

# Tokyo Demystified

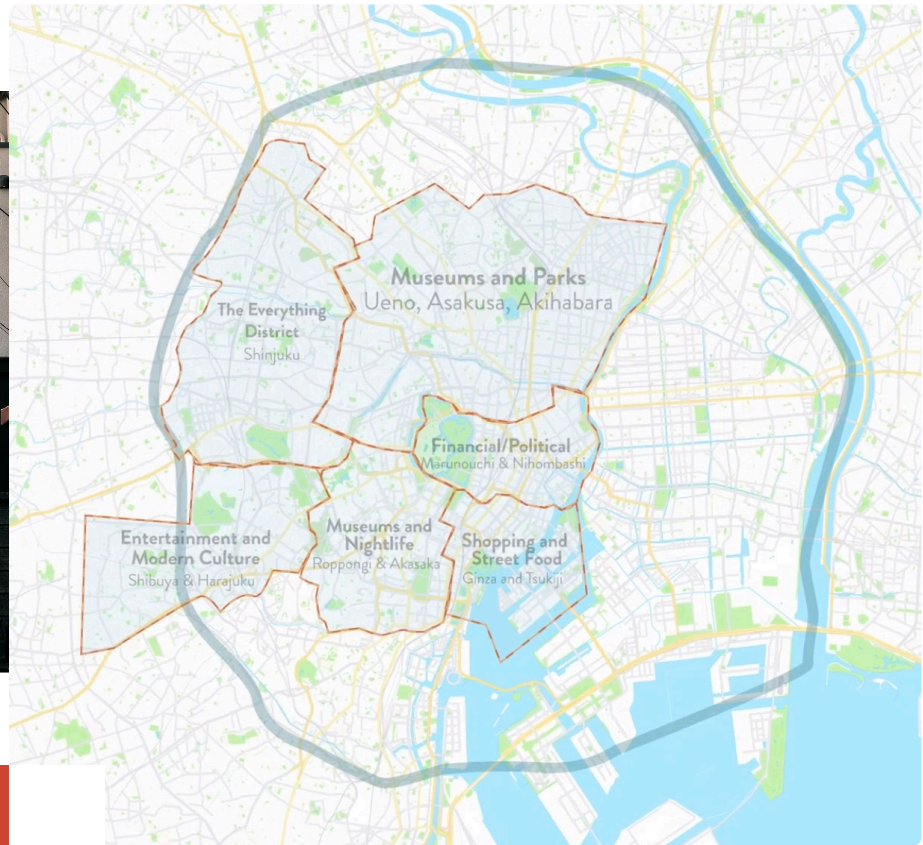
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## Chapter 1

In this course, we are going to show you Tokyo and teach you how to experience this unique city. We'll first give you a quick context and history of this place, and then we will get you familiar with the map of the city. This section will provide you with an overview of the city's neighborhoods and give you a perspective on where you may want to stay or explore. We'll teach you how to navigate this city that has some of the best public transit in the world and show you some of the customs and etiquette to keep in mind while you are here. Then, we'll dive into the fun stuff, how to experience Tokyo. From food, nightlife, culture, and shrines to how to experience the city with kids, this course will give you all the tools you will need to plan your trip to Tokyo. We will even teach you how to see and experience Tokyo's robots!

This PDF will be a summary of everything we cover throughout the course, including specific locations and places we've enjoyed visiting. This guide will help remind you of the key concepts that we include in the course. It would be a great idea to print this PDF out or download it to your phone, so you have it on-hand to reference while on your trip.





## Chapter 2

### Know the map

#### Major Landmarks

1. **Shibuya Crossing** - The busiest crosswalk in the world.
2. **Yoyogi Park** - Massive forest in the middle of the city.
3. **Tsukiji Market** - A street food paradise.
4. **Ueno Park** - Where you can find some peace and quiet.
5. **Tokyo National Museum** - Has the largest collection of Japanese art.
6. **MORI Tower** - See Tokyo's skyline from an incredible view.

#### Political + Financial District

7. **Tokyo Central Station**
8. **Imperial Palace**  
Kokyo Gaien - Large, outer gardens open to the public.
9. **Nihonbashi Bridge** - Symbolic center of Tokyo.

