



Let the Games Begin!

Tokyo rises to the challenge of a repeat Olympic performance. BY ELYSE GLICKMAN

ICONIC
INTERSECTION:
*Shibuya Crossing (top),
and artist's renderings of
Shibuya Stream, a new
tower block in the Shibuya
Station South area*

PHOTOS: © JNTO

WITH THE 2020 SUMMER OLYMPICS, Tokyo joins an elite group of cities that played host to the Games multiple times. The IOCC's selection of Japan's capital further underscores it as one of the world's most dynamic cities.

Tokyo made a big splash during the 1964 Summer Olympics, sealing its global reputation as the city of the future. The 2020

planners and policymakers, therefore, knew they had an enormous challenge in finding fresh ways to reintroduce Tokyo to the world. Numerous tech bells and whistles brought forth by Fortune 500 sponsors will enhance how spectators experience the games. Panasonic's contributions, for example, include a translation device handling up to 10 spoken

COMING AND GOING

U.S. citizens must have a valid passport and an onward/return ticket for tourist or business visa-free stays of up to 90 days. Passports must be valid for the duration of your stay in Japan.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Japanese



MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Tokyo Central Railway Station in Chiyoda, near the Imperial Palace grounds and Ginza commercial district

PHOTO : © RICHIE CHAN | DREAMSTIME.COM

LODGING

CONRAD TOKYO

Here's the perfect fusion of business and pleasure with views of Tokyo Bay, Hamarikyu Garden and commanding skyscrapers. Expect exceptional service, museum-caliber art and sublime cuisine (especially Kazuhana) and cocktails.

1 Chome-9-1 Higashi-shin-bashi, Minato
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HOSHINOYA HOTEL TOKYO

This luxury *ryokan* is the ultimate urban retreat. Change into a *yukata* and sip artisanal tea, enjoy a Japanese classical music performance or poetry reading, or unwind in the rooftop *onsen* mineral baths.

1 Chome-9-1 Otemachi, Chiyoda
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SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, TOKYO

The Tokyo Central Station-adjacent property combines indulgence with convenience, with its exceptionally appointed executive lounge and suites providing everything you need during a business or leisure stay, down to the softest pajamas.

Marunouchi Trust Tower Main, 1-8-3 Marunouchi, Chiyoda
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languages and a smartphone app enabling foreign visitors to instantly scan and translate signs. There's also a big buzz surrounding driverless Lexus and Toyota taxis.

On the other hand, Tokyo follows South Korea's performance on the world stage with the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and precedes Beijing's next outing as a repeat Olympic city in 2022. Perhaps for these reasons, the city and various developers are emphasizing historic preservation even as projects to improve infrastructure and accessibility apply a city-of-the-future mindset. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization, this Olympian undertaking exemplifies Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's goal to increase the annual number of incoming foreign tourists to 40 million by 2020 and 60 million by 2030.

The reworking of the concrete-based National Stadium, used for the 1964 Olympics' opening and closing ceremonies, embodies this approach. The old structure enters the 21st century with the implementation of a nature-focused design by noted Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, employing Japanese lumber. It serves as an anchor point of a Heritage Zone surrounding the Imperial Palace that includes upgraded and updated venues from the earlier games. The 10 new facilities, meanwhile, go up in the Tokyo Bay Zone on the reclaimed land of Odaiba, including the swimming competitions venue.

The New Shinagawa Station, launching 2020, is one of the crown jewels of the city's infrastructure improvements. According to *The Japan Times*, the first major addition to the Yamanote train loop since 1971 is intended to not only

improve crowd flow but also make exploring Tokyo and Japan more user-friendly years beyond the games. It dovetails into transforming the Shinagawa neighborhood and will provide a quick connection to Metro Sengakuji Station and access to Narita and Haneda airports by 2027.

Some of the most visible developments will reside in Shibuya, which adjoins Yoyogi Park, site of the new Olympic Stadium. The mega makeover includes more than 786,000 square feet of new office space around Shibuya Station and nearly 2.8 million square feet of space throughout the district. One of the most important revitalizations is Shibuya Station, adding new elevators and escalators to link the different levels and passageways, facilitating smoother transfers between commuter lines.

