

NEIGHBOURHOODS

top picks

- **Imperial Palace** (p50) – The Imperial Palace remains the home of the Japanese imperial family.
- **Meiji-jingū** (p109) – Easily the most beautiful and peaceful spot in Tokyo.
- **Takeshita-dōri** (p109) – The undisputed teen fashion capital of Japan. Runs through the heart of Harajuku.
- **Shibuya Crossing** (p105) – One of the largest intersections in the world, Shibuya Crossing overwhelms.
- **Sensō-ji** (p85) – The most sacred spot in Tokyo.
- **Roppongi Hills** (p94) – This complex presents the new face of stylistic Tokyo.
- **Akihabara Electric Town** (p67) – An entire neighbourhood dedicated to geek culture.
- **Tsukiji Central Fish Market** (p64) – The world's largest fish market is simply not to be missed.
- **La Qua Spa** (p58) – The perfect place to heal your body and recover from jet lag.
- **Ameyoko** (p70) – Catch a glimpse of the old Shitamachi at this bustling shopping street full of open-air markets.

What's your recommendation? www.lonelyplanet.com/tokyo

NEIGHBOURHOODS

The target of relentless Allied fire bombing during WWII, old Edo burnt to the ground in a fiery maelstrom. However, as Japan transformed itself into one of the world's largest and most dynamic economies, the modern city of Tokyo quickly rose from the ashes. Today the greater Tokyo area numbers upwards of 35 million people, and is regarded by demographers as the largest metropolitan area in the world.

Lacking the geometric precision of gridded cities common to Europe and North America, the urban complexity of Tokyo can be absolutely mindblowing to the uninitiated. In fact, even Tokyoites joke among themselves that getting lost in their own city is a matter of course. However, the key to breaking down Tokyo into manageable pieces is to simply view the capital as an amalgamation of minicities.

Despite its fairly repetitious façade of stale concrete, blazing neon and jumbled electrical wires, Tokyo is actually made up of distinct neighbourhoods, each of which is distinguished by its own unique character and flair. Like Edo before it, Tokyo has long thought of itself in terms of the high city and the low city. The high city or Yamanote, home of the shōgun (and the nobles and samurai who served him), was a rarefied place, while the low city, or Shitamachi, was reserved for the commoners.

If you look at a JR (Japan Rails) transit map today, you'll notice a green ring around the city centre. This is the JR Yamanote Line, which loops around the heart of the city, connecting east and west, old and new. Transit, among a slew of other political, cultural and economic factors, has eliminated the distinctions between the high city and the low city. However, the unique heritage and idiosyncrasies of Tokyo's mini-cities are still very much alive, and a quick stroll through each of the neighbourhoods is still the best way to get acquainted with the many faces of the capital.

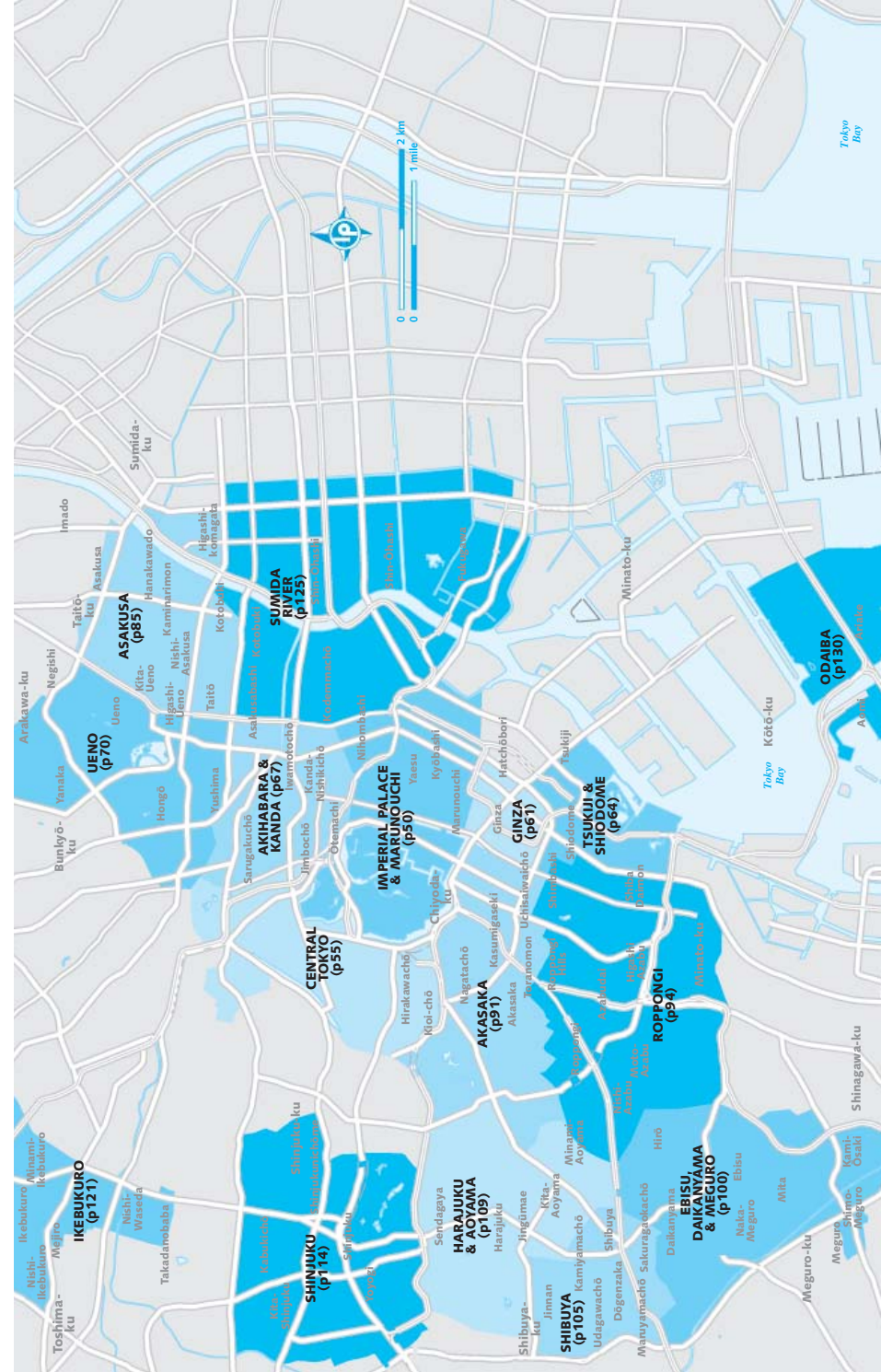
We begin at the centre of it all, the Imperial Palace, which is the geographical and spiritual heart of both Tokyo and Japan. Next we head east towards Ginza and the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River), which marks the eastern boundaries of Yamanote, and retains its high-stepping airs as the most prestigious shopping district in the country.

Continuing north through the electronics district and geek capital of Akihabara, we arrive at the venerable cultural centres of Ueno and Asakusa, which form the living, breathing heart of the historic Shitamachi. Crossing the river brings us to Ryōgoku, seat of sumō culture, and the southeasterly manmade island of Odaiba, which has no intention whatsoever of taking you back to old Edo.

Southwest of the Imperial Palace is the government district of Akasaka and the pleasure district turned design centre of Roppongi. In the southwesterly corner are the fashionable residential areas of Ebisu and Meguro, though class gives way to youth in the adjacent fashion hubs of Harajuku and Shibuya. Continuing north, we finish our tour at the high-rise-meets-low-rise cacophony of Shinjuku and Ikebukuro, two of the city's most important financial and commercial districts.

Indeed, the appeal of Tokyo lies in its multitude of layers, all of which must be peeled back in order to fully delve into the core of the city. Of course, penetrating the heart of the world's largest metropolitan area is no easy task, though few urban destinations can offer as much variety as Tokyo. From the highfalutin boutiques of Ginza and the trendy street fashions of Harajuku, to the cheery fishmongers of Ueno and the chanting monks of Asakusa, Tokyo will lay siege to your senses from the moment you set foot on her streets.

'even Tokyoites joke among themselves that getting lost in their own city is a matter of course.'



ITINERARY BUILDER

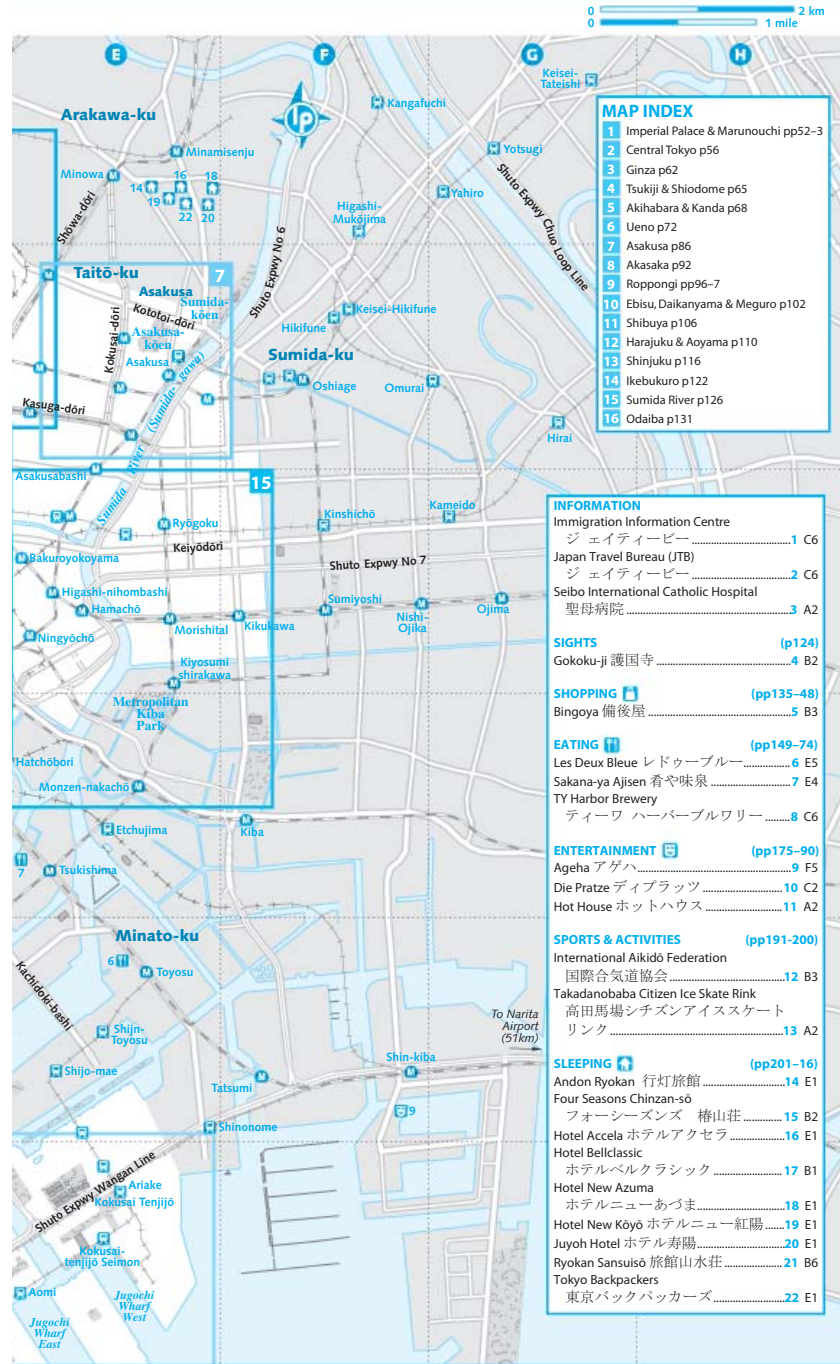
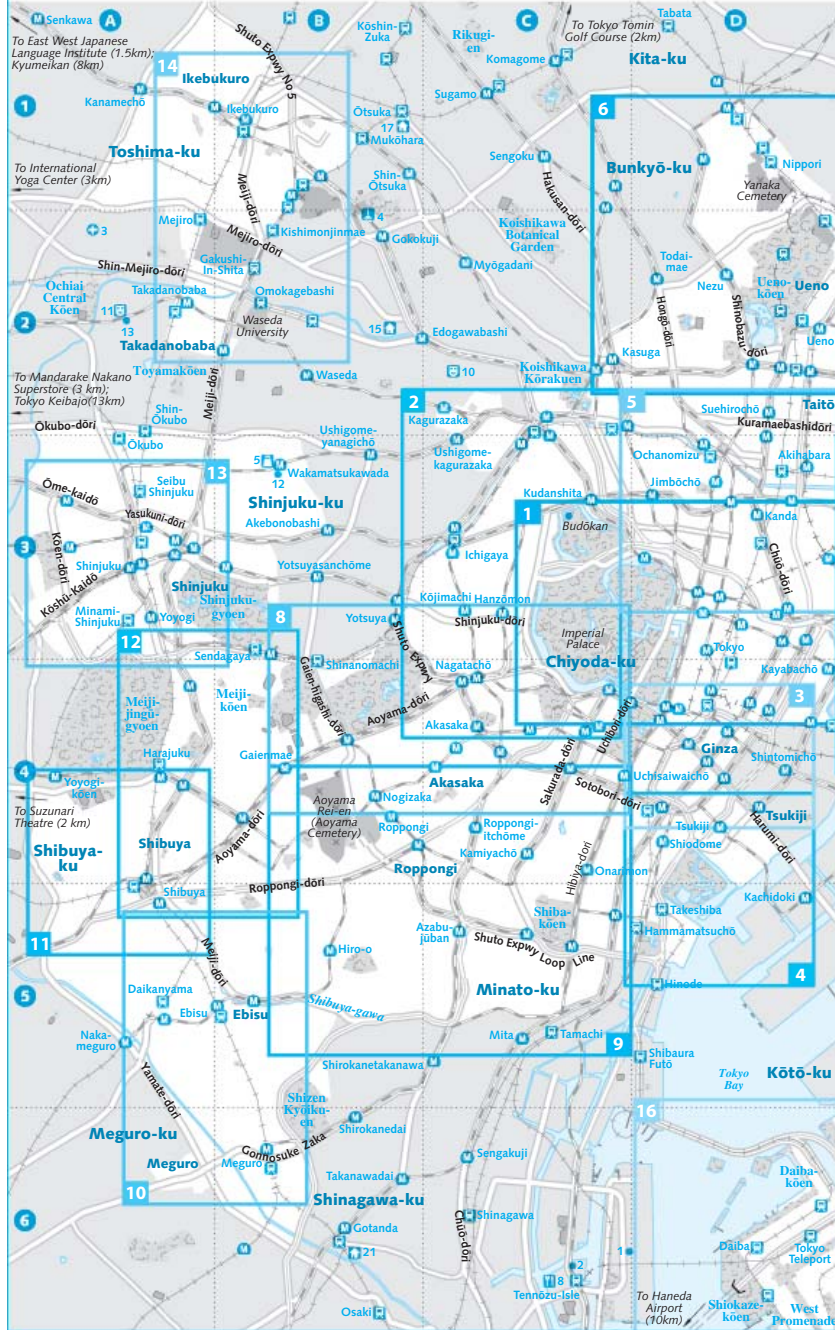
Planning an itinerary through the world's largest megalopolis is no small task, especially as Tokyo can take several lifetimes to fully explore. Each of Tokyo's neighbourhoods is best thought of as a city unto itself, adding layers of complexity to a capital defined by both tradition and modernity. However, most of its top sights can be checked off in a few days, though you should slow down and save enough time to savour a fine Japanese meal or take in one of the capital's numerous cultural attractions. Indeed, the beauty of Japan is often revealed in the subtle nuances that lie behind the dense crowds and blazing neon.

HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Museums	Eating	Shopping	Entertainment
AREA	Central Tokyo	Imperial Palace (p50) Yasukuni-jinja (p55) Kagurazaka (p60)	Bridgestone Museum of Art (p52) Idemitsu Museum of Arts (p53) JCI Camera Museum (p58)	Tsukiji Central Fish Market (p64) Peter (p156) Kyūbei (p158)	Akihabara Electric Town (p67) Sony Building (p61) Tsukiji Outer Market (p65)	Kabuki-za (p176) Tokyo Dome (p58) La Qua Spa (p58)
	Shibuya & Harajuku	Meiji-jingū (p109) Hachikō Statue (p105) Love Hotel Hill (p105)	Tobacco & Salt Museum (p106) Tepco Electric Energy Museum (p107) Toguri Museum of Art (p108)	Coucagno (p167) Nobu (p168) Fonda De La Madrugada (p168)	Omote-sandō Boulevard (p142) Takeshita-dōri (p144) Mandarake (p143)	Bunkamura (p107) Cerulean Tower Nō Theatre (p176) Kanze Nō-gakudō (p176)
	Asakusa & Ueno	Sensō-ji (p85) Asakusa-jinja (p86) Chingodō-ji (p87)	Shitamachi Museum (p75) Kokuritsū Kagaku Hakubutsukan (National Science Museum; p74) Taiko-kan (Taiko Drum Museum; p89)	Asakusa Imahan (p162) Komagata Dojō (p162) Daikokuya (p163)	Kappabashi-dōri (p138) Edo Shitamachi Dentō Kōgeikan (Traditional Crafts Museum; p89) Ameyoko (p70)	Sumida-gawa (River) Cruise (p87) Ueno Kōen (Ueno Park; p70) Ueno Dōbutsu-en (Ueno Zoo; p73)
	Shinjuku & Ikebukuro	Shinjuku-gyōen (p119) Metropolitan Government Offices (p116) Hanazono-jinja (p119)	Japanese Sword Museum (p116) Sompo Japan Museum of Art (p117) Ikebukuro Bōsai-kan (Ikebukuro Earthquake Hall; p123)	Isetan & Seibu (p171) Daidaya (p170) Park Hyatt Delicatessen (p170)	Japan Traditional Craft Center (p123) Kinokuniya Bookshop (p119 & p143) Sunshine City (p121)	New York Grill and Bar (p181) Kabukichō (p119) Golden Gai (p119)
	Roppongi & Akasaka	Tokyo Tower (p95) National Diet Building (p91) Zōjō-ji (p98)	Mori Art Museum (p95) Suntory Museum of Art (p95) National Art Center, Tokyo (p99)	Vinoteca (p164) China Room (p164) Fukuzushi (p164)	Roppongi Hills (p94) Axis (p99) Complex (p99)	Blue Note Tokyo (p189) Grand Prince Hotel Akasaka (p184) Heartland (p182)
	Odaiba	Fuji TV Studio (p132) Toyota Mega Web (p132)	Miraikan (p130) Fune no Kagaku-kan (Museum of Maritime Science; p131)	Ōshima Endomae-dokoro (p173) Tsukiji Tama Sushi (p173)	Venus Fort (p147) Decks Tokyo Beach (p147)	Ō-Edo Onsen Monogatari (p130)
	Ebisu & Daikanyama	Daien-ji (p100) Shizen Kyōiku-en (Institute for Nature Study; p101) Meguro gajoen (Meguro Wedding Hall; p104)	Meguro Parasitological Museum (p103) Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo (p103) Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (p103)	Mushroom (p165) Toki no Ma (p166) Ricos Kitchen (p165)	Yebisu Garden Place (p141) Daikanyama Address (p141)	Yebisu Garden Cinema (p188) Beer Museum Yebisu (p100)

GREATER TOKYO



IMPERIAL PALACE & MARUNOUCHI

Eating p156; Shopping p136; Sleeping p204

The geographical and spiritual heart of Tokyo and Japan is the Imperial Palace (below), which has been the centre of national affairs since the year 1600. Under the watch of shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu and his descendants, the city of Edo expanded at a breakneck pace, on its way to becoming a military stronghold and one of the world's largest cities. Edo Castle (Edo-jō), which grew to include the thick stone walls and expansive moat that remain today, became the focus of the shōgun's power.

Although few other vestiges of the castle survived Allied bombing, its imposing grounds still house the reconstructed Imperial Palace. However, in truth most of the area's power-brokering takes place a short walk away in adjacent Marunouchi. Here, government ministries, national financial institutions and corporate headquarters attend to the daily ebb and flow of the world's second-largest economy.

The historic Yamanote has greatly expanded beyond this tract of land, though the Imperial Palace and Marunouchi recall the era when the high town was the command post of a nation. The monolithic ministry and insurance industry buildings fronting the palace survived WWII, and still carry out their original functions. At nearby Tokyo Station, legions of salarymen (office workers) pass through the turnstiles, each devoting their time and energy to keeping Japan's financial gears churning.

Northeast of the Imperial Palace lies the remnants of Edo's rough-and-tumble low city, namely the historic Shitamachi and the modern district of Ueno. The electronics district of Akihabara is to the east, and the glitzy Ginza and the fish market at Tsukiji are to the south. The bustling government and business district of Akasaka is to the southwest, while the districts collectively known as Central Tokyo lie to the north and northwest.

Once you've arrived at Tokyo Station, the western exit will take you out towards the Imperial Palace. It is an easy, accessible five-minute walk through Marunouchi's rows of banks and blue suits and onward to one of the most open spaces in the city, within which lives the most cloistered family in Japan. The eastern exit takes you to Yaesu and more of the financial district.

KYŌKYO (IMPERIAL PALACE)

Map pp52-3

皇居

The Imperial Palace is the permanent residence of Japan's emperor and imperial family. Given the recent birth of future emperor Prince Hisahito, the frequent nervous breakdowns of Princess Masako and the debate regarding Princess Aiko's right of ascension, new stories surrounding the imperial family are splashed across the Japanese tabloids on a daily basis. Of course, unlike their royal counterparts in the UK, life in the Imperial Palace is rigidly controlled by a secretive organisation known as the **Imperial Household Agency**, which keeps any potential scandals under wraps.

Completed in 1968, the palace itself is a somewhat staid, contemporary reconstruction of the Meiji Imperial Palace, which was targeted by aerial bombers during WWII. However, on these grounds once stood Edo Castle, which in its time was the largest castle in the world. The first Edo Castle was home to a prominent feudal lord,

though the grounds were abandoned following his assassination in 1486. In 1590, Tokugawa Ieyasu chose the grounds as the site for an unassailable castle from which the shōgun was to rule all Japan until the Meiji Restoration.

Edo Castle was fortified by a complex system of stone walls, moats, watch towers and armouries. However, this didn't stop the commoners from rising up, and by the

TRANSPORT: IMPERIAL PALACE & MARUNOUCHI

Train The JR Yamanote Line stops at brick-fronted Tokyo Station, which borders the Imperial Palace to the west. Yūrakuchō Station, one stop south, may be more convenient to some destinations.

Metro The Marunouchi Line runs along the east side of the Imperial Palace and connects with Tokyo Station. The Toei Mita, Chiyoda and Hanzōmon Lines also have stops near Tokyo Station and around the Imperial Palace.

time Commodore Perry and the black ships brought about the end of shōgun rule in 1868, large sections of the old castle had already been destroyed. In the years to follow, the Emperor Meiji took up power in Edo, and much of the remaining castle was torn down to make way for the new Imperial Palace.

The palace itself is closed to the public for all but two days a year: 2 January (New Year's holiday) and 23 December (the Emperor's birthday). But it is possible to wander around its outskirts and to visit the gardens, from where you can catch a glimpse of the palace's most famous landmark, the double-barrelled bridge, **Nijū-bashi**.

HIGASHI-GYŌEN (IMPERIAL PALACE EAST GARDEN) Map pp52-3

東御苑

☎ 3213-2050; admission free; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun Mar-Oct, closed for imperial functions & from 4pm Nov-Feb; 📍 Marunouchi, Tozai, Chiyoda or Hanzōmon Line to Ōtemachi (exits c13b or c8b)

Higashi-gyōen is the only corner of the Imperial Palace proper that is regularly open to the public, and it makes for a pleasant retreat from the grinding hustle and bustle of Tokyo. Here you can get up-close-and-personal views of the massive stones used to build the castle walls, and even climb the ruins of one of the keeps, off the upper lawn. Although entry is free, the number of visitors at any one time is limited, so it never feels crowded.

Entry here is through one of three gates: **Ōte-mon** on the east side and **Hirakawa-mon** and **Kitahanebashi-mon** on the north side. Most people enter through Ōte-mon, which is situated closest to Tokyo Station, and was the principal entrance to Edo Castle for more than 200 years. Here you may want to make a stop at the **Museum of Imperial Collections**, which mounts small exhibits of the 5000-plus artworks held within the palace.

KITANOMARU-KŌEN (KITANOMARU PARK) Map pp52-3

北の丸公園

☎ Hanzōmon Line or Shinjuku or Tōzai Line to Kudanshita (exit 2), or Tōzai Line to Takebashi (exit 1a) This large park north of the Imperial Palace grounds is home to a few noteworthy mu-

seums as well as the **Nihon Budōkan** (☎ 3216-5123; 2-3 Kitanomaru-kōen). Westerners know the 14,000-plus-seat Budōkan as Tokyo's legendary concert hall for big acts from the Beatles to Beck, but it was originally built as the site of martial arts championships (judō, karate, kendō, aikidō) for the 1964 Olympics (*budō* means 'martial arts'). These arts are still practised and exhibited here today – for more information, see p192.

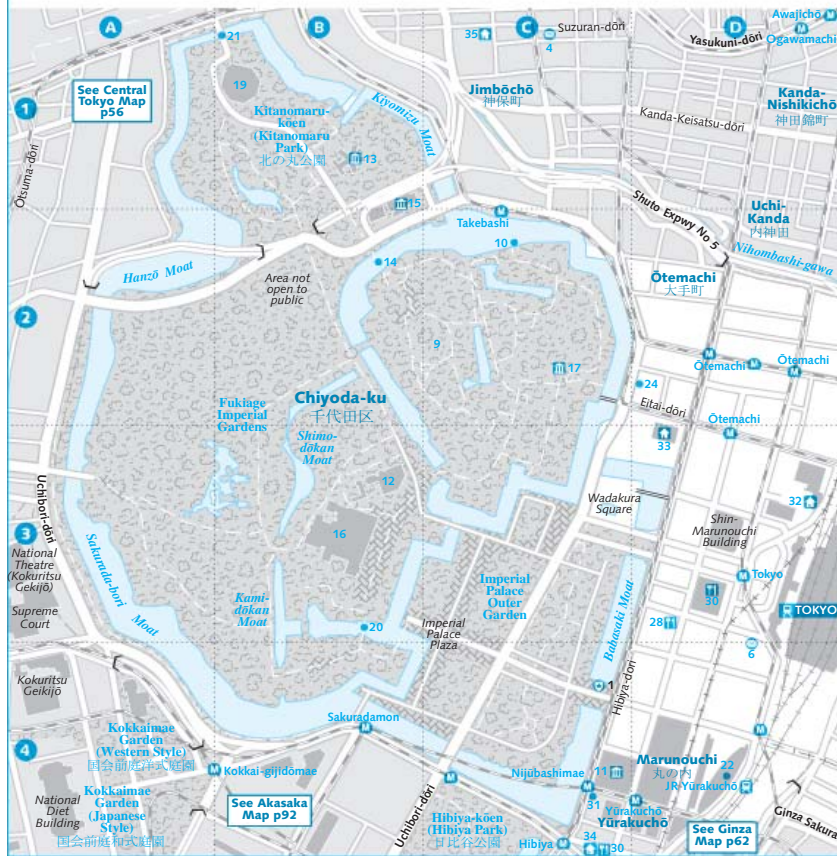
Located in a position southeast of the Budōkan is **Kagaku Gijitsukan** (Science Museum; ☎ 3212-2440; www.jsf.or.jp/eng; 2-1 Kitanomaru-kōen, Chiyoda-ku; adult/child ¥600/250, student ¥400; 🕒 9am-4.50pm), which features a good selection of exhibits aimed primarily at children and teenagers. There is little in the way of English explanations, but there is an excellent bilingual guidebook (¥200) available. Even without a guidebook or an understanding of Japanese, you can still stand inside a soap bubble, and visit the 'methane boy' (he emits exactly what you think he emits).

In the south of the park, facing the Imperial Palace East Garden, is the contemporary art museum **Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan** (National Museum of Modern Art, MOMAT; ☎ 5777-8600; www.momat.go.jp/english; 3-2 Kitanomaru-kōen, Chiyoda-ku; adult/senior & child/student ¥420/free/130; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, 10am-8pm Fri). All pieces date from the Meiji period onward and impart a sense of a more modern Japan through portraits, photography and grim wartime landscapes. Its collection of over 9000 works is arguably the best in the country.

Situated conveniently nearby, MOMAT also operates the **Bijutsukan Kōgeikan** (Crafts Gallery; 1 Kitanomaru-kōen, Chiyoda-ku; adult/senior & under 15/student ¥200/100/70; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), which is an excellent museum to visit. It stages changing exhibitions of *mingei* crafts: ceramics, lacquerware, bamboo, textiles, dolls and much more. Artists range from living national treasures to contemporary artisans. Its red-brick building is an important cultural property in its own right – it dates from 1910, when it was the headquarters of the imperial guards, and was rebuilt after destruction in WWII.

The gate at the northern end, **Tayasumon**, dates from 1636, making it the oldest remaining gate in the park.

IMPERIAL PALACE & MARUNOUCHI



TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Map pp52–3

東京国際フォーラム

☎ 5221-9000; 3-5-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; admission free; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Yūrakuchō, or Yūrakuchō Line to Yūrakuchō (exit a4b)

Located between Tokyo and Yūrakuchō Stations, the Forum is truly one of Tokyo's architectural marvels. Architect Rafael Viñoly won Japan's first international architecture competition with his design that matches a building with this sort-of-trapezoidal lot, hemmed in by train tracks on the east side. Completed in 1996, the Forum sits on land that had previously been the site of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices, which moved to their present location in Shinjuku (p116).

The glass eastern wing looks like a fantastic ship plying the urban waters, while the west wing is a cavernous space of vaulted steel and glass. At night, the glass hall is lit up by hundreds of precisely placed beams, and takes on the appearance of a space colony. Although it's used principally for its meeting halls and convention venues, for the casual visitor there are restaurants, cafés and shops throughout.

BRIDGESTONE MUSEUM OF ART

Map pp52–3

ブリヂストン美術館

☎ 3563-0241; www.bridgestone-museum.gr.jp/en; adult/under 15/student/senior ¥800/free/500/600; 🕒 10am-8pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun; ④ Ginza or Tozai Line to Nihombashi (Taka-



shimaya exit), Ginza Line to Kyōbashi (Meidi-ya exit) or JR Yamanote or Marunouchi Line to Tokyo (Yaesu Central exit)

Tokyo has a love affair with all things French, so it shouldn't come as too much of a surprise that French impressionist art looms large in the civic imagination. The Bridgestone Tyre Company's collection, which was previously kept as a private collection by Bridgestone founder Ishibashi Shojiro, is one of the best French impressionist collections you will find in all of Asia. Though French painting is undoubtedly the main attraction (think Renoir, Ingres, Corot, Matisse et al), the museum also exhibits sculpture and some works by Japanese impressionists as well as European pieces that employ abstract or neoclassical aesthetics.

IMPERIAL PALACE & MARUNOUCHI

INFORMATION

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Post Office 郵便局.....	5 E3
Tokyo Central Post Office 東京中央郵便局.....	6 D4
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Imperial Household Agency 宮内庁.....	12 B3
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Kitahanebashi-mon 北橋門.....	14 B2
Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan (National Museum of Modern Art) 国立近代美術館.....	15 B1
Kyōkyō (Imperial Palace) 皇居.....	16 B3
Museum of Imperial Collections 三の丸尚蔵館.....	17 C2
Nihombashi.....	18 F3
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Nijū-bashi 二重橋.....	20 B3
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Sakura Hotel サクラホテル.....	35 C1
Yaesu Terminal Hotel 八重洲ターミナルホテル.....	36 E3

IDEMITSU MUSEUM OF ARTS

Map pp52–3

出光美術館

☎ 3213-9402; www.idemitsu.co.jp/museum, in Japanese; 9th fl, 3-1-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; adult/student ¥800/500; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Thu,

CHÔME THE WAY TO GO HOME...

In Tokyo, finding a place from its address can be difficult, even for locals. The problem is twofold: first, addresses are given within a district rather than along a street (only major streets have names or numbers); and second, building numbers are not necessarily consecutive, as prior to the mid-1950s numbers were assigned by date of construction. During the US occupation after WWII, an attempt was made to impose some 'logic' upon the system, and main streets were assigned names, though the city reverted to its own system after the Americans left.

