

niponica

Discovering  
Japan

にほにか

no. 28



Special Feature

Tokyo: The Ultimate Gourmet  
Experience



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Special Feature

## Tokyo: The Ultimate Gourmet Experience

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Komuro Mitsuhiro, the owner of Kaiseki Komuro, a high-end traditional restaurant in Kagurazaka, Tokyo, tends to *matsutake* mushrooms. The term *kaiseki* refers to two types of Japanese food styles: the simple modest fare born from the spirit of the tea ceremony, and the banquet-type of meal that originated in the Edo period (1603–1868). The two styles have converged as they were passed down to modern times.

Cover: The appetizers served at Kaiseki Komuro are exquisitely prepared, with exhaustive attention to detail, using fresh seafood and mountain vegetables.

Special Feature

## Tokyo: The Ultimate Gourmet Experience

Tokyo is one of the world's leading gourmet cities. Spend a day—at least!—to experience and enjoy its incredibly diverse food scene. You can find everything from exquisite Japanese cuisine served at classy traditional restaurants to conveyor-belt sushi.





Sashimi of prawns and yellow jack caught in Tokyo Bay are arranged in the shape of a folding fan used in traditional dances during cherry blossom viewing. The plate featuring a design of grass sprinkled with cherry blossoms enhances the spring ambience.

# Spring

Rice cooked with *maitake* (hen-of-the-woods) mushrooms picked in the mountains of Tohoku during the autumn harvest season is sprinkled with salmon roe marinated in soy sauce and fragrant Japanese honeywort.



# Autumn



# Summer

Conger pike, a delicacy that gets particularly fatty in summer, is scalded and then immediately immersed in icy water. The fish is served in a bowl with kelp broth and decorated with a star-shaped slice of green yuzu citrus fruit, which, together with fireworks depicted on the inside of the lid, creates the image of a summer night sky.

# Winter



The meat of snow crab, a beloved winter delicacy, is steamed and then returned to the shell. The creative arrangement is served in a matching leaf-shaped plate, with a vibrant decoration of cucumbers and two types of edible chrysanthemum. (All four dishes are prepared by Kaiseki Komuro)



# Traditional Japanese Cuisine over the Centuries

In Japan's Edo period (1603—1868), the common folk began to develop a taste for gourmet food, a variety of restaurants emerged, and Japanese cuisine became more refined. This is the time when the foundations were laid for the thriving gastronomic culture of Tokyo today.

From a conversation with Harada Nobuo Photography: Oyama Yuhei (p2—6) Photos: PIXTA



Characterized by the use of fresh seasonal ingredients, outstanding nutritional balance, and detailed attention to arrangement and food presentation, Japan's unique gastronomic culture blossomed during the Edo period. The continued political stability and peace under the Tokugawa Shogunate (a government of military leaders from the Tokugawa family) were conducive to the advancement of large-scale urban planning and the development of a distribution network of land and sea routes. As a result, specialty products from all over Japan were acquired by the seat of the Shogunate, Edo (present-day Tokyo). Historical evidence indicates that the area of Nihonbashi, in particular—the starting point of the main routes as well as a landing place for sea cargo—flourished as a commercial center for trade in various products, with riverside fish markets bustling with people.

In addition to the flow of material goods, Edo also enjoyed an enormous influx of people, and in the first half of the 18th century, it grew into a large city with a population over one million. It overflowed with samurai warriors, retainers, merchants away from home, and day laborers, and the need for eating establishments increased exponentially because most of these people were single men. Their hunger was satisfied by portable food stalls, which became popular as places where customers could enjoy swiftly prepared cooked meals. Later, these portable stalls transformed into small-scale restaurants and *izakaya* bars, and gradually, various eateries popped up along the streets of Edo.

Not long after that, the capital saw the emergence of upscale restaurants catering to the affluent townspeople class, and these establishments soon became social venues for cultural interaction hosting gatherings of *haiku* poets



A bustling riverside fish market in Nihonbashi in the late Edo period. People are depicted carrying sea bream, octopuses, and abalones. (Utagawa Kuniyasu, *Nihon-bashi Uoichi Hanei Zu* ("Prosperity of the Fish Market at Nihon-bashi") (Partial image))

and other cultural events. Their skilled chefs prepared banquet-type *kaiseki* meals (traditional multi-course dinners), which were a slightly simplified version of ritual full-course dinners given to entertain samurai warriors. This *kaiseki* tradition is reflected in today's luxurious traditional Japanese restaurants and inns.

The inflow of specialty products and the expansion of the culture of dining out led to the emergence of the four staples of modern Japanese cuisine: sushi, *unagi* (freshwater eel) grilled with a sweet *kabayaki* sauce, *tempura* (batter-coated, deep-fried vegetables and seafood), and *soba* (buckwheat noodles). Another factor that contributed to the birth of these foods was the wide spread of fermented seasonings, such as soy sauce, vinegar, and *mirin* (sweet rice wine for cooking).

The predecessor of sushi, for instance, is the so-called

*narezushi*, a type of preserved food in which fish was fermented with salt and rice. In order to shorten the time necessary for fermentation, Edo people came up with the idea of adding vinegar, a fermented seasoning, to the rice. Placing slices of fresh raw fish on top of such vinegar rice was the beginning of sushi as we know it. Since there was no refrigerating technology in the Edo period, sushi chefs treated the fish with vinegar, pickled it in soy sauce, and so on, in order to preserve its freshness and taste. They also came up with ways to remove the unpleasant smell of the fish by using condiments such as *wasabi* and ginger.

