

## EATING

### top picks

- **Inakaya** (p164) – A loud and joyful beer and BBQ spot – Japanese style of course!
- **Kyūbei** (p158) – Exquisite sushi served on rare pottery.
- **L'Osier** (p158) – Regarded by France-loving Tokyoites as one of the city's best.
- **New York Grill** (p169) – The views from this lofty Shinjuku restaurant are almost as good as the food.
- **Rakutei** (p163) – Tempura is regarded as a high art at this culinary temple.
- **Peter** (p156) – Foi gras meets fatty tuna at the Peninsula Hotel's celebrated dining room.
- **Canal Café** (p157) – Savour a slow cocktail at one of the city's few al fresco dining spots.
- **Daiwa Sushi** (p160) – This Tsujikiji institution will make you rethink sushi for breakfast.
- **China Room** (p164) – A Roppongi Hills affair all the way, this Chinese banquet-style restaurant is tops.
- **Coucagno** (p167) – Spot Shibuya shoppers from lofty heights at this landmark French restaurant.

What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/tokyo](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/tokyo)

Who could ever weary of moonlit nights and well-cooked rice?

*Traditional Japanese Proverb*

Tomes have been written about Japanese food, not least on the delights of noodles, the perils and pleasures of raw fish, and the health-inducing properties of everything from shiitake mushrooms and miso soup to pickled ginger and fresh wasabi. As visitors to Tokyo quickly discover, Japanese people are absolutely obsessed with food.

In Japan the simple act of eating permeates every walk of life, fills the airwaves and bookshelves, and figures largely in most conversations. Indeed, an invitation to have a meal with a Japanese person is better seen as an opportunity to commune over food. Breaking bread (or splitting rice) is an act of mutual celebration, a way of reinforcing group identities and welcoming outsiders into the fold.

Needless to say, the Japanese are voracious gourmands, and a highlight of any trip to Tokyo is its vast culinary landscape. From traditional Japanese staples such as sashimi and tempura, to more modern inventions such as *rāmen* (noodles) and *shabu-shabu* (sautéed beef), Japanese cuisine is as varied as it is simply delicious. See the Language chapter (p259) for more information.

## ETIQUETTE

If you're worried about putting your foot in it, relax – the Japanese don't expect you to know everything, and are unlikely to be offended as long as you follow the standards of politeness of your own country. Just follow the locals for things such as lifting soup bowls and slurping noodles.

Among the more important rules are those regarding chopsticks. Don't stick them upright in your rice – that's how rice is offered to the dead! Passing food from your chopsticks to someone else's is a similar no-no – that's how the bones of the dead are passed in Buddhist funeral rites.

When taking food from shared plates, avoid using the end of the chopsticks that's already been in your mouth – invert your chopsticks before reaching for that tasty morsel. When there are shared dishes, you will usually be given a *torizara* (small plate) to use as your own.

Before digging in, it's polite to say '*itadakimasu*' (literally 'I will receive'). At the end of the meal you should say '*gochisō-sama deshita*' (literally 'it was a feast'), a respectful way of saying that the meal was good. Even if you're just enjoying a cup of coffee or sampling some snacks at a shop, it's polite to use these expressions.

If you're out drinking, remember that you're expected to keep the drinks of your companions topped up – beer bottles in Japan

are typically large (at least 500mL) and the glasses small. Hold your glass with both hands while it's being filled, and don't fill your own glass; wait for someone to do this for you, and if you're done just leave your glass full. The Japanese equivalent of 'cheers' is *kampai!* Don't use the Mediterranean toast *chin chin* unless you want to induce peals of laughter. It translates to what boys have and girls don't!

The word for 'delicious' is *oishii* – if you only learn a handful of words in Japanese, make this one of them! If there's something you don't like, just leave it on your plate or in your bowl and don't make a big deal of it. If you're at a group dinner and have eaten enough, and the server brings more food, it's best just to accept it and leave it, rather than send it back.

If someone invites you to eat or drink with them, they will be paying. In any case, it's unusual for bills to be split. Generally, at the end of the meal something of a struggle ensues to see who gets the privilege of paying. If this happens, it is polite to at least make an effort to pay the bill, though it is extremely unlikely that your hosts will acquiesce. Exceptions are likely among younger people or co-workers, for example, out for lunch together.

