



Tour Name

New York Times Journeys - Tokyo: Past, Present and Reused

Tour City

Tokyo

Tour Snapshot

Tokyo is the original metropolis. A frenzy of technology, history and humanity that can be tricky to navigate by yourself. Join us on a specially curated tour in partnership with *The New York Times* and discover the highlights and hidden quirks of Japan's neon-lit capital. See the 'Ghost Station,' meet a robot and find out all about the Japanese craft beer boom!

Highlights

- Find out how this megacity faces the constant challenge of lack of space, how it adapts and how it finds new, innovative uses for old buildings
- Explore a historic train station, known as the Ghost Station, and admire its old history preserved amid a modern regeneration project
- Learn how this shrinking society is repurposing former schools and other empty spaces into arts venues and meeting places that benefit the community
- Finish your day like a local with happy hour under the train tracks in a typical *izakaya* (Japanese pub)

New York Times Exclusives:

- *Behind-the-Scenes Access*: Question mankind's uncertain future as you interact with a humanoid robot called Pepper
- *Hands-on Element*: Take an anime-style group picture in a quirky photo booth for a fun souvenir.
- *Local Interactions*: Meet and talk with several shopkeepers, including the owner of a typical Japanese pub who runs his business under the train tracks and has seen the city change as it prepares for the 2020 Olympics.

Inclusions: Local English-speaking guide, fare for public transportation (metro or train) between Akihabara and Yurakucho, beer tasting set (3 types) and local snacks (seasonal such as seafood, chicken, pickles, nuts with Japanese seasoning), happy hour at Matsusou Izakaya (assorted food and drink), group photo.

Exclusions: Items of personal nature, additional food or drink, tips/gratuities for your guide.

Schedule details

- Duration: 4 hours
- Meeting point:
JR Akihabara Station (train station), Electric Town Exit, in front of the Ticket Office/Travel Service Center (Midori no Madoguchi).
[View on Google Maps.](#)
- {label-what3words-location}
- Starting time: 3.30 PM
- Ending point:
Matsusou Izakaya, which is within walking distance to several train/subway stations.

Full Itinerary

Your tour begins in Tokyo's electronics heartland, known as Electric Town, at the J.R. Akihabara railway station. We'll stroll through the frenetic, neon-lit streets to nearby Manseibashi Station, where we will stop to admire and discuss how the city has cleverly repurposed many of its old buildings.

Built in 1912, the original station was destroyed by an earthquake in 1923, leaving only its platform and some stairs, which remain today. The rebuilt station was then closed in 1943 and has been spookily nicknamed “the Ghost Station.”

Re-generation occurred in 2013 after the station was transformed into a collection of trendy boutiques and restaurants known as mAACH ecute Kanda Manseibashi, which the trains still regularly pass through, giving this shopping mall a quirky edge!

Next, we will head towards the Hitachino Brewing Lab to find out more about the Japanese craft beer boom. This historic company has been making sake since the early 19th century, and started making beer in 1994. We will taste some of the 10 craft beers that are available on tap, paired with some delicious local snacks, and chat to the brewery staff about how their beer is made.

A walk through the larger-than-life Akihabara neighbourhood follows. The buildings here are a riot of color, proudly displaying anime images almost everywhere you go! Stop to take a group picture inside a quirky photo booth that will make you look like an anime character yourself, with big eyes and perfect skin. We'll arrive at 2K540 Aki-Oka Artisan, an urban space under the train tracks that used to be a car park but is now home to 50 shops and cafes. The retail offering focuses on artisan products from across the country, so it's a great place to peruse for meaningful souvenirs to take home. We will stop at Nocra, renowned for its lifelike wooden toys from the north of Japan. The business shrewdly uses the wooden scraps left over from furniture to avoid waste and cut costs. We will spend time chatting to the shop manager about their products, the unusual space and their admirable aim not to waste *anything*.

Just around the corner, our next stop awaits. 3331 Arts Chiyoda used to be a junior high school but due to a drop in Japan's youth population, it's been transformed into an arts centre featuring galleries, creative space, a cafe, shops and a rooftop organic garden. Rather charmingly, its name is a numeric rendering of a traditional hand clap used to share happiness and ease stress. Here we will learn how Japan is coping with its dwindling population.

Being a creative space, it should come as no surprise that 3331 Arts Chiyoda is also home to Aldebaran Atelier Akihabara with Softbank, a robot software development company. Its most famous robot, Pepper, has been painstakingly designed to support everyday people conduct everyday tasks. Remarkably (or creepily, depending on your point of view), Pepper has the ability to detect human emotions and react to them. We will spend some time with Pepper, learn about the processes that go into developing these high-tech robots and interact with them in English.

A short subway ride will take us into the heart of Tokyo, where we will pass by the Imperial Palace. The emperor and empress of Japan reside behind the pretty moats that surround it, with 300 police officers and more than a thousand staff members on hand to support them! Godzilla is next on our Tokyo agenda, no doubt the unspoken icon of the city for nearly a century. Tokyo is fascinated by Godzilla and isn't shy about celebrating his notoriety, with statues and street art dedicated to him all over the city. We will check out the latest Godzilla statue to spring up; this 2018 statue, modelled on a 2016 movie, replaced a 1995 version (like we said, Godzilla is much loved in Tokyo!).

Finally, after a busy afternoon of sightseeing, we will settle in at Matsuso, a typical *izakaya* (a kind of Japanese pub). Like many *izakaya*, it's nestled under the train tracks, allowing commuters to stop in for a quick drink or a snack on their way home from

work. We will sit down with the bar owner, who previously worked in real estate, to chat about his business and what makes this location under the train tracks so special to the locals.

New York Times Reading List:

- [In Tokyo, Stories on Their Wrists](#)
- [An Unassuming Tokyo Enclave Is Having Its Moment](#)
- [A Japanese Street Wear Designer Wins LVMH's Prize for Emerging Talent](#)
- [From Hiroshima to Tule Lake, Films About Japan and America](#)
- [In Rural Japan, Lifting a Shrine and Building a Friendship](#)
- [In Pursuit of Cartoonish Perfection in a Japanese Rice Bowl](#)
- [Review: 'Ascent' of Mount Fuji, Guided by Over 4,000 Images](#)

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Additional information

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Your Trip: For your New York Times Journeys/Urban Adventure you will be in a small group of a maximum of 8 people.

Confirmation of booking: If you have your voucher, your booking is confirmed. We'll see you at the start point. Get in touch if you have any concerns or require more information via the email address or phone number (business hours only) on your voucher.

Child Policy: Travellers under 12 years of age are not permitted to join this tour.

Dietary Notes

We can accommodate vegetarians and other dietary restrictions. Please notify us in advance if you have any dietary requests.

You can do so in the 'Additional information' box at checkout, or by emailing us at info@tokyourbanadventures.com.

Local contact

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