

Marunouchi & Nihombashi

IMPERIAL PALACE AREA | MARUNOUCHI AREA | NIHOMBASHI AREA

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Strolling the manicured gardens of the **Imperial Palace** (p56) and watching for VIP visitors in horse-drawn carriages.
- 2 Being blown away by the beautiful displays at the fascinating **Inter-mediateque** (p58).
- 3 Comparing the classic and contemporary architecture of **Tokyo Station** (p58) and **Tokyo International Forum** (p58).
- 4 Browsing the outstanding collection of impressionist works at the **Bridgestone Museum of Art** (p59).
- 5 Eyeballing the sculpted dragons on **Nihombashi** (p59) and sailing under the bridge on a river cruise.



For more detail of this area, see Map p276 ➔

Explore Marunouchi & Nihombashi

Tokyo's geographical and spiritual heart is the Imperial Palace. The majority of the compound, encased in a broad moat, remains off-limits to the general public as it's the home of Japan's emperor. However, in the Imperial Palace East Garden you can admire the remains of the mammoth stone walls that once constituted Edo Castle, the largest fortress in the world. Kitanomaru-kōen, north of the main palace area, is renowned for the springtime cherry blossoms by its northern gate, and contains a trio of decent arts and science museums.

Immediately east of the palace, the once drab business stronghold of Marunouchi has blossomed in recent years with a slew of new and revamped buildings including high-end hotels, shops and restaurants. Tree-lined Naka-dōri has morphed into one of Tokyo's most pleasant thoroughfares, the ideal way to saunter from Tokyo Station's handsomely reappointed red-brick entrance to Yūrakuchō, taking in the dramatic architecture of Tokyo International Forum on the way.

Also having undergone a recent architectural facelift is Nihombashi, also spelled Nihonbashi, northeast of Tokyo Station. Joining the elegant department stores Mitsukoshi and Takashimaya here is the new Coredō Muromachi shopping, dining and entertainment complex. In neighbouring Kyōbashi, you'll also find several top-class art museums. In the coming years expect to see Ōtemachi, north of Marunouchi and west of Nihombashi, undergoing a similar makeover.

Local Life

- ➔ **Market** At Tokyo International Forum's twice monthly Ōedo Antique Market (p59) you can find unusual and unique souvenirs and gifts.
- ➔ **Shopping** Browse high-end boutiques along Marunouchi's Naka-dōri or craft and gourmet-food stores on Ningyōchō's Amazake Yokochō (p62).
- ➔ **Exercise** Jog or cycle around the Imperial Palace (p56), or get a gentle workout from the rental pedal boats in the north section of the moat.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** The Yamanote and other JR lines, including the Narita Express and *shinkansen* 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.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

At the foot of Nihombashi is a landing from which you can board boats run by **Tokyo Bay Cruise** (Map p276; ☎5679-7311; www.ss3.jp; 45/60min cruises ¥1500/2000; 📍Ginza line to Mitsukoshimae, exit B5 or B6) for a unique perspective of the city. Lasting either 45 minutes or an hour, the cruises proceed along the Nihombashi-gawa, under the historic bridges and the expressway built above the river, out to the Sumida-gawa, or make a loop around Nihombashi-gawa to Kanda-gawa.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Hōnen Manpuku (p63)
- ➔ Taimeike (p63)
- ➔ Rose Bakery (p62)

For reviews, see p62 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Cafe Salvador (p63)
- ➔ Manpuku Shokudō (p63)
- ➔ Peter: the Bar (p63)

For reviews, see p63 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Coredō Muromachi (p64)
- ➔ Mitsukoshi (p64)
- ➔ KITTE (p64)

For reviews, see p64 ➔