If you're arriving at someone's home, it is polite to bring a gift. See p139 for suggestions. And if you have been someone's guest, be sure to thank them upon leaving. Following up with a thank you note is an excellent touch.

## WHAT TO EAT & WHERE

### Sushi & Sashimi

The tonnes of fish that pass through the fish market in Tsukiji (for more information see p64) are the telltale signs of what locals are eating. Almost every Japanese meal you eat will probably include something fishy, and at times the sheer variety of seafood available in Tokyo can be overwhelming.

With that said, the first thing most visitors in Tokyo are intent on eating is either sushi (すし or 寿司) or sashimi (刺身). Sushi is raw fish served with sweetened, vinegared rice while sashimi is slices of raw fish served with soy sauce for dipping.

There are two main types of sushi: *nigiri-zushi* (握りずし; a small slice of fish served on a small pillow of rice) and *maki-zushi* (巻き寿司; served in a seaweed roll). Lesser-known varieties include *chirashi-zushi* (ちらし寿司; a layer of rice covered in strips of fish, vegetables and julienned egg), *oshi-zushi* (押し寿司; fish pressed in a mould over rice) and *inari-zushi* (いなり寿司; rice in a pocket of sweet, fried tofu). *Nigiri-zushi* and *maki-zushi* usually contain a bit of wasabi (わさび; hot green horseradish).

Sushi shops run the gamut from cheap and cheerful *kaiten-zushi* (回転寿司; conveyor-belt parlours) and stand-up eateries to more expensive and highly refined bars and restaurants. Generally speaking, quality is equated to price, though it's not necessary to eat at the best of the best to indulge in great sushi. With Tsukiji fish market right around the corner, chances are that everything you taste will be significantly fresher than the sushi you eat back home.

### SUSHI PRIMER

So, you've made it to the sushi restaurant, but now you're feeling a bit dumbfounded about what to do next. Here's a quick crash course to help you get started.

If you're seated at the sushi counter, you can simply point at what you want; most of the selections are visible in a refrigerated glass case between you and the *itamae* (sushi chef). One portion (*ichi-nin mae*) usually means two pieces of sushi. If ordering à la carte feels like a chore, you can order a *mori-awase* (assortment, generally six or seven pieces); prices vary according to the type of fish used.

Unless the sushi is already dressed with a sauce, you'll probably want to dip it in *shōyu* (soy sauce) before popping it into your mouth. Pour just a little soy sauce at a time from the bottle on the counter into the small saucer provided (don't fill the saucer), and if there is a side of wasabi, add a little at a time – it can be very hot! Remember, the soy sauce is used to flavour the fish and not the rice, so don't dip your sushi rice-side down (plus, the rice tends to fall apart in the soy sauce).

If you're not good at using chopsticks, don't worry, sushi is one of the few foods in Japan that it is perfectly acceptable to eat with your hands. Slices of *gari* (pickled ginger) are served to help refresh the palate. The beverage of choice with sushi is beer or sake, with a cup of cloudy green tea at the end of the meal.

## Noodles

It's hard to imagine how Tokyo could function without noodles. From traditional Japanese staples such as *soba* (buckwheat noodles) and *udon*, to that much beloved Chinese import that is *rāmen*, Tokyoites slurp down an impressive amount of noodles in their daily lives.

*Soba* are thin, brownish buckwheat-based noodles, while *udon* are thick, white wheat noodles. *Soba* is more closely associated with the Kantō region, which includes Tokyo, while *udon* are more reminiscent of Kansai (around Osaka). With that said, the vast majority of restaurants throughout the country serve both.

When hot, both varieties are served in a large bowl of light, bonito-flavoured broth. You can also order them served cold and piled on a bamboo mat; very refreshing in warm weather. Note that although it's highly rude in the West, it is customary to slurp your noodles, both to cool them (when hot) and to enhance the flavour.

The most popular type of cold noodles is *zaru soba*, topped with slivers of dried *nori* (海苔; seaweed). They come with a cup of cool broth and small plate of wasabi and sliced spring onions – stir these into the cup of broth and eat the noodles by dipping them in this mixture. Do not pour the broth over the noodles – it creates a huge mess! At the end of your meal, the server may give you some of the hot water used for boiling the noodles to mix with the leftover broth, which you drink like tea.