*Unagi* has been used as food since ancient times, but the *kabayaki* method of preparation, in which the eel is dipped in a soy-and-*mirin*-based sweet sauce and grilled, dates back to the late Edo period. Before that, eels had just been skewered and grilled whole. With the *kabayaki* method,



1. A man selling the delete first *katsuo* of the season. In that period, fishmongers often went from house to house to sell fish.  
(Utagawa Kunisada, *Unohana-zuki* ("The Fourth Month in the Lunar Calendar") (Property of Seikado Bunko Art Museum))
2. Sushi in the Edo period was two to three times larger than its modern version. This drawing depicts sushi topped with sea bream, ice fish, medium-sized gizzard shad, horse mackerel, shrimp, and bloody clam, as well as pressed sushi with pickled mackerel.  
(Property of Yoshino Sushi Main Store)
3. Soy sauce is a uniquely Japanese condiment made from soybeans. It is used as a flavoring for sushi, *sashimi*, and other dishes.
4. *Unagi* (eel) made *kabayaki* style, butterflied, skewered and dipped in a sweet soy-and-*mirin*-based sauce, and then grilled.
5. *Soba* noodles are prepared by kneading buckwheat flour to form a sheet of dough, which is then cut into noodles.

Harada Nobuo  
Born in 1949. Professor at the Koku-shikan University School of Asia 21. Specializes in Japanese cultural studies and the history of Japanese life and culture. Author of many books, such as *Edo no ryori-shi* ("History of Edo Cuisine") and *Rekishi no naka no kome to niku* ("Rice and Meat in History").



however, the preparation became quite an art—eels were butterflied, steamed once, dipped in the sweet sauce, and then grilled. The steaming helps melt away all excess fat and gives the meat a soft and plump texture.

Tempura, too, gained popularity among the common folk during the late Edo period, while soba noodles became a staple a bit earlier. They were most commonly served with a delicious broth made from kelp stock, soy sauce and *mirin*, and it is believed this broth contributed to their spread.

Part of the historical background for the birth and

proliferation of these new types of foods was the thriving printing culture of the Edo period. Knowledge and information—which until then had been conveyed orally or through hand-written notes, or had otherwise been kept secret—could now be printed. In the early Edo period, practical culinary books were printed, recording in a systematic manner the knowledge and techniques for preparing these foods, thereby contributing to their popularity.

It was not just the Edokko (a collective name for people born and raised in Edo) who enjoyed the local gourmet

cuisine. In 1824, *Edo Kaimono Hitori Annai*, a guidebook introducing popular shops and restaurants in Edo, was published in Osaka to help visitors from other parts of Japan to enjoy the Edo cuisine.

There is a memorable episode that illustrates well the passion for food of the people of Edo. By nature, Japanese people are eager to get an early taste of the first seasonal products, but in the late Edo period, the fever for *katsuo* (skipjack tuna), whose delicate flavor is associated with early summer, reached such proportions that its price

skyrocketed, causing a social phenomenon that gave rise to the saying, "If it's not expensive, then it's not *katsuo*." As a result, even people who did not have the income to afford such luxuries liked to show off and follow the trend of buying *katsuo*.

The gastronomic culture that blossomed during the Edo period, with commoners as the central driving force, extends through the ages to modern-day Tokyo, and remains just as vibrant and exciting, inspiring new creativity and ingenuity every day.





1. A dish with three types of tempura: shrimp, *kisu* (Japanese whiting), and *kakiage*. *Kakiage* is made by batter-dipping and deep-frying a mixture of ingredients, such as small-sized shrimp, squid, and clams.  
2. Several hundred shrimp are deep fried in a single day at Sansada, not to mention many other delights.  
3. A huge brass pot is used in order to maintain the high frying temperature.

## A Heritage of Skills from Old Edo

### A tempura chef who preserves the taste loved by the Edo common folk

Established in 1837 in Tokyo's old downtown area of Asakusa, Sansada is Japan's oldest tempura restaurant. Tempura is a traditional Japanese dish of seafood and vegetables that are coated in batter made of flour, eggs, and water, and then deep fried. Usually served with a light dipping sauce made from aromatic *dashi* broth, soy sauce, etc., tempura is enjoyed for its crispy and crunchy texture.

"The Edo-style tempura boasts a thick and solid batter coating," explains Sansada manager and chef Suzuki Shun. The signature tempura offered by the restaurant is filling, just like the common people of Edo preferred it. The humidity and temperature affect how the tempura fries up, so the ratio of ingredients in the batter is not fixed. It is up to the chef's skills to prepare a batter with the thickness that best matches the conditions of that day.

In addition to preserving the ancient traditional flavors, Suzuki also aspires to develop tempura that uses new ingredients, such as bitter melon and avocado. The ability to uphold traditions while remaining open to innovation is one of the reasons why Sansada is still a beloved dining spot after all these years.

Suzuki was only 15 when he began his apprenticeship at Sansada.



1. Amezaiku craft candy boasting a rich variety of motifs—from realistic items like a crane, tiger, or rabbit, to fantasy items like a transparent Pegasus.  
2. The process of making a crane. A ball-shaped dollop of heated candy is fixed onto a stick. The artisan stretches the candy with her fingers, and then makes cuts with Japanese scissors to form the wings.  
3. To color the candy, the artisan uses mainly food coloring.

Various skills inherited from the Edo period (1603—1868) still exist in modern-day Tokyo. This article presents a young chef and an artisan who bring a breath of fresh air to their respective fields while keeping traditions alive.

Photos: Matsumura Takahiro

### A candy craft artisan who delivers beautiful performances

Historic records point to the peddlers who sold candy on the streets of old Edo (present-day Tokyo) as the predecessors of Japanese candy craft artisans. Starting with a small dollop of soft candy, this elaborate formative art continues to fascinate many people to this day. The main ingredient, *mizuame* (literally, "water candy") is a sweetener that has been used in Japan since ancient times. Although it is transparent, when melted at high temperatures and kneaded while blowing air into the mix, *mizuame* turns milky-white and obtains a silky luster.

