building is the flame (locals, however, refer to it as the 'golden turd').

(フラムドール; Flamme d'Or www.asahibeer.co.jp/aboutus/summary/#headQuarter; 1-23-1 Azuma-bashi, Sumida-ku;  Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 4)



Asakusa red bridge and Super Dry Hall | MOSAYMAY / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Jakotsu-yu

BATHHOUSE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Unlike most *sentō* (public baths), the tubs here are filled with pure hot-spring water, naturally the colour of weak tea. Another treat is the lovely, lantern-lit, rock-framed *rotemburo* (outdoor bath). Jakotsu-yu is a welcoming place; it has English signage and doesn't have a policy against tattoos. It's an extra ¥200 for the sauna, ¥140 for a small towel.

(蛇骨湯  03-3841-8645; www.jakotsuyu.co.jp; 1-11-11 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥460/180;

 1pm-midnight Wed-Mon;  Ginza line to Tawaramachi, exit 3)

Chingo-dō

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This small, peaceful temple is actually part of [Sensō-ji](#) but has a separate entrance on Dembō-in-dōri. It pays tribute to the *tanuki* (raccoon-like folkloric characters), who figure in Japanese myth as mystical shape-shifters and merry pranksters. They are also said to protect against fire and theft, which is why you'll often see *tanuki* figurines in front of restaurants.

(鎮護堂 www.senso-ji.jp/guide/chingodo_e.html; 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 6am-5pm; 🚉 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1)

Edo Shitamachi Traditional Crafts Museum MUSEUM

MAP [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Asakusa has a long artisan tradition, and changing exhibitions of local crafts – such as *Edo-kiriko* (cut glass) – are on display at this museum in a covered shopping arcade. Demonstrations are held on Saturdays and Sundays (between 11am and 5pm).

(江戸下町伝統工芸館; Edo Shitamachi Dentō Kōgeikan 📞 03-3842-1990; 2-22-13 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 10am-8pm; 🚉 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1)



Top Tip

Asakusa Info & Events

The **Asakusa Culture Tourist Information Center** (浅草文化観光センター [GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3842-5566; <http://taitonavi.jp>; 2-18-9 Kaminarimon, Taitō-ku; 🕒 9am-8pm; 📶; 🚉 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 2) often has special events including geisha performances; the staff here can clue you in to where to find places to dress up in rental kimono. The 8th floor here has perfect (and free!) views of [Tokyo Sky Tree](#).





Eating

Otafuku

JAPANESE \$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Over a century old, Otafuku specialises in *oden* (a classic Japanese stew). It's simmered at the counter and diners pick what they want from the pot. You can dine cheaply on radishes and kelp, or splash out on scallops and tuna or a full-course menu for ¥5400 – whichever way you go, you get to soak up Otafuku's convivial, old-time atmosphere.





(大多福  03-3871-2521; www.otafuku.ne.jp; 1-6-2 Senzoku, Taitō-ku; oden ¥110-550;  5-11pm Tue-Sat, to 10pm Sun; ;  Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 1)

Onigiri Yadoroku

JAPANESE \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Onigiri (rice-ball snacks), usually wrapped in crispy sheets of *nori* (seaweed) are a great Japanese culinary invention, and this humbly decorated and friendly place specialises in them. The set lunches, including a choice of two or three *onigiri*, are a great deal. At night there's a large range of flavours to choose from along with alcohol.

(おにぎり 浅草 宿六  03-3874-1615; <http://onigiriyadoroku.com>; 3-9-10 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; set lunch ¥660 & ¥900, onigiri ¥200-600;  11.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 6pm-2am Thu-Tue; ;  Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 1)

Asakusa Imahan

JAPANESE \$\$\$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

For a meal to remember, swing by this famous beef restaurant, in business since 1895. Choose between courses of *sukiyaki* (sauteed beef

dipped in raw egg) and *shabu-shabu* (beef blanched in broth); prices rise according to the grade of meat. For diners on a budget, Imahan sells a limited number of cheaper lunch sets (from ¥1500).

(浅草今半 📞 03-3841-1114; www.asakusaimahan.co.jp; 3-1-12 Nishi-Asakusa, Taitō-ku; lunch/dinner set menu from ¥3800/10,000; 🕒 11.30am-9.30pm; 🚶🏠🚶🏠; 🚆 Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 4)

Rokurinsha

RAMEN \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Rokurinsha's speciality is *tsukemen* – ramen noodles served on the side with a bowl of concentrated soup for dipping. The noodles here are thick and perfectly al dente and the soup has a rich *tonkotsu* (pork bone) base. It's an addictive combination that draws lines to this outpost in Tokyo Sky Tree Town.

(六厘舎 www.rokurinsha.com; 6th fl, Solamachi, 1-1-2 Oshiage, Sumida-ku; ramen from ¥850; 🕒 10.30am-11pm; 🚶🏠🚶🏠; 🚶🏠 Hanzōmon line to Oshiage, exit B3)

Daikokuya

TEMPURA \$

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)


Near Nakamise-dōri, this is the place to get old-fashioned tempura fried in pure sesame oil, an Asakusa speciality. It's in a white building with a tile roof. If there's a queue (and there often is), you can try your luck at the annexe one block over, where they also serve set-course meals.

(大黒家 📞 03-3844-1111; www.tempura.co.jp/english/index.html; 1-38-10 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; meals ¥1550-2100; 🕒 11am-8.30pm Sun-Fri, to 9pm Sat; 🚶🏠🚶🏠; 🚶🏠 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1)

Local Life



Hoppy-dōri

Along either side of the street popularly known as **Hoppy-dōri** (ホッピー通り [GOOGLE MAP](#); 2-5 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; skewers from ¥120;  Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 4) – ‘hoppy’ is a cheap malt beverage – food vendors set out stools and tables for customers to nosh on cheap *yakitori* (skewers of grilled meat or vegetables) from noon until late.



Mix yakitori (meat-and-vegetable skewers) | TMON / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Drinking

Café Otonova

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Tucked away on an alley running parallel to [Kappabashi-dōri](#), this charming cafe occupies an old house. Exposed beams are whitewashed and an atrium has been created, with cosy booths upstairs and a big communal table downstairs in front of the DJ booth. It's a stylish cafe by day and a romantic bolthole for drinks at night, with no table charge.





(カフェ・オトノヴァ  03-5830-7663; www.cafeotonova.net/#3eme; 3-10-4 Nishi-Asakusa;  noon-11pm, to 9pm Sun; )

Ef

CAFE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Set in a 19th-century wooden warehouse that beat the 1923 earthquake and WWII, this wonderfully cosy space serves coffee, tea and, after 6pm, cocktails and beer. Be sure to check out the gallery in the stone *kura* (storeroom) out back.

(エフ  03-3841-0442; www.gallery-ef.com; 2-19-18 Kaminari-mon, Taitō-ku; coffee ¥550;  11am-midnight Mon, Wed, Thu & Sat, to 2am Fri, to 10pm Sun; ;  Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 2)

'Cuzn Homeground

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Run by a wild gang of local hippies, 'Cuzn is the kind of bar where anything can happen: a barbecue, a jam session or all-night karaoke, for example.

(www.homeground.jpn.com; 2-17-9 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; beer ¥800; 🕒 11am-6am; 📶 📄; 🅑 Ginza line to Tawaramachi, exit 3)

Kamiya Bar

BAR

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

One of Tokyo's oldest Western-style bars, Kamiya opened in 1880 and is still hugely popular – though probably more so today for its enormous, cheap draught beer (¥1050 for a litre). Its real speciality, however, is Denki Bran (¥270), a herbal liquor that's been produced in-house for over a century. Order at the counter, then give your tickets to the server.

(神谷バー 📞 03-3841-5400; www.kamiya-bar.com; 1-1-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 11.30am-10pm Wed-Mon; 📄; 🅑 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 3)

Understand

Traditional Festivals

Tokyo's shrines host riotous *matsuri* (festivals) that seem to turn back the clock a few centuries. Men don *happi* (short-sleeve coats) and *fundoshi* (the traditional loincloths worn by sumo wrestlers) to carry *mikoshi* (portable shrines) through the streets, chanting as they push through the crowds. These celebrations have their roots in Shintō tradition, but they also serve to renew age-old community bonds. Asakusa's **Sanja Matsuri**, held the third weekend of May, is Tokyo's biggest, drawing some 1.5 million spectators annually; however, there are festivals throughout the year. Check for listings on **Go Tokyo** (www.gotokyo.org/en/index.html).






Performers dress as herons during Sanja Matsuri | SOO HON KEONG / GETTY IMAGES ©

Entertainment

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Oiwake is one of Tokyo's few *minyō izakaya*, pubs where traditional folk music is performed. It's a homey place, where the waitstaff and the musicians – who play *tsugaru-jamisen* (a banjo-like instrument), hand drums and the bamboo flute – are one and the same. Sets start at 7pm and 9pm; children are welcome for the early show. Seating is on tatami.

(追分  03-3844-6283; www.oiwake.info; 3-28-11 Nishi-Asakusa, Taitō-ku; admission ¥2000 plus 1 food item & 1 drink;  5.30pm-midnight;  Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 1)

Understand

Old Edo & Shitamachi

Before Tokyo there was Edo – literally ‘Gate of the River’ – named for its location at the mouth of the Sumida-gawa. This small farming village rose from obscurity in 1603 when Tokugawa Ieyasu established his shogunate (military government) here. The new capital quickly transformed into a bustling city and by the late 18th century was the largest city in the world with a population of one million.

Life in Edo

Under Tokugawa rule, society was rigidly hierarchical. At the top were the *daimyō* (feudal lords) and their samurai. Then came the peasants – the farmers and fishermen – and at the bottom were the *chōnin*, the townspeople, including merchants and artisans. The layout of Edo, too, was divided: on the elevated plain to the west of the castle was the *yamanote* (literally ‘mountain’s hand’), where the feudal elite built its estates. In the east, along the banks of the Sumida-gawa, the *chōnin* lived elbow to elbow in wooden tenement houses in *shitamachi* (the low-lying parts of Edo).

Wealth, however, didn’t follow such neat lines; in reality, some *chōnin* grew fabulously wealthy and enjoyed a lifestyle that thumbed its nose at the austerity prescribed by the ruling class. It was they who patronised the kabuki theatre, sumo tournaments and the pleasure district of Yoshiwara, to the north of Asakusa.

Shitamachi Today

While official class distinctions were laid to rest along with feudalism in the 19th century, the old city patterns remain. Former *shitamachi* districts to the east, such as Asakusa, are still a tangle of alleys and tightly packed quarters, with more traditional architecture, old-school artisans and small businesses. Even today, the word *shitamachi* is used to describe such neighbourhoods that come closest to approximating the spirit of old Edo. Those who’ve lived in such districts for generations can call themselves *Edokko*, or ‘children of Edo’. And even some who don’t qualify are finding themselves drawn to such neighbourhoods, which offer the human connections and warmth lacking in newer parts of the city.




Shopping

Marugoto Nippon

FOOD & DRINKS

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Think of this as a modern mini department store, showcasing the best of Japan's best in terms of speciality food and drink (ground floor) and arts and crafts (2nd floor). There are also plenty of tasting samples, and cafes and restaurants on the 3rd and 4th floors should you want something more substantial.




(まるごとにつぼん  03-3845-0510; www.marugotonippon.com; 2-6-7 Asakusa, Taitō-ku;  10am-8pm;  Ginza line to Tawaramachi, exit 3)

Tokyo Hotarudo

VINTAGE

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

This curio shop is run by an eccentric young man who prefers to dress as if the 20th century hasn't come and gone already. If you think that sounds marvellous, then you'll want to check out his collection of vintage dresses and bags, antique lamps, watches and decorative *objet*.

(東京蛍堂  03-3845-7563; <http://tokyohotarudo.com>; 1-41-8 Asakusa, Taitō-ku;  11am-8pm Wed-Sun;  Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 5)

Kurodaya

STATIONERY

[MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)

Since 1856, Kurodaya has been specialising in *washi* (traditional Japanese paper) and products made from paper such as cards, kites and papier-mâché folk-art figures. It sells its own designs and many others from across Japan.