Tokyo, like most Japanese cities, is divided first into *ku* (wards – Tokyo has 23 of them), which in turn are divided into *chō* or *machi* (towns) and then into numbered *chōme* (*cho-may*), areas of just a few blocks. Subsequent numbers in an address refer to blocks within the *chōme* and buildings within each block. In English, addresses are most often written, for example, '3-5-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo': the '3' refers to the *chōme*; the '5' narrows down the field to a single block within the *chōme*; and the '1' indicates a specific building, all within the Marunouchi district of Chiyoda ward. A number followed by an F in an address indicates the floor within the building. Note that when written in Japanese the order is reversed (Tokyo, Chiyoda-ku, Marunouchi 3-5-1). Of course!

Generally you have to ask for directions. Numerous *kōban* (local police boxes) are there largely for this purpose. Businesses often include a small map on their advertisements or business cards, or most are happy to email you a map. It was not too long ago that you needed this map to show to a taxi driver, but nowadays if you have the address they can generally get you there by means of a navigation system. If you're arriving by train or subway, be sure to also get the closest exit number from the station. We've provided transit information throughout this guidebook, including exit numbers where useful.

Otherwise, you can pick up a bilingual road atlas (Kodansha publishes the excellent *Tokyo City Atlas*) or buy a map that shows every building in every *chōme*. More and more there are also directional signs in English to important locations.

Sat & Sun, 10am-7pm Fri; ㊚ JR Yamanote Line to Yūrakuchō, or subway Chiyoda or Toei Mita Line to Hibiya (exit A1 or B3)

This excellent collection of Japanese art, sprinkled liberally with Chinese and Korean pottery and a few stray Western pieces, is the result of the lifetime passion of petroleum magnate Idemitsu Sazo. As there is no permanent display, exhibits change every few months, highlighting the complete depth of Idemitsu's collection. The museum also provides broad views across to the grounds of the Imperial Palace.

NIHOMBASHI Map pp52-3

日本橋

㊚ Ginza Line to Mistukoshimae (exits B5 or B6) or Nihombashi (exits B11 or B12)

Even with the bronze lions guarding it, you could be forgiven for walking right past this granite bridge under an expressway, where Chūō-dōri meets Nihombashi-gawa. Still, it bears mention for its historic significance. Nihombashi ('Japan bridge') was the point from which all distances were measured during the Edo period, the beginning of the great trunk roads (the Tōkaidō, the Nikkō Kaidō etc) that took *daimyō* (feudal lords) between Edo and their home provinces. To

see a replica of the original wooden bridge, visit the **Edo-Tokyo Museum** (p125).

TOKYO STOCK EXCHANGE Map pp52-3

東京証券取引所

㊚ 3665-1881; www.tse.or.jp; 2-1 Nihombashi Kabutocho, Chūō-ku; admission free; ㊚ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri with the exception of holidays; ㊚ Tōzai Line to Kayabacho (exit 11) or Toei Asakusa Line to Nihombashi (exit D2)

The Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) has been operating since 1878, and today it is the world's second-largest capital market after the New York Stock Exchange. The two main indices of the TSE are the benchmark Nikkei (an index of 225 companies selected by the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, Japan's leading economic daily) and the broader TOPIX index, which covers all 1600 companies on the TSE's prestigious 1st Section.

Though the Tokyo Stock Exchange no longer echoes with the flurry of unbridled activity (the trading floor closed in the spring of 1999, and now all trading is by computer), it's still worth a visit. You can walk through the visitors galleries, or inquire about the 40-minute guided English-language tour (with video presentation).

CENTRAL TOKYO

Eating p157; Shopping p138; Sleeping p205

More a collection of contiguous neighbourhoods than one unified district, the area north and west of the Imperial Palace spans the spectrum from historic gardens and samurai quarters to baseball stadiums, amusement parks and war memorials. Commonly referred to as Central Tokyo, the bulk of historic Yamanote is somewhat lacking in terms of an identifiable character, though its continued wealth and status is evident in the soaring steel and glass skyscrapers that line the streets. However, Central Tokyo does have a number of noteworthy sights, which are definitely worth seeking out amid the urban sprawl.

Closest to the Imperial Palace is the infamous Yasukuni-jinja (below), a controversial shrine to Japan's war dead that is plastered across the international headlines every time a Japanese politician stops by to pay their respects. Although a quick pass through the onsite WWII history museum is somewhat sobering to say the least, it does feature high on the itineraries of politically savvy foreign travellers.

Northwest of the palace is Kōrakuen, which originally housed the pleasure gardens of the Yamanote nobility. Today, it continues to be a place of amusement, especially since the neighbourhood is home to the Tokyo Dome (p58), the fabled home of the Yomiuri Giants, the Japanese equivalent of the New York Yankees. Also in the shadow of the dome is Koishikawa Kōrakuen (p58), a traditional Japanese garden that is no longer reserved for the highest of classes.

West of the palace is Kagurazaka, which offers up quaint old-Edo streetscapes and hide-and-seek alleys, which would provide the perfect setting for a romantic tryst or a shady backroom deal.

Central Tokyo is roughly bordered by the grounds of the Imperial Palace to the east, the government and business district of Akasaka to the south and greater Shinjuku and Ikebukuro to the west and northwest.

YASUKUNI-JINJA (YASUKUNI SHRINE) Map p56

靖国神社

㊚ 3261-8326, Yūshūkan 3261-0998; www.yasukuni.or.jp; 3-1-1 Kudankita, Chiyoda-ku; shrine admission free, Yūshūkan admission adult ¥800, student ¥300-500; ㊚ 9am-5.30pm Mar-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Feb; ㊚ Tōzai, Hanzōmon or Toei Shinjuku Line to Kudanshita (exit 1)

If you've kept up with international headlines, you might recall several news stories about China, Korea and other Asian nations taking to the streets every time a Japanese politician (such as former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi) visited Yasukuni-jinja. Literally 'For the Peace of the Country Shrine', Yasukuni is the memorial shrine to Japan's war dead, some 2.5 million souls who died in combat. However, although the conservative right wing in Japan stands by its patriotic duty to honour its war dead, the complete story is just a tad more controversial (to say the least).

To put things in perspective, it's important to fully understand the history of Yasukuni-jina. Although the shrine only dates back to 1869, in the years leading up to and during WWII, it was chosen as Tokyo's chief shrine of State Shintō. During this time, Yasukuni-jinja became the physi-

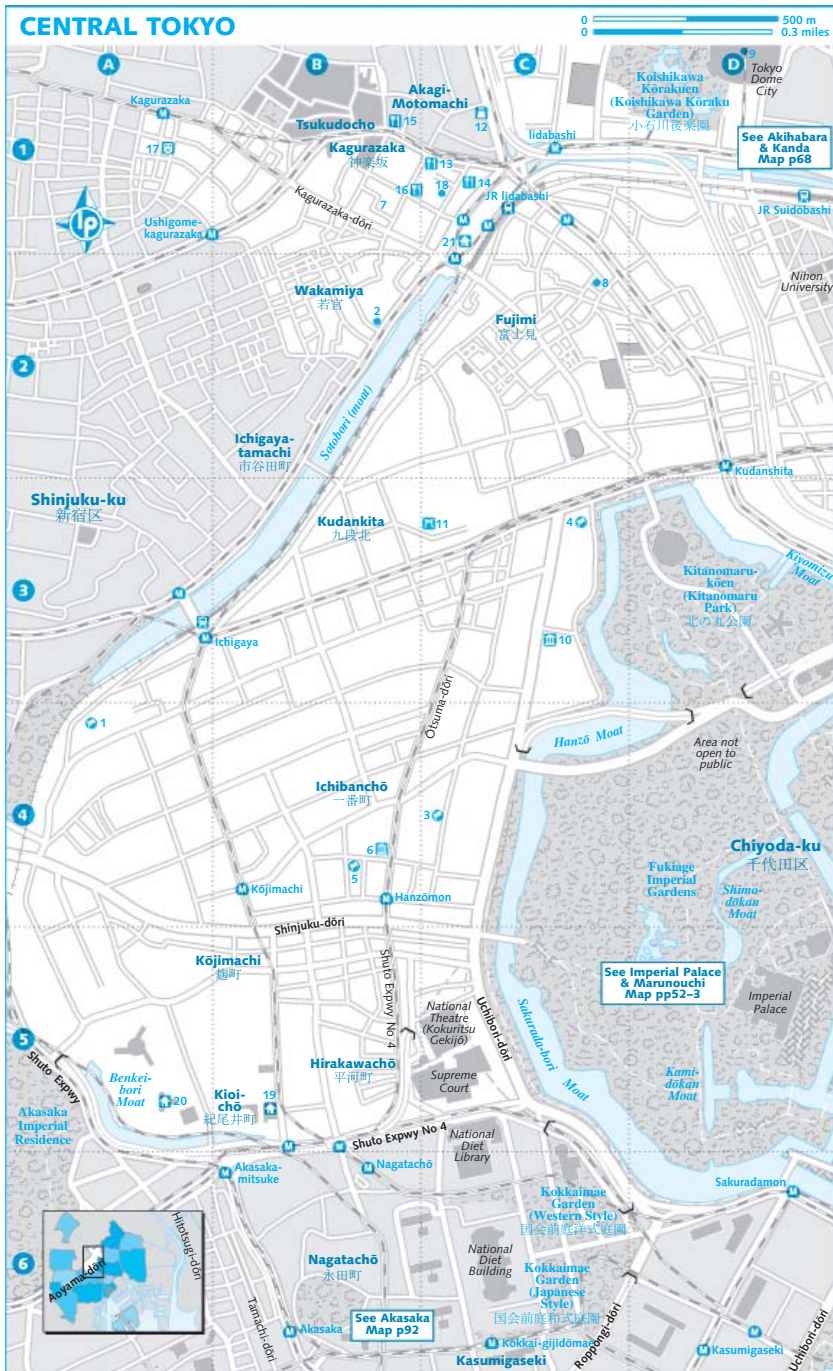
cal representation of the Japanese government's jingoistic policy. Needless to say, the Asian countries that suffered under the harsh grip of Imperial Japan are less than ecstatic when heads of state stop by and pay their respects.

Of course, that's only half the story. Despite a post-war constitutional commitment to the separation of religion and politics as well as a renunciation of militarism, in 1979 14 class-A war criminals (as determined by the US-led International Military Tribunal for the Far East) including Hideki Tojo (infamous WWII general) were enshrined here amid worldwide protests. And, as if to add salt to the wound, leading Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politicians have made a habit of visiting the shrine on the anniversary of Japan's defeat in WWII (15 August).

TRANSPORT: CENTRAL TOKYO

Train The JR Chūō and JR Sōbu Lines stop at Iidabashi and Suidōbashi, which are located at the centre of this area.

Metro Useful stations include Iidabashi (Toei Ōedo Line), Kōrakuen (Marunouchi Line), Kagurazaka (Tōzai Line) and Hanzōmon (Hanzōmon Line).



CENTRAL TOKYO

CENTRAL TOKYO

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Regardless of your political leanings, a visit to Yasukuni is highly recommended, especially since it's one of the most beautiful shrines in Tokyo. Yasukuni-jinja's enormous *torii* (gate) at the entrance is, unusually, made of steel, while the second set is made of bronze. The beautiful inner shrine is laid out in the style of Japan's most important Shintō edifice, Ise Shrine (100km southeast of Kyoto), and there are often seasonal displays of ikebana in the inner courtyard. The grounds are charmingly home to a flock of doves, which balances out all the war hawks who are about.

Beyond the inner shrine, visitors are likely to come away with mixed feelings about the shrine's museum, the *Yūshūkan*, Japan's oldest museum (1882). It starts, fittingly enough for a war memorial, with stately cases depicting Japan's military heritage and traditions, punctuated by displays of swords and samurai armour, and art and poetry extolling the brave, daring and indomitable spirit of the Japanese people.

However, as you gradually progress through Japan's 19th- and early-20th-century military conflicts – the Meiji Restoration, Satsuma Rebellion, tussles with Russia, occupation of Korea, and elsewhere – tempers tend to get a bit heated.

But the source of the most controversy is the section of the museum covering the 'Greater East Asian War', which you probably know as WWII. While there is undoubtedly value in offering the Japanese perspective, one can also understand the anger of Japan's neighbours at the ap-

parent watering down of the hardships they endured at Japan's hands. Consider this gem about the Rape of Nanjing (here called the 'Nanking Incident') of December 1937: 'The Chinese were soundly defeated, suffering heavy casualties. Inside the city, residents were once again able to live their lives in peace.' Or you might learn that Japan was forced into attacking Pearl Harbor due to American and British foreign policy of the time, or that 'The US had no interest in bringing the war to an early end.' If this strikes you as blatant and altogether despicable revisionism, many of Japan's neighbours feel the same.

That said, many of the exhibits are fascinating and harrowing. Note the *kaiten* (human torpedo), essentially a submarine version of the kamikaze aeroplane. You can listen to the final message of a *kaiten* pilot to his family – it's in Japanese but it's easy to note how young he sounds. There's also the 'miracle coconut' inscribed and set afloat by a Japanese soldier in the Philippines shortly before his death in 1944. The coconut floated in the Pacific for 31 years before washing up very near his widow's hometown – you can still make out the Japanese characters. The walls of the last few galleries of the *Yūshūkan* are covered with seemingly endless photos of the dead, enough to leave a lump in many throats and make one wonder about the value of any war.

As such, the feelings engendered by having to pay to visit a place of such solemnity can be mixed – feelings the attached gift shop, selling gaily decorated biscuits, chocolates and curry, doesn't do much to dispel.

TOKYO DOME CITY Map p56

東京ドームシティ

There's no shortage of stellar attractions awaiting you inside Tokyo Dome City:

Tokyo Dome

東京ドーム

☎ 5800-9999; www.tokyo-dome.co.jp/e/; 1-3-61 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; all-day pass adult/child ¥4000/3000, night ticket (after 5pm) ¥3000/2800; 🕒 10am-10pm; 🚶 Marunouchi Line to Kōrakuen, or JR Chūō or JR Sōbu Line to Suidōbashi (west exit)

Although the grounds were originally home to the historic Kōraku-en Stadium (1937), the Tokyo Dome (aka 'Big Egg') opened with great fanfare in 1988, and has never once looked back. Then again, it's hard to remain nostalgic about the past when you're home to the Yomiuri Giants, the most successful franchise in the history of Japanese baseball.

The dome itself is an engineering marvel, especially considering that the Teflon roof is supported by nothing but air – the pressure is 0.3% higher indoors than out (what will the Japanese think of next?). You can take a [stadium tour](#) (☎ 3817-6086; adult/child from ¥1000/600) on the rare occasions when no events are on, though it's best to call in advance to confirm your spot.

The Tokyo Dome is surrounded by an amusement park with the usual assortment of coasters and spinners, as well as a healthy smattering of bars, restaurants and shops. If you don't want to invest in an all-day pass offering access to all of the rides (see information at the beginning of this listing), tickets are available for individual rides (¥400 to ¥1000).

If you're looking to catch the Yomiuri Giants in action, the baseball season typically runs from the end of March through October – see [p198](#) for more details.

La Qua Spa

ラクアスパ

☎ 5800-9999; www.tokyo-dome.co.jp/e/laqua/spa.htm; 1-3-61 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; entrance ¥2565, charge for Healing Baden ¥525, extra charge for late night bathing ¥1890; 🕒 11am-9am; 🚶 Marunouchi Line to Kōrakuen, or JR Chūō or JR Sōbu Line to Suidōbashi (west exit)

KOISHIKAWA KŌRAKUEN (KOISHIKAWA KŌRAKU GARDEN)

Map p56

小石川後楽園

☎ 3811-3015; 1-6-6 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; adult/senior & child ¥300/free; 🕒 9am-5pm; 🚶 Toei Ōedo Line to Iidabashi (exit C3)

This 70,000-sq-metre formal Japanese garden is one of Tokyo's most beautiful and least visited (by foreigners at least) – if you have the slightest interest in gardens, you should make a beeline for here.

Established in the mid-17th century as the property of the Tokugawa clan, the garden incorporates elements of Chinese and Japanese landscaping, although nowadays the *shakkei* (borrowed scenery) also includes the otherworldly cool of the Tokyo Dome. The garden is particularly well known for plum trees in February, irises in June and autumn colours. Of particular note is the Engetsu-kyō (full moon bridge), which dates from the early Edo period.

Kōrakuen means 'the garden of later enjoyment', which comes from a Chinese proverb about maintaining power first and enjoying it later – we assume this sounds better in Chinese.

JCII CAMERA MUSEUM Map p56

日本カメラ博物館

☎ 3263-7100; www.jcii-cameramuseum.jp/; 25 Ichiban-cho, Chiyoda-ku; adult/child/student ¥300/free/100; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Hanzōmon Line to Hanzōmon (exit 4)

What's that? You didn't know that Japan is obsessed with photography? This museum, established in 1989 by the Japan Camera Industry Institute, takes it a step further, for those for whom equipment is the thing. Holdings consist of over 10,000 cameras, of which as many as 600 may be on show at any one time. Highlights of the collection include the world's first camera, the 1839 Giroux daguerreotype (one of an estimated seven worldwide) and the Sony Mavica, a prototype for the original digital camera,

The most sophisticated *onsen* (hot spring) in Tokyo, La Qua is the ultimate destination for public bathers looking to spoil themselves beyond comprehension. Spanning five floors of the Tokyo Dome, La Qua is a veritable pleasure palace that quickly overwhelms the senses of even the most passionate of hedonists.

Start things off on the bathing floor in whichever hot, cold, indoor, outdoor, still, bubbling, natural or mineral pool takes your fancy. When you've had enough, sweat it out in the sauna for a while, or visit the attendants' station and sign up for *akasuri*, a cleansing scrub that removes all of the dead skin from your body.

If you want the complete La Qua experience, spend the extra money and head up to the Healing Baden. Here you can unwind in a variety of nature-themed rooms set at different temperatures – breathe in the hot, dry desert air just moments before you watch your breath condense in the Arctic room.

If you really want to go the whole distance, you can spoil yourself by shelling out a few thousand yen on a full body massage. At La Qua you can choose from toe-stepping Thai massage, deep tissue Swedish massage or the obligatory Japanese-style shiatsu massage.

If you start to get hungry, reunite with your friends of the opposite sex on the rendezvous floor, and recharge in any of the inviting bars and restaurants. After eating and drinking your fill, grab a seat in the massage chair lounge, turn on your personal TV and fully give in to the food coma. Bliss!

(For a quick primer on the proper *onsen* etiquette, see the boxed text, [p193](#).)

Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum

野球体育博物館

☎ 3811-3600; 1-3-61 Kōraku, Bunkyo-ku; adult/child ¥400/200; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Sep, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-Feb; 🚶 Marunouchi Line to Kōrakuen, or JR Chūō or JR Sōbu Line to Suidōbashi (west exit)

Baseball arrived in Japan in 1872, courtesy of an American teacher at the school that eventually became Tokyo University. Since then it has been a national obsession among Japanese of all ages.

From the establishment of college and professional baseball leagues in 1922 to the Japanese team winning the bronze medal at the 2004 Olympics, this museum walks you through the glorious history of the Japanese sport. Be sure to pick up the comprehensive English-language pamphlet so you don't miss anything.

The entrance to the museum is adjacent to Gate 21 of the Tokyo Dome.

from which images had to be downloaded to a floppy disk.

Behind the museum is the JCII *photo salon* (☎ 3261-0300; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) with a changing roster of photography exhibits.

Exiting Hanzōmon Station, walk around the Diamond Hotel. The photo salon is in this alley, while the museum entrance is through to the next street.

HOTEL NEW ŌTANI Map p56

ホテルニューオータニ

☎ 3265-1111; www1.newotani.co.jp/en/tokyo/index.html; 4-1 Kioi-chō, Chiyoda-ku; 🚶 Ginza or Marunouchi Line to Akasaka-mitsuke (Belle Vie exit) The New Ōtani was a showplace when it opened in 1964 to coincide with the Tokyo Olympics. Even though the mantle of tippy-top hotel has since gone elsewhere, it remains worth visiting for its 400-year-old *garden* (admission free; 🕒 6am-10pm), which once belonged to a Tokugawa regent, and for the [New Ōtani Art Museum](#) (☎ 3221-4111; hotel guests

free, nonguests from ¥500; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), which displays a decent collection of modern Japanese and French paintings as well as wood-block prints. Otherwise, visitors may be blown away by the hotel's sheer mass: two towers, 1533 guest rooms, nearly three dozen banquet rooms and 37 (!) restaurants and bars. Be sure to pick up a map. Also see [p205](#).

YAMATANE BIJUTSUKAN (YAMATANE MUSEUM OF ART) Map p56

山種美術館

☎ 3239-5911; 2 Sanbanchō, Chiyoda-ku; adult/student ¥600/500, special exhibitions extra; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Hanzōmon Line to Hanzōmon (exit 5)

This exceptional collection includes some 1800 Japanese paintings dating from the Meiji Restoration and onward, of which around 50 are on display at any one time; exhibits change approximately every two months. Some names to look for: Hayami Gyoshū (1894–1935), whose *Dancing Flames* is an important cultural property;

and Okumura Togyū (1889–1990), whose *Cherry Blossoms at Daigoji Temple* is a masterpiece in pastel colours. The museum is located on the ground floor of the KS Building.

KAGURAZAKA Map p56

神楽坂

🚉 Tōzai Line or Yūrakuchō Line to Iidabashi (exit B3)

Kagurazaka is worth a visit more for an atmospheric stroll than for any particular sights. Its intimate *kakurenbo yokocho* (hide-and-seek alleys) recall bygone days of Edo, or a city like Kyoto which wears its history on its sleeve. But this is Tokyo, which means that the denizens of the nearby government and business districts come to broker their power, and deals are being made behind the wooden façades and slid-

ing gates of the expensive restaurants and nightspots.

From Sotobori-dōri, head up Kagurazaka Hill and turn right at Royal Host restaurant. The back alleys will be on your left in a few blocks.

RIKUGI-EN (RIKUGI GARDEN)

Map pp48–9

六義園

☎ 3941-2222; 6-16-3 Hon-Komagome; admission ¥300; 🕒 9am–5pm; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line to Komagome, south exit

This fine garden has landscaped views unfolding at every turn of the pathways that crisscross the grounds. The garden is rich in literary associations: its name is taken from the six principles of *waka* poetry (31-syllable poems), and the landscaping invokes famous scenes from Chinese and Japanese literature.

GINZA

Eating p158; Shopping p136; Sleeping p205

Proudly reigning alongside 5th Avenue, Beverly Hills and the Champs-Élysées, Ginza is one of the most famous upmarket shopping districts in the world. Lined with brand-name shops and luxury boutiques, Ginza is as much a destination as it is a lifestyle. While Tokyo's hordes of salarymen slave away at the office, their wives shop till they drop, feeding millions upon millions of yen into the Japanese consumerist machine.

There are clusters of department stores throughout Tokyo, but Ginza's have long been the leaders. The department stores here are shopping extravaganzas, to be sure, but they're so much more: highlights include traditional Japanese products and kimono displayed as if in art galleries, in-store art galleries that actually are art galleries of current up-and-coming artists, and wildly bustling food floors called *depachika* (p171).

Tokyoites sometimes point out that Ginza has lost a bit of its glamour over the past few years, particularly since Aoyama, Ebisu and Daikanyama have become increasingly trendy. However, Ginza, or the 'silver mint', is still where Tokyoites determined to shop often begin their mission. The neighbourhood also remains the shopping mecca for Japanese tourists visiting from the countryside.

Since it was one of the first areas of Tokyo to modernise during the Meiji Restoration, Ginza has a European air that is atypical of urban Japan. With brick buildings, wide boulevards, tree-lined streets, gas street lamps and other past emblems of Western modernity, Ginza is indeed a rarity in the urban jungle of Tokyo.

Even if you're not out to empty the wallet and get your shopping fix, Ginza is still perfect for a leisurely stroll or for lingering over a cup of coffee. On Sundays Ginza is at its best when the district closes to motor vehicles, allowing the lively alleyways and lanes to come alive with pedestrians.

Ginza is bounded to the north by the Imperial Palace and the commercial district of Marunouchi. To the east and south are Tsukiji and Shiodome, where you'll find fish and grocery markets alongside soaring skyscrapers. Ginza itself, almost completely encircled by the Shuto Expressway, is about as grid-like as Tokyo gets. Within these confines, the neat rows of squares make for easy navigation through the boutiques, galleries and cafés.

KABUKI-ZA (KABUKI THEATRE) Map p62

歌舞伎座

☎ 3541-3131; www.shochiku.co.jp/play/kabukiza/theater/index.html; 4-12-5 Ginza, Chūō-ku;

🚉 Hibiya or Toei Asakusa Line to Higashi-Ginza (exit 3)

Located along the eastern end of Harumi-dōri is this famed kabuki theatre – even if you don't plan on attending a performance, it's worth stopping by for a quick look. Reconstructed in the 1950s, the building remains true to its 1920s fusion of Western and Japanese architecture. If you do plan on sitting in on a few acts, keep in mind that it's OK to bring your lunch and something to sip on. See p176 for information on shows.

SONY BUILDING Map p62

ソニービル

☎ 3573-2371; Sukiyabashi Crossing; admission free; 🕒 11am–7pm; 🚉 Marunouchi, Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ginza (exit B9)

Right on Sukiyabashi Crossing is the Sony Building, which attracts gadget hounds in search of gizmos that have yet to be re-

leased. Kids love the free Playstation games on the 6th floor, while adults tend to lose an hour or so perusing all the latest audio and video accessories. If nothing else, you can put your feet up and relax for a while in one of the building's two Hi-Vision theatres.

HIBIYA-KŌEN (HIBIYA PARK) Map p62

日比谷公園

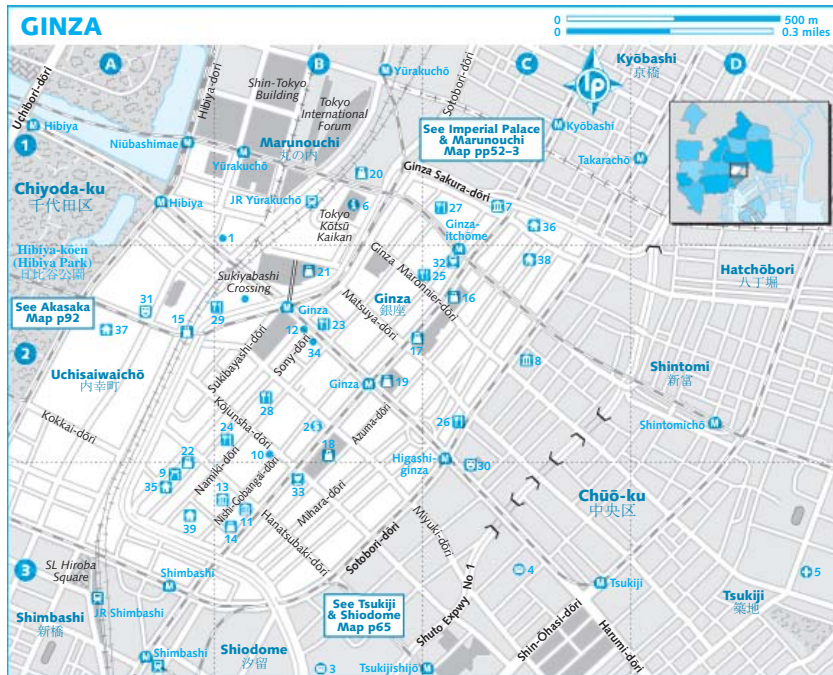
Admission free; 🚉 Chiyoda, Hibiya or Toei Mita Line to Hibiya (exits A5 & A13)

Built around the turn of the 20th century at the height of Meiji Restoration, this

TRANSPORT: GINZA

Train The JR Yamanote Line stops at Shimbashi Station, which borders Ginza to the west. From the station, it's a five- to 10-minute walk to reach central Ginza.

Metro The Ginza and Marunouchi Lines are the best way to get to Ginza, which is centred on the aptly named Ginza Station.



leafy park just west of Ginza was Tokyo's first Western-style park. At the time, Western design was the height of fashion, and it doesn't take long to notice the similarities to public spaces in London, Paris and New York. If you're in need of a break on a quiet afternoon, find your way to one of the two ponds for a cup of tea at a pavilion.

GALLERY KOYANAGI Map p62

ギャラリー小柳

☎ 3561-1896; www.gallerykoyanagi.com; 8th fl, 1-7-5 Ginza; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sat; 🚶 Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza (exit A9), or Yūrakuchō Line to Ginza-itchōme (exit 7)

This gallery exhibits photography and prints in a space conspicuously set off by blinding white light. The staff speaks fluent English and is willing to talk about the work on the walls, which includes some of the leading artists of Japan and abroad, like Sugimoto Hiroshi and Marlene Dumas. Enter around the rear of the building housing the White Bell jewellery shop on Chūō-dōri.

SHISEIDO ART HOUSE Map p62

資生堂アートハウス

☎ 3571-0401; www.shiseido.co.jp/house-of-shiseido; 7-5-5 Ginza, Chūō-ku; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Shimbashi (Ginza exit) or Toei Asakusa Line to Shimbashi (exits 1 & 3)

Underwritten by the cosmetics giant Shiseido, this space is also a classic Ginza concoction: soft-sell corporate promo. Most will be drawn by the alluring, wonderfully displayed themed exhibitions (past ones have included speciality handbags and cosmetics for men), and along the way you might find yourself distracted by advertising icons of the history of Shiseido.

SHISEIDO GALLERY Map p62

資生堂ギャラリー

☎ 3572-3901; www.shiseido.co.jp/e/gallery/html; 8-8-3 Ginza, Chūō-ku; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Shimbashi (Ginza exit) or Toei Asakusa Line to Shimbashi (exits 1 & 3)

This gallery in the basement of Shiseido's Ginza boutique is more experimental than

GINZA

INFORMATION

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Citibank シティバンク 2 B2
Ginza Post Office 銀座郵便局 3 B3
Kyōbashi Post Office 京橋郵便局 4 C3
St Luke's International Hospital
聖路加国際病院 5 D3
Tourist Information Center
東京交通会館 6 B1

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Ghibli Museum 8 C2
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Kabuki-za (Kabuki Theatre) 歌舞伎座 (see 30)
Shiseido Art House 資生堂アートハウス 10 B2
Shiseido Gallery 資生堂ギャラリー 11 B3
Sony Building ソニービル 12 B2
Tokyo Gallery 東京画廊 13 B3

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Hayashi Kimono 林きもの 15 A2
Itōya 伊東屋 16 C2
Matsuya 松屋 17 B2
Matsuzakaya 松坂屋 18 B2
Mitsukoshi 三越 19 B2
Muji 無印良品 20 B1
Seibu 西武 21 B2
Takumi たくみ 22 A3

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L'Osier レストランロオジエ 24 B2
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Nair's ナイル 26 C2
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Hotel Seiyō Ginza ホテル西洋銀座 36 C1
Imperial Hotel 帝国ホテル 37 A2
Mercure Hotel Ginza Tokyo メルキュールホテル銀座 38 C2
Mitsui Urban Hotel Ginza 三井アーバンホテル銀座 39 A3

the house thereof. The result is an ever-changing selection, particularly of installation pieces, which lend themselves well to the high-ceilinged space. With a history dating back to 1919, it's also one of the oldest galleries in the area.

HACHIMAN-JINJA (HACHIMAN TEMPLE) Map p62

八幡神社

7-4 Ginza; admission free; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Shimbashi (Ginza exit) or Toei Asakusa Line to Shimbashi (exits 1 & 3)

It's so small that you might stroll past and not notice it – which is exactly what makes Hachiman-jinja worth pausing for. Real-estate values in Ginza have generally forced

places of worship elsewhere (or relocated them to the rooftops of Ginza's temples of commerce). Near Shimbashi Station, this is one shrine that remains at street level, a feat that was achieved by building over the top of it.

TOKYO GALLERY Map p62

東京画廊

☎ 3571-1808; 8-6-18 Ginza; admission free; 🚶 Ginza Line to Shimbashi (exit 1)

One of our favourite small galleries, the Tokyo Gallery collaborates with a large studio in Beijing, and shows challenging, often politically pointed works by Japanese and Chinese artists. The staff speaks English and is very friendly.

TSUKIJI & SHIODOME

Eating p160; Sleeping p206

An early morning visit to the Tsukiji fish market (below), arguably Tokyo's top attraction, will awaken all your senses. From the sights and sounds of fresh tuna being sliced up with samurai-like precision to the smells and tastes of a sushi breakfast so fresh it still wriggles in your mouth, Tsukiji is a world unto itself. Since most of the action takes place between the hours of 5am and 8am, you're either going to have to set the alarm clock for the wee hours of the morn or alternatively party all night long in the nearby pleasure district of Roppongi (p94).

