

# INTRODUCING TOKYO



Cherry blossoms in full bloom at Shinjuku-gyōen (p114)

JOHN BANAGAN

Tokyoites inhabit a singular capital inimitably yoking past and future, where Zen temples nestle in sci-fi cityscapes and centuries-old madness for cherry blossoms coexists with an insatiable desire for nonstop novelty.

Old and new are forever juxtaposed in Tokyo: its residents are at home both donning loincloths to shoulder a portable Shinto shrine through Asakusa's religious festivals and piloting humanoid fighting machines in Akihabara's robot sport tournaments. Tradition, happily, is not ossified, but feted along with innovation.

The workaholic stereotype is very true – death from overwork is legally recognised in Japan – but stroll through a neon-lined row of Shinjuku *yakitori* (grilled chicken) joints on the weekend, or any cherry grove in spring, and you'll see that people take pleasure very seriously here. There is ever-flowing sake, deep respect for freshly filleted fish, heartfelt karaoke, and constant curiosity about how outsiders view this archipelago at the end of the world.

Orderly, efficient Tokyo works stunningly well for a metropolis its size, yet it has about as many masks as there are hostess clubs in Kabukichō. Peeling back each facade reveals a city that's far less Western than first impressions suggest; nearly everything Tokyoites do, from taking out the trash to cheering a ball game, is profoundly un-Western. Their reverence for ritual, courtesy and the power to *ganbaru* (persevere) gives this superdense megalopolis a calm at the heart of the storm. This is *wa* – social harmony – and it's the force that makes Tokyo more a series of one-of-a-kind experiences than a collection of sights.

## TOKYO LIFE

Tokyo never stops. Change trains during rush hour at Shinjuku Station and you'll experience Tokyo at its most dizzying, with rivers of people pouring from the platforms. Gaze out from the observation deck at the nearby Metropolitan Government Offices and you'll see a vast labyrinth of a city that seems to continue forever. This city of nearly 13 million people (expanding to 33 million if you include the greater metropolitan area) has been constantly reinventing itself following natural disaster, war and an endless architectural construction-demolition cycle.

What Tokyo lacks in greenery and historic structures is made up for by an almost playful chameleon character, with new redevelopment zones transforming neighbourhoods like Marunouchi, Roppongi and Shiodome into chic new centres of entertainment, business and media. Grand schemes, such as plans to restore Tokyo Station to its original 1914 glory and construction of the 634m-tall Tokyo Sky Tree, are changing the urban landscape. Meanwhile, the new Fukutoshin subway line is funnelling people between Ikebukuro and Shibuya, and a new high-speed rail link will cut travel time between central Tokyo and Narita Airport to 36 minutes as of July 2010.

Social pressures are often the subject of beery talk in *izakaya* (Japanese-style pubs). Two pillars of Japan's politics and economy crumbled in 2009–10 as the conservative Liberal Democrats lost their 54-year lock on political power to the Democratic Party of Japan, and Japan Airlines filed for bankruptcy. The rise of China and India is putting Japan's famed technological prowess in the shadows. Tokyo is now relying on the appeal of Japanese pop culture, video games, animation and environmental technologies to retain its international influence. The country's large but fragile economy is struggling to return to a solid growth footing following the 2008–09 recession.

To drum up business, the government is luring more travellers to Japan. The most popular are those with a curiosity for the culture, and Tokyoites delight at trying to explain their foods, social etiquette or the writing system. Tokyoites are as intensely interested in themselves as outsiders, and devour articles on the sex lives of the elderly, the schoolgirl prostitution scandal or trends in yoga for pets. Turn on the TV and you'll see infantile buffoonery on the variety shows and firemen belting out their best *enka* blues on the national karaoke program. Beneath its staid corporate face, the city is a child at heart. Tokyo's *joie de vivre*, frantic pace and pure energy never let up.



