

Welcome to Tokyo

*Yoking past and future,
Tokyo dazzles with its
traditional culture and
passion for everything new.*

You've Never Had Sushi Like This

Tokyo brims with astonishing cuisine. It out-Michelins every city in the world, and for good reason: Tokyoites take fresh ingredients, dining and service very seriously. Whether you're inhaling a thick bowl of miso *rāmen* noodles, sinking your teeth into some creamy tuna from the Tsukiji Central Fish Market or splashing out with a multi-course *kaiseki* meal of seasonal delicacies, you'll often be struck by the care that goes into the humble art of eating here.

Kampai!

The Japanese workaholic stereotype is very true, but stroll through a neon-lined row of Shinjuku *yakitori* joints on a Friday or any cherry grove in spring, and you'll see that people take pleasure very seriously here. There is ever-flowing sake, deep respect for heartfelt karaoke, and constant curiosity about how outsiders view this archipelago at the end of the world. From picnics to shot bars, Tokyo's nightlife is a drinker's delight. *Kampai!*

Blade Runner City

This ever-changing metropolis of over 12 million is perhaps the most gorgeous ugly city in the world. It's a superdense riot of mismatched buildings, overhead wiring and garish neon. Yet it has the moxie to build the tallest tower in the world on a foundation of reclaimed land and several bucking tectonic plates. Add one of the planet's best mass transit systems and you have the perfect sci-fi cityscape.

Shop Till You Drop

From the superdeluxe shops of Ginza to the electronics stores of Akihabara to Hara-juku hipster boutiques, Tokyo is a universe of beautifully designed clothing, antique prints and bizarre only-in-Japan gems like Pocari Sweat (a soft drink). Craftsmen, meanwhile, continue to produce finely wrought treasures such as kimono-clad dolls and samurai swords that make excellent souvenirs.



Why I Love Tokyo

By Timothy Hornyak

I've spent over 10 years in Tokyo, but this capital of the shōgun always renews its spell. I love walking in a random direction and finding something unusual like a museum of musical boxes or an eye-popping glimpse of Mt Fuji over Shinjuku at sunset.

In a way, Tokyo has an infinite quality. It's always under construction, always crackling with new fads, and always swirling with people who are passionate about everything from anime to Zen. As Dr Johnson said of London, to be tired of Tokyo is to be tired of life.

For more about our authors, see p304.