

TOKYO GUIDE CONTENTS

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Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

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TravelVince is an ever-evolving guide, as much as Tokyo.
Therefore there will always be new entries to this page.

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TRUNK HOTEL

CATEGORIES: Great Location, Hotels, New | Novo

Make a Call: +81357663210

Visit Website: <https://trunk-hotel.com/>

Get Directions: 5 Chome-31 Jingumae, Shibuya, Tokyo 150-0001, Japan

5-31 Jingumae Shibuya

〒150-0001 5-31

Part of a new breed of happening hotels focused on millennial travelers, the Trunk Hotel, in between Harajuku and Shibuya, is a very good option to explore the coolest part of Tokyo. Not only a hotel, Trunk is a place to socialize, eat, drink and enjoy.

See you tomorrow! #trunkhotel ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? #architecture
 #hoteldesign #architect #architecturephotography #hotel #instahotel #interior #restaurant
 #food #travel #design #minimal #instatravel #instagood #instadaily #instamood #tokyo
 #shibuya #japan

A post shared by [TRUNK\(HOTEL\)](#) (@trunkhotel) on Apr 8, 2018 at 7:34am PDT

IN THE HOOD

CATEGORIES: Apartments, Guides & Books, Hotels, Insider Info

Visit Website: <https://inthehood.co/>

Get Directions: Curitiba, Brazil

In the Hood is a local Tokyo service working more or less like Airbnb, where residential apartments are for rent. If you are planning on a longer than a few days stay in the city, it may be a great choice to rent a flat and feel like a local. It is a much more rewarding experience than staying in a hotel. Moreover, In the Hood has teamed up with concierge service [Porter&Sail](#)

to design local guides for those renting their flats.

Looking for a place to stay in Tokyo? Look no further! We have beautiful apartments available for our guests with all the comforts to make you feel at home. Spacious + Bright. Experience a slice of Japan for yourself ??

A post shared by [In The Hood](#) (@in.thehood) on Apr 23, 2018 at 2:57am PDT

YAYOI KUSAMA MUSEUM

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Museums

Make a Call: +81352731778

Visit Website: <https://yayoikusamamuseum.jp/>

Get Directions: Bentencho, Shinjuku, Tokyo 162-0851, Japan

107 Bentencho Shinjuku-ku

Thursday to Sunday and National Holidays from 11am to 5pm

Tickets **must** be purchased online

The must-go destination in Tokyo for Kusama's fans.

#yayoikusama

A post shared by [Yayoi Kusama](#) (@yayoikusamas) on Aug 18, 2016 at 8:27am PDT

THE BLIND DONKEY

CATEGORIES: Eating, Nice Restaurants

Make a Call: +81368766349

Visit Website: <https://www.theblinddonkey.jp/en/>

Get Directions: Uchikanda, Chiyoda, Tokyo 101-0047, Japan

3-17-4 Uchikanda, Chiyoda-ku

Tuesday to Saturday from 5pm to 11:30pm

Reservations required

This is [Monocle](#)'s favorite hangout in Tokyo, in an inconspicuous area of town. Former Beard owner Shin Harakawa and former Chez Panisse chef Jérôme Waag got together for this new venture. They travel around Japan to look for farmers who produce incredible food for them. It is an interesting address and I will certainly visit next time I am in town.

A post shared by [the Blind Donkey](#) (@theblinddonkey.jp) on Apr 11, 2018 at 2:34am PDT

A post shared by [Buvette Tokyo \(@buvettetokyo\)](#) on Apr 13, 2018 at 10:29pm PDT

MEUS DIAS EM TÓQUIO, POR JULIA BUFREM

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, City Areas, Dance & Music, Eating, Friends in Town, Getting Around, Shopping, Sights

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

?? Minha amiga [Julia Bufrem](#) esteve no Japão e nos conta como foram os seus dias em Tóquio. Ela também me mandou [25 imagens de Tóquio](#) e um [mini-preparativo para a viagem](#).

"Ao todo, passei 11 dias em Tóquio (contando as viagens de um dia pra Hakone e [Tokyo Disneyland](#)) e mais três em [Kyoto](#). Foi maravilhoso mergulhar na cultura japonesa e descobrir os hábitos, costumes e gostos desse povo tão delicado, educado, sorridente e acolhedor. É incrível como eles se esforçam pra tentar ajudar, detestam dar uma notícia ruim – dizer que, por exemplo, o refrigerante que você pediu está em falta é algo muito triste e constrangedor – e ficam felizes em saber que nos demos ao "grande trabalho" de atravessar o mundo para estar lá. As pessoas diziam: "Thank you for coming to Japan!" e eu só respondia: "Oh, well, thank YOU!"

VAMOS ÀS COMPRAS!

O Japão é um país de muitas "coisas". E em quase todos os tipos de loja existem produtos inusitados e traquitanas para todas as utilidades. Se compras são a sua praia, anote:

[ROPPONGI HILLS](#)

Um shopping que mais parece um labirinto com boas opções de cinema, restaurantes e lojas, claro. Com uma grande área externa, esse é o go-to place se você procura lojas de marcas famosas. A grande aranha maravilhosa da Louise Bourgeois fica na parte externa desse shopping que leva o nome de um dos bairros mais famosos de Tóquio.

[NIKO AND...](#)

Se o seu estilo é clássico, básico, mas com um toque diferente, você vai amar a Niko and.... Com um conceito superlegal que não segue fortes tendências e preza por peças duráveis e fáceis de combinar, as lojas têm um café superfofo e aconchegante. É uma coisa meio *scandi chic meets asian cool*!

[MUJI](#)

Apesar de marcar presença no mundo todo, a MUJI é parada obrigatória pra quem vai ao Japão. Seja pra comprar uma mala, um guarda-chuva ou uma jaqueta mais quente, a loja é cheia de produtos superúteis que vão de cama, mesa e banho à papelaria. Tudo com a mesma pegada japonesa *sleek* e sem marca estampada em lugar nenhum. Se você esqueceu de levar algo importante na mala, corra pra uma MUJI perto de você.

[DESERT SNOW](#)

Tóquio é uma loucura pra quem ama se embrenhar em brechós. Entre grandes, pequenos, baratos e caros, o que mais me impressionou foi o Desert Snow, no bairro mega cool de [Shimo-kitazawa](#), que "funciona" mais à tarde. Com muitas opções de tamanho da mesma peça (nunca tinha visto isso na vida), modelos e várias raridades, o espaço é grande e cheira a sabão em pó. Vá depois do meio-dia, com tempo e paciência para garimpar.

[DON QUIJOTE](#)

Com várias lojas pelo Japão, a "Donki", como é carinhosamente chamada, é o lar de todas as bugigangas do mundo! São mais ou menos dez andares pra pirar em categorias como: beleza, brinquedos, papelaria, eletrônicos, roupas, malas, sex toys, cães & gatos, utilidades domésticas e... deu pra ter uma ideia, né? Ótimo lugar pra comprar presentinhos, se perder e perder a cabeça com tudo aquilo que você não sabe como estava vivendo sem ter até agora. Se o tempo for curto, vá direto ao ponto e visite apenas os andares com categorias que realmente interessam.

[DAIKANYAMA T-SITE](#)

Eleita uma das livrarias mais bonitas do mundo, o T-Site abriga a filial mais cool, bonita e descolada da Tsutaya, uma famosa rede de livrarias no Japão. São três prédios lindos com cafés e outras lojinhas ao redor. Perfeito pra desacelerar, relaxar e tomar um café entre livros, árvores e muito design!

FARMÁCIAS

É muito difícil comprar em farmácias japonesas porque os produtos não têm rótulos em outros idiomas e além disso,

encontrar alguém que fale inglês é uma raridade. Então a dica é pesquisar muito e ir já sabendo o que quer. Levar foto dos produtos no celular também ajuda. Colírios (os japoneses são doidos por colírios e usam como um cosmético) e coisas das marcas Shiseido, Bioré e Canmake sempre valem a pena!_

BOM APETITE, OU ITADAIKIMASU!

De maneira geral, é fácil comer bem no Japão. Os peixes são frescos, a comida bem feita e não importa se o restaurante é pequeno ou simples. Vá com a mente aberta para experimentar coisas diferentes e a barriga vazia pra aproveitar bem essas dicas.

[GENKI SUSHI](#)

O famoso sushi “de esteirinha”. É simples: chegue, sente e comece a fazer os pedidos numa tela à sua frente. Segundos depois, os pratinhos vêm rápido numa esteira longa e param exatamente na sua frente. Os combinados são deliciosos e bem baratos, já que o restaurante não oferece serviço. Programe-se: o Genki costuma fazer fila para entrar.

[EATRIIP](#)

Numa casinha discreta no meio de um jardim em Shibuya, fica um restaurante/floricultura pequeno e charmosíssimo. O Eatrip é todo à meia luz durante a noite, tem pouquíssimos funcionários e poucas mesas. De qualquer lugar do restaurante você consegue ver todos trabalhando entre mesas e na cozinha em silêncio absoluto. Muito bonito de ver._

PARK HYATT TOKYO

Cenário do filme [Lost in Translation](#), o hotel Park Hyatt tem duas opções para comer e beber nas alturas. No 52º andar fica o New York Bar, um restaurante com shows de jazz ao vivo, e o 41º andar é todo do Girandole, um bar um pouco menos formal. Fique atento ao look do dia: é proibido entrar nos bares com roupas curtas e esportivas._

[ROBOT RESTAURANT](#)

O mais puro suco de Japão! O Robot Restaurant é um daqueles lugares bem turísticos e, apesar de ser um restaurante, a comida não é essencial nesse programa. O show estilo cabaré com robôs e muitas luzes é divertido e propositadamente barulhento e extravagante. É preciso fazer reserva pelo site com algumas semanas de antecedência._

[GOLDEN GAI](#)

Um complexo de ruas estreitas com quase 300 *izakayas* minúsculos (alguns chegam a ter apenas 6 lugares) que bomba em todas as noites da semana. Perfeito pra quem curte um bar-hopping. Não perca muito tempo num só lugar! O legal é curtir o máximo possível de bares._

[ICE MONSTER](#)

Um dos mais famosos *kakigoris* de Tóquio. Febre no Japão, o “sorvete ralado” da rede taiwanesa Ice Monster é bem leve e servido em porções gigantescas. Não se assuste, porque a maior parte é só gelo fino com sabor._

LUGARES PARA VISITAR

[MORI ART MUSEUM](#)

Localizado dentro do shopping Roppongi Hills, o Mori Art Museum tem muita arte moderna e instalações diferentes. Aproveite a ida para visitar a Mori Tower, na cobertura do prédio, onde é possível ver grande parte da cidade e também a Tokyo Tower, aquele emoji que todo mundo acha que é uma Torre Eiffel com cores erradas._

[UENO PARK](#)

O terreno desse parque nacional fazia parte de um dos maiores e mais ricos templos durante o período Edo. Aberto ao público em 1873, hoje abriga templos, o primeiro zoológico do Japão e seis museus. Vale visitar o [National Museum of Western Art](#) e o [Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum](#). Além disso, se você for ao Japão durante a floração das cerejeiras, o Ueno Park é um dos melhores lugares para admirar as *sakuras*._

[NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TOKYO - MoMAT](#)

Dependendo da sala em que você estiver, o MoMAT pode ser um dos lugares mais silenciosos do mundo. Por isso, não pode entrar mascarando chiclete. Eu passei a maior vergonha cuspidando o meu num guardanapo na mão da recepcionista. Mas falando do que interessa, o acervo conta com exemplares incríveis de artistas japoneses como Harada Naojirō e Tetsugorō Yorozu, e também ocidentais, como Gauguin e Picasso.