Bright lights, big city – the classic meeting place outside the Studio Alita building (p109)

# THE AUTHORS

## Andrew Bender



France was closed, so after college Andy left his native New England to work in Tokyo. It ended up being a life-changing journey, as visits here so often are. He's since mastered chopsticks, the language, karaoke and

taking his shoes off at the door, appeared in Japanese TV commercials, earned his MBA, and worked with Japanese companies on both sides of the Pacific in fields from finance to film production. His writing has appeared in *Travel + Leisure*, *Forbes*, the *Los Angeles Times* and many airline magazines, plus over a dozen other Lonely Planet titles. In an effort toward ever greater trans-oceanic harmony, Andy also consults on cross-cultural issues from his current base in Los Angeles. Find out more at [www.wheres-andy-now.com](http://www.wheres-andy-now.com).

## Timothy N Hornyak



A native of Montreal, Tim Hornyak moved to Japan in 1999 after watching Kurosawa's *Ran* too many times. Since then, he has written on Japanese culture, technology and history for titles including CNET News, *Scientific*

*American* and *Far Eastern Economic Review*. He has played bass in a rock band in Tokyo, lectured on Japanese robots at the Kennedy Center in Washington and travelled to the heart of Hokkaidō to find the remains of a forgotten theme park called Canadian World. As the author of *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*, his favourite robot is Astro Boy, but he firmly believes that the greatest Japanese invention of all time is the onsen.

## LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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# GETTING STARTED

We've heard even the most intrepid of travellers say that they're intimidated by Tokyo, so let's dispense with the fears first: language barrier, illegible signs and menus, crowds, high prices, getting lost. Yes.

And no. A little preparation (hint: you're reading it now) goes a long way. While it's true that Japanese generally speak less English than do people in many other Asian countries, English signage and picture menus are increasingly common. Moments of peace can be had even in the most unexpected places (subway cars are typically silent). One quickly figures out the gap between need-to-spend and want-to-spend and, if you're standing on a street corner trying to make sense of a map, don't be surprised if a stranger approaches offering help.

Now that that's out of the way, get ready to be wowed.

A trip to Tokyo can be as organised or as spontaneous as you'd like. Accommodation can be booked online ahead of time, and there is no shortage of guided city tours (see [p261](#)) to help you catch your bearings. Reservations at higher-end restaurants are helpful, but otherwise Tokyo is perhaps best experienced by simply putting down the guidebook, getting lost in the crowds and finding your own secret corner of the city.

## WHEN TO GO

Tokyo is one of the world's most exciting cities, regardless of when you visit. If you take a quick look at the calendar of festivals (see [right](#)), you'll realise that Tokyo hosts a number of big events every single month.

Weather can be a factor. Summers (late June through August) are stiflingly hot and humid, and winter chill (December to February) can severely limit your outdoor time, although the skies tend to be clear in winter and snows not too bad. Spring (April and May) and autumn (October to November) tend to have the most reliably pleasant weather. See

[p18](#) for information about cherry blossom and autumn foliage seasons.

Otherwise you might want to time your visit so you can catch one of several annual *sumō* tournaments, which take place in January, May and September (see [p207](#)), or perhaps a baseball game or two ([p208](#)), which are played from March to October.

Virtually all businesses, restaurants and sights shut down for the New Year's holiday (31 December to 3 January). Make reservations well in advance if you plan to be in Tokyo during the big travel holidays of Golden Week (29 April to 5 May) or the newly designated Silver Week (around 21 Sep).

## THINGS TO PACK

- Seasonally appropriate, 'smart casual' clothing. Tokyo is very fashion-forward. Leave the athletic wear at home unless you plan on working out.
- Business attire in conservative colours, if you're going on business.
- Comfortable walking shoes. See [p20](#) for shoe etiquette.
- Handkerchief: to dry your hands, not wipe your nose. Many public washrooms don't have paper towels or dryers.
- See [p259](#) for information about bringing medications into Japan.
- Try to fit your belongings in a small to medium-sized suitcase. Japanese hotel rooms may be smaller than you're used to, and smaller bags will be easier to manage on public transport.

