

# Shinjuku & West Tokyo

NISHI-SHINJUKU | SHINJUKU | OGIKUBO | KICHIJŌJI | MITAKA

## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Exploring the crackling neon canyons of **Shinjuku** (p134). From the narrow lanes of seedy Kabukichō to the main boulevards, the light show here and the sheer volume of dining, drinking and entertainment options are something to behold.
- 2 Looking out over the city from the observatory atop the **Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices** (p127).
- 3 Laying on the lawn at **Shinjuku-gyoen** (p127) and gazing up at the skyscrapers.
- 4 Immersing yourself in the imagination of animator Hayao Miyazaki at the **Ghibli Museum** (p128) in Mitaka.
- 5 Getting cosy in the bars of **Golden Gai** (p133), Shinjuku's literary and artistic hang-out.



For more detail of this area, see Map p286 ➔

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Shinjuku is nothing if not intimidating. 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 inside Shinjuku Station, such as **Lumine** (ルミネ; Map p286; www.lumine.ne.jp/shinjuku; Shinjuku Station, Shinjuku-ku; ☺11am-11pm; 田 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, south exit) or **MyLord** (ミロード; Map p286; www.shinjuku-mylord.com; Shinjuku Station, Shinjuku-ku; ☺11am-11pm; 田 JR Yamanote line to Shinjuku, south exit). Both have more than a dozen reasonably priced options with plastic food models out the front.

### Best Places to Eat

- Nagi (p132)
- Kozue (p132)
- Nakajima (p132)

For reviews, see p129 ➡

### Best Places to Drink

- Zoetrope (p133)
- Advocates Café (p133)
- New York Bar (p135)

For reviews, see p133 ➡

### Best Places to Shop

- Isetan (p136)
- Disk Union (p136)
- RanKing
- RanQueen (p136)

For reviews, see p136 ➡

## Explore Shinjuku & West Tokyo

Shinjuku is a whole city within the city. Its breadth and scale are simply awesome – over three million people a day pass through the station alone. To the west of the station is Nishi-Shinjuku (West Shinjuku), a planned district of soaring skyscrapers. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government offices are here, along with many company headquarters; it's full of black-suited office workers.

East of the train station is one huge entertainment district. Commuters who pass through Shinjuku on their way home stop off for something to eat and drink, and sometimes stay out until the trains start running the next morning. Tipplers are spoiled for choice here: Shinjuku is that rare Tokyo neighbourhood that truly has something for everyone. It's also home to the nation's largest gay district, Shinjuku-nichōme.

The JR Chūō line runs west of Shinjuku, to commuter towns that gradually grow more suburban the further out you go. Mitaka, a 20-minute train ride from Shinjuku, is home to the magical Ghibli Museum. Neighbouring Kichijoji has been voted the best place to live in Tokyo for 10 years running; with a fantastic park, Inokashira-kōen, plenty of shops and a laid-back vibe, it's easy to see why.

## Local Life

- **Parks** Grassy Shinjuku-gyoen is a popular picnic spot; you can sometimes catch performers in Inokashira-kōen on weekends. Both parks are excellent for *hanami* (blossom viewing).
- **Alleyway eats** Omoide-yokochō (p129) and Harmonica-yokochō (p129) are two atmospheric old markets where you can down *yakitori* (skewers of chicken, and other meats or vegetables) and beer like a local.
- **Shopping** Kōenji (p128) is known for its high concentration of secondhand clothing stores; Nakano (p128) is paradise for collectors of old cameras, vintage action figures and more.
- **Romance** The sky-high New York Bar (p135) is famous as a date spot, and also for marriage proposals.

## Getting There & Away

- **Train** The JR Yamanote and Chūō-Sōbu lines stop at Shinjuku Station; Chūō-Sōbu continues west, stopping at Nakano, Kōenji, Kichijōji and Mitaka. The private Keio New line stops at Hatsudai, west of Shinjuku.
- **Subway** The Marunouchi, Shinjuku and Ōedo lines run through Shinjuku. The Marunouchi, Fukutoshin and Shinjuku lines stop at Shinjuku-sanchōme, convenient for the east side of Shinjuku. For Nishi-Shinjuku (West Shinjuku), Tochōmae Station on the Ōedo line is more convenient.