

# Ueno & Yanaka

UENO | YUSHIMA | YANAKA

## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Getting schooled in Japanese art history at the **Tokyo National Museum** (p155), the finest collection of Japanese art in the world and home to samurai swords, *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints) and gilded screens.
- 2 Strolling through expansive **Ueno-kōen** (p158), chock-a-block with museums, temples and even a zoo.
- 3 Exploring the winding lanes, temples and art galleries of **Yanaka** (p160), where time stands still.
- 4 Absorbing the sights, sounds and smells of the old-fashioned outdoor market, **Ameya-yokochō** (p158).
- 5 Dining in one of the neighbourhood's historic restaurants, such as the *izakaya* (Japanese pub-eatery) **Shinsuke** (p161).



For more detail of this area, see Map p294 ➔

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

While it's possible to get around these neighbourhoods on foot, the 'tōzai' (東西; east-west) route of the **Megurin** (めぐりん; [www.city.taito.lg.jp/index/kurashi/kotsu/megurin](http://www.city.taito.lg.jp/index/kurashi/kotsu/megurin); ☺single-ride/day pass ¥100/300) community bus does a helpful loop around the area. Useful stops include No 2, across from the Ueno Park exit at Ueno Station, No 9 in front of Yanaka Cemetery (Yanaka Rei-en Iriguchi) and No 12 for Yanaka Ginza (Yanaka Ginza Yomise-dōri). Stops are announced on the bus, which runs approximately every 15 minutes from 7am to 7pm.

### Best Museums

- ➔ Tokyo National Museum (p155)
- ➔ Asakura Chōso Museum (p161)
- ➔ Shitamachi Museum (p158)

For reviews, see p155 ➔

### Best Places to Stroll

- ➔ Ueno-kōen (p158)
- ➔ Yanaka Ginza (p159)
- ➔ Ameya-yokochō (p158)
- ➔ Yanaka-reien (p161)

For reviews, see p158 ➔

### Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Shinsuke (p161)
- ➔ Hantei (p162)
- ➔ Sasa-no-Yuki (p161)

For reviews, see p161 ➔

## Explore Ueno & Yanaka

Ueno, revolving around its sprawling park, Ueno-kōen, has been one of Tokyo's top draws since the Edo period. You could easily spend a whole day just exploring the park. Start in the morning at the Tokyo National Museum and wend your way southward, hitting a few other museums, the zoo and the centuries-old shrines and temples that dot the park. Temporary exhibitions can draw huge crowds, but you'll find the permanent collections of most museums blissfully quiet. Wrap up the day with a stroll through the retro street market Ameya-yokochō.

Within walking distance of Ueno is Yanaka, famous locally as the neighbourhood that time forgot. Having survived, miraculously, the Great Kantō Earthquake and the allied fire-bombing of WWII (not to mention the slash and burn modernising of the postwar years), Yanaka has a high concentration of vintage wooden structures. But that's not all that makes Yanaka unique: it has more than a hundred temples, relocated from around Tokyo during an Edo-era episode of urban restructuring. Many artists also live and work in the neighbourhood. Simply put, it's a fantastic place to wander. It's popular with Tokyoites though too, and can get crowded on weekends. There are also a handful of charming museums here and in neighbouring Yushima that see few tourists.

With the exception of the area around Ueno Station, these districts get pretty quiet at night, though Yanaka has a few hip hang-outs.

## Local Life

➔ **Park life** On weekends, look for buskers, acrobats and food vendors in Ueno-kōen (p158). The park is also Tokyo's most famous cherry-blossom viewing place, with people arriving at dawn to claim their spots.

➔ **Night market** In and around Ameya-yokochō (p158) are several casual restaurants that open up onto the street. It's a fun place to dine in the evening.

➔ **Cycling** Join the locals getting around Yanaka by bicycle with a rental from Tokyo Bike Gallery (p162). If you're staying in the neighbourhood, many accommodation places also have bicycles to lend.

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Train** The JR Yamanote line stops at Ueno and Nippori (for Yanaka). Keisei line trains from Narita Airport stop at Keisei Ueno Station.

➔ **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.