## FESTIVALS

Old Edo was home to an abundance of *matsuri* (festivals), which originated in farming communities as expressions of the Shinto religion. Spring festivals were held to supplicate the local gods and to secure a plentiful harvest, while autumn festivals were held in thanks and celebration of a rich harvest. Summer and winter festivals were less common, though this changed with the rise of large urban settlements, where they were held in the hope of circumventing pestilence and plague. Today, Tokyo's civic calendar is jam-packed with *matsuri* as well as a mix of events from traditional flower viewings to trade shows covering everything from motorcycles to design.

For a list of Japan's national holidays, see [p259](#).



## January & February

### SHŌGATSU (NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY)

1 to 3 Jan

While Tokyo comes to a virtual halt on the first few days of the year (also referred to as O-Shōgatsu, 'Honourable New Year'), the city's large Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples swell with visitors; Sensō-ji (p83) and Meiji-jingū (p105) are good places to start. Although both of these places get extremely crowded – Meiji-jingū gets millions of visitors alone – it can be a particular thrill to be part of the crowds of people from all walks of life, many of whom are dressed in fine kimono and purchasing seasonal trinkets.

You may also want to stop in at Yasukuni-jinja (p59), where the shrine's dramatic *nō* (stylised dance-drama) is performed in honour of the shrine's god. On 2 January, you should consider a visit to the Imperial Palace (p50) as the emperor and imperial family make a brief appearance in one of the inner courtyards – it's one of the very rare occasions when visitors are allowed a glimpse into imperial life behind bullet-proof glass.

### SEIJIN-NO-HI (COMING-OF-AGE DAY)

15 Jan

Arrows fly at Meiji-jingū (p105) during traditional archery displays in the celebration of the world of the grown-up.

### SETSUBUN

3 or 4 Feb

Setsubun marks the first day of spring in the traditional calendar, a shift once believed to bode evil and bring disaster. To ward off the oncoming evil, temples erupt into metaphysical food fights as rowdy suppliants throw tiny sacks of roasted beans and shout, '*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*' ('Devil out! Fortune in!').

### HARI-KUYŌ

early Feb

Women mourn the passing of broken pins and needles by burying their beloved sartorial pals in cubes of tofu or in radishes at Sensō-ji (p83).

## March & April

### HINA MATSURI (GIRLS' DAY)

3 Mar

Homes and public spaces are decorated with squat dolls in the traditional dress

# top picks

## QUIRKY EVENTS

- **Setsubun** (February; left)
- **Hari-kuyō** (February; left)
- **Design Festa** (May and November; p19 & p20)
- **Takigi Noh** (July or August; p19)
- **Samba Carnival** (August; p19)

of the *hina* (princess). Around this time, dolls made by children are set adrift on the Sumida River (Map p122) from Sumida-kōen near Azuma-bashi. There's also a Boys' Day held in May (see p18).

### UME HANAMI

late Feb

Before the riot of cherry blossoms comes to town, the plum trees do their own number, the first sign that winter is ending. Popular viewing spots are Koishikawa Kōrakuen (p62) and Yushima Tenjin (p82).

### HIWATARI MATSURI

mid-Mar

Mountain monks take the lead in this festival in Mt Takao (p231) by walking over hot coals. If you're feeling invincible (or drunk), you're also welcome to try.

### ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

mid-Mar

[www.inj.or.jp/stpatrick\\_e.html](http://www.inj.or.jp/stpatrick_e.html)

Around 17 March, tens of thousands line the Omote-Sandō (Map p106) for the wearin' and drinkin' of the green.

### TOKYO MOTORCYCLE SHOW

late Mar

At Tokyo Big Sight (Map p127) the biggest motorcycle show in Japan has been letting the good times roll since the 1970s.