Other multipurpose structures in Shibuya will alter one of the world's most photographed neighborhoods. The 750-foot-tall Shibuya Scramble Square, opening 2019, encompasses expansive rooftop space and one of Japan's largest observation decks. Panoramic views include the iconic intersection as well as the Meiji Shrine, the Shinjuku skyline to the north, the Roppongi district to the east and (on clear days) Mount Fuji to the west. Shibuya Stream, arriving in 2018, fuses nature with practicality with 20 open-concept office floors, a fourth-floor atrium with compact workstations, and a fifth-floor lobby with an arched ceiling reminiscent of the wave-shaped patterns of the former roof of the Tōyoko Line's terminal. Its 6,500-foot, tree-lined walkway will abut the banks of the newly exposed, free-flowing Shibuya River.

DEBUT DESIGNS: *Ginza Six* (top), and *Trunk Hotel* (bottom)

PHOTOS : © MORI BUILDING CO.,
© TRUNK HOTEL, TOKYO

INFO TO GO

Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport both serve Tokyo. Haneda primarily serviced internal flights within Japan until its international terminal opened in 2010. Today, travelers refer to Haneda as the city's downtown airport, especially as a monorail (about \$4.50), commuter trains (about \$2.65–3.90) and airport limos (about \$5.30) connect it to the Central Business District.

The most popular way to get to and from Narita is the Narita Express, or NEX (about \$28), which whisks passengers to Tokyo Central Station in about an hour. Numerous improvements to Narita in advance of the 2020 Olympics include restrooms retrofitted with upscale interior design and functionality, such as warm water bidets and temporary storage for suitcases.



Developments in Ginza involve the use of repurposed buildings and designs paying homage to past architectural styles defining Tokyo retail. Early players include Ginza Place (opened fall 2016), inspired by the 1932 landmark Neo Renaissance-style Wako department store building directly across the street; and Ginza Six (G6), debuted in spring 2017 at the location of the former Matsuzakaya department store. G6's third basement floor serves as the new home of the Kanze School of Noh, a musical theater group tracing its history back nearly 700 years. The project transplanted its historic stage, plank by plank, to pair with state-of-the-art sound and lighting, improved handicapped access and a multilingual interpretation system.

Between 2018 and 2020, the former Sony building will transform into Ginza Sony Park, where visitors will enjoy multisensory *kando* experiences delivered by technological gadgets and machines devised by Sony and others. Another global Japanese brand expanding beyond retail is MUJI,



Japan's minimalist lifestyle and apparel store. When the MUJI Hotel in Ginza opens in spring 2019, visitors can draw inspiration from the brand's unique design element in the hotel on the top four floors, as well as its expansive home retail concept covering the bottom six and three basement floors.

Quirky boutique hotels opening or soon to open include the Wired Hotel Asakusa in the historic Taito ward; the 15-guestroom Trunk Hotel in Shibuya, distinguished by expanses of recycled woods, tiered balconies, aromatic herb gardens and organic made-in-Japan bathroom toiletries; and the Tokyo Skytree, designed by Tokyo Olympic stadium architect Kengo Kuma, integrating industrial materials with natural wood.

Though it may be hard to predict how the 2020 Olympic Games will play out, it looks certain improvements and innovations coming to Tokyo will remain winners with business and leisure travelers in the years to come.

CHECKING IN WITH ANNE KYLE

Founder, Arigato Tours

Why is a Tokyo food tour an outstanding way for both business groups and family groups to get a better orientation of the city beyond the familiar places?

Visitors should not miss out on the best seasonal and regional food because of a language barrier, and doing a food tour with a local offers a great way to get to know the city. Perks include going beyond obvious tourist points to explore back alleys, meet fellow travelers and develop a deeper understanding of the food and culture.

How will the upcoming Olympics alter the local food scene? Do you have concerns about games-related developments negatively affecting local dining?

Japan is the Michelin capital of the world, boasting 226 Michelin-starred restaurants. As there is one restaurant for every 82 people in Tokyo, competition is high in terms of maintaining the quality of food and unparalleled service. I believe the Olympics will definitely boost local business confidence but will not have a negative impact on quality and service. On the other hand, regarding new development and the changing infrastructure, I am concerned some great eateries will be forced to move or close their doors if

they are in the path of development.