(黒田屋 📞 03-3844-7511; 1-2-5 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 10am-6pm; 🚉 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 3)

🔒 Yonoya Kushiho

FASHION & ACCESSORIES

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Even in a neighbourhood where old is not out of place, Yonoya Kushiho stands out: this little shop has been selling handmade boxwood combs since 1717. Yonoya also sells old-fashioned hair ornaments (worn with the elaborate up-dos of courtesans in the past) and modern trinkets.

(よのや櫛舗 1-37-10 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 10.30am-6pm Thu-Tue; 🚉 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1)

🔒 Fujiya

ARTS & CRAFTS

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Fujiya specialises in *tenugui*: dyed cloths of thin cotton that can be used as tea towels, handkerchiefs, gift wrapping (the list goes on – they're surprisingly versatile). Here they come in traditional designs and humorous modern ones.

(ふじ屋 📞 03-3841-2283; www.asakusa-noren.ne.jp/tenugui-fujiya/sp.html; 2-2-15 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; 🕒 10am-6pm Wed-Mon; 🚉 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1)

🔒 Kappabashi-dōri

HOMEWARES

MAP GOOGLE MAP

Kappabashi-dōri is the country's largest wholesale restaurant-supply and kitchenware district. Gourmet accessories include bamboo steamer baskets, lacquer trays, neon signs and *chōchin* (paper lanterns). It's also where restaurants get their freakishly realistic plastic food models.

(合羽橋通り) **S** Ginza line to Tawaramachi, exit 3)




Top Sights

Ōedo Onsen Monogatari

Ōedo Onsen Monogatari proves that Tokyo really does have it all – including a natural hot spring. The baths here, which include gender-divided indoor tubs and outdoor *rotemburo* (outdoor baths), are filled with real onsen water, pumped from 1400m below Tokyo Bay. It's touristy, yes, but for visitors making their first foray into Japanese-style communal bathing, the light and kitschy atmosphere makes the actual bathing part that much less intimidating. Just to experience the truly Japanese phenomenon that is an amusement park centred on bathing is reason enough to visit.

Getting There

 Take the Yurikamome line from Shiodome to Telecom Center, south exit. You can also take the Rinkai line from JR Ōsaki Station to Tokyo Teleport Station and transfer to the free shuttle bus (or walk for 25 minutes).



PATRICK SHYU / CONTRIBUTOR / GETTY IMAGES ©

Practicalities

[GOOGLE MAP](#)

大江戸温泉物語 www.oedoonsen.jp; 2-6-3 Aomi, Kōtō-ku; adult/child ¥2280/980, surcharge Sat & Sun ¥200; 🕒11am-9am, last entry 7am; 🚶Yurikamome line to Telecom Center, Rinkai line to Tokyo Teleport with free shuttle bus

✔ Top Tips

- ➔ Visitors with tattoos will be denied admission.
 - ➔ Come after 6pm for a ¥500 discount.
-

🍴 Take a Break

There are plenty of food offerings inside the complex, including no less than three ramen shops.

Microbrewery and restaurant **TY Harbor Brewery** ([GOOGLE MAP](#)); 📞03-5479-4555; www.tyharborbrewing.co.jp; 2-1-3 Higashi-Shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku; lunch set meal ¥1200-1700, dinner mains from ¥1700; 🕒11.30am-2pm & 5.30-10pm; 🚶🚶🚶; 🚶Rinkai line to Tennōzu Isle, exit B) is only one stop away, on the Rinkai line.

Wear a Yukata

The first thing you'll do when you arrive is pick out your *yukata*, a lightweight, easy-to-wear kimono that is part of the Ōedo Onsen Monogatari experience. In the changing room you'll swap your street clothes for this, which you can wear not only to and from the baths but also around the whole complex. It's worn with the left side over the right, tied at the waist for women and at the hips for men.

Soak Away

Part of the fun here is hopping from bath to bath trying out the different temperatures and styles. There are jet baths, pools of natural

rock and, on the ladies' side, personal bucket-shaped baths made of cedar. It's popularly believed in Japan that onsen water has healing properties; the slightly alkaline, sodium chloride–rich waters here are said to be good for stiff muscles and achy joints.

Outside is a Japanese-style garden with a 50m-long *ashi-yu* (foot bath) snaking through the centre. The ankle-deep water keeps your feet warm no matter how chill the air. On the bottom are stones designed to stimulate the pressure points on the soles of the feet.

Hang out in Town


Ōedo Onsen Monogatari is not, however, solely about bathing. Billed as an 'onsen theme park' – a fantastically Japanese concept – it's done up to resemble a Disneyland-style version of an Edo-era town, with carnival games (like tossing ninja stars) and food stalls. The atmosphere is enhanced by the fact that everyone is wearing *yukata* (which makes for great photos). The garden and town areas are communal, so mixed parties can hang out together.



Top Sights Mt Fuji

Catching a glimpse of Mt Fuji (富士山; 3776m), Japan's highest and most famous peak, will take your breath away. Climbing it and watching the sunrise from the summit is one of Japan's superlative experiences (though it's often cloudy). The official climbing season runs from 1 July to 31 August. The mountain is divided into 10 'stations' from base (First Station) to summit (20th). The vast majority of visitors hike the Kawaguchi-ko Trail from the Fifth Station, as it's easy to reach from Tokyo.

Getting There

 During the climbing season, Keiō Dentetsu (www.highwaybus.com) runs direct (¥2700, 2½ hours; reservations necessary) from the Shinjuku Station to Fuji Subaru Line Fifth Station.



Mt Fuji and Chureito Pagoda | BULE SKY STUDIO / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ Climbing Mt Fuji (www17.plala.or.jp/climb_fujiyama) and the official web site for Mt Fuji Climbing (www.fujisan-climb.jp) are good online resources.
- ➔ Check summit weather conditions before planning a climb at www.snow-forecast.com/resorts/Mount-Fuji/6day/top.
- ➔ To avoid the worst of the crowds head up on a weekday or start earlier during the day.
- ➔ Authorities strongly caution against climbing outside the regular season, when the weather is highly unpredictable and first-aid stations on the mountain are closed.

🍴 Take a Break

Mountain huts along the trail offer spartan sleeping conditions and hot meals. Reservations are essential for overnighting. Try **Taishikan** (www.mfi.or.jp/w3/home0/taisikan) or **Fujisan Hotel** (www.fujisanhotel.com).

The Climb

The Kawaguchi-ko Trail is accessed from Fuji Subaru Line Fifth Station (aka Kawaguchi-ko Fifth Station). Allow five to six hours to reach the top (though some climb it in half the time) and about three hours to descend, plus 1½ hours for circling the crater at the top. To time your arrival for dawn you can either start up in the afternoon, stay overnight in a mountain hut and continue early in the morning, or climb the whole way at night. You do not want to arrive on the top too long before dawn, as it will be very cold and windy, even at the height of summer.

Know Before You Go

Mt Fuji is a serious mountain, high enough for altitude sickness, and weather and visibility can change instantly and dramatically. At a minimum, bring clothing appropriate for cold and wet weather,

including a hat and gloves, at least 2L of water (you can buy more on the mountain during the climbing season), snacks and cash for other necessities, such as toilets (¥200). If you're climbing at night, bring a torch (flashlight) or headlamp and spare batteries.

Fuji-spotting

Outside the climbing season, you can hunt for views of Mt Fuji in the Fuji Five Lake region, where placid lakes, formed by ancient eruptions, serve as natural reflecting pools. Kawaguchi-ko is the most popular lake, with plenty of accommodation, eating and hiking options around it. Winter and spring are your best bet for catching a glimpse, though often the snow-capped peak is visible only in the morning before it retreats behind its cloud curtain. Buses run year-round to Kawaguchi-ko (¥1750, 1¾ hours).



The Best of Tokyo

[Contemporary Architecture in Omote-sando](#)

[Asakusa Shitamachi](#)

[Historic Marunouchi & Ginza](#)

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Courses



Best Walks

Contemporary Architecture in Omote-sandō



The Walk

Omote-sandō is a broad, tree-lined boulevard running between Harajuku and Aoyama. It's known for its parade of upmarket boutiques designed by the who's who of (mostly) Japanese contemporary architects. This stretch of prime real estate functions as a walk-through design showroom and is full of architectural eye candy. All of the buildings on the route are contemporary, though the final stop, Nezu Museum, is a modern take on the traditional Japanese villa.

Start Tokyū Plaza; **Train** Harajuku

Finish Nezu Museum; **Subway** Omote-sandō

Length 1.5km; one hour



Take a Break

On Omote-sandō, between Harajuku and Aoyama, **Anniversaire**

Café (アニヴェルセルカフェ [GOOGLE MAP](#); <http://cafe.anniversaire.co.jp>; 3-5-30 Kita-Aoyama,

Minato-ku; 🕒 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-11pm Sat & Sun; 📍; 🚉 Ginza Line to Omote-sandō, exit A2)

has an attractive patio that is perfect for people-watching.



1 Tokyū Plaza

Tokyū Plaza (2012) is castle-like structure by up-and-coming architect Nakamura Hiroshi. The entrance is a dizzying hall of mirrors and there's a spacious roof garden on top.

2 Omotesandō Hills

Andō Tadao's deceptively deep **Omotesandō Hills** (2003) is a high-end shopping mall spiralling around a sunken central atrium. It replaced an ivy-covered, pre-WWII apartment building (to considerable protest); the low horizontal design pays homage to the original structure.

3 Dior Building

Across the street from Omotesandō Hills, the flagship boutique for

Dior (2003), designed by Pritzker Prize winner SANAA (composed of Sejima Kazuyo and Nishizawa Ryūe), has a filmy, white exterior that seems to hang like a dress; made entirely of glass and a thin grey sheath, it acts as a semipermeable veil protecting the refined interior from the urban tangle outside.

4 **Louis Vuitton Building**

Meant to evoke a stack of clothes trunks, Aoki Jun's design for **Louis Vuitton** (2002) features offset panels of tinted glass behind sheets of metal mesh of varying patterns.

5 **Tod's Building**

Climb onto the elevated crosswalk to better admire Itō Toyō's construction for **Tod's** (2004). The crisscrossing strips of concrete take their inspiration from the zelkova trees below; what's more impressive is that they're also structural.

6 **Spiral Building**

Maki Fumihiko's post-modernist **Spiral Building** is worth a detour down Aoyama-dōri. Constructed in 1985, it predates everything else on this walk. The patchwork, uncentred design is a nod to Tokyo's own mismatched landscape. Inside, a spiralling passage doubles as an **art gallery**.

7 **Prada Building**

The most internationally famous structure on this strip is the convex glass fishbowl that Herzog and de Meuron designed for **Prada** (2003).

8 **Nezu Museum**

Finish the walk at the traditional-meets-modern [Nezu Museum](#), remodelled in 2009 by Kuma Kengō. The bamboo-lined entrance is likened by the architect to the pathway that leads to a traditional teahouse, which gives the visitor time to adjust their mood.



Tokyū Plaza entrance | JIRAT TEPARAKSA / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Best Walks Asakusa Shitamachi

The Walk

Shitamachi is the word used to describe parts of Tokyo that come closest to approximating the spirit of old Edo. Asakusa is one of those places. Not only does it have important temples and shrines dating to the Edo era (1603–1868) or earlier, but it also has the narrow lanes and wooden shop fronts that characterise Shitamachi today. This walk will take you past the main sights, and also along lanes that ooze old-Tokyo atmosphere.

