



# TOKYO

TOP SIGHTS, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

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## Welcome to Tokyo

*Rather than any particular sight, it's Tokyo itself that enchants visitors. It's a sprawling, organic thing, stretching as far as the eye can see. Its diverse collection of neighbourhoods is always changing, so no two experiences of the city are ever the same.*

Some neighbourhoods feel like a vision from the future, with ever-taller, sleeker structures popping up each year; others evoke the past with low-slung wooden buildings and glowing lanterns radiating surprising warmth. Elsewhere, drab concrete blocks hide art galleries and cocktail bars and every lane hints at possible discoveries. In Tokyo you can experience the whole breadth of Japanese arts and culture, from centuries-old sumo and kabuki to cutting-edge digital art.

When it comes to Tokyo superlatives, however, the city's food scene tops the list. Wherever you are, you're usually within 100m of a good, if not great, restaurant. It's a scene that careens nonchalantly between the highs and lows: it's not unusual for a top-class sushi restaurant to share the same block with an oil-spattered noodle joint. Tokyoites love dining out; join them and delight in the sheer variety of tastes and experiences the city has to offer.

Tokyo may seem daunting at first: its subway map is a tangle of intersecting lines and is often compared to a bowl of noodles. But once you get out there, you'll be surprised how easy it is to navigate. That subway can take you everywhere you want to go; trains are frequent (though sometimes uncomfortably crowded) and almost always on time, and stations are well signposted in English.

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**Shinjuku & Ikebukuro**  
Shinjuku has the world's busiest train station, city hall and nightlife galore; grittier Ikebukuro is a student haunt. (Map p253)



**Kanda & Akihabara**  
Swathe of central Tokyo that includes a former geisha district and a pop-culture hub. (Map p254)



**Ueno & Yanaka**  
Tokyo's most famous museum, a sprawling park and well-preserved historic neighbourhoods. (Map p254)



**Kōenji & Kichijōji**  
Neighbourhoods loved by locals, who appreciate the vintage mid-20th-century look and bohemian spirit.



**Shibuya & Shimo-Kitazawa**  
Shibuya is the heart of Tokyo's youth culture; Shimo-Kitazawa is a beloved, bohemian haunt. (Map p246)



**Harajuku & Aoyama**  
Nexus of tradition and trends with Tokyo's grandest Shintō shrine, shops galore and stunning architecture. (Map p246)



**Ebisu & Meguro**  
Broad collection of hip neighbourhoods with fashionable boutiques, (relatively) quiet streets and great dining. (Map p246)



**Roppongi & Aoyama**  
Legendary for its nightlife, this area is also the place for cutting-edge art and design. (Map p252)



**Ginza & Tsukiji**  
Ginza is Tokyo's most polished neighbourhood; Tsukiji is synonymous with its famous food market. (Map p250)



**Odaiba & Tokyo Bay**  
Waterside museums, amusement parks and shopping malls plus pleasure-boat cruises.



**Marunouchi & Nihombashi**  
History meets modernity where the grounds of the Imperial Palace meet the skyscrapers of downtown. (Map p250)



**Asakusa & Ryōgoku**  
Riverside district of ancient temples, old merchants' quarters and Tokyo's sumo stadium. (Map p254)

Imperial Palace

Kabukiza Theatre

Tsukiji Market

Toyosu Market

teamLab Borderless

Tokyo National Museum

Sensō-ji

Ryōgoku Kokugikan

Narita (60km)

Tokyo

Suntory Museum of Art

Mori Art Museum

National Art Center Tokyo

Shibuya Crossing

Shibuya

Ebisu

Meiji-jingu

Golden Gai

Shinjuku

Rikugi-en

0 1 miles 2 km

Haneda (10km);  
Kamakura (60km);  
Mt Fuji (150km)

## Contents

### Plan Your Trip

This Year in Tokyo.....	4
Hot Spots For.....	18
Top Days in Tokyo.....	20
Need to Know.....	28
What's New.....	30
For Free.....	31
Family Travel.....	32

### Top Experiences..... 35

Golden Gai .....	36
Meiji-jingū .....	38
Ramen .....	42
Shopping in Harajuku .....	46
Walking Tour:	
Omote-sandō Architecture .....	50
Tokyo National Museum .....	52
Cherry-Blossom Viewing.....	58
Day Trip: Mt Fuji.....	60
Shibuya Crossing .....	66
Sumo at Ryōgoku Kokugikan.....	68
Sensō-ji.....	72
Ghibli Museum, Mitaka.....	76
teamLab Borderless.....	78
Onsen.....	82
Toyosu Market .....	86
Walking Tour: Yanaka .....	88
Kabukiza Theatre .....	90
Day Trip: Kamakura.....	94
Imperial Palace.....	98
Rikugi-en.....	102
Roppongi Art Triangle.....	104
Tsukiji Market .....	108
Akihabara Pop Culture .....	110
City Views .....	114
Karaoke .....	116

### Dining Out.....119

<b>The Best .....</b>	<b>122</b>
Shinjuku & Ikebukuro .....	124
Kōenji & Kichijōji .....	126
Harajuku & Aoyama .....	126
Shibuya & Shimo-Kitazawa.....	130
Ebisu & Meguro.....	135
Roppongi & Around .....	136
Ginza & Tsukiji .....	138
Marunouchi & Nihombashi .....	140
Kanda & Akihabara .....	143
Ueno & Yanaka .....	144
Asakusa & Ryōgoku .....	146