### HANAMI (CHERRY-BLOSSOM VIEWING)

usually early Apr

See the boxed text on p18 for the best spots for these blossom-viewing parties.

### TOKYO INTERNATIONAL ANIME FAIR

late Mar or early Apr

[www.tokyoanime.jp/en](http://www.tokyoanime.jp/en)

Tokyo's International Anime Fair at Tokyo Big Sight (Map p127) brings in everyone from the 17-year-old animephile living next door to big-screen voice actors and some 170

## TOKYO IN BLOOM

Owing to the seasonal nature of Japanese culture, monitoring the progress of spring blossoms and autumn foliage is an obsession up and down the archipelago – the national news carries maps of their progress. Even though Tokyo is largely hemmed in by concrete, blossom viewing and leaf peeping are still a big deal.

### Hanami

Cherry blossoms seem to burst out overnight some time between the end of March and the beginning of April, representing the climax of spring. *Hanami* (cherry-blossom viewing) parties begin with the earliest buds and endure to the last clinging blossoms. Both daytime parties and moonlit soirees are standard, as crowds flood the parks with beer and good humour.

**Hama Rikyū Onshi-teien (p65)** There are about 100 cherry trees here, including a few wild varieties. A small admission fee keeps the crowds at bay.

**Shinjuku-gyōen (p114)** A prime cherry-blossom attraction, this garden has several varieties of cherry trees, including the spectacular *yaezakura* (double-blossoming cherries).

**Ueno-kōen (p77)** *Hanami* explosion as enthusiasts vie for the best angle on Ueno's 1000 flowering trees.

**Yasukuni-jinja (p59)** There are more than 1000 cherry trees in the grounds of the shrine; check out the cherry trees lining the nearby Imperial Palace moat as well.

**Yoyogi-kōen (p107)** There is plenty of space here to stretch out and admire the park's 500 or so cherry trees.

**Zōjō-ji (p94)** About 100 trees are found here at Shiba-kōen, with the temple for a backdrop.

### Kōyō

During the *kōyō* (autumn foliage season), which runs from about mid-October to early November, Tokyo's trees virtually explode in colour. Look especially for the maple, which goes through a minor spectrum of yellows and oranges before climaxing in a fiery red. Some of the best spots include the following:

**Kitanomaru-kōen (p51)** This grassy expanse is a great place for an autumn stroll and/or a picnic.

**Koishikawa Kōrakuen (p62)** A lovely pond and surrounding gardens make this park one of Tokyo's best foliage spots.

**Shinjuku-gyōen (p114)** This sprawling garden's many leaf-peeping locales include the Western-style garden.

**Ueno-kōen (p77)** As popular for autumn foliage as for cherry blossoms.

**Yasukuni-jinja (p59)** The tree-lined walkway leading to this temple explodes in a fury of autumn colours.

**Yoyogi-kōen (p107)** This sprawling park is dotted with picturesque ginkgo, zelkova and cherry trees.

exhibitors. Sorry, *cos-play* (costume play) is sadly not permitted inside as the decorum of this bit of the event is surprisingly serious – in an anime sorta way.

### HANA MATSURI 1st week in Apr

Happy birthday Buddha celebrations happen across Japan. Look for the parade of children in Asakusa, pulling a white papier-mâché elephant.

## May & June

### OTOKO NO HI (BOYS' DAY) 5 May

This is the male counterpart to Hina Matsuri (see p17). Homes where boys live fly *koinobori* (banners or windsocks in the shape of a carp), a symbol of strength, never-ending struggle and other masculine virtues.

### KANDA MATSURI mid-May

[www.kandamyoujin.or.jp](http://www.kandamyoujin.or.jp)

One of the city's three big *matsuri*, this festival features music, dancing and a healthy dose of sake. The highlight is the parade of *mikoshi* (portable shrines) through the streets of Kanda (see Kanda Myōjin, p68).