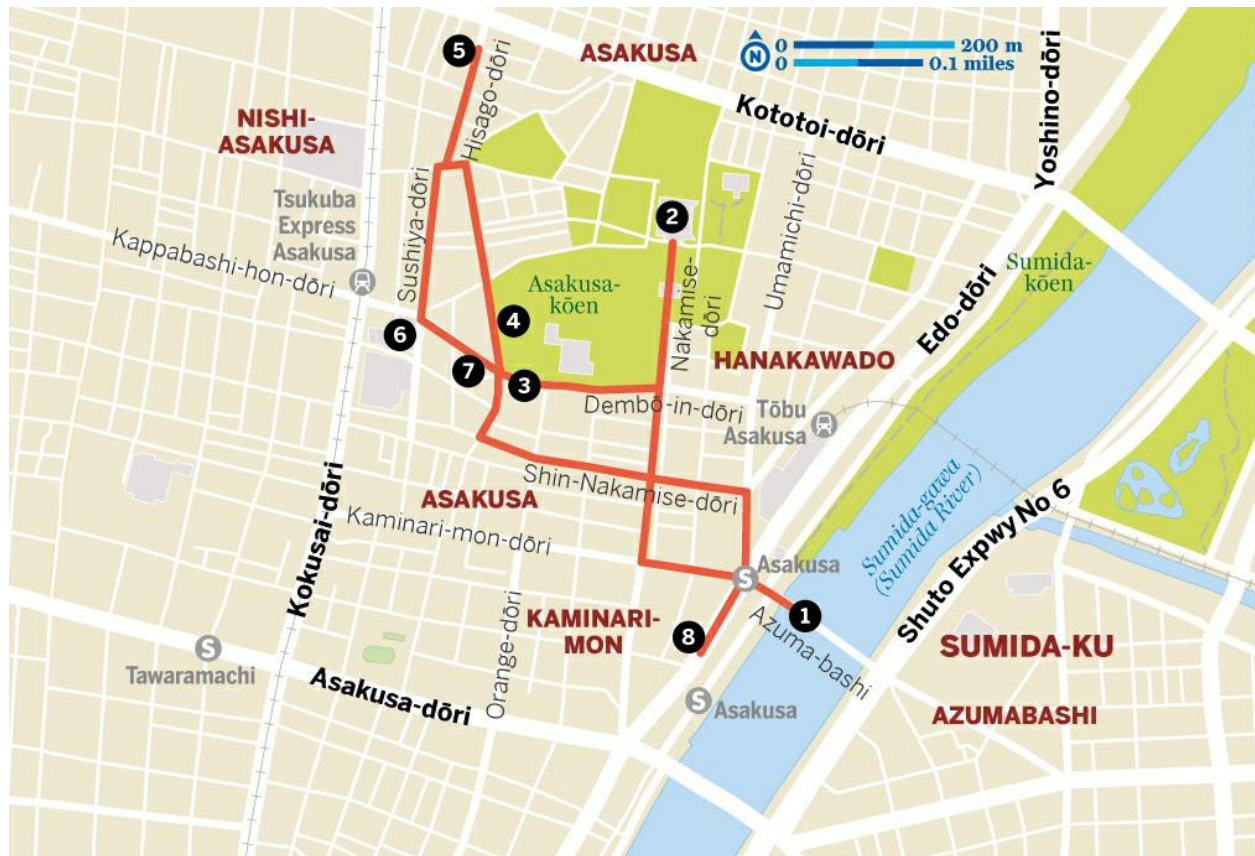
Start Azuma-bashi; **Subway** Asakusa

Finish Ef; **Subway** Asakusa

Length 3km; two hours

Take a Break

Stop for tempura at **Daikokuya** (大黒家 [MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#); ☎03-3844-1111; www.tempura.co.jp/english/index.html; 1-38-10 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; meals ¥1550-2100; 🕒11am-8.30pm Sun-Fri, to 9pm Sat; 📄; 🅊 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1) (in business since 1887) on Dembō-in-dōri. You'll also find snack vendors along Nakamise-dōri, such as **Chōchin Monaka** (ちょうちんもなか [GOOGLE MAP](#); 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; ice cream ¥330; 🕒10am-5pm; 📄; 🅊 Ginza line to Asakusa, exit 1).



1 Azuma-bashi

Originally built in 1774, **Azuma-bashi** was once the departure point for boat trips to the Yoshiwara pleasure district, just north of Asakusa. Today, **tourist boats** leave from a nearby pier to Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien and Odaiba (in Tokyo Bay).

2 Sensō-ji

The grand gate Kaminarimon marks the entrance to the ancient temple [Sensō-ji](#), which has been drawing pilgrims to Asakusa for centuries. Also worth a visit is nearby Asakusa-jinja, a rare early-Edo Shintō shrine, dating to the early 17th century.

3 Dembō-in-dōri

Dembō-in-dōri is lined with shops fronted by wooden signboards and

sliding doors, providing a historic atmosphere. Stop in [Yonoya Kushiho](#), a shop that has been producing boxwood combs since 1717. At the end of the street is [Chingo-dō](#), a tiny Buddhist temple dedicated to the *tanuki*, the Japanese raccoon dog.

4 **Hoppy-dōri**

Next head up the lane called [Hoppy-dōri](#), lined with *yakitori* stalls. Go on, have a few skewers and a beer. At the end you'll pass **Hanayashiki**, Japan's oldest amusement park.

5 **Traditional Crafts Museum**

The [Edo Shitamachi Traditional Crafts Museum](#) showcases crafts still produced locally in Asakusa, and it's free to enter. It's in one of the neighbourhood's many covered shopping arcades. Keep an eye out for shops selling traditional goods like *geta* (the sandals worn with kimono).

6 **Asakusa Engei Hall**

Lantern-lit **Asakusa Engei Hall** is reminiscent of the vaudeville halls that were once common here. The theatre is part of Asakusa's Rokku district, a famous (and famously bawdy) entertainment district during the century before WWII.

7 **Vintage Shopping**

Drop by vintage store [Tokyo Hotarudo](#), where the goods pay homage to the early 20th century, when Asakusa was thought of as the Montmartre of Tokyo.

8 **Ef**

Finish up at [Ef](#), a cafe and gallery in an old wooden building, originally a warehouse, dating back to 1868.



Sensō-ji main gate | TOPNATTHAPON / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Best Walks Historic Marunouchi & Ginza

The Walk

Neighbouring Marunouchi and Ginza were the first Tokyo neighbourhoods to modernise (in the Western sense) after Japan opened its doors to foreign influence at the end of the 19th century. Many reminders of this fascinating, turbulent time still exist. This is also where you'll find top sights, such as the Imperial Palace and Kabuki-za, and the city's most expensive real estate.

Start Tokyo Station; **Train** Tokyo

Finish Kabuki-za; **Subway** Higashi-Ginza

Length 3km; two hours

Take a Break

Rose Bakery (ローズベーカリー 丸の内 [MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 03-3212-1715;

<http://rosebakery.jp>; Meiji-Yasada Bldg, 2-1-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; cakes & quiches from ¥410,

lunch set ¥1250; 🕒 11am-7pm; 🍴 🏠; **S** Chiyoda line to Nijūbashimae, exit 3), near the Imperial Palace, does light lunches, coffee and cake. There are also plenty of treats to be sourced from the *depachika* (department store

food hall) in **Mitsukoshi** (三越 [MAP](#) [GOOGLE MAP](#)); www.mitsukoshi.co.jp; 4-6-16 Ginza,

Chūō-ku; 🕒 10am-8pm; **S** Ginza line to Ginza, exits A7 & A11).



1 Tokyo Station

Head out the Marunouchi exit to see the elaborate facade and twin domes of [Tokyo Station](#). Conceived as the city's first rail hub, the European-style brick station opened in 1914.

2 Marunouchi Building

Walking west from the station, you'll pass the **Marunouchi Building**, first erected in 1923 when Marunouchi was taking shape as the city's first modern business district. The building emerged 30 storeys taller after a renovation in 2001. From the 35th-floor **lounge**, you can see all the way to the Imperial Palace.

3 Japan Post Tower

The **Japan Post Tower** has preserved the facade of the old Central

Post Office and has a stylish mall, Kitte, where you'll find the fascinating museum, [Intermediateque](#).

4 Imperial Palace

After the Meiji Restoration brought the emperor from Kyoto to Tokyo, the [Imperial Palace](#) was built to replace the shōgun's castle, Edo-jō. Walk along the moat and look in the distance to see some of the old castle keeps that still remain.

5 Naka-dōri

From the palace, walk down pretty, tree-lined **Naka-dōri** to Ginza. With boutiques and cafes, this is now one of Tokyo's most fashionable strips.

6 Ginza

Ginza was the city's first modern retail district, where department stores introduced the latest fashions from the West. At the heart of the neighbourhood is the Yon-chōme intersection, where you'll find the department store [Mitsukoshi](#).

7 Shiseido Gallery

Walk down Ginza's main drag, Chūō-dōri, which is closed to cars on weekends from noon to 5pm, to the lipstick-red Shiseido Building. In the basement is [Shiseido Gallery](#), one of the city's first contemporary galleries.

8 Kabuki-za

Tokyo's premier kabuki theatre, [Kabuki-za](#), has stood on this spot since 1889. Although it was extensively renovated in 2013, the

flamboyant theatre facade remains intact and is a grand spectacle.



Tokyo Station | COWARDLION / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Best Food

As visitors to Tokyo quickly discover, the people here are absolutely obsessed with food. The city has a vibrant and cosmopolitan dining scene and a strong culture of eating out – popular restaurants are packed most nights of the week. Best of all, you can get superlative meals on any budget.

Tokyo Dining Scene

Tokyo foodies take pride in what they like to think of as their 'boutique' dining scene. Rather than offer long menus of elaborate dishes, many of the best restaurants make just a few things – and sometimes even just one! Sushi shops make sushi, tempura shops make tempura. A restaurant that does too much might be suspect: how can it compare to a speciality shop that has been honing its craft for three generations? It's easy to make a connection between Tokyo's deep-rooted artisan culture – born of its early days as a castle town – and this preponderance of small restaurants hell-bent on perfecting a single dish, be it *tonkatsu* (deep-fried pork cutlets) or hamburgers.

Izakaya

Izakaya (居酒屋) translates as 'drinking house' – the Japanese equivalent of a pub. Here food – a mix of raw, grilled, steamed and fried dishes – is ordered for the table a few dishes at a time and washed down with plenty of beer, sake or *shōchū* (a strong distilled alcohol often made from potatoes). It's fine to order a soft drink instead, but it would be strange to not order a drink. Some serve only

the classics; others incorporate Western dishes (like chips) or fusion ones. While the vibe is social, it's perfectly acceptable to sit by yourself at the counter.

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ Tipping is not customary, though most high-end restaurants will add a 10% service charge to the bill.
- ➔ Reservations are recommended for high-end places or for groups of five or more; popular places fill up quickly.
- ➔ Traditional or smaller restaurants may not accept credit cards.

Best Japanese

[Kikunoi](#) Gorgeous *kaiseki* (Japanese haute cuisine) in the classic Kyoto style.

[Innsyoutei](#) Lovely place to eat *kaiseki*-style in Ueno-kōen.

[Kado](#) Classic home-cooking in an old house.

[Kozue](#) Exquisite Japanese dishes and stunning night views over Shinjuku.

Best Izakaya

[Shinsuke](#) Century-old *izakaya* adored by sake aficionados.

[Donjaca](#) A classic, straight out of the Shōwa era (1926–1989).

[Shirube](#) Loud, lively and hip, serving creative fusion dishes.

Best Ramen

[Kagari](#) Ramen on a whole new level, and a current Tokyo favourite.

[Gogyō](#) Taste the *kogashi* (burnt) ramen at this popular late-night haunt.

[Nagi](#) Late-night ramen in Golden Gai.

Best Sushi

[Kyūbey](#) Rarefied Ginza sushi at its finest.

[Numazukō](#) Tokyo's best conveyor-belt sushi restaurant.

Best Old-Tokyo Flavour

[Hantei](#) Deep-fried skewers in a century-old heritage house.

[Otafuku](#) Charming 100-year-old *oden* (stew) restaurant.

[Tonki](#) *Tonkatsu* (deep-fried pork cutlets) raised to an art.

Best Local Eating

[Omoide-yokochō](#) Atmospheric *yakitori* stalls in an old black market.

[Manpuku Shokudō](#) *Izakaya* under the tracks in Yūrakuchō.

[Ebisu-yokochō](#) Hip retro dining arcade.

Best for Sweets

[Ouca](#) Ice cream in only-in-Japan flavours.

[Higashiya Man](#) Fresh-steamed, sweet bean dumplings.



Omoide-yokochō yakitori stalls | URAIWONS / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Best Museums & Galleries

Tokyo has many excellent museums, including both grand repositories of art and antiquities and tiny centres of devotion to one particular thing. The city is the centre of Japan's contemporary-art scene; though it doesn't have a cohesive arts district, many galleries are clustered in Ginza or within the Roppongi Art Triangle (formed by Mori Art Museum, National Art Center Tokyo and Suntory Museum of Art).