According to Kato Maiko, the sculpted candy is indeed very beautiful, but the true charm of this art form is that it is a performance for people to watch and enjoy. The melted candy cools and hardens in approximately three minutes. In this short time, the artisan uses scissors and her fingertips to pull, twist and clip the material into form at a dizzying speed. Once the candy hardens, it cannot be re-shaped, so the artisan cannot stop to consider processes. Efficient movements executed at an expert speed are the true skills necessary for this craft.

Kato is also willing to take some modern and ingenious approaches to candy sculpture creation by incorporating vibrant pop-style designs and improving recipes. Through her work, these traditional Japanese sweets will continue to evolve.

Kato polishes her skills at Amezaiku Yoshihara, Japan's first specialized shop for candy sculptures.





# Surprisingly Diverse Produce Grown in Tokyo

The heart of Tokyo is composed predominantly of bustling business districts, but in fact, the Tokyo metropolitan area is also famous for producing a variety of agricultural and marine products. This article highlights the diverse lineup of Tokyo specialty products, from traditional vegetables that date back to the Edo period (17th—19th century) to fruits grown on the outlying islands in the Pacific Ocean south of Tokyo.

Photos: Tokyo Development Foundation for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, PIXTA

## Tomatoes ⑩

(Producing region: Akiruno City, Hino City, etc.)

Since Japanese people tend to eat tomato raw, the major varieties of tomatoes grown in Japan are distinguished by low acidity and sweet flavor. Tokyo is known as one of the producing regions of high-quality brand tomatoes valued for their high sugar content and rich taste.



## Ashitaba ⑨

(Producing region: Hachijo Town, Miyake Village, etc.)

*Ashitaba* is a leaf vegetable cultivated largely on Tokyo's outlying islands in the Pacific Ocean. It is rich in vitamins, carotene, iron, and other nutrients, making it a popular medicinal plant.

*Ashitaba* field in Hachijojima Island



## Passion fruit ㊟㊟

(Producing region: Ogasawara Village, Hachijo Town, etc.)

Passion fruit is distinguished by a sweet-sour flavor that makes it the perfect ingredient for preparation of jams and other such condiments. Blessed with a year-round warm climate, Ogasawara Village is famous as one of Japan's main producers of passion fruit.

## Okutama *wasabi* ①

(Producing region: Okutama Town)

*Wasabi* (Japanese horseradish) is one of Japan's best-known condiments. Its unique pungent taste makes it the perfect condiment for *sashimi* and sushi, soba noodles, and many other dishes. A mountainous region blessed with numerous clean cool springs, Okutama has historically been known as a major *wasabi* producing area.



## Nerima *daikon* ②

(Producing region: Nerima City)

*Daikon* is a root vegetable that is widely used in traditional Japanese simmered and pickled dishes. The Nerima *daikon* is larger than other varieties, and its white root portion reaches up 80-100cm in length.



## Waseda *myoga* ㊟㊴

(Japanese ginger)  
(Producing region: Shinjuku City, Nerima City)

Distinguished by its crunchy texture and crisp, fresh flavor, this condiment vegetable was named after Waseda Village, which was known for its *myoga* production.

Photo courtesy of Otake Michishige



## Yanaka ginger ㊟

(Producing region: Arakawa City)

Yanaka ginger is a leaf ginger that was first cultivated during the Edo period. Its soft root and stem are commonly eaten raw with miso paste. Distinguished by its fresh spicy aroma and crisp texture free from stringy fiber, Yanaka ginger is a beloved summer specialty.



## Komatsuna ㊟

(Japanese mustard spinach)  
(Producing region: Edogawa City)

*Komatsuna* is a leaf vegetable rich in various nutrients, such as vitamins, carotene, and calcium. It is usually prepared by boiling or stir-frying. According to an old story, a feudal lord of the Edo Shogunate was pleased with the taste of a leaf vegetable he was served at the Komatsugawa Village (present-day Edogawa City), and named it "*Komatsuna*" after the area.



## Anago (salt-water eel) ㊟

(Producing region: Tokyo Bay)

Very similar in shape to *unagi* (freshwater eel), *anago* is salt-water eel, and to this day Tokyo Bay remains its main fishing ground. *Anago* makes its way into the local cuisine in tempura, simmered dishes, sushi, and more.



## Asari clams ㊟

(Producing region: the coastline of Tokyo Bay)

*Asari* clams are approximately 4cm-large bivalves rich in taurine, an amino acid known to lower high blood pressure. Clam-digging on the shores of Tokyo Bay was one of the most popular pastimes for ordinary people during the Edo period.