### SANJA MATSURI mid-May

Another one of the city's three big *matsuri*, this three-day festival attracts around 1.5 million spectators to Asakusa-jinja (p85). The highlight is watching half-naked men (and women, although not half-naked) carry more than 100 *mikoshi* around the shrine and neighbouring Sensō-ji. The crowd sheds its reserve and things get rowdy, so grab a beer or two and feel free to jump into the action and let it all hang out – so to speak.

**DESIGN FESTA**

mid- to late May

[www.designfesta.com](http://www.designfesta.com)

At Tokyo Big Sight (p136), this two-day arts and design fair brings in more than 2700 exhibitors (professionals and amateurs alike) and some 50,000-plus visitors, making it the biggest art event in Asia. Also held in mid-November (see p20).

**IRIS VIEWING**

early to mid-Jun

Mizumoto-kōen (3-2 Mizumoto-kōen, Katsushika-ku) & Horikiri Iris Garden (2-19-1 Horikiri, Katsushika-ku)

These parks in eastern Tokyo show off more than 100 unique iris species. Saturdays and Sundays bring drum performances and larger crowds; weekdays are better for a quiet walk. These parks are best reached by taking the Keisei Line to Kanamachi Station.

**SANNŌ-SAI**

mid-Jun

Tokyoites turn out to Hie-jinja (p87) for this *matsuri* with music and dancing and the usual frenetic procession of *mikoshi*, at the former protector shrine for Edo Castle.

**July & August****INTERNATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL**

mid-Jul

[www.tokyo-igff.org](http://www.tokyo-igff.org); various venues

IGLFF has nearly 20 seasons beneath its belt, highlighting gay and lesbian cinema from Japan and around the world, with almost three dozen films and other programs.

**SUMIDA RIVER HANABI**

last Sat in Jul

Summertime in Japan is synonymous with exhibitions of fireworks (*hanabi*), which happen throughout the country. The ones on the Sumida-gawa are among the most spectacular around. Although you may have seen fireworks displays elsewhere, they probably haven't prepared you for the grandness of this one, which goes on, marvellously, for hours.

**TAKIGI NOH**

Jul or Aug

As the summer weather starts to peak, shrines, temples and parks stage evening outdoor *nō* backlit by bonfires. Meiji-jingū (p105), Kichijōji Gesoji and Shinjuku are the usual spots for evening performances

within the city limits. This is a great bit of old Edo that has been preserved in modern Tokyo.

**O-BON**

mid-Aug

For several days, Japanese city dwellers return to their ancestral provinces to gather with family and visit the graves of ancestors, marking the time when Buddhist teaching says the dead revisit the earth. *Bon-odori* (folk dances) by people in *yukata* (light cotton kimono) are held throughout Japan, but the one at Yasukuni-jinja (p59) is famous, illuminated by *bonbori* (paper lanterns).

**FUKAGAWA HACHIMAN**

mid-Aug

The latest of the city's three big *matsuri* is famous for its traditional chant of '*wass-hoi! wasshoi!*' as spectators pour sacred water over the *mikoshi* carriers along the route. Needless to say, everyone gets wet, which is certainly welcomed if the August sun is beating down. Location: Tomioka Hachimangū (p123).

**KŌENJI AWA ODORI**

last Sat &amp; Sun in Aug

[www.koenji-awaodori.com](http://www.koenji-awaodori.com)

Some 12,000 participants do the Fool's Dance along a 2km stretch. If you happen to find yourself along the parade route at Kōenji Station (Map pp48–9), you're welcome to break into your own rendition.

**SAMBA CARNIVAL**

last Sat in Aug

This universally loved event, which is staged by the Nikkei Brazilians, features roughly 3500 dancers moving their fleshy way down Kaminarimon-dōri in Asakusa (Map p84) past half a million spectators. The dancing is top-notch and the judged competition is fierce, drawing dancers all the way from Rio.