Prior to 1923, the city's fish market was ensconced in Nihombashi as it had been throughout the Edo era. Of course the whole place smelled, well, fishy, and the market's well-off neighbours had grown weary of looking at its ugly façade. Fortunately for them (not so much for others), they got a reprieve when the deadly Great Kantō Earthquake flattened it. Though some of the more stubborn stall-keepers insisted on returning to the old location, the market was officially moved to the old naval lands at Tsukiji, where it is now the world's largest fish market.

But not for much longer; the market is scheduled to move east to the Toyosu neighbourhood, east of the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River), in 2012. To see what the neighbourhood will look like once the move is complete, look just a little south. Here you'll find the skyscrapers of Shiodome business district – pretty much all the construction you see here has been done in the new millennium.

The markets of Tsukiji rest on the banks of the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River) on what were once old naval lands. Heading away from Tsukiji to the northwest on foot via Hanatsubaki-dōri will land you on the west end of Ginza, while walking just a few minutes to the southwest will bring you to the gates of Hama Rikyū Onshi-teien, one of Tokyo's most expansive gardens. Shiodome is the cluster of tall buildings on the other side of the Shuto Expressway. Although this largely residential and commercial district doesn't attract as many tourists as the surrounding areas, it is home to one of the city's most appealing skylines.

TSUKIJI CENTRAL FISH MARKET

Map p65

築地市場

www.tsukiji-market.or.jp; admission free; ☞ early morning, closed 2nd & 4th Wed of most months, Sun & public holidays; ☞ Toei Ōedo Line to Tsukijishijō (exit A1) or Hibiya Line to Tsukiji (exit 1 or 2)

If it lives in the sea, it's probably for sale in the Central Fish Market, where acres and acres of fish and fish products change hands in a lively, almost chaotic atmosphere. Everything is allotted its own area, and a quick scan of the loading docks will reveal mountains of octopus, rows of giant tuna, endless varieties of shellfish and tank upon tank of live exotic fish.

About 2246 tonnes of fish, worth over 1.8 billion yen (US\$15.5 million), are sold here daily; that's 615,409 tonnes of fish worth some US\$4.25 billion a year. It's not unheard of for a single tuna to fetch an incredible ¥20 million!

The auctions are not officially open to the general public, but if you are of a mind to go (trust us – it's worth it!), you have to be there around 5am to see the action. Afterwards, you are free to visit the wholesalers market, and wander

around the seemingly endless rows of fishmongers.

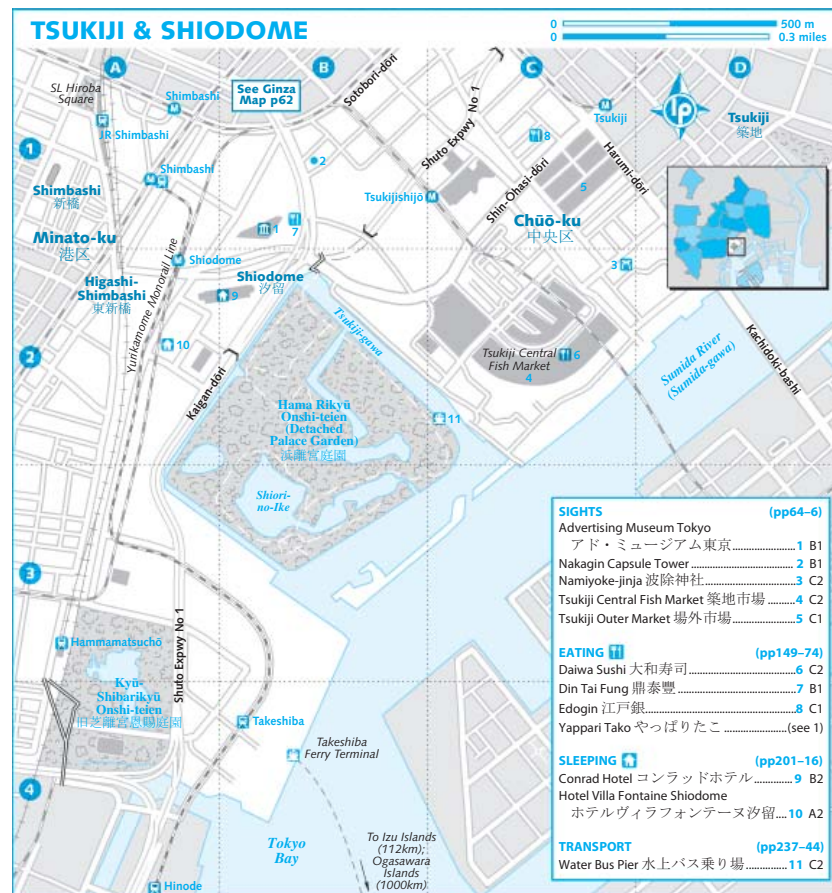
The stalls are set up to sell directly to restaurants, retail stores and other commercial enterprises. In fact, some of the hundreds of merchants have been here for more than 20 generations! The hustle and bustle can be intoxicating, and as long as you're there before 8am, some kind of push and pull will doubtless be going on. Keep in mind, however, that the market shuts completely by 1pm for cleaning. Although

TRANSPORT: TSUKIJI & SHIODOME

Train Shimbashi Station (JR and subway lines) is the transit hub for Shiodome. Shimbashi is also the terminus for the Yurikamome Line for Odaiba.

Metro The best way to reach Tsukiji fish market is to take either the Hibiya Line to Tsukiji Station, or the Toei Ōedo Line to nearby Tsukijishijō.

Waterbus Sumida-gawa (Sumida River) water taxis stop at the pier on the east end of Hama Rikyū Onshi-teien (Detached Palace Garden; Map p65). Destinations include Asakusa and Odaiba.



the market is not as odoriferous as you might think, you still don't want to wear your nicest clothing (and especially not your best shoes).

Tradition has it that you should finish your visit here with a sushi breakfast. **Daiwa Sushi** (p160) is within the market itself and gathers long, long queues.

Between the Central Fish Market and the Outer Market (see right) is **Namiyoke-jinja**, the Shintō shrine where wholesalers and middlemen come to pray before work. Highlights are the giant gold parade masks used for the lion dance and the dragon-shaped taps over the purification basins.

If you have arrived too late to see the fish auctions, or maybe you just can't stand the thought of dead sea creatures,

we can almost guarantee you will find something of interest in Tsukiji's **Outer Market**. With that said, if you hate food in general, well, there is not much we can do to help you.

The Outer Market is neither as famous nor as breathtakingly busy as its inner counterpart. But that is usually a blessing, given that it allows you the time you need to browse all kinds of seafood (naturally) and produce, noodle shops, tiny cafés and cooking supply shops. In addition, you'll also find boots, baubles, baskets, plates, picks (of the tooth variety) and pottery, all at reasonable prices.

It can be quite an education to see how those Japanese foods you've always loved are actually made, and to learn what all those tiny bowls and plates are used for. In

short, the Tsukiji Outer Market is a one-stop shop for anything you need to prepare and serve that next great Japanese meal. Be sure to first check your country's import restrictions if you plan to take any food products home with you.

HAMA RIKYŪ ONSHI-TEIEN (DETACHED PALACE GARDEN) Map p65

浜離宮庭園

☎ 3541-0200; adult/senior ¥300/150; 🕒 9am-5pm; 📍 Toei Ōedo Line to Shiodome (A2 or A3 exit) or Tsukijishijō (exit A2)

Once a shōgunal palace extending into the area now occupied by the fish market, this traditional Japanese garden is one of Tokyo's finest. The Detached Palace Garden features a large duck pond with an island that's home to a charming tea pavilion, as well as some wonderfully manicured trees (black pine, Japanese apricot, hydrangeas, camellias etc), some of which are hundreds of years old. Besides visiting the park as a side trip from Ginza or Tsukiji, consider ar-

riving by boat from Asakusa via the Sumidagawa cruise aboard the *Suijō Bus* (p87).

ADVERTISING MUSEUM TOKYO

Map p65

アド・ミュージアム東京

☎ 6218-2500; www.admt.jp; B1 fl, 1-8-2 Higashi Shimbashi, Minato-ku; admission free; 🕒 11am-6.30pm Tue-Fri, 11am-4.30pm Sat & public holidays; 📍 Ginza, Toei Asakusa or JR Yamanote Line to Shimbashi (Shiodome Shio-site exit or exit A3) Dentsu, Japan's largest advertising agency, operates this rather extensive museum of Japanese ads in the basement of the Caretta building. The collection covers wood-block printed handbills from the Edo period through sumptuous Art Nouveau and Art Deco Meiji- and Taisho-era works to the best of today. Although there's not a lot of English signage, the strong graphics of many of the ads stand alone, and there's a video room where you can watch award-winning TV commercials from around the world.

AKIHABARA & KANDA

Eating p160; Sleeping p207

Akihabara is just as much Tokyo's centre for electronics as it is for *otaku* (geek) culture. From multistoreyed computer stores and back-alley discount camera shops to anime cafés and the latest in geek fashions, Akihabara is one of Tokyo's most bizarre districts. Indeed, for many years Akihabara was off the radar screen for most foreign visitors, aside from a few in-the-know tourists looking to score some cheap electronics. However, following the rapidly increasing global popularity of anime, *otaku* culture and all things Japanese, a visit to Akihabara is becoming something of a Tokyo staple.

With its street touts hawking cheap goods, electronic bells ringing with inimitable sound and fury, geeks of all ages decked out in anime garb, and a frenetic street scene of lights, beeps and endless pedestrian traffic, Akihabara can quickly overwhelm the senses. Of course part of the reason why you are in Akihabara is to stand at the ground zero of geekdom, though you can always manage to find respite in the neighbouring commercial and residential district of Kanda.

During the Edo period, the vibrant green banks of the Kanda-gawa were famously depicted in wood-block prints. Streets in the neighbourhood were lined with artisans' shops, and a residential district served as a rowdy, overcrowded home to workers and craftsmen. These days, however, Kanda's vital spirit has been channelled by the thousands of students who inhabit Ochanomizu, the area that lies north of Kanda proper. Nihon University and Meiji University, two of Japan's most prestigious private universities, are located nearby, and a couple of enclaves cater to them with clusters of shops as in days of old.

Akihabara and Kanda lie firmly within the bounds of Yamanote, between the Imperial Palace and Marunouchi to the west and Ueno to the east. Electric Town is to the west of Akihabara Station, while Kanda is west of the grounds of the Imperial Palace.

AKIHABARA ELECTRIC TOWN

Map p68

秋葉原電気街

Denki-gai; west of JR Akihabara; 📍 JR Yamanote or JR Sōbu Line to Akihabara (Denki-gai exit)

What the Tsukiji Central Fish Market is to the food trade, Akihabara is to Japan's legendary electronics industry: bustling, busy and fun to watch. Bonus: you don't have to get up early in the morning to catch the action (afternoon is prime time).

Big box retailers (Ishimaru Denki, Laox, Onoden, Satō Musen and Yamagiwa among them), wholesale shops and tiny stalls all compete to sell you everything from big appliances to microscopic components, robots, mouse pads and next year's computers, some at a steep discount from prices on the outside. Some items are intended for export (make sure the voltage and plugs match what you use at home), others are just coming onto the market, so even if you have no intention of shopping now, it's worth a peek to see what you may be buying two years hence.

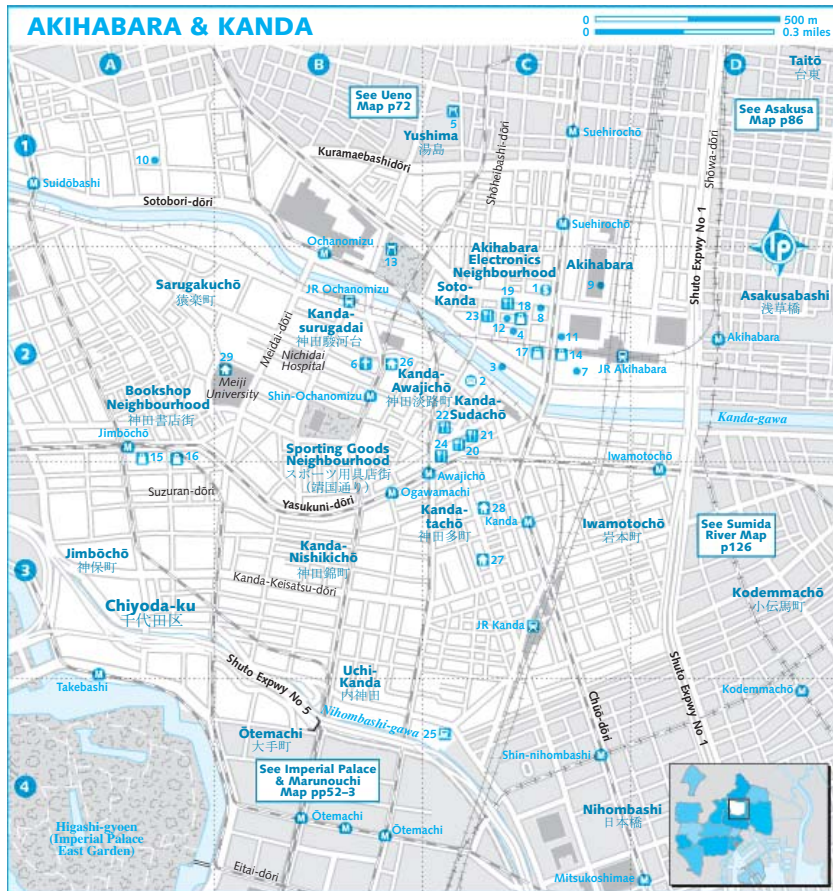
Akihabara can no longer claim exclusive rights to the title of the city's electronics centre (thanks to increased competition from denser hubs like Shinjuku and

Ikebukuro), yet it is still quite the scene. As the electronics business has moved elsewhere (and competition has come in from – gasp! – Korea, China and Taiwan), Akihabara has turned to the boom market in cartoon manga (comics), often pornographic, to round out its fiscal activity. If you like your pornography of the PG-13 variety, don't miss the opportunity to have a cup of coffee and a pastry in any of Akihabara's wholly unique Maid Cafés (see p161).

TRANSPORT: AKIHABARA & KANDA

Train The JR Yamanote and Keihin-Tōhoku Lines both stop at Akihabara and Kanda. Akihabara is also served by the JR Sōbu Line, which runs from east to west across Central Tokyo.

Metro Since the Hibiya Line stops a bit east of the main electronics neighbourhood, the JR is more convenient. For Kanda, the Marunouchi Line stops at Awajichō, close to the traditional restaurant neighbourhood. To get to Jimbōchō, take either the Toei Shinjuku or the Hanzōmon Lines to Jimbōchō Station.



AKIHABARA & KANDA

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KANDA MYŌJIN (KANDA SHRINE)

Map p68

神田明神

☎ 3254-0753; www.kandamyoujin.or.jp; 2-16-2 Sotokanda, Chiyoda-ku; admission free; ☺ Marunouchi Line to Ochanomizu (exit 2)

Hidden behind the main streets, this little-known but quite splendid Shintō shrine boasts vermilion-coloured halls surrounding a stately courtyard. It traces its history back to AD 730, though its present location dates from 1616. The *kami* (gods) enshrined here are said to bring luck in business and in finding a spouse. It is the home shrine of the **Kanda Matsuri** (Kanda Festival; p18) in mid-May, one of the largest festivals in Tokyo.

TOKYO ANIME CENTER Map p68

東京アニメセンター

☎ 5298-1188; www.animecenter.jp; 4th fl, Akihabara UDX Bldg, 4-14-1 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote or JR Sōbu Line to Akihabara (Electric Town or Denki-gai exit)

The recently opened Tokyo Anime Center is less a museum than a place for promoting the latest and greatest in the world of anime (animation) and its merchandising. Facilities include exhibit halls, a shop and a theatre for cinematic screenings of anime as well as appearances by voice actors and anime creators (some 200 events annually). Although it is still something of a work in progress, displays are planned to be in four languages, including English.

TOKYO WONDER SITE Map p68

トーキョーワンダーサイト

☎ 5689-5531; www.tokyo-ws.org in Japanese; 2-4-16 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 JR Sōbu Line to Ochanomizu or Suidōbashi

Operated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo Wonder Site comprises

three floors of galleries with the aim of promoting new and emerging artists. There is a regularly changing programme of exhibitions, competitions and lectures in media ranging from painting to video art.

NICHOLOI CATHEDRAL Map p68

ニコライ堂

☎ 3295-6879; hrc@gol.com; 4-1 Surugadai, Kanda, Chiyoda-ku; donation ¥300; ☎ 1-4pm Tue-Fri Apr-Sep, 1-3.30pm Tue-Fri Oct-Mar; 🚶 Chiyoda Line to Shin-Ochanomizu (exit C12)

This Russian Orthodox cathedral is named for St Nicholas of Japan (1836-1912), who first arrived as chaplain of the Russian consulate in the port city of Hakodate (Hokkaidō) and through missionary work soon amassed about 30,000 faithful. The Tokyo building, complete with a distinctive onion dome, was first constructed in 1891. The original copper dome was, like parts of so many grand buildings, damaged in the 1923 earthquake, forcing the church to downsize to the (still enormous) dome that's now in place. If you're interested in attending worship services, inquire inside for times.

YUSHIMA SEIDŌ (YUSHIMA SHRINE)

Map p68

湯島聖堂

☎ 3251-4606; 1-4-25 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Oct-Mar; 🚶 Marunouchi Line to Ochanomizu (exit 2) Established in 1632 and later used as a school for the sons of the powerful during the Tokugawa regime, Yushima Seidō is one of Tokyo's few Confucian shrines. There is a Ming dynasty bronze statue of Confucius in its black-lacquered main hall, which was rebuilt in 1935. The sculpture is visible only from 1 to 4 January and the fourth Sunday in April, but you can turn up at weekends and holidays for a chance to see the building's interior.

UENO

Eating [p161](#); Sleeping [p207](#)

Forming part of the historic core of Shitamachi, Ueno has always proudly thumbed its nose at the high fashions and fickle trends of the high-class districts in Yamanote. Although rising real estate prices and recent gentrification have erased most vestiges of the old atmosphere, Ueno's Ameyoko Arcade, which was once the site of the largest post-war black market, still holds true to its proud roots. Here you'll find fishmongers, fruit and vegetable sellers, knock-off clothing vendors and a healthy smattering of open-air markets, all of which sell products that are more or less legit.

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

Today, Ueno-kōen is the neighbourhood's foremost attraction and one of Tokyo's most famous leafy retreats. Boasting a wealth of museums, shrines, a kid-friendly zoo, some phenomenal cherry-blossom viewing ([p20](#)) and the hallowed precincts of Tokyo University (Japan's most prestigious institution of higher learning), Ueno Park for an afternoon is the perfect antidote to the urban grind.

The sprawling Ueno Station is the nexus of the neighbourhood, with the greater Asakusa area to the east and Akihabara and Kanda to the south. In Ueno itself, all things lead to the park with its myriad art museums; to get here, take the Ueno-kōen (Ueno Park) exit from Ueno Station.

AMEYOKO (AMEYOKO ARCADE)

Map [p72](#)

アメヤ横町
🕒 10am-8pm; 🚶 Yamanote Line to Okachimachi (north exit) or Ueno (south exit), or Ginza Line to Ueno Hirokōji or Hibiya Line to Naka-Okachimachi (both exit A5)

This unabashed shopping street is one of the few areas in which some of the rough readiness of old Shitamachi still lingers. Step into this alley paralleling the JR Yamanote Line tracks south of JR Ueno Station, and ritzy, glitzy Tokyo may seem like a distant memory.

Ameyoko earned its notoriety as a famous black-market district in the years following WWII, though today it's primarily a bargain shopping area. Simple shops spill out into the alleys, selling block after block of cheap clothing (for Japan, anyway), produce, dried fruit, dried *nori* (seaweed), dried mushrooms and dried squid.

Some of the same tourist items on sale in Ginza sell here at more reasonable rates. Shopkeepers also stand on less ceremony than those in other shopping areas in Tokyo, brazenly hawking their goods with guttural cries to the passing crowds. In the [Ameyoko Center building](#), Chinese, Korean and Southeast Asian mer-

chants have set up their own shopping arcade where you'll find exotic cooking spices, fresh seafood, durian fruit and other unusual imported items.

UENO-KŌEN (UENO PARK)

Map [p72](#)

上野公園
☎ 3828-5644; admission free; 🕒 5am-11pm;
🚶 JR Yamanote Line or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

Tokyo's oldest public park has several names: its Sunday name, which no-one ever uses, is Ueno Onshi Kōen; some locals dub it Ueno no Oyama (Ueno Mountain); and English speakers call it Ueno Park.

TRANSPORT: UENO

Train The JR Yamanote Line terminates at Ueno Station and is the best transport option for reaching Ameyoko. The private Keisei Line also terminates here, and has cheap connections to Narita Airport.

Metro The Hibiya and Ginza Lines connect with Ueno Station and let you off near the park. If you're heading to Tokyo University or Yushima Tenjin, take the Chiyoda Line to Yushima.

TOKYO FOR CHILDREN

Tokyo deliberately cultivates spaces for children. Parks, museums and other venues are designed with wee ones in mind. And, even on a limited budget, you'll find things here reasonably priced and accessible. The following should get you started:

Fune No Kagaku-kan (Museum of Maritime Science; [p131](#)) Filled with detailed model ships, hands-on displays and a cool pool for piloting remote-control submarines.

Ikebukuro Bōsai-kan (Ikebukuro Earthquake Hall; [p123](#)) Younger children may be rattled, literally, by the simulations of earthquakes and fires, but it's important preparation for older kids.

Kodomo-no-Shiro (National Children's Castle; [Map p110](#); [www.kodomono-shiro.jp/english/index.html](#); adult/child over 3 ¥500/400; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya, east exit, or Ginza Line to Omote-sandō, B2 exit) Has playrooms, puppet theatres, a swimming pool and a music lobby where kids can make all the noise they like. The Children's Castle Hotel ([p213](#)) next door was built especially for those with young children and can be a convenient refuge for travelling families. It's located off Aoyama-dōri.

Meguro Parasitological Museum ([p103](#)) This museum is ideal for kids who like big worms and other scary bugs.

Miraikan (National Museum of Emerging Science & Innovation; [p130](#)) Offers interactive exhibits where kids can manipulate robots and micromachines, and explore the principles of superconductivity.

Mori Art Museum ([p95](#)) This is a dramatic place to introduce kids to contemporary art. If they weary of the exhibits, excellent views await on the 52nd-floor observation decks.

Tokyo Disney Resort ([www.tokyodisneyresort.co.jp/index_e.html](#); 1-day pass adult/child 12-17/child 4-11 yr ¥5800/5000/3900, 2-day pass adult/child 12-17/child 4-11 yr ¥10,000/8800/6900; 🚶 JR Keiyo Line to Maibama) The world's most successful theme park is home to kid-friendly Tokyo Disneyland as well as the more adult-oriented Tokyo DisneySea.

Tokyo-to Jido Kaikan (Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Hall; [Map p106](#); ☎ 3409-6361; [www.fukushihoken.metro.tokyo.jp/jidou/english/index.html](#); 1-18-24 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; admission free; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya, east exit (Miyamasuzaka)) Boasts six kid-friendly stores and a number of ingenious play areas – check out the human body maze or get messy in the hands-on art studio, where children can make pottery and origami. It's 300m northeast of Shibuya Station, next to Mitake-kōen.

Ueno Dōbutsu-en (Ueno Zoo; [p71](#)) This fairly comprehensive zoo has all the usual lions and tigers and bears. If you've come with little ones, the real attraction here is the goat- and sheep-filled petting zoo.

There are a number of amusement parks, including the oldie-but-a-goody [Hanayashiki Amusement Park](#) ([Map p86](#); ☎ 3482-8780; [www.hanayashiki.net](#), in Japanese; 2-28-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; adult/child under 5/5-12 yr ¥900/free/400, rides cost extra 🕒 10am-6pm;) the more razzle-dazzle-y [Tokyo Dome City](#) ([p58](#)), the indoor amusements and food theme-parks of [Namco Namjatown](#) ([p121](#)) and one of the world's tallest [Ferris wheels](#) ([p132](#)) in Odaiba.

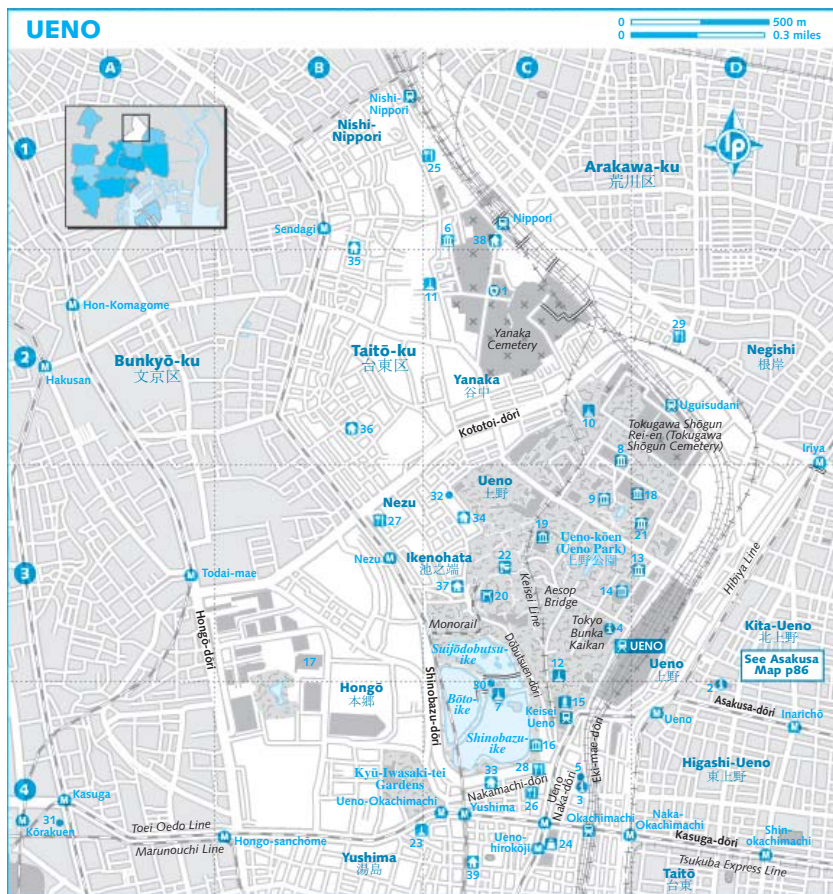
Whichever you prefer, Ueno Kōen makes for a pleasant city escape.

There are two entrances to the park: the main one takes you straight into the museum and art gallery area, a course that might leave you worn out before you get to Ueno's temples. Instead, it's better to start at the southern entrance between Ueno JR Station and Keisei Ueno Station, and do a little temple-viewing en route to the museums. From the JR Station, take the Ikenohata exit and turn right. Just around the corner is a flight of stairs leading up into the park.

Situated slightly to your right at the top of the stairs is the mother of all meeting

places, a [statue of Saigō Takamori](#). Fans of the movie *The Last Samurai* should note that Katsumoto, the character played by Ken Watanabe, was loosely based on Takamori, a Tokugawa loyalist who gained legendary status among the common Japanese. The Meiji government, capitalising on this fame, posthumously pardoned Takamori, and granted him full honours. Today he remains an exemplar of the samurai spirit in Japan.

Continue along the way, bear to the far left and follow a wide tree-lined path until you reach [Kiyōmizu Kannon-dō](#), modelled after the landmark Kiyōmizu-dera in Kyoto. During Ningyō-kuyō ([p19](#)) those wishing to



conceive a child leave a doll here for the Senjū Kannon (the 1000-armed Buddhist goddess of mercy), and the accumulated dolls are burnt ceremoniously each 25 September.

From the temple, continue down to the narrow road that follows the pond, Shinobazu-ike. Through a red *torii* (gate), located on an island in the pond, is **Benten-dō**, a memorial to Benten, a patron goddess of the arts. Behind the temple you can hire a **small boat** (☎ 3828-9502; row boats per hr ¥600, paddle boats per 30min ¥600; ☹ 9am-5pm Mar-Nov) to take out on the water, weather permitting.

Make your way back to the road that follows Shinobazu-ike and turn left. Where the road begins to curve and leaves Shinobazu-ike behind, there is a stair path-

way to the right. Follow this path and take the second turn to the left. This will take you into the grounds of **Tōshō-gū** (☎ 3822-3455), which was established in 1627 (the present building dates from 1651). This is a shrine which, like its counterpart in Nikkō, was founded in memory of **Tokugawa Ieyasu** (p224).

Inside, beyond the subdued worship hall, Ieyasu's shrine is all black lacquerwork and gold leaf. Miraculously, the entire structure has survived all of Tokyo's many disasters, making it one of the few early Edo structures still extant. There's a good view of the 17th-century, five-storey pagoda **Kanei-ji**, now stranded inside Ueno Zoo, to your right as you take the pathway into the shrine. The pathway itself is fronted by a stone *torii* and lined with 200 stone

UENO

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lanterns rendered as gifts by *daimyō* in the Edo period.

UENO DŌBUTSU-EN (UENO ZOO)

Map p72

上野動物園

☎ 3828-5171; www.tokyo-www.zoo.net/english/index.html; 9-38 Ueno Kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child/student/senior ¥600/free/¥200/300; ☹ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun; ☺ JR Yamanote Line or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

Japan's oldest zoo was established in 1882, and is home to lions, tigers and bears (oh my!). This being Asia, however, most visitors head straight for the rather sweet and sleepy-looking pandas, which were a gift to Japan from the government of China.

Even if you're not normally a fan of zoos, you should know that the animals in Ueno are well cared for, and all of them live in somewhat natural habitats. Although it's small compared to zoos in your own country, it's larger than you'd think given the obvious space constraints of Tokyo. Plus, all of the big-name animals from around the globe are well represented here.

If you're visiting the zoo with the kids, you can take a ride on the monorail to the petting zoo, where your precious wee ones can gently run their small, sticky hands over tame domesticates such as ducks, horses and goats.

TOKYO KOKURITSU HAKUBUTSUKAN (TOKYO NATIONAL MUSEUM)

Map p72

東京国立博物館

☎ 3822-1111; www.tnm.jp; 13-9 Ueno Kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥420/free, student free-¥130, additional charges for special exhibitions; ☹ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun; ☺ JR Yamanote Line or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

If you visit only one museum in Tokyo, make it this one. The Tokyo National Museum's grand buildings hold the world's largest collection of Japanese art, and you could easily spend an entire day perusing the galleries here. The building dates from 1939, and is in the imperial style, which fuses Western and Japanese architectural motifs.

The museum has four galleries, the most important of which is the **Honkan** (Main Gallery). For an introduction to Japanese art history from Jōmon to Edo in one fell swoop, head to the 2nd floor. Other galleries include ancient pottery, religious sculpture, arms and armour, exquisite lacquerware and calligraphy.

The **Tōyōkan** (Gallery of Eastern Antiquities) boasts a collection of art and archaeological finds from all over Asia, with an emphasis on Chinese arts and archaeology. **Heiseikan** (Heisei Hall) is the newest, opened in 1999 to commemorate the marriage of Crown Prince Naruhito, and it is used for exhibitions of Japanese archaeology.

A MEDLEY OF MUSEUMS

There are some 240 museums in Tokyo, ranging from the grand and world-scale to quirky one-room affairs of mind-boggling specificity. If you're planning on visiting any of them, here are some tips to keep in mind.

- Museum hours are generally 10am to 5pm, and nearly all museums are closed Mondays. Hours in this book refer to closing times, not to last-admission times (usually an hour prior to closure).
- Student discounts are common by school type (university, high school etc), and for the youngest visitors admission is usually free. Seniors discounts are less frequent. You may be required to show ID for any discount.
- The GRUTT Pass allows free or discounted admission to some 45 attractions around town within two months, and it can be excellent value. It costs ¥2000 and can be purchased at tourist offices, Lawson convenience stores, some hotels and the venues themselves. Inquire at tourist information offices.
- The *Handy Guide* and *Handy Map* published by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government come with tear-off coupons for discounted admission.

Finally, there is the **Gallery of Hōryū-ji Treasures**, which displays masks, scrolls and gilt Buddhas from Hōryū-ji, the first Buddhist temple in Japan. In order to protect the artefacts, some of which are more than 1000 years old, this wing may be shut when it's raining or humid.