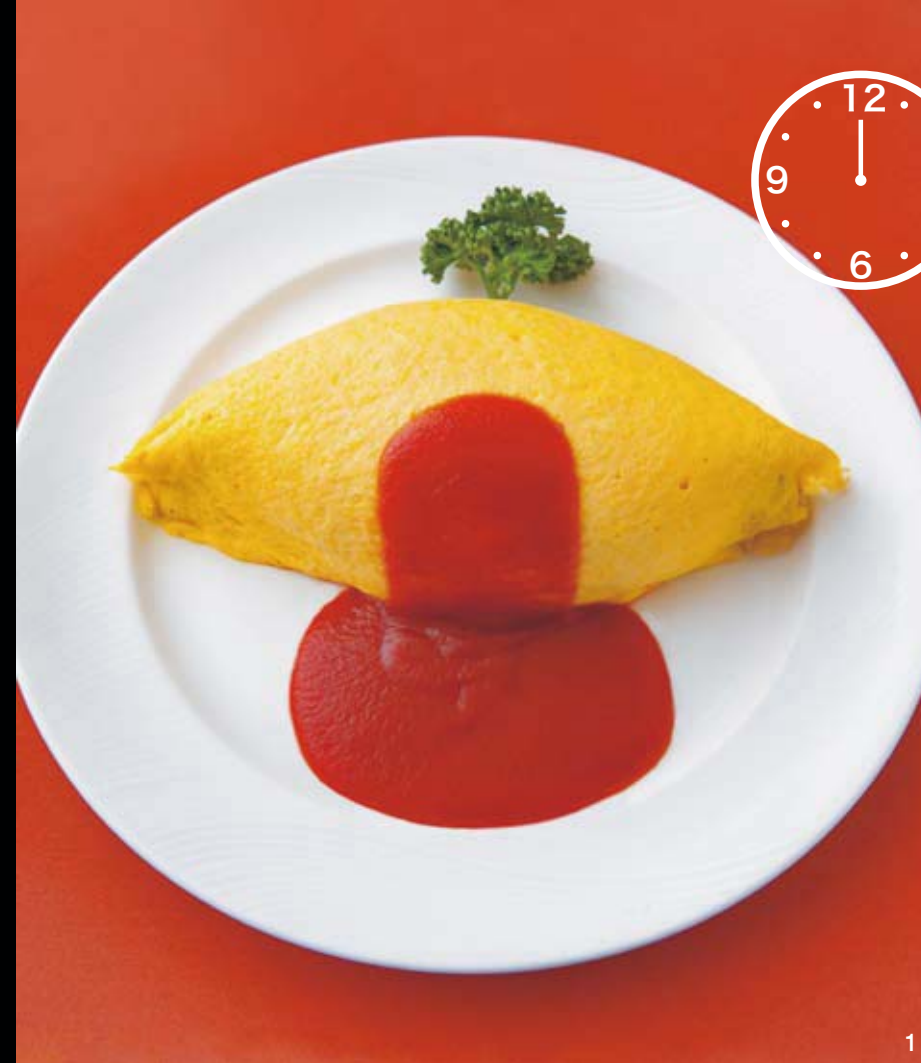


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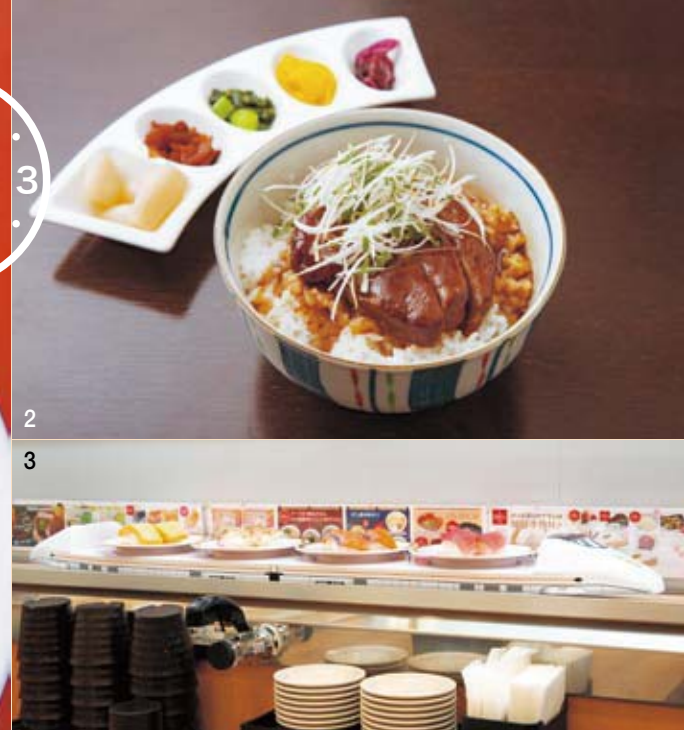
# Savoring Tokyo in a Day

What do you want to eat in Tokyo? The capital of Japan is famous as a gourmet city that continues to evolve while offering a multilayered integration of Japan's unique food culture. Though hardly possible to sample all aspects of this culture in a single day, we still think you can enjoy the main "flavors of Tokyo" together with the atmosphere of the capital's vibrant districts and restaurants in that short a time. Check out this proposal for savoring Tokyo like the locals do, from dawn till midnight.

Photography: Osaka Satoshi Photos: PIXTA



1



2

3



1. For lunch, try some *yoshoku* (Western-style food arranged to match the Japanese palate). *Omu-raisu*—an omelet made with ketchup-flavored fried rice wrapped in a layer of thinly-fried scrambled eggs—is a favorite dish for Japanese people of all ages.  
2. A *sute-ki-don*—a bowl of rice topped with a steak of beef fillet sautéed in soy sauce flavored gravy—is the perfect lunch for ease of eating and volume. (1, 2 KUROFUNE-TEI)  
3. Conveyor belt sushi restaurants are constantly evolving. In some stores, model *shinkansen* bullet trains deliver the orders to the customer's seat. (KAPPA SUSHI)



1. Morning. Start the day at a classic coffee shop and enjoy the ubiquitous good-value breakfast set menu that includes coffee, toast, egg, and salad.  
2. Despite the fast spread of chain restaurants, there are still many privately-run coffee shops. (1, 2 Soleil)



2



3



4



5



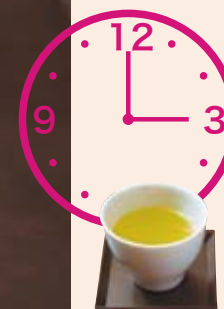
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5. Stand-up soba noodle stands, which are a common sight at street corners and stations, are also perfect for breakfast. It takes less than five minutes to slurp down a bowl of freshly-prepared soba noodles. Tempura soba, which is served with a topping of shrimp tempura, is quick, filling and nutritious.  
6. Most convenience stores are equipped with fully automated drip machines that brew delicious coffee using beans that are freshly ground only after the customer places their order, making it possible to enjoy real quality coffee at a very reasonable price.