#### Shopping + Street Food

10. **Ginza** - High-end shopping
  - **Uniqlo** - 12-story clothing store
  - **Itoya** - 12-story stationery store
  - **GINZA SIX** - Huge mall with great food and a rooftop garden.
11. **Tsukiji Market**
  - Street food paradise
  - Great area for Japanese cookware

#### Art Museums + Nightlife

12. **Roppongi**
  - **Day** - Peaceful and great for visiting museums, parks and gardens.
  - **Night** - The city's epicenter for nightlife, clubs and party culture.

#### Entertainment + Modern Culture

13. **Shibuya** - High-energy with a lot of screens, shops, video games, robots and a whole lot more.
14. **Harajuku**
15. **Yoyogi Park**
16. **Meiji Shrine**



# Chapter 3

## Arriving in Tokyo



### Preparing for Arrival

- Check to see if you need to apply for a visa in advance
  - There are currently 68 countries that are exempt from obtaining a Japan visa. Citizens of these countries include European Union member countries, the United States, Canada and Mexico.
  - Citizens of these countries can travel to Japan for up to 90 days.
  - More information about additional countries and Japan visas can be found [here](#).

### Airport Arrival

- **Post Arrival checklist**
  - Get cash
  - Buy Wifi or SIM card
  - Get a train ticket
  - Get a transportation card



### Sim Card Options

- [Mobal](#)
- [Klook](#)
- [Sakura Mobile](#)
- [eConnect](#)

**Tip:** We prefer to rent a wifi hotspot or "Pocket Wifi".

**Note:** When you arrive at the airport, head to the underground train area.

- **At Narita Airport**
  - **Trains to the city**
    - **Narita Express** if you're staying in central Tokyo.
    - **Skyliner** if you're staying in northern Tokyo.
  - **Bus to the city**
    - Cheaper than the train, but takes longer.
    - Tell the bus desk where you're staying for information about bus stops.
- **At Haneda Airport**

The monorail gets you into the city in 30 minutes.

### Inexpensive Accommodations

- **Capsule Hotels**
  - 9h Nine Hours Takebashi
  - Bay Hotel Ginza
  - Nell Ueno Okachimachi
  - Anshin Oyado - Shinjuku
  - Millennials
- **Hostels**
  - CITAN Hostel
  - Book and Bed
  - Kaisu
  - Ryokan
  - Sawanoya Ryokan
  - Hoshinoya Tokyo
  - Homeikan
  - Sadachiyo
  - Kimi Ryokan
- **Airbnb**

**Note:** Use Google Maps to find out which method of transportation is best to get to your accommodations.

# Chapter 4

## History



### A Brief History

- Tokyo was called Edo and was a sleepy fishing village until the 1600s.
- The center of political and military power moved from Kyoto to Edo.
- In the late 1800s the military commanders in Edo lost power and the Emperor in Kyoto took it back, renaming it "Eastern Capital" or "To-Kyo".
- Tokyo became the center of the Japanese empire continuing into the 1930s and 40s, this led to a war with the US in WWII.
- The US dropped two atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, killing hundreds of thousands and led to a Japanese surrender.
- The Americans had a clause that barred Japan from having an active military
- Japan rebounded after the war, their economy exploded and they quickly became an economically prosperous and peaceful place. Today, it has one of the highest qualities of life of any nation on earth.
- Japan has close relations with the US and the West both in military and economic affairs.

### Tokyo Today

- The greater Tokyo Metropolitan Area has around 38 million people living in it, making it the most populous megacity on earth.
- If you want to explore Tokyo's urban sprawl, click [here](#) and see Tokyo in a satellite view on Google Maps.
  - Hold down SHIFT and click + drag to get a 3D perspective of the city.
- Japan has been ranked one of the safest cities on earth in the Economist's Safe Cities Index.
- Crime is also very low in Tokyo compared to other cities its size.
- The largest ethnic minority in Japan are Koreans who didn't emigrate willingly to Japan, but rather were forcibly brought over during WWII.



### Tokyo's city logo

It looks like the leaf of a tree that is very common and important in Japan, the Ginkgo tree. The shape can represent the city's growth towards peace and prosperity of Tokyo over recent decades.



# Chapter 5

## Food



*Washoku* emphasizes the value of elevating simple seasonal ingredients into an art form.

