

Opened in 2012, at 634m, Tokyo Sky Tree is among the world's tallest structures. Two observation decks, at 350m and 450m, present a stunning panorama of the greater Tokyo area and, if you're lucky, Mt Fuji. At night the exterior of steel mesh is illuminated, turning the tower into an otherworldly beacon in relatively undeveloped east Tokyo. (observation deck admission 350m/450m ¥2060/3090; 8am-10pm; 🚶 Hanzōmon Line to Oshiage)

★ **Top tip** To increase your chances of spotting Mt Fuji go in the early morning, or in the winter.



🍴 On the 6th floor of the Solamachi building under the tower, **Rokurinsha** serves delicious ramen.

MORNING

From ① to your afternoon destination

🚶 35min 🚶 40min 🚶 40min 🚶 20min 🚶 20min 🚶 35min 🚶 30min 🚶 35min 🚶 20min 🚶 30min 🚶 30min 🚶 40min 🚶 20min

Rumoured to be the world's busiest, this intersection in front of Shibuya Station is known as the Scramble. It's a spectacle of giant video screens, neon and people coming from all directions at once. Up to one thousand cross with every light change, yet still manage to dodge each other with a practiced, nonchalant agility. (🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya, Hachikō exit)

★ **Top tip** There's an excellent view from the Starbucks on the 2nd floor of the Q-front building across the street (though it's hard to get a seat).



🍴 **Za Watami** (6th-8th fl, Kiyama Bldg, 27-4 Udagawa-chō) is a popular *izakaya* place that serves all the classics at reasonable prices.

AFTERNOON

From ⑭ to your evening destination

🚶 15min 🚶 30min 🚶 35min 🚶 40min 🚶 35min 🚶 20min 🚶 45min 🚶 25min 🚶 15min 🚶 20min 🚶 30min 🚶 25min 🚶 15min

East 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. (🚶 Shinjuku. Take the east exit then follow the station signs for Kabukichō. When you emerge, you should see the glowing screen of Studio Alta, Shinjuku's de facto meeting spot.)



🍴 Smoke billows nightly from the yakitori stalls that line **Omoide-Yokochō**, an alley by the train tracks.

EVENING

2 MEIJI-JINGŪ



**Tokyo's
grandest
Shintō
shrine**

15 TOKYO JOYPOLIS



**Virtual
reality
attractions
and action
rides**

28 SUMŌ



**Experience
the
spectacle
and ritual of
sumō**

Tokyo's grandest Shintō shrine is dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken. Constructed in 1920, the shrine was destroyed in WWII air raids and rebuilt in 1958, but it has an authentic feel. The shrine occupies only a small fraction of the sprawling forested grounds, which contain 120,000 trees collected from around Japan. (1-1 Yoyogi Kamizono-chō, Shibuya-ku; **FREE**; 有線 JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku, Omotesandō exit)

★ **Top tip** The best times to visit are 8am and 2pm when a priest strikes a large drum as part of a ritual offering of food to the deities enshrined here.



FOOD Purveyor of delicious dumplings, **Harajuku Gyōza Rō** (6-4-2 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku), is a 10-minute walk away.

MORNING

From **2** to your afternoon destination

50min 50min 50min 35min 45min 70min 40min 45min 45min 45min 40min 50min 60min

This indoor amusement park has three storeys of virtual reality attractions and action rides. Popular big-kid attractions include the Spin Bullet, an indoor spinning roller coaster, and the snowboard-like, video-enhanced Halfpipe Canyon; there are rides for little ones, too. If you plan to go on more than a half-dozen attractions, the unlimited 'passport' makes sense. (2-3-6 Aomi, Kōtō-ku; adult/child ¥800/300; 10am-5pm Wed-Mon; 有線 Yurikamome Line to Odaiba Kaihin-kōen)



FOOD Nearby **Hibiki** (6th fl., Aqua City Odaiba, 1-7-1 Daiba, Minato-ku) offers views across the bay.