*Rāmen* originated in China, but its popularity in Japan is epic. Your basic *rāmen* is a big bowl of noodles in broth, served with toppings

## THE HISTORY OF RĀMEN

The history and lore behind nature's most perfect food is worthy of textbooks.

Originating in China, scholars debate exactly when this hardest of noodles was first introduced to Japan. Although it may have crossed over at several times in the history of the nation, the first documented record of *rāmen*-eating was in the late 17th century by the shōgun of the Tokugawa.

Of course, *rāmen* was not introduced to the Japanese masses until the Meiji era when the country first opened its doors to foreign interests. For most of Japan's history, the diet consisted simply of steamed rice, vegetables and seafood, which partly explains why the country's people suddenly became incessant gourmands in the late 19th century.

During the Meiji era, American and European cuisine became the height of fashion, which sparked a large cattle- and pork-rearing industry in Japan. However, the real culinary revolution of the late 19th century was taking place in the Chinatowns of Kōbe and Yokohama, where Chinese immigrants opened up food stalls in the busy ports. Here, along with Chinese-style dumplings, Japanese commoners tasted their first bowls of hot, steaming *rāmen*.

WWII put something of a damper on the Japanese obsession with eating gourmet, though the food industry was quick to bounce back. In the 1950s cheap US flour imports flooded the Japanese market, while ex-soldiers who had previously been in China proceeded to set up Chinese restaurants across the country. In a few short years *rāmen* shops took Japan by storm, becoming something of a neighbourhood landmark.

Today, *rāmen* shops are found throughout the country, and although their nutritional value is somewhat debated, warming up with a bowl of *rāmen* remains the great social equaliser in Japan.

such as sliced pork, bean sprouts and leeks, though you can expect to see anything from Hokkaidō butter corn and fresh seafood to wontons and Chinese vegetables. Although you may be a loyal *rāmen* devotee in your own country, we can assure you that instant noodles in the West are ill-preparation for the deliciousness that is real *rāmen*.

As the bread and butter of most Japanese, a large number of noodle shops in Tokyo are simple *tachigui* (立ち食い; stand-and-eat) affairs. Of course, depending on what kind of mood you're in and how much cash you want to part with, you can instead choose a slower, more sophisticated sit-down noodle shop, or a highly refined restaurant serving up handmade noodles on impressive spreads (usually bamboo or other natural plant material served on fine china).

## Izakaya

*Izakaya* (居酒屋) translates as 'drinking house', the Japanese equivalent of a pub. They're great places for a casual meal, with a wide selection of food, hearty atmosphere and, of course, plenty of beer and sake. *Izakaya* can be identified by their rustic façades and the red lanterns outside their doors.

Patrons typically order a few dishes at a time, from a selection of Japanese foods such as *yakitori* (焼き鳥; skewers of grilled chicken), *kushiyaki* (串焼き; other grilled skewers, often vegetables), sashimi and grilled fish, as well as Japanese interpretations of Western foods such as french fries

and beef stew. Say *toriaezu* (that's all for now) when finished ordering each set of dishes.

*Izakaya* food is usually fairly inexpensive. Depending on how much you drink, you can expect to spend just ¥2000 to ¥5000 per person.

## Tempura

Tempura (天ぷら) consists of portions of fish, prawns and vegetables cooked in fluffy, nongreasy batter. Typically, tempura is served with a small bowl of *ten-tsuyu* (天つゆ; a light brown sauce) and a plate of grated *daikon* (大根; white radish) to mix into the sauce ahead of time. Dip each piece of tempura into this sauce before eating it. Tempura is best when it's hot, so don't wait too long – use the sauce to cool each piece, and dig in.

Although there are speciality tempura restaurants in Tokyo, the dish is commonly found elsewhere, such as at *izakaya*.

## top picks

### PLACES TO GO FOR BROKE

- Botan (p160)
- Coucagno (p167)
- Nobu (p168)
- Ōshima Endomae-Dokoro (p173)
- Peter (p156)

## Sukiyaki, Shabu-shabu & Yakiniku

Sukiyaki, *shabu-shabu* and *yakiniku* are favourites of most foreign visitors to Japan, perhaps because you get to cook them yourself at the table.