A fifth building, **Hyōkeikan** (Hyōkei Hall) was built in 1909, with Western-style architecture that is reminiscent of a museum you might find in Paris. Used for special exhibitions, the Hyōkeikan displays temporary exhibits, a good number of which are in fact rotating exhibits from France and other European countries.

KOKURITSU KAGAKU HAKUBUTSUKAN (NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM) Map p72

国立科学博物館

☎ 3822-0111 Mon-Fri, 3822-0114 Sat, Sun & holidays; www.kahaku.go.jp; 7-20 Ueno Kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥500/free; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

This large, sprawling, multistorey museum dedicated to the pursuit of science is packed with delights, especially if you're travelling with the little ones. Displays (eg of the forest or animals of the savannah) are imaginatively presented, some allowing kids to climb up, down, around and even within.

Other displays explain concepts of physics and mechanics by showing just how mystical things like magnets do what they do. Also, don't miss the giant, life-sized replica of blue whale that soars over the entrance to the museum. And of course, there are dinosaurs, dinosaurs and more dinosaurs...

There is English signage throughout, though it's not as extensive as the Japanese signage. An English-language audio guide is available (¥300). Note the different contact number for weekends and holidays.

KOKURITSU SEIYŌ BIJUTSUKAN (NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART) Map p72

国立西洋美術館

☎ 3828-5131; www.nmwa.go.jp; 7-7 Ueno Kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥420/free, student ¥70-130; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun, 9.30am-8pm Fri; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

Designed by Le Corbusier in the late 1950s, this museum has its roots in French impressionism, but runs the gamut from medieval Madonna & Child images to 20th-century splatter painting. All the big names are here, particularly Manet, Rodin, Miró and the Dutch Masters. It also hosts wildly popular temporary exhibits on loan from such stalwarts as the Prado Museum in Madrid.

Much of the original collection was amassed by Matsukata Kōjiro (1865–1950), president of a shipbuilding company and later a politician. He would travel frequently to Europe on business and bring back treasures to inspire young, up-and-coming Japanese painters. Some 400 of his works were impounded in France during WWII, and it was only after Matsukata's death that they were allowed to be shipped to Japan.

TOKYO METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART Map p72

東京都美術館

☎ 3823-6921; www.tobikan.jp; 8-36 Ueno Kōen, Taitō-ku; admission free, charges for special exhibits vary; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line

or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

Established in 1926, this museum hosts special exhibitions of everything from traditional Japanese arts, such as ink brush and ikebana, to avant-garde shows paid for by groups of artists who collaborate to rent gallery space. One annual event taking place in November, which consistently draws hundreds of thousands, is the exhibit of the Nitten. The Nitten is considered to be the leading association of Japanese artists, in Japanese- and Western-style painting, calligraphy, sculpture and craft as art. The museum also boasts an excellent, free art library.

SHITAMACHI MUSEUM Map p72

下町風俗資料館

☎ 3823-7451; 2-1 Ueno Kōen, Taitō-ku; adult/child/student ¥300/free/100; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line or Tokyo Metro Ginza or Hibiya Line to Ueno (Ueno Kōen exit)

This museum re-creates life in the plebeian quarters of Tokyo during the Meiji and Taishō periods through an exhibition of typical Shitamachi buildings. Take off your shoes and look inside an old tenement house or around an old sweet shop while soaking up the atmosphere of long-gone Shitamachi. For some more detailed info, pick up the English-language leaflets describing the various buildings in detail. On weekends the museum stages *kamishibai*: narratives told by performers using lovely painted cards.

TOKYO DAIGAKU (TOKYO UNIVERSITY) Map p72

東京大学

🚉 Chiyoda Line to Nezu (exit 2) or Yushima (exit 1) Most kids in Japan dream of gaining admission to Tokyo University or simply Tōdai, Japan's most prestigious institution of higher learning. Much like Harvard and Oxbridge in the West, admission here practically ensures later admission to the halls of power in both business and government. With that in mind, high-school students spend years studying at home and in cram schools for Tōdai's rigorous admission exam.

The campus itself is not beautiful, but does hold historical interest. In 1968–69 Tōdai became the centre of a national crisis when students thrice took over the main administrative building, Yasuda

Hall, ousting the school's president and other administrators before finally being ousted themselves. In order to make an example of the students, police employed tear gas as well as blasting the students' stronghold with fire hoses on national TV in what came to be called the battle of Yasuda castle.

Today, students at Tōdai are a bit more tame, and have a reputation among the Japanese as being somewhat conservative, stodgy and eccentric in comparison to other university students. Regardless of their disposition, standing among the hallowed halls of Japan's top university is a memorable experience, even if only to rub shoulders with the future Japanese elite.

YUSHIMA TENJIN (YUSHIMA SHRINE) Map p72

湯島神社

Yushima Tenmangū; ☎ 3836-0753; 3-30-1 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku; admission free; 🕒 8am-5pm; 🚉 Chiyoda Line to Yushima (exit 1)

Across the way from Tokyo University, this particularly attractive Shintō shrine traces its lineage back to the 5th century. In the 14th century, the spirit of a renowned scholar was also enshrined here, which leads to Yushima Tenjin's current popularity: it receives countless pilgrims in search of academic success. Amid the buildings with their painted accents and gold trim (the latest reconstruction was in 1995), students hang messages written on wooden tablets called *ema*, left in hope that lofty exam scores will gain hopeful high-school students admission to the power generator across the street or universities nationwide.

ASAKURA CHŌSO MUSEUM Map p72

朝倉彫塑館

☎ 3841-4549; 7-8-10 Yanaka Taitō-ku; adult/student ¥400/150; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line to Nippori (north exit)

The primary work of sculptor Asakura Fumio (1883–1964) consisted of realistic sculptures of people and cats, but the real attractions are the Japanese house, studio and garden, designed by the artist himself. Upstairs in the Morning Sun Room and the Poised Mind Room are some excellent ink scrolls and beautiful old *tansu* (wooden chests).

NIPPORI TO NISHI-NIPPORI

Walking Tour

Spared from aerial bombing during WWII, Nippori (near Ueno) is imbued with the slowness of a former age. This nook of Tokyo is filled with small temples, atmospheric old cemeteries and little shops.

1 Tenno-ji (天王寺) The Heaven's King Temple belongs to the Tendai sect, one of the most important Buddhist traditions in Japan. The undisputed highlight of this small but tranquil temple is the large Buddha image occupying the central courtyard. Cast in 1690, and modelled after the Great Buddha in Kamakura (p232), this rather solemn statue has weathered the many disasters of both old Edo and modern Tokyo.

2 Yanaka Cemetery (谷中霊園) Even if you normally don't have a morbid bent, a stroll through this historical and rather scenic cemetery (for more information see p99) is a great way to catch a glimpse of old Edo. With camera in hand, spend some time wandering the row upon row of ancient tombstones while keeping an eye out for the rather territorial cats in residence. After a circuit through the cemetery, stroll through the adjacent residential neighbourhood where you'll find a handful of small shops selling Buddhist religious objects.

3 Kannon-ji (観音寺) Although there's no shortage of small temples and shrines in Nippori, Kannon-ji is distinguished by the fact that its consecrated to Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy. Belonging to the Shingon sect, Kannon-ji features a comforting representation of the female incarnation of Buddha as well as a small cemetery from where you can steal views of the modern city beyond.

4 Sandara Kōgei (さんだら工芸屋) Retail therapy of the Shitamachi variety can be yours at this quaint little family-run basket store, which sells a variety of traditional baskets as well as rustic Japanese crafts. Although most of Tokyo once brimmed with stores of this variety, sadly they've gone the way of glitz and glamour.



WALK FACTS

Start Nippori Station (south exit)

End Nishi-Nippori Station

Distance 2km

Time Three hours with stops

Fuel Stop Chalet Swiss Mini

5 Asakura Chōso Museum (朝倉彫塑館) This cutesy-cool museum (p75) is home to a charming collection of Asakura Fumio's quirky sculptures (many of them cats) as well as a marvellous Japanese garden behind the main building. The entire house was designed by the artist himself.

6 Chalet Swiss Mini (シャレスイスマニ) No walk through historic Shitamachi would be complete without a stop at this historic restaurant (for more information see p162), which somehow managed to survive the aerial bombing of WWII. True to its moniker (and its Europhilic atmosphere), the Chalet Swiss Mini serves up a great fondue.

After getting your energy back, continue north past a few small temples until you reach JR Nishi-Nippori station.

ASAKUSA

Eating p162; Shopping p138; Sleeping p208

As the thriving core of the historic Shitamachi district, Asakusa (a-sock-sa) is where the spirit of old Edo proudly lives. The neighbourhood is centred on the magnificent temple of Sensō-ji (also known as Asakusa Kannon-dō), which was founded in the 7th century, not only before Tokyo was Edo, but also before Edo was even a glimmer of an idea. As Edo rose, Asakusa emerged as a bustling commercial centre and bawdy entertainment area, becoming the sturdy beat of Shitamachi's rowdy heart.

Sadly, Asakusa has never fully recovered from the great earthquake of 1923, before it was flattened once again by aerial bombing in the closing months of WWII. Although the brightest lights have shifted elsewhere, this works to Asakusa's advantage: it retains a close-to-the-ground feeling of the common people not readily visible in other parts of town. Also, time spent on the tranquil grounds of the rebuilt Sensō-ji offers a glimpse of Lost Japan that is difficult to experience outside places like Kyoto.

This being Shitamachi, Asakusa is undeniably bustling and full of life, and lends itself perfectly to a directionless stroll. Here, more than any other district in Tokyo, you'll be rewarded by closing the book, ignoring the map and just getting lost in the side streets and back alleys. Up one street, you might find a charming ryokan (traditional inn) or a fastidious *sembei* (rice cracker) maker, while down the next lane could be a marvellous public bath frequented by the *yakuza* (Japanese mafia). Nevertheless, you should not be afraid to put the book down and do it yourself – Asakusa is ripe for your own personal discovery.

Asakusa is bounded on the east by the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River) and by Ueno to the west. All of the destinations in this section are easiest reached via Asakusa Station on the Ginza Line. There is also an Asakusa Station on the Toei Asakusa Line, a slightly longer walk. From either subway station, head away from the river along Kaminarimon-dōri; the Kaminarimon Gate marks the entrance to Sensō-ji. Through the gate, the lively Nakamise-dōri shopping arcade leads straight to the temple.

SENSŌ-JI (SENSO TEMPLE) Map p86

浅草寺

☎ 3842-0181; 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; admission free; 🕒 24hr; 📍 Ginza Line to Asakusa (exit 1) or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A5)

Asakusa's *raison d'être*, Sensō-ji enshrines a golden statue of Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy, which was miraculously fished out of the nearby Sumida-gawa by two fishermen in AD 628. In time, a structure was built to house the image, which has remained on the spot through successive reconstructions of the temple, including a complete postwar reconstruction following the aerial bombings at the end of WWII.

The temple precincts begin at the majestic Kaminarimon (Thunder Gate), which houses a pair of ferocious protective deities: Fūjin, the god of wind, on the right; and Raijin, the god of thunder, on the left.

Straight on through the gate is the lively shopping street Nakamise-dōri, which was recently renovated to include an attractive covered awning that keeps out the elements. Everything is sold here from tourist trinkets like purses made from *obi* (kimono sash) fabric to Edo-style crafts and wigs to

be worn with a kimono. Along this route are also stands that specialise in salty, crunchy *sembei* and *ningyō-yaki* (snacks in the shape of pagodas, fish and more), made of pancake batter with a dollop of *anko* (bean paste) baked inside.

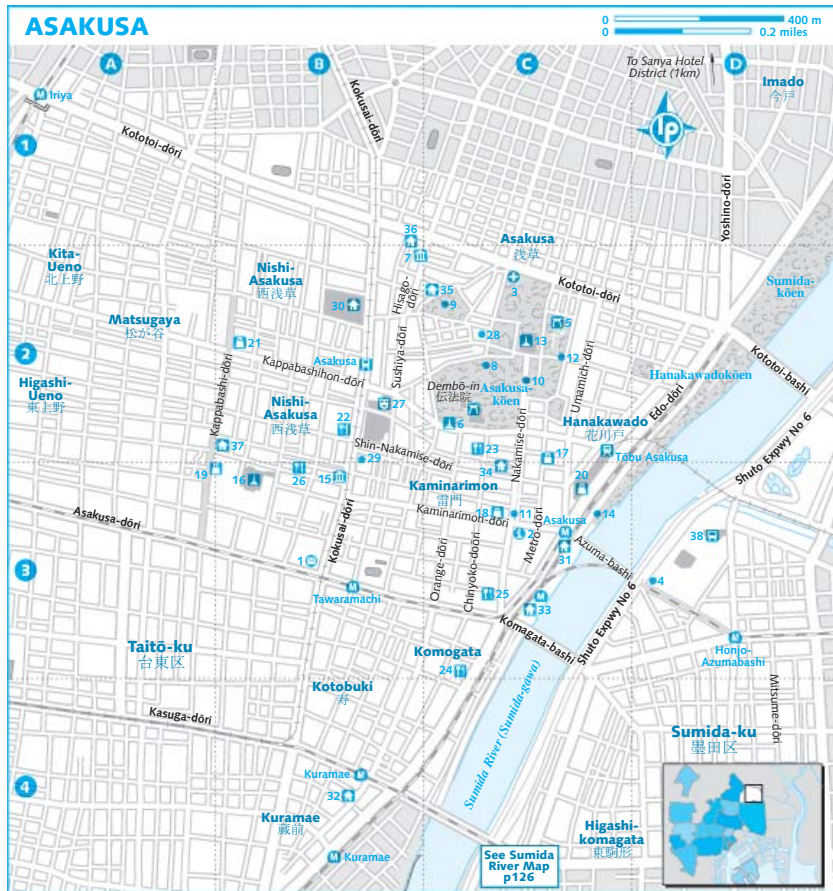
Nakamise-dōri leads north to another gate, *Hōzō-mon*, whose fierce guardians you must pass to reach the main temple compound. To your left stands a 53m-high five-storey pagoda, a 1973 reconstruction of a pagoda built by Tokugawa Iemitsu. The current structure is the second-highest pagoda in Japan.

TRANSPORT: ASAKUSA

Train The Tōbu Nikko Line terminates at Asakusa Station, offering the most convenient connections to Nikko (p221).

Metro The Ginza Line stops at Asakusa, just in front of Azuma-bashi. The Toei Asakusa Line also stops at a separate Asakusa Station nearby.

Waterbuses Water taxis arrive and depart regularly from beneath Azuma-bashi.



The temple grounds resound with cameras and voices with accents from across the country and around the world. The Kannon image (a tiny 6cm) is cloistered within, but despite its seclusion, a steady stream of worshippers makes its way to the temple, where they cast coins, pray and bow in a gesture of respect. In front of the temple, smoke winds its way up from a huge incense cauldron around which supplicants stand wafting the smoke and its scent to their bodies and over their heads to ensure good health.

ASAKUSA-JINJA (ASAKUSA TEMPLE)

Map p86

浅草神社

Asakusa Kannon-dō; 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taitō-ku;

☉ Ginza Line to Asakusa (exit 1) or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A5)

The proximity of this Shintō shrine, behind Sensō-ji and to the right, testifies to the comfortable coexistence of Japan's two major religions. Asakusa-jinja was built in honour of the brothers who discovered the Kannon statue and is renowned as a fine example of an architectural style called *gongen-zukuri*. It's also the site of one of Tokyo's most important festivals, the Sanja Matsuri (p18), a three-day extravaganza of costumed parades, about 100 lurching *mikoshi* (portable shrines) and stripped-to-the-waist *yakuza* sporting remarkable tattoos.

Niten-mon gate, which marks one of the entryways to Asakusa-jinja, was erected in 1618 as a private entrance to the temple for the Tokugawa shōgun. The gate was built here at the same time as Tōshō-gū

ASAKUSA

INFORMATION

Asakusa Post Office 浅草郵便局 1 B3
Asakusa Tourist Information Center (JNTO)
浅草観光案内所..... 2 C3
Sensō-ji Hospital 浅草寺病院..... 3 C2

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Capsule Hotel Riverside カプセル
ホテルあさくさりバーサイド 31 C3
K's House ケイズハウス 東京... 32 B4
Khaosan Guesthouse
カオサン東京ゲストハウス... 33 C3
Ryokan Shigetsu 旅館指月..... 34 C3
Sakura Hostel サクラホステル... 35 C2
Sukeroku no Yado Sadachiyo
助六の宿貞千代..... 36 B1
Tokyo Ryokan 東京旅館..... 37 B2

TRANSPORT

(pp237-44)
Waterbus Pier 水上バス発着所 38 D3

(p223), which burned at this location and was moved to Ueno for fire prevention. The gate's weathered wooden pillars, plastered with votive papers left by Shintō pilgrims, and its enormous red paper lantern certainly merit a stop on your way out of the compound. Remarkably, Niten-mon is the only structure in the temple precincts to have survived Asakusa's various disasters.

SUMIDA-GAWA (RIVER) CRUISE

Map p86

隅田川クルーズ

Suijō Bus; ☎ 0120-977-311; www.suijobus.co.jp;

☉ Ginza Line to Asakusa (exit 5), Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A5) for Azuma-bashi Pier

Though the heavily developed Sumida-gawa is no longer a quaint river, it is still famous for its 12 bridges, and a trip via waterbus is an excellent way to survey Tokyo's old geography.

The Suijō Bus departs from a pier located by Asakusa's Azuma-bashi for the stately garden Hama Rikyū Onshi-teien (p66; ¥620, 35 minutes) and Hinode Pier (¥660, five minutes further). From Hinode Pier you can continue on the journey to Odaiba Marine Park (¥400, 20 minutes) or the Museum of Maritime Science (p131; ¥520, 25 minutes).

Boats leave once or twice per hour between 9.45am and 6.30pm (until 7.10pm on Saturday and Sunday), and English leaflets

describe the dozen or so bridges you'll pass under en route.

DEMBŌ-IN (DEMBO GARDEN)

Map p86

伝法院

☎ 3842-0181; admission free; ☉ Ginza Line to Asakusa (exit 1) or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A5)

To the left of the temple precinct lies Dembō-in, a garden that adjoins the residence of the chief priest of Sensō-ji. The grounds are thought to have been designed sometime in the late 18th century to resemble those of Katsura-rikyū, the sprawling imperial villa in Kyoto. Dembō-in is not usually open to the public, but if you'd like to take a peek at the 12,000-sq-metre area, whose pond is reputedly shaped like the Chinese character for 'heart', call ahead to the main office, which is to the left of the five-storey pagoda.

CHINGODŌ-JI (CHINGODO SHRINE)

Map p86

鎮護寺

Admission free; ☉ Ginza Line to Asakusa (exit 1) or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A5)

This odd, peaceful little shrine on the banks of Dembō-in pays tribute to *tanuki* (raccoon dog) who figure in Japanese myth as mystical shape-shifters and merry pranksters. *Tanuki* are normally depicted

with enormous testicles on which they can fly. Since (needless to say) they make for great subject matter, they frequently pop up in Japanese wood-cuts like Utagawa Kuniyoshi's *The Seven Wonders of the Clowning Raccoon*, in which the *tanuki* is shown cheerily dancing his way round a geisha house.

KAPPABASHI-DŌRI (KAPPABASHI STREET) Map p86

合羽橋通り

🚇 **Ginza Line to Tawaramachi (exit 3)**

A 10-minute walk west of Sensō-ji, Kappabashi-dōri is the country's largest wholesale kitchenware and restaurant-supply district. Gourmet accessories include colourful, pat-

TEMPLE & SHRINE ETIQUETTE

Visitors to Tokyo are often nervous about committing some dreadful faux pas at a temple or shrine. Relax – as with most other aspects of their lives, the Japanese are not particularly rigid in these matters and certainly wouldn't judge a foreign visitor for not adhering to ritual.

If photography is forbidden at a shrine, it will be posted as such; otherwise, it is permitted and you should simply use your discretion when taking pictures so as not to interfere with other visitors.

At both shrines and temples, you can buy amulets called *omamori*, for traffic safety, academic success, good health, safe pregnancy and more, usually for ¥300 to ¥500. *Omamori* run the gamut from minimalist paper or wooden charms to small but elaborate brocade bags embroidered with the name of the shrine or temple and your wish. Another popular memento is *shūin-chō* (pilgrimage books; around ¥1000), which are blank fanfold books; purchase one at the first shrine or temple you visit, and then have it inscribed at each subsequent shrine or temple (around ¥300), usually with lovely calligraphy.

Shintō Shrines

Just past the *torii* (gate) at most larger Shintō shrines is a *chōzuya* (trough of water) with long-handled ladles perched on a *hishaku* (rack) above. This water can be used to purify yourself before entering the sacred precincts. Some Japanese forego this ritual and head directly for the main hall. The traditional way to purify oneself is to take a ladle, fill it with fresh water from the tap, pour some over one hand, transfer the ladle and pour water over the other hand, then pour a little water into a cupped hand, rinse your mouth and spit the water out. Make sure that any water you have used for washing or rinsing goes on to the ground beside the trough (not into the trough, which would make it impure).

Once you have purified yourself, head to the *haiden* (hall of worship), which sits in front of the *honden* (main hall) enshrining the *kami* (god or gods) of the shrine. Here you'll often find a thick rope hanging from a gong, in front of which is an offerings box. Toss in a coin, ring the gong by pulling on the rope (to summon the deity), bow twice, place your hands in the prayer position to pray silently, clap twice, bow once more and then back away. Some Japanese believe that a ¥5 coin is the luckiest offering at a temple or shrine (the word for ¥5, *go-en*, is a homonym for fate), and that the blessing engendered by the offering of a ¥10 coin will come in the future (since 10 can be pronounced 'tō' in Japanese, which also means 'far').

Many shrines sell *ema* (wooden votive plaques), on which you can write a wish before hanging it on a rack for the purpose. Your wish does not have to be in Japanese.

Buddhist Temples

Unless the temple contains a shrine, you will not have to purify yourself before entry. The place of worship in a temple is in the *hondō*, which usually contains a Buddhist altar and one or more Buddha images. The standard practice is to toss some change into the offering box, which sits in front of the altar, step back, place your hands together, pray and then bow to the altar before backing away. Most temples sell *omikuji* (fortunes written on little slips of paper). These usually cost ¥100. Either pay an attendant or place the money in an honour-system box. Fortunes are dispensed randomly from a special box containing sticks with different numbers written on their ends. Shake the box until one stick pops out of a hole in the box's top. Show this to the attendant and you will be given a fortune matching the number on the stick (remember to return the stick to the box!). This will be written in Japanese under one of four general headings: *dai-kichi* (big luck), *kichi* (luck), *sho-kichi* (small luck) and *kyō* (bad luck). *Kichi* is considered best – your luck is good, but getting better – whereas *dai-kichi* implies that it's great now but otherwise all downhill. *Sho-kichi* is moderately grim and *kyō* is the worst. Some fortunes are translated into English, or you can ask someone on the temple grounds to read your fortune for you. Once you've read it, fold the fortune and tie it to a nearby tree branch so that the wind can disperse the bad luck; there's always a tree nearby festooned with the white fortunes, or sometimes there's a clothesline-type contraption for the same purpose.

TOKYO'S RED LIGHTS

In early Edo times, Asakusa was a halfway stop between the Yamanote and the pleasure quarters of the Yoshiwara, but in time the area emerged as a pleasure quarter in its own right. Originally starting out as the hub of kabuki theatre, that most beloved of Edo entertainments, the resulting fairground atmosphere harboured a wealth of decidedly more secular entertainment. In time, beneath in the very shadow of Sensō-ji, Asakusa became known as the principal destination for those in search of the pleasures of the flesh.

When Japan ended its isolation with the Meiji Restoration, it was in Asakusa that the first cinemas, music halls and Western operas appeared. It was also in Asakusa that another Western export – the striptease – first found a Japanese audience. Surprisingly, striptease almost failed to catch on due to the popularity of a rival form of risqué entertainment, namely female sword fighting (to modern ears, the idea of scantily clad jousting females might sound a bit strange, but at the time it was the height of erotic entertainment). However, following the inspired introduction of a bubble-bath show, the pursuit of the carnal became a permanent fixture of the Asakusa spirit.

Today, you can still see girlie-show venues at the fringes of central Asakusa.

terned *noren* (split doorway curtains), pots and pans, restaurant signage, tableware and a number of bizarre Japanese kitchen gadgets to make you go 'hmmm?'

The key drawcard for overseas visitors is the plastic models of food, such as you see in restaurant windows throughout Tokyo. Whether you want steak and chips, a lurid pizza, a bowl of *ramen* or a plate of spaghetti bolognese complete with an upright fork, you'll find it here.

EDO SHITAMACHI DENTŌ KŌGEIKAN (TRADITIONAL CRAFTS MUSEUM)

Map p86

江戸下町伝統工芸館

📍 **3842-1990; 2-22-13 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; admission free; 🕒 10am-8pm; 🚇 Ginza Line to Asakusa (exit 1) or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A5)** Gallery Takumi, as this hall is also known, is a great place to view dozens of hand-made crafts that still flourish in the heart of Shitamachi. The gallery on the 2nd floor is crammed with a rotating selection of works by neighbourhood artists: fans, lanterns, knives, brushes, gold leaf, precision wood-working and glass just for starters. Craft demonstrations take place most Saturdays and Sundays around noon. If anything you see strikes your interest, staff can direct you to artisans or shops selling their work.

TAIKO-KAN (TAIKO DRUM MUSEUM)

Map p86

太鼓館

📍 **3842-5622; 2-1-1 Nishi Asakusa, Taitō-ku; adult/child ¥300/150; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Sun; 🚇 Ginza Line to Tawaramachi (exit 3)**

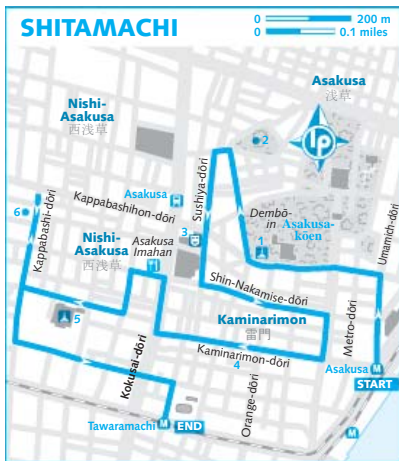
More than 600 drums make up this collection, gathered from around the world,

though only about 200 are available at any one time in the splendidly interactive drum exhibit. You have free rein to touch or play any instrument without a hand – those with a blue dot should be handled carefully, while a red dot means 'off limits'. If you are inspired by the display, you can buy a Japanese-style drum and lots of other festival products at Miyamoto Unosuke Shoten (p138).

SHITAMACHI Walking Tour

If you squint a little, Shitamachi, or the Low City you'll see before you, still looks something like the settings depicted in the wood-block prints famously produced here in Edo times. Luckily, the area retains much of its traditional working-class feel – sort of a rough, gruff, friendly spirit distinctly different from other zones of reinvention-addicted Tokyo.

1 Chingodō-ji (鎮護寺) Located on the ground of Sensō-ji (p85), this small temple is an interesting oddity. Founded in 1883, it was constructed for the *tanuki* (raccoon dogs) living in the Sensō-ji precincts. These beasts, which local lore has as relentless shape shifters and hedonists, are sculpturally depicted with enormous testicles. As you enter, also notice the *jizō* statues, protectors to travellers and children. There are often stalls set up along the stretch of road outside the temple precincts. Along with workaday clothing and shoes, you can find interesting festival accessories here, including the obligatory *tanuki* cell phone strap. See p87 for more information.



WALK FACTS

Start Asakusa subway station (exit 16)

End Tawaramachi subway station

Distance 2km

Time Two hours

Fuel Stop Asakusa Imahan (p162)

2 Hanayashiki Amusement Park (花やしき) This nostalgia-inducing **amusement park** (☎ 3842-8780; 2-28-1 Asakusa; adult/child ¥900/400; 🕒 10.30am-6pm Wed-Mon), Tokyo's oldest, dates back to 1853, and is an absolute delight for the young ones. If you're having trouble finding the entrance, just listen for the delighted shrieking of young children, as well as the rollercoaster creaking and whooshing along its aging wooden tracks.

3 Asakusa Engei Hall (浅草演芸ホール) The centrepiece of Asakusa's old cinema district is this performance hall (for more information see p187), where *rakugo* (performances of stand-up comedy or long tales) are still held today. Unfortunately, the district itself is a little down-at-heel nowadays, and the few remaining cinemas don't screen much besides Japanese pornography. However, as you wander through this historic area, consider that this was once the liveliest of Tokyo's entertainment districts and the preferred haunt of everyone from prostitutes and gangsters to novelists and artisans.

4 Kaminarimon-dōri 雷門通り The major street running through Asakusa is lined with traditional Japanese restaurants, any of which are perfect for a relaxing lunch break. Although there's no shortage of delicious spots in this stretch of town, our recommendation is **Asakusa Imahan** (for more information see p162), a historic *shabu-shabu* restaurant where you can easily spend an hour or so swishing thinly sliced cuts of raw meat in a boiling pot filled with stock.

5 Tokyo Hongan-ji (東京本願寺) If you're looking to escape the tourist crowds and explore one of Asakusa's little-known corners, this atmospheric but rather unknown temple complex is the perfect antidote to the sensory overload of Sensō-ji.

6 Kappabashi-dōri (かっぱ橋通り) Tokyo's wholesale restaurant supplies area (for more information see p88) is shop upon shop selling plastic food models, bamboo cooking utensils, batik cushions and even the *akachōchin* (red lanterns) that light the back alleys of Tokyo by night. Go one – see if you can get a good deal on a plastic sushi model!

AKASAKA

Eating p163; Sleeping p210

During the Meiji era, Akasaka was the district of Tokyo most densely populated by geisha. These female companions, who were highly trained artists and masters of conversation, continued to occupy the area during both world wars. During the American occupation, Akasaka's geisha houses served as the settings for notorious backroom deals that jumpstarted the economy, sealed political alliances and shaped the modern nation of Japan.

Although Tokyo's geisha are sadly no more, Akasaka remains as Tokyo's centre of both explicit and exclusive power. With the National Diet Building just a few minutes' walk away in the Nagatachō area, Akasaka fills with bureaucrats, politicians and high-powered businessmen at the end of the day. The geisha houses may be long gone, but Akasaka's backstreets and late-night bars still echo political murmurings and business deals.

Politics aside, Akasaka is also home to Hie-jinja (*below*), which comes alive in the spring when the cherry blossoms complement its row of rust-red *torii*, and in autumn when children in traditional costumes arrive for Shichi-go-san (p19). One of Tokyo's most exuberant *matsuri* takes place here, offering an excellent chance to see one of the rowdy, colourful processions of *mikoshi*.

Akasaka is situated southwest of the Imperial Palace, due north of Roppongi and west of Aoyama. The neighbourhood is centred on Hie-jinja, though the pull of the National Diet Building to the shrine's east is strong. Nearby is a cadre of luxury hotels, most notably the Hotel New Otani (see p59 and p205), which is known for its splendid garden and intimate art gallery.

HIE-JINJA (HIE SHRINE) Map p92

日枝神社

☎ 3581-2471; www.hiejinja.net/eindex.htm;
2-10-5 Nagatachō, Chiyoda-ku; admission free;
📍 Ginza or Namboku Line to Tameike-Sannō
(exit 5 or 7)

This Shintō shrine traces its roots to the sacred Mt Hiei, northeast of Kyoto, and it has been the protector shrine of Edo Castle since it was first built in 1478. The present site dates from 1659, though the shrine was destroyed in the 1945 bombings and later rebuilt in 1967.

These days, the shrine is chiefly known as the host of one of Tokyo's three liveliest *matsuri*, Sannō-sai (p18; 15 June). Given the shrine's protector status, the festival was regularly attended by the shōgun, and even now the route of the festival's *mikoshi* terminates at the Imperial Palace.

When the festival's not on, the shrine makes for a colourful yet quiet break. A highlight is the walk up through a 'tunnel' of orange *torii*, especially dramatic on a sunny day. The shrine is also great for a visit when the cherry blossoms are out or the leaves are changing.

Oh, and if you're wondering about the carved monkey clutching one of her young, she is emblematic of the shrine's ability to offer protection against the threat of a miscarriage.