Access & Admission

Many museums close on Mondays (or, if Monday is a national holiday, then the following Tuesday). Museums in Tokyo tend to close early, around 5pm or 6pm, and last admission is 30 minutes before closing. Take advantage of the free lockers (¥100 deposit) to stow your coat and bag. Permanent exhibits at national museums are the most economical; expect to pay more for admission to temporary exhibits or private museums. Concessions are often available for students and seniors; bring ID. Commercial galleries are free to enter.

Top Tips

- [Click here](#) for information on museum discounts.
- Check out Tokyo Art Beat (www.tokyoartbeat.com) for exhibition information and reviews in English.

Best Museums

[Tokyo National Museum](#) Home to the world's largest collection of Japanese art.

[Intermediatheque](#) Experimental museum drawing on the holdings of the University of Tokyo.

[TOP Museum](#) Tokyo's leading photography museum.

[MOMAT](#) A history of 19th- and 20th-century Japanese art.

[Mori Art Museum](#) Sky-high galleries that host travelling shows by top Japanese and foreign artists.

[Nezu Museum](#) Asian antiques in a striking contemporary building.

Best Galleries

[Complex 665](#) New destination housing three leading galleries.

[SCAI the Bathhouse](#) Cutting-edge contemporary art in a renovated bathhouse.

Best Temples & Shrines

Tokyo's many temples and shrines honour Japan's two entwined religions: Buddhism and Shintō (respectively). The grounds are free to enter and open to all, so long as the gate is open. Shrines and temples – both rare-in-Tokyo examples of traditional architecture – often look quite similar; shrines can be identified by their distinctive *torii* gates, composed of two upright pillars, joined at the top by two horizontal crossbars.

Visiting Etiquette

Shrines and temples don't have strict rules (there are no dress codes, for example), however, there are some prescribed manners. Since the *torii* indicate the entrance to sacred space, you'll often see Japanese visitors bowing upon entering and exiting. As Shintō prizes purity, shrines also have fountains where visitors wash their hands before approaching the main hall.

Temples often have a slightly raised threshold, which you should step over – not on. Taking pictures on the grounds is fine, but many temples do not want you taking photos – especially flash photos – of the inside. It's also respectful to keep your voice down.

Top Tips

➔ Temples and shrines host festivals throughout the year. For event listings, see Go Tokyo (www.gotokyo.org/en/index.html).

➔ It is customary to make a small offering at both temples and shrines. Fortunately for budget travellers, a ¥5 coin is considered the luckiest (¥10 coins are unlucky).

Best Temples

[Sensō-ji](#) Tokyo's oldest and most famous Buddhist temple and the epicentre of old-world Asakusa.

[Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō](#) Temple modelled after Kyoto's famous Kiyōmizu-dera.

Best Shrines

[Meiji-jingū](#) Tokyo's grandest Shintō shrine, set in a wooded grove.

[Nezu-jinja](#) Elegant, early-18th-century shrine in an atmospheric district.

[Ueno Tōshō-gū](#) Recently restored, gilded homage to warlord Tokugawa Ieyasu.

[Akagi-jinja](#) Centuries-old shrine updated with contemporary design.



Best Architecture & Design

Japan's traditional design aesthetic of clean lines, natural materials, heightened spatial awareness and subtle enhancement – still found in the modern city today – has long been an inspiration to creators around the world. Meanwhile, the country's contemporary architects are among the most internationally acclaimed.

Modern Icons

Modern Japanese architecture really came into its own in the 1960s. The most influential architect of the age was Tange Kenzō (1913–2005), who was in turn influenced by traditional Japanese forms as well as the aggressively sculptural works of French architect Le Corbusier. Tange's landmark structures include the National Gymnasium (1964) in Yoyogi-kōen and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building (1991). Among his contemporaries were the Metabolists Kurokawa Kishō and Maki Fumihiko, whose design philosophy championed flexible spaces over fixed form.

Contemporary Architects

The current generation continues to explore modernism and postmodernism, pushing forward while also drawing on Japan's rich heritage. Names to know include Pritzker Prize winners Andō Tadao, who creates monumental works in concrete; SANAA (Sejima Kazuyo and Nishizawa Ryūe), known for their luminous form-follows-function

spaces; Itō Toyō, whose designs are light and conceptual; and Shigeru Ban, who makes fantastic use of low-cost and recycled materials. Kengo Kuma, meanwhile, received the commission for the new Olympic stadium.

✓ Top Tips

➔ Omote-sandō is the best place in the city to see contemporary architecture. Here you'll find works from most of the rising stars, all on one strip so that you can easily compare styles. For a walk through the neighbourhood, [click here](#).

Best Contemporary Buildings

[Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building](#) Imposing, iconic skyscrapers by Tange Kenzō.

[Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures](#) Modernist home of ancient Buddhist sculpture, designed by Yoshio Taniguchi.

[Nakagin Capsule Tower](#) Kurokawa Kishō's retro vision of the future.

[Tokyo International Forum](#) Soaring glass vessel in the heart of downtown.

[Super Dry Hall](#) Philippe Starck's curious golden plume.

[Roppongi Hills](#) Ambitious, utopian microcity by master of malls, Jon Jerde.

[Tokyo Sky Tree](#) Futuristic tower using ancient pagoda engineering.

[National Art Center Tokyo](#) Sculptural structure of curving glass by Kurokawa Kishō.

Best for Design

[21_21 Design Sight](#) Museum devoted entirely to contemporary design, in a concrete clam shell by Andō Tadao.

[d47 Museum](#) Showcase for the best product design in the country.

[Matsuya](#) Come for the design exhibition hall on the 7th floor.

Best Interiors

[Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum](#) Art deco, former-princely residence.

[Takashimaya](#) Opulent 1930s department store filtered through Japanese sensibilities.



Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures | SIRAANAMWONG / GETTY IMAGES ©



Worth a Trip

Archi-Depot ([www.http://archi-depot.com/en/](http://archi-depot.com/en/)) is a storehouse turned showcase for the miniature models architects make to conceptualise buildings. Many of the big names of Japanese architecture are represented here.

Best Parks & Gardens

Tokyo enjoy hectares of open space in the city's many parks – all of which are free to enter. Most of the city's attractive manicured gardens, which cost just a few hundred yen to enter, once belonged to the imperial family or the former feudal elite.

Cherry Blossoms

During *hanami* (cherry-blossom viewing), which usually happens in late March or early April, groups of friends and coworkers gather under the *sakura* (cherry blossoms) for sake-drenched picnics. It's a centuries-old tradition, to celebrate the fleeting beauty of life, symbolised by the blossoms which last only a week or two. Ueno-kōen is the classic *hanami* spot. Yoyogi-kōen is where serious party people come armed with barbecues and turntables. Shinjuku-gyoen is a grassy, family-friendly spot for lazing under the blossoms.

Fall Leaves

The city's trees undergo magnificent seasonal transformations during *kōyō* (autumn foliage season), which usually hits Tokyo in late November and early December. Koishikawa Kōrakuen and Hamarikyū Onshi-teien are known for their spectacular displays.

Top Tip

→ Pick up a *bentō* (boxed meal) from a *depachika* (department store food hall) or

convenience store for a picnic lunch.

Best Parks

[Yoyogi-kōen](#) A big grassy expanse and a popular weekend gathering spot.

[Ueno-kōen](#) Tokyo's oldest park with museums, temples, woodsy paths and water lilies.

[Shinjuku-gyoen](#) Home to 1500 cherry trees, vast lawns and a tropical greenhouse.

[Inokashira-kōen](#) Wooded strolling paths, performance artists and pedal boats.

Best Gardens

[Koishikawa Kōrakuen](#) Built by the Tokugawa clan, a fine example of traditional Japanese garden design.

[Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien](#) An ancient shogunate hunting ground, now a vast green space with a traditional teahouse.

[Imperial Palace East Garden](#) On the palace grounds, with the ruins of an old stone keep.

[Canadian Embassy Stone Garden](#) Rock garden designed by a Zen priest.

Best Pop Culture

From giant robots to saucer-eyed schoolgirls to a certain ubiquitous kitty, Japanese pop culture is a massive phenomenon that has reached far around the world. At the centre of the manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese animation) vortex is the neighbourhood of Akihabara. For eye-popping street fashion, look to Shibuya and Harajuku.

Tokyo's Pop Culture Districts

Akihabara should be the first stop on any pop culture Tokyo tour. With its multitude of stores selling anime and manga-related goods, not to mention maid cafes and all the electronic gizmos imaginable, Akiba (as it's known to locals) is peak geek territory. Look for cosplay (costume play) kids on Sundays along Chūō-dōri.

The streets of Harajuku – Takeshita-dōri, Cat St and Omote-sandō – remain the best places to survey Tokyo's multiple style tribes, from the *goth-loli* (think zombie Little Bo Peep) of the last decade to the more contemporary *doli-kei* (doll-style) girls who model their look after cherub-cheeked dolls.

Shibuya, meanwhile, is the centre of Tokyo's teen culture. Here, the latest fashion trends grow legs, pop stars perform on giant TV screens, and nightclubs and karaoke parlours glow all night long.



TAKAMEX / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Best Pop Culture Experiences

[Ghibli Museum](#) Entering the magical world of animator Miyazaki Hayao.

[@Home Cafe](#) Visiting Akihabara's most famous maid cafe.

[Robot Restaurant](#) Seeing Shinjuku's wacky cabaret costarring giant robots.

[Shibuya Crossing](#) Getting swept up in the crowds at Shibuya's epic intersection.

[Super Potato Retro-kan](#) Playing old-school video games in this

Akihabara arcade.

[Purikura no Mecca](#) Primping for *purikura* (print club) photos – the ultimate souvenir.

[Takeshita-dōri](#) Strolling through Harajuku's famous teenage subculture bazaar.

[Kawaii Monster Cafe](#) Checking out the surreal installations at Tokyo's newest pop culture attractions.

[Mandarake Complex](#) Making a pilgrimage to this mammoth anime and manga shop.

[KiddyLand](#) Shopping for all your favourite character goods.



Best Drinking & Nightlife

Tokyo's nightlife is one of the city's highlights. Friday and Saturday are the big nights out, especially for clubs, but Tokyo is a work-hard, play-hard kind of place and you'll find people in bars any night of the week. Major nightlife districts include Roppongi, Shibuya and Shinjuku.

What's Hot Now

Craft beer and third-wave coffee have hit it big in Tokyo. While the city has long been known for its classic cocktails, bars with more inventive recipes are starting to appear; as with craft beer, you'll likely come across familiar-sounding tipples spiked with local flavours (like *matcha*, powdered green tea, and *yuzu*, a kind of citrus). For more info on the craft beer scene, see the webzine *Beer in Japan* (beerinjapan.com/bij).

What to Drink

Japan's national beverage is sake, aka *nihonshū* (酒 or 日本酒), and is made from rice. According to personal preference, sake can be served hot (*atsu-kan*), but premium ones are normally served well chilled (*reishu*) in a small jug (*tokkuri*) and poured into tiny cups known as *ochoko* or *sakazuki*.

The clear spirit *shōchū* (焼酎) is made from a variety of raw materials including potato and barley. Because of its potency (alcohol content of around 30%) it is usually served diluted with hot water

(*oyu-wari*) or in a *chūhai* cocktail with soft drinks or tea.

Sake and *shōchū* are common drinks to order at *izakaya* – along with *nama* (draft beer).

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ Don't forget to say (or yell, depending on the venue) '*kampai!*' when toasting your drinking buddies.
- ➔ While bars don't ask for ID, clubs do: you must be 20 to enter and you must have a picture ID – even if you are decades beyond 20.
- ➔ Discount flyers can be downloaded from most club websites.

Best Bars

[BenFiddich](#) Original cocktails made using freshly ground spices and herbs.

[Zoetrope](#) Sample premium whiskies at this Shinjuku hole-in-the-wall.

[Two Rooms](#) Cool views and a cool crowd, plus an outdoor terrace.

[New York Bar](#) Make like Bill Murray in the Park Hyatt's starry jazz bar.

[Buri](#) Sake slushies and standing room only.

Best for Craft Beer

[Good Beer Faucets](#) Fine choice of ales in Shibuya.

[Yanaka Beer Hall](#) Microbrew ales in a charming complex of old wooden buildings.

Best for Sake

[Sake Plaza](#) Find your favourite in this tasting showroom.

