

West Tokyo

NAKANO & KŌENJI | KICHIJŌJI & MITAKA | OGIKUBO | KICHIJŌJI

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Ghibli Museum (p120)**
Delighting in the creativity of Japan's legendary animator, Miyazaki Hayao, and savouring the magic and wonder of his films in a museum he designed.
- 2 Inokashira-kōen (p121)**
Ambling through the woody grounds of a beloved park, past buskers and per-

formance artists, and paying your respects to the sea goddess enshrined here.

- 3 Nakano Broadway (p121)**
Wandering the halls of this vintage 1960s shopping mall, a collectors' paradise and favourite of *otaku* (fans of anime and manga).

- 4 Kita-Kore Building (p124)**
Getting a glimpse of Tokyo's raw, unpolished side at Kōenji's colourful (counter) cultural centre.

- 5 Reversible Destiny Lofts (p121)**
Experiencing the topsy-turvy tactile world of one of Tokyo's more eccentric contemporary buildings.



For more detail of this area see Map p278 and p279 ➡

Explore West Tokyo

West Tokyo here is defined by the largely residential neighbourhoods along the Chūō line, Tokyo's central rail line, west of Shinjuku. Over the decades, each node on the line has developed its own local culture and atmosphere: Nakano is a draw for *otaku* (fans of anime and manga); Kōenji attracts punks and social activists; many who work in the anime industry live in Asagaya; students love Kichijōji. These are generalisations, of course, but spending an hour or two (or more!) in each gives you a picture of the many possible lives of Tokyoites.

The area's top sight is the enchanting Ghibli Museum (p120), in far-west Mitaka. We recommend booking your visit at 10am or 2pm so that your visit can coincide with a leisurely detour through Inokashira-kōen (p121) and lunch in Kichijōji. Spend the rest of the afternoon wandering around Nakano, with its stubbornly mid-20th-century shopping arcades and collectors' shops, or Kōenji, with its colourful (and sometimes a little crumbly) counter-culture spaces. Most of the neighbourhoods here have *nomiyagai* (p123), strips crammed with tiny bars and restaurants that come alive in the evenings – proof that these suburbs are anything but sleepy.

Local Life

- ➔ **Hang-outs** On weekends Inokashira-kōen (p121) fills with performance artists and craft vendors, drawing families and students.
- ➔ **Music** Kōenji is the locus of Tokyo's punk scene and has several underground music venues.
- ➔ **Living** Kichijōji, with its park, department stores and commuting convenience, is routinely voted one of the best places to live in Tokyo.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** The JR Sōbu (local) and Chūō (rapid) lines run on the same lines west from Shinjuku to Nakano, Kōenji (local trains only on weekdays), Ogikubo, Kichijōji and Mitaka. Beware of the 'special' rapid and 'Ome liner' trains, which go nonstop from Shinjuku to Mitaka. The Keiō Inokashira line runs from Shibuya to Kichijōji, stopping at Inokashira-kōen-mae (for the park).
- ➔ **Subway** The Tōzai line continues west from Takadanobaba to Nakano. The Marunouchi line runs from Shinjuku to Ogikubo, south of (but parallel to) the Sōbu-Chūō line.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Two of the highlights here, the Ghibli Museum (p120) and the Reversible Destiny Lofts (p121), require advanced reservations. We recommend booking Ghibli tickets as early as possible (up to three months in advance) with a travel agent in your home country – otherwise you may find yourself out of luck. If there are no tours of the Reversible Destiny Lofts taking place during your visit, you can always stay (p197) there.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Tensuke (p122)
- ➔ Okajōki (p122)
- ➔ Harukiya (p122)

For reviews, see p122. ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Cocktail Shobō (p123)
- ➔ Nantoka Bar (p123)
- ➔ Uni Stand (p123)

For reviews, see p123. ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Mandarake (p124)
- ➔ PukuPuku (p124)
- ➔ Sokkyō (p124)

For reviews, see p124. ➔