### Phrases to Learn for Dining

- Greeting
  - From morning to late evening: "*Konnichi-wa*" = "Good day"
  - When it is dark outside: "*Konban-wa*" = "Good evening"
- Thank you
  - "*Arigato*" = "Thank you"
  - "*Arigato gozaimasu*" = "Thank you very much"

### Types Food

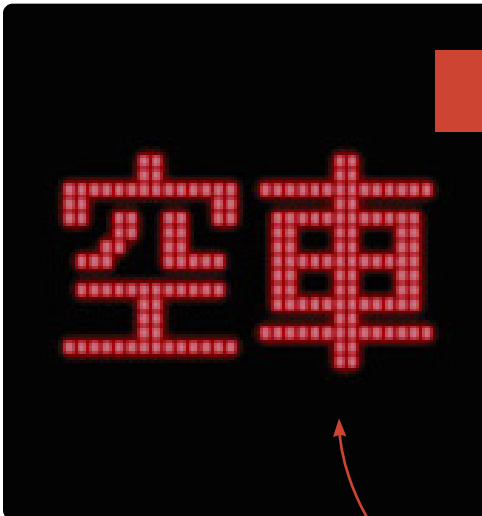
- Ramen
  - *Broth*
    - *Shio* = Salt
    - *Miso* = Fermented
    - *Tonkotsu* = Pork Bone
    - *Shoyu* = Soy Sauce
  - Click [here](#) for the 5am Blog Ramen Tour
  - *How to Eat*
    - Put money into the vending machine
    - Choose the kind of ramen. This can be seen in the upper part of the order machine.
    - Look at the bottom part of the machine which is where you order extra toppings, sides, or drinks.
    - Every time you click a button a little ticket prints out. make sure to collect these and give them to the person inside the shop.
    - Once you get your ramen. try the broth first.
    - Slurp your noodles.
- Other Noodles in Japan
  - *Soba* = Buckwheat (thin)
  - *Udon* = Thick, wheat flour noodles
- *Kaiseki* = Traditional multi-course meal
- Tokyo's Best Depachika
  - Daimaru Tokyo (Marunouchi) - Attached to Tokyo Station
  - Ginza Mitsukoshi (Ginza) - B2 and B3 levels of Ginza Department Store
  - Tokyu Food Show (Shibuya) - Tokyu Department Store
  - Takashimaya Nihonbashi (Nihonbashi) -

### Places to Wander for Food

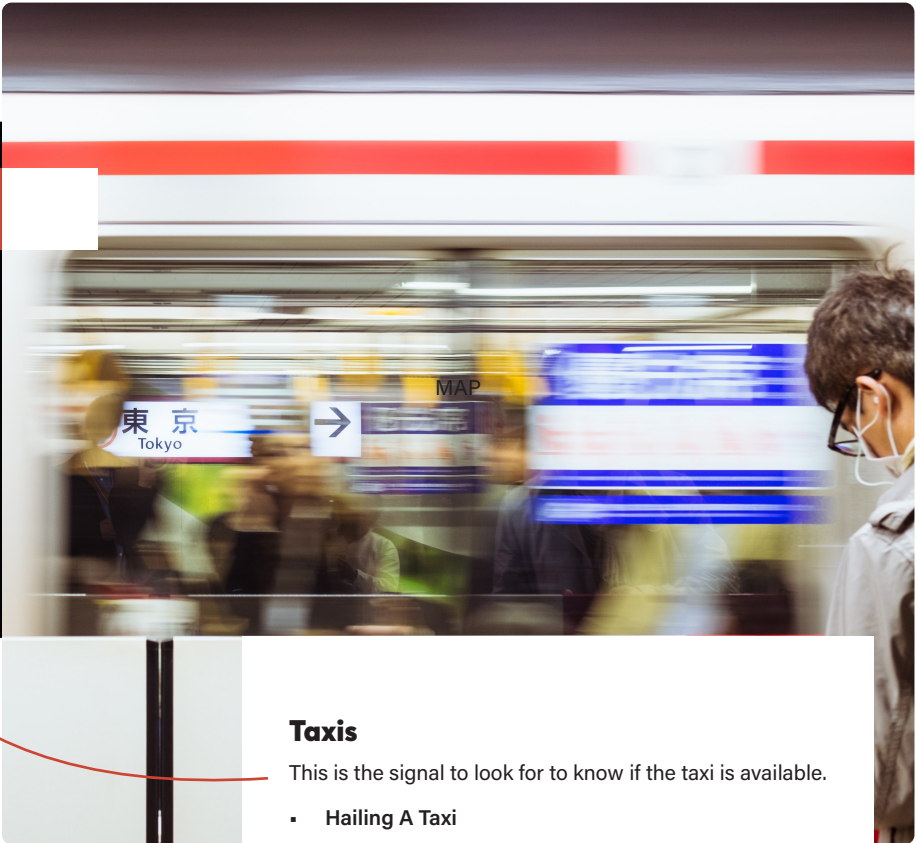
- Tsukiji Fish Market
- Omoide Yokocho (piss alley)
- Golden Gai