What new developments going up around town do you find particularly exciting?

Because Japan is a world leader in innovation and technology, the integration and use of robots to help visitors with language translation is amazing. Some world-leading companies such as Mitsubishi Electric are working on a system that will project large, free-floating holograms into the air. In addition to developing a translation device worn about the neck, Panasonic aims to create a water mist-based cooling system that does not leave marks on glasses, paper or make-up. Toyota has its eye on building a flying car in time to light the Olympic flame.

What are the best areas to visit to bring the various facets of Tokyo's character together?

Yurakucho is home to Gado Shita, a lively restaurant district built under the brick arches of the elevated train tracks. Step into the narrow streets of red lanterns and neon signs, so-called Yokocho alleys, where you can find yourself back in the 1970s. In such retro ambience of the Showa period, you'll see local *izakaya* restaurants, mostly frequented by locals. In Ginza, current trends meet the oldest traditions, from the Shiseido Gallery, the oldest gallery in Japan, to Tenkuni, the oldest tempura place in Ginza. It is also a haven for the newest fashion trends and architecture.

DINING

ASAKUSA IMAHAN

The century-old sukiyaki restaurant remains a favorite for executive gatherings with its attentive wait staff and the pure joy of cooking one's portions of Wagyu beef and vegetables to perfection.

3 Chome-1-12 Nishi-asakusa,
Taito
\$\$\$\$

TAPAS MOLECULAR BAR

Tapas may be a Spanish culinary art, but chefs here manage to transform it into a futuristic food-as-performance dining experience that captures the city's 21st-century soul.

Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo,
2-1-1 Nihonbashi Muromachi,
38F, Chuo
\$\$\$\$

TOKYO SHIBA TOFUYA-UKAI

This kaiseki dining experience epitomizes the city's seamless and delicious fusion of past and present. What feels like an imperial Edo dwelling was actually built from a former mid-century bowling alley.

4 Chome-4-13 Shiba-koen, Minato
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JUST THE FACTS

Time zone: GMT +9

Phone code: Country code: 81

City code: 3

Currency: Yen

Key industries: Electronics manufacturing; transport and communication industries; wholesalers; food and beverage establishments; retail, financial and insurance industries; publishing and printing industries

BENEATH THE TRACKS:

Restaurants in Yakitori Alley, Yurakucho, under the JR Yamanote Line

PHOTO: © ROLAND NAGY | DREAMSTIME.COM





SET IN STONE:
Bishamonten Buddhist
Temple (top left); stone
lanterns in Ueno Park,
Taito ward (top right); and
Asakura Choso Museum
(bottom)

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Whether on your
second or 22nd
visit, invest in a
Pasmo or SUICA
card. It not only
swiftly gets you in
and out of the
subway, it also works
in vending machines
(Boss canned coffee
is crazy good), buses
and some taxis.

DIVERSIONS

Taito, a village-y neighborhood just beyond Ueno Park, houses numerous tiny temples and the Asakura Choso Museum inside the family's former residence. Walk a bit farther and it opens out into the Yanaka District and its Ginza that retains its pre-World War II character, even with high-end boutiques and galleries.

Daikanyama, nestled in Shibuya, makes an ideal hangout for a relaxed Sunday morning. Take breakfast at Ivy Place (the fresh-baked breads and egg dishes stand out) and spend a few hours wandering Tsutaya Bookstore's three buildings. And don't forget Kagurazaka, another offshoot from Shibuya (aka Tokyo's French

Quarter), a food-focused neighborhood built around the Bishamonten Zenkokuji temple.

The in-town Tokyo craft mixology scene is an exciting work in progress, especially among the business networking set. Independent bars with imaginative menus include Bar Tram in Evisu and Iron Fairies in Ginza. Bar Benfiddich and Bar Mixology Laboratory play on the old-school Tokyo whiskey bars while tapping into contemporary trends such as infusions and indigenous ingredients. The eight-seat atelier of international award-winning bartender Gen Yamamoto blurs the lines between bartending and theater. Reservations are required for a four- (\$45) or six-course (\$60) menu.