1

2



3



3



4



5

1. At 3 p.m., relax with a delectable snack of Japanese sweets and green tea. After feasting your eyes on a piece of *namagashi*—freshly prepared and aesthetically-pleasing sweets made of natural ingredients—reflecting the shapes and colors of blossoming cherry trees on a spring mountain, enjoy the delicate taste, which perfectly matches the bittersweet flavor of the green tea. (Toraya Akasaka Store)



6



7

2. 3. Made from rolled-out non-glutinous rice brushed with soy sauce and grilled, *senbei* are a filling snack beloved by ordinary people. Many specialized *senbei* stores still remain in Tokyo's old downtown area and shopping districts around the city. (Daikokuya)  
4. 5. *Taiyaki*—waffle-like cakes that imitate the shape of the *tai* (Japanese red seabream)—are eaten straight off the grill while still hot. The cakes are filled with sweet red bean paste. (Nezu-no Taiyaki)  
6. 7. Matcha-flavored chocolate treats are a very popular souvenir. (Nestle KitKat Mini in a flavor called "*otona-no-amasa*, matcha" which means "sweetness for adults, green tea taste")





1



2

1. *Sashimi*—thin slices of fresh raw fish—is a delicious treat even when eaten only with a splash of soy sauce. Another way to enjoy the flavor of *sashimi* is by serving it on warm rice and pouring tea or broth on it to make *chazuke*.  
2. Shown here is the popular *tai chazuke* served at a venerable old restaurant in Ginza well-known for its eel dishes. It is prepared by pouring tea over Japanese red seabream *sashimi* seasoned with sesame miso sauce. (1, 2 Chikuyotei, Ginza)



3, 4. Known as the best place to eat ramen, Tokyo offers a rich variety of the iconic noodle soup dish. First, though, we recommend you try the classic “Tokyo Ramen,” which features a light and savory soy sauce-based broth (left). In recent years, restaurants have also started to offer vegan ramen, which contains no animal ingredients at all and can be enjoyed by those who don’t eat meat (right back). (SORANOIRO NIPPON@Tokyo Ramen Street)  
5. Where there are long lines, you will find delicious ramen.  
6. At most ramen shops, food tickets are purchased in advance from the vending machine.



3



5



6



1



2

1. Well-hidden in the entertainment and shopping districts in the heart of Tokyo, there are numerous alleys thickly lined with *izakaya* bars that serve snacks at reasonable prices. (Shinjuku Nishi-guchi Memories Alley)  
2. A little past 7 p.m., the *izakaya* bars fill with the after-work crowd.  
3. *Korokke* (Japanese croquette) (front right), diced tuna fish (front left), and grilled chicken meatball skewers (left back). These and other reasonably-priced delicious snacks are one of the attractions of *izakaya* bars. (2, 3 Public Bar Fukuro, Mikuni Koji)



4. *Oden* is a popular winter dish, very warming in the cold months. It is a simple stew featuring fried fish balls and other ingredients in a broth.  
5. *Yakitori* is a delicacy of bite-sized pieces of chicken skewered on bamboo sticks and grilled. The aromatic smoke is part of the experience of enjoying *yakitori*.  
6. *Hiyayakko* is a dish many customers order first because it is served almost immediately. It is chilled tofu with an assortment of savory toppings, served with a drizzle of soy sauce.



3



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An epicenter of new trends



**Korean**

The foundations of today's multi-ethnic Okubo were established in the 1990s by Korean restaurants. To this day, they are the most common type of dining establishment in the district. The Korean cuisine available here is incredibly diverse: all the way from dishes that were once Korean royal court cuisine to home-cooked delicacies. In recent years, there has also been a trend in enticing new snacks, especially popular among young Japanese women. These include unique shaved ice deserts such as sweetened shaved ice with a topping of diced mango and cheese ①, as well as the famous cheese hot dog ②, which is cheese on a stick wrapped in diced potatoes and batter and then deep-fried. This supermarket sells these delicacies at a special stand, which attracts large lines in front of the store ③. The *gochujang*-flavored sweet and spicy chicken ④ also seems poised to become a fad. (1, 4 Hong Chun Cheon restaurant; 3 Seoul Ichiba)



Attracting customers with healthy food and gentle flavors



**Vietnamese**

As the number of foreign students who attend Japanese language schools and professional training colleges increased, so did the number of young Vietnamese people visiting Okubo. Visitors can enjoy a familiar lineup of dishes and treats, such as coffee with condensed milk ⑤, pho rice noodles and fresh spring rolls ⑥. (Vietnam chan)