Sukiyaki (すき焼き) consists of thin slices of beef cooked in a broth of soy sauce, sugar and sake together with a variety of vegetables and tofu. After cooking, dip the ingredients one by one in raw egg before eating. When made with high-quality beef, such as that from Kōbe, it is a sublime experience.

*Shabu-shabu* (しゃぶしゃぶ) consists of thin slices of beef and vegetables cooked by swirling the ingredients in a light broth ('*shabu-shabu*' is an onomatopoeia for the 'swish-swish' sound the beef makes in the pot), then dipping them in special sesame seed and/or citrus-based sauce.

*Yakiniku* (焼肉) consists of thin slices of beef or pork that are grilled over hot coals, and then dipped in a variety of sauces. A variation on Korean barbecue, *yakiniku* is typically eaten with *kimchi* (キムチ; spicy pickled cabbage) and rice, and is currently one of the most popular types of cuisine in Tokyo.

All three of these dishes are prepared in a pot over a fire at your table; your server will usually help you get started and keep a close watch. Take your time, add the ingredients little by little and savour the flavours as you go.

## Okonomiyaki

The name means 'cook what you like', and *okonomiyaki* is an inexpensive opportunity to do just that. Sometimes described as Japanese

pizza or pancake, the resemblance is in form only. At an *okonomiyaki* restaurant you sit around a *teppan* (iron hotplate), armed with a spatula and chopsticks to cook your choice of meat, seafood and vegetables in a cabbage and vegetable batter.

Some restaurants will do most of the cooking and bring the nearly finished product to your hotplate for you to season with *katsuo bushi* (鰹節; bonito flakes), soy sauce, *ao-nori* (青海苔; a sea green similar to parsley), Japanese Worcestershire-style sauce and mayonnaise. Cheaper places, however, will simply hand you a bowl filled with the ingredients and expect you to cook it for yourself. If this happens, don't panic.

First, mix the batter and filling thoroughly, then place it on the hot grill, flattening it into a thick pancake. After five minutes or so, use the spatulas to flip it and cook for another five minutes. Then season and dig in.

Most *okonomiyaki* places also serve *yakisoba* (焼きそば; fried noodles) and *yasaitame* (野菜炒め; stir-fried vegetables). All of this is washed down with mugs of draught beer. Also look for *okonomiyaki* at festivals and street fairs.

## Shokudō

A *shokudō* (食堂) is the most common type of restaurant in Japan, and is found near train stations, tourist spots and just about any other place where people congregate. Easily distinguished by the presence of plastic food displays in the window, these inexpensive places usually serve a variety of *washoku* (和食; Japanese) and *yōshoku* (養殖; Western) dishes.

## THE HOLY TRINITY OF JAPANESE FOOD

Although modern Japanese cuisine is highly refined, for millennia Japanese people survived on just three staple crops, namely rice, soya beans and pickled vegetables. Today these humble food items are often passed over in favour of fish and meats, though they continue to make a small but profound presence at virtually every meal.

Rice is more than just food in Japan; it's an essential component of Japanese culture. Throughout the majority of Japan's history, communities were founded on and maintained by rice farming. In fact, the food is so central to the Japanese idea of eating that the word for rice, *gohan* (ご飯), is also the word for a meal. Despite the influx of foreign cuisines, rice remains the centrepiece of a Japanese meal.

The humble soya bean has a revered place in the Japanese food pantheon, especially since it's versatile and monstrously good for you. You probably are familiar with soy sauce (しょうゆ; *shōyu*) but may not know that miso (味噌; fermented soya bean paste) also comes from the soya bean. Tofu (豆腐; soya bean curd) is another soya staple, as well as *edamame* (枝豆), which are whole soya bean pods that have been quickly boiled.

*Tsukemono* (漬物; pickled vegetables) were essential to the diet of the Japanese who until very recently had no way of procuring fresh vegetables for much of the year. In honour of this tradition, pickles are still eaten today, with the most common being made from *daikon* (大根; a large, long white radish), eggplant, cucumber and mixed greens.

# top picks

## FOR VEGETARIANS

- Mominoki House (p169)
- Natural Harmony Angolo (p169)
- Nataraj (p159)
- Natural House (p166)
- Shizenkan II (p168)

neighbourhoods in Tokyo boast vegetarian eateries, many of them serving vegan meals and exclusively organic produce. For a list of the top picks for vegetarians, see [above](#).