**September & October****TOKYO GAME SHOW**

late Sep

[tgs.cesa.or.jp](http://tgs.cesa.or.jp); Makuhari Messe

Get your geek on when the Computer Entertainment Suppliers Association stages this massive expo at a convention centre on the way to Narita Airport (Makuhari Messe is about 30 minutes east of Tokyo, via the JR Keiyō Line from Tokyo Station to Kaihin Makuhari Station).

**NINGYŌ-KUYŌ**

late Sep

Childless couples pray for children by offering dolls to Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy. More interesting for spectators is the ceremonial burning by priests of all the dolls held in the temple precinct from the previous year. See Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō (p77) for more info.

**TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

late Oct

[www.tiff-jp.net](http://www.tiff-jp.net)

Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better when it comes to film festivals, though the TIFF – the biggest one in Asia – maintains its integrity by keeping a feature-length film competition at its core. The TIFF pays special attention to films from Asia, although there are always selections in English.

**TOKYO METROPOLITAN CHRYSANTHEMUM FESTIVAL**

late Oct to mid-Nov

Chrysanthemums are the flower of the season (as well as the flower of the imperial family), and this dazzling display in Hibiya-kōen (p56) is certainly cause for celebration, and has been ever since 1914. You can also catch dazzling chrysanthemum displays at Shintō shrines, including Meiji-jingū (p105) and Yasukuni-jinja (p59).

**TOKYO DESIGNERS' WEEK**

late Oct to early Nov

Video, furniture and fashion are a few of the genres represented at venues around the city, mostly in arts enclaves such as Aoyama, Harajuku and Roppongi. In 2009, some 300 exhibitors attended, representing 21 countries.

**November & December****TOKYO JIDAI MATSURI (FESTIVAL OF THE AGES)**

3 Nov

On National Culture Day, locals, dressed in splendid costumes representing figures from Japanese history parade around the Sensō-ji temple precincts in Asakusa (Map p84). This festival takes after a much bigger (and older) one in Kyoto, held a couple of weeks earlier.

**SHICHI-GO-SAN (SEVEN-FIVE-THREE FESTIVAL)**

early to mid-Nov

This adorable festival celebrates children of these tender ages, who were once thought to be in danger of imminent misfortune. Parents dress girls aged seven and three and boys aged five in wee kimono and head to Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples throughout town, grandparents often in tow. It's a prime photo opportunity.

**KŌYŌ (AUTUMN FOLIAGE SEASON)**

The city's trees undergo magnificent seasonal transformations during *kōyō*. See the boxed text, p18.

**DESIGN FESTA**

mid-Nov

[www.designfesta.com](http://www.designfesta.com)

This enormous art and design festival at Tokyo Big Sight (p136) is held for a second time in mid-November. See also p19.

**INTERNATIONAL ROBOT EXHIBITION**

late Nov to early Dec

This biennial event organised by the Japan Robotics Association and friends featured 850-plus booths in 2009, at Tokyo Big Sight. The next event is scheduled for 2011.

**TOKYO'S SHOE FETISH**

Japan is fastidious about shoe habits, and shoe *faux pas* are about the surest way to start a visit on the wrong foot. Here are some important tips:

- Shoes are never worn in homes, or indoors at many restaurants, ryokan (traditional inns), shrines and temples.
- Remove shoes in a *genkan* (entryway inside the door). Shoes *are* worn in most other places.
- Step out of your shoes on the stone or tile surface inside the *genkan* and up onto the wooden or carpeted surface.
- Don't step on the stone or tile in your stocking feet.
- Place your shoes in a rack or locker, if provided.
- Many places provide slippers. If these are too small, you are not obligated to wear them.
- Slippers are not worn on tatami (straw floor mats).
- To put your shoes on again, place them on the stone surface and step down into them.
- Slip-on shoes are enormously helpful!