[21_21 DESIGN SITE](#)

Um museu todo dedicado à arte do ponto de vista do design. As instalações são interativas e convidam os visitantes a mudarem sua perspectiva. Quem ama arquitetura e design, precisa conhecer._

[SNOOPY MUSEUM](#)

Foi uma surpresa descobrir como os japoneses amam o Snoopy. Nem estava nos planos ir ao museu do personagem, que abriu em 2016, mas, andando por Roppongi, demos de cara com a placa e foi irresistível! Por dentro, o museu é lindo, todo colorido e muito bem feito. Cada área conta a história e inspiração para cada um dos personagens criados pelo americano Charles Schulz. Vale a pena! (*o museu fechou em setembro de 2018*)._

[RAINBOW KARAOKE](#)

Não dá pra ir pro Japão sem ir num karaokê! E o Rainbow é maravilhoso! As salas são privativas, super bem equipadas, com sofá, ar condicionado e bebida e comida à vontade dependendo do pacote que você escolher. Algumas salas têm até

instrumentos musicais para formar uma “banda”. Ótimo pra emendar aquela saideira depois do jantar...
Ai, que saudades!”

JAPÃO 101 - PREPARANDO A VIAGEM, POR JULIA BUFREM

CATEGORIES: Friends in Town

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

Uma das coisas mais legais e inesperadas que a viagem ao Japão me mostrou foi a pureza da surpresa das pessoas quando eu respondia o meu destino de férias: “Uaaaaau! Japão?! Que legal!”. Foi bem divertido ver o quanto todas as pessoas, sem exceção, tinham uma reação superparecida com essa. Mas o mais lindo e surpreendente aconteceu quando eu cheguei lá e vi a reação das pessoas quando eu contava que era do Brasil: “Burajiru? Ooooooooohhh! So far! Beautiful! Ooooh!” Eu sei que parece algo bobo, mas pra quem chorou de emoção no meio do [Robot Restaurant](#), isso pra mim foi sentir a pura conexão de quem ficou com quem tava lá.

Mas falando sobre planejamento, realizar sonho é um negócio complicado. Você espera, espera, planeja, e, quando chega a hora, você ainda tem a pachorra de achar que não está suficientemente preparado. Eu esperei 20 anos para ir ao Japão, então eu juntei bastante coisa legal que pode te ajudar a atravessar o mundo (literalmente) com tranquilidade:

BEFORE YOU GO

O QUE LER?

A resposta é “tudo”. Revistas, panfletos, sites, reportagens... Tudo é informação. Por recomendação do Vicente, recomendo também o guia de viagens da revista [Monocle – Tokyo Edition](#).

O QUE ASSISTIR?

No Netflix tem um programa escondidinho que se chama [Japanese Style Originator](#). É uma produção japonesa que mostra a cultura, hábitos e dicas sobre o país. Além de ser muito fofo, foi bem útil. Vídeos de reportagens no YouTube também ajudaram a decidir o roteiro e passeios.

O QUE OUVIR?

[Tokyo Drift – Teriyaki Boyz](#)

[FLY – Taichi Mukai](#)

[Love Letter to Japan – the bird and the bee](#)

[Harajuku Girls – Gwen Stefani](#)

[Alone in Kyoto – Air](#)

[Pizzicato Five – À Tokyo](#)

DE QUE DOCUMENTOS VOCÊ VAI PRECISAR?

Para brasileiros entrarem no Japão, é preciso ter visto no passaporte. Eu tenho passaporte italiano e acabei não precisando mas, se você precisar, programe-se e agende sua visita no consulado do Japão. O processo costuma ser rápido, mas é bom não arriscar.

DINHEIRO

Eu comprei ienes antes de ir e levei alguns dólares para trocar por lá. Vale reservar com antecedência os ienes com uma casa de câmbio pois não é assim tão disponível quanto comprar dólares, euros ou libras.

O QUE LEVAR NA MALA?

Um dos meus objetivos na vida é diminuir o tamanho da mala a cada viagem. Sendo assim, eu levei uma mala bem basicona pro Japão e poucos sapatos confortáveis. Anda-se MUITO no Japão! Além disso, em lugares mais tradicionais, como templos, tira-se e põe-se os sapatos muitas vezes. Pense nisso quando for arrumar a mala. Meias de compressão também são ultranecessárias e vão te deixar muito mais confortável nos voos muito longos.

ONCE YOU’RE THERE

COMO SE LOCOMOVER NO JAPÃO?

Trens, táxi, ônibus e a pé. O Google Maps e uma boa conexão wi-fi (stay tuned: more on that later) são TUDO de que você vai precisar! Eu atravessei a cidade (inclusive, dos nove dias em Tóquio, fiquei quatro sozinha), fui sem medo pra todos os lugares que queria e não errei uma estação sequer. Além disso, no Google Maps, você pode salvar com um pin todos os lugares que quer visitar. Fica bem fácil planejar, visualizar tudo no mapa e decidir os roteiros diários.

Sobre os trens, a malha ferroviária do Japão tem trens “normais” e JR (Japan Railways). [Com um cartão Pasmo ou Suica você pode andar em qualquer um deles e também de ônibus](#). Na prática os trens não têm muita diferença mas, se você for viajar para mais cidades no Japão, você vai precisar andar de Shinkansen, o trem-bala, que é um trem JR. Aí, dependendo da sua

programação, quantidade de dias em cada cidade e tudo o mais, pode ser que você precise comprar o JR Pass separadamente. Você encontra uma lojinha da Japan Railways no aeroporto de Narita e lá você pode pedir mais informações. É bom saber que esse passe é bem caro, mas pode ser um bom custo-benefício dependendo do seu roteiro. Ah, e precisa ser comprado antes de embarcar para lá.

Outra coisa é que, misteriosamente, Uber custa mais caro que táxi no Japão. Como eu sou muito low-b, evitei ao máximo pegar táxi porque, ainda assim, é meio caro. Mas vale a pena, pelo menos, pela experiência. Ah! não precisa encostar na porta, ela abre e fecha sozinha.

COMO SE COMUNICAR NO JAPÃO?

Vários AirBnbs disponibilizam roteador portátil pra colocar na bolsa e levar pra onde quiser. Mas se esse não for o seu caso, é bem fácil comprar um chip local por, aproximadamente, 50 dólares. Você pode fazer isso no aeroporto.

O que é muito impressionante é a segurança e a organização de tudo, então vá sem medo de nada, pois o mais grave que pode acontecer em uma viagem ao Japão é você se perder por alguns minutos até alguém te levar de mão dada ao seu destino (ou pelo menos até bem perto dele).

JAPÃO EM 25 IMAGENS, POR JULIA BUFREM

CATEGORIES: Friends in Town, Photos | Fotos

Get Directions: Japan

Minha amiga [Julia Bufrem](#) esteve no Japão em setembro de 2017 e, ao longo de alguns posts, vai nos contar um pouco do que viu, de como foi e outras “cositas más”. Seguem aqui 25 clicks que ela trouxe de Tóquio e de Kyoto, com uma visão bem particular do País do Sol Nascente.-----

[Gostou? Para mais sobre Tóquio, vá ao Tokyo Guide aqui no TravelVince. Arigatô!](#)

HARUKI MURAKAMI

CATEGORIES: Guides & Books, Insider Info

Visit Website: <http://www.harukimurakami.com/>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

Haruki Murakami is one of my favorite contemporary fiction writers. I discovered him out of the blues while browsing a large bookshop in London back in 2000. There was a specially bound edition of Norwegian Wood that looked like a bento box with two little books, the size people read on the Tokyo metro. I took those books with me on a trip to Italy and got so immersed in the story that now, every time I remember the characters or just by seeing the books at home, I get transported back to those balmy days in the Italian coast.

His writing has the power to take me to Japan and to feel like a little observer of the character's lives. Some books I liked better than others. My favorite so far being 1Q84 that took years to get an English translation. By reading Murakami, I feel connected to Japan's pop culture and to what the Japanese are also reading. The music, the atmosphere, everything gets tangled up in my mind and take me to Japan while flicking through the pages.

Even his non-fiction writing pleases me, like his book about running and his texts about the time he had a jazz bar. Last but not least, there was one book I hated, the Wind-Up Bird Chronicle.

MIDNIGHT DINER: TOKYO STORIES

CATEGORIES: Films & Videos, Insider Info

Visit Website: <https://www.netflix.com/br-en/title/80113037>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

The made in Japan Netflix series Midnight Diner: Tokyo Stories gives you a glimpse on the comings and goings of a small izakaya in Tokyo where customers come for comfort food in the wee hours and share their stories with each other and with you. I love watching the episodes because they are very simple and show sides of Japanese life that you would normally not see. I really enjoy knowing more about the culture of the places I travel to and by watching a series like this one I feel like living with those characters for those 20-odd minutes of each episode. ([Valium](#))

-
Image by Netflix

CRUISE TRAIN SEVEN STARS

CATEGORIES: Out of Town

Visit Website: <http://www.cruisetrain-sevenstars.com/>

Get Directions: Kyushu, Japan

The [Japanese train company Seven Stars](#) in the southern island of Kyushu brought to Japan the concept of luxury train travel. While you can zip around the country in the ultra-fast and convenient Shinkansen in a matter of hours, Seven Stars bet was on the slow travel, where the journey is more important than the destination. For the train's design, they commissioned Mr. Eiji Mitooka, from Don Design Associates in Tokyo. Every single detail was taken care of and the popularity of the trip is such that you must really plan well in advance. Other interesting Japanese train journeys are the [Genbi Shinkansen](#), also called the Art train in Niigata, the Osaka to Sapporo [Twilight Express Mizukase](#) and the [Train Suite Shiki-Shima](#) offering luxury trips out of Tokyo's Ueno Station.

The Seven Stars Journey

The Twilight Express

The exclusive Shiki-Shima Train

SUSHI CHEF SUKIYABASHI JIRO

CATEGORIES: Guides & Books, Insider Info

Visit

Website: https://www.amazon.com/Sushi-Chef-Sukiyabashi-Shinzo-Satomi/dp/1942993277/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

The [sushi chef Jiro Ono](#) has become world famous when Michelin Guide awarded him their stars. However, well before the French publication arrived in Japan, Mr. Ono dedicated his life for the quest of the perfect sushi. His techniques have been showcased on film and he has been featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles. This book, published by Japanese

Vertical Publishing, is almost aPh.D.D on Jiro Ono's craft and will teach you many aspects of the Japanese culinary world you may find interesting before heading the archipelago.

CITAN

CATEGORIES: Budget, Hotels

Make a Call: +81366617559

Visit Website: <https://backpackersjapan.co.jp/citan/en>

Get Directions: Japan, 〒103-0011 Tōkyō-to, Chūō-ku, Nihonbashiōdenmachō, 〇〇-〇〇

〇〇〇〇〇〇〇〇〇〇15-2

15-2 Nihonbashi-Odenmacho, Chuo-ku

The Citan is part of the new breed of cool hostels springing up all around Tokyo and Kyoto. They offer well-priced rooms in good locations and on top of that, the hostel is also a meeting point for travelers and locals alike with a nice bar and café. Along with bunk beds and all-female rooms, you can book at Citan a double room with either a queen or a king-size bed to have more privacy. Bathrooms, toilets and showers are communal though, but this being Japan, expect them to be squeaky clean at all times.