[Nihombashi Toyama](#) Sample sake from remote Toyama prefecture.

Best Clubs

[SuperDeluxe](#) Tokyo's most interesting club with an eclectic line-up of events.

[Womb](#) Four levels of lasers and strobes at this Shibuya club fixture.

[Contact](#) Sign up online to get into Tokyo's coolest members-only club.

Best Local Drinking

[Nakame Takkyū Lounge](#) Hang with ping pong–playing hipsters in Naka-Meguro.

[These](#) Cocktails and books in posh enclave Nishi-Azabu.

[Never Never Land](#) Groovy Shimo-Kitazawa hideaway.

Best for Tea & Coffee

[Jugetsudo](#) All kinds of Japanese tea at this venerable merchant.

[Cafe de l'Ambre](#) Ginza institution specialising in aged beans from around the world.



Craft beer on tap | TAKETAN / GETTY IMAGES ©

Best Entertainment

Tokyo entertainment highlights include traditional performing arts, such as dramatic kabuki and subtle *nō* (a stylised dance-drama that predates kabuki); spectator sports like fan favourites sumo and baseball; and a live music scene that runs the gamut from classical (including Western and eastern styles) to jazz to pop and noise.

Top Tips

- ➔ Get concert tickets at **Ticket Pia** (チケットぴあ  0570-02-9111; <http://t.pia.jp>; 🕒 10am-8pm); there's a kiosk inside the [Asakusa Culture Tourist Information Center](#).
- ➔ Purchase kabuki tickets from www.kabuki-bito.jp/eng/top.html.
- ➔ For tickets for shows at any national theatre, see www.ntj.jac.go.jp/english.html.
- ➔ See Tokyo Dross (tokyodross.blogspot.co.uk) for listings for live music and other events.

Best for Live Music

[Shinjuku Pit Inn](#) Tokyo jazz-scene institution for serious devotees.

[Unit](#) Offering both live gigs and DJs to a stylish crowd.

[Tokyo Bunka Kaikan](#) Great acoustics and interiors at this Ueno-kōen venue.

[WWW](#) Great views of the stage for all at this happening Shibuya live house.

[Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall](#) With legendary acoustics, this halls

hosts the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and other famed ensembles.

[Oiwake](#) Listen to indigenous tunes at this rare *minyō* izakaya (pub where traditional folk music is performed).

Best for Traditional Theatre

[National Theatre](#) Top-notch *nō*, bunraku (puppet theatre) and other drama in a grand setting.

[Kabuki-za](#) A visual and dramatic feast of traditional theatre awaits inside and out.

Best for Spectator Sports

[Ryōgoku Kokugikan](#) Clash of sumo titans at the city's three big tournaments.

[Tokyo Dome](#) Home to the Yomiuri Giants, Japan's top baseball team.

Best Onsen & Sentō

Don't be shy! Many Japanese would argue that you couldn't possibly understand their culture without taking a dip, and the blissful relaxation that follows can turn a sceptic into a convert. Onsen are fed by natural underground hot springs. *Sentō* are old-school public bathhouses that often use ordinary water (but have lots of local charm instead).

Bathing Etiquette

Getting naked with strangers is scary enough, so relax. There's really only one hard-and-fast rule you need to remember: wash yourself before you get in the bath. When you enter a bathhouse, put your shoes in a locker at the entrance. Then pay your admission fee and head to the correct – check the characters on the door curtains – changing room. Leave your clothes in a locker or basket and enter the bathing room with just your toiletries and a small hand towel. Park yourself on a stool in front of one of the taps and give yourself a thorough wash, making sure to rinse off all the suds.

That little towel performs a variety of functions: you can use it to wash (but make sure to give it a good rinse afterwards) or to cover yourself as you walk around. It is not supposed to touch the water though, so leave it on the side of the bath or – as many Japanese do – folded on top of your head. Before heading back to the changing room, use it to wipe yourself down, so as not to drip on the changing-room floor.

Some bathhouses refuse entry to persons with tattoos because of their association with the *yakuza* (Japanese mafia); signs at the entrance will make the policy clear.

✓ Top Tips

- ➔ *Sentō* don't provide soap and towels, so bring your own (or buy some from the counter).
- ➔ Know your kanji: 女 means women and 男 means men.

Best Baths

[Ōedo Onsen Monogatari](#) 'Onsen theme park' with real hot-spring water and a variety of tubs.

[Jakotsu-yu](#) A classic *sentō* with pure hot spring water and no policy against tattoos.

[Spa LaQua](#) Urban oasis with multiple baths and saunas.



Best Shopping & Markets

Tokyo is the trendsetter for the rest of Japan, and its residents shop – economy be damned – with an infectious enthusiasm. From quirky fashion to cutting-edge electronics, antiques to traditional crafts, Tokyo has many ways to tempt your wallet. Merchandise is generally of excellent quality and not as wildly expensive as you might think.

Where to Shop

Tokyo is famous for its fashion tribes, each of whom has a preferred stomping ground. Ginza has long been Tokyo's premier shopping district and has many high-end department stores and boutiques, but also fast-fashion emporiums. Harajuku, on the other side of town, has boutiques that deal in both luxury fashion and street cred. Shibuya is the locus of the teen-fashion trend machine.

For one-stop shopping, Shinjuku is your best bet: here there are department stores, electronics outfitters, book shops and more. Asakusa has many stores selling artisan crafts, both traditional and contemporary, which makes it a good place for souvenir hunting.

Flea Markets

Flea markets and antique fairs pop up regularly around Tokyo, with many taking place at shrines; [Hanazono-jinja](#) hosts one every Sunday. Hipster flea market **Raw Tokyo** is held over the first weekend of the month at the [Farmer's Market @UNU](#). Quality vendors gather twice a

month at [Tokyo International Forum](#) for the excellent **Ōedo Antique Market**.

✓ Top Tip

- ➔ More and more shops are offering tax-free shopping to foreign tourists who spend more than ¥5000. Look for the sign in the window and bring your passport. Otherwise tax is 8%. For more details, see tax-freeshop.jnto.go.jp.
- ➔ Hagglng is expected at flea markets, but it is considered bad form to drive too hard a bargain.

Best for Fashion

[Dover Street Market](#) Comme des Garçons and other avant-garde labels.

[Fake Tokyo](#) A hotbed of up-and-coming Japanese fashion designers.

[Kapital](#) Denim woven on vintage looms and lush, hand-dyed textiles.

[Isetan](#) Tokyo's most fashion-forward department store.

[Sou-Sou](#) Traditional Japanese clothing with contemporary panache.

Best Markets

[Tsukiji Outer Market](#) Atmospheric cluster of food vendors.

[Ameya-yokochō](#) Vintage post-WWII market in Ueno.

Best Local Shopping

[Daikanyama T-Site](#) Designer digs for art and travel tomes and a popular hang-out.

[Uniqlo](#) Where Tokyoites stock up on the basics.

[Don Quijote](#) An all-night treasure trove of miscellaneous oddities.

Best for Souvenirs

[Tokyu Hands](#) Variety store with eight fascinating floors of gadgets, craft supplies, beauty goods and more.

[Takumi](#) One-stop shop for earthy traditional crafts from all over Japan.

[Souvenir from Tokyo](#) One-of-a-kinds from local artists and designers.

Best for Food & Kitchenware

[Akomeya](#) Beautifully packaged, traditional gourmet foodstuffs.

[Marugoto Nippon](#) Showcase of food products from around Japan.

Best Malls

[mAAch ecute](#) Craft and food stores in a former train station.

[Coredo Muromachi](#) Top-class, made-in-Japan fashion and food items.



Ameya-yokocho | PSGXXX / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Best Gay & Lesbian

Tokyo is a generally tolerant city, though you won't see public displays of affection or even hand-holding by anyone, gay or straight. Shinjuku-nichōme (nicknamed 'Ni-chōme') is the city's gay and lesbian enclave, where hundreds of establishments are crammed into a space of a few blocks, including bars, dance clubs, saunas and love hotels.

Parties & Events

As bars are tiny, larger events are held at venues around town (look for flyers around Ni-chōme). **Shangri-La** (www.ageha.com/gn/ja/events/index.html) is the city's best gay party, held at bayside super club Ageha. **Goldfinger** (www.goldfingerparty.com) is Tokyo's sexiest women-only party. In May, Japan's LGBT community comes together for **Tokyo Rainbow Pride** (<http://tokyorainbowpride.com>).

Top Tips

- ➔ Not all Ni-chōme bars welcome foreigners, ask around or check out Utopia Asia (www.utopiaasia.com) for a list of friendly places (and a handy map).
- ➔ Love hotels outside Ni-chōme have been known, on occasion, to turn away (or grossly overcharge) same-sex couples; ordinary hotels won't bat an eye.

Best Gay & Lesbian Bars

Aiiro Cafe (アイイロカフェ ; <http://aliving.net/aiirocafe/>; 2-18-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-

ku; 🕒 6pm-2am Mon-Thu, 6pm-5am Fri & Sat, 6pm-midnight Sun; 📍; 🅀 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit C8) **Start your Ni-chōme night at this popular corner bar.**

Bar Goldfinger ([GOOGLE MAP](#) ; 📞 03-6383-4649; www.goldfingerparty.com; 2-12-11 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 6pm-late; 🅀 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit C8) **Friendly** vibe at this lesbian bar that look like a '70s motel.

Town House Tokyo (タウンハウス東京 [GOOGLE MAP](#) ; 📞 03-3289-8558; <http://townhousetokyo.web.fc2.com>; 6th fl, Koruteire Ginza Bldg, 1-11-5 Shimbashi, Minato-ku; cover incl 1 drink from ¥1000; 🕒 6pm-midnight, to 4am Fri; 🅀 Ginza line to Shimbashi, exit 3) **Spacious** Shimbashi gay bar.

Arty Farty (アーティファティ [GOOGLE MAP](#) ; www.arty-farty.net; 2nd fl, 2-11-7 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 6pm-1am; 🅀 Marunouchi line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exit C8) **Rub shoulders (and more)** on this bar's packed dance floor.

Best For Kids

In many ways, Tokyo is a parent's dream: hyperclean, safe and with every mod con. The downside is that most of the top attractions aren't that appealing to little ones. Older kids and teens, however, should get a kick out of Tokyo's pop culture. Shibuya and Harajuku in particular are packed with the shops, restaurants and arcades that local teens love.

Travelling with Children

In central Tokyo (where few families live) large chains (such as Jonathan's, Royal Host and Gusto) are the most family-friendly eating options: they have large booths, high chairs, nonsmoking sections and children's menus (usually with Western food). Most hotels have cots for a small fee, but it's near impossible to find a room with two double beds (that isn't an expensive suite). Ryokan (traditional inns) usually have rooms that can accommodate four or five people on futons.

Family Fun

Onsen theme park [Ōedo Onsen Monogatari](#) has a festival atmosphere with old-fashioned games – plus the chance to dress up in *yukata* (a light, cotton kimono). Make the most of a rainy afternoon with a trip to a karaoke parlour. Take your little train fans to the southern terrace at Shinjuku Station to watch the world's busiest train station in action.

 **Top Tips**

- ➔ Children under 12 get in for free at most city museums and gardens.
- ➔ Kids under six ride for free on public transport; under-12s are charged half the adult fare.
- ➔ Try to limit your subway time to the hours between 10am and 5pm, when they're free of pushing crowds.
- ➔ For nursing and nappy-changing stations, department stores are your best bet.

Best Kid-friendly Museums

[Ghibli Museum](#) Packed with colourful characters and creative inspiration.

[Tokyo National Museum](#) Samurai armour and swords.

[National Museum of Nature & Science](#) Filled with natural wonders and hands on activities.

[Shitamachi Museum](#) Edo-era games and buildings to explore.

Best Courses


Tokyo has more English-language courses than ever before. Activities to seek out include traditional crafts workshops and cooking courses. Not only do these offer a chance to engage with Japanese culture, they also get you talking to and getting to know the savvy locals who run the courses.

Top Tips



- ➔ The courses are designed for small groups, so sign up in advance (usually possible online).
- ➔ Tourist information centres often host one-off activities (often free) for travellers; check in at a TIC to see if any are happening.

