

# Marunouchi & Nihombashi

IMPERIAL PALACE & Kitanomaru-Kōen | MARUNOUCHI | NIHOMBASHI

## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Imperial Palace (p56)**  
Strolling through the manicured gardens that were once only for the emperor and his family, and climbing the base of the keep that was at the centre of Edo Castle.
- 2 Intermediatheque (p57)**  
Being blown away by the beautiful displays at this fascinating museum crafted

- from the eclectic collection of Tokyo University.
- 3 Tokyo International Forum (p58)** Gazing up at the vast atrium of this convention and arts centre, which also hosts a great antiques market twice a month.
- 4 National Museum of Modern Art (MOMAT) (p57)** Browsing the impressive

collection of artworks by both Japanese and international artists and enjoying a panoramic view across the Imperial Palace East Garden.

- 5 Nihombashi (p58)** Eye-balling the sculpted dragons on Tokyo's most famous bridge, then sailing underneath it on a river cruise.



For more detail of this area see Map p266 ➡

## Explore Marunouchi & Nihombashi

Tokyo's geographical centre is the Imperial Palace, home of Japan's emperor. Little is open to the public, though it is possible to tour some areas and to visit the Imperial Palace East Garden (p56), where you can admire the remains of the mammoth stone walls that once constituted Edo-jō, 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 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 (p58) handsomely reappointed red-brick entrance to Yūrakuchō.

Also having undergone a recent architectural facelift is Nihombashi (also spelled Nihonbashi), northeast of Tokyo Station. Joining the elegant department stores Mitsukoshi (p64) and Takashimaya (p64) here is the Credo Muromachi (p64) shopping, dining and entertainment complex. Further east towards the Sumida-gawa, the old *shitamachi* (downtown) areas of Ningyōchō and Bakurochō are worth browsing for traditional shops, small shrines and contemporary galleries.

## Local Life

➔ **Market** At Tokyo International Forum's twice monthly Ōedo Antique Market (p64), shop for 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 (p59).

➔ **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* (bullet train) 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** (www.ss3.jp; 1 Nihombashi, Chūō-ku; %03-5679-7311; 45/60min cruises ¥1500/2000) 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 (p59)
- ➔ Taimeiken (p58)
- ➔ Dhaba India (p58)
- ➔ Tamahide (p59)

For reviews, see p58. ➔

## Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Manpuku Shokudō (p63)
- ➔ Peter: the Bar (p63)
- ➔ Nihombashi Toyama (p63)
- ➔ 100% Chocolate Cafe (p63)

For reviews, see p63. ➔

## Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Credo Muromachi (p64)
- ➔ Mitsukoshi (p64)
- ➔ KITTE (p64)
- ➔ Muji (p64)

For reviews, see p64. ➔