## COSTS & MONEY

Tokyo, once known as an impossibly expensive city, has become a lot more affordable in the last 10 years – or at least prices have frozen, giving the rest of the world a chance to catch up. Truth be told, it's still possible to spend thousands of dollars on a five-star hotel room, and wine and dine on gourmet cuisine until your bank account is in the red, but Tokyoites are quick to point out that their city is as expensive as you want it to be. In fact, for every upmarket hotel or sophisticated restaurant in the capital, there are numerous affordable guesthouses and cheap noodle shops scattered about. All this means that, depending on currency fluctuations, a trip to Tokyo can well be better value than one to London, Paris or any other European capital.

Although shoestringers will have to part with a bit more cash than they're perhaps used to, it is possible to survive in Tokyo for around ¥5000 a day, if you sleep in dorms, subsist on noodles and rice, and limit your sight-seeing to reduce entrance and transport fees. More realistically, a budget of ¥10,000 to ¥15,000 will allow you to bed down in a private room, sample Tokyo's culinary offerings and snap a few hundred shots at sights around the city. If money is no object, then welcome to paradise – Tokyo is a fantasy come true.

Throughout this book, we have broken down sleeping and eating listings based on price. For instance, budget sleeps are rooms costing ¥6500 or less, midrange rooms cost between ¥6500 and ¥16,000, and top-end rooms will cost more than ¥16,000. Budget eats will cost around ¥1000 or less for lunch, and ¥2000 or less for dinner. A quality midrange meal can run upwards of ¥5000, while haute cuisine can easily run to ¥20,000 per person.

Generally speaking, anything that requires a lot of space costs a lot (eg bowling alleys, cinemas, domestic produce), so you can save a bit if you avoid these minor pleasures. Also, although most museums and cinemas don't generally offer discounts to adults, concessions are usually available to students, children and senior students, and the GRUTT pass is good value (see p80). And finally, you should know, too, that Tokyo's little-kept secret, the bargain lunch set, can sometimes put your foot in the door at places that might otherwise be beyond your budget.

## HOW MUCH?

- 1L petrol ¥128
- 500mL bottled water ¥110
- Onigiri (rice ball) ¥120
- Cup of coffee in a cafe ¥450
- Basic subway fare ¥160
- 2km taxi ride ¥710
- Tokyo National Museum ticket ¥600
- Souvenir T-shirt ¥2000
- Kirin beer at a bar ¥700
- Kirin beer from a vending machine ¥330

## INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a vast treasure trove of Japan-related info on web. Before touching down in Tokyo, take a few moments to check out the following sites:

**Hyperdia** ([www.hyperdia.com](http://www.hyperdia.com)) Having problems finding your way around Tokyo? Resident expats use this English site to make sense of Tokyo's overwhelming transportation grid.

**Japan National Tourism Organization** (JNTO; [www.jnto.go.jp/eng](http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng)) This official government body offers an extremely comprehensive guide to tourism in Tokyo and the whole of Japan.

**Japan Times** ([www.japantimes.co.jp](http://www.japantimes.co.jp)) Tokyo's most widely circulated English-language newspaper is a great way to catch up on the latest Japan headlines.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Includes summaries on travelling in Tokyo, the Thorn Tree forum, travel news and links to the most useful travel resources on the web.

**Metropolis** ([www.metropolis.co.jp](http://www.metropolis.co.jp)) Japan's most popular English-language weekly magazine offers insights and listings about what's happening in Tokyo.

**Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau** ([www.tcvb.or.jp](http://www.tcvb.or.jp)) Targeted at business travellers, this website gives the basics.

**Tokyo Notice Board** ([www.tokyonoticeboard.co.jp](http://www.tokyonoticeboard.co.jp)) From apartment listings to job openings, this weekly English-language classified zine is worth checking out.

**Tokyo Tourism Info** ([www.tourism.metro.tokyo.jp](http://www.tourism.metro.tokyo.jp)) City-run portal that covers everything from upcoming events to self-guided walking tours.

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