

Ueno & Around

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Pursuing samurai swords, woodblock prints, kimono and paintings at the Honkan gallery of **Tokyo National Museum** (p158), the finest collection of Japanese art in the world.
- 2 Strolling through the cherry groves in the enormous **Ueno-kōen** (Ueno Park; p159), chock-a-block with museums, temples and a zoo.
- 3 Exploring the old-world lanes, temples and graves of **Yanaka** (p164), where time stands still.
- 4 Bargaining Shitamachi-style for candy, fruit, luggage and just about anything else in **Ameya Yokochō** (Ameyoko Arcade; p160).
- 5 Enjoying the hill of blooming plum trees at **Yushima Tenjin** (Yushima Shrine; p160) in February.



For more detail of this area, see Map p300 ➔

Explore Ueno

Ueno and the northern neighbourhoods of Yanaka, Nezu and Sendagi (aka Yanesen) form a large area that can take up the best part of a day to explore. Start at Ueno-kōen, taking the Ueno Park exit from Ueno Station. Boasting a wealth of museums and shrines, and some phenomenal cherry-blossom viewing, Ueno Park is the perfect antidote to the urban grind. Don't miss the Tokyo National Museum and the National Museum of Western Art, a short walk apart.

Ueno Hill is famous for a last-ditch defence of the Tokugawa shōgunate by an estimated 2000 loyalists in 1868. Devoted to preventing the restoration of the emperor, these adherents stationed themselves at Kanei-ji, a grand temple compound on the hill. They were duly dispatched by the imperial army, and the subsequent Meiji government decreed that Ueno Hill would become one of Tokyo's first parklands.

Although rising real estate prices and recent gentrification have erased most vestiges of the old atmosphere, Ameya Yokochō, to the south of the station, was once the site of the largest postwar black market and still holds true to its proud roots even if the goods are now legit. It's full of Japanese housewives and hawkers haggling over fish and produce, as well as foreign merchants selling everything from Turkish kebabs to Chinese-made bags.

For a far slower vibe, Yanesen, north of Ueno Park, seems stubbornly stuck in the past. This temple-thick area, famed for its stray cats and cemetery, seems more like Kyoto than Tokyo. Walking its gentle hills and lanes is a very refreshing way to spend an afternoon or morning.

Local Life

- ➔ **Eating** Browsing the cracker and sweet shops along Yanaka Ginza (p164) is perfect for refuelling your meanderings.
- ➔ **Shopping** Aside from Ameya Yokochō (p160), Ueno has large retailers like Yodobashi Camera and Matsuzakaya Department Store.
- ➔ **Flower-viewing** Ueno-kōen (p159) is one of the prime spots to party under cherry blossoms in spring. Finding space on the ground, though, can be challenging.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** The JR Yamanote Line stops at Ueno, and is the best choice for Ueno-kōen. Okachimachi, one stop south, is more convenient for Ameya Yokochō. Ueno is also a hub with Keisei Line trains to Narita Airport and *shinkansen* (ultra-fast bullet train) services to points north.
- ➔ **Subway** The Ginza and Hibiya Lines stop at Ueno.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Getting from Ueno Park to the Yanesen neighbourhoods is easiest by riding the Megurin community bus (¥100). Get on at the No 2 Tōzai Megurin (東西めぐりん) stop across from the Ueno Park exit at Ueno Station. You can get off at No 9 Yanaka Cemetery (Yanaka Rei-en Iriguchi) or No 12 Yanaka Ginza (Yanaka Ginza Yomise-dōri), which are announced on the bus.

Best Museums

- ➔ Tokyo National Museum (p159)
- ➔ National Museum of Western Art (p159)
- ➔ Shitamachi Museum (p160)
- ➔ Daimyo Clock Museum (p160)

For reviews, see p159 ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Izu-ei Inagi (p161)
- ➔ Fire House (p161)
- ➔ Sasa-no-Yuki (p161)

For reviews, see p161 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Ameya Yokochō (p160)
- ➔ Isetatsu (p165)
- ➔ Nippori Nuno No Machi (p165)

For reviews, see p161 ➔