-

SUSHI IWA

CATEGORIES: Eating, Nice Restaurants

Make a Call: +81335720955

Visit

Website: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2014/08/05/food/sushi-iwa-high-end-michelin-starred-sushi-at-a-medium-price/>

Get Directions: Japan, 〒104-0061 Tōkyō-to, Chūō-ku, Ginza, 8 Chome-〇〇-〇〇

〇〇〇〇 8-5-25

8-5-25 Ginza, Chuo-ku

Tuesday to Saturday from 12noon to 2pm and from 6pm to 10pm

Sunday and holidays from 12noon to 8pm

Sushi Iwa, in the heart of glitzy Ginza, offers high-end sushi with a one star from the Michelin Guide. This is my brother's favorite sushi place in Tokyo (and he has been twice to Jiro's) so I highly recommend it. They are used to foreigners, so there is an English menu but let the chef do his omakase and discover what is fresh that day.

BEST OF KYOTO 〇〇

CATEGORIES: Out of Town

Visit Website: <http://kyoto.travel/en>

Get Directions: Kyoto, Kyoto Prefecture, Japan

Kyoto is a mere two and a half hours by [bullet train from Tokyo](#), but it feels ages apart. While Tokyo pulsates in the future, Kyoto gladly embraces Japan's past. It is the perfect place to enjoy the beauty of the gardens, parks, mountains, temples and

indulge in a hot bath at a traditional ryokan, the Japanese-style hotel.

The Nozomi bullet train runs in 15 to 20-minute intervals from Tokyo to Kyoto and makes very few stops in between. You could go for a day trip, but try sleeping at least one night in the ancient capital. If you have more time, even better.

There are several Western-style hotels in Kyoto, some incredibly fantastic such as the [Ritz-Carlton](#), the [Four Seasons](#) or the [Hyatt Regency](#). But since you are in a historic town, why not take the chance and embrace the Japanese culture by staying at a ryokan, where you will have the opportunity to sleep in a tatami and take those deep hot baths in the onsen.

I've stayed at the [Ryokan Shinmonso](#) years ago and liked it a lot. It was renovated lately, so I believe it is even better than before. The last time I chose the [Yuzuya](#), a bit more upscale and better located (I was with my parents). Both were in Gion, the historic quarters of the city. But it does not matter the hotel since the Japanese are incredible hosts and cleanliness is the norm anywhere. There is one place that is not so central (because it is south of the train station) but incredibly cool, the [Anteroom](#) and next time I will definitely stay there (there is a great bar and several concerts at the hotel).

In Kyoto you have to be ready to walk a lot, so wear comfortable shoes. Ideally, you can rent a bike. Most of the attractions are temples that are quite far apart from each other and my must-sees are [Sanjusangendo](#) (for its 1001 Buddha statues), the [Golden Pavilion of Kinkaku-ji](#), the mountain temples of [Kiyomizu-dera](#) and the impressive roof of the [Nijo Castle](#). There are many others, some quite impressive, others less so, and you can visit them all, depending on how much time and energy you have. However, another paramount visit is the [Imperial Palace \(this has to be booked in advance\)](#).

Start exploring the Gion area. Walk along the narrow streets and the canal. If you are lucky, you will see geishas walking around. The main street of Shijo-dori has traditional shops and restaurants on both sides and ends at the beautiful [Yasaka Shrine](#). Across the river, running along its banks, you will visit Kiya-machi-dori with plenty of Japanese restaurants, many with breathtaking river views where you can experience a traditional kaiseki meal. The [Kiln](#) is a good choice.

The [Nishiki Market](#) is a bustling area with shops and restaurants of all kinds. It gets very busy, and I prefer walking its side streets for pleasant surprises. There are usually independent stores and small cafés a few blocks away from the main covered arcade. Little by little you start getting the hang of the city and will discover that there is plenty to see everywhere. Many of the stores from Tokyo have a branch in Kyoto, so do not be surprised to see Muji, Uniqlo, Takashimaya, Loft, Graniph and so on. Explore, walk, get lost and tell me what you find out.

COFFEE & TEA

- [Ippodo](#) for Japan's favorite tea
- [%Arabica](#) for outstanding coffee

SHOPPING

- [Today's Special](#) for a bit of everything
- [Arts&Science](#) for cool impeccable clothing

MORE INFORMATION

- [Kyoto Travel](#)
- [Inside Kyoto](#)

THE APOLLO

CATEGORIES: Eating, Nice Restaurants

Make a Call: +81362645220

Visit Website: <http://theapollo.jp/>

Get Directions: 5 Chome-2-1 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Tōkyō-to 104-0061, Japan

〒104-0061 東京都中央区銀座5-2-1 11F

Tokyu Plaza Ginza 11F, 5-2-1 Ginza, Chuo-ku | Greek Mediterranean

Daily from 11am to 11pm (last order at 10pm)

After its success in Sydney, Australia, The Apollo opened in Tokyo in early 2016 to bring to Japan delicious Greek and Mediterranean dishes in a sleek ambience with great views over [Ginza](#). The food is superb and the best option is ordering several small dishes to share, so you can try the salads, the grilled cheese, the lamb, the amazing seafood and the olives. Lunch and dinner are fine, but in the evenings the atmosphere is enhanced by the careful lighting and the Ginza neons.

HOSHINOYA TOKYO

CATEGORIES: Hotels, Splurge

Visit Website: <http://hoshinoyatokyo.com/en/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-9-1 Ōtemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tōkyō-to 100-0004, Japan

〒100-0004 東京都千代田区有明1-9-1

1-9-1, Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku

Tokyo is extremely well served when it comes to five-star luxury hotels. All of the major international chains are present while some key Japanese players also have great properties. However, what the city was lacking was a Japanese-style luxury hotel, like an urban ryokan. This is why [Hoshino Resorts](#), the centenary operator of several luxury inns around the Japanese countryside, have decided to open Tokyo's first deluxe ryokan.

Since we are in Tokyo, one will not see wooden houses around a garden but a glass tower in the middle of Otemachi, near Tokyo Station. However, the atmosphere all over the high rise is that of serenity and sublime omotenashi, the Japanese inbred hospitality spirit. The core of a ryokan experience, that of tatami floors, welcoming smiles, simple yet sophisticated service are all present at Hoshinoya Tokyo. If you are looking into a different kind of luxury hospitality experience, this is the place to stay while in Japan.

ASAKUSA 浅草

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Sights

Make a Call: +81338420181

Get Directions: Taito, Tokyo, Japan

〒112-0002 東京都台東区上野2-3-1

2-3-1 Asakusa, Taito-ku

The Temple grounds are always open whereas the Main Hall is open daily from 6:30am to 5pm

The area of Asakusa Kannon has kept a bit of the old Japanese spirit that has been lost with the urbanization of Tokyo. The temple of Senso-ji, with its red gates, the bustling Nakamise-dori street full of craft shops and the visitors from all over the world, but mainly from Japan, give the place a very nice feel. This is the perfect place for that "I have been to Tokyo" picture. After you say your prayer at the temple, you can explore the area, filled with traditional shops and restaurants. Nearby is the incredibly tall [Tokyo SkyTree](#).

BAREBURGER

CATEGORIES: Burger Joints, Eating

Make a Call: +81335725315

Visit Website: <http://www.bareburger.co.jp/>

Get Directions: Ginza, Chuo, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan

〒104-0061 東京都中央区銀座10F 2-1

Tokyu Plaza Ginza 10F, 2-1 Ginza, Chuo-ku | Burger

Daily from 11am to 11pm (last order at 10pm)

The Bareburger fever in America has crossed the Pacific and settled in Tokyo with two restaurants, the first one in Jiyugaoka, Meguro, and a new one in Ginza (on the 10th floor of Tokyu Plaza). They produce organic hamburgers, with no GMO, no pesticides, happy grazing cows and so on, therefore the "bare" on the name. (hopeclinical.com) I don't think their burger is better than that of [Blacows](#), but it is very good nevertheless and they offer more "customization" for your sandwich with

patty, bun and cheese options.

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Image from Bareburger Japan on Instagram

TENOHA

CATEGORIES: Drinking, Eating, Gourmet & Food, Nice Restaurants, Restobar, Shopping

Make a Call: +81120625109

Visit Website: <http://tenoha.jp/>

Get Directions: 20-23 Daikanyamachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0034, Japan

〒150-0034 20-23

20-23 Daikanyamacho, Shibuya-ku

Store daily from 11am to 8pm

Restaurant daily from 11am to 11pm

Tenoha, in Daikanyama, is one of those cool places you can only find in Tokyo. Upon crossing the gates, there is a garden with benches and tables where you can sip a cold beer or a coffee from the café. You can see the cool guys working at the co-working space before you head to the nice restaurant on the corner, with great dishes and a very urban atmosphere. Before you leave, pass by the shop to stock on some gourmet items to take home (or devour in your hotel room).

LB8

CATEGORIES: Delicious Bistros, Drinking, Eating, Wine Bars

Make a Call: +81334764799

Visit Website: <http://www.lb6.jp/lb8daikanyama/>

Get Directions: 16-2 Daikanyamachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0034, Japan

〒150-0034 16-2 1F・B1F

1F, B1F, Hachiman Bldg, 16-2 Daikanyama-cho, Shibuya-ku | Winebar and Grill

Monday to Friday from 5pm to 2am (last order at 1am)

Saturday and Sunday from 11:30am to 2am (last order at 1am)

LB8 is a sister property to LB6 in Roppongi and follows much the same principle of a very informal place to have a glass of wine and order delicious grilled fish, meat, poultry and vegetables. The place has a very intimate feel as the lighting is very soft and you can choose to seat at the high stools or at the counter. A cozy place for an easy-going meal.

MORI ART MUSEUM

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Museums

Make a Call: +81357778600

Visit Website: <http://www.mori.art.museum/eng/>

Get Directions: 6 Chome-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tōkyō-to 106-0032, Japan

東京都港区6-10-1 53F

53F Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku

Daily from 10am to 10pm (except Tuesdays to 5pm)

Some of the coolest contemporary art exhibitions in Tokyo are held at the Mori Art Center, on top of the high Mori Tower in [Roppongi Hills](#), with incredible views of the city's skyline. As there is no permanent collection, the rotating expos attract a constant influx of both art aficionados and tourists who flock to the panoramic viewing area of the [Tokyo City View](#). Get a combined ticket and visit both.

ROPPONGI HILLS

CATEGORIES: Shopping, Shopping Areas & Malls

Visit Website: <http://www.roppongihills.com/>

Get Directions: Roppongi, Minato, Tokyo 106-0032, Japan

東京都港区

Roppongi Hills, Minato-ku

Roppongi Hills was the first major mixed use development in central Tokyo. The imposing Mori Tower can be seen from many parts of the city. The place has luxury stores, a [Tsutaya Bookshop](#), a huge cinema, restaurants – including [Atelier Joel Robuchon](#) – the Maman spider sculpture by Louise Bourgeois and the access to [Mori Art Museum](#), on the 53rd floor. It is easy to get lost in and around Roppongi Hills, so make sure you do not stray away from your travel companions.

BEARD

CATEGORIES: Casual Dining, Eating

Make a Call: +81354960567

Visit Website: <http://www.b-e-a-r-d.com/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-17-22 Meguro, Meguro-ku, Tōkyō-to 153-0063, Japan

東京都港区17-22

1-17-22 Meguro, Meguro-ku | Chef's table

Tuesday to Saturday from 5:30pm to 12midnight (last order at 10:30pm)

Sunday from 10am to 2:30pm (last order at 1:30pm)

I was really curious to eat at Beard for it had been praised endlessly on Monocle Magazine, even winning its [Restaurant Awards](#) back in 2015. I made the reservation well before leaving home to guarantee my table using [Open Table](#). There were a few email exchanges and all was good. The restaurant is tiny, with an open kitchen and a few tables around, so you get to see all of the chef's activity while having your meal. The ingredients come from different parts of Japan and are all top quality so you will eat the sweetest carrots, the tenderest octopus, the healthiest broccoli and so on.

