Tokyo

It would take a lifetime to get to know every facet of Tokyo, so large that it spreads as far as the eye can see. But look closely and you will find a city of exceptional charm and breathtaking efficiency. The Japanese capital is a fascinating tangle of opposites: the latest technology and traditional arts; crowded stations and quiet backstreets; concrete highways and green parks. Yet it all works like a dream.

Food and drink

Smart bites and top stops

1 The Monocle Café, Yurakucho
Coffee and katsu sandos
At our café in Hankyu Men’s department store you can read the latest issue while enjoying a cappuccino, a rice or katsu sand (pork-cutlet sandwich).
8F, Hankyu Men’s, 2-5-4 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku
+81 (0)3 6252 5280
monocle.com/about/contacts/tokyo-cafe

2 Ginza Maru, Ginza
Lunchtime favourite
Chef Keiji Mori sources the best seasonal ingredients and even the standard elements of a Japanese meal – the rice, pickles and miso soup – are superior.
2F, Ichigo Ginza 612 Building, 6-12-15 Ginza, Chuo-ku
+81 (0)3 5377 7420
maru-maxfont.jp

3 Sushi no Midori, Shibuya
Charm with charm
For an unfussy, satisfying meal try Sushi no Midori. This casual restaurant’s Ultimate Sushi Assortment is a popular choice: fatty tuna, shrimp, eel, unchir and a few seasonal specialities.
4F, Mark City, 1-12-3 Dogenzaka, Shibuya-ku
+81 (0)3 5438 0002
sushinomidori.co.jp

4 Tamawarai, Jingumae
Bucking the trend
Masahiro Arakawa is one of the city’s most revered artisans of soba: noodles made from buckwheat. At his restaurant he mills about 5kg of buckwheat daily from eight farms in Ibaraki, and some from his own fields in Tochigi.
5-23-3 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku
+81 (0)3 5485 0025

Hotels

Hospitality at its finest

1 Park Hyatt Tokyo, Shinjuku
Sky-high boutique
Views are an obligatory feature of Tokyo hotels and this one has some of the best. If you want to wake up to Mount Fuji, ask for a Park Deluxe room.
35-7-1-2 Nishi Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku
+81 (0)3 3222 1234
parkполнитель.com

2 Palace Hotel Tokyo, Marunouchi
State-of-the-art renovation
For lunch or dinner with a view book a private tatami room at the Wadakura kaiseki restaurant. Try the house saké 1-1-1, made for the hotel by famed Niigata brewher Hakkaian.
1-1-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku
+81 (0)3 3211 3211
palacehoteltokyo.com

3 Cerulean Tower Tokyo Hotel, Shibuya
Centrally located convenience
Book the spacious 19th-floor washitsu: a traditional room with a wooden bath. The turn-down service involves laying out the futon mattresses and quilts on the floor.
26-1 Sakuragakuchuo, Shibuya-ku
+81 (0)3 3476 3000
ceruleantower-hotel.com

Retail

Shop talk

1 45rpm, Aoyama
Committed to craft
Japanese fashion label 45rpm started out as a small operation about 40 years ago and is now best known for its indigo cottons and denims. However, the full collection runs from T-shirts to overcoats.
7-7-21 Minami Aoyama, Minato-ku
+81 (0)3 5778 0065
45rpm.jp

2 Cibone, Gaiemae
Made in Japan
Since opening in 2001, interiors shop Cibone has been a beacon for imaginative retailing with an emphasis on products made in Japan.
3F, 2-27-25 Minami Aoyama, Minato-ku
+81 (0)3 3475 8047
cibone.com

3 Postalco, Shibuya
Daily noted
The main shop for Tokyo stationery brand Postalco has a retro feel – think Mad Men in Shibuya – and sells everything from notebooks, wallets and bags to envelope holders.
3F, Yamaji Building, 1-6-3 Dogenzaka, Shibuya-ku
+81 (0)3 6435 0032
postalco.net

4 Daikanyama T-Site, Daikanyama
Home entertainment
Tsutaya Books, at Daikanyama T-Site, is a bookshop with few equals. Designed by Tokyo-based architecture firm Klein Dytham, the shop consists of three two-storey buildings with more than 140,000 book and magazine titles.
7-7-21 Minami Aoyama, Minato-ku
+81 (0)3 3770 2125
tsite.jp/daikanyama

Vocabulary

Local lingo

01 Conbini: Convenience store
02 Famiresu: Family restaurant
03 Gochisosama: Thanks for the meal
04 Jihanki: Vending machine
05 Kaado: Credit card
06 Nama: Draft beer
07 Okawari: Big portion (food)
08 Olivia: Big portion (food)
09 Suimasen: Please/excuse me/sorry
10 Toire: Toilet

Need to know

Get to grips with the basics

01 City sticklers: Etiquette rules here – when riding escalators stand on the left, don’t cut to the front of a queue and be mindful about where you smoke in public.
02 Table manners: Avoid chopstick taboos: don’t point the tips at anyone, never leave them planted vertically in your rice and never use them to pass food to someone else.
03 Stand-up socks: It’s customary to remove your shoes when entering someone’s home. If you want to avoid the embarrassment of padding around in socks with holes, stock up on a few new pairs before you arrive or head down to sock specialist Tabio.
04 Cash out of hand: When paying, don’t hand money to the cashier: you will only be asked to place it in the tray. Don’t worry about tipping either; it’s not part of the culture.
05 All hail the cab: Tokyo’s taxis are spotless, seats come with embroidered covers and drivers are courteous. They even open and close the back door for you (from their seat) so don’t try to slam it shut or even open it.

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+81 (0)3 3522 1234
tokyo.park.hyatt.com

2 Akao, Sangenjaya
Top selection
Opened in 1982 by Satoru Takizawa, this restaurant has 80 types of premium saké and a fish menu that changes daily.
2-15-3 Sangenjaya, Setagaya-ku
+81 (0)3 3410 9918
akahomij.com

3 Akaoni, Sangenjaya
Top selection
Located in 1982 by Satoru Takizawa, this restaurant has 80 types of premium saké and a fish menu that changes daily.
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