The colorful cuisine of a smiling nation

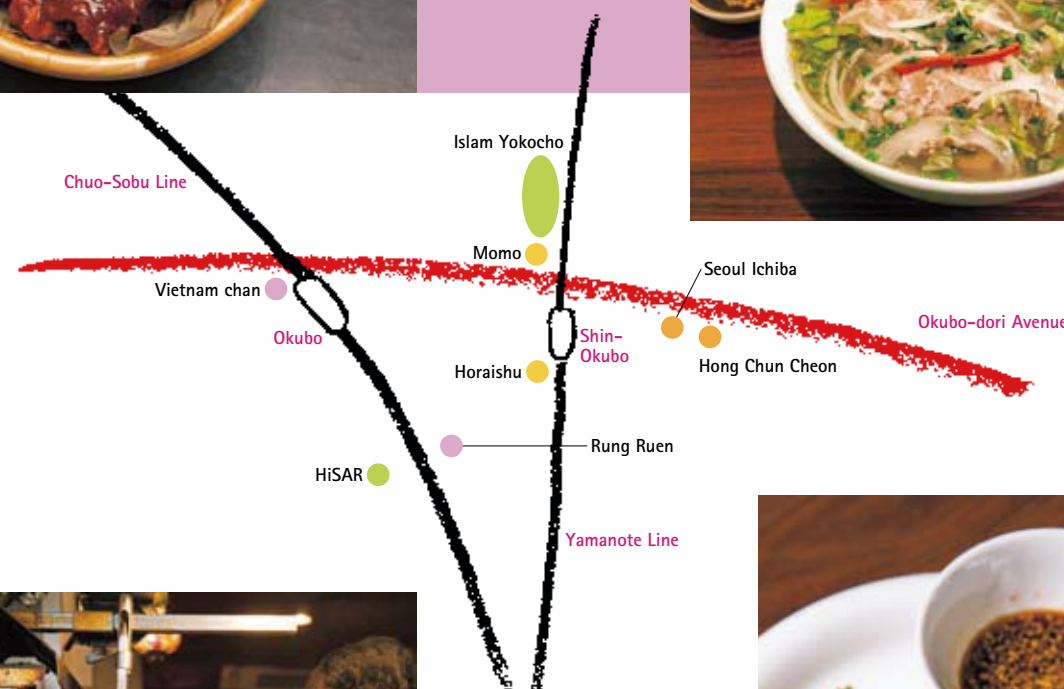


**Thai**

Delicacies such as shaved ice flavored with multicolored syrups ⑦, steamed sweets made from coconut milk mixed into rice flour ⑧, and lunch boxes of stewed chicken and saffron rice ⑨ and all are beloved by countless fans, regardless of their nationality. (Rung Ruen)



# Okubo: Crossroads of Asian Cuisine



A place to enjoy halal cuisine

**Islam Yokocho**

Down a narrow alley off the main Okubo-dori Avenue, there is a multinational quarter known as "Islam Yokocho." Here, visitors can feel the atmosphere of Islam with street-side eateries ⑩, shops that sell both food and spices ⑪, a mosque housed in a building, and more. The grilled chicken ⑫ is made using halal chicken rubbed with spices. It is also available for take-out.

One of the world's three grand cuisines



**Turkish**

Turkish kebab is a dish of thinly sliced meat that is layered together, grilled over fire, then shaved, and served with salad in bread. There are numerous kebab stands in Okubo, but there is also a restaurant where customers can enjoy not only take-away kebab ⑬, but also a course of authentic Turkish dishes starting with appetizers of hummus and tzatziki to spread on a piece of pita bread ⑭. (HiSAR)



A rich selection of various local cuisines



**Chinese**

Okubo is home to numerous Chinese restaurants that serve local dishes from Yanbian, Hebei, and other regions in China. They attract many customers looking for a taste of home. Here you can find a variety of Chinese cuisines: from the famous grilled lamb skewers of Northeast China ⑮, to the crayfish dishes originating in Hunan ⑯, which recently have become all the rage, to Chinese mitten crab ⑰, which is very popular in Japan. (Horaishu)

Okubo is a district along Okubo-dori Avenue, the thoroughfare that runs under Shin-Okubo Station on the JR Yamanote Line and Okubo Station on the JR Chuo-Sobu Line. People of Korean, Chinese, Southeast Asian, and Middle Eastern descent have flocked here to live, carving out their own niches and transforming the area into one of Tokyo's most diverse districts. A great place for anyone who wants to enjoy any kind of Asian cuisine in a casual setting, Okubo has become an attractive tourist destination.

Photography: Osaka Satoshi



A symphony of spices



**Nepalese**

The growing number of Nepalese people living in Okubo has led to a rapid increase in restaurants catering to their needs. Nepali Momo (dumplings stuffed with chicken minced meat, onion, and spices) is one of the most popular dishes in Nepal. (Momo)



# Local Production for Local Consumption in Ginza

The streets of Ginza, Japan's premier shopping and entertainment district, are lined with historic stores as well as Japanese and global luxury brand shops. But inside and on the rooftops of Ginza's bustling office buildings, extraordinary initiatives have yielded some very special "made-in Ginza" agricultural products.

Photos courtesy of Ginza Honey Bee Project  
Photography: Kurihara Osamu (p.21)



1. Staff members collect bee honey on the roof of a building.
2. Bees return to their hive after collecting nectar from flowers.
3. Project chairman Tanaka Atsuo
4. The bee honey is sold at department stores and various other establishments.



©NaokoYamamoto

## Ginza Honey Bee Project: Collecting honey in the heart of Tokyo

The Ginza Honey Bee Project was launched in 2006 by Ginza businesspersons and store owners under the theme of "Coexistence between nature and the city." The initiative, which started with several beehives on the rooftop of a 45m-tall building, made steady progress, gradually expanding in scope. Today, the project has grown to become a large honey producer. It operates bee-farms on the rooftops of four buildings and collects approximately 1 ton of honey annually.

Perhaps many people wonder whether it is even possible to keep bees for honey in Ginza. In fact, however, Ginza is an excellent site for beekeeping. The Imperial Palace, Hibiya Park, and many other locations with abundant nectar- and pollen-source vegetation, are within range of bee flight. Moreover, no pesticides are spread over the area, and the winters are not so cold. Overall, Ginza offers superb conditions for honey production.

More and more stores are creating original products made using the honey, such as cakes and cocktails, and it continues to grow as one of Ginza's new specialty agricultural products.

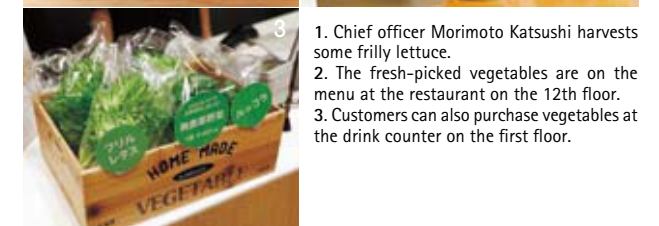
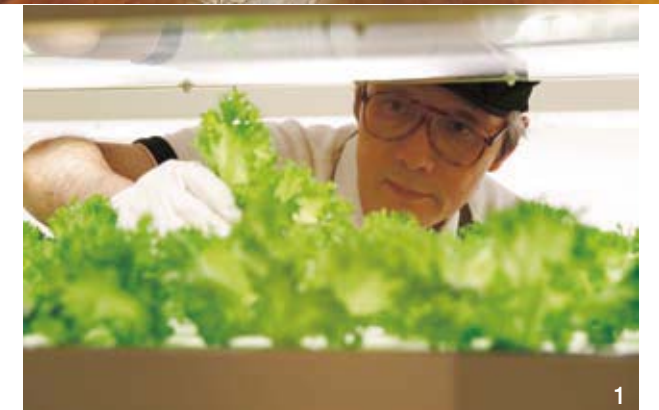


## Vegetables grown in a building on the main street state-of-the-art vegetable production plant

LED-illuminated frilly lettuce and rucola shine brightly on the other side of the glass panels lining the corridor. This place is actually a vegetable production plant located within Ginza Itoya, a stationery and art supplies specialty store. The plant was established in 2015, when the store underwent a full renovation to become a place that customers could truly enjoy rather than simply a shop that sold stationery.