The food is good. We ordered the chef's menu and two glasses of wine (the wine by the glass is not the best, go for a bottle). The music was fun – the chef's Spotify playlist with a lot of [Beirut](#). It was a good evening out, we had a nice time (I was with a friend) but left feeling that there had to be something else to make it so special for Monocle. The news now is that Beard will close down. Chef Shin Harakawa has passed the helm to Envall Utbult, from Copenhagen's Relae, and will pursue a new venture in Tokyo. As soon as I know what he has in mind, I will publish here.

TSUTAYA T-SITE DAIKANYAMA

CATEGORIES: Books & Magazines, Shopping

Make a Call: +81337702525

Visit Website: <http://real.tsite.jp/daikanyama/english/>

Get Directions: 17-5 Sarugakuchō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0033, Japan

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17-5 Sarugakuchō, Shibuya-ku

Daily from 7am to 2am (the second floor opens at 9am)

This is, by far, my favorite place in Tokyo. Tsutaya is a local bookstore chain, but the concept developed in Daikanyama goes way beyond a simple place to buy books. First of all the architecture of the place is astonishing. The buildings float in a garden, with areas to sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee or just walk around breathing the fresh air. There are three buildings, each with a different theme on the ground floor such as fashion, cooking, travel and sports. ([Xanax](#)) Everything is arranged in a way to keep you browsing for hours to find interesting things all along. The selection of magazines is staggering, with all major titles from the entire planet.

The aim of the place is to have people lingering. You can select some CDs and listen to them while enjoying the view from the huge windows. The leather seats are comfortable and there is always a free listening station. There is a Starbucks, a Family Mart, an Italian restaurant – the [Ivy Place](#) – and a cozy bar on the second floor called Anjin Library & Lounge. It is a place you will want to return a few times while in town.

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Image from T-Site's website

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Image by TravelVince

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Image by TravelVince

FUGLEN

CATEGORIES: Cocktail Bars, Drinking

Make a Call: +81334810884

Visit Website: <http://www.fuglen.com/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-16-11 Tomigaya, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 151-0063, Japan

■■■■■■1-16-11

Tomigaya 1-16-11, Shibuya-ku | Café and cocktail bar

Café

Monday to Friday from 8am to 7pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 7pm

Cocktails

Wednesday from 7pm to 12midnight

Thursday from 7pm to 1am

Friday and Saturday from 7pm to 2am

Sunday from 7pm to 12midnight

Fuglen is a small piece of Norway in the cool area of Tomigaya, in Shibuya, close to the green [Yoyogi Park](#). The place is open for coffee during the day, with some nice bites like the brown cheese sandwich and later into the day it becomes a cocktail bar. There is a nice area outside to sit down on sunny days but the vintage interior is Fuglen's main drawcard (apart from the

perfect coffee and cocktails). There is Norwegian art on the walls, as if it were a chalet in some fjord or island. Very nice indeed.

IZAKAYA VIN

CATEGORIES: Delicious Bistros, Drinking, Eating, Wine Bars

Make a Call: +81334962467

Get Directions: 1 Chome-5-7 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0043, Japan

📍 📍 1-5-7

1 Chome-5-7 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku | Winebar + French casual

Monday to Saturday from 5pm to 1am (last order at 12midnight)

Izakaya Vin is another of those places I stumbled upon by chance while exploring Shibuya. The empty wine bottles outside caught my attention because they were from excellent French Burgundy and Bordeaux. So I walked in and asked for a table. It is rather small, with three floors. I like sitting at the bar in the entrance, facing the kitchen (but it is generally the first to fill up). The wines are amazing and you can have just a glass of some grand cru you would not even dare drink in Europe. The food is simple but prepared with extreme care and precision to balance taste and presentation. I recommend the smoked duck salad and the pork belly with lentils and Dijon mustard. It gets full easily so you better make a reservation or get there early.

DON QUIJOTE

CATEGORIES: For Kids, Gifts & Specialties, Shopping

Visit Website: <http://www.donki.com/en/>

Get Directions: Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

There are 23 stores spread all over Tokyo

Don Quijote, or simply DonQui, are stores selling a myriad of stuff, from cosmetics to confectionery, costumes and electronics. Some sell medicine and many are open 24-hours a day. It is one of those places that could only exist in Japan and are quite fun to explore. There are items on sale that will crack you up. I went into one with some friends after a stint at a karaoke place in Shinjuku and we got seriously lost in the place. We managed to find the way out not before laughing our hearts out (well, we had had a bit too much sake).

SHIBUYA 📍

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Neighborhoods

Get Directions: Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

Shibuya never sleeps. It is Tokyo's Times Square, always busy and one of the city's main transport hubs. Famous Shibuya Crossing, where pedestrians fight their way from many different traffic lights, is an attraction in itself. If you just stand still and observe, it feels like a choreographed dance. Most of the crowd transiting around Shibuya is young and so is the focus of many stores and restaurants. Even so, there is plenty for all ages. (rentalsfloridakeys.com) Even though there are no luxury hotels in the area, the best being the [Cerulean](#), it is, in my opinion, the best place to stay because many of other Tokyo's areas like Aoyama, Omotesando, Meguro and Daikanyama are within a 10 to 15-minute walk. Even Roppongi and [Shinjuku](#) are

not that far.

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Image via Shutterstock

GINZA 銀座

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Neighborhoods

Get Directions: Ginza, Chuo, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan

Ginza is one of the most upmarket areas of Tokyo and the place where luxury high-end shopping reaches its nadir. Brands not only must set up shop there but they do so with bravado, normally hiring star-architects for stylish shopping concepts. It is also “depato” heaven. Japan’s biggest names in Department Stores (the depatos) are all crammed in this reasonably small area. The greatest thing about Ginza is the difference in atmosphere between the busy main thoroughfares and the calm side streets, filled with trees and bicycles.

On weekends, the main road is closed for traffic, so pedestrians take over the street. The best way to explore Ginza is to zigzag around the main roads and the side streets. There is always a very interesting mix of people, from chic kimono-clad ladies to super casual tourists from all over the place. It can be highly commercial at times, but money also attracts culture and creativity. So take some time to discover the area. Marunouchi and the [Imperial Gardens](#) are all just a stone’s throw away.

TOKYO DISNEYLAND RESORT

CATEGORIES: Out of Town

Make a Call: +81453305211

Visit Website: <http://www.tokyodisneyresort.jp/tdl/index.html>

Get Directions: 1-1 Maihama, Urayasu-shi, Chiba-ken 279-0031, Japan

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Maihama Station, Chiba

Opening times, parade times, events and fireworks vary along the year

Yes, Tokyo has its very own Disneyland! It was the first one outside of the USA, opened way before Disneyland Paris. There are two theme parks, the Disneyland itself, much like the Magic Kingdom in Florida, and the DisneySea Park. As you might expect, there are hotels, restaurants and shops all around. It is easy to reach the resort from central Tokyo on public transportation.

SHIBUYA GRANBELL HOTEL

CATEGORIES: Budget, Hotels

Make a Call: +81354572681

Visit Website: <http://www.granbellhotel.jp/en/shibuya/>

Get Directions: 15-17 Sakuragaokachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0031, Japan

サクラガオカ15-17

15-17 Sakuragaoka-cho, Shibuya-ku

The Granbell Shibuya has basic rooms and simple service in a very good location. So prices are very attractive. Two blocks away from the [Cerulean Tower](#) for half the price. If you book with inclusive breakfast, you can choose between the Japanese restaurant or the Wine Bar (for Western-style food). There are single rooms and day use is also possible, in case all you need is a shower and a nap before heading somewhere else.

SHIBUYA EXCEL HOTEL TOKYU

CATEGORIES: Great Location, Hotels

Make a Call: +81354570109

Visit Website: http://www.tokyuhotelsjapan.com/en/hotel/TE/TE_SHIBU/

Get Directions: 1 Chome-12-2 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0043, Japan

渋谷マークシティ1-12-2

Shibuya Mark City, 1-12-2, Dogenzaka, Shibuya-ku

The Shibuya Excel is, together with the Cerulean, my two favorite places to stay in Tokyo. Although less imposing than the [Cerulean](#), the Excel is closer to the happening areas of Shibuya and offers better rates, especially for their single rooms. The hotel is right above Shibuya Mark City. Do not expect luxury accommodations, but rather a very correct and comfortable place to stay. As good service and cleanliness in Japan are present everywhere, this is a good option to save some money for eating and shopping.

JAPAN TAX-FREE SHOP

CATEGORIES: Insider Info, News & Articles, Shopping

Visit Website: <http://tax-freeshop.jnto.go.jp/eng/shopping-guide.php>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

It is good to know that, as a temporary visitor, you can get a tax refund in many shops around Japan. If you spent over JPY 5.000, which is more or less USD 50 at any purchase, part of the tax gets back to you. Always have your passport with you when going out shopping as the shop assistant will need to see it in order to process the refund. Keep the receipts and go early to the airport the day you leave to get your money back. You will also have to show the purchased items. Look for the Japan Tax Free signs. Even convenience stores are in the scheme, so enjoy.

GENKI SUSHI

CATEGORIES: Casual Dining, Eating

Make a Call: +81334611281

Visit Website: <http://www.genkisushi.co.jp/en/>

Get Directions: 24-8 Udagawachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0042, Japan

24-8ウダガワチョビル

1F Leisure Plaza Bld., 24-8 Udagawacho, Shibuya-ku

Daily from 11am to 12midnight

Genki Sushi is a high-tech way to eat sushi for very little prices. You walk in and tell the attendant how many seats you need. She will take you to your numbered chair with a screen in front of it. You choose what you want from the screen and the items come in a flash over magnetic tracks. Once they arrive, you will hear a beep. Just pick up the dish and push the button so the tray can whizz back to the kitchen. It is a very convenient way to try different types of sushi since there is an English menu and pictures. After you've had enough, you just stand up and pay at the cashier before leaving.

CIGNALE ENOTECA

CATEGORIES: Delicious Bistros, Eating

Visit Website: <http://cignale.jp/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-5-11 Komaba, Meguro-ku, Tōkyō-to 153-0041, Japan

📅📅📅 1-5-11

1-5-11 Komaba, Meguro-ku | Italian

Daily from 6pm to 12midnight

Japanese chef Toshiji Tomori spent enough time in Italy to really learn how to master the peninsula's cuisine. Back in Japan, he is the star of Cignale Enoteca, an 18-seat restaurant in Meguro, focusing on delicious food and great atmosphere. He says that when he sees his Italian customers having dinner at his place and really enjoying his food, he gets a real sense of satisfaction. There is a mix of Japanese and Italian ingredients, all prepared with care. Securing a reservation may prove to be the quite difficult, especially now that Cignale has won number one at Monocle Magazine's [Restaurant Awards 2016](#). You can book via the restaurant's website one month ahead from your desired date.

TOKYO BIKE RENTALS

CATEGORIES: Insider Info, News & Articles

Make a Call: +81338274819

Visit Website: <https://tokyobike.com/rental.html>

Get Directions: 6 Chome-3-12 Yanaka, Taitō-ku, Tōkyō-to 110-0001, Japan

📅📅📅 6-3-12

6-3-12 Yanaka Taito-ku

Wednesday to Sunday from 10am to 7pm

Tokyo Bike is a cult bicycle brand from Tokyo's suburb of Yanaka. With stores in Europe, US, Singapore and Bangkok, the brand has a huge following that enjoys a slower pace of life, preferably on a bike. From bespoke designs, Tokyo Bike has also evolved to sell branded items and to form partnerships with other like-minded brands such as Ace Hotels and OneFineStay. In Tokyo you can have the opportunity of renting a Tokyo Bike to explore the city on two wheels. I am sure you will experience a different Tokyo if you go ahead and book a Tokyo Bike on their website.