Best Cooking Courses


Tokyo Cooking Studio (東京クッキングスタジオ [GOOGLE MAP](#));

<http://tokyo.cookingstudio.org>; Hins Minato #004, 3-18-14 Minato, Chūō-ku; classes for up to 3 people from ¥30,000;  Yūrakuchō line to Shintomichō, exit 7) **Learn how to make soba (buckwheat noodles) from an English-speaking master.**

Tokyo Sushi Academy ([GOOGLE MAP](#));  03-3362-2789; <http://sushimaking.tokyo>;

2nd fl, Tsukiji KY Bldg, 4-7-5 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; per person ¥5400;  9am-3pm Sat;  Hibiya line to Tsukiji, exit 1) **Runs 30-minute crash courses in sushi making, after which you'll have an hour to make (and eat) as much as you like.**

Buddha Bellies ([GOOGLE MAP](#)); <http://buddhabelliestokyo.jimdo.com>; 2nd fl, Uekuri Bldg,

22-4-3 Kanda-Jimbōchō, Chiyoda-ku; courses from ¥7500;  Shinjuku line to Jimbōchō, exit A2)

Small hands-on classes in sushi, *bentō* (boxed lunch) and udon making.

Best Arts Courses

Wanariya (和なり屋 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 03-5603-9169; www.wanariya.jp; 1-8-10 Senzoku, Taitō-ku; indigo dyeing/weaving from ¥1920/1980; 🕒 10am-5pm Thu-Tue; 🚶 Hibiya line to Iriya, exit 1)

Learn indigo dyeing and traditional hand-loom-weaving.

Mokuhankan (木版館 [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 070-5011-1418; <http://mokuhankan.com/parties>; 2nd fl, 1-41-8 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; per person ¥2000; 🕒 10am-5.30pm Wed-Mon; 🚶 Tsukuba Express to Asakusa, exit 5) Try your hand at making *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints).

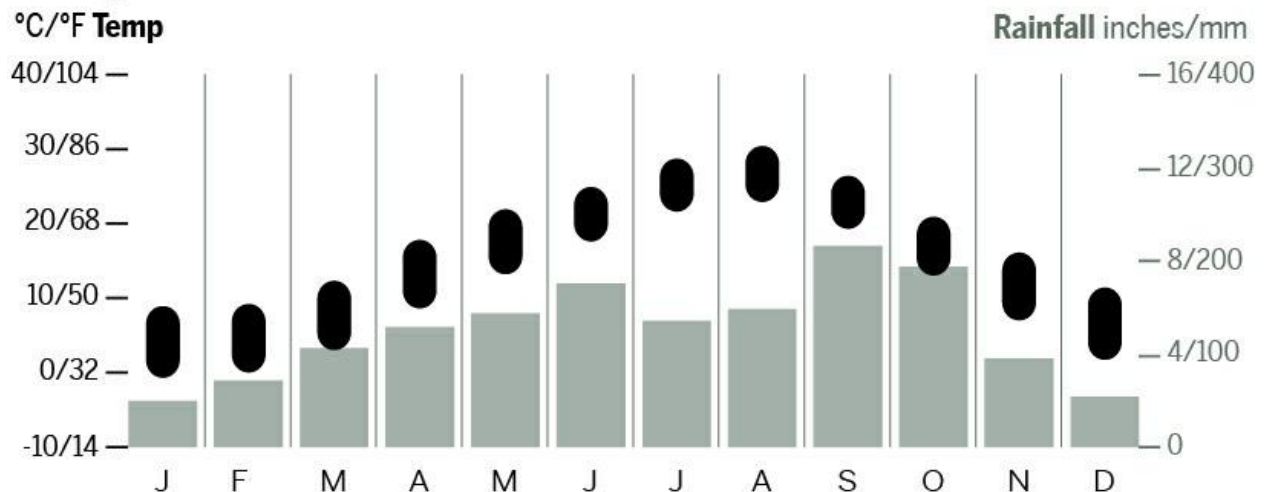
Ohara School of Ikebana (小原流いけばな [GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 03-5774-5097; www.ohararyu.or.jp; 5-7-17 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; per class ¥4000; 🚶 Ginza line to Omote-sandō, exit B1) Introductory flower-arrangement classes in English.

Survival Guide

Before You Go

When to Go

Tokyo



- ➔ **Winter (Dec–Feb)** Cold but clear. December is lively with end-of-year celebrations; the city shuts down for the New Year holiday (1–3 Jan).
- ➔ **Spring (Mar–May)** Gradually warmer days; glorious cherry blossoms from late March to early April.
- ➔ **Summer (Jun–Aug)** Rainy season from June to mid-July, then hot and humid. City gets sleepy during the week-long O-Bon holiday in mid- August.
- ➔ **Autumn (Sep–Nov)** Warm days turn crisp and cool, with the odd typhoon in September and gorgeous autumn leaves in late November.

Book Your Stay

- ➔ Tokyo is known for being expensive; however, more attractive budget and midrange options are popping up every year. Levels of cleanliness and service are generally high everywhere.
- ➔ 'Business hotels' are functional midrange options that exist in every major hub.
- ➔ Asakusa is Tokyo's backpacker neighbourhood with the highest concentration of hostels.
- ➔ Shinjuku, with its numerous hotels and good transit links, is a popular place to stay; though note that many budget properties are in the red light district.
- ➔ For a cultural experience, stay in a ryokan, a traditional inn where you'll sleep on mats on the floor.
- ➔ Advance booking is highly recommended. You'll get a better price at most hotels, and even at hostels walk-ins can fluster staff.
- ➔ Some traditional inns and budget options may not accept credit cards.

Useful Websites

- ➔ **Jalan** (www.jalan.net) Popular Japanese discount accommodation site, searchable in English.
- ➔ **Japanese Inn Group** (www.japaneseinngroup.com) Bookings for ryokan and other small, family-run inns.
- ➔ **Japanican** (www.japanican.com) Accommodation site for foreign travellers run by JTB, Japan's largest travel agency.

➔ **Lonely Planet** (lonelyplanet.com/Japan/Tokyo/hotels) Reviews, recommendations and bookings.

Best Budget

Nui (http://backpackersjapan.co.jp/nui_en) Hipster hostel in a former warehouse near Asakusa.

K's House (<http://kshouse.jp>) Cosy and social backpacker fave near Asakusa.

First Cabin (<http://first-cabin.jp>) Capsule hotel with bigger-than-average berths in Akasaka.

Khaosan World (<http://khaosan-tokyo.com/en/world>) Trippy hostel in a former love hotel.

Best Midrange

Hanare (<http://hanare.hagiso.jp>) Beautiful tatami rooms in an old Yanaka house, renovated by Tokyo University of the Arts students.

Shibuya Granbell (www.granbellhotel.jp) Funky boutique hotel on the quieter side of Shibuya.

Hotel Mystays Premier Akasaka (www.mystays.com/mystaysp-akasaka) New Akasaka hotel with excellent rates.

Hotel S (<http://hr-roppongi.jp>) Stylish rooms down the road from Roppongi's legendary nightlife.

Best Top End

Hoshinoya Tokyo (<http://hoshinoyatokyo.com/en>) Luxurious new ryokan with hot-spring baths and breathtaking design, near Marunouchi.

Claska (www.claska.com/en/hotel) Retro business hotel turned designer digs in a residential neighbourhood south of Meguro.

Park Hyatt Tokyo (<http://tokyo.park.hyatt.com>) Palatial high-rise atop a Shinjuku skyscraper.

Aman Tokyo (www.aman.com/resorts/aman-tokyo) Gorgeous new retreat with excellent views in Ōtemachi.

Best Ryokan

Sawanoya Ryokan (www.sawanoya.com) A gem in quiet Yanaka with wonderful hospitality and traditional baths.

Hōmeikan (www.homeikan.com) Atmospheric, 100-year-old ryokan near Ueno.

Sukeroku No Yado Sadachiyo (www.sadachiyo.co.jp) Traditional inn with big tatami rooms and fantastic baths, in Asakusa.

Andon Ryokan (www.andon.co.jp) Minimalist modern ryokan with rooftop jacuzzi near Asakusa.

Arriving in Tokyo

Top Tip For the best way to get to your accommodation, [click here](#).

Narita Airport

Narita Airport (NRT; 成田空港 [GOOGLE MAP](#); ☎0476-34-8000; www.narita-airport.jp), where most international flights arrive, is 66km east of Tokyo.

➔ Trains run between Tokyo and Narita Airport terminals 1 and 2. For Terminal 3 (which handles low-cost carriers), take a train to Terminal 2 and then walk or take the free shuttle bus to Terminal 3 (and budget

an extra 15 minutes).

➔ **Keisei Skyliner** (www.keisei.co.jp/keisei/tetudou/skyliner/us) The quickest service into Tokyo runs nonstop to Nippori (¥2470, 36 minutes) and Ueno (¥2470, 41 minutes) stations, on the city's northeast side, where you can connect to the JR Yamanote line or the subway (Ueno Station only). Foreign nationals can purchase advanced tickets online for slightly less (¥2200).

➔ The **Skyliner & Tokyo Subway Ticket**, which combines a one-way or round-trip ticket on the Skyliner and a one-, two- or three-day subway pass, is a good deal.

➔ **Narita Express** (www.jreast.co.jp/e/nex) N'EX trains depart Narita approximately every half hour between 7am and 10pm for Tokyo Station (¥3020, 53 minutes), Shinjuku (¥3190, 80 minutes) and Shibuya (¥3190, 75 minutes). At the time of research, foreign tourists could purchase return N'EX tickets for ¥4000, valid for 14 days.

➔ **Friendly Airport Limousine** (www.limousinebus.co.jp/en) Scheduled, direct, reserved-seat buses (¥3100) depart from all Narita Airport terminals for major hotels and train stations in Tokyo. The journey takes 1½ to two hours depending on traffic. At the time of research, discount round-trip 'Welcome to Tokyo Limousine Bus Return Voucher' tickets (¥4500) were available for foreign tourists.

➔ **Keisei Tokyo Shuttle** (www.keiseibus.co.jp) Discount buses connect all Narita Airport terminals and Tokyo Station (¥1000, approximately 90 minutes, every 20 minutes from 6am to 11pm, with less frequent departures costing ¥2000 between 11pm and 6am).

➔ Purchase train tickets in the basement of either terminal 1 or 2, where the entrances to the train stations are located; purchase bus tickets from the kiosk in the arrivals hall. No advance reservations

necessary.

➔ Fixed-fare taxis run ¥20,000 to ¥22,000 for most destinations in central Tokyo. There's a 20% surcharge between 10pm and 5am. Credit cards accepted.

Haneda Airport

At the southern edge of Tokyo, **Haneda Airport** (HND; 羽田空港 [GOOGLE](#) [MAP](#));  international terminal 03-6428-0888; www.tokyo-airport-bldg.co.jp/en) is much closer to the city centre than Narita.

➔ Note that some international flights arrive at awkward night-time hours, between midnight and 5am, when only sporadic buses to central Tokyo will be running.

➔ **Keikyū Airport Express** (www.haneda-tokyo-access.com/en)

These trains depart several times an hour (5.30am to midnight) for Shinagawa (¥410, 12 minutes), where you can connect to the JR Yamanote line.

➔ **Tokyo Monorail** (www.tokyo-monorail.co.jp/english) Leaves approximately every 10 minutes (5am to midnight) for Hamamatsuchō Station (¥490, 15 minutes), also a stop on the JR Yamanote line.

➔ Note that the international and domestic terminals have their own stations; when travelling to the airport by train or monorail, the international terminal is the second-to-last stop.

➔ **Friendly Airport Limousine** (www.limousinebus.co.jp/en) Coaches connect Haneda with major train stations and hotels in Shibuya (¥1030), Shinjuku (¥1230), Roppongi (¥1130), Ginza (¥930) and others; fares double between midnight and 5am. Travel takes anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes depending on traffic.

➔ Fixed taxi fares include: Ginza (¥5600), Shibuya (¥6400), Shinjuku (¥6800) and Asakusa (¥6900). There's a 20% surcharge between 10pm and 5am. Credit cards accepted.

Tokyo Station

[Tokyo Station](#) is the main point of entry for travellers coming via *shinkansen* (bullet train) from other parts of Japan. From Tokyo Station you can transfer to the JR Chūō and JR Yamanote lines as well as the Marunouchi subway line.

