

Shinjuku & West Tokyo

SHINJUKU | WEST TOKYO

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Exploring the crackling neon canyons of **East Shinjuku** (p129). 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 is something to behold.
- 2 Looking out over the city from the observatory atop the **Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices** (p129).
- 3 Laying on the lawn at **Shinjuku Gyoen** (p130) and gazing up at the skyscrapers.
- 4 Immersing yourself in the imagination of animator Hayao Miyazaki at the **Ghibli Museum** (p130) in Mitaka.
- 5 Getting cosy in the bars of **Golden Gai** (p129), Shinjuku's literary and artistic hangout.



For more detail of this area, see Map p294 ➔

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 or Mylord. Both have over a dozen reasonably priced options with plastic food models out front. Takashimaya Times Sq has good restaurants too, though they can be rather pricey.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Nakajima (p134)
- ➔ Nagi (p134)
- ➔ Tsunahachi (p135)
- ➔ Dachibin (p135)

For reviews, see p134 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ La Jetée (p136)
- ➔ Zoetrope (p136)
- ➔ Advocates Café (p136)
- ➔ New York Bar (p137)

For reviews, see p136 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Disk Union (p138)
- ➔ Bingoya (p138)
- ➔ Nakano Broadway (p130)

For reviews, see p138 ➔

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. It's a good idea to pay attention to the signs in the station to orient yourself.

To the west of the station are the skyscrapers that make up the prefectural government and the largest business district on the west side of Tokyo. Some of the buildings themselves are impressive. The unusual, elliptical Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower can also be handy for navigating. There are some good museums on this side, too.

To the east is the lively entertainment district, where many will stop off for something to eat and drink on their way home. Tipplers are spoiled for choice here: you could hang out on a different block each night of the week and have a completely different experience. Shinjuku is that rare Tokyo neighbourhood that truly has something for everyone: young or old, rich or poor. It's also home to the nation's largest gay district, Shinjuku-nichōme.

The JR Chūō Line heads west of Shinjuku, where the neighbourhoods become gradually more suburban. None of these are major sightseeing destinations, yet they are dear to the Tokyoites who live and hang out there, and each has its own personality. You could spend a leisurely day working your way stop by stop from Mitaka to Kōenji.

Local Life

- ➔ **Parks** Shinjuku-gyoen (p130) is a popular picnic spot; Inokashira-kōen (p130) has a lively weekend scene. Both are excellent for *hanami* (blossom viewing).
- ➔ **Nightlife** Golden Gai (p136) draws late-night drinkers from the arts, media and entertainment industries.
- ➔ **Romance** The sky-high New York Grill (p135) is famous as a date spot, and also for marriage proposals.
- ➔ **Shopping** Kōenji (p130) is known for its high concentration of thrift stores; Nakano Broadway (p130) is a collector's paradise.

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 east Shinjuku. For west Shinjuku, Tochōmae Station on the Ōedo Line is more convenient.