The plant utilizes hydroponic cultivation systems to grow vegetables in water and culture solution. Since they are not grown in soil, these vegetables suffer virtually no damage caused by pests and diseases, and can be cultivated without pesticides. Furthermore, the water and air temperatures, the concentration of fertilizers, and the hours of daylight replicated by LED are automatically controlled at the optimal levels using information technology. All this means the quality of the vegetables, too, is consistently high. Customers can count on a stable supply of delicious fresh vegetables.

The vegetables cultivated here are supplied to the restaurant upstairs, and limited quantities are also available for purchase. The vegetables, known for being "fresh and delicious," are very popular among consumers and are attracting a growing number of fans, who drop by the store just to see them grow on their way home from work or while out shopping.



1. Chief officer Morimoto Katsushi harvests some frilly lettuce.
2. The fresh-picked vegetables are on the menu at the restaurant on the 12th floor.
3. Customers can also purchase vegetables at the drink counter on the first floor.





## Anpan

(introduced in 1874  
by Ginza Kimuraya)

Anpan is a classic Japanese bread with a sweet red bean paste filling. Made with *sakadane* (yeast mash cultured in a mixture of rice malt and water), the bread dough has a distinctively sour yet subtly sweet flavor and soft texture.



# Tokyo's Unique Culture of Bread

Ever since the culture of bread spread in Japan in the 19th century, Tokyo has been the birth place of unique varieties of bread that do not exist anywhere in the Western world. They have become a deeply-rooted part of Japan's food culture, remaining to this day unchanged in appearance, yet always improving in flavor. Enjoy a taste of Tokyo's good old, brand new breads.

Photos: Kurihara Osamu



## Korokke bread

(introduced in 1927  
by Choshiya)

*Korokke* is the Japanese word for a croquette made by mixing minced meat and chopped onions with mashed potato, rolling it in bread crumbs, and deep-frying it. Korokke bread is made by sandwiching such a croquette in a half-sliced bun.



## Yakisoba bread

(introduced in the 1950s  
by MARUJU)

*Yakisoba* bread is a sandwich featuring *yakisoba*—noodles fried with meat and vegetables and seasoned with a special sauce—served in the slit of a partially sliced soft bun. It is said to have originated from breads sold in downtown Tokyo, where the first bread with fried noodles was sold in the 1950s. The spindle-shaped soft buns, too, are an original Japanese type of bread created in 1919.



## Fruit sandwich

(Nihonbashi Sembikiya-Sohonten, Ltd.)

Juicy fresh fruits, such as strawberries and papaya, are embedded in lightly sweetened whipped cream and sandwiched between two slices of bread.



## Jam bread

(introduced in 1900  
by Ginza Kimuraya)

Nowadays, jam bread is usually made with strawberry jam, but the original product had a filling of apricot jam. The sweet yet tart apricot flavor of the jam goes well with the taste of the bread dough.



## Turtle bread

(introduced in 1958  
by Ginza Kimuraya)

While bread shaped as manga and anime characters remains extremely popular in Japan to this day, the origins of this classic Japanese bun can be traced back to the turtle bread. The abundant lineup of animal-shaped buns also includes crab bread and octopus bread.



## Curry bread

(introduced in the 1920s by  
Cattlea)

Curry bread is a fried, curry-filled dough food. Covered in bread crumbs, then deep-fried until golden brown and crispy on the outside, it is voluminous and usually made with mild-flavored Japanese curry.





Where History and Culture Shine amid Big City Bustle

# Ueno



Ueno is a district that offers visitors a diverse range of attractions—from shopping to gourmet dining to art appreciation. Come explore this special place, where downtown bustle coexists with the calm and quiet of art and cultural establishments.

Photos: Kurihara Osamu, AFLO, PIXTA, shutterstock



1, 2. Iseoto is a venerable old store for dried goods established in the 1860s. The storefront boasts a variety of products, such as *katsuobushi* (dried smoked bonito flakes), an indispensable ingredient in Japanese cuisine.  
3. Niki no Kashi offers more than 8,000 varieties of sweets and snacks at all times.  
4. The human flow on Ameyoko never abates, inundated with the energetic cries of merchants from the shops along the street.  
5. Yoshiike is a fresh food store just off Ameyoko that boasts the largest selection in the area.  
6. Fresh-cut fruit on sale.  
7. MANSOH lures customers with a selection of high-quality leather goods.







Center, left: The National Museum of Western Art established in 1959. Famously designed by Le Corbusier, it was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2016. © The National Museum of Western Art  
Right: The compelling exhibit of stuffed animals and dinosaur skeletons at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo.  
Photo courtesy of National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo

Ueno is located on the JR Yamanote Line, just a 10-minute train ride from Tokyo Station. It is home to one of Japan's most famous and busy shopping areas, Ameyoko, which is a neighbor to Ueno Park, a cultural and artistic hub. These two very different, yet inseparable faces of Ueno have been the essence of its irresistible magnetism—both in the past and still today.

Ameyoko started as an open-air market in the aftermath of World War II. Today, it is lined with stores that sell all sorts of products, such as fresh foods, daily commodities, clothes, and accessories, and it also has restaurants. There are approximately 400 stores in the central part of Ameyoko, and some 1,200 stores in the whole area.