TOKYO TOTEM

CATEGORIES: Guides & Books, Insider Info

Visit Website: <http://www.tokyototem.jp/>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Totem is an awesome guide for those interested in discovering how Tokyoites live and go about their daily lives in the world's biggest city. More than a guidebook, Tokyo Totem is a guide and a book, with stories, drawings, cartoons, interviews and much more. It is a nice way to be less tourist and more explorer. You can easily find it in bookstores in Tokyo, but I would secure a copy beforehand for delightful in-flight reading on your way to the Far East.

NEZU MUSEUM

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Museums

Make a Call: +81334002536

Visit Website: <http://www.nezu-muse.or.jp/en/>

Get Directions: 6-5-1 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku

〒106-0031 6-5-1

6-5-1 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku

Daily except Monday from 10am to 5pm (last entry at 4:30pm)

Nezu Museum houses a private collection of ancient Japanese and East Asian art saved from the WWII bombing. The museum's building, designed by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma is new but has kept many old Japanese details and a beautiful Japanese garden. What a wonderful way to get in touch with the country's rich history. In the middle of bustling Aoyama, you can find peace and quiet at the Nezu. After your visit, have a green tea enjoying the greenery to restore your batteries before heading back to the 21st century.

SHIBUYA PUBLISHING BOOKSELLERS

CATEGORIES: Books & Magazines, Shopping

Make a Call: +81354650577

Visit Website: <http://www.shibuyabooks.co.jp/>

Get Directions: 17-3 Kamiyamachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0047, Japan

〒150-0047 17-3 1F

Kamiyama-cho 17-3, Shibuya-ku

Monday to Saturday from 12noon to 12midnight

Tokyo has over 1.300 independent bookshops but one of my favorites is Shibuya Publishing, in Kamiyama, near [Fuglen](#), the deliciously Norwegian café. It is not a very big shop but their selection is second to none. Magazines, gifts, books and Tokyo guidebooks are waiting for you to take them home. What is nice at SPBS is that you feel more focused than on the amazingly large [Tsutaya T-Site](#).

GETTING AROUND TOKYO

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Getting Around

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

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Image by TravelVince

Getting around Tokyo is one of the nice challenges you will face during your trip. The extensive public transport network's map may look daunting at first but once you get the hang of it, you can reach all corners of the city quite easily and comfortably. Having the [Google Maps](#) app on your mobile phone helps a lot. The information given by it is very precise and it even informs the price of the ride.

- Tokyo Metro Map from Tokyo Metro's website

It is good to know that Tokyo's subway system is run by [Tokyo Metro](#) and several other private companies. Instead of trying to figure out which line belongs to whom, get a Suica or Pasmo card that will work on all lines and you will not have to buy a single-journey ticket every time you decide to use public transport. You load these cards with money and use them for transport, vending machines and convenience stores.

When it comes to finding your way around the corridors, escalators and tracks of Tokyo, just follow the signs. Each line has a designated color and number. The names are always in Japanese script and Roman characters. Note that some of the area maps at each station do not follow the Western notion of having the North upwards, so you may end up walking the wrong way. Once again the Google Maps app helps you find your way once out of a subway stop. And you can use it offline too.

Taxis are quite expensive but very convenient and ubiquitous. Uber is also present. A good tip is to have your destination's address in Japanese to show the driver. Again, you can do so with Google Maps. I type where I want to go and take a screenshot of the display. Many websites have the location maps for you to screenshot too. The Japanese also have a hard time finding their way around Tokyo, believe me.

To and from the airports

Tokyo has two main airports, [Narita](#) (NRT) and [Haneda](#) (HND). Both have international and domestic flights. Haneda, however, is much more convenient due to its location, much closer to the Central Tokyo, so getting into town is not only cheaper, but quicker. From either airport you can catch the [Airport Limousine Service](#), a comfortable bus network with several routes into the different areas of Tokyo, many stopping in front of main hotels.

From Narita the trip into Central Tokyo takes around 1:30 hour be it by bus, taxi or train. The most convenient way using public transportation is to combine the [Skyliner](#), a train with a few stops between the airport and Nippori and Ueno Stations. From there you connect to the Yamanote Line that goes around Tokyo either clockwise or counterclockwise or already into the subway system. Have a small suitcase with 4-wheels to help you out otherwise take the bus. Note that at peak times the trains are quite crowded.

From Haneda, apart from the Airport Limousine, you can take the Tokyo Monorail or the Keikyu-Kuko line into the main stations. The Keikyu-Kuko Line connects to the Asakusa Line all the way to Narita. (<https://expo.aspe.org>)

Taxis

When you flag a taxi, the doors will open automatically. You show the driver the address or just tell the main location you want to go to. If you give him the phone number of the destination, he keys into the car's GPS and finds the way. Once you arrive, the doors open automatically. No tipping is necessary. Actually, no tipping is given anywhere in Japan.

Walking and Cycling

Bare in mind that you will get lost somehow and that is part of the fun of being in Japan. Try to explore the areas aimlessly on foot, to discover the hidden gems. Most of what happens in Tokyo happens on the side streets. It is safe and you are never far from a subway stop or a helpful local.

If you want to cycle, and Tokyo is a perfect city to do so, there are bike hiring places and some hotels also have bikes available. The [Tokyo Bike Rentals](#) can also be an option. I would not explore Shibuya or Roppongi by bike because of the density of pedestrians, but areas around the Sumida River, the parks, Daikanyama and Meguro are excellent for that.

Image by TravelVince

AKIHABARA 有明

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Neighborhoods

Visit Website: <http://e-akihabara.jp/e/>

Get Directions: Akihabara, Taito, Tokyo 110-0006, Japan

Akihabara is Tokyo's electronics wonderland. Back in the 1990s, when Japan still ruled the electronics manufacturing world, this was heaven. The area is still a magnet for gadgets with its cluster of shops selling from motherboards to mobile phones, from cameras to robots. Nowadays the salesmen shouting offers outside the shops do it in Mandarin instead of Japanese and you will notice the heavy presence of tourists from mainland China. Shops are generally spread over several floors, each floor dedicated to a segment such as lenses, computers, tablets, robots, mobile phones, music and so on. It is shopaholics galore. Just make sure you buy things that will work back in your country, especially in relation to the power plugs. (<https://chiringa.com>)

Image by TravelVince

BISTRO KIKI HARAJUKU

CATEGORIES: Delicious Bistros, Eating

Make a Call: +81337979282

Visit Website: <http://kikioishii.com/>

Get Directions: 6 Chome-9-9 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0001, Japan

〒150-0001 6-9-9 井郷町1F

6-9-9 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku | French

Daily from 12noon to 2pm (last order) and from 6pm to 10pm (last order)

In June and July there are some holidays

Kiki is a tiny bistro, seating up to 20 guests at a time, in the backstreets of Omotesando. Chef Yuki Noda lived in Paris working his way through several of the city's kitchens before moving back to Tokyo to set up his own show. It is a nice place to enjoy good food and good wines prepared by someone who truly enjoys cooking and hunting for excellent ingredients. ([Ambien](#))

-
Image by #kikioichi on Kiki's website. Japanese beef Shizuoka grow lamp steak green asparagus and truffle risotto.

TENGU SAKABA

CATEGORIES: Casual Dining, Eating

Make a Call: +81334626001

Visit Website: <http://www.teng.co.jp/>

Get Directions: 15-15 Sakuragaokachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0031, Japan

〒150-0031 15-15

15-15 Sakuragaoka-cho, Shibuya-ku | Izakaya

Monday to Friday from 11:30am to 11:30pm

Saturday from 4pm to 11:30pm

Sunday from 4pm to 11pm

Tengu Sakaba is a chain of izakayas spread all over Japan. There could be not more easygoing place to enjoy some Jap cuisine without any fuss. They have English menu, service is quick and there is a myriad of options, from pizza and French fries to yakitori, gyoza and tofu. It can be fun to sit on a communal table and strike up conversation with the locals after a few beers. ([leankitchenco](#))

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Image by TravelVince

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Image by TravelVince

UNION WORKS

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Shopping

Make a Call: +81351595717

Visit Website: <http://www.union-works.co.jp/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-9-8 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Tōkyō-to 104-0061, Japan

〒104-0061 1-9-8 銀座103

Okuno Bldg. 103, 1-9-8 Ginza, Chuo-ku

Daily, except Wednesdays, from 12noon to 8pm

Union Works may look just like a simple shoe repair shop. However, as you walk in you will see that they not only fix all kinds of leather shoes and boots as well as belts, bags and you name it. The uniformed staff looks very professional and the place has a kind of vintage feel to it. On the side they also sell beautifully crafted new leather accessories, even new shoes and boots in case yours have no way to be fixed. There are other shops of Union Works in Shibuya, Shinjuku and Aoyama.

D DESIGN TRAVEL

CATEGORIES: Guides & Books, Insider Info

Visit Website: <http://www.d-department.com/jp/d-design-travel>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

The project “d design travel” has been developed by [D&Department](#). It focuses on showcasing the 47 Japanese prefectures (municipalities) through their very local assets such as craftsmen, hoteliers, vocal residents, cafés and much more. Apart from being an online platform, there are printed guides with text both in Japanese and English. It is a good way to explore not only Tokyo but the whole country accompanied by local experts. These are guides for Japan lovers, many of whom are actual Japanese residents. So change your Frommers or Lonely Planet for the d design travel magazine and happy discoveries.

MICHELIN GUIDE TOKYO

CATEGORIES: Eating, Nice Restaurants

Visit Website: <http://gm.gnavi.co.jp/restaurant/list/tokyo/>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

Since Tokyo featured for the first time in the list of Michelin Restaurant Guides, everybody has been surprised by the amount of stars the city has received. Not even Paris has so many Michelin-stars. When it comes to preparing food and eating, the Japanese are at the top of the food chain. The attention to detail and to food quality is something intrinsic to the Japanese culture. While I think it is very interesting to have these lists and classifications, much like the [“World’s 50 Best Restaurants”](#), I strongly recommend that you discover the underdogs, the restaurants that are as good as those featured in the guides and websites but have not been on the spotlight. For what happens once a place joins this super list, it becomes a tourist attraction and it may take ages before you can secure a reservation. One excellent point of the Michelin selection are the Bib Gourmand recommendations. These are places that are not as fancy and have a more “intimate” feel.

I am, by no means, saying you should not eat at the Michelin restaurants. But try to balance and not become obsessed with them. Remember that eating at a food stall under the Yamanote line tracks with locals can be a much richer experience. ☐☐

On the positive side, the great achievement of Michelin Guide Tokyo has been to include all types of cuisine in their list, so you will find from sushi and tempura to Indian curries and the traditional French fois-gras. What a feast! Enjoy the list and bon appétit!

SHINJUKU ☐☐

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Neighborhoods

Get Directions: Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan

Shinjuku is one of Tokyo's main areas, with the train station being among the world's busiest. The area is filled with bars, cafés, restaurants, karaoke and pachinko joints on one side. To the other side you will see a collection of high-rises, like a mini Manhattan, where there are many 5-star hotels. It gets quite rowdy in the evenings, when many workers leave their offices on the high-rises and head to the pubs. This is Shibuya for adults. The Shinjuku Gyoen Park is an island of greenery and a very peaceful place to spend some hours during the day, most notably during the cherry-blossom season around April. The Shinjuku Ni-Chome is Tokyo's official gay area and quite an interesting experience.

