



DESTINATION OF THE MONTH

Tokyo

Japan | February 2018



Spring is a special season in Japan. As the snow melts and the first buds bloom, the busy locals of Tokyo and the wide-eyed travelers come together to celebrate the beauty of the cherry blossoms, and contemplate *mujō* (無常) – the bittersweet impermanence of things. But while the spring blooms may be transient, Tokyo's magnetism is year-round.



When to go



Tokyo is an amazing destination year-round, but for the best sights, visit during spring (**March to May**) and fall (**October to December**). To see the spring blooms and fall foliage at their most beautiful, look up spring and foliage forecasts around February and September. These months are wildly popular though – plan your trip at least a month in advance to secure good hotels and tickets.



What to see & do



Take part in the hanami

Hanami (literally “flower viewing”) is a Japanese tradition that happens every spring. If you come in March and April, you’ll see hundreds of people enjoying a stroll or a picnic in Tokyo’s many beautiful gardens. Visit Shinjuku-gyoen for the stunning view of a thousand cherry trees. You can also enjoy the cherry blossoms in Yoyogi park, Ueno park, and Sumida park. [Here are other places to visit for the cherry blossoms.](#)



Go downtown to Asakusa

Learn about Tokyo's history and get a feel for its energy by taking a walk around the Asakusa district. Visit the temple and the shrine, look at the baubles along the shopping streets, and try out the street food. If you wait until nightfall, you'll get gorgeous night shots of the district. Also head over to the nearby Tokyo Skytree for city views or go to the Sumida river for a quiet stroll.



Travel to the future to Odaiba

Tokyo is a city of contrasts and after a day in the historical downtown district of Asakusa, a trip to Odaiba brings you to the future. An artificial island in Tokyo Bay, Odaiba sports plenty of modern buildings where you can do endless shopping and sightseeing. The Rainbow Bridge, which connects Odaiba to central Tokyo, adds beauty to the skyline.



Hike to Mt. Takao

Tokyo's energy is unrelenting and a feast to the senses. When it gets too much, escape to the green trails of Mt. Takao, a mountain just a 50-minute train ride from Shinjuku. Take a scenic route like the Inariyama trail on the ascent, have a bowl of udon at the peak, then take the cultural route on your way back down. It's a great spot for seeing late-blooming cherry blossoms (mid to late April) and also for the fall foliage.

[Here are several more ideas to help you relax in Tokyo.](#)



Where to eat



It's almost impossible to have a bad meal in Tokyo. From hole-in-the-wall diners to Michelin-starred restaurants, you can literally just prowl the streets of Tokyo and follow your nose. Book a table at [Sagaya Ginza](#) for the best Wagyu steak, enjoy melt-in-your-mouth yakiniku at [Sumbiyakiniku Nakahara](#) or head to [Namba](#) for sushi. Don't forget to get a taste of Tokyo's quirky side – enjoy robots and laser displays with your meal at the [Robot Restaurant](#) or dive into cosplay at a [maid café](#). If those get too weird, unwind and relax Tokyo-style with this [bar-hopping tour](#).



Where to stay

Shinjuku and Ikebukuro are central districts with lots of food and shopping options, as well as convenient starting points for day trips in and around Tokyo. The luxurious [Keio Plaza Hotel](#) will give you amazing views and lots of pampering while a ryokan like [Tadaima](#) will prime you for a cultural look into the heart of Tokyo.

If you're not one for crowds and would rather stay somewhere more relaxing, opt for [The Prince Park Tower](#) in the quiet, business district of Minato.

On a budget? [Check out these budget hotels in Tokyo.](#)



Tips for your trip

Getting there and around

Fly to Narita or Haneda and take the train or the limousine bus to the city. Haneda is a much more convenient airport as it's closer to the city and has less foot traffic, so make that your first choice. If you're coming from elsewhere in the country, find your way around with [Jorudan](#) or [Hyperdia](#).

If you're traveling to multiple prefectures in Japan, consider getting a [Japan Rail pass](#) to save on transportation costs. But if you're planning to travel just within Tokyo, a [subway ticket](#) would suffice.

Read more

- Join in on the spring festivities this coming March. [Here's our guide to seeing the cherry blossoms in Japan.](#)
- Tokyo's energy getting to you? [Here's how to have a relaxing holiday.](#)



About this guide

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