The most interesting way to explore Ameyoko is to follow your curiosity. The main street of the market is lined with venerable old stores, such as Niki no Kashi, which sells more than 8,000 varieties of Japanese and imported sweets, and Iseoto, a shop known for its top quality *katsubushi*, the dried smoked bonito slices that are an indispensable ingredient of basic Japanese soup stock. Nearby is Yoshiike, a fresh foods store that is a favorite destination for professional chefs and foodies. Visitors enjoy the lively and energetic atmosphere filled with the cries of sellers of goods and foods.

The alley under the elevated tracks off the main street is crammed with shops that sell cosmetics, sneakers, watches, and stationery. It is also home of some well-hidden popular stores such as the leather brand MANSOH, known for its bags and leather accessories. Exploring these stores with the trains roaring overhead is an exciting experience.

A short walk from Ameyoko northwards, past Ueno Station, will take you to the lush, green spaces of Ueno Park. Established in 1876 on a site that formerly was part of the vast grounds of Kanei-ji Temple built during the Edo period (17th—19th century), Ueno Park is home to numerous cultural and scientific research facilities, and to this day it functions as a base for the promotion of arts and culture in Japan.

The sight of children cheerfully romping around the wide, well-maintained lanes of the park on holidays has been a constant since 1882, when the Ueno Zoological Gardens were opened within Ueno Park. As home to seven museums and art galleries, including the National Museum of Western Art, which was designed by the renowned French architect Le Corbusier and is inscribed on the UNESCO



Left: Shinobazu Pond located in Ueno Park.  
Top: The Five-Storeyed Pagoda of the former Kanei-ji Temple features the traditional architectural style of the 17th century.  
Right: The Ueno Zoological Gardens are home to more than 350 different animal species, including the very popular giant pandas and elephants.  
Photo: Tokyo Zoological Park Society



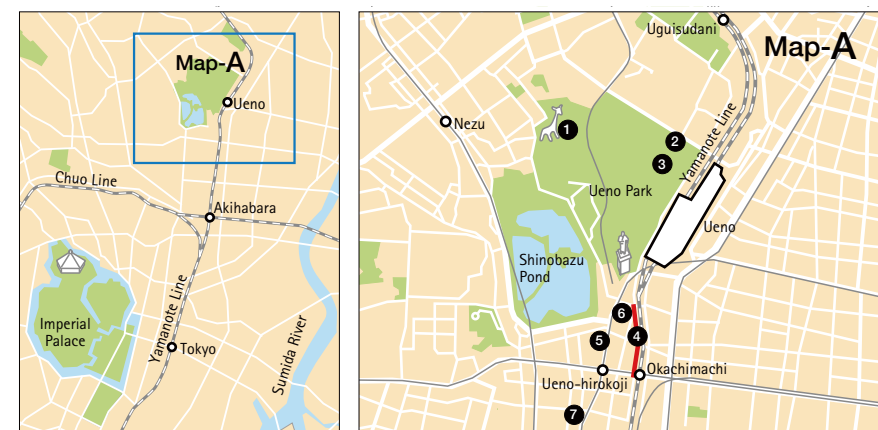
Enjoy a *rakugo* performance at Suzumoto Entertainment Theater. Many story tellers, such as Tachibanaya Entaro (right), perform here every day.

World Heritage List, and the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo, which is extremely popular for its exhibit of dinosaur skeletons, Ueno Park is an inexhaustible source of entertainment and information.

Lovingly called “The Mountain” by the locals, Ueno Park is a famous cherry blossom viewing spot in spring, while in summer people come to enjoy the stunning view of lotus flowers in full bloom in Shinobazu Pond. Visitors who wish to relish these enchanting seasonal traditions and further acquaint themselves with Japanese culture should drop by Suzumoto Entertainment Theater for a taste of the ancient storytelling art of *rakugo*. This is a classic art unique to Japan, in which a single story-teller uses only vocal expressions and gestures to portray the world of a



Left: Mihashi Honten is a traditional Japanese-style café established in 1948. Their signature *anmitsu*—a dessert with agar-agar jelly, red bean paste, black sugar syrup, and other ingredients—is popular and has remained unchanged since the early days of the café.  
Right: Usagiya is a popular store for Japanese sweets established in 1913. Make sure you try their famous freshly-prepared *dorayaki*.



## Ueno Area Map

- ① Ueno Zoological Gardens
- ② National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo
- ③ The National Museum of Western Art
- ④ Ameyoko
- ⑤ Suzumoto Entertainment Theater
- ⑥ Mihashi Honten
- ⑦ Usagiya

•Access  
Approximately 60 minutes by Keisei Line Limited Express from Narita Airport to Ueno.  
•Contact information  
The Official Tokyo Travel Guide  
GO TOKYO  
<https://www.gotokyo.org/en/index.html>  
Ueno Zoological Gardens  
<https://www.tokyo-zoo.net/english/index.html>





Souvenirs of



Japan 19

Practical and Fun

## Food Replica Lifestyle Accessories

Photos: Osaka Satoshi

Food replicas, originally developed for the display windows of restaurants, are true-to-life models of food items made from synthetic resin, and they have been around since the 1920s. The secret to their realistic appearance is hidden in the techniques of the artisans who meticulously craft each piece. Foods to replicate are selected from the menu, and it takes a complex process with multiple steps to complete a single one—for example, creating the mold from the real food, painting by hand or using an airbrush, and baking in an oven.

In recent years, going beyond their original use, food replicas have become popular as personal lifestyle accessories—USB memory sticks in the shape of fried prawns, sushi earrings, ramen bowl-shaped smartphone holders, pizza rulers, and more. Despite their small size, the replicas are quite realistic. A gift of such a food replica accessory, both fun and practical, is certain to bring a smile.

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