TOKYO MIDTOWN

CATEGORIES: Shopping, Shopping Areas & Malls

Make a Call: +81334753100

Visit Website: <http://www.tokyo-midtown.com/en/>

Get Directions: Tokyo Midtown, 9 Chome-7 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tōkyō-to 107-0052, Japan

🏪🍽️🏨

Shops daily from 11am to 9pm

Restaurants daily from 11am to 11pm

Tokyo Midtown, very much like [Roppongi Hills](#) and Toranomon Hills, is a mixed-use development in central Tokyo where you will find art, hotels, shops, restaurants and offices. The central atrium is filled with bamboo trees and upmarket stores while the outside area has a very pleasant sculpture garden leading to the [21_21 Design Site](#) art gallery. The Roppongi Art Triangle comprises one of Tokyo Midtown venues, the [Suntory Museum of Art](#).

MEIJI JINGU 明治神宮

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Sights

Visit Website: <http://www.meijijingu.or.jp/english/>

Get Directions: Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

In the middle of bustling [Shibuya](#), just behind the Harajuku train station, you will find the entrance to this lush park. Take a deep breath and step into the gravel paths leading to the park's core. Along the way you will see treasures given to Japan's Emperor by foreign dignitaries, you will cross wooden gates, the torii, and right at the center there is the impressive Meiji Shrine, devoted to Shinto Gods. Shinto is Japan's home-grown religion. If you are lucky, you will witness a wedding ceremony. Since this is a holy place, you cannot go running in the area. ([Flexeril](#)) If you are looking for exercise, head to [Yoyogi Park](#) instead, which is attached to this same mass of greenery.

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Image by TravelVince

KAMAKURA 鎌倉

CATEGORIES: Out of Town

Get Directions: Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan

Today's Kamakura, a small coastal town in the outskirts of Tokyo, does not do justice to the power the place had in the 12th century, when it ruled the archipelago, before the seat of power moved to Kyoto. But the place is very nice, with traditional architecture, temple galore, winding streets and the famous Buddha Statue. It is an interesting day trip from Tokyo, taking around one hour by train via the JR Yokosuka Line from Tokyo Station.

AKOMEYA**CATEGORIES:** Delicious Bistros, Eating, Gourmet & Food, Shopping**Make a Call:** +81367580270**Visit Website:** <http://www.akomeya.jp/>**Get Directions:** 2 Chome-2-6 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Tōkyō-to 104-0061, Japan

〒104-0061 2-2-6

2-2-6 Ginza, Chuo-ku

Shop opens daily from 11am to 9pm

Kitchen opens daily from 11:30am to 10pm (last order at 9pm)

Akomeya started out as a rice store but has become a gourmet destination, where you can buy high quality Japanese ingredients and all the paraphernalia that revolves around cooking rice and preparing tea. It is a fascinating place to buy souvenirs or that special gift. There is a restaurant at the store serving healthy dishes all day long.

BEAMS HOUSE MARUNOUCHI**CATEGORIES:** Fashion & Accessories, Shopping**Make a Call:** +81352208686**Visit Website:** <http://www.beams.co.jp/shops/detail/beams-house-marunouchi>**Get Directions:** 2 Chome-4-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tōkyō-to 100-0005, Japan

〒100-0005 2-4-1 1F

1F MARU Bldg., 2-4-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku

Daily from 11am to 9pm (Sunday until 8pm)

Beams is one of Japan's most successful clothing brands that also ventures in design and home décor. You are bound to pop into one of their stores in the city as there are plenty, many of which are dedicated to specific brands. Japan is famous for tailoring to all possible niches, specially in fashion, and Beams brands buck the trend. The store in Marunouchi is one of the biggest and the area is known for high end shopping, so it is a good place to immerse yourself in the Beams world. However, Shibuya, Harajuku, Daikanyama, Shinjuku and even Marunouchi are filled with their shops. Have a look [here](#) for the complete list of shops in Tokyo.

TOMORROWLAND**CATEGORIES:** Fashion & Accessories, Shopping**Make a Call:** +81352202391**Visit Website:** <http://www.tomorrowland.jp/>

Get Directions: 2 Chome-2-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tōkyō-to 100-0005, Japan

〒100-0005 2-5-1 2F

2-5-1, Marunouchi 2-chome Building 1F, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku

Daily from 11am to 8pm

As much as [Beams](#), Tomorrowland is another of Japan's fashion successes. A bit more upmarket, it holds several brands with Tomorrowland being the most stylish. They are also the ones behind the presence of some international brands in Japan such as Dries Van Noten, Acne Studios and Isabel Marant. The shop in Marunouchi is beautiful and worth some selective browsing but all of their stores around the city are worth a peek.

SUPERGUIDE TOKYO

CATEGORIES: Guides & Books, Insider Info

Visit Website: <http://superfuture.com/supershop/tokyo-superguide#>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

This is my favorite guide to Tokyo and one of the most complete when it comes to shopping and eating tips. Ozzy-born Wayne Berkowitz has a witty way of writing that makes all places sound very interesting. He also has a very well curated eye for what is good and what is great. Wait until a few months before your trip to buy the most updated version of his map. There is an app as well, but the map works way better. You pay with your credit card and download the pdf. Then you print and make it into a real guide. This series of SuperGuides is what inspired me to get into the travel guide business. But beware, there is loads of information and you may face traveler's anxiety wanting to see it all.

COMMUNE 246

CATEGORIES: Coffee & Sweets, Eating, Street Food & Trucks

Visit Website: <http://commune246.com/>

Get Directions: Minato, Tokyo, Japan

〒106-0031 3-13

3-13 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku

Daily from 11am to 10pm

In the very chic Omotesando-Aoyama junction you will find Commune 246. Where an empty lot once stood, foodies have developed a kind of fixed food truck area where you can find craft beer, vegetarian food, sausage sandwiches and more options in a groovy, NY-Williamsburg kind of vibe.

PILGRIM SURF + SUPPLY

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Gifts & Specialties, Shopping

Make a Call: +81354591690

Visit Website: <http://pilgrimsurfsupply.jp/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-14-7 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0041, Japan

〒150-0041 1-14-7

1F 1-14-7 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku

Daily from 11am to 8pm

When I see this shop I really wish I were a surfer. But even not hitting the waves, there is some nice beachwear on sale. And the vibe is pretty nice. Don't get carried away and end up buying one of the surfboards, unless they do home delivery.

HYSTERIC GLAMOUR

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Shopping

Make a Call: +81364193899

Visit Website: <http://www.hystericglamour.jp/>

Get Directions: 5 Chome-5-3 Minamiaoyama, Minato-ku, Tōkyō-to 107-0062, Japan

〒107-0062 5-5-3

5-5-3 Minamiaoyama, Minato-ku

Monday to Friday from 12noon to 8pm

Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 8pm

When it comes to denim, HysteriC Glamour has some pretty cool stuff. The shop has a rock n' roll vibe with some groovy tees and hoodies for women, men and children. Stores spread all over Tokyo.

BABEL

CATEGORIES: Films & Videos, Insider Info

Get Directions: Roppongi, Minato, Tokyo 106-0032, Japan

Babel is director Alejandro González Iñárritu's masterpiece involving four separate stories that are intertwined in an intricate way. The Tokyo part is filmed in Shibuya and Roppongi and offers a glimpse into a rich teenager girl's life.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

CATEGORIES: Films & Videos, Insider Info

Visit Website: <http://www.lost-in-translation.com/>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

Lost in Translation by Sofia Coppola is one of my favorite movies ever. Tokyo serves as the perfect backdrop for the two characters who meet out of chance at the [Park Hyatt](#) in [Shinjuku](#). A great story with great music and cinematography. Every time I watch it I feel like jumping into a plane bound for Narita.

NODE UEHARA

CATEGORIES: Casual Dining, Delicious Bistros, Eating

Make a Call: +81334660497

Visit Website: <http://welcometonode.jp/uehara/>

Get Directions: 3 Chome-11 Nishihara, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 151-0066, Japan

〒151-0066 3-11-8

3-11-8 Nishihara, Shibuya-ku | Bar, Deli & Grill Bistro

1st floor Café, Bar & Deli from 10am to 11pm

Basement Grill Bistro enu Monday to Friday from 6pm to 11pm

Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 3pm and from 6pm to 11pm

A bit off the beaten track, in between cool Yoyogi and youthful Shimo-Kitazawa, Node Uehara is a bistro, a café, a restaurant and a grocery shop full of organic food from Japan and beyond. The place has a very nice and welcoming feel. The food is really awesome so the place is worth the detour. (<https://www.riverbendresort.us>)

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Image from Node Uehara on Instagram

D&DEPARTMENT

CATEGORIES: Gifts & Specialties, Gourmet & Food, Shopping

Make a Call: +81357520120

Visit Website: <http://www.d-department.com/>

Get Directions: Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

At the 8th floor of [Shibuya Hikarie](#) | Shibuya-ku

D&Department is a promoter of all things Japanese, mainly the country's design and small artisans. They sell beautiful pottery, furniture and kitchen utensils as well as cooking ingredients and books. Their store is a nice place to browse and find handicraft and small batch items. There are some wine glasses so thin they feel like paper. They also edit superb guides to the 47 Japanese prefectures for a project called [d design travel](#). On the site you can check their recommendations but the paper guides are something of a collector's item. They all focus on the very local and the hidden treasures. Part of the text is in English, so they can help you on your oriental explorations.

SHIBUYA HIKARIE

CATEGORIES: Casual Dining, Eating, Shopping, Shopping Areas & Malls

Make a Call: +81354685892

Visit Website: <http://www.hikarie.jp/en/>

Get Directions: 2 Chome-21-1 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0002, Japan

〒150-0002 2-21-1

2-21-1 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku

ShinQs Store daily from 10am to 9pm

Restaurants on the 6th and 7th floors from 11am to 11pm

Shibuya Hikarie is a skyscraper on top of Shibuya Station with a department store called ShinQs occupying the basement and

the first five floors. Floors 6 and 7 are full of restaurants opened until quite late whereas the 8th floor is a Culture Space, with a branch of the [D&Department](#) store and a co-working area. If you go one floor higher you get the the [Tokyu Theatre Orb](#) where many international musicals are staged.

NATIONAL ART CENTER

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Museums

Make a Call: +81357778600

Visit Website: <http://www.nact.jp/english/>

Get Directions: 7 Chome-22-2 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tōkyō-to 106-0032, Japan

〒106-0032 7-22-2

7-22-2 Roppongi, Minato-ku

Daily, except Tuesdays, from 10am to 6pm (8pm on Fridays)

The National Art Center is part of the Roppongi Art Triangle. The building itself is already worth the visit and if there is a blockbuster exhibition on show while you are in town, you've earned brownie art points!

IMPERIAL PALACE 皇宮

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Sights

Make a Call: +81352238071

Visit Website: <http://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/english/guide/koukyo.html>

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

The Imperial Palace, in the very heart of Tokyo, is not only a major green area but the seat of Japan's Imperial House since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, when the capital moved from Kyoto to Tokyo. The whole area is very large and from outside you can just glimpse at some of the buildings inside the walled fortress. It feels very medieval in a way, with the moat, the huge stone walls and the fortresses. You can have a more panoramic view from some of the hotels in the area, most notably the [Peninsula](#) (go up for a glass of Champagne at the bar).

If you want to visit the interior of the area, you need to book in advance. There are guided tours lasting around 75 minutes twice a day, at 10am and at 1:30pm. The whole application process is very well explained on the website. If you are also visiting Kyoto, go ahead and book your visit to the Palace over there as well.