NATIONAL DIET BUILDING Map p92

国会議事堂

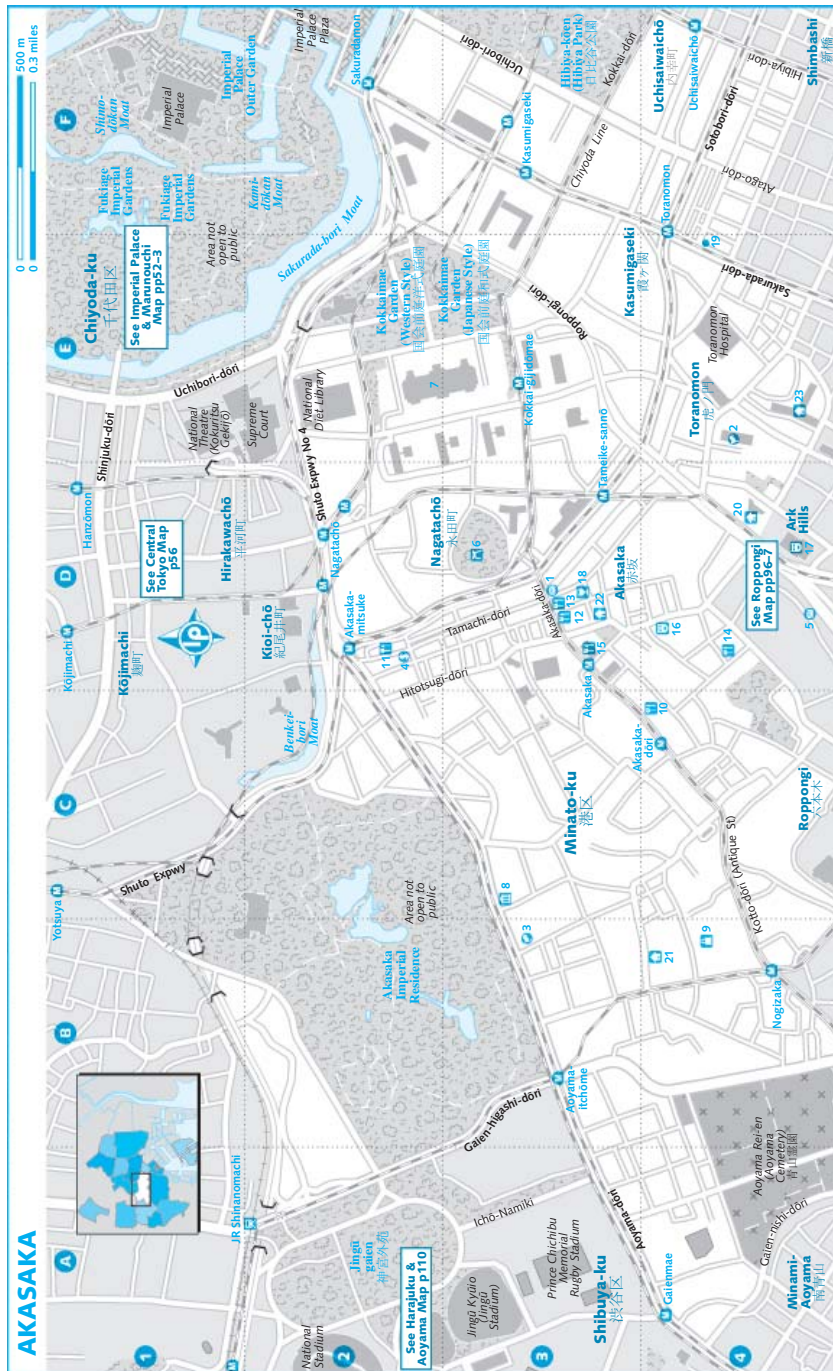
☎ 3581-3111; www.sangiin.go.jp; 1-7-1
Nagatachō, Chiyoda-ku; 🕒 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, closed national holidays; 📍 Yūrakuchō,
Hanzōmon or Namboku Line to Nagatachō
(exit 1), or Marunouchi or Chiyoda Line to
Kokkai-gijidōmae (exit 1)

Built on a site once inhabited by feudal lords, the National Diet was completed in 1936 with its landmark pyramid-shaped dome. The chambers – the Shūgi-in or House of Representatives (the Upper House) and the Sangi-in or House of Councillors (the Lower House) – have been the scene of fist fights and wrestling matches over the occasional hot-button issue. Recently things have been a bit more tame, though you can still take in the occasional hot-tempered plenary session.

Free 60-minute **tours** (☎ 5521-7445) of the Sangi-in are available when the Diet is not in session, taking in the public gallery, the

TRANSPORT: AKASAKA

Metro The Yūrakuchō, Hanzōmon, Namboku, Chiyoda, Marunouchi and Ginza Lines all converge in the Akasaka area, including Nagatachō, Akasaka, Akasaka-Mitsuke and Tameike-Sannō Stations.



AKASAKA

INFORMATION

Akasaka Post Office 赤坂郵便局	1	D3
American Embassy アメリカ大使館	2	E4
Canadian Embassy カナダ大使館	3	B3
Citibank シティバンク	4	D2
Koyasu Drug Store Hotel Ōkura 子安ドラッグストアホテルオークラ	(see 23)	
Roppongi Post Office 六本木郵便局	5	D4

SIGHTS

	(pp91-3)	
Hie-jinja (Hie Shrine) 日枝神社	6	D3
National Diet Building 国会議事堂	7	E2
Sōgetsu Kaikan 草月会館	8	C3

SHOPPING

	(pp135-48)	
Nogi-jinja Flea Market 乃木神社フリーマーケット	9	B4

EATING

	(pp149-74)	
Asterix アステリックス	10	C4
Daidaiya 橙家	11	D2
Delhi デリー	12	D3
Lotus Palace	13	D3
Rakutei 楽亭	14	D4
Yamaya やまや赤坂店	15	D3

ENTERTAINMENT

	(pp175-90)	
B-Flat ビーフラット	16	D4
Suntory Hall サントリーホール	17	D4

DRINKING

	(pp175-90)	
Hobgoblin ホブゴブリン	18	D3

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

	(pp191-200)	
Sōgetsu Kaikan 草月会館	(see 8)	
World Union of Karate-dō Organisation	19	E4

SLEEPING

	(pp201-16)	
ANA Intercontinental Tokyo ANA インターコンチネンタルホテル東京	20	D4
Asia Center of Japan アジア会館	21	B4
Hotel Avanshell Akasaka ホテル アバンシェル赤坂	22	D3
Hotel Ōkura ホテルオークラ	23	E4

emperor's room (from where he addresses the Diet at the start of each session) and central hall (featuring a floor mosaic of a million pieces of marble and murals depicting the four seasons). For the tours, it is best not to arrive before 9am to avoid the largest tour groups. And unless you're here for a protest, leave your red headbands, which are *de rigueur* among demonstrators, in your suitcase.

SŌGETSU KAIKAN Map p92

草月会館

☎ 3408-1126; www.sogetsu.or.jp/english/index.html; Sōgetsu Kaikan Bldg, 7-2-21 Akasaka, Minato-ku; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Thu & Sat, 10am-8pm Fri; 🚉 Ginza, Hanzōmon or Toei Ōedo Line to Aoyama-itchohme (exit 4)

Sōgetsu is one of Japan's leading schools of avant-garde ikebana offering classes in English (p196). Even if you have no interest in flower arranging, it's worth a peek in for the building (1977) designed by Tange Kenzō and the giant, climbable piece of installation art that occupies the lobby, by the revered Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi.

ROPPONGI

Eating p164; Shopping p139; Sleeping p211

Since the end of WWII, Roppongi has garnered a notorious reputation as a den of sin. A popular haunt for American soldiers on leave, wet-behind-the-ears foreigners fresh off the plane, Chinese prostitutes, Russian strippers, Nigerian bouncers and plenty of hungry women and hungrier men on the prowl, Roppongi is the unabashed hedonism capital of Tokyo. Most self-respecting Tokyoites and long-term foreign residents won't go near the place, but it's hard to deny that a good time is usually had by all who do. Dancing and flirting until the wee hours of the morning is the standard course of action in Roppongi, as is spending big, drinking hard and forgetting most of the night.

Ten, 20 or 50 years ago, any Tokyoite could tell you exactly what you could do during the day in Roppongi: nothing. Yet in 2003, everything changed following the opening of Roppongi Hills, a masterfully designed shopping/dining/office/residential/hotel/gallery/museum complex. A visually stunning project aimed at redefining the cultural landscape of the neighbourhood, Roppongi Hills is now regarded as one of the capital's principal landmarks. Though the complex was given a run for its money in 2007 with the opening of Tokyo Midtown (opposite), an equally impressive feat of urban architecture.

Together, both complexes are seeking to transform Roppongi from a sleazy pleasure quarter into a high-class neighbourhood with all the bourgeois trimmings. And so far it's working – real estate prices are on the rise, well-to-do men and women are changing addresses and high-class boutiques, bars and restaurants are popping up all over the neighbourhood. In the meantime, the posh cafés lining the streets near Roppongi Hills and Tokyo Midtown are a world away from the liquor-soaked clubs in nearby Roppongi Crossing, though this may change in the years to come.

Roppongi lies between Aoyama and Harajuku to the west and Ginza and Shiodome to the east, while to the north it eventually turns into stately Akasaka. The neighbourhood is centred on Roppongi Crossing (*Roppongi kōsaten*), where Roppongi-dōri meets Gaien-highashi-dōri in the shadow of the expressway. Roppongi Hills and Tokyo Midtown lies west along Roppongi-dōri (if you're facing Almond, head right).

ROPPONGI HILLS Map pp96–7

六本木ヒルズ

☎ 6406-6000; Roppongi 6-chōme; admission free;

🚇 Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 1c)

Opened in 2003 to an incredible amount of fanfare, Roppongi Hills was the dream of real-estate developer Mori Minoru, who long envisaged a transformation of Roppongi. Since then, an incredible amount of lofty praise has been vaulted at the complex, which is arguably the most architecturally arresting sight in Tokyo. Simply put, Roppongi Hills is a feast for the eyes, enhanced by public art such as Louise Bourgeois's giant, spiny alfresco spider called *Maman* and the benches-cum-sculptures on Keyakizaka Street.

With expertly drawn lines of steel and glass, expansive tree-lined public spaces and a healthy smattering of the city's top bars, restaurants and shops, Roppongi Hills stands as a testament to a new concept in urban planning. Rather than building larger and taller residential towers, it is argued developers should instead focus on useable space that can better serve the community.

And truth be told, although most Tokyoites can't even dream about owning a high-rise apartment at the city's most prestigious address, Roppongi Hills has become a destination in its own right.

The centrepiece of the complex is the 54-storey Mori Tower, which is home to some of the world's leading companies as well as the Mori Art Museum and Tokyo City View (opposite). At the base of the tower are the marvellous Grand Hyatt Tokyo (p211) and some 200 shopping, drinking and dining establishments including internationally known brands and chefs (eg Joël Robuchon). On the plaza below, the TV Asahi network headquarters adjoins an ancient samurai garden and the Roppongi Hills Arena, where you can often catch outdoor

TRANSPORT: ROPPOINGI

Metro The Hibiya and Toei Ōedo Lines both run through Roppongi, but the Hibiya Line drops you closer to Roppongi Crossing, Roppongi's main intersection.

performances. Just beyond, the brand-name shops ascending Keyakizaka are nothing short of marvels of modern design.

MORI ART MUSEUM Map pp96–7

森美術館

☎ 5777-8600; www.mori.art.museum; Mori

Tower, Roppongi 6-chōme; admission varies;

🕒 10am–10pm Wed–Mon, 10am–5pm Tue;

🚇 Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 1c)

Perched on the 52nd and 53rd floors of Mori Tower in the Roppongi Hills complex, the high ceilings, broad views and thematic programmes of this new museum have somehow managed to live up to all the hype. Exhibits are consistently beautifully presented and run the gamut from Bill Viola and Sugimoto Hiroshi to the Da Vinci Codex and the silver of Georg Jensen.

Admission to the museum includes Tokyo

City View (☎ 6406-6652; www.tokyocityview.com;

adult/child/student ¥1500/500/1000 if purchased separately; 🕒 9am–1am), on the 52nd floor. There

are observatories atop other tall buildings in town, but none can match Roppongi Hills for its central location and undeniable 'cool factor'.

The observatory is open longer than the museum. If you're visiting the museum, you also get admission to the observatory; otherwise you have to purchase a separate admission. Note that the museum is subject to closure between exhibitions, but Tokyo City View is open daily.

TOKYO MIDTOWN Map pp96–7

東京ミッドタウン

☎ 3423-8000; Minato-ku; admission free;

🚇 Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 8)

Following the impressive lead of Roppongi Hills, Tokyo Midtown wowed the legions of crowds who arrived on opening day in 2007. A composite urban district of ultramodern buildings surrounding a historic Japanese garden, Tokyo Midtown is perhaps the only project to surface in recent years that can give Roppongi Hills a run for its money. Following the same design and urban planning lines that made Roppongi Hills so successful, the Tokyo Midtown complex brims with sophisticated bars, restaurants, shops, art galleries, hotels and leafy public spaces. Escalators ascend alongside manmade waterfalls of rock and glass, while soaring planters full of bamboo

draw your eyes to the lofty heights of the towers above.

Aside from the myriad opportunities for parting with serious cash while simultaneously buying status, the highlight of the complex is undoubtedly *Hinokicho-kōen*. Formerly a private garden attached to the Azabu villa residence of the Mori family, a member of the Hagi Clan during the Edo Period, Hinokicho was reopened as a public park for the benefit of visitors to Tokyo Midtown. Adjacent to the park is the aptly named *Midtown Garden*, which was the former site of the Japan Self Defense Agency, though today it's a cherry tree-lined grassy space that's perfect for a picnic. Tokyo Midtown is also home to the *Suntory Museum of Art* (below), which provides a nice respite from all the rampant consumerism about, as well as the glamorous *Grand Hyatt Tokyo* (p211).

SUNTORY MUSEUM OF ART Map pp96–7

サントリー美術館

☎ 3479-8600; www.mori.art.museum; Tokyo

Midtown, Minato-ku; admission varies; 🕒 10am–

6pm Sun–Mon, 10am–8pm Wed–Sat; 🚇 Hibiya or

Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 8)

Since its original opening in 1961, the Suntory Museum of Art has always subscribed to the underlying philosophy of 'Lifestyle Art'. Adhering to this mantra, rotating exhibits focus on Japanese ceramics, lacquerware, glass dyeing, weaving and other facets of lifestyle art as opposed to more traditional paintings and sculpture. One of the more innovative museums in the city, the Suntory Museum is likely to thrive in its brand new location at the heart of Tokyo Midtown. Note that the museum is subject to closure between exhibitions.

TOKYO TOWER Map pp96–7

東京タワー

☎ 3433-5111; www.tokyotower.co.jp/english;

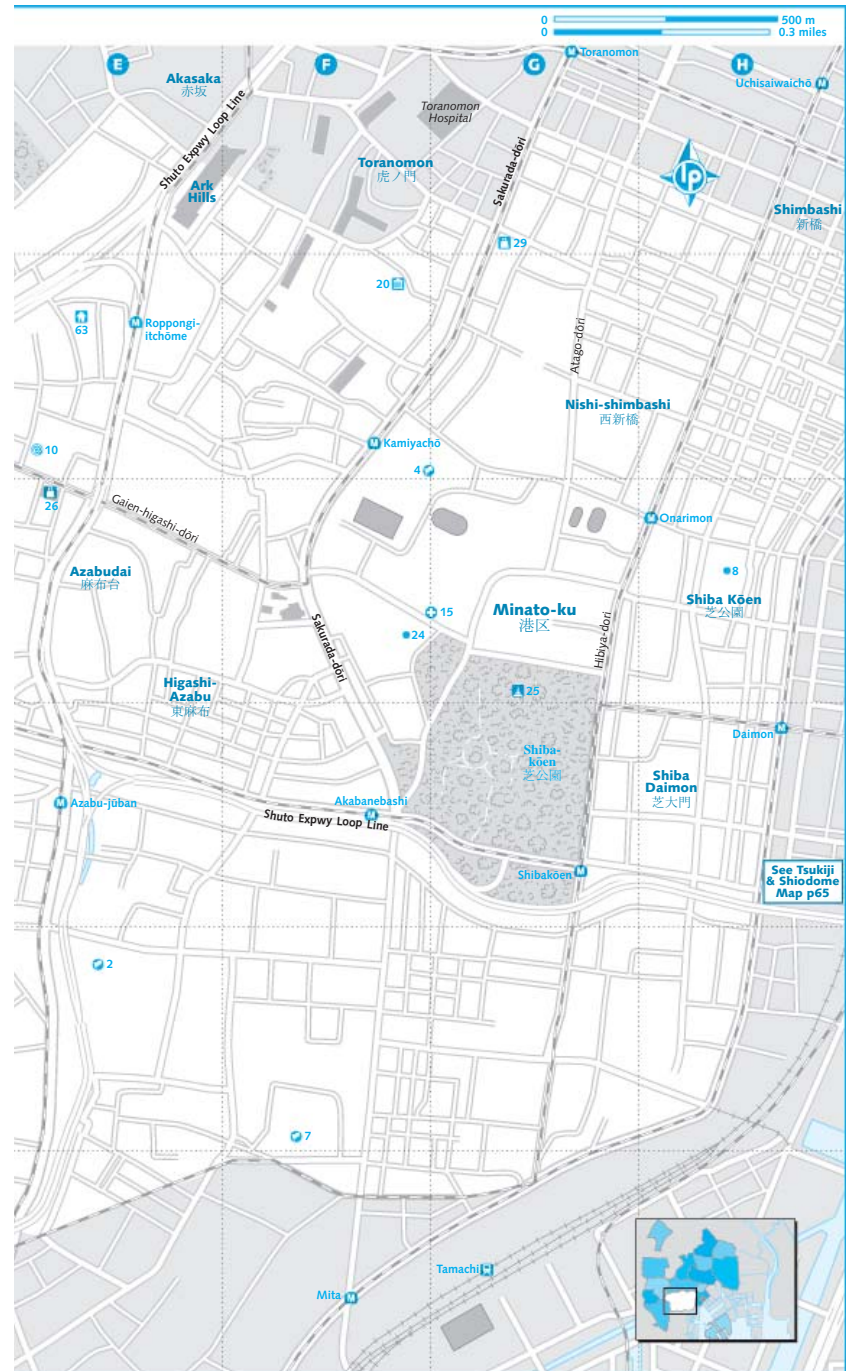
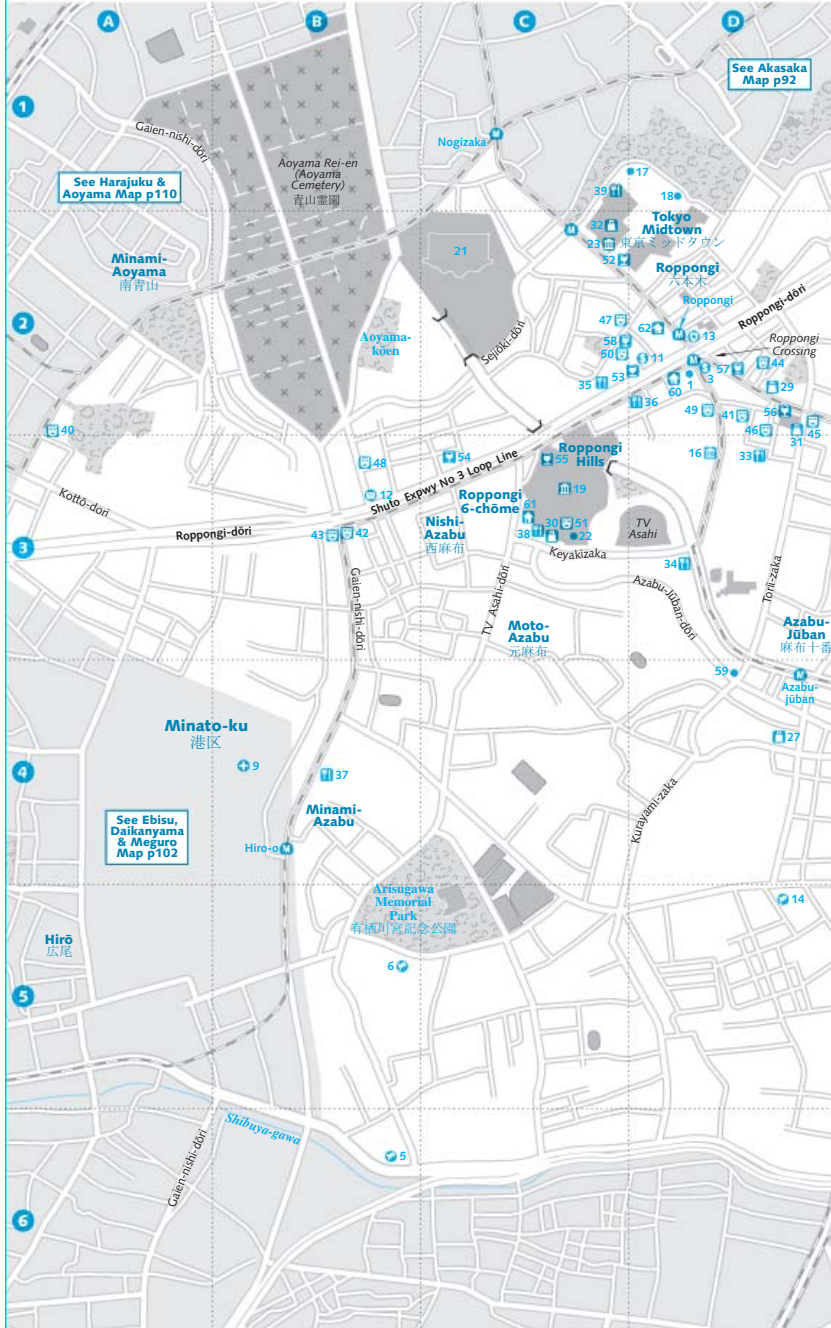
4-2-8 Shiba-kōen, Minato-ku; adult/child ¥820/460;

🕒 observation platforms 9am–10pm; 🚇 Toei

Ōedo Line to Akabanebashi (Akabanebashi exit)

Tokyo Tower, which currently serves as the city's principal radio and TV broadcasting tower, proudly bills itself as the world's highest self-supporting steel tower, and the tallest man-made structure in Japan. However, with the planned 2011 opening of the Sumida Tower in Asakusa, it's likely that Tokyo Tower's days of fame are numbered.

ROPPONGI



ROPPONGI

INFORMATION

Almond アーモンド.....	1	D2
Australian Embassy オーストラリア大使館.....	2	E5
Citibank シティバンク.....	3	D2
Dutch Embassy オランダ大使館.....	4	F2
French Embassy フランス大使館.....	5	B6
German Embassy ドイツ大使館.....	6	B5
Italian Embassy イタリア大使館.....	7	F5
Japanese Red Cross Language Service Volunteers 日本赤十字社.....	8	H3
Japanese Red Cross Medical Centre 日本赤十字社医療センター.....	9	B4
Manga Hiroba まんが広場.....	10	E2
Mizuho Bank 第一勧業銀行.....	11	D2
National Azabu Supermarket Pharmacy ナショナル麻布ス.(see 37)		
National Medical Clinic スーパーマーケット薬局.....(see 37)		
Nishi-Azabu Post Office 西麻布郵便局.....	12	B3
Police Box 交番.....	13	D2
South Korean Embassy 韓国大使館.....	14	D5
Tokyo Medical & Surgical Clinic 東京クリニック.....	15	G3
SIGHTS (pp94-9)		
Aquarium.....(see 24)		
Axis アクシスギャラリー.....(see 26)		
Complex コンプレックス.....	16	D3
Hinokicho-kōen 港区立榎町公園.....	17	D1
Midtown Garden ミッドタウン・ガーデン.....	18	D1
Mori Art Museum 森美術館.....	19	C3
Musée Tomo 智美術館.....	20	F2
National Art Centre, Tokyo.....	21	C2

Roppongi Hills 六本木ヒルズ.....	22	C3
Suntory Museum of Art サントリー美術館.....	23	C2
Tokyo City View 東京シティビュー.....(see 19)		
Tokyo Tower 東京タワー.....	24	F3
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Zōjō-ji (Zōjō Temple) 増上寺.....	25	G3
SHOPPING (pp135-48)		
Axis アクシスビル.....	26	E3
Blue & White ブルアンドホワイト D7	27	D4
Don Quixote ドンキホーテ.....	28	D2
Japan Sword 日本刀剣.....	29	G1
Muji 無印.....	30	C3
Roppongi Antique Fair 六本木アンティークフェア.....	31	D2
Roppongi Hills 六本木ヒルズ..(see 22)		
Tokyo Midtown 東京ミッドタウン.....	32	C2

EATING

China Room チャイナルーム..(see 61)		
Fukuzushi 福寿司.....	33	D3
Hawker Style Asian Canteen 海南鶏飯食堂.....	34	D3
Inakaya 田舎屋.....(see 41)		
Meidi-ya 明治屋.....	35	C2
Moti モティ.....	36	D2
National Azabu ナショナル麻布 スーパーマーケット.....	37	B4
Sumibi-Yakiniku Toraji International 炭火焼肉トラジ インターナショナル.....	38	C3
Vinoteca ヴィノテカ.....	39	C1

ENTERTAINMENT

Blue Note Tokyo ブルーノート東京.....	40	A2
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New Lex Edo ニューレックスエドウ.....	44	D2
Pasela Karaoke パセラ.....	45	D2
Salsa Caribe サルサカリベ.....	46	D2
Salsa Sudada サルサスダーダ.....	47	C2
Space Lab Yellow スペースラボイエロー.....	48	B3
Sweet Basil 139 (Stb139) スイートバジル 139.....	49	D2
Vanilla ヴァニラ.....	50	C2
Virgin Toho Cinemas Roppongi Hills ヴァージン TOHO シネマズ六本木ヒルズ.....	51	C3

DRINKING

A971.....	52	C2
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BUL-Lets プレツ.....	54	C3
Heartland ハートランド.....	55	C3
Mistral Blue/Train Bar ミストラルブルー.....	56	D2
Motown House 1&2.....	57	D2
Tokyo Sports Café 東京スポーツカフェ.....	58	C2

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Azabu-jūban Onsen 麻布十番温泉.....	59	D4
Koshi-no-Yu Sentō 腰の湯銭湯 (see 59)		

SLEEPING

Arca Torre ホテルアルカトーレ六本木..	60	D2
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Hotel Ibis ホテルアイビス.....	62	D2
Villa Fontaine Roppongi Annex ホテルヴィラフォンテーヌ 六本木アネックス.....	63	E2

ZŌJŌ-JI (ZŌJŌ TEMPLE) Map pp96-7

増上寺
☎ 3432-1431; Shiba-kōen; admission free;
☼ dawn-dusk; 🚶 Toei Ōedo Line to Akabanebashi
(Akabanebashi exit)

Behind Tokyo Tower is this former funerary temple of the Tokugawa regime, one of the most important temples of the Jōdō (Pure Land) sect of Buddhism. It dates from 1393, yet like many sights in Tokyo, its original structures have been relocated and subject to war, fire and other natural disasters. It has been rebuilt several times in recent history, the last time in 1974.

Nevertheless, Zōjō-ji remains one of the most monumental temples in town. The main gate, Sanmon, was constructed in 1605, and its three sections were designed to symbolise the three stages one must pass through to achieve nirvana.

The giant bell (1673; 15 tonnes) is considered one of the Great Three Bells of the Edo period. On the temple grounds there is a large collection of statues of the Bodhisattva *jizō*, said to be a guide during the transmigration of the soul (see p101 for more details).

NATIONAL ART CENTER, TOKYO

Map pp96-7

NACT; ☎ 6812-9900; www.nact.jp; 7-22-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku; admission varies; 🕒 10am-6pm Sat-Mon & Wed-Thu, 10am-8pm Fri; 🚶 Chiyoda Line to Nogizaka (exit 6)

This architectural marvel designed by Kishō Kurokawa, which opened in 2007 as Japan's fifth national-class museum, has no permanent collection but boasts the country's largest exhibition space for visiting shows, which have included painter Yokoyama Taikan and photographer Shigeo Anzai. The NACT is also worth visiting for its awesome undulating mesh façade, its café atop a giant inverted cone and the great gift shop.

AXIS Map pp96-7

アクシスギャラリー

☎ 3587-2781; 5-17-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku; admission free; 🕒 11am-7pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 3)

One of the most respected design showcases in Tokyo, as well as the publisher of a well-regarded design magazine, Axis is a multi-storey, multi-genre gallery and retail building. There's always something new and daring in its art galleries, and the shops, chosen with care, include home

design at **Living Motif** (☎ 3587-2784, 1st & 2nd fl), fabulously innovative textiles at **Nuno** (☎ 3582-7997; www.nuno.com; B1 fl) and flashy duds and accessories for your inner auto mechanic at **Le Garage** (☎ 3587-2785; 1st fl). Also see p139.

MUSÉE TOMO Map pp96-7

智美術館

☎ 5733-5311; 4-1-35 Toranomon, Minato-ku; adult ¥1300, student ¥500-800; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Hibiya Line to Kamiyachō (exit 4b)

This marvellous museum may be one of Tokyo's most elegant and tasteful. It is named for Kikuchi Tomo, whose collection of contemporary Japanese ceramics wowed them in Washington and London before finally being exhibited in Tokyo. Exhibitions change every few months and might include high-lights of the Kikuchi collection or a special study of *raku* pottery; you can bet that the displays will be atmospheric and beautiful. The museum is behind the Hotel Ōkura.

COMPLEX Map pp96-7

コンプレックス

☎ 5411-7510; admission free; 🚶 Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 3)

If you're here for only a few days and are seeking a peek into the Tokyo art scene, stop here. Several of the best commercial galleries in town inhabit the five-storey, aptly named Complex. Spaces are a mix of styles and intentions, a conflation of more established exhibitors such as Ota Fine Arts, known for showing big names like Kusama Yayoi as well as newer galleries.

TOKYO CEMETERIES

Strolling through a cemetery may seem like a grim pastime, but in Tokyo the grave markers can be quite elegant, making the experience both historical and pleasant.

Aoyama Rei-en (青山霊園; Map pp96-7; Aoyama Cemetery; 🕒 24hr; 🚶 Chiyoda Line to Nogizaka, main exit) John Manjiro, the famously shipwrecked young fisherman who became the first Japanese person to go to America, is buried here, as is Professor Ueno, the master of Hachikō the Dog (p105). It's a good alternative to the crowds at Ueno or Yoyogi-kōen during *hanami* (cherry-blossom viewing) season. You can stroll from either Roppongi or Aoyama.

Yanaka Cemetery (谷中霊園; Map p72; 🕒 dawn-dusk; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Nippori, south exit) One of Tokyo's oldest cemeteries, it's worth strolling the narrow lanes and continuing to Ueno on foot. Beyond the cemetery, the quiet Yanaka area has many old Buddhist temples and speciality shops. For a walking tour of the area, see p76.

Zōshigaya Cemetery (雑司ヶ谷墓地; Map p122; 🕒 dawn-dusk; 🚶 Yūrakuchō Line to Higashi-ikebukuro, exit 5) Not far south of Ikebukuro's commercial hub is the old residential district of Zōshigaya. This cemetery, a collection of weathered headstones surrounded by small paths and greenery, is the final resting place of authors Lafcadio Hearn, Nagai Kafu and Soseki Natsume.

EBISU, DAIKANYAMA & MEGURO

Eating p165; Shopping p140; Sleeping p211

Home to a smart, stylish set of young professionals, wealthy families and privileged expats, Ebisu is one of Tokyo's best-kept secrets. The entire neighbourhood, which screams status, privilege and excellent breeding, offers up some of the city's most cosmopolitan eateries and lounges. Quick to scoff at the teen trends and fickle fashions of nearby Harajuku and Shibuya, Ebisu is cool, classy and always sophisticated.

Up the hill and to the west of Ebisu is Daikanyama, which is characterised by a matrix of funky restaurants and bars run by eccentric proprietors, crazy buildings designed by local visionaries and unique shops defying classification. Equally prestigious as an Ebisu address, Daikanyama is something of a Ginza for high-class shoppers and diners in-the-know.

One stop south from Ebisu on the JR Yamanote Line is Meguro, which is decidedly more working class than its ritzy neighbours. However, Meguro does have a number of unique sights including the intimate and haunting Daien-ji temple (below), the intimate and artful Meguro Museum of Art (p103) and the frankly icky Meguro Parasitological Museum (p103). Also nearby are the forests of the Shizen-Kyōiku-en, a nature preserve right in the middle of the big city.

If you have even the slightest love for that deliciously malty alcoholic beverage known in Japanese as *biiru*, don't miss the Beer Museum Yebisu (below), which has a bargain tasting room that serves up copious amounts of their famous brew. Also of note in Ebisu is the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (p103), a point of pilgrimage for devout shutterbugs (and there are certainly a lot of them in Japan!).