Getting Around

Bicycle


➔ Tokyo is not a bicycle-friendly city – bike lanes are almost nonexistent and the traffic is not for the skittish – yet cycling remains a popular way for locals to get around.

➔ You'll see no-parking signs for bicycles everywhere (ignore these at your peril: your bike could get impounded, requiring a half-day excursion to the pound and a ¥3000 fee).

➔ Some hostels and ryokan have bikes to lend.

➔ **Rentabike** (<http://rentabike.jp>) lists places around town that rent bicycles.

Boat

Tokyo Cruise (水上バス, Suijō Bus  0120-977-311; <http://suijobus.co.jp>) water buses run up and down the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River), roughly twice an hour between 10am and 6pm. Useful stops include Asakusa and [Hama-rikyū Onshi-teien](#). Tickets can be purchased immediately before

departure, if available, at any pier.

Taxi

- ➔ Fares start at ¥730 for the first 2km, then rise by ¥90 for every 280m you travel (or for every 105 seconds spent in traffic). There's a surcharge of 20% between 10pm and 5am.
- ➔ Drivers rarely speak English, though fortunately most taxis have navigation systems. Have your destination written down in Japanese, or better yet, a business card with an address.
- ➔ All cabs run by the meter; most (but not all) take credit cards.
- ➔ Train stations and hotels have taxi stands where you are expected to queue. In the absence of a stand, you can hail a cab from the street, by standing on the curb and sticking your arm out.
- ➔ A red light means the taxi is free and a green light means it's taken.

Train & Subway

- ➔ Tokyo's extensive rail network includes JR lines, a subway system (run by two operators, Tokyo Metro and Toei) and private commuter lines that depart for the suburbs. Lines are colour-coded, making navigation fairly simple.
- ➔ Trains run approximately 5am to midnight.
- ➔ Try to avoid rush hour (around 8am to 9.30am and 5pm to 8pm), when 'packed in like sardines' is an understatement.
- ➔ Major transit hubs include Tokyo, Shinagawa, Shibuya, Shinjuku, Ikebukuro and Ueno stations. The above-ground JR Yamanote (loop) line, the handiest train line, connects all of these.

- ➔ Fares (¥133 to ¥240) are determined by distance travelled. Journeys that require transfers between lines run by different operators cost more than journeys that use only one operator's lines.
- ➔ Purchase paper tickets or top up train passes at the touch-screen ticket-vending machines outside station ticket gates. These have an English-language function.
- ➔ All ticket gates have card readers for Suica and Pasma train passes; simply wave your card over the reader.
- ➔ If you're using a paper ticket or a one-day pass, you'll need to use a ticket gate with a slot for inserting a ticket. Make sure to pick it up when it pops out again.
- ➔ You'll need your ticket or pass to exit the station as well. If your ticket or pass does not have sufficient charge to cover your journey, insert it into one of the 'fare adjustment' machines near the exit gates.
- ➔ Figure out the best route to your destination with the Japan Travel app (<https://navitimejapan.com>); you can download routes to be used offline, too.
- ➔ Most train and subway stations have several different exits. Try to get your bearings and decide where to exit while still on the platform; look for the yellow signs that indicate which stairs lead to which exits.

Train & Subway Passes

Prepaid, re-chargeable Suica and Pasma cards (they're essentially the same; JR issues Suica and the subway issues Pasma) work on all city trains and subways and allow you to breeze through the ticket gates without having to work out fares or transfer tickets.

Purchase one from any touch-screen ticket-vending machine in Tokyo (including those at Haneda and Narita airports). A ¥500 deposit and a minimum charge of ¥2000 is required (¥1000 for Pasma); the deposit is refunded when you return the pass to any

ticket window.

The only reason not to get a Suica or Pasma is to take advantage of Tokyo Metro's 24-hour unlimited ride pass (adult/child ¥600/300). Note that this is only good on the nine subway lines operated by Tokyo Metro.

Essential Information

Business Hours

Banks 9am–3pm (some to 5pm) Monday to Friday

Bars from around 6pm to late

Boutiques noon–8pm, irregularly closed

Cafes vary enormously; chains 7am–10pm

Department stores 10am–8pm

Museums open 9am or 10am and close 5pm; often closed Monday

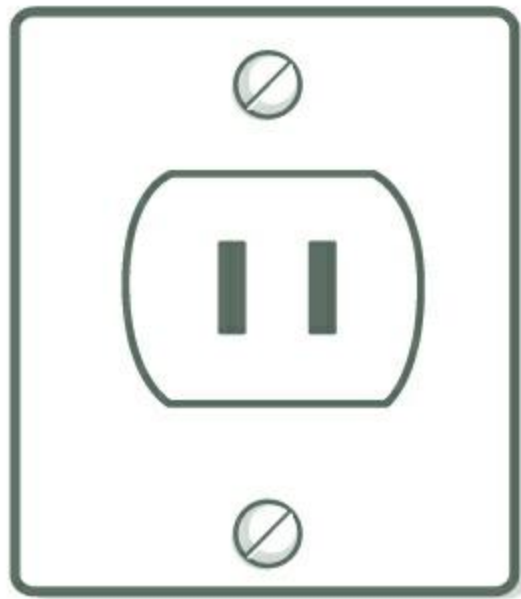
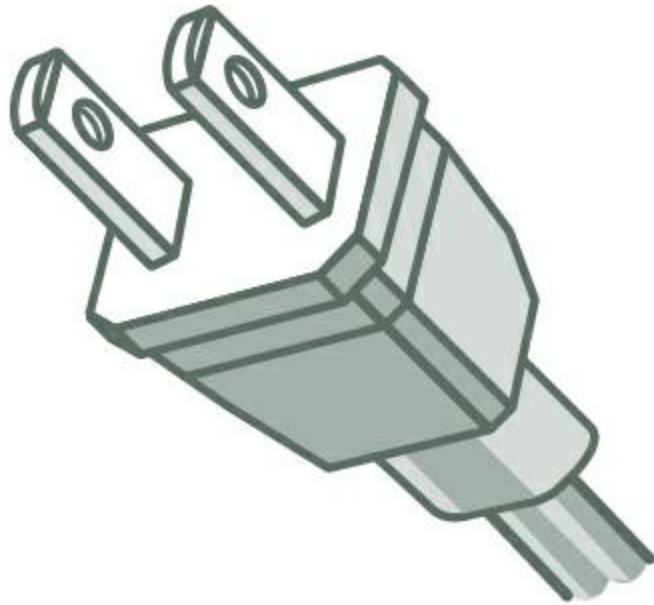
Post offices 9am–5pm Monday to Friday; larger ones have longer hours and open Saturday

Restaurants lunch 11.30am–2pm; dinner 6–10pm; last orders taken about half an hour before closing

Discount Cards

Grutto Pass (www.rekibun.or.jp/grutto; ¥2000) gives you free or discounted admission to 79 attractions around town within two months. All participating venues sell them.

Electricity



Type A
100V/50Hz

Emergency

Ambulance & Fire ☎ 119

Police ☎ 110

Non-emergency Police Hotline for Foreigners (8.30am-5.15pm Mon-Fri) ☎ 03-3503-8484

Emergency Interpretation (Medical Info 9am-8pm) ☎ 03-5285-8181

Japan Helpline (☎ 0570-000-911) English-speaking operators available 24 hours a day can help you negotiate tricky situations; if you don't have access to mobile service, use the contact form on the website (<http://jhelp.com/english/index.html>).

Internet Access

Tokyo now has more free wi-fi hot spots than it used to have, though the system still feels clunky. To avoid frustration, heavy users might consider renting a pocket internet device.

Money

ATMs

➔ Most Japanese bank ATMs do not accept foreign-issued cards. Even if they display Visa and MasterCard logos, most accept only Japan-issued versions of these cards.

➔ Seven Bank ATMs at 7-Eleven convenience stores and Japan Post Bank ATMs at post offices accept most overseas cards and have instructions in English. Seven Bank ATMs are accessible 24 hours a day.

➔ Note that many banks place a limit on the amount of cash you can withdraw in one day (often around US\$300).

Credit Cards

- ➔ More and more places in Tokyo accept credit cards, but it's still a good idea to always keep at least several thousand yen in cash on hand.
- ➔ Businesses that do take credit cards will often display the logo for the cards they accept. Visa is the most widely accepted, followed by MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club. Foreign-issued cards should work fine.

Money-Saving Tips

- ➔ Many of Tokyo's more expensive restaurants are comparatively reasonable at lunch; you'll get better value if you splurge at midday.
- ➔ After 5pm, grocery stores, bakeries and even department store food halls slash prices on *bentō* (boxed meals), baked goods and sushi.
- ➔ Check out Tokyo Cheapo (<http://tokyocheapo.com>) for other money-saving tips.

Public Holidays

If a national holiday falls on a Monday, most museums and restaurants that normally close on Mondays will remain open and close the next day instead.

New Year's Day (Ganjitsu) 1 January

Coming-of-Age Day (Seijin-no-hi) Second Monday in January

National Foundation Day (Kenkoku Kinen-bi) 11 February

Spring Equinox (Shumbun-no-hi) 20 or 21 March

Shōwa Day (Shōwa-no-hi) 29 April

Constitution Day (Kempō Kinem-bi) 3 May

Green Day (Midori-no-hi) 4 May

Children's Day (Kodomo-no-hi) 5 May

Marine Day (Umi-no-hi) Third Monday in July

Mountain Day (Yama-no-hi) 11 August

Respect-for-the-Aged Day (Keirō-no-hi) Third Monday in September

Autumn Equinox (Shūbun-no-hi) 23 or 24 September

Health & Sports Day (Taiiku-no-hi) Second Monday in October

Culture Day (Bunka-no-hi) 3 November

Labour Thanksgiving Day (Kinrō Kansha-no-hi) 23 November

Emperor's Birthday (Tennō-no-Tanjōbi) 23 December

Safe Travel

- ➔ The biggest threat to travellers in Tokyo is the city's general aura of safety. It's wise to keep up the same level of caution and common sense that you would back home.
- ➔ Drink-spiking continues to be a problem in Roppongi (resulting in robbery, extortion and, in extreme cases, physical assault). Be wary of following touts into bars there and in Kabukichō; men are also likely to be solicited in both neighbourhoods.
- ➔ Women, especially those alone, walking through Kabukichō and Dōgenzaka risk being harassed (both are red-light districts).
- ➔ *Chikan* (gropers) do haunt crowded trains. During rush hour, many trains have women-only cars (marked in pink).
- ➔ Twenty-four-hour-staffed *kōban* (police boxes) are located near most major train stations.

Telephone

Country code ☎81

Tokyo area code ☎03

International access code ☎001

Mobile Phones

➔ Japan operates on the 3G network, so overseas phones with 3G technology should work in Tokyo.

➔ Data-only SIM cards for unlocked smartphones are available at kiosks at both Narita and Haneda airports and at large electronics stores (like Bic Camera, Yodobashi Camera etc). To work, they may require some fiddling with settings, so make sure you've got a connection before you leave the shop.

➔ B-Mobile's **Visitor SIM** (www.bmobile.ne.jp/english/index.html), which offers 14 days of unlimited data (the speed will be reduced for heavy users) for ¥2380, is a good choice.

➔ **Rentafone Japan** (www.rentafonejapan.com) rents mobiles for ¥3900 a week plus ¥300 for each additional day and extra call charges.

Pay Phones

➔ Public phones do still exist and they work almost 100% of the time; look for them around train stations.

➔ Local calls cost ¥10 per minute; note that you won't get change on a ¥100 coin.

➔ Phones that allow you to call abroad are grey and are usually

marked 'International & Domestic Card/Coin Phone'. The minimum charge is ¥100, which buys you a fraction of a minute.

➔ Reverse-charge international calls can be made by dialling 0051.

Toilets

➔ Public toilets (free, typically clean and with toilet paper) can be found in most train stations; convenience stores often have toilets you can use, too.

➔ Some restrooms still have squat toilets; Western-style toilets are often marked with the characters 洋式 (*yō-shiki*) on the stall door.

➔ 'Washlets', increasingly common, are heated-seat thrones that wash and dry your intimate areas at the touch of a button.

➔ Separate toilet slippers are usually provided in homes and restaurants where you take off your shoes at the entrance; they are typically just inside the toilet door.