## PRACTICALITIES

For first-timers (and some seasoned veterans) in Tokyo, deciphering Japanese menus is enough to make anyone lose their appetite. If you fall into this category, consider searching out restaurants where English menus are available. Throughout this chapter, we have added a simple 'E' to listings where this is the case.

## Opening Hours

Restaurants in hubs such as Shinjuku, Ikebukuro or Shibuya are usually open seven days a week from 11am or noon until 9pm or 10pm, with many offering set specials during lunch hours. In smaller eateries in less central areas such as Ebisu or Asakusa, hours often run shorter, and it's not unusual to find some places shuttered on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday. Generally, the lunch hour goes from 11am or noon to 2pm or 3pm, while dinner is served from 5pm or 6pm to 9pm or 10pm. Last orders are usually taken an hour or half-hour before the kitchen closes.

## How Much?

*Haute cuisine* fetches high prices here, as anywhere else in the world. An upmarket sushi dinner can easily run to ¥20,000. But despite what you've heard about Tokyo's exorbitant prices, it's possible to eat very well on a midrange or even modest budget without needing to raid the shelves of the convenience stores or eating curried rice twice a day. Good *washoku* (和食; Japanese set meal) can be had for around ¥1000, and a tremendous bowl of noodle soup might set you back around ¥700. You should know, too, that Tokyo's

anly – expecting chocolate and finding *anko* instead.

With such a wide variety of sweets, it's impossible to list all the names. However, you'll probably find many variations on the *anko* with *mochi* (餅; glutinous rice) theme. Sweet shops are easy to spot – they usually have open fronts with their wares attractively laid out in wooden trays to tempt hungry shoppers.

For Western-style sweets, try cafés, coffee shops and pastry shops for a variety of cakes, muffins and the like; these are also abundant in Tokyo. If all else fails duck into a convenience store for *aisukurīmu* (アイスクリーム; ice cream) or *chokorēto* (チョコレート; chocolate).

## Drinks

Unlike the Western world, sodas and other sweetened drinks rarely appear on the menu (with the exception of course being Western-style fast-food restaurants). Needless to say, the beverage of choice in Japan is *o-cha* (お茶; green tea), which is served hot or cold depending on the time of year. You can also expect to find subtle variations on this traditional brew.

Although the canned coffee you get from vending machines does resemble the watered-down brews you find in the US, European-style cafés serving the good stuff are found on virtually every corner in Tokyo. In addition to the standard cup of *kōhii* (コーヒー; coffee), you can also expect to find *esupurēsu* (エスプレッソ; espresso), *kapuchīno* (カプチーノ; cappuccino) and even *matcha-rāte* (抹茶ラッテ; matcha latte).

When it comes to alcohol, the Japanese are avid consumers of *biru* (ビール; beer), which tend to be light and easy-drinking lagers. *Wain* (ワイン; wine) and *uisuki* (ウイスキー; whiskey) are also fairly common tipples, though their high-status means that they're significantly more expensive than in the West. Surprisingly, sake or *nihonshu* (酒 or 日本酒; rice wine) is falling out of favour with the younger generation, though the potent *shōchū* (焼酎; distilled grain liquor) is becoming ever so fashionable.

## Vegetarians & Vegans

Japan can be a frustrating place for vegetarians and vegans, especially since *dashi* (だし; fish stock) is used as a base for most dishes. On the bright side however, the more cosmopolitan

椒; Sichuan pepper), a pungent herb that has numbing properties in the mouth. Some *unagi* restaurants keep barrels of live eels to entice passers-by.

## Fugu

The deadly *fugu* (globefish, aka puffer fish or blowfish) is eaten more for the thrill than the taste. The actual meat is rather bland but acclaimed for its fine texture. Nonetheless, if you have the money to lay out for a *fugu* dinner (around ¥10,000), it makes a good 'been there, done that' story.

Since most of its internal organs (especially the liver) are highly poisonous, *fugu* can only be prepared by chefs who have a licence and have undergone extensive training. With that said, the danger of *fugu* poisoning is negligible, though Japanese joke that you should always let your dining companion try the first piece of *fugu*. If they are still talking after five minutes, you can consider the dish safe.

