



Stopover TOKYO

Take a food tour around Japan's capital and discover super-fresh sushi, cocktails made with local passion fruit and octopus with taro and pumpkin

Words DANIELLE DEMETRIOU

1 Stylish sushi There are few more high-quality settings in which to eat sushi in Tokyo than family-run **Kyubey** in Ginza. This four-storey restaurant has an array of traditional spaces, from tatami rooms to counters. A highlight is the ground-floor counter where chefs rustle up haiku-inspiringly perfect sushi. Try the meltingly soft seared chutoro. kyubey.jp

2 Pig out It's all about tonkatsu – breaded pork cutlets – at **Maisen**. Housed in a converted public bathhouse on a quiet backstreet near fashionable Omotesando boulevard, the signature pork and delicious in-house sauce have made this place a cult favourite – as reflected in the queues. Buy a bottle of the restaurant's rich, sweet brown sauce to take home with you. mai-sen.com

3 Go fishing With its endless rows of maritime creatures and early morning tuna auction, atmospheric **Tsukiji fish market** is not only the world's biggest seafood wholesale market but also a must-visit. The market is (controversially) moving to a new location in November, so try to

sneak in a final pre-dawn visit (and deliciously fresh sushi breakfast) before it shifts further out of town. tsukiji-market.or.jp

4 Stellar ramen It might have a nondescript façade and a nine-seat counter but **Tsuta** is Japan's first Michelin-starred ramen outlet. Chef Yuki Onishi creates rich, warm and delicately balanced shoyu soba, flavoured with black truffle oil, plus rock salt shio soba. The downside? Diners must queue before 9am for a deposit ticket – before queuing again at a designated lunchtime slot. For ramen pilgrims, however, it's worth it. facebook.com/jsn.tsuta

5 Crafted cocktails For a taste of Japan's passion for precision, craftsmanship and innovation in a single glass, head to **Gen Yamamoto**. At this small bar in Azabu-Juban the cocktail tasting menu is served at an oak counter and is inspired by the seasons using ingredients such as Okinawan passion fruit, Hokkaidan grapes or sweet potato shochu from Kagoshima. genyamamoto.jp

6 Contemporary kaiseki For a contemporary take on Kyoto's traditional kaiseki banquet cuisine, head to the Aoyama or Ginza branches of **Maru**. Both restaurants excel at serving exquisitely prepared seasonal Japanese food with a contemporary twist. The set menus change monthly, with dishes ranging from simmered octopus, taro and pumpkin, to deep-fried pike eel with aubergine and ginger soy sauce, to sashimi and delicious clay pot-cooked rice. maru-mayfont.jp

7 Hot stock Forget a latte to go. For the ultimate Japanese takeaway experience, head to **Nihonbashi Dashi Bar** for a cup of dashi – the soup stock made from dried fish flakes or seaweed, which forms the basis of most Japanese dishes. The bar offers a range of dashi including one made with katsubushi dried fish flakes from Ninben, a 400-year-old local company. ninben.jp

8 Supermarket sweep Colourful, bustling and invariably appetite-inducing, Japan's department store basement food halls – or depachika – are a must-visit. From endless rows of exquisitely crafted traditional sweets to the meticulously courteous staff, they are perfect for souvenir shopping (and snacking). **Food Sake Tokyo** offers insider culinary tours across Tokyo, including visits to depachika. foodsaketokyo.com

9 Noodle know-how Enrol at **Tsukiji Soba Academy** and learn how to make traditional Japanese buckwheat soba noodles from scratch. In half-day classes, chef Akira Inouye guides beginners through the world of Japanese noodle-making – from dough temperatures to the exact width of each noodle – before everyone sits down to eat the results. soba.specialist.co.jp

10 Bean scene It's all about coffee in 21st-century Tokyo, a city fully embracing the so-called third wave artisanal coffee boom. One local spot that has acquired near cult-like status is **Bear Pond Espresso**, a café in the bohemian Shimokitazawa district. Here, the owner Katsuyuki Tanaka whips up the city's tastiest espressos. bear-pond.com

HOW TO DO IT

Return flights from London to Tokyo start from £526 (ana.co.jp). Double rooms at Park Hotel Tokyo start from around £145, room-only (en.parkhoteltokyo.com).

More info: seejapan.co.uk

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