BOOK AND BED

CATEGORIES: Budget, Hotels

Visit Website: <http://bookandbedtokyo.com/en/>

Get Directions: Ikebukuro, Toshima, Tokyo 170-0014, Japan

〒170-0014 1-17-7 西池袋ビル7F

Lumiere building 7F, 1-17-7 Nishi Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku

Book and Bed is an incredibly cool hostel in Ikebukuro area focused on books. They even call themselves an "accommodation bookshop" though no books are actually sold. Instead a room you will book a bunk bed and use the shared bathroom and toilets. This is one of the many new options of cheap accommodation popping up in Japan because of the tourist boom in the

country. If you are just curious, you can book a day use.

CERULEAN TOWER

CATEGORIES: Great Location, Hotels

Make a Call: +81334763000

Visit Website: <https://www.ceruleantower-hotel.com/en/>

Get Directions: 26-1 Sakuragaokachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0031, Japan

〒150-0031 26-1

26-1 Sakuragaoka-cho, Shibuya-ku

The Cerulean is my favorite hotel in Tokyo. It is not the most luxurious nor the cheapest, but it offers a very good price to quality ratio and it is smack in the heart of Shibuya, making it extremely easy to explore Daikanyama, Meguro, Ebisu to one side and Omotesando, Yoyogi, Aoyama and Harajuku to the other. And Shibuya, of course, the place that never sleeps. Try booking your room with wi-fi included. All rooms are comfortable (not so big though), with amazing beds. Some have great city views. The bathrooms are also quite nice, with black stone floors. I cannot recommend it enough. However, if you are looking into something slightly cheaper, the [Shibuya Excel Hotel Tokyu](#), on the other side of the expressway, has better rates and some single rooms.

PRADA AOYAMA

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Shopping

Make a Call: +81364180400

Visit Website: <http://www.prada.com/en/a-future-archive/epicenters/epicenters-tokyo.html>

Get Directions: Minato, Tokyo, Japan

〒106-0031 5-2-6

5-2-6 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku

Monday to Thursday from 11am to 8pm

Friday to Sunday from 11am to 9pm

In Tokyo, where the post-luxury world is already a reality, international luxury brands need much more than just stores in the major areas of the city. Many names rely heavily on star-architects to create destination stores that are design attractions in themselves. The Prada store in Aoyama is one of this great masterpieces, created by the Swiss duo [Herzog & DeMeuron](#). After you take the selfie in front of it and explore some of its interior, explore the area around the shop. Getting lost in Aoyama and Omotesando side-streets is one of the best pastimes in Tokyo and one that will reveal very nice secrets.

ASO RISTORANTE

CATEGORIES: Drinking, Restobar

Make a Call: +81337703690

Visit Website: <https://www.hiramatsurestaurant.jp/eng/aso/space/>

Get Directions: 29-3 Sarugakuchō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0033, Japan

〒150-0033 29-3

29-3, Sarugakucho, Shibuya-ku | Drinks at the entrance bar

Daily from 12noon to 11pm (last order at 8:30pm)

Aso has a very nice balcony where you can have some quiet moments while sipping a glass of red Italian wine. If you need some down time before entering the magic world of [T-Site Daikanyama](#), this is where you can have a pit stop.

TEN-ICHI TEMPURA

CATEGORIES: Eating, Fine Dining

Make a Call: +81335711949

Visit Website: <http://www.tenichi.co.jp/>

Get Directions: 6 Chome-6-5 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Tōkyō-to 104-0061, Japan

〒104-0061 6-6-5

Ginza, Chuo-ku, 6-6-5 | Tempura

Daily from 11:30am to 4pm (lunch) and until 10pm (dinner, last order at 9pm)

Perhaps the best tempura in the world, Ten-ichi in Ginza is part of the neighborhood's history. Make a booking and ask for the chef's menu. You will not be disappointed. Each piece of tempura is like a small gem, with very little fat and rich in taste. Not cheap but worth the experience.

21_21 DESIGN SITE

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Galleries

Make a Call: +81334752121

Visit Website: <http://www.2121designsight.jp/en/>

Get Directions: 9 Chome-7-6 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tōkyō-to 107-0052, Japan

〒107-0052 9-7-6

9-7-6 Akasaka, Minato-ku

Daily from 10am to 7pm (some exhibitions may have different timings)

Star-architect Tadao Ando and fashion designer Issey Miyake have teamed up to create this superb art center focused on design. It has a rotating calendar of temporary exhibitions and only opens when there is a show. It sits in a nice part of [Tokyo Midtown](#), with a green garden filled with urban art.

GONPACHI

CATEGORIES: Eating, Nice Restaurants

Make a Call: +81357842011

Visit Website: <http://www.gonpachi.jp/shibuya/?lang=en>

Get Directions: 3-6 Maruyamachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0044, Japan

〒150-0044 3-6 Maruyamachō 14F

14F E. Space Tower, 3-6, Maruyama-cho, Shibuya-ku | Sushi and Udon

Daily from 11:30am to 3:30am (last order at 3am)

Gonpachi is a nice option to try either sushi or soba with some English subtitles as they have English menus. At the Shibuya

venue, on the top floor of a modern tower, you have to choose between the soba or the sushi restaurants, there is one side for each. No soba with sushi, sorry. The place is stylish and the quality of the food is very good. Extended opening hours make it a convenient stop for the jet lagged traveler. There are other branches in Ginza and Nishi-Azabu.

TSUMORI CHISATO GOLD

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Shopping

Make a Call: +81363828266

Visit Website: <http://www.tsumorichisato.cc/>

Get Directions: Japan, 〒104-0061 Tōkyō-to, Chūō-ku, Ginza, 1 Chome-4-9 〇〇〇〇〇〇〇〇〇〇

〇〇〇〇〇〇 1-4-9 〇〇〇〇 1F

1 Chome-49, Ginza, Chuo-ku

Daily from 11am to 8pm

Japanese male names such as Issey Miyake, Kenzo and Yohji Yamamoto are well known in the fashion world. When it comes to female stars, apart from Comme des Garçons Rei Kawakubo, there are not many known brands. So when in Japan you have to visit Tsumori Chisato's store in Ginza to discover her manga-bohemian style. Her other store in is Aoyama (〇〇〇〇〇〇 4-21-25), with a men's collection as well.

HANARE

CATEGORIES: Budget, Hotels

Make a Call: +81358347301

Visit Website: <http://hanare.hagiso.jp/en/>

Get Directions: 3 Chome-10-25 Yanaka, Taitō-ku, Tōkyō-to 110-0001, Japan

〇〇〇〇〇〇 3-10-25 HAGISO

3-10-25 Yanaka, Taito-ku

A stay at Hanare is for the traveler who looks for an authentic Japanese experience on a budget. On a residential area of Tokyo, not far from the Nippori Station (easy to access from Narita Airport), the refurbished house is an urban ryokan. ([Zolpidem](#)) Rooms have tatami beds and, included in the room rate, there is a Japanese breakfast and entrance to the local onsen (thermal baths). Different from a hostel or hotel, Hanare offers the Japanese version of how to stay when not at home. A true immersion, good if you have already been to the city or have time to stay here for a few days before moving into a more central area.

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Image from Hanare's website

NUI HOSTEL AND BAR LOUNGE

CATEGORIES: Budget, Hotels

Make a Call: +81362409854

Visit Website: <https://backpackersjapan.co.jp/nuihostel/english.html>

Get Directions: 2 Chome-14-13 Kuramae, Taitō-ku, Tōkyō-to 111-0051, Japan

東京都 2-14-13

2-14-13, Kuramae, Taito-ku

Among Tokyo's new breed of cool hostels, Nui looms large ahead of the competition. Situated a few minutes from Sumida River, [Tokyo Skytree](#) and the [Asakusa](#) area, in a converted toy factory, Nui means handmade and this vibe permeates the whole place. There are dorms with 8 bunk beds as well as twin and double rooms for those wishing more privacy (although the showers and bathrooms are all shared). The common areas foster the exchange of travel information with other travelers who come from all over the world, with a lot of Japanese guests as well. Even if you are not staying there, go over for a drink in the evenings to mingle with some nice people.

SPRING VALLEY BREWERY

CATEGORIES: Drinking, Restobar

Make a Call: +81364164975

Visit Website: <http://www.springvalleybrewery.jp/tokyo/>

Get Directions: 13-1 Daikanyamachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0034, Japan

東京都 13-1 東京都

13-1 Daikanyama-cho, Shibuya-ku | Brewery

Monday to Saturday from 8am to 12midnight (last order at 10:30pm)

Sunday from 8am to 10pm (last order at 9pm)

Spring Valley Brewery is a beautifully appointed restaurant and beer garden in Daikanyama. The beer is excellent and there is always some special brew on offer. You can have a beer flight of their 6 main flavors for JPY 1000 (around USD 10). The food menu pairs well with all of their craft creations and the dining room itself is wonderful. The "oven-kissed" chocolate cake with whipped cream and their Afterdark beer is to die for. A place to stop by at any given time.

FRED SEGAL

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Gifts & Specialties, Shopping

Make a Call: +81334643961

Visit Website: <http://www.fredsegal.co.jp/>

Get Directions: 13-1 Daikanyamachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0034, Japan

東京都 13-1 東京都

13-1 Daikanyama-cho, Shibuya-ku

Daily from 11am to 8pm

Fred Segal is not just a shop but a lifestyle destination. The beautiful wood covered walls, some with vertical green gardens invites us to linger around, have a coffee and walk from shop to shop. The curation is wonderful with clothes and accessories you will not regret buying. This is Fred Segal's first venture outside of Los Angeles and the place could not have been better chosen. It does feel California. The [Spring Valley Brewery](#) is around the corner in case you feel peckish (or thirsty).

PIZZA SLICE

CATEGORIES: Casual Dining, Eating

Make a Call: +81354285166

Visit Website: <http://www.pizzaslice.co/>

Get Directions: 1-3 Sarugakuchō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0033, Japan

〒150-0033 (〒150-0033 1F)

1-3 Sarugakuchō, Shibuya-ku | Pizza

Daily from 11:30am to 11pm (last order at 10:30pm)

Pizza Slice serves New York style pizza in Daikanyama. Both the pizza and the décor are authentic New York. You can pass by and grab just a slice or sit down for some mouthwatering pizza in a lively place. You may even wonder if you really are in Japan, especially in the evenings, when the atmosphere gets livelier.

TOKYU HANDS

CATEGORIES: Gifts & Specialties, Shopping

Make a Call: +81354895111

Visit Website: <http://www.tokyu-hands.co.jp/foreign.html>

Get Directions: 12-18 Udagawachō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0042, Japan

〒150-0042 12-18

12-18 Udagawa-cho, Shibuya-ku

Daily from 10am to 8:30pm

Have you ever imagined a shop that would sell absolutely anything you may need or want? That shop already exists and is in Tokyo. Its name is Tokyu Hands and there is not only the big one in Shibuya, but also in other parts of the sprawling metropolis. Pink lace? Check! A special balance to weigh suitcases? Check! Fishing rod? Of course! Special sushi knives? Absolutely. And much much more. Even if you are not in the shopping mood, have a peek inside just for fun. You may find that special screw-driver you've been dreaming of. The other conveniently located stores are in [Shinjuku](#), [Ginza](#) and by Tokyo Station, to name a few.

ITOYA

CATEGORIES: Gifts & Specialties, Shopping

Make a Call: +81335618311

Visit Website: <http://www.ito-ya.co.jp/>

Get Directions: 2 Chome-7-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Tōkyō-to 104-0061, Japan

〒104-0061 2-7-15

2-7-15, Ginza, Chuo-ku

Monday to Saturday from 10am to 8pm

Sunday from 10am to 7pm

Itoya is any stationery-aficionado's dream come true. The flagship store in Ginza is actually two stores. The main one called G.Itoya has 12 floors of sheer browsing pleasure, with everything you can dream of in terms of paper, pens, envelopes, bags, notebooks, crafts and so on. 12 floors!!! And each has a theme such as Travel, Meeting, Sense, Farm... Across the back road you find K.Itoya where there are fine pens, diaries, art supplies and a personalization floor, to create your own seal and stationery made to measure. There are other, smaller Itoyas around Tokyo, mainly inside department stores. Check their website for these locations.