### Tabelog Restaurant Guide

- 3.5 stars is the standard for a really good review
- Click [here](#) for the Tabelog website
- Click [here](#) for the English Tabelog site.



空車



## Chapter 6

### Transportation

#### Train Rules

- Avoid using the train during rush hour (before 10am and after 4pm).
- While on the train take your backpack off and place it at your feet.
- Don't eat food on the train.
- Give your seat up to pregnant women and people with disabilities.
- **Sumimasen** = Excuse me  
Say this to squeeze through the crowd and signal to people you are trying to get off the train

#### Buses

- Most buses operating in the city cost 210 JPY for adults and 110 JPY for children.
- You can use your transportation card for payment.

#### Taxis

This is the signal to look for to know if the taxi is available.

- **Hailing A Taxi**
  - Step to the edge of the street
  - Look intently at the driver
  - Wave/raise your hand and/or shout "Taxi!"
  - **Remember:** The driver controls the door, no need to open it yourself.
- Have your destination plugged into Google Maps and show the driver, scroll until you see "Chome".
- Keep cash on hand for payment, although, more taxis are accepting credit cards and transportation cards.
- **Ride-Hailing Apps**
  - Japan Taxi
  - Uber
  - Line

#### Bikes

- Try to avoid sidewalks
- Park your bike at an official parking lot or out of the way since authorities are fairly strict on illegally parked bikes.



# Chapter 7

## Customs and Etiquette



### Religious Sites

- Avoid clothing with rips/tears
- Bring a t-shirt to throw over a tank top
- Wear a pair of matching, hole-free socks.

### Using Your Phone

- Don't talk on the phone on public transportation.
- Keep your phone on silent or vibrate.
- Avoid heavy use while walking the streets.

### Things to Consider

- Try your best to cover tattoos, as you may be refused entry in some public places (bathhouse, pools, temples and shrines).
- Showing cleavage is considered taboo in Japan.

### Social Interactions

- Bowing is used for greetings, goodbyes, and casual apologies.
- Feel free to bring business cards
  - Used as a token of respect when meeting someone
  - Give/receive business cards with two hands

### Public & Private Spaces

- When entering someone's home REMOVE YOUR SHOES.
- If you see shoes at an entrance, take yours off too.
- Stand single-file on escalators. Make way for the "fast-lane".

**Note:** While 'taboos' can be helpful to keep in mind, remember that there are no explicit rules and so you should feel free to decide to dress however you feel like doing so.

## Chapter 7

### Customs and Etiquette



#### Meal Etiquette

- **Street Food**
  - Don't walk and eat.
  - Complete your beverage or snack where you bought it.
- **Restaurants**
  - Use the towel they provide for your hands. Disposable towels can be used at the beginning and end of your meal.
  - Pour the soy sauce into the intended dish rather than onto the main meal plate. Then dip the individual bites into the soy sauce.
  - Many meals come with a bowl/cup of miso. Stir with chopsticks and if you weren't provided with a spoon, it's totally acceptable to drink it!
  - If eating noodle soup, SLURP!
  - When eating rice, feel free to bring the bowl toward, or hover over it to avoid spillage.
  - When finished, place your chopsticks, next to each other, across your bowl.
  - Do not tip! Show your appreciation by saying "Arigatou gozaimasu" (Adi-Gato-Go-Zai-Mahs) meaning "thank you", along with a slight bow.



#### Chopsticks

- Don't stab your chopsticks into the rice.
- Don't rub your chopsticks together.
- Don't hover communal dishes.
- When setting your chopsticks down, use the holder. For disposable chopsticks, use the wrapper they were originally in.
- Don't point with your chopsticks (try to avoid holding them while talking).