Ebisu and Daikanyama are located south of Harajuku and Aoyama and east of Roppongi. From the JR Ebisu Station, the east exit opens onto the Yebisu Sky Walk, a series of conveyor belts that will eventually deposit you in the courtyard of Yebisu Garden Place. This is the side of Ebisu designed for visitors, tourists and hardcore shoppers. If you want to see where locals live and play, head for the west exit and up the hill towards glitzy Daikanyama.

From Meguro Station, Daien-ji, Meguro Gajoen and the Meguro Museum of Art are west of the station, while the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum and National Park for Nature Study are east along Meguro-dōri.

BEER MUSEUM YEBISU Map p102

恵比寿麦酒記念館

☎ 5423-7255; www.sapporobeer.jp/english/when/museum/museum.html; 4-20-1 Ebisu, Shibuya-ky; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, last entry 5pm; 📍 Hibiya or JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (main exit) Let's cut to the chase. Yes, this is the site of the original Yebisu brewery (1889; now owned by the giant brewer Sapporo). And yes, inside are giant pot-bellied beer vats, antique signage, cute beer ads and a cheesy Magic Vision Theatre. But really you've come for the Tasting Room, where you can try cheap draughts of everything from weizen and ale to porters and stouts – a four-glass tasting set will set you back only ¥400.

DAIEN-JI (DAIEN TEMPLE) Map p102

大円寺

☎ 3491-2793; 1-8-5 Shimo-Meguro, Meguro-ku; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm; 📍 JR Yamanote Line or subway Namboku or Mita Line to Meguro (west exit)

Established sometime around 1615, this small, photogenic temple hemmed in by

trees commemorates stillborn and miscarried children as well as aborted fetuses. Located in the rear of the temple precinct is a separate tribute to the 14,700 people who died in the fire of 1772, which, in addition to flattening most of the wooden houses in surrounding Meguro, burned the original temple structure to the ground.

As you enter, you'll see red-bonneted *jizō* figures (small stone statues of the

TRANSPORT: EBISU, DAIKANYAMA & MEGURO

Train The JR Yamanote Line stops at Ebisu and Meguro Stations. Daikanyama is located on the Tōkyō Tōyoko Line.

Metro The Hibiya Line runs through Ebisu and connects with the main JR station. Meguro is served by the Namboku and Toei Mita Lines. Some locations east of Meguro are closest to Shirokanedai Station on the Namboku Line.

JAPANESE GODS & MYTHICAL CREATURES

You can see representations of a myriad folk gods in temples, shrines and artwork. Common deities and supernatural creatures include the following.

Benzaiten The goddess of art is skilled in eloquence, music, literature and wisdom. She holds a *biwa* (lute) and is often escorted by a sea snake.

Bishamon The god of war wears a helmet and a suit of armour, and brandishes a spear. As a protector of Buddhism, he can be seen carrying a pagoda.

Daikoku The god of wealth has a bag full of treasures slung over his left shoulder and a lucky mallet in his right hand.

Ebisu The patron of seafarers and a symbol for prosperity in business, Ebisu carries a fishing rod with a large, red sea bream dangling on the line and can be recognised by his beaming, bearded face.

Fukurokuju This god looks after wealth and longevity. He has a bald, dome-shaped head, a dumpy body and wears long, flowing robes.

Hotei The god of happiness is instantly recognisable (in Japan and elsewhere in Asia) by his large paunch and Cheshire-cat grin. Originally a Chinese beggar-priest, he is the only god in this group whose antecedents can be traced to a human being. His bulging bag provides for the needy and is never empty.

Jizō Bodhisattva and protector of children, the infirm, the aged and travellers. Often seen by the side of the road, and wearing a red bib and sometimes a cap, and often in clusters where tragedies have taken place.

Jurojin This god also covers longevity. He sports a distinguished white beard and holds a cane to which is attached a scroll listing the life spans of all living beings.

Kappa These are amphibious creatures about the size of a 12- or 13-year-old child. They have webbed hands and feet and a reputation for mischief, such as dragging horses into rivers or stealing cucumbers. The source of their power is a depression on top of their heads that must always contain water. A crafty method to outwit a *kappa* is to bow to it. When the *kappa* bows back, it empties the water from its head and loses its power. The alternatives are not pleasant: *kappa* are said to enjoy ripping out their victim's liver through the anus!

Kitsune This creature is a fox that has strong connections with the supernatural and is worshipped at over 30,000 Inari shrines as the messenger of the harvest god. Fushimi Inari Taisha, a shrine near Kyoto, is the largest of its kind and is crammed with fox statues.

Maneki-neko The Beckoning Cat is a very common sight outside shops or restaurants. The raised left paw attracts customers – and their money.

Shichifuku-jin The seven gods of luck are a happy band of well-wishers plucked from Indian, Chinese and Japanese sources. Their images are popular at New Year, when they are, more often than not, depicted as a group on a *takarabune* (treasure ship).

Tanuki This creature is often translated as 'badger', but bears a closer resemblance to a North American raccoon. Like the *kitsune*, the *tanuki* is thought of as a mischievous creature and is credited with supernatural powers, but it is more a figure of fun than the fox. Statues usually depict the *tanuki* in an upright position with straw headgear, clasping a bottle of sake.

Tengu The mountain goblin has a capricious nature – sometimes abducting children, sometimes returning those who were missing. Its unmistakable feature is a long nose, like that of a proboscis monkey.

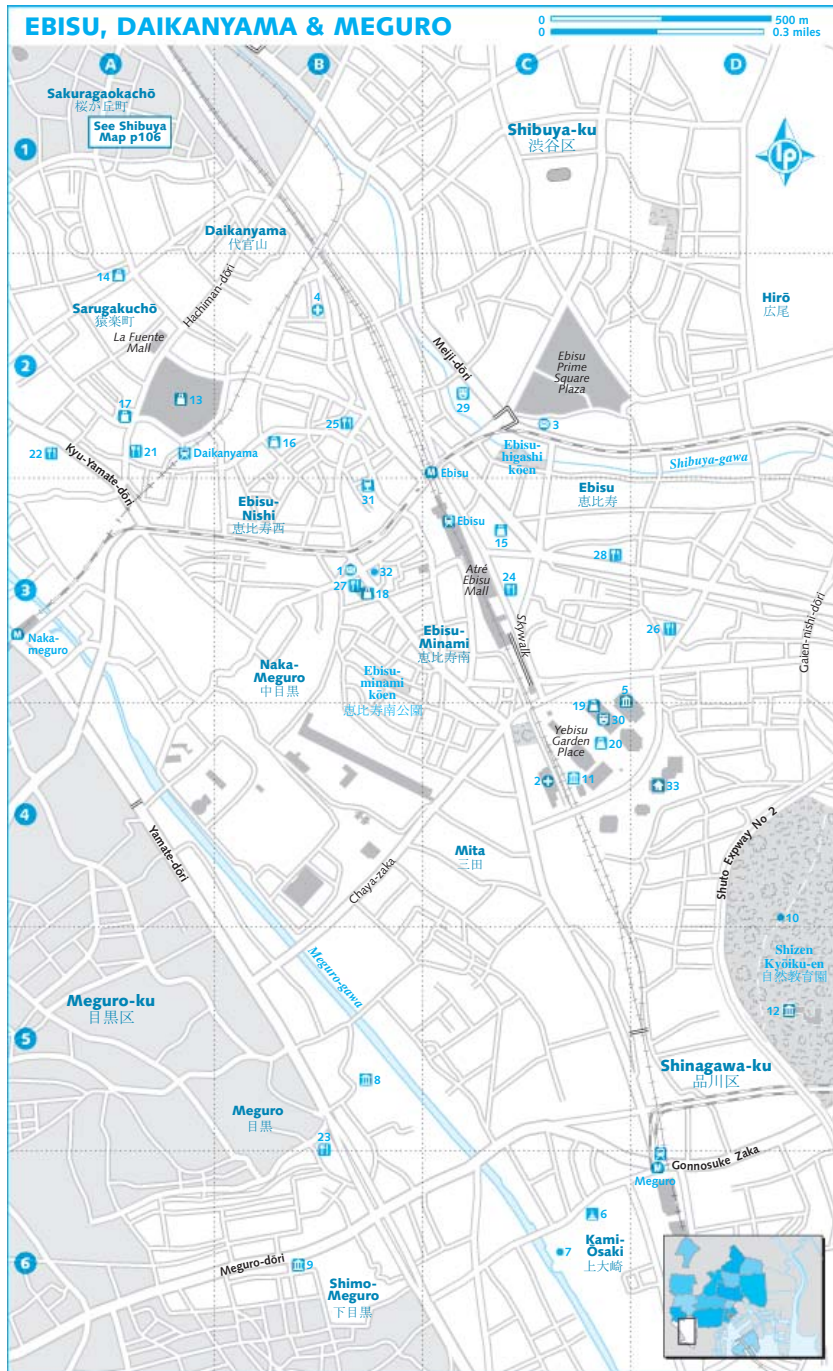
Buddhist protector of travellers and children; for more details see the boxed text, above). Further into the temple precinct and completely lining one of its walls are *Arhat* (atonement) statues of the Gohyakurakan (the 500 followers of Buddha). Each of these exquisite stone markers, made to appease the souls that departed in the great fire, has its own design and facial expression. Water is often placed in front of the statues to ease the degree of the victims' suffering.

SHIZEN KYŌIKU-EN (INSTITUTE FOR NATURE STUDY) Map p102

自然教育園

☎ 3441-7176; www.kahaku.go.jp/english/visitor_info/shizenen/index.html; 5-21-5 Shirokanedai, Minato-ku; adult/child to 18 & seniors ¥300/free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Sep-Apr, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug, last admission 4pm year-round; 📍 Namboku Line to Shirokanedai (exit 1)

Although the 200,000 sq metres of this land was the estate of a *daimyō* some six centuries ago and was the site of gunpowder



EBISU, DAIKANYAMA & MEGURO

INFORMATION

Ebisu Eki-mae Post Office 恵比寿駅前郵便局	1 B3
Kōseiichū Hospital 厚生中央病院	2 C4
Post Office 郵便局	3 C2
Tokyo British Clinic 東京ブリティッシュ クリニック	4 B2

SIGHTS (pp100-4)

Beer Museum Yebisu 恵比寿麦酒記念館	5 C3
Daien-ji (Daiei Temple) 大門寺	6 C6
Meguro Gajoen (Meguro Wedding Hall) 目黒雅叙園	7 C6
Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo 目黒区美術館	8 B5
Meguro Parasitological Museum 目黒寄生虫館	9 B6
Shizen Kyōiku-en (National Institute for Nature Study) 自然教育園	10 D4
Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography 東京都写真美術館	11 C4

Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art

Museum 東京庭園美術館

12 D5

SHOPPING (pp135-48)

Daikanyama Address

代官山 アドレス

13 A2

GDC

14 A2

Good Day Books

グッドデイブックス

15 C3

Hacknet ハックネット

16 B2

Kamawanu かまわぬ

17 A2

Matsuzakaya 松坂屋

18 B3

Mitsukoshi 三越百貨店

19 C4

Q Flagship Ebisu-nishi
ハックネット

(see 16)

Yebisu Garden Place
恵比寿ガーデンプレース

20 C4

EATING (pp149-74)

Café Artigose

カフェアルトファゴス

21 A2

Caffè Michelangelo

カフェミケランジェロ

22 A2

Konishi Japanese Cooking Class
小西ジャパニーズ
クッキングクラス

23 B5

Monsoon モンスーンカフェ

24 C3

Mushroom マッシュルーム

25 B2

Rico's Kitchen
リコスキッチン

26 D3

Toki no ma 時の間

27 B3

Zest Cantina Ebisu
ゼストキャンティーナ

恵比寿

28 C3

ENTERTAINMENT (pp175-90)

Liquid Room リキッドルーム

29 C2

Milk みるく

(see 31)

Yebisu Garden Cinema
恵比寿ガーデンシネマ

30 C4

DRINKING (pp175-90)

Footnik フットニック

(see 15)

What the Dickens
ワットザディッケンズ

31 B3

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp191-200)

Comm'Inn

32 B3

SLEEPING (pp201-16)

Westin Hotel Tokyo
ウェスティンホテル東京

33 D4

warehouses in the early Meiji period, you'd scarcely know it now. Since 1949, this garden has been part of the **Kokuritsu Kagaku Hakubutsukan** (see p73), and aims to preserve the local flora in undisciplined profusion. There are wonderful walks through its forests, marshes and ponds, making this one of Tokyo's least known and most appealing getaways. Bonus: admission is limited to 300 people at a time.

MEGURO MUSEUM OF ART, TOKYO

Map p102

目黒区美術館

☎ 3714-1201; www.mmat.jp; 2-4-36 Meguro, Meguro-ku; adult/concession ¥1000/700; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 JR Yamanote Line or subway Namboku or Mita Line to Meguro (west exit)

Half local, half global, one part of this museum exhibits the work of Meguro artists, while the other is dedicated to international fine art and craft exhibits (think the work of Charles and Ray Eames). The building is a delight – it's airy, spacious and well-lit compared with many other Tokyo art museums, which can want for space – and there's a coffee shop with pleasant views of the grounds.

Take the west exit of Meguro Station, walk straight ahead down Meguro-dōri and turn right just after crossing Meguro River (Meguro-gawa). Walk along the river and the museum is on your left, past the tennis court and swimming pool.

MEGURO PARASITOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Map p102

目黒寄生虫館

☎ 3716-1264; 4-1-1 Shimo-Meguro, Meguro-ku; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; 📍 JR Yamanote Line or subway Namboku or Mita Line to Meguro (west exit)

Yeah, ew. Probably the grossest museum in Japan, this spot was established in 1953 by Satoru Kamegai, a local doctor concerned by the increasing number of parasites he was encountering in his practice due to unsanitary postwar conditions. The grisly centerpiece is an 8.8m-long tapeworm found encased in the body of a 40-year-old Yokohama man. Although there's not a lot of English signage, little explanation is necessary (or even welcomed) as you can easily see how some of these nasties might set up house inside you. Fun for the whole family!

TOKYO METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Map p102

東京都写真美術館

☎ 3280-0099; www.syabi.com; 1-13-3 Mita, Meguro-ku; admission ¥500-1500; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Hibiya or JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (main exit)

In a corner of Yebisu Garden Place, this five-storey museum chronicles the history and contemporary use of still and moving images, and holds 23,000 works, roughly 70%

of them Japanese. Displays often comprise exceptional work by photographers from both Japan and abroad, and there's an extensive library of photographic literature from throughout the world.

TOKYO METROPOLITAN TEIEN ART MUSEUM Map p102

東京庭園美術館

☎ 3443-0201; www.teien-art-museum.ne.jp;
5-21-9 Shirokanedai, Minato-ku; admission ¥1000;
🕒 10am-6pm, closed 2nd & 4th Wed of the month;
🚶 Namboku Line to Shirokanedai (exit 1)

Although this museum hosts art exhibitions (eg Meissen porcelain or pottery by important Japanese artists), its appeal lies principally in the building itself – it's an Art Deco structure built in 1933, designed by French architect Henri Rapin. The interior details remain alluring, including etched tile trim, light fixtures sculpted to look like peaches and pumpkins, and the 'perfume fountain', sort of an early aromatherapy device. The house was originally home to Prince Asaka-miya (1887–1981), Emperor Hirohito's uncle, who was pardoned for his part in

the 'Rape of Nanjing'. It became a museum in 1983. The museum sits in the southwest corner of the Shizen Kyōiku-en (separate entrance and admission).

MEGURO GAJOEN (MEGURO WEDDING HALL) Map p102

目黒雅叙園

☎ 3491-4111; 1-8-1 Shimo-Meguro, Meguro-ku; admission free; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line or subway Namboku or Mita Line to Meguro (west exit)

One look at the ads on virtually any subway car will tell you that wedding halls are big business in Tokyo. For better or for worse, Gajoen is one of the biggest, and as a study in anthropology you can hardly beat it. 'Wedding hall' doesn't do justice to its many storeys of chapels, banquet halls, expensive restaurants and hotel rooms. The impossibly long corridor connecting them is lined with friezes of geisha and samurai and often festooned with flowers, while floor-to-ceiling windows look out on a drop-dead hillside garden. Even if there aren't wedding bells in your future, it's worth stopping by for a look.

SHIBUYA

Eating p167; Shopping p141; Sleeping p211

Step out of Shibuya Station sometime after dark, and you'll find yourself in the Tokyo of your dreams. At Shibuya Crossing, a mind-blowing spectacle of neon, streets radiate out like a starburst, and the crowd is a mix of diligently acquired elegance and adolescent exuberance. Much like New York's Times Square and London's Piccadilly Circus, Tokyo's Shibuya Crossing is visual and aural candy at its best.

Truth be told, Shibuya is not rich in history, and its paltry handful of sights pale in significance compared to those found in adjacent neighbourhoods. However, Shibuya is perhaps the best neighbourhood in Tokyo to take in the beating pulse of modern Japan by simply browsing, shopping, dining and watching the outrageous get-ups that have most recently come off the runways at Tokyo's fashion shows. You will be rewarded here by putting down the guidebook and getting lost in the sea of rampant consumerism surrounding you.

Shibuya is studded with department stores that vie for the patronage of cash-loaded young Japanese looking for their own unique fashion identity. The offshoots of the Tōkyū and Seibu department stores tend to be funkier than in other parts of the city, though the Tōkyū Hands (p142) is perhaps the gem among all of them.

Shibuya, the neighbourhood, is at the centre of Shibuya ward, with nearly a million people within its bounds. Harajuku borders it to the north, Aoyama and Roppongi lie to the east and the sophisticated Ebisu and Daikanyama are just south. The most famous meeting place in Tokyo, which lies in front of Shibuya Station, is the Hachikō statue. This famous pooch even has his own exit from the station named after him, which is in fact the exit you should use for all of the sights listed in this section.

HACHIKŌ STATUE Map p106

ハチ公像

🚶 JR Yamanote Line or subway Ginza Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)

In the 1920s, a professor who lived near Shibuya Station kept Hachikō, a small Akita dog, who came to the station every day to await his master's return. The master died while at work in 1925, but the dog continued to show up and wait at the station until his own death 10 years later. Hachikō's faithfulness was not lost on the Japanese, who built a statue to honour his memory. The story is more interesting than the statue itself, but Hachikō is perhaps Tokyo's most famous meeting spot. The proud pooch is usually surrounded by hip-looking Tokyoites with mobiles in hand, coordinating the festivities to follow.

SHIBUYA CROSSING Map p106

渋谷クロッシング

🚶 JR Yamanote Line or subway Ginza Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)

Across from Hachikō plaza is arguably one of the coolest intersections you will ever see in your life. Made famous in the West following Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*, Shibuya Crossing is remarkable for its throngs of people, blazing neon lights and enormous video screens, which sometimes

display live videos of the street scene below. The sheer energy of the place is enough to stop you dead in your tracks while you loudly proclaim to yourself, 'Wow – I'm in Tokyo!'

LOVE HOTEL HILL Map p106

ラブホテルヒル

🚶 JR Yamanote Line or subway Ginza Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)

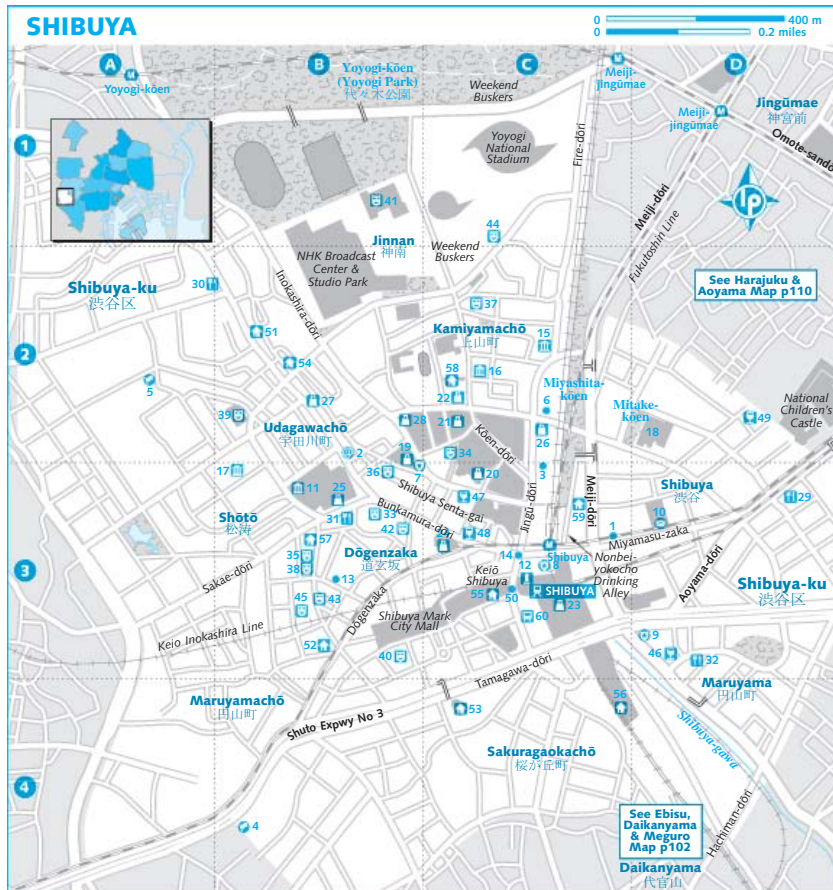
If you think that Japan is all about raked pebble gardens, geisha in kimono and Zen meditation, make a point of taking a stroll through Love Hotel Hill. Offering one of the largest concentrations of love hotels (see p202 for more details) in Tokyo, this famous hill is where most men and women out on the prowl hope the night will end.

Depending on your tastes, you can bed down in a variety of themed hotels ranging from miniature Gothic castles and kitschy

TRANSPORT: SHIBUYA

Train The JR Yamanote Line stops at Shibuya Station. You can also connect here to suburban private trains operated by the Tokyu and Keio Lines.

Metro The Hanzōmon and Ginza Lines stop at Shibuya.



Arabian palaces to traditional Japanese-themed inns and Balinese-inspired resorts. Although choosing where to go is the best part of visiting a love hotel (well, aside from the actual act itself), our personal favourite is a particular Caribbean-themed love hotel with fake palm trees at the bedside – we'll leave it to you to find it!

To reach Love Hotel Hill, take the road up Dōgenzaka to the left of the Shibuya 109 building. At the top of the hill, on the side streets that run off the main road, is the main concentration of love hotels. Of course, the best way to get around this area is to meet a nice Japanese guy or girl to show you around!

Also take note that should you need a little help enhancing your love life, nearby Love Hotel Hill is a variety of shops selling

all sorts of herbal and chemical love tonics. Even if you read Japanese, it's hard to know what the heck is in these things, though our sources tell us that these drugs will knock the socks off you and your partner.

TOBACCO & SALT MUSEUM [Map p106](#)

たばこと塩の博物館

☎ 3476-2041; www.jti.co.jp/Culture/museum/Wel come.html; 1-16-8 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku; admission ¥100; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line or subway Ginza Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)

For years, smokers have found solace in Tokyo's cafés and bars, and for much of that time the government was in the business of supplying them through a tobacco monopoly. That company has since been privatised to Japan Tobacco Inc, which is the owner of this museum, a shrine to the

SHIBUYA

INFORMATION

Across Travellers Bureau

アクロストラベル 1 C3

Café J Net New カフェジ

エイネットニューニュー 2 B2

HIS Travel

株式会社エイチ・アイ・エス .. 3 C3

Malaysian Embassy

マレーシア大使館 4 B4

New Zealand Embassy

ニュージーランド 大使館 5 A2

No 1 Travel

ナンバーワントラベル 6 C2

Police Box 交番 7 B3

Police Box 交番 8 C3

Shibuya Police Station 9 D3

Shibuya Post Office 渋谷郵便局 .. 10 D3

SIGHTS [\(pp105-8\)](#)

Bunkamura 文化村 11 B3

Hachikō Statue 八千公像 12 C3

Love Hotel Hill ラブホテルヒル .. 13 B3

Shibuya Crossing

渋谷クロッシング 14 C3

Tepco Electric Energy Museum

電力館 15 C2

Tobacco & Salt Museum

たばこと塩の博物館 16 C2

Toguri Museum of Art

戸栗美術館 17 B3

Tokyo-to Jido Kaikan (Tokyo

Metropolitan Children's Hall)

東京都児童会館 18 D2

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Beam Building ビームビル 19 B2

Loft ロフト 20 C3

Mandarake まんだらけ (see 19)

Parco I パルコパート 1 21 C2

Parco II パルコパート 2 22 C2

Ranking RanQueen

ランキンランキン 23 C3

Shibuya O-East

渋谷オ・イースト 23 B3

Shibuya 109 渋谷 109 24 C3

Shibuya Tōkyū Honten

渋谷東急本店 25 B3

Tower Records タワーレコード .. 26 C2

Tsutomu Factory 含む工房 27 B2

New Zealand Embassy

ニュージーランド 大使館 28 B2

Tōkyū Hands 東急ハンズ 28 D3

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Coucagno クーカーニョ (see 53)

El Castellano

エルカステリャーノ 29 D3

Kujiraya 鯨屋 (see 24)

Mayu (Cocoon) 繭 30 A2

Okinawa 沖縄 31 B3

Shizenkan II 自然館 32 D3

Sonoma ソノマ (see 42)

Arimax Hotel

アリマックスホテル 51 B2

Capsule Land Shibuya

カプセルランド渋谷 52 B3

Cerulean Tower Tōkyū Hotel

セルリアンタワー東急ホテル 53 C4

Creston Hotel クレストンホテル 54 B2

Excel Tokyo Hotel

エクセルホテル東急 55 C3

Hotel Mets Shibuya

ホテルメッツ渋谷 56 C4

Shibuya City Hotel

渋谷シティホテル 57 B3

Club Quattro クラブクアトロ .. 36 B3

Eggman エッグマン 37 C2

Eurospace ユーロスペース 38 B3

JZ Brat ジェイゼットブラット (see 53)

Kanze Nō-gakudō

(Kanze Nō Theatre) 観世能楽堂 .. 39 B2

La.Mama ラママ 40 B3

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES [\(pp191-200\)](#)

Eight Rent エイトレント 50 C3

SLEEPING [\(pp201-16\)](#)

ENTERTAINMENT [\(pp175-90\)](#)

Bunkamura Orchard Hall (see 11)

Bunkamura Theatre Cocoon

文化村シアターコクーン (see 11)

Cerulean Tower Nō Theatre

セルリアンタワー能楽堂 (see 53)

Cine Amuse East/West

シネアミューズ 33 B3

Cinema Rise シネマライズ 34 C2

Club Asia クラブアジア 35 B3

Shibuya Tobu Hotel

渋谷東武ホテル 58 C2

Shibuya Tōkyū Inn

渋谷東急イン 59 C3

TRANSPORT [\(pp237-244\)](#)

Shibuya Bus Terminal

渋谷バスターミナル 60 C3

the likes of Man Ray. It's also a busy theatre, art house cinema and concert hall. It's about seven minutes' walk from Shibuya Station (turn right at the Shibuya 109 building).

TOGURI MUSEUM OF ART Map p106

戸栗美術館

☎ 3465-0070; www.toguri-museum.or.jp; 1-11-3 Shōto, Shibuya-ku; adult/child/student ¥1000/400/700; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line or subway Ginza Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)

A few minutes' walk from Bunkamura, the Toguri displays about 100 pieces at a time from its 7000-piece collection of fine Japanese, Korean and Chinese porcelain. The galleries are reasonably sized, there's a pretty garden and the residential neighbourhood is so quiet that you'd never guess you're just steps away from Shibuya's hustle and bustle.

YOYOGI-KŌEN (YOYOGI PARK)

Map p106

代々木公園

admission free; 🕒 dawn-dusk; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Omote-sandō exit)

Sunday in Yoyogi-kōen used to be one of Tokyo's prime attractions, when local bands gathered to give free concerts on the park's pathways and kids in wild hairdos and 1950s get-ups gathered to gyrate to recorded rock and roll. Sadly, the police have put a stop to this and now Yoyogi-kōen is just another park. That said, with lots of wide open spaces and some flowering trees, it's not a bad place for a picnic or playing some sport on the grass. It's also worth a stop to view an early piece by architect Tange Kenzō, the National Gymnasium, which was built for the 1964 Olympics.

HARAJUKU & AOYAMA

Eating p168; Shopping p142

Few districts in Tokyo can offer as many contrasting styles and personalities as the adjacent neighbourhoods of Harajuku and Aoyama. The living, breathing souls of Harajuku are the aptly named 'Harajuku girls', who have been vaulted onto the global stage following the smash hit *Rich Girl* by American pop singer Gwen Stefani. Although Harajuku girls don't exactly come from the hoods of Japan (Harajuku is in fact one of the most expensive strips of real estate in Tokyo), they are certainly an easily identifiable breed. With camera in hand, be sure to take a stroll down Takeshita-dori, or stop by the Sunday *cos play* (costume play) fashion show on Jingo-bashi – you'll certainly photograph some interesting characters!

If you cross the bridge and enter the grand, calming, tree-lined precincts of Meiji-jingū, you'll quickly be transported back to old Japan. This serene shrine, which would probably be more at home in ancient Kyoto than in ultra-modern Tokyo, is one of the undeniable highlights of any trip to the capital. However, if you step just outside the shrine, and head east to the grand shopping boulevard of Omote-sandō, the contrasts continue. Home to the *haut-est* of *haute couture*, Omote-sandō is where Harajuku girls head when they grow up and earn a bit more cash.

At the boulevard's other end is Aoyama, domain of chic boutiques and ersatz Parisian cafés. Here too are fine museums, galleries and design stores, most notably Watari-Um (Watari Museum of Contemporary Art; p111) and the National Art Center, Tokyo (p99).

Omote-sandō links Harajuku with Aoyama, which lie at the centre of the greater Shibuya ward. To the west is Shibuya and the broad expanse of Yoyogi Park, while to the east is Aoyama Cemetery and Roppongi.

MEIJI-JINGŪ (MEIJI SHRINE) Map p110

明治神宮

Meiji Shrine; ☎ 3379-5511; www.meijijingu.or.jp; Kamizono-chō, Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku; admission free; 🕒 dawn-dusk; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Omote-sandō exit) or Chiyoda Line to Meiji-Jingūmae (exit 3)

Tokyo's grandest Shintō shrine, this 1920 edifice enshrines the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken, under whose rule Japan ended its isolation from the outside world. Destroyed in WWII bombings and reconstructed in 1958, the shrine buildings occupy just a corner of the precinct's 70 forested hectares (175 acres). In fact, its 100,000 trees are said to have been donated by 100,000 visitors from all over Japan.

Meiji-jingū might be a reconstruction of the original but, unlike so many of Japan's postwar reconstructions, it is altogether authentic. The main structure was built with prized *hinoki* cypress from the Kiso region of Nagano prefecture, while the cypress for the huge *torii* (gate) was imported from Alishan in Taiwan. If you're there when a wedding is in progress, the procession is pure photographic gold.

The grounds are also home to the Meiji-jingū Gyōen (admission ¥500; 🕒 9am-4.30pm), a lovely strolling garden. Once the property

of two *daimyō* families, after it came under imperial control, Meiji himself designed the garden as a gift to the Empress Shōken. There are peaceful walks to the pond and teahouse and a good dose of privacy at weekdays, and spectacular irises and sat-suki azaleas in season.

