

FREE DESTINATION GUIDE

TOKYO

Japan



Neon and shrines, ramen at midnight, and the smoothest big city on Earth.

SAFETY: US State Dept: Level 1

Travelling with ActorTonyB & Nala The Shih Tzu

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Top Sights

- **Senso-ji Temple, Asakusa.** Tokyo's oldest temple; arrive before 9 am and snack your way down Nakamise shopping street.
- **Shibuya Crossing.** Watch it from above, then dive in: the scramble, the arcades, and the backstreets of Center Gai.
- **Meiji Shrine.** A forest in the middle of the city; pair it with Harajuku's Takeshita Street next door.
- **teamLab Planets.** Barefoot, walk through water digital art. Book tickets online; slots sell out fast.
- **Tokyo Skytree.** The tallest tower in Japan; on clear winter mornings you can spot Mount Fuji.
- **Tsukiji Outer Market.** Graze on tamagoyaki, tuna, and strawberries for breakfast with the locals.
- **Akihabara.** Arcades, electronics, and anime culture stacked ten floors high.
- **Mount Fuji Day Trip.** Hakone or Lake Kawaguchi by train and bus; go on a clear day and start early.

Local Tips

- Add a digital Suica card to your phone wallet before landing; it works on every train, bus, and convenience store.
- Cash still matters: small restaurants, shrines, and market stalls often prefer it. Seven Eleven ATMs accept foreign cards.
- Trains stop around midnight. Plan late nights around the last train or budget for a taxi.
- Book teamLab, the Ghibli Museum, and popular themed cafes weeks ahead; they do not do walk ups.
- Carry a small bag for your trash; public bins are rare and locals carry waste home.
- Convenience stores (konbini) are genuinely great for breakfast, snacks, and late night essentials.

Customs & Etiquette

Do

- Bow slightly when greeting or thanking; it is appreciated everywhere.
- Queue patiently on the marked train platform lines and let passengers off first.
- Use both hands or a tray when paying; money goes on the tray, not hand to hand.
- Keep phone calls off trains; set your phone to manner mode (silent).

Please Don't

- Do not tip; excellent service is standard and tipping can cause confusion.
- Do not eat while walking in busy areas; finish food where you bought it.
- Do not stick chopsticks upright in rice; it resembles a funeral ritual.
- Do not wear shoes on tatami or past a home or temple entry step.

Things to Know Before You Go

Currency. Japanese yen (JPY). Cards are growing but cash is still king in small places; 100 yen coins pile up fast, use them.

Language. Japanese. English signage is good in stations and major sights; translation apps bridge the rest.

Best time to visit. Late March to May for cherry blossoms, and October to November for fall color and crisp air.

Getting around. Metro and JR lines with an IC card cover everything. Google Maps nails platforms and exits; taxis are pricey but spotless.

Five phrases that open doors

Konnichiwa	Hello
Arigatou gozaimasu	Thank you very much
Sumimasen	Excuse me / sorry
Onegaishimasu	Please
Toire wa doko desu ka?	Where is the restroom?

What to Bring

- Slip on shoes; you will take them off at temples, restaurants, and fitting rooms all day.
- A phone with a digital Suica card loaded before you land, plus some cash for small places.
- A small hand towel; many public restrooms have no paper towels or dryers.
- A compact umbrella; Tokyo rain arrives in every season.
- Layers: trains and stores run warm while streets can be cold, especially November to March.
- A coin purse: 100 yen coins run your life (lockers, shrines, vending machines, gacha).

What to Expect

Weather: four full seasons. Humid summers near 90 F, crisp winters in the 40s, and a rainy season in June and early July.

Pace: precise and fast in transit, calm and ritualized everywhere else. Trains are silent; restaurants turn tables quickly at lunch.

Costs in practice: Tokyo surprises people by being affordable at street level: excellent ramen, set lunches, and convenience store meals are cheap, while taxis and high end sushi are not.

How tourists are received: politely and helpfully. Staff will often walk you to the right platform rather than point. English is limited but goodwill is not.

What NOT to Bring

- Strong perfume or cologne; scent is kept subtle in Japan and heavy fragrance is unwelcome in tight spaces.
- Certain medications without checking: some common US prescriptions (including some ADHD and cold medicines with pseudoephedrine) are prohibited in Japan and can be confiscated or worse. Check the embassy list and carry prescriptions.
- A big hard suitcase for the trains if you can avoid it; use the luggage forwarding services instead, they are cheap and reliable.
- Expectations of tipping anywhere; leave the habit at home for this trip.

Safety Rating

US State Dept advisory level: Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions

Japan holds the US State Department's lowest advisory level. Tokyo is one of the safest big cities in the world; the realistic concerns are natural events (earthquakes, typhoons) and nightlife drink spiking in a few bar districts.

Three practical safety moves

- Know your hotel's earthquake drill and keep your phone charged; alerts come in English via the Safety Tips app.
- Watch your drink in Roppongi and Kabukicho bar touts; never follow a tout into a bar.
- Enroll in the free STEP program at step.state.gov, even for Level 1 countries.

Advisory levels change. Check the current rating for your destination at travel.state.gov before you book and again before you fly. Summary reflects the advisory in effect in October 2026.

Budget Snapshot

Rough per person daily ranges in US dollars, including lodging, food, local transport, and activities. Airfare not included. Treat these as planning estimates, not quotes.

Tier	Per day (USD)	What it looks like
Budget traveler	\$80 to \$120 per day	Business hotel or hostel, konbini breakfasts, ramen lunches, free shrines and parks.
Mid range	\$160 to \$240 per day	Well located hotel, sushi dinners, teamLab and Skytree, a Fuji day trip.
Comfort	\$320 plus per day	Ryokan night with kaiseki dinner, private guide, premium omakase, first class trains.

Ready to Go?

You have the sights, the tips, the customs, and the budget. Now put dates on it. Compare flights, stays, cars, and activities for Tokyo in one place, with live prices and traveler reviews.

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