# Chapter 8

## Drinks



### Coffee

- Types of Coffee
  - Hand-drip
  - Vending machine
  - Cold brew
- Favorite cafes
  - Onibus Coffee Nakameguro
  - About Life Coffee Brewers
  - Switch Coffee
  - The Roastery by Nozy Coffee
  - Cafe de L'ambre
  - Glitch Coffee & Roasters

### Sake

- *Nihon-shu* = "Japanese alcohol"
- Sake is a sipping drink

### Japanese Whiskey

- *Mizuwari* = Whiskey + water
- *Oyuwari* = Whiskey + hot water
- *Haiboru* = Whiskey + soda

### Tea

Green tea can be ordered at meals by simply saying "hot tea"

- Types of Tea
  - *Sencha* = Most common
  - *Bancha* = Lower grade
  - *Matcha* = Highest grade

# Chapter 9

## Tokyo Night Life & Entertainment

### Customs

- Wear your nicest socks
- Avoid the PDA
- Keep your passport on you
- No need to tip your bartender

### Izakaya

A restaurant bar-hybrid with great drink specials and open very late.

### Shinjuku's Nichome area

Is Tokyo's LGBTQ+ nightlife district.

### Live Music

- Jazz
- Clubs
  - Many clubs are equipped with lockers immediately past security.
  - Clubs open around 11pm or midnight. They don't get packed until 2am to 3am and stay open until 6am to 7am.

### Sumo

- Tournaments are all day events
- Many spectators arrive around 2pm or 3pm.
- The final, most exciting, bouts of the day (featuring the yokozuna) finish around 6pm.
- Tickets can be bought online 5 weeks in advance.
- Tickets can be bought [here](#).



### Plays

- Kabuki
  - Traditional Japanese theatre
  - Kabukiza is the main Kabuki theatre in Tokyo
  - If you buy a single act ticket you need to pay in cash (\$5 to \$25)
  - The show is in Japanese, but a translator device can be rented (500 JPY and 1000 JPY)

### Karaoke

- Don't bring your own drinks



# Chapter 10

## Shrines & Tea Ceremonies



### Religion in Japan

- **Shinto**
  - Synonymous with Japanese history and culture
  - No centralized god or set of commandments
  - The place of Shinto worship is called a shrine.
  - Shrines can be identified by seeing a Torii gate.
- **Buddhism**
  - Differs from Shintoism because it introduces theology of eternal life.
  - Buddhist sacred spaces are called temples.

Many Japanese practice both Shintoism and Buddhism.

### How to do Shrines and Temples

- **Shrines**
  - Once you cross the torii gate you are on sacred territory
- **Cleansing**
  - Take a cup of water with your right hand
  - Cleanse your left hand, then your right hand
  - Cup your left hand and pour water into it
  - Bring the water from the left into your mouth and spit it out in the designated area below you (NOT BACK INTO THE BASIN)
  - Pour the water back onto the hand with both hands
- It is custom to do a subtle bow when entering the main shrine complex
- **Making An Offering**
  - Get a lucky 50 yen coin (has a hole in the middle)
  - Throw into the coin box
  - Bow twice
  - Clap twice
  - Pray
  - Bow again when finished praying
- **Temples**
  - No need to clap at offering area
  - You can purchase incense and waft them toward you for good luck
  - *O-mikuji* - random fortunes written on strips of paper
- **Favorite Tokyo Shrines**
  - Meiji Jingu
  - Hie Shrine
  - Nezu Shrine
  - Yasukuni Shrine
- **Favorite Tokyo Temples**
  - Sensoji Temple
  - Gotokuji Temple

## What is a Tea Ceremony

- Tea cultivation was brought over from China and then Japanese made it their own by elevating the practice in beautiful ways.
- Grew tea leaves in the shade, making them grow slower, more potent and green.
- Then, pick the prime leaves, dry them, grind them into a fine powder called matcha.
- Fused with Zen Buddhism being prepared in ceremonial ways, soon being adopted by nobles and elites.
- Tea ceremonies began fusing with other Japanese art forms like, pottery, garden design, calligraphy, and flower arranging.