SHIMO-KITAZAWA

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Neighborhoods

Get Directions: Kitazawa, Setagaya, Tokyo 155-0031, Japan

Shimo-Kitazawa, also known to locals at Shimokita, is a very young neighborhood to the east of Central Tokyo, in the district of Setagaya. With cheaper rents, the area has always attracted students and small shops and this is what it is famous for. It is a short train ride from [Shinjuku](#) or [Shibuya](#) stations but it feels a world away. True that the whole area is very crammed with second-hand stores, small restaurants, street vendors and lots of people walking around. Already in 2008, when I went to a [WGSN](#) conference, they mentioned that Shimokita was a great place to spot new trends. It still is.

TAKARAZUKA REVUE

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Theatre, Concerts & More

Make a Call: +81352512001

Visit Website: <https://kageki.hankyu.co.jp/english/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-1-3 Yūrakuchō, Chiyoda-ku, Tōkyō-to 100-0006, Japan

〒100-0006 1-1-3

1-1-3 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku

The Takarazuka Revue is a century-old theatre ensemble from Kansai (Osaka area) that have made Tokyo their success base. The all-female group has a huge following in Japan. Takarazuka has subverted genre relations in the archipelago since women act male and female characters, breaking with the tradition of the male-only entertainment world.

To join the ensemble, candidates go through a two year training in almost monastic conditions at the Takarazuka school before they can go on stage as full fledged actresses. Shows are mostly cabaret and vaudeville style performances, ranging from Japanese fairy tales to Broadway Musicals and Brecht. Presentations are generally sold out, so secure your ticket online beforehand. Get to know this facet of Japanese life at their Tokyo headquarters. You will be surprised.

To know more, there is this [New York Times article about them](#) and here is a link to their [YouTube Channel](#).

KPP KYARY PAMYU PAMYU

CATEGORIES: Insider Info, Social Media

Visit Website: <http://kyary.asobisystem.com/>

Get Directions: Harajuku, Tokyo 150-0001, Japan

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is a result of Japan's efforts to show its weight in soft power and try to compete with the bombastic success of K-Pop from neighboring South Korea. KPP, born in 1993, is a singer and fashion model who dresses very flamboyantly like the cosplay cult in Harajuku. It is J-Pop at its best. Very pink, very kawaii (cute) and extravagant. This is the link to her [YouTube Channel](#).

TSUKIJI FISH MARKET 魚市場

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Sights

Visit Website: http://www.tsukiji-market.or.jp/tukiji_e.htm

Get Directions: Tsukiji, Chuo, Tokyo 104-0045, Japan

Tsukiji Fish Market is one of Tokyo's most interesting sights. The wholesale seafood paradise is a hive of activity, mostly early mornings, making it a nice option for the jet lagged tourist who wakes up at 4am. In contrast to the ever-so-organized city, the market looks messy and confusing, with little trucks zipping in all directions, long corridors with creatures from the seven seas, loading and unloading of trucks, shouting and Japanese signs. But take a closer look and you will notice that there is a very well orchestrated choreography around. From the tuna auctions to the sushi restaurants on the outer ring of Tsukiji, there is a lot to observe, many great picture stops and after you have had enough of fish, Ginza is only a few blocks away.

However, the whole market is set to move to a new location in Toyosu. It is not too far from its present incarnation, but it will not be so convenient to get there and part of the atmosphere of the place may fade away. For now, my recommendation is to get to Tsukiji early, don't go in a group, walk around trying not to disturb the fishermen and respect the no go areas. Get in line early for the sushi restaurants even if it may be weird for you to have fish for breakfast. Some restaurants have longer lines than others, this is because they are more famous. The etiquette is normally to wait for your turn. Patrons enter in groups to be served all at the same time with an omakase (chef's selection). After all have eaten, doors open and the next group comes in.

There is a documentary called "[Tsukiji Wonderland](#)" about the market which may be a great source of information before your visit.

GRANIPH

CATEGORIES: Fashion & Accessories, Shopping

Make a Call: +81364193053

Visit Website: <http://www.graniph.com/>

Get Directions: 6 Chome-12-17 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0001, Japan

〒150-0001 6-12-17

6-12-17 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku

Daily from 11am to 8pm

For colorful and funky t-shirts, head to Graniph. Founded by three graphic designers from Shimo-Kitazawa, in Tokyo, the idea was to create nice collections of t-shirts that could be sold for affordable prices to a young crowd. With time the brand became better known and they started hiring outside designers, both from Japan and abroad. There are also collaborations with other brands and now Graniph produces not only t-shirts but pullovers, hoodies, handbags, socks and other accessories. They have also opened stores in Taiwan and Australia. (<https://nelsonjsalon.com>) If you like illustrations, you will enjoy having a look at a Graniph store.

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Image from Graniph's website

AMAN TOKYO

CATEGORIES: Hotels, Splurge**Make a Call:** +81352243333**Visit Website:** <https://www.aman.com/resorts/aman-tokyo>**Get Directions:** Otemachi, Chiyoda, Tokyo 100-0004, Japan

東京都千代田区1-5-6 五反田

[1-5-6 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku](#)

The Aman is one of the newest additions to Tokyo's sublime luxury hotels. If budget were not a "minor" constraint, I would move to a suite with Imperial Gardens view and live happily ever after. The architecture is serene, making you feel instantly at peace. I went there for a drink at The Lounge and in the middle of the beautiful contemporary lobby there was a lady playing traditional Japanese harp. There is an Italian restaurant with a wine cellar of over 1200 wines or you can try the hotel's signature sake. The Spa is also divine, so I heard, and the swimming pool has an astonishing view of Tokyo's skyline, as seen on hundreds of Instagram photos.

YOYOGI PARK 公園

CATEGORIES: Keep Fit, Running Routes**Get Directions:** Yoyogi, Shibuya, Tokyo 151-0053, Japan

Yoyogi Park, in the middle of Shibuya, is a great place for a run. The park's running path is not so long, so you may have to go around a few times. The area is well equipped with toilets and water fountains and running underneath the green canopy of trees in the middle of Tokyo is a nice feeling. This area will be one of the focus points of the Olympic Games in 2020. The stadium that looks like a temple will be refurbished. Part of the same green area is the [Meiji Shrine](#). However, you are not allowed to run in that area, as the shrine is sacred land. A power walk is more recommended.

People in Tokyo love running. There are running clubs, marathons and several paths in the city's green areas. Nike, Reebok, Asics, Mizuno and Under Armour have incredible shops selling top gear and you will also find magazines devoted to the sport. One of the greatest runs is around the Imperial Gardens. For those staying in [Ginza](#), Marunouchi, Toranomom and Nihombashi, the gardens are not far away. Better than heading for the hotel's treadmill, running outside helps your body adjust to the time-zone, especially if it is sunny. One tip: run counterclockwise on the tracks to fit in.

ANDAZ TORANOMON HILLS

CATEGORIES: Hotels, Very Comfortable**Make a Call:** +81368301234**Visit Website:** <http://tokyo.andaz.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html>**Get Directions:** 1 Chome-23-4 Toranomom, Minato-ku, Tōkyō-to 105-0001, Japan

東京都港区1-23-4

[1-23-4, Toranomom, Minato-ku](#)

Toranomon Hills is a mixed use development near the government area of Shinbashi and Hibiya Park. The grande dame of the region has always been the Okura Hotel, which is undergoing a renovation. But high above, at the Toranomom Mori Tower's 50th floor, with panoramic views of the city's skyline, there is the Andaz Hotel. Sleek and modern, it is not just a place to stay, but a place to go for a meal and for a drink. There is an enormous rooftop area where you can enjoy a glass of champagne seeing the lights of Tokyo. The mini-éclairs served at the Andaz Tavern are very famous with the chic ladies who enjoy the hotel's afternoon tea.

GHIBLI MUSEUM

CATEGORIES: Arts & Culture, Museums

Make a Call: +81570055777

Visit Website: <http://www.ghibli-museum.jp/en/>

Get Directions: 1 Chome-1-83 Shimorenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tōkyō-to 181-0013, Japan

〒181-0013 東京都ミタカ市1-1-83 日比谷公園

Metropolitan Inokashira Park Nishizonon, 1-1-83 Simorenjaku, Mitaka-shi

Closed on Tuesdays and during certain times of the year for general maintenance. Please click [here](#) for an updated calendar.

Studio Ghibli is behind Japan's soft power success of anime movies and cute characters that feature in cartoons and animated videos. Their highest grossing movie, "Spirited Away", has been screened the world over. Ghibli has a huge following and is present in merchandise, apps, video games and clothing, almost like a Japanese version of Disney (in fact, Disney distributes their content abroad).

In the suburb of Mitaka, about 30 minutes by train from Shinjuku or Shibuya the Ghibli Museum brings the studio's character's to life, recreating many scenes from their cartoons and showcasing temporary exhibitions that attract teenagers and kids from Japan and abroad.

MUST-SEE LANDMARKS

CATEGORIES: City Areas, Sights

Get Directions: Tokyo, Japan

Some of Tokyo's landmarks:

Tokyo Tower

Tokyo SkyTree

Asakusa Kannon (Senso-ji)

Imperial Palace

Shibuya Crossing

Meiji Shrine

Shinjuku Gyoen

Harajuku

Mori Tower

BLACOWS

CATEGORIES: Burger Joints, Eating

Make a Call: +81334772914

Visit Website: <http://www.kuroge-wagyu.com/bc/>

Get Directions: 2 Chome-11-9 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0013, Japan

〒150-0013 東京都渋谷区恵比寿2-11-9

2 Chome-11-9 Ebisunishi, Shibuya-ku | Burgers

Daily from 11:30am to 10pm (last order at 9pm)

I discovered Blacows by chance, in a freezing winter weekday while lost around Daikanyama. It was one of the most delicious discoveries I ever made in Japan. Their burger is simply one of the best I have ever had, anywhere in the planet. The beef comes from special farms that breed the Japanese Wagyu Beef, so the taste is sublime. To go along, the bread comes from [Maison Eric Kayser](#), the Parisian baker that has conquered Asia, so it is soft and savoury. As for the other ingredients, you can pick and choose, but I strongly recommend the avocado and bacon. There is also an amazing spread of finely chopped onions and a light mayo that comes by default and makes the burger just addictive. A real treat!

IVY PLACE

CATEGORIES: Eating, Nice Restaurants

Make a Call: +81364153232

Visit Website: <https://www.tysons.jp/ivyplace/en/>

Get Directions: 16-15 Sarugakuchō, Shibuya-ku, Tōkyō-to 150-0033, Japan

〒150-0033 16-15

16-15 Sarugaku-cho, Shibuya-ku | International with an Italian twist

Daily from 7am to 11pm (last order at 10pm)

Set in a calm and green area around the amazing magazine and bookstore [Tsutaya T-site](#), Ivy Place is a delicious restaurant with three different areas, a bar, a dining room and a café. An ideal place for a long lunch during the week, with a set menu for JPY 3800, for some pancakes with coffee in the afternoon or drinks in the evening, any time is a great time to enjoy the place. They have a competent wine list but the craft beers from its parent company [T.Y. Harbor Brewery](#) are a good choice. A true gem in the middle of Daikanyama with large windows facing the greenery and the calm passers-by. ([Ambien](#))

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Image from Ivy Place's website