AFTERNOON

From **15** to your evening destination

35min 40min 35min 35min 25min 40min 30min 35min 35min 40min 5min 30min 35min

Travellers who visit Tokyo in January, May or September should not miss a Grand Tournament at Ryōgoku Kokugikan – 15-day tournaments at the national sumō stadium. Ancient sumō is captivating for its spectacle and ritual. During the rest of the year, you can catch the big boys in action at one of the neighbourhood stables, such as Arashio Stable (www.arashio.net), one of many stables where wrestlers sleep, eat and train. (www.sumo.or.jp/eng/index.html; 1-3-28 Yokoami, Sumida-ku; admission ¥2200-14,800; 有線 JR Sobu Line to Ryōgoku, west exit)



FOOD Try *chanko-nabe*, a protein-rich stew eaten by the wrestlers, at **Chanko Kaijō** (noon-4pm), in the stadium's basement.

EVENING

3 SENSŌ-JI



**The
spiritual
home of
Tokyo's
ancestors**

16 JINGŪ-BASHI



**Harajuku's
legendary
cosplayers**

29 KABUKI



**Breathtaking
costumes,
elaborate
stagecraft**

Founded over 1000 years before Tokyo got its start, Sensō-ji is the capital's oldest temple and is the spiritual home of its ancestors. Enshrining a sacred image of Kannon (the bodhisattva of compassion), this grand temple stands out for its old-world atmosphere – a glimpse of a bygone Japan that is difficult to experience outside places like Kyoto. (2-3-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; **FREE**; 24hr; 𠙴 Ginza Line to Asakusa, exit 1)

★ **Top tip** Consider the crowds part of the experience, as there doesn't seem to be a time of a day when Sensō-ji isn't packed.



Just off Nakamisedōri, **Daikokuya** (1-38-10 Asakusa, Taitō-ku) serves delicious tempura in an unpretentious setting.

MORNING

From ③ to your afternoon destination

40min 25min 45min 5min 10min 45min 35min 35min 25min 30min 30min 30min 30min

If you're hunting to take photos of Harajuku's legendary cosplayers (costume players), this is your best bet. Though the scene appears to be fading, on sunny weekends (especially Sundays) you might catch eccentrically dressed teens assembling here. (𠙴 JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku, Omote-sandō exit)

★ **Top tip** Takeshita-dori is another good spot to catch a glimpse of *gosurori* (gothic Lolita) kids.



There's always a line for seats outside **Kyūshū Jangara** (1-13-21 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku), a Kyūshū-style ramen shop near Harajuku Station.

AFTERNOON

From ⑩ to your evening destination

20min 20min 20min 30min 30min 25min 25min 20min 25min 35min 30min 20min 35min

Dramatic, intensely visual kabuki is Japan's most recognised art form, developed during the reign of the shōgun and shaped by the decadent tastes of Edo's wealthy merchant class – resulting in breathtaking costumes and elaborate stagecraft. Kabuki-za is Tokyo's kabuki theatre. Established in 1889, the theatre reopened after a lengthy reconstruction in 2013. The new building is a blend of traditional elegance and modern sensibilities, with scarlet and gold throughout. (www.kabuki-bito.jp/eng/; 4-12-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku; tickets ¥4000–20,000; 𠙴 Hibiya Line to Higashi-Ginza, exit 3)



Order bento at **Hanakago** (¥2100–3500) on the 3rd floor of Kabuki-za or get take-away (around ¥1000) from stands inside the theatre.

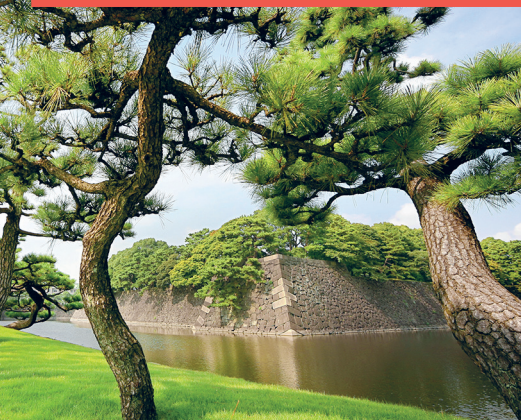
EVENING

4 TAKESHITA-DŌRI



**Where
aspiring
goths,
Lolitas and
punks come
to shop**

17 IMPERIAL PALACE GARDENS



**See one of
Japan's
most famous
bridges**

30 TOKYO DOME CITY



**Baseball
arena meets
amusement
park**