### Treasure Hunt .....149

<b>The Best .....</b>	<b>152</b>
Shinjuku & Ikebukuro .....	154
Kōenji & Kichijōji .....	155
Harajuku & Aoyama .....	156
Shibuya & Shimo-Kitazawa.....	156
Ebisu & Meguro.....	157
Roppongi & Around .....	159
Ginza & Tsukiji .....	160
Marunouchi & Nihombashi .....	162
Kanda & Akihabara .....	165
Ueno & Yanaka .....	165
Asakusa & Ryōgoku .....	166

### Bar Open ..... 169

<b>The Best .....</b>	<b>172</b>
Shinjuku & Ikebukuro .....	174
Kōenji & Kichijōji .....	175
Harajuku & Aoyama .....	175
Shibuya & Shimo-Kitazawa.....	176
Ebisu & Meguro.....	178
Roppongi & Around .....	179
Ginza & Tsukiji .....	181
Marunouchi & Nihombashi .....	181
Kanda & Akihabara .....	182
Asakusa & Ryōgoku .....	183



## Showtime ..... 185

Shinjuku & Ikebukuro .....	188
Kōenji & Kichijōji .....	189
Harajuku & Aoyama .....	189
Shibuya & Shimo-Kitazawa .....	190
Ebisu & Meguro .....	190
Roppongi & Around .....	190
Ginza & Tsukiji .....	192
Marunouchi & Nihombashi .....	192
Kanda & Akihabara .....	193
Ueno & Yanaka .....	193
Asakusa & Ryōgoku .....	193

## Active Tokyo ..... 195

Spectator Sports .....	198
Outdoors .....	198
Amusement Parks .....	199
Courses .....	200

## Rest Your Head ..... 203

Accommodation Types .....	206
Where to Stay .....	207

## In Focus

Tokyo Today .....	210
History .....	212
Pop Culture .....	217
Food & Drink .....	219
Arts .....	223
Traditional Culture .....	226

## Survival Guide

Directory A–Z .....	229
Transport .....	233
Language .....	237
Index .....	239
Tokyo City Maps .....	245
Symbols & Map Key .....	257

## Map Section

Harajuku, Aoyama, Shibuya & Ebisu .....	246
Marunouchi, Nihombashi, Ginza & Tsukiji .....	250
Roppongi & Around .....	252
Shinjuku .....	253
Ueno, Akihabara & Asakusa .....	254



# Plan Your Trip This Year in Tokyo

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## Tokyo

***From pop culture events to festivals that have been taking place for centuries, there is always something going on in Tokyo. Like elsewhere in Japan, the seasons have special meaning and every new bloom is a reason for celebration.***

Clockwise from left: Chidori-ga-fuchi in cherry blossom season (p9); Sumida-gawa Fireworks (p12); Kōenji Awa Odori (p13); Sanja Matsuri (p10)





## ★ Top Festivals & Events

**Hatsu-mōde**, January (p6)

**Cherry blossoms**, April (p9)

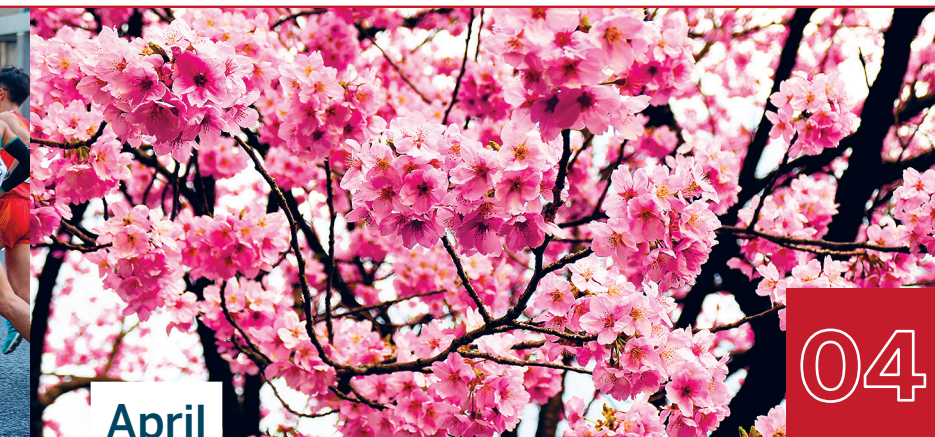
**Sanja Matsuri**, May (p10)

**Sumida-gawa Fireworks**, July (p12)

**Kōenji Awa Odori**, August (p13)







## April

**Warmer weather and blooming cherry trees make this quite simply the best month to be in Tokyo.**

### ✿ Buddha's Birthday 8 Apr

In honour of the Buddha's birthday, Hana Matsuri (flower festival) celebrations take place at temples. Look for the parade of children in Asakusa, pulling a white papier-mâché elephant.

### ✿ Kannon-ura Ichiyo Sakura Matsuri 11 Apr

This annual spring event takes place along the backstreets behind Sensō-ji (p72). The highlight is the procession of women dressed in the finery of Edo-era (1603–1868) courtesans.

### 👁 Azalea Blossoms mid-Apr

From mid-April to early May the city's azaleas bloom bold shades of pink. Nezu-jinja is the place to see them.

## 04

### 👁 Cherry Blossoms early Apr

From the end of March through the beginning of April, the city's parks and riversides turn pink and Tokyoites toast spring in spirited parties, called *hanami*, beneath the blossoms.

### ✿ Earth Day 18–19 Apr

Tokyo celebrates this international event over the nearest weekend to Earth Day (22 April) with a festival at Yoyogi-kōen (p41) that includes organic food stalls, live music and workshops for kids.

### ✿ Nakizumo late Apr

At Sensō-ji (p72) sumo wrestlers pull faces to make babies cry, and the one who cries first, or loudest, is the winner – because in Japan it's believed that crying babies grow big and strong. It's usually held on the last Saturday of the month.