If you're eating *fugu* because you've been challenged by a Japanese friend, and you want to repay them with a cruel joke, hold your hand still and let your chopsticks drop onto the table (in case of poisoning, the extremities go first). On second thought, don't do this, as it will probably alarm everyone else in the restaurant.

For some liquid courage, try a glass of *hire-zake* (toasted *fugu* fin in hot sake), the traditional accompaniment to a *fugu* dinner.

## Sweets

Although most Japanese-style restaurants don't serve dessert (plates of sliced fruit are sometimes served at the end of a meal), there is no lack of sweets in Japan. *Wagashi* (和菓子; traditional Japanese sweets) are sold in speciality stores for you to eat at home. Many of the more delicate-looking ones are made to balance the strong, bitter taste of the special *matcha* (抹茶; whisked green tea) served during the tea ceremony.

Even if you have the sweetest tooth in the world and have sampled every type of sweet that's come your way, you may find yourself surprised by Japanese confectionery. Many sweets contain the red adzuki-bean paste called *anko* (あんこ). This earthy, rich filling turns up in a variety of pastries, including those you pick up at the corner bakery shop. Legions of foreign visitors have been surprised – not altogether unpleas-

At lunch, and sometimes at dinner, the easiest meal to order at a *shokudō* is a *teishoku* (定職; set-course meal), which is sometimes also called *ranchi setto* (ランチセット; lunch set) or *kōsu* (コース; set meal). This usually includes a main dish of meat or fish, a bowl of rice, miso soup, a small salad and some *tsukemono* (漬物; pickled vegetables).

## Kaiseki

*Kaiseki* (懐石; elegant ceremonial food) is the pinnacle of Japanese cuisine, where ingredients, preparation, setting and presentation come together to create a dining experience quite unlike any other. Born as an adjunct to the tea ceremony, *kaiseki* is a largely vegetarian affair (though fish is often served, meat never appears on the *kaiseki* menu). One usually eats *kaiseki* in the private room of a *ryōtei* (料亭; an especially elegant style of traditional restaurant), often overlooking a tranquil garden. The meal is served in several small courses, giving the diner an opportunity to admire the plates and bowls, which are carefully chosen to complement the food and season. Rice is eaten last (usually with an assortment of pickles) and the drink of choice is sake or beer.

## Tonkatsu

*Tonkatsu* (豚カツ) is a deep-fried, crumbed pork cutlet served with a savoury sauce. *Tonkatsu* is a staple that appears in most Japanese restaurants, though you'll have to head to the speciality shops for the good stuff.

## Unagi

Even if you can't stand the creature, you owe it to yourself to try *unagi* (うなぎ; freshwater eel) at least once while in Tokyo. It's cooked over hot coals and brushed with a rich sauce composed of soy sauce and sake. Often you can sprinkle it with powdered *sanshō* (山

# top picks

## INTERNATIONAL FOOD

- Canal Cafe (p157)
- China Room (p164)
- Daidaiya (p163)
- Fonda de la Madrugada (p168)
- Hannibal Deux (p169)

little-kept secret, the bargain lunch set, can sometimes put your foot in the door at places that might otherwise be beyond your budget. Remember too that tipping is not customary, and if you try it, you may get chased down the street by staff wanting to reunite you with your change.

## Booking Tables

Reservations are essential at many top-end spots. Some of the finer Japanese restaurants will be able to reserve a table for you over the phone, though in some cases it helps if you can speak some Japanese. If you don't, your hotel can usually make the booking for you. As for midrange and budget spots, reservations are unnecessary except in the case of larger groups.

## IMPERIAL PALACE & MARUNOUCHI

There's no shortage of restaurants in the proximity of Tokyo Station and the Imperial Palace, though a good number of them cater to the dine-and-dash lunch crowd. Of course, even salarymen (businessmen) and government workers need a nice sit-down meal from time to time, which is why you can expect to find a number of trendy and upmarket eateries scattered among the avenues.

### RESTAURANT PRIMER

You've made it to a Japanese restaurant, but now you're feeling a bit dumbfounded about what to do next. Here's a quick crash course to help you get started.

When you enter a restaurant, often the entire staff will shout a hearty '*irasshaimase!*' (welcome!). In all but the most casual places the waiter or waitress will next ask you, '*nan-mei sama?*' (how many people?). Indicate the answer with your fingers, which is what the Japanese do, or respond with the number (eg *san-nin* for 'three