TAKESHITA-DŌRI (TAKESHITA STREET) Map p110

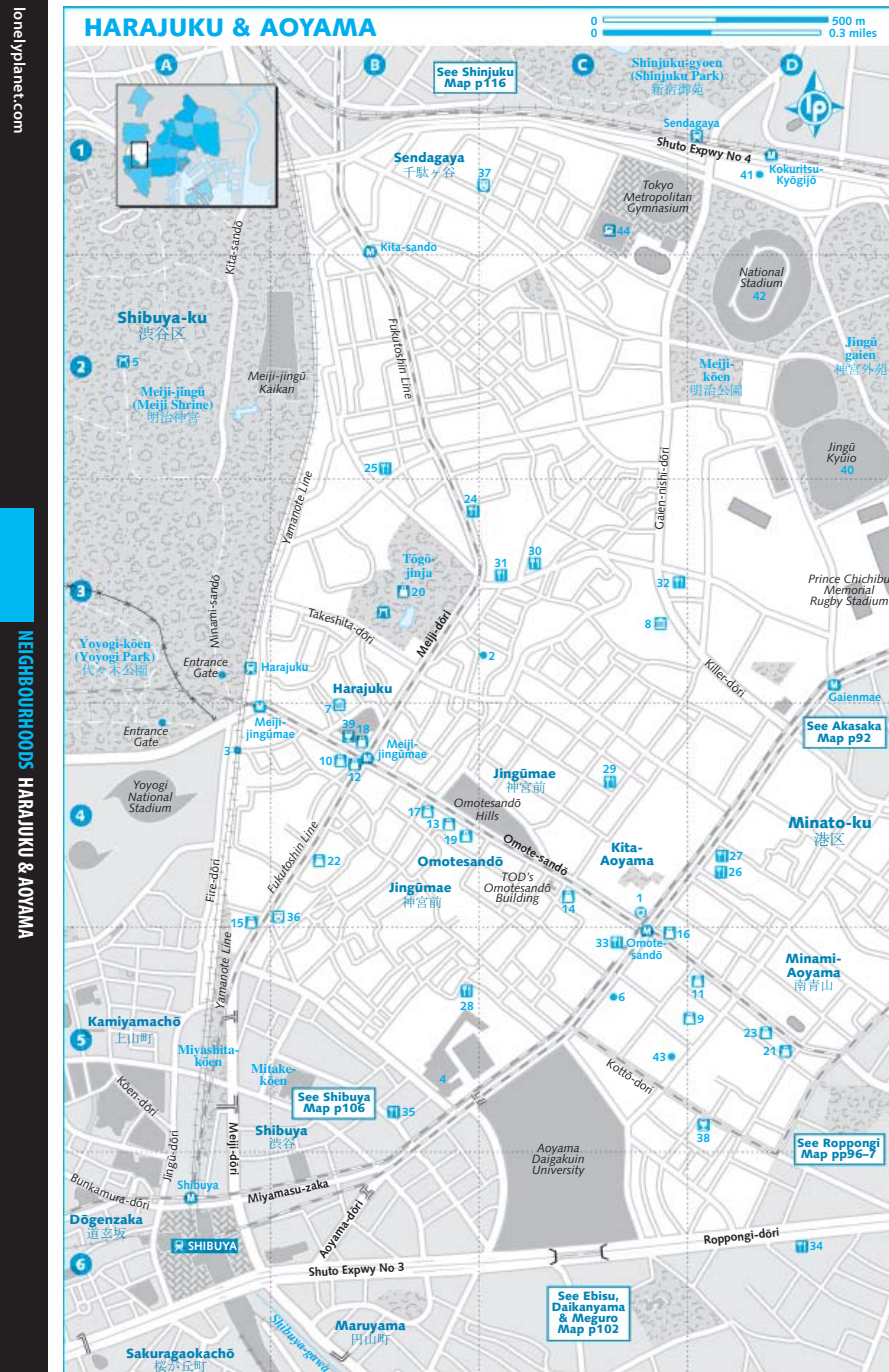
竹下通り

🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Takeshita-dōri exit) This teeming alley, which lies at the heart of Harajuku, represents Tokyo's propensity for both teenage kitsch and subcultural fetish. Boom boxes blare at full volume while young, angst-decorated adolescents browse through racks of cheap versions of the day's latest trend. This is the place to

TRANSPORT: HARAJUKU & AOYAMA

Train The JR Yamanote Line stops at Harajuku Station.

Metro The Chiyoda Line runs beneath Omote-sandō, stopping at Omote-sandō Station and Meiji-jingūmae Station. The Ginza and Hanzōmon Lines also both stop at Omote-sandō Station.



HARAJUKU & AOYAMA

INFORMATION

Police Box 交番	1	C4
Design Festa	2	C3
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Kodomo-no-Shiro (National Children's Castle)	4	B5
Meiji-jingū (Meiji Shrine)	5	A2
Spiral Building スパイラルビル	6	C5
Ukiyo-e Ota Memorial Art Museum	7	B4
Watarium (Watarium Museum of Contemporary Art)	8	C3

SIGHTS (pp109-12)

デザインフェスタ	2	C3
神宮橋	3	A4
こどもの城	4	B5
明治神宮	5	A2
スパイラルビル	6	C5
浮世絵大田記念美術館	7	B4
ワタリウム美術館	8	C3

SHOPPING (pp135-48)

A Bathing Ape	9	D5
ア・ベイシング・エイブ	9	D5
Chicago Thrift Store シカゴ	10	B4
Commes des Garçons	11	D5
コムデギャルソン	11	D5
Condomania コンドマニア	12	B4
Fuji-Torii ふじとりい	13	B4
Hanae Mori Building	14	C4
ハナエモリビル	14	C4
Hanae Mori Building Antique Market	(see 14)	
ハナエモリビル骨董市	(see 14)	

Hysterie Glamour	15	A4
ヒステリックグラモア	15	A4
Issey Miyake 三宅一生	16	C5
Issey Miyake 三宅一生	16	C5
Kiddyland キディランド	17	B4
Laforet Building ラフォーレ	18	B4
Oriental Bazaar	19	B4
オリエンタルバザール	19	B4
Spiral Records	(see 6)	
スパイラルレコード	(see 6)	
Tōgō-jinja Fine Arts Market	20	B3
東郷神社骨董市	20	B3
Undercover アンダーカバー	21	D5
Uniqlo ユニクロ	22	B4
Yohji Yamamoto 山本耀司	23	D5

EATING (pp149-74)

Fonda de la Madrugada	24	B3
フォンダデラ	24	B3
マドゥルガダ	24	B3
Hannibal Deux	25	B2
ハンニバル	25	B2
Kinokuniya (Interim Store)	26	D4
紀ノ国屋	26	D4
Kinokuniya International	27	D4
Supermarket 紀ノ国屋	27	D4
Las Chicas ラスチカス	28	B5
Maisen まい泉	29	C4
Mominoki House	30	C3
モミノキハウス	30	C3
Nabi ナビ	31	C3
Natural Harmony Angolo	32	C3
ナチュラルハーモニー	32	C3
アンゴロ	32	C3

Natural House 紀ノ国屋	33	C5
Nobu 信	34	D6
Tetsugen Nikusho	35	B5
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ENTERTAINMENT (pp175-90)

Aoyama Enkei Gekijō	(see 4)	
青山円形劇場	(see 4)	
Crocodile クロコダイル	36	B4
Kokuritsu Nō-Gakudō (National Nō Theatre) 国立能楽堂	37	C1

DRINKING (pp175-90)

Den Aquarium	38	D5
デンアクアリウム	38	D5
Tokyo Apartment Café	39	B4
東京アパートメントカフェ	39	B4

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp191-200)

Jingū Baseball Stadium	40	D2
神宮球場	40	D2
Meiji-jingū Ice Skating Rink	41	D1
明治神宮アイススケート場	41	D1
National Stadium 国立競技場	42	D2
Nihara School of Ikebana	43	C5
小原流いけばな	43	C5
Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium	44	C1
東京体育館	44	C1

SLEEPING (pp201-16)

National Children's Castle Hotel	(see 4)	
子供の城ホテル	(see 4)	

look for outrageously gaudy jewellery, punk accessories, trendy hair boutiques, fast-food joints and cuddly toys. Also see p144.

JINGŪ-BASHI (JINGŪ BRIDGE) Map p110

神宮橋

Ⓧ JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Takeshita-dōri exit)
The epicentre of the Harajuku *cos-play* (costume play) scene, Jingū Bridge is best experienced on a warm and sunny Sunday afternoon when legions of bizarrely dressed teens parade before photographers as if they were on a Milan catwalk. From Lolitas and goths to French maids and anime characters, you never really know what will appear here!

UKIYO-E OTA MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM Map p110

浮世絵大田記念美術館

☎ 3403-0880; www.ukiyoe-ota-muse.jp/english.html; 1-10-10 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; adult ¥700, student ¥200-500 Tue-Sun, student free-¥250 Sat & Sun; ☎ 10.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun, closed 27th-end of the month; Ⓧ JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Omote-sandō exit), or Chiyoda Line to Meiji-jingūmae (exit 5)

This cosy museum, which asks that you trade your shoes for a pair of slippers at the door, has an excellent collection of *ukiyo-e* (wood-block prints). The original collector, Ota Seizo, former head of the Toho Life Insurance Company, began to buy *ukiyo-e* when he realised that many important examples of Japanese wood-block prints belonged to foreign museums, making it impossible for Japanese to view many of the genre's masterworks. The museum usually displays no more than a few dozen works at a time from its collection of over 10,000 prints, including those by masters of the art such as Hokusai and Hiroshige.

WATARI-UM (WATARI MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART) Map p110

ワタリウム美術館

☎ 3402-3001; www.watarium.co.jp; 3-7-6 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; adult/student ¥1000/800; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 11am-9pm Wed; Ⓧ Gaienmae (exit 3)

This progressive and often provocative museum was built in 1990 to a design by Swiss architect Mario Botta. Exhibits are always cutting-edge and sometimes arty-farty – think push-the-envelope photos

by Larry Clark, or vacuum-cleaner ballets choreographed by visiting Scandinavians. There's an excellent art bookshop called **On Sundays** (☎ 3470-1424; 🕒 hours vary) where you can browse through its enormous collection of obscure postcards.

AOYAMA ARCHITECTURE Walking Tour

From the *cos-play* kids of Harajuku to the high-stepping fashionistas of Aoyama, Omote-sandō stretches out in a veritable catwalk of style and architecture.

1 Laforet Building (ラフォーレビル) Ascend the circular interior as if in a shopping-focused video game, and you'll soon discover the uniquely confusing half-floors of this building (for more information see p144), a popular shopping beacon in Aoyama. Of course, don't spend too much time here as you still need to explore the surrounding neighbourhood. Around the corner you'll find a number of experimental storefronts, many of them belonging to cutting-edge fashion boutiques.

2 Design Festa (デザインフェスタ) One of the strangest buildings in Aoyama, the headquarters of **Design Festa** (☎ 3479-1433; 3-20-18 Jingūmae; 🕒 11am-8pm) looks like an industrial, spider-webbed diorama, though the space is actually home to a slew of galleries. Design Festa is also responsible for the enormous art and design festival (p18) that takes place biannually at the Tokyo Big Sight (p133).

SPIRITED AWAY TO THE GHIBLI MUSEUM

When you saw *Spirited Away* by Miyazaki Hayao (or *Princess Mononoke*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, *My Neighbour Totoro* and so on) you probably fell in love with its mythical themes, fanciful characters and outrageous landscapes. Needless to say, do did every kid in Japan, which means you need to arrange tickets long before you arrive at this **museum** (☎ general information 0570-055777, tickets 0570-000777; www.ghibli-museum.jp/ticket/overseas.html; 1-1-83 Shimorenjaku, Mitaka-shi; adult ¥1000, child ¥100-700; 🕒 10am-6pm Wed-Mon; 📍 Tōzai or JR Chūō Line to Mitaka, south exit) of the work of Ghibli, Miyazaki's animation studio.

Galleries walk you through the process of animation from concept to screen (English-speaking guides are usually on hand). Other highlights include a zoetrope presentation of a half-dozen Ghibli characters in motion, a mini-theatre presenting short films (in Japanese but usually easy enough to follow), a garden on the roof that sits beneath a 5m-tall robot from the *Castle in the Sky*, and a gift shop with exclusive themed merchandise (though much of it at exclusive prices). Special exhibits change annually. To top off the visit, every visitor is given an original frame from one of Miyazaki's films.

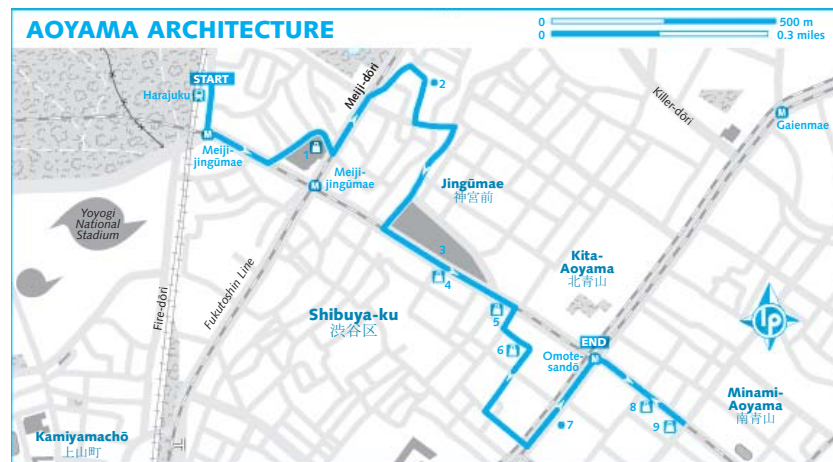
From Mitaka Station, follow the signposted walk along the Tamagawa Waterworks for 15 minutes to Inokashira Park, and turn right. Alternatively, a community bus (one way/return ¥200/300, approximately every 10 minutes) goes directly to the museum from the Mitaka Station.

3 Omotesandō Hills (表参道ヒルズ) The latest Mori development pales in comparison to the architectural splendour that is Roppongi Hills (p94), though this coveted strip of upscale boutiques and apartments is still one of the city's elite domains of the rich and privileged. Originally built as public housing after the Great Kantō Earthquake left half the city homeless, today Mori Hills is easily recognisable by its long and elegant glass façade.

4 Louis Vuitton Building (ルイヴィトンビル) For several years running, the Japanese have had something of a love affair with Louis Vuitton, which is why this **flagship store** (☎ 3478-2100; 5-7-5 Jingūmae; 🕒 11am-8pm) is usually packed wall-to-wall with shoppers. Meant to evoke a stack of clothes trunks, Jun Aoki's design features offset panels of tinted glass behind sheets of metal mesh of varying patterns, creating a fabric-like effect.

5 Tod's (トッズ) The Tokyo home of Italian footwear designer Tod's, this **shoe store** (☎ 6419-2055; 5-1-15 Jingūmae) is one of the most distinguished buildings in Aoyama. Wrapped in glass and supporting beams whose shapes reflect the winter-bared branches of the Zelkova trees along Omote-sandō, architect Toyo Ito's structure makes a statement while echoing the elements of its environment.

6 Hanae Mori Building (ハナエモリビル) The exquisitely mirrored surface of this building was designed by Tange Kenzō, one of Japan's most influential architects. For anyone



WALK FACTS

Start Harajuku JR Station (Omote-sandō exit)

End Omote-sandō subway station

Distance 2.5km

Time One to two hours with stops

looking to do a bit of antiquing, the basement of the building is home to a bustling market of more than 30 stalls.

7 Spiral Building (スパイラルビル) Designed by Tokyo architectural luminary Fumihiko Maki, the first floor of this building is dramatically crowned by a semicylinder. Inside you'll find a listening station featuring Japanese and world music and an exhibition hall with displays of everything from fashion and accessories to sculpture and photography. If you have some time, it's worth ascending the whimsical spiral ramp to a museum-style gift shop located on the 2nd floor.

8 Commes des Garçons Building (コムデギャルソン) The sloped windows of Kawakubo Rei's flagship store (see p144 for more information) mildly prepare you for the architectural gems lying inside. Step through the entrance and admire the wares on display, which occupy minimalist, curvaceous spaces arranged in a disorienting maze of tilted walls.

9 Prada Aoyama Building (プラダ青山ビル) Your final stop on the walking tour is this dazzling **store** (☎ 6418-0400; 5-2-6 Minami-Aoyama), which was designed by Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron. The resulting building is a weirdly organic, bubble-surfaced crystal of a venue in which the goods almost play a secondary role. The exterior itself is stunning, with its panels of convex glass, but the design of the interior's six floors almost deceives the senses into seeing the space as a seamless whole.

Once you've had your fill of architecture, turn back towards the Omote-sandō intersection; it's just a few minutes' walk to the Omote-sandō subway station.

SHINJUKU

Eating p169; Shopping p145; Sleeping p213

Shinjuku is anything but camera shy. Here, Bill Murray caught his first, jet-lagged glimpses of Tokyo in *Lost in Translation*, and Ridley Scott was rumoured to have drawn inspiration for his cult classic *Blade Runner*. More than any other neighbourhood, Shinjuku represents Tokyo's sensory overload and breakneck pace. Its neon canyons crackle with an energy drawn from somewhere in the future, and its laissez-faire attitude draws 20- and 30-something party people to tiny nightspots stacked storeys high.

Shinjuku's *raison d'être* is its enormous commuter train station, which is the second largest in the world, and services an estimated 3.5 million passengers each day. This station also effectively divides Shinjuku into two very distinct neighbourhoods. The west side, Nishi-Shinjuku, which was once the site of a sizable reservoir, is now dominated by skyscraping office towers, luxury hotels and the imposing Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices, all connected by wide avenues that are definitely more New York than old Edo. A number of compelling museums have also brought contemporary art to the area, and played their part in rounding out the corporate edge.

Not to be outdone by its higher-stepping other half, Shinjuku's east side is spontaneous chaos, an area to wander with your neck craning up and around. Chief attractions here include the shrine Hanazono-jinja (p119), site of a great Sunday morning flea market, and the colourful if sleazy Kabukichō (p119) and Golden Gai (p119) entertainment areas. Tokyo's gay district, Shinjuku-nichōme, is also located in East Shinjuku, and is perhaps one of the liveliest queer neighbourhoods in Asia. Just beyond, the park Shinjuku-gyōen (p119) remains one of Tokyo's favourite spots for cherry-blossom viewing in the spring, and a calming respite at other times.

Shinjuku is bordered by Harajuku to the south, greater Akasaka and the outskirts of the Imperial Palace to the east and Ikebukuro to the north.

Shinjuku Station is the city's biggest transit hub and the one everyone warns you about: take the wrong exit and you may find yourself a half-hour away from your destination. Yes, it is daunting, but here are some general guidelines.

The classic rendezvous point opposite the station's east exit, across Shinjuku-dōri, is in front of the Studio Alta building with its huge video screen. Continuing through the side streets away from the station, you'll reach Yasukuni-dōri with its neon buildings, and beyond that the bawdy district of Kabukichō. Isetan (p146) and Mitsukoshi (p136) department stores and Shinjuku-nichōme are to the east via Shinjuku-dōri or Yasukuni-dōri (Shinjuku-sanchōme Station is the closest station for these locations).

If you're heading for the skyscrapers, there is a pedestrian tunnel towards Tochōmae Station on the Toei Ōedo Line, which may be the easier stop depending on your destination. There's also a south exit, which is the closest access to Shinjuku-gyōen and the Takashimaya Times Square shopping complex.

WEST SHINJUKU (NISHI-SHINJUKU)

TOKYO OPERA CITY Map p116

東京オペラシティ

☎ 5353-0770; www.operacity.jp; 3-20-2 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; ㊟ Keio New Line to Hatsudai (north exit)

Since opening in 1997, Tokyo Opera City has been recognised as one of the world's most acoustically perfect concert halls, and this in a city that embraces classical music with fervour. It's also one of the most architecturally daring, like a giant indoor A-frame.

Even if you are unable to make it to a concert in Tokyo, Opera City is called home by two of Tokyo's best art spaces. The two storeys of the **Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery** (☎ 5353-0756; www.operacity.jp/ag; 3rd fl; admis-

TRANSPORT: SHINJUKU

Train The JR Yamanote Line, JR Chūō Line and several other commuter lines stop at Shinjuku Station. The private Keio and Odakyū Lines come in handy for destinations west of the Yamanote Line.

Metro The Marunouchi, Toei Shinjuku and Toei Ōedo Lines run through Shinjuku.

TOKYO FOR FREE

If you've been here for a few days, you've probably learned that yen is easy enough to spend quickly in the metropolis. To balance your budget, consider the many things to do that are completely free. These suggestions will cost no more than the train ticket to get to them.

For an idea of current goings-on, including some freebies, check the website of **Japan National Tourist Organization** (JNTO; www.jnto.go.jp).

Parks

Unlike Tokyo's gardens, most of Tokyo's parks are free (Shinjuku-gyōen is the big exception to this rule), and provide a welcome escape from the omnipresent concrete and urban sprawl. Just grab a *benō* (boxed lunch) and/or some baked bread and you've got yourself a picnic. Good spots are **Kitanomaru-kōen** (p51) near the Imperial Palace, **Yoyogi-kōen** (p108) near Harajuku, **Ueno-kōen** (p70) and **Hibiya-kōen** (p61) near Ginza.

Galleries

Most private galleries don't charge admission. Indeed, these galleries are often rented by individual artists who are delighted to help cultivate interest in their work. Ginza and Harajuku are the best places to hunt for them. Department store galleries (on upper floors) are another good bet – if these are not free, admission is often cheaper than a museum entry fee.

Temples & Shrines

Shrines are almost always free in Tokyo and most temples charge only to enter their *honden* (main hall). **Sensō-ji** (p85) in Asakusa and **Meiji-jingū** (p109) in Harajuku are two good places to start.

Company Showrooms

So they're really just another form of advertising, but some showrooms in Tokyo are like small museums and most have hands-on displays and test-drives – all for free. Auto enthusiasts will love **Toyota Mega Web** (p132) in Odaiba, and just about everyone will find something intriguing at the **Sony Building** (p61) in Ginza. Other showrooms can be found in Ginza, Shinjuku and Harajuku.

Tsukiji Market

Wander the world's biggest **fish market** (p64) for hours at no cost.

Skyscrapers

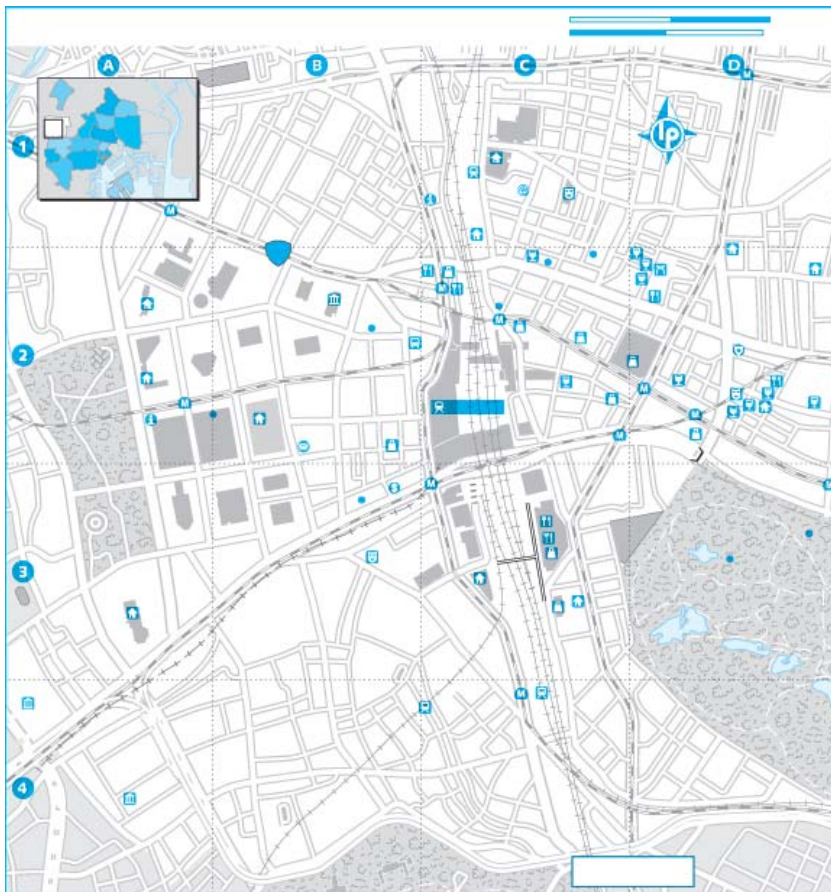
Several skyscrapers have free observation floors, eg **Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices** (Tokyo Tochō; p116), **Shinjuku Sumitomo Building** (p118) and **Tokyo Big Sight** (Tokyo International Exhibition Centre; p133).

Bookshops

Unlike some other countries, in Japan no one will object to you spending hours reading books and magazines on display in bookshops. There's even a word for the practice: *yomitachi* (a standing read). See Tokyo's Bookshops (p143) for listings.

sion varies by exhibition; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Thu & Sun, 11am-8pm Fri & Sat) showcase work by new and established Japanese artists. Meanwhile the **NTT Intercommunication Centre** (ICC; ☎ 0120-144-199; www.nttic.or.jp; 4th fl; adult ¥800, student ¥600-400; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) has an excellent collection of cutting-edge works and installations that address the myriad intersections of art

and technology. Its superlative video library includes important works by artists such as Idemitsu Mako, Bill Viola and Nam June Paik, while installations on display include dreamy pieces such as works by Laurie Anderson, or Mikami Seiko's *World, Membrane and the Dismembered Body*, designed especially for the museum's eerie, echo-free chamber.



TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OFFICES

東京都庁
 ☎ 5321-1111; 2-8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; admission free; 🕒 observatories 9.30am-11pm, north observatory closed 2nd & 4th Mon of the month, south observatory closed 1st & 3rd Tue of the month; 🚶 Toei Ōedo Line to Tochōmae, (exit A3)

Known as Tokyo Tochō, this grey granite complex designed by Tange Kenzō has stunning, distinctive architecture and great views from the observatories (☎ 5320-7890) on the 45th floor of the twin towers of Building 1. On a clear day, look west for a glimpse of Mt Fuji. Back on the ground, stand in the Citizens Plaza and look up at Building 1 and see if it does not remind

you of a computer-chip version of the great cathedrals of Europe. There's even a 'rose window', only this being Tokyo the rose is replaced by a gingko leaf, in honour of the city's official tree. With several modern sculptures scattered about, this is a good spot for a picnic lunch.

JAPANESE SWORD MUSEUM

Map p116
 刀剣博物館
 ☎ 3379-1386; 4-25-10 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku; adult/student ¥525/315; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Keio New Line to Hatsudai (east exit)
 In 1948, after American forces returned the swords (*katana*) they'd confiscated during the postwar occupation, the Ministry of Education established a society to

SHINJUKU

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preserve the feudal art of Japanese sword-making. There are about 120 swords with their fittings in the collection, of which about a third are on view at any one time. The museum also showcases crafts of tempering and polishing steel. Its location, in a residential neighbourhood, is not obvious, but if you ask for the *Token Hakubutsukan*, someone should be able to help you.

SOMPO JAPAN MUSEUM OF ART

Map p116
 損保ジャパン東郷青児美術館
 ☎ 5777-8600; www.sompo-japan.co.jp/museum/english/index.html; 42nd fl, 1-26-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; adult/student ¥500/300; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 JR Shinjuku (west exit)

The private museum of the Sompo Japan insurance company concentrates most heavily on the lithography, sculpture and painting of Tōgō Seiji (1897-1980), whose subjects, most often women, resemble luminescent anime figures set against backdrops that hover between cubist and Art Deco. Tōgō was closely associated with the Sompo Japan's forerunner, Yasuda Fire & Marine Insurance Company, and donated many of his works to the museum. The museum also caused a stir back in the 1980s bubble, when it famously purchased Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* for a cool ¥5 billion; there are also a limited number of works by Gauguin, Cézanne and Van Gogh. The museum's 42nd floor location also affords excellent views.

WEST SHINJUKU (NISHI-SHINJUKU)

Walking Tour

Looking up as you walk the streets of Nishi-Shinjuku may put a kink in your neck, while peering down from those skyscrapers will make your jaw drop (smog willing). Within these towering structures lie delights as unexpected as a toilet gallery, the world's largest pendulum clock and Matisse originals.

1 Shinjuku L Tower (新宿Lタワー) For anyone interested in test-driving the latest in bidet technology, the Shinjuku L Tower is home to the **Toto Super Space** (☎ 3345-1010; 1-6-1 Nishi-Shinjuku; ☎ 10am-6pm, closed 1st & 3rd Mon), a high-tech bathroom showcase scenically perched on the building's 26th and 27th floors. Although Japan first-timers may be initially resistant to the, um, invasiveness of the spray, our recommendation is simply to relax your muscles and give in to the warm rush of water.

2 Somo Japan Museum of Art (損保ジャパン東郷青児美術館) The Somo Japan Museum of Art (for more information see

p117), located on the 42nd floor of the Somo Building, is known mainly for its purchase of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* for a whopping ¥5 billion. Although the famous painting is the undoubtable highlight, the museum focuses on the largely figurative work of Japanese artist Tōgō Seiji.

3 Pentax Forum (ペンタックスフォーラム) Even non-photography buffs will appreciate the photo exhibits at this **gallery** (☎ 3348-2941; 2-1-1 Nishi-Shinjuku; ☎ 10.30am-6.30pm), on the 1st floor of the Shinjuku Mitsui building. For true camera buffs, however, the best part is the vast array of Pentax cameras, lenses and other optical equipment on display. It's completely hands-on – you can snap away with the cameras and spy into neighbouring buildings through the huge 1000mm lenses.

4 Shinjuku Sumitomo Building (新宿住友ビル) Although this hollowed-out building is home to a large jewellery mall and a general shopping centre, the real attraction is the free observation platform on the 51st floor. Stop by for a quick bird's-eye view of the urban jungle that is Shinjuku.

5 Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices (東京都庁) By now you've no doubt noticed the towering Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices (for more information see p116) where some 13,000 government workers sweat over the administrative paperwork of running Tokyo in these buildings. The Citizen's Plaza features shops, restaurants, a passport section and, curiously, a blood donation room, though the views from the 45th-floor observation platform in Building No 1 are some of the best in the city.

6 Shinjuku NS Building (新宿NSビル) If you're in the mood for a bit of eccentric high tech, the interior of this building, is hollow, like the Sumitomo building and features a 1600-sq-metre area from which you can gaze upward at the transparent roof. Overhead, at 110m, is a sky bridge. The square itself features a 29m pendulum clock, listed by the *Guinness Book of Records* as the largest in the world.

7 Park Hyatt Delicatessen (パークハイアットデリカテッセン) If you're looking for a rewarding nosh, the Park Hyatt Delicatessen (see p170 for more information) could easily compete with the best Jewish delis in New York.

EAST SHINJUKU (SHINJUKU)

KABUKICHO Map p116

歌舞伎町

☉ JR Yamanote Line to Shinjuku (east exit)

Tokyo's most notorious red-light district, which lies east of Shinjuku Station and north of Yasukuni-dōri, is made up of soaplands (massage parlours), love hotels, peep shows, pink cabarets, porn booths, prostitutes and strip shows, all well attended by drunken salarymen out for the night. Female voices wail out invitations, while Japanese (and, increasingly, foreign) punks eke out a living passing out ads for karaoke boxes and peep shows. Remarkably, the area is generally safe (and much more interesting) to walk through at night, though it's wise to go with a friend or more or you may find yourself the object of unwanted, and irritating, attention (both for males and females). However, most places are aimed solely at Japanese clients, hence foreigners are not permitted in most places.

GOLDEN GAI Map p116

ゴールデン街

☉ Marunouchi Line to Shinjuku-sanchōme (exit B3)

This ramshackle block of tiny *boîtes* became golden just in time for the '64 Olympics. By day, there's not much going on here except for dozens of stray cats. But by night, the closet-sized bars, some accessed by stairways steep enough to bruise your shins as you ascend, light and fill up, mostly with off-duty office workers. There's been much speculation about the demise of Golden Gai's rickety structures and narrow alleyways, but for the moment it seems a new generation is buying in and quietly setting up shop.

HANAZONO-JINJA (HANAZONO SHRINE) Map p116

花園神社

☎ 3200-3093; 5-17 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku;

☎ 24hr; ☉ Marunouchi or Shinjuku Line to Shinjuku-sanchōme (exit B3 or B5)

During the day merchants from nearby Kabukichō come to this Shintō shrine to pray for the solvency of their business ventures, but at night the spotlights come on, legions of high school kids and salarymen show up, and action spills over from nearby Golden Gai and from further-away Yasu-

kuni-dōri. On Sunday the grounds become a **marketplace** (☎ 8am-4pm), where you'll find bargains on knick-knacks and, possibly, some antiques.

SHINJUKU-GYŌEN (SHINJUKU PARK)

Map p116

新宿御苑

☎ 3350-0151; www.shinjukugyoen.go.jp; 11 Naito-chō, Shinjuku-ku; adult/child under 6/6-15 yrs ¥200/free/50; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun; ☉ Marunouchi Line to Shinjuku-gyōenmae (exit 1)

Though Shinjuku-gyōen was designed as an imperial retreat (completed 1906), it's now definitively a park for everyone. The wide lawns and diverse design (the garden applies French, English and Japanese horticultural principles) make it a favourite for urbanites in need of a quick escape. To make an afternoon of it, head for the east side where the glassed-in **greenhouse** displays subtropical waterlilies the size of party platters. Alternatively, park yourself in the southern part of the park in the **traditional teahouse**. Expect lots of company during cherry-blossom season; however, Shinjuku Park is easily one of the top *sakura*-viewing spots in Tokyo.