Tourist Information

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building Tourist Information

Center ([GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-5321-3077; 1st fl, Tokyo Metropolitan Government bldg 1, 2-8-1

Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🕒 9.30am-6.30pm; 🚶🏻♂️ Ōedo line to Tochōmae, exit A4) **Has** English-language information and publications. Additional branches in Keisei Ueno Station, Haneda Airport and Shinjuku Bus Terminal.

JNTO Tourist Information Center ([GOOGLE MAP](#); 📞 03-3201-3331;

www.jnto.go.jp; 1st fl, Shin-Tokyo Bldg, 3-3-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 9am-5pm; 📶; 🚶🏻♂️ Chiyoda line to Nijūbashimae, exit 1) **Run by the Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO)**, this TIC has information on Tokyo and beyond. There are also branches in Narita Airport terminals 1 and 2.

JR East Travel Service Center Tourist information, money exchange and bookings for ski and onsen getaways. There are branches in the two airports, too.

Tokyo Tourist Information Center ([GOOGLE MAP](#)); ☎ 03-3287-2955; 2-4-10 Yūrakuchō, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 11am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun; 📶; 🚶 JR Yamanote line to Yūrakuchō, Hibiya exit) **Booking counters for tours, money-exchange machines, wi-fi and a shop with a range of souvenirs.**

Dos & Don'ts

- ➔ Relax. Japan is known for its hair-splitting etiquette rules, but foreign tourists are given a pass for just about everything.
- ➔ Pack light. Tokyo hotel rooms are small, with little room for luggage.
- ➔ Dress smart if you want to blend in, although for all but the fanciest restaurants, casual clothes are fine.
- ➔ Wear shoes you can slip on and off easily, as many ryokan and restaurants still ask you to leave your shoes at the door.
- ➔ Refrain from eating on the subway or while walking down the street – it's considered impolite.
- ➔ Get in line. The Japanese are famous queuers.

Travellers with Disabilities

- ➔ Newer buildings have wheelchair-access ramps, and more and more subway stations have elevators; still, Tokyo gets mixed reviews on accessibility.
- ➔ **Accessible Tokyo** (<http://accessible.jp.org/tokyo>) describes the accessibility of major Tokyo-area attractions, including which train stations have elevators.
- ➔ **Japan Accessible Tourism Centre** (www.japan-

accessible.com/city/tokyo.htm) has a cheat-sheet for accessible sights and hotels in Tokyo.

➔ Download Lonely Planet's free *Accessible Travel* guide from <http://lptravel.to/AccessibleTravel>.

Visas

➔ Citizens of 67 countries, including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, USA, UK and almost all European nations will be automatically issued a 90-day temporary visitor visa.

➔ For a complete list of visa-exempt countries, consult www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html#list.

Language

Japanese pronunciation is easy for English speakers, as most of its sounds are also found in English. Note though that it's important to make the distinction between short and long vowels, as vowel length can change the meaning of a word. The long vowels (**ā, ē, ī, ō, ū**) should be held twice as long as the short ones. All syllables in a word are pronounced fairly evenly in Japanese. If you read our pronunciation guides as if they were English, you'll be understood.

To enhance your trip with a phrasebook, visit lonelyplanet.com.

Basics

Hello.

こんにちは。 kon·ni·chi·wa

Goodbye.

さようなら。 sa·yō·na·ra

Yes.

はい。 hai

No.

いいえ。 ī·e

Please.

ください。 ku·da·sai

Thank you.

ありがとう。 a·ri·ga·tō

Excuse me.

すみません。 su·mi·ma·sen

Sorry.

ごめんなさい。 go·men·na·sai

What's your name?

お名前は
何ですか? o·na·ma·e wa
nan des ka

My name is ...

私の
名前は…です。 wa·ta·shi no
na·ma·e wa...des

Do you speak English?

英語が
話せますか? ē·go ga
ha·na·se·mas ka

I don't understand.

わかりません。 wa·ka·ri·ma·sen

Eating & Drinking

I'd like to reserve a table for (two).

(2人)の
予約をお
願いします。 (fu·ta·ri) no
yo·ya·ku o
o·ne·gai shi·mas

I'd like (the menu).

(メニュー)
をお願いします。 (me·nyū)
o o·ne·gai shi·mas

I don't eat (red meat).

(赤身の肉)
は食べません。 (a·ka·mi no ni·ku)
wa ta·be·ma·sen

That was delicious!

おいしかった。 oy·shi·kat·ta

Please bring the bill.

お勘定
をください。 o·kan·jō
o ku·da·sai

Cheers!

乾杯! kam·pai

beer

ビール bī·ru

coffee

コーヒー kō·hī

Shopping

I'd like ...

…をください。 ... o ku·da·sai

I'm just looking.

見ているだけです。 mi·te i·ru da·ke des

How much is it?

いくらですか? i·ku·ra des ka

That's too expensive.

高すぎます。 ta·ka·su·gi·mas

Can you give me a discount?

ディスカウント
できますか? dis·kown·to
de·ki·mas ka

Emergencies

Help!

たすけて! tas·ke·te

Go away!

離れろ! ha·na·re·ro

Call the police!

警察を呼んで! kē·sa·tsu o yon·de

Call a doctor!

医者を呼んで! i·sha o yon·de

I'm lost.

迷いました。 ma·yoy·mash·ta

I'm ill.

私は病
気です。 wa·ta·shi wa
byō·ki des

Where are the toilets?

トイレは
どこですか? toy·re wa
do·ko des ka

Time & Numbers

What time is it?

何時ですか? nan·ji des ka

It's (10) o'clock.

(10)時です。 (jū)·ji des

Half past (10).

(10)時半です。 (jū)·ji han des

morning 朝 a·sa

afternoon 午後 go·go

evening 夕方 yū·ga·ta

yesterday きのう ki·nō

today 今日 kyō

tomorrow 明日 a·shi·ta

1 一 i·chi

2 二 ni

3 三 san

4 四 shi/yon

5 五 go

6 六 ro·ku

7 七 shi·chi/
na·na

8 八 ha·chi

9 九 ku/kyū

10 十 jū

Transport & Directions

Where's the ...?

…はどこ
ですか? ... wa do·ko
des ka

What's the address?

住所は何
ですか? jū·sho wa nan
des ka

Can you show me (on the map)?

(地図で)教えて (chi·zu de) o·shi·e·te
くれませんか? ku·re·ma·sen ka

When's the next (bus)?

次の(バス)は tsu·gi no (bas) wa
何時ですか? nan·ji des ka

Does it stop at ...?

…に ... ni
停まりますか? to·ma·ri·mas ka

Please tell me when we get to ...

…に着いたら ... ni tsu·i·ta·ra
教えてください。 o·shi·e·te ku·da·sai

Behind the Scenes

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Our Readers

Many thanks to the travellers who used the last edition and wrote to us with helpful hints, useful advice and interesting anecdotes:

Julian Matossian, Karen Fletcher, Mor Rosenberg, Regie Plana Alcuaz and Snir Aharon

Rebecca's Thanks

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Photograph on pp4–5: View of Tokyo city; Sakarin Sawasdinaka / Shutterstock ©

This Book

This 6th edition of Lonely Planet's *Pocket Tokyo* guidebook was researched and written by Rebecca Milner and Simon Richmond, who also worked on the previous edition. This guidebook was produced by the following:

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Our Story

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

Our Writers

Rebecca Milner

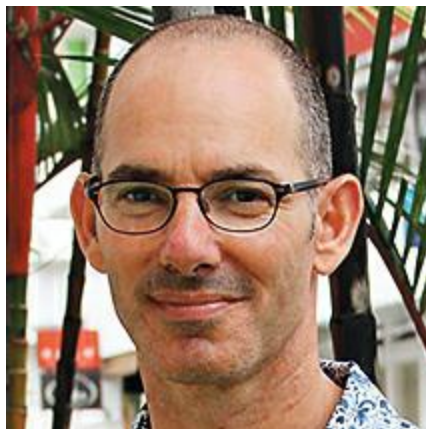
California born Rebecca is a longtime Tokyo resident (14 years and counting!). She is the cowriter of Lonely Planet guides to Tokyo, Japan, Korea and China and a freelance writer covering travel, food and culture. Her work has been published in the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, the *Sunday Times Travel Magazine*, the *Japan Times* and more. After spending the better part of her twenties working to travel – doing odd jobs in Tokyo to make money so she could spend months at a time backpacking around Asia – Rebecca was fortunate enough to turn the tables in 2010, joining the Lonely Planet team of

freelance writers.



Simon Richmond

A travel writer, photographer and videographer, Simon won travel guidebook of the year for his first coauthored guidebook on Japan, published in 1999. He's also written several guidebooks to Tokyo (where he lived and worked as a journalist and editor in the early 1990s) and books on anime and manga. A writer with Lonely Planet since 1999, Simon has worked for the company on many titles and features for its website.



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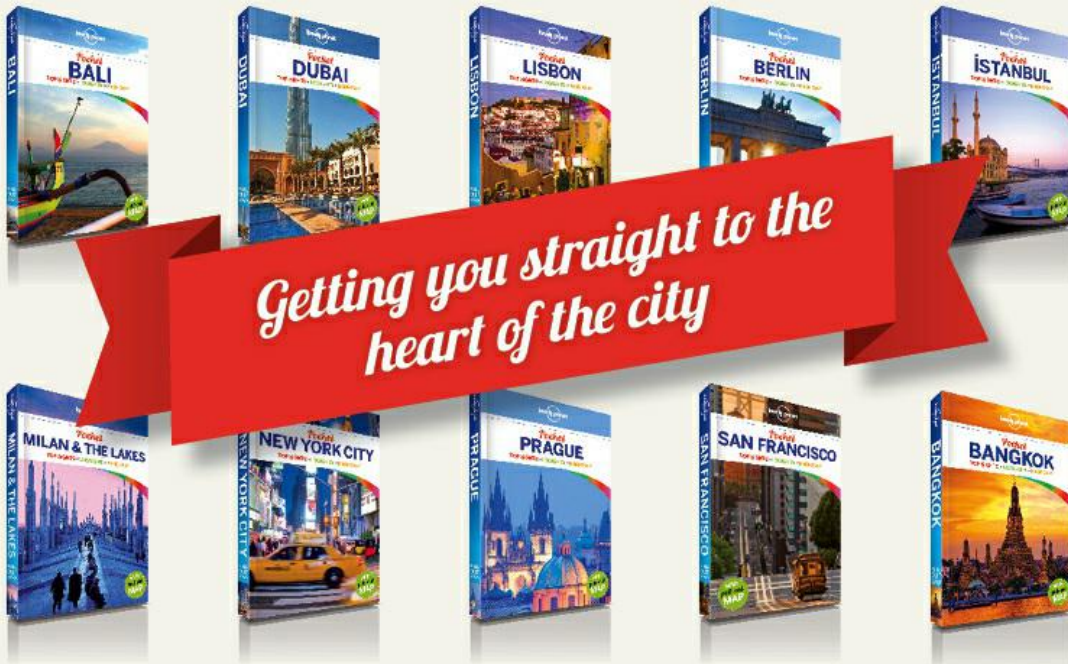
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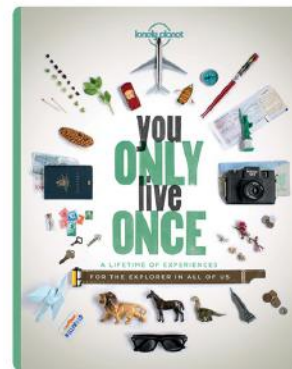
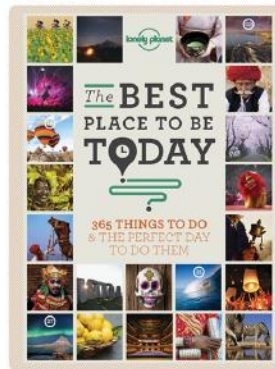
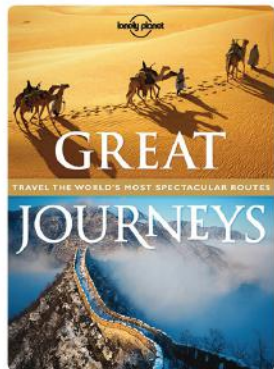
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