## How to do a Tea Ceremony

- Can cost between \$25 to \$200 USD depending on how fancy you want to get.
- Click [here](#) for Airbnb Experiences' Tokyo tea ceremonies
- Click [here](#) for a reputable, elegant tea ceremony at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel
- **The Ceremony**
  - Everything in the room is chosen with intention; take time to appreciate it all.
  - 4 principles of the Japanese way of tea
    - Harmony
    - Respect
    - Tranquility
    - Purity
- The ceremony is performed on a traditional Japanese tatami mat
- Wear socks and long pants if possible
- When the tea master has finished preparing the tea
  - Lift the bowl with your right hand
  - The, holding the tea bowl with both hands to show respect.
  - Rotate the "front" of the bowl away from the mouth clockwise to show respect
- Remember to remain quiet and sit upright during the ceremony





# Chapter 11

## Robots and Automation

### Tokyo's Fun Robots

- Henn na Hotel has robots everywhere
- Everything Districts of Shinjuku you can find a robot show for about ¥ 8000
- Pepper can be found in the Softbank shops in Ginza
- Asimo in the Honda Welcome Building
- National Museum of Science and Innovation
- The Unicorn Gundam

### Automated Food

- **Conveyor belt sushi**
  - Type in kaitenzushi to find locations near you
  - Kura sushi is where we went in North Tokyo
- **Vending machines**
  - Many only accept coins

# Chapter 12

## Shopping - Where to go?



### Tsukiji Outer Market

- A fish market that has grown significantly beyond fish.
- Has fresh produce, street food, souvenirs and more.
- A great location for kitchenware and Japanese knives.

### Odaiba

- A cross of Las Vegas and an amusement park.
- Situated outside the city, along the water. Can easily be spotted by its iconic ferris wheel.
- A collection of themed malls, everything from 18th century Rome to beach themed.
- Home of the famous Gundam statue.

### Kitchen Land

- A long row of streets lined with all things kitchen.
- Great spot to find handmade coffee set-ups or sake collections.

**Tip:** While at Kitchen Land, stop by Kuramae. Kuramae is a small area with beautiful coffee shops, a few handmade stores, and most notably a stationary shop where you can custom make every detail of a notebook.



### Ginza

- This is where you can find every major fashion brand and the window displays are stunning.
- Has a 9-story stationery store that is every bit of wonderful as it sounds.

**Tip:** On weekend afternoons the main road, Chuo Dori is closed to traffic and turned into a large pedestrian only area where you can enjoy the hustle and bustle of the many determined shoppers.

### Shibuya

- Full of nonstop crowds of hip teens and stores for anything and everything.
- While it is loud and overwhelming, but it's iconic and an absolute must see.

### Harajuku

- The center of Kawaii culture.
- Full of trendy and minimalist boutiques.