EAST SHINJUKU (SHINJUKU)

Walking Tour

This walking tour is best begun about an hour before dusk falls, when you'll observe the perceptible change of East Shinjuku's day life turn over to night. The neon burns brighter against the darkening sky, and the seedier side of Kabukichō likewise comes into sharper contrast.

1 Kinokuniya Bookshop (紀伊國屋書店)

This popular **bookshop** (☎ 3354-0131; 3-17-7 Shinjuku; ☎ 10am-8pm) is a great time-killer. Here, you can pop in to browse its superb collection of foreign-language books and magazines on the 7th floor. And of course, this being Japan, no one will say anything to you if you decide to spend an hour or so reading something without buying it.

2 Isetan Building (伊勢丹ビル) Packed

to the gills with fashionable boutiques and trendy shops, this shopping mecca draws in crowds of fashionable Tokyoites ready to spend big. You can balance out your retail therapy by browsing the **Isetan Art Gallery**

WALK FACTS

Start Shinjuku-nishiguchi (west exit)

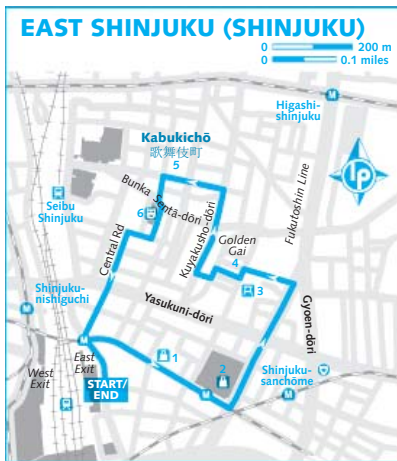
End Tochōmae subway station

Distance 3km

Time Two hours

Fuel Stop Park Hyatt Delicatessen





WALK FACTS

Start Shinjuku-nishiguchi (east exit)

End Shinjuku-sanchōme

Distance 2km

Time Two hours

(admission free; ☎ vary) on the 5th floor, which hosts print, ceramic and fine art exhibits by Japanese artists.

3 Hanazono-Jinja (花園神社) This shrine (for more information see p119) nestles so close to Tokyo's most infamous red-light

district that its clientele can make for some interesting people-watching. The shrine has a reputation for bringing success to business ventures – both legit and not-so.

4 Golden Gai (ゴールデン街) This intimate district (for more information see p119) is little more than a warren of alleyways devoted entirely to small, stand-up watering holes. Traditionally the haunt of bohemian Tokyoites, it's deserted by day, but can be great fun at night. It's said that the block is gradually being bought up by Seibu department store, but for now Golden Gai hangs tight.

5 Kabukichō (歌舞伎町) Despite its reputation as Tokyo's notorious red-light district (for more information see p119), Kabukichō is a relatively safe area to stroll around, though being aimed solely at Japanese clients, most of what goes on in these environs is pretty much off-limits to foreigners. Nevertheless, Kabukichō has everything from 'soaplands' (massage parlours) and peep shows to porno-video booths and strip shows that involve audience participation.

6 Koma Theatre (コマ劇場) This enormous theatre started off as a cinema, but quickly switched to stage shows, and today hosts performances of a more mainstream variety than those elsewhere in Kabukichō. The square facing the Koma is ringed by cinemas, and is also a popular busking spot at night, though *yakuza* (mafia) are usually quick about moving anyone too popular along.

IKEBUKURO

Eating p171; Shopping p146; Sleeping p214

Never quite part of Shitamachi and in the postwar years the site of an enormous, gang-controlled black market, Ikebukuro seemed destined to be the sleaziest of the three main Yamanote hubs. However, somehow Ikebukuro managed to evolve into a well-grounded, working-class neighbourhood that feels wonderfully lived in. Perhaps this is because the rents have stayed relatively stable, and young families, students and senior citizens have been able to set up shop here without going broke.

Significantly overshadowed by the glitz and glam of Shibuya and Shinjuku, Ikebukuro lacks a definable character, though developers have been quick to capitalise on the neighbourhood's up-and-coming status. Ikebukuro is currently home to two of the world's biggest department stores, Tōbu (p146) and Seibu (p146), as well as an entire complex built around one of the tallest buildings in Asia, Sunshine City (below).

The bright lights of Shinjuku are to the south, to the east are quiet lowland residential districts and to the west are Tokyo's more remote wards.

The JR Yamanote Line runs smack through the middle of the district, dividing Ikebukuro into east and west. Like Shinjuku, Ikebukuro's east and west sides have different identities: the west end has the lion's share of bars and good restaurants, while the east is home to the towering Sunshine City complex.

SUNSHINE CITY Map p122

サンシャインシティ

☎ 3989-3331; 🚉 JR Yamanote Line to Ikebukuro (east exit)

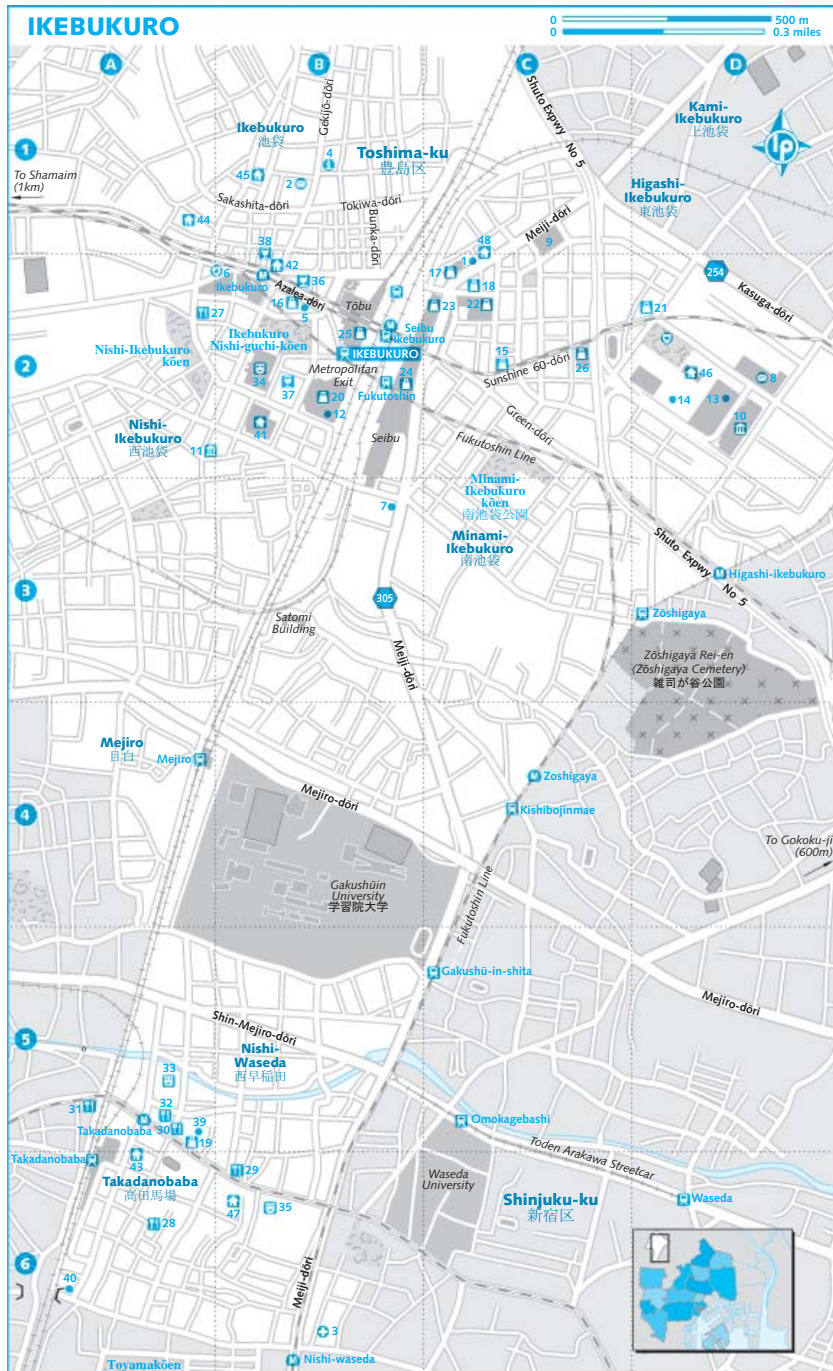
A complex of four buildings dedicated to commerce, Sunshine City ironically stands on the former site of Sugamo Prison where General Tojo, and others deemed Class-A war criminals by occupying forces, were executed. However, all echoes of that past are gone now, and this 'city within a building' is now focused on that quintessential Japanese pastime: shopping.

If retail therapy isn't your thing, the complex includes **Sunshine 60**, an office tower and one of the tallest buildings in Japan (the 60 refers to the number of floors). What's billed as the world's second-fastest lift whisks you to the top-floor **observatory and sky deck** (adult/child ¥620/310; 🕒 10am-9.30pm) where you can gaze out at the Lego blockesque buildings below or perhaps Tokyo's horizon beyond.

On the top floor of the World Import Mart building is the **Sunshine International Aquarium** (☎ 3989-3466; adult/child ¥1800/900; 🕒 10am-6pm), home to more than 20,000 fish, while on the same floor the planetarium at the **Sunshine Starlight Dome** (☎ 3989-3475; adult/child ¥800/500; 🕒 noon-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) is a nice diversion for space heads (shows in Japanese only). If you plan to visit more than one of these three venues, discounted combination tickets are available.

Families with kids may want to visit **Namco Namjatown** (☎ 5950-0765; 2nd fl, World Import Mart bldg; adult/child ¥300/200; 🕒 10am-10pm). Namjatown is owned by the arcade-game company Namco, which should tell you all you need to know about one half of the activities here (it can be pretty cacophonous!). The other half consists of three food theme parks. In the **Ikebukuro Gyoza Stadium**, 23 vendors from all over Japan compete for your business with their version of pan-fried dumplings. Denizens of the **Tokyo Chou Crème Hatake** peddle dozens of varieties of cream puffs, while **Ice Cream City** showcases innovative takes on the world's favourite dessert – check out the **Cup Ice Museum**, displaying packaged ice cream in flavours from vanilla and chocolate to octopus and grilled eggplant.

Finally, on the 7th floor of the Bunka Kaikan Centre you'll find the quiet **Ancient Orient Museum** (☎ 3989-3491; admission ¥500; 🕒 10am-5pm). It displays art and antiquities, sculpture and fragments, amulets and idols from Iran, Iraq, Uzbekistan and especially Syria. Exhibits change every six months; there are about 600 pieces on display at any one time.



IKEBUKURO

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IKEBUKURO BŌSAI-KAN (IKEBUKURO EARTHQUAKE HALL)

Map p122

池袋防災館

☎ 3590-6565; 2-37-8 Nishi-Ikebukuro,
Tōshima-ku; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm
Wed-Mon, closed 3rd Wed of the month; ♿ JR
Yamanote Line or Marunouchi Line to Ikebukuro
(Metropolitan exit)

Quick: what should you do in case of an earthquake? What if your house is on fire? This facility operated by the Tokyo Fire Department prepares you for these and other disasters by means of videos (available in English) and incredibly realistic simulations; it's hard not to be rattled once the room starts a-shaking. A visit here is important preparation if you're planning on living in Japan. Even if you're not, it's an important insight into a possibility that's never far from the mind of any Japanese.

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JAPAN TRADITIONAL CRAFT CENTER

Map p122

全国伝統的工芸品センター

☎ 5954-6066; www.kougei.or.jp/english/center.html; 1st fl, Metropolitan Plaza Bldg, 1-11-1 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Tōshima-ku; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm; ♿ JR Yamanote Line or Marunouchi Line to Ikebukuro (Metropolitan exit)

Operated by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, this showroom is less a museum and more

TRANSPORT: IKEBUKURO

Train Ikebukuro is one of the hubs of the JR Yamanote Line, and the terminus of the Tōbu and Seibu commuter lines.

Metro The Marunouchi Line terminates at Ikebukuro, while the Yūrakuchō Line also runs through it.

a valuable resource for working artisans and crafts collectors. You'll find on display more than 130 different types of crafts, ranging from lacquerwork boxes to paper, textiles to earthy pottery. You can also buy much the same from the discriminating collection. If you've had the misfortune to break your favourite ceramic cup or damage your kimono, the centre also conducts repair clinics (which are housed inside the massive Metropolitan Plaza building). Also see [p146](#) for more information.

GOKOKU-JI (GOKOKU TEMPLE)

Map pp48–9

護国寺

☎ 3941-0764; admission free; 🌅 dawn to dusk;

🚶 Yūrakuchō Line to Gokokuji (exit 1)

Declared an Important Cultural Property, this temple gets surprisingly few visitors. One of the few surviving Edo temples, it dates from 1680, and was built by the fifth Tokugawa shōgun for his mother. Exiting the temple grounds and turning to the left, you'll reach Toshimagaoka Goryo, an imperial mausoleum that is closed to the public.

SUMIDA RIVER

Eating [p173](#)

The area east of the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River), which is relatively off the radar screens of most foreign visitors, is more a collection of distinct districts than it is one single unit. Even so, there are a few noteworthy attractions for anyone interested in getting off the beaten path and exploring the varying faces of the Sumida-gawa. Of particular note is Ryōgoku ([below](#)), the centre of sumō culture, with its large number of sumō *heya* (stables). Also, the nearby Edo-Tokyo Museum ([below](#)), which gives a marvellous presentation of city history, is always a big hit with anyone looking for a glimpse of old Edo.

To the south, the neighbourhoods of Kiyosumi and Fukagawa retain a Shitamachi feel not gussied up for tourist consumption, with some wonderful old gardens and temples. Stroll Eitai-dōri east of Monzen-nakachō Station on the 1st, 15th and 28th of each month for a street market with lots of local colour. Kiyosumi is also where you'll find the Museum of Contemporary Art ([p127](#)), a remarkable building with consistently smart exhibitions. Perhaps because of this museum, or because rents remain relatively low, private galleries from other parts of Tokyo have begun to move here.

Ryōgoku is a quick train ride from Akihabara or a quick taxi ride from Asakusa. Kiyosumi and Fukagawa are neighbours on the south side in Kōtō-ku, just across the Sumida-gawa from Ginza.

RYŌGOKU KOKUGIKAN Map [p126](#)

両国国技館

www.sumo.or.jp/eng/index.html; 1-3-28 Yokoami,

Sumida-ku; admission free; 🕒 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri;

🚶 JR Sōbu or Toei Ōedo Line to Ryōgoku (main exit)

Just north of Ryōgoku Station is this sumō stadium with its adjoining Sumō Museum (☎ 3622-0366). Fifteen-day tournaments (*basho*) take place here three times a year (January, May and September) while three other tournaments are held in other cities in March, July and November. Together, these *basho* decide who will be the *yokozuna* or grand champion.

Although small, the museum displays a rotating selection of interesting artefacts of sumō history and art (mostly wood-block prints). When sumō tournaments are on at the stadium, only those holding tickets to the matches can enter the museum.

For details on watching tournaments, see [p197](#). For details on eating *chanko-nabe*, the delicious and nutritious stew that is consumed in massive quantities by sumō wrestlers, see the listing for Tomoegata on [p173](#).

TOMIOKA HACHIMANGŪ (TOMIOKA HACHIMAN SHRINE) Map [p126](#)

富岡八幡宮

☎ 3462-1315; 1-20-3 Tomioka, Kōtō-ku; admis-

sion free; 🚶 Tōzai or Toei Ōedo Line to Monzen-

nakachō (exit 1)
Next door to Fukagawa Fudō-dō, this large shrine dates from 1627, and is closely associated with the world of sumō. Around the back of the main building is the *yokozuna*

stone, carved with the names of each of these champion wrestlers. Also of note are two treasured *mikoshi* (portable shrines), used in the Fukagawa Hachiman festival in mid-August. The current *mikoshi* date from 1991, and are encrusted with diamonds and rubies – look in the eyes of the phoenix and other birds on top.

A flea market takes place here on the 15th and 28th of most months, from around 8am to sunset.

EDO-TOKYO MUSEUM Map [p126](#)

江戸東京博物館

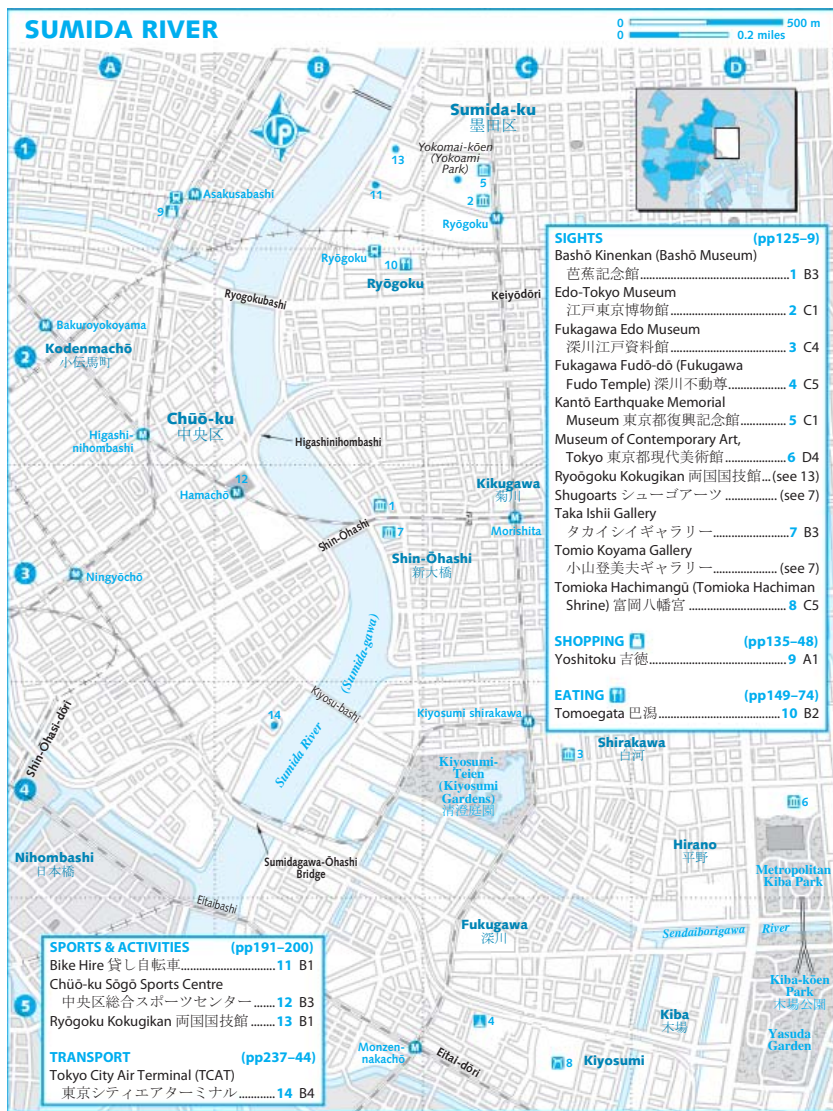
☎ 3626-9974; www.edo-tokyo-museum.or.jp/english; 1-4-1 Yokoami, Sumida-ku; adult/child ¥600/free, student ¥300-450; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Tue, Wed, Sat & Sun, 9.30am-8pm Thu & Fri; 🚶 Toei Ōedo or JR Sōbu Line to Ryōgoku (main exit)

This massive, futuristic building is by far the best city-history museum we've ever

TRANSPORT: SUMIDA-GAWA (SUMIDA RIVER)

Train The JR Sōbu Line is a main approach to Ryōgoku. It is the most convenient access to the sumō district but is slightly less convenient to the Edo-Tokyo Museum.

Metro The Toei Ōedo Line connects the Ryōgoku, Kiyosumi and Fukagawa districts via Ryōgoku, Kiyosumi-Shirakawa and Monzen-Nakachō Stations. The Hanzōmon and Tōzai Lines also serve the last two stations, respectively.



encountered. The permanent collection on the upper floors starts with a reconstruction of half of the bridge at Nihombashi (p54), on either side of which are thorough histories of Edo and Tokyo respectively, mostly with excellent English signage. Highlights are too numerous to mention, but we like the sections on the lodgings of the *daimyō*, woodblock printing, the evolution of kabuki and Tokyo's headlong rush to Westernise. There

are often special exhibits, but the extent of the permanent collection is usually enough to overwhelm most visitors.

KIYOSUMI TEIEN (KIYOSUMI GARDEN) Map p126

清澄庭園

☎ 3641-5892; 3-3-9 Kiyosumi, Kōtō-ku; adult/child/☎ ¥150/free/70; ☎ 9am-5pm; 🚗 Toei Ōedo or Hanzōmon Line to Kiyosumi-shirakawa (exit A3)

This marvellous garden was the first location to be designated a site of scenic beauty by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government – and it's easy to see why. The origins of Kiyosumi Garden date back to 1721 as a villa for a *daimyō*. Although the villa itself was destroyed in the 1923 earthquake, the property thereafter was purchased by Iwasaki Yatarō, founder of the Mitsubishi Corporation. He was able to use company ships to transport prize stones to here from all over Japan – count all 50 (they're numbered). They're set around a pond ringed with Japanese black pine, hydrangeas, Taiwan cherries and other plants designed to bloom at different times of the year.

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, TOKYO Map p126

東京都現代美術館

MOT; ☎ 5245-4111; www.mot-art-museum.jp; 4-1-1 Miyoshi, Kōtō-ku; adult/child ¥500/free, student ¥250-400; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚗 Hanzōmon or Toei Ōedo Line to Kiyosumi-shirakawa (exit B2)

Dedicated to showcasing postwar artists and designers from Japan and abroad, MOT also holds some 3800 pieces exhibited in rotation in its permanent collection gallery, by the likes of David Hockney, Sam Francis and Andy Warhol, as well as Japanese artists such as Yokō Tadanori. The building's stone, steel and wood architecture by Yanagisawa Takahiko is a work of art in its own right – highlights include a sunken garden, V-shaped structural supports, and a water and stone promenade.

The museum is located in Metropolitan Kiba Park. It takes about 10 well-signposted minutes on foot from the subway station.

VISITING A SUMŌ STABLE

Sumō stables, called *heya* or *beya* in Japanese, are where the *sumōtori* (wrestlers) live and train. There are over 50 *heya* in Ryōgoku, along with shops catering to their clothing needs as well as restaurants. Unfortunately, *heya* are not normally in the business of hosting guests, but a few of them occasionally open to allow visitors to observe training sessions. Some things to know:

- Times of visits are limited. Stables close during tournaments and for one to three weeks immediately before or after.
- Training usually begins around 6am and finishes by 10am, with the lower-rank wrestlers training earliest. The best time to see the wrestlers is usually around 8.30am. For most visitors, a half-hour visit is sufficient.
- Most *heya* prefer visits arranged in advance. Ask at tourist information offices or check out www.sumo.or.jp for information on which *heya* are open and how to arrange a visit, and do not be a no-show or cancel at the last minute.
- Discipline is a key element of sumō training, and you should also exercise discipline as a visitor. Sit quietly outside the *dohyō* (ring) and do not make noise or take photographs without permission.

ART GALLERIES Map p126

1-3-2 Kiyosumi, Kōtō-ku; 🚗 Hanzōmon or Toei Ōedo Line to Kiyosumi Shirakawa (exit A3) An increasing number of galleries are moving out of Central Tokyo to an edgy space such as you might expect in New York or Los Angeles. The building faces the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River) on one side and a cement plant on the other, and downstairs are loading docks for a department store. But no matter: the gallery owners present some of the city's most cutting-edge work. Galleries are on the 5th to 7th floors. **Taka Ishii Gallery** (タカイシイギャラリー); ☎ 5646-6050; www.takaishii-gallery.com; free entry), **Shugoarts** (シュウゴアーツ); ☎ 5621-6434; www.shugoarts.com; free entry) and **Tomio Koyama Gallery** (小山登美夫ギャラリー); ☎ 3462-4090; www.tomiokoyamagallery.com; free entry) should give you a good start. Check for exhibitions and opening hours before setting out.

FUKAGAWA FUDŌ-DŌ (FUKUGAWA FUDŌ TEMPLE) Map p126

深川不動尊

Fukagawa Fudō Hall; ☎ 3461-8288; 1-17-13 Tomioka, Kōtō-ku; admission free; 🚗 Tōzai or Toei Ōedo Line to Monzen-nakachō (exit 1)

The history of this giant temple dates from 1703 as a sub-temple of Shinshō-ji in the city of Narita, one of the head temples of Shingon Buddhism. The main image, which is housed in a recently constructed inner hall, is Fudōmyō, a venerable Buddha depicted in murals by Nakajima Chinami (2004). On the 2nd floor is a gallery depicting all 88 temples of the 1400km pilgrimage route on the island of Shikoku – it is said that offering a prayer at each alcove

MATSUO BASHŌ

Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) was born in what is now Mie prefecture in western Japan and by the age of 10 he began to compose haiku, the seasonal-themed Japanese poetry of five syllables in the first line, seven in the second and five in the third. In 1671 he published his first set of poems. By 1680 he became the leader of a literary circle in Edo. In 1681 one of his disciples planted a banana tree (*bashō*) by Matsuo's cottage here in Fukagawa; the cottage came to be known as Bashō-an (banana house) and from that Matsuo took his pen name.

Bashō soon embarked on an additional career, travel writer. He wandered the length of his homeland, documenting what he saw, Edo's own Mark Twain, Bill Bryson or Pico Iyer. Here is one of his most famous verses, from 1686:

*Furu-ike ya
Kawazu tobikomu
Mizu no oto.*

The ancient pond
a frog leaps in.
The sound of the water.

In 1689 he departed Fukagawa to research what would become one of his most famous works, *Oku no Hosomichi no Tabi* (The Narrow Rd to the Deep North), then later to the Kyoto area where he wrote *Saga Nikki* (Saga Diary). Upon returning home to Fukagawa, he wrote the verse:

*Moon viewing at my hut.
Let me hang on the pillar
like a banana leaf.*

In 1694 he took one last journey, to the great city of Ōsaka, where he fell ill. His last poem before dying that October:

*On a journey, ailing
My dreams roam about
Over a withered moor.*

The above haiku are translated from Japanese and don't conform exactly to the 5-7-5 rule, but one of haiku's great legacies is its easy adaptability to other languages. To try one in English, use the 5-7-5 syllabication, include a reference to the season, and throw in a twist, so that by the end of the haiku, readers are transported somewhere they couldn't anticipate.

has the same effect as visiting each temple. One of the best times to visit is around 3pm, when priests read sutras in a thunder of *taiko* drums and fire.

KANTŌ EARTHQUAKE MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Map p126

東京都復興記念館

☎ 3622-1208; Yokoami-kōen, Sumida-ku; admission free; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Toei Ōedo Line to Ryōgoku (exit A1)

This museum presents sombre exhibits about the 1923 earthquake that destroyed more than 70% of the city and killed more than 50,000 people. Maps chart the course of the devastating fires while cases display glassware, eyeglasses, binoculars, tools and other objects convoluted by heat. There is also a harrowing collection of photographs and paintings of the aftermath. The museum has generalised to cover other disasters to strike Tokyo prefecture, includ-

ing WWII air raids and the volcanic eruption on one of the prefecture's southern islands. The museum sits in **Yokoami-kōen** (Yokoami Park), with other memorial buildings and a garden dedicated to quake victims.

A pleasant walk connects the park and the **Ryōgoku Kokujikan** (p125) through the former **Yasuda garden** (admission free; 🕒 9am-4pm), once the site of the Edo home of a *daimyō* (lord).

BASHŌ KINENKAN (BASHŌ MUSEUM)

Map p126

芭蕉記念館

☎ 3631-1448; 1-6-3 Tokiwa, Kōtō-ku; admission ¥100; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Toei Ōedo Line to Morishita (exit A1)

Although it now takes just a matter of minutes from the central Nihombashi district, Fukagawa was considered a very remote area of Edo in 1680 when the revered haiku poet Matsuo Bashō arrived here. At this compact

museum, you can see some scrolls of poetry written by Bashō and those inspired by him, as well as souvenirs of his journeys. There's no English signage, but it's a unique opportunity nonetheless to enter his world. There's a small garden out back, or walk out to the Sumida-gawa and take a left for a lookout where you can view the skyscrapers while contemplating Bashō's long-lost Edo.

FUKAGAWA EDO MUSEUM

Map p126

深川江戸資料館

☎ 3630-8625; 1-3-28 Shirakawa, Kōtō-ku; adult

¥300, student ¥50-300; 🕒 9.30am-5pm, closed

2nd & 4th Mon of the month; 🚶 Toei Ōedo or Hanzōmon Line to Kiyosumi-shirakawa (exit A3)
This museum re-creates a 17th-century Edo neighbourhood complete with a fire lookout tower, life-sized façades and buildings you can enter. Explore the shops like the greengrocer's and rice shop, or slip off your shoes to enter the tenement homes and handle the daily utensils and children's toys. Be sure to note the Inari shrine and the *kura* (storehouse) where belongings were kept for protection from fire and, just as big a danger, Edo's legendary humidity.

TOYOTA MEGA WEB Map p131

トヨタメガウェブ

☎ 3599-0808; www.megaweb.gr.jp; 1 Aomi, Kōtō-ku; admission free, virtual test drives ¥600; 🕒 11am-9pm; 🚗 Yurikamome Line to Aomi (main exit), or Rinkai Line to Tokyo Teleport (main exit) In the Palette Town development, Mega Web was designed to display the wares of the Toyota corporation. Yes, it's a show-room, but against all odds it's actually also fun. Test drive vehicles (advance reservation required), try the Mega Theater motion simulator or poke around in the History Garage with cars from the Golden Age. Some facilities close earlier; call ahead to confirm.

Next door, don't miss one of the world's tallest **Ferris wheels** (Dai-kanransha), which is as high as the second viewing platform of the Eiffel Tower (the one in Paris, not Tokyo Tower!).

AN ISLAND STROLL**Walking Tour**

Pick and choose your stops on this walk. The entertainments of Odaiba are so humungous and sprawling that browsing one mall and one museum could take an entire day.

1 Decks Tokyo Beach (デックス東京ビーチ) There's no shortage of shopping on the island of Odaiba, though this day-at-the-beach themed **shopping complex** (for more information see p147) is the perfect place for perking yourself if the rain happens to start

falling. If you're planning to be on your feet all day, it's probably a good idea to eat your fill of fresh sushi at **Tsukiji Tama Sushi** (for more information see p173).

2 Fuji Television Japan Broadcast Center (フジテレビ日本放送センター)

The headquarters of Fuji TV, an unmistakable ball-shaped structure straight out of the future, is home to one of the city's best observatories. On a clear day you'll get picture-postcard views of Tokyo Bay, Rainbow Bridge and the towering skyline of Shinagawa. A ticket to the **observatory** (adult/child ¥500/300) also gets you into the Fuji Studio (tour conducted in Japanese).

3 Miraikan (未来館) With a name like the National Museum of Emerging Science & Innovation (for more information see p130), you know it has to be good – especially if you're travelling with the little ones. With enough hands-on exhibits to occupy the attention spans of even the most finicky of children (or adults), it's easy to forget about your walking tour and lose an entire day here.

WALK FACTS

Start Daiba Station (main exit)

End Kokusai-tenjijō Seimon Station

Distance 2.5km

Time Three to four hours with stops

Fuel Stop Tsukiji Tama Sushi (p173)

AN ISLAND STROLL

4 Ō-edo Onsen Monogatari (大江戸温泉物語) Just as dangerous to your itinerary as the Miraikan, this *onsen* resort is the perfect spot to soak your travel-worn bones. Of course, Ōedo Onsen (for more information see p130 and p194) is so much more than a hot spring resort, especially since you can top off your bath with a stroll through the shops and restaurants of 'Old Edo' while sporting your finest *yukata*.

5 Venus Fort (ビーナスフォート) This female-friendly shopping complex (p147) stages faux sunrises and sunsets amid a kitschy Italian Renaissance-theme, though none of this

should detract from the real reason why you're here, namely to cash in on some retail therapy. Designer shops and boutiques are aimed exclusively at women, so men may want to take a pass or continue on.

6 Tokyo Big Sight (東京ビッグサイト)

The humorously named 'Big Sight' is an exhibition hall that looks like an Egyptian pyramid that fell to earth – upside down. If nothing else, it's certainly one of Tokyo's architectural wonders, though the main reason you're here is to snag a good view of the bay from the roof of the hall, which is open to visitors any time a conference is not in session.

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