

KANOO WORLD TRAVELLER

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VISIT TOKYO

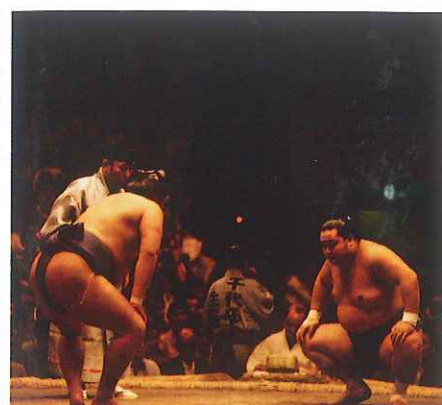
Sophia Osman explores the two faces of Japan's thriving metropolis



Getting off a plane in Tokyo is an experience like no other. Once you clear customs, you step aboard one of the smoothest, fastest and most modern trains you're ever likely to encounter. Yet, as you speed your way from Narita Airport to Tokyo's inner-city, you'll catch glimpses of a more traditional Japan; one that's filled with rice paddy fields and shapely pagodas. It's this contrast between old and new, developed and developing, that make Japan the paradox that it is. To overcome the confusion that Tokyo's two sides can cause, it is often best for visitors to approach it as a collection of small towns, rather than view it as one large city. With so much to do and see, it's best to create your own list (or follow ours) of sight-seeing must-dos, but the real beauty of this city is in the unknown; and allowing your natural curiosity to guide you will lead to much delight as you discover the weird, the wonderful, and the quite simply unexpected. Prepare for an enlightening journey.

🍷 TOKYO MUST-DOS

- ★ Go in spring for cherry blossom season ('sakura') in Tokyo's parks. **Ueno Park (1)** is the spot to celebrate 'Hanami' festivals (from the Japanese 'hana' meaning 'flower' and 'mi' meaning 'to look') and marvel at the sight of over one thousand cherry-blossom trees in bloom.
 - ★ Head to **Nikko** and experience the beauty of its mountains and **National Park**. While there, be sure to visit **Toshogu (2)**; Japan's most revered, historical shrine.
 - ★ Take a trip to **Tokyo Ryogoku Kokugikan (3)** and watch Japan's national sport: sumo-wrestling. Over 2,000 years old, its rules have been passed down through history, making it a time-honoured past time. Near the venue you'll
- be able to see the massive wrestlers walking by in traditional dress while being snapped by paparazzi-like tourists.
- ★ Tokyo's retail speciality is electronics and **Akihabara Electric Town (4)** is a den for all-things technical: the brighter the better.
 - ★ Dedicate an evening to one ever-popular activity: **karaoke**. It's easy to find karaoke boxes all over the city, which give privacy to groups of friends who can sing to their hearts content.
 - ★ Don't leave without seeing Tokyo's most iconic sight: **Mount Fuji (5)**. Around 200,000 people scale its heights each year, but you don't have to do the hard climb: head to Hakone, at Fuji's foot, and take a cable car to the top for truly fantastic views.



Opposite page: Mount Fuji in all its snow-capped glory. This page, clockwise from top left: Trees full of cherry blossom in spring; super-fresh sushi; Sumo wrestlers ready for battle; Tokyo's Shinjuku District at night; The stunning view from Park Hyatt Tokyo's signature restaurant.



WHERE TO STAY

Park Hyatt Tokyo (6)

Shinjuku,
www.tokyo.park.hyatt.com

Located in the heart of Tokyo, this five-star hotel's setting offers easy access to all the action. Occupying the top 14 floors of Shinjuku Park Tower, its expansive city views stretch all the way to Mount Fuji. From \$620, room only.

Ginza Yoshimizu Inn (7)

Ginza,
www.yoshimizu.com
If you harbour a taste for tradition, book a Ryokan (Japanese inn or bed and breakfast) like this one for a truly authentic experience. This hidden gem is nestled in the hub of Tokyo's shopping district. From \$320, including breakfast.

WHERE TO EAT

Jojoen Yugentei (8)

Jojoen Bldg. 3-24-18 Nichi-Azabu,
03-3796-8989

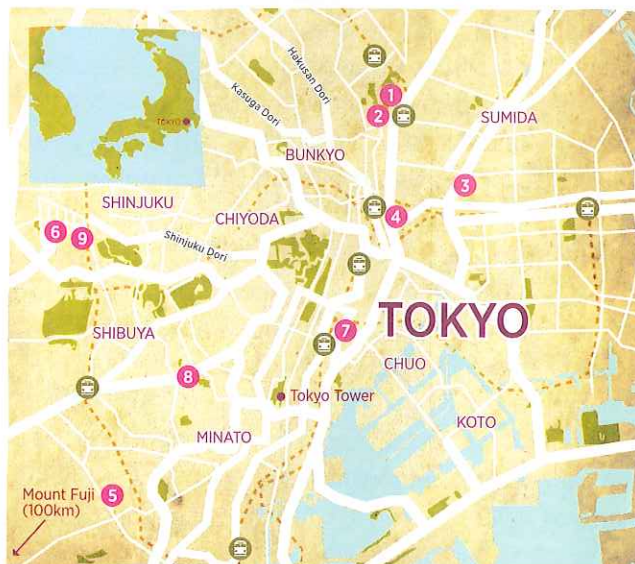
Sample a Japanese restaurant of a different kind at this 'yakiniiku' eatery - meaning 'grilled meat'. Inside, you can order meats and vegetables, then grill them yourself in the middle of the table. Book early to secure a table at this oh-so-popular spot. Dinner from \$90.

Tsukiji Tama-sushi (9)

Takashimaya Times Square 13F,
03-5361-1866

You can't go to Tokyo without eating sushi and this place is just the ticket, with its daily fresh fish bought from a local market. Get there early to beat the hungry crowds. From \$70 for two. **K**

VENDING MACHINES: Too tired for a mall trawl? These plentiful machines churn out all sorts of goodies, from rice to mobile phones and brollies. **CLEAN SOCKS:** You never know when you'll be asked to remove your shoes (usually in restaurants) so wear your best socks.



Images: Park Hyatt; Tokyo; Photolibriary; Shutterstock & Stockphoto