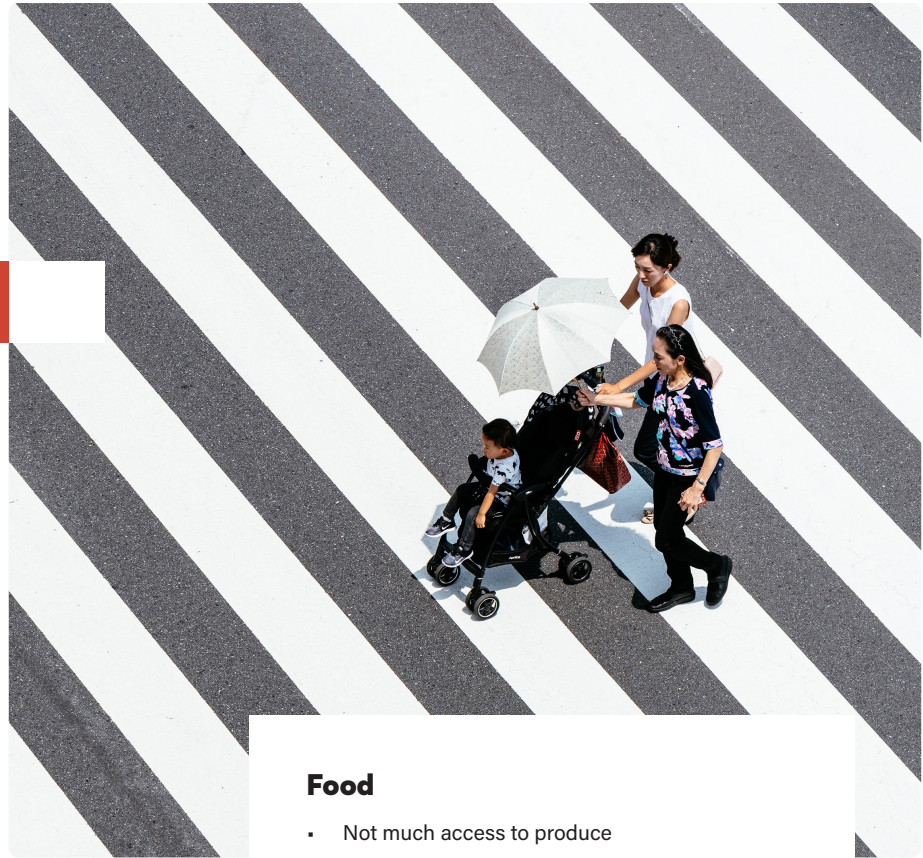
### Naka Meguro

- Packed with many darling boutiques and second-hand shops full of old Japanese treasures.
- A great place for a quiet stroll and an escape from the big chains.



# Chapter 13

## Tokyo With Kids



### Transportation

- Trains are the best way to get around the city
- **Tips for trains**
  - Use the handicap/stroller entry if you have one
  - Kids 6 and under travel free
  - 2 children for free per 1 adult
  - Look for an elevator (maybe take a bit of walking)
  - Be careful if using escalators
  - There are priority train cars for strollers (look for signs on the ground)
  - Your children may really enjoy being in the front of the car
- **Taxis**
  - More expensive than trains
  - Look for larger taxis if you have a stroller
- **Walking**
  - Tokyo is very pedestrian friendly

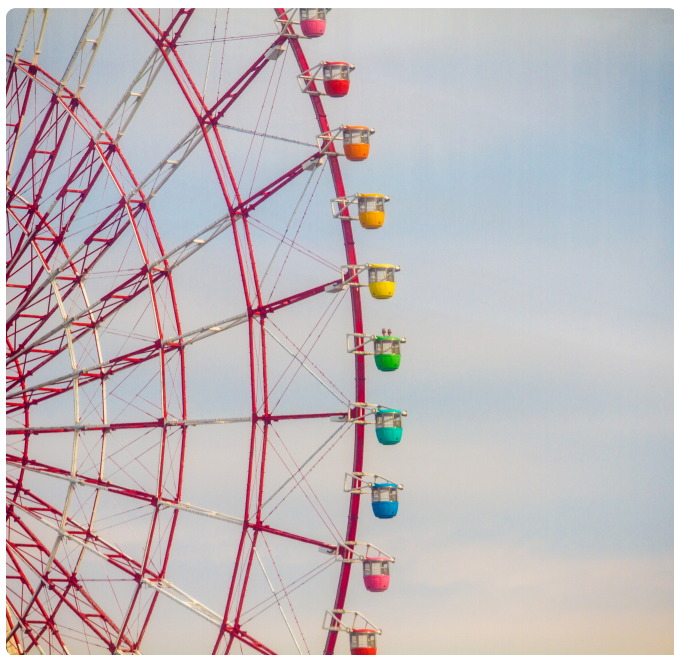
### Food

- Not much access to produce
- **Convenience Stores**
  - A LOT of snack options
- **Department stores**
  - Great option for pastries, smoothies, or bento boxes
- **Restaurants**
  - Many restaurants that accomodate children
  - Try and find a place to spread out
- **Foods to Try**
  - UDON (Tell them to SLURP!)
  - Ramen
  - Miso and rice
  - Sushi
- **When in Doubt**
  - Chicken katsu (breaded and fried chicken)
  - Pan-fried dumplings
  - Bowl of plain rice
  - Fast food (You'll see many familiar options when all else fails).



## Supplies

- Everything you're used to seeing in stores will likely be available in Japan
- Don't rely on finding brand-specific or allergy-specific items
- Pharmacies or medium-sized grocery stores have many of the essentials you will need.



## Activities

- **Playgrounds**
  - Shinjuku Chuo Park
  - Shinagawa Children's Adventure Park
  - Sakura-zaka Park ("Robot Park")
  - Ueno Park
  - Meiji Jingu Gaien Nikoniko Park
- Karaoke
- **Conveyor belt sushi**
  - Kura Sushi
- Ueno Park
- **Museums**
  - Nations Museum of Nature and Science
- Dome City Amusement Park
- **Robots**
  - Arcades
  - Honda Welcome Center
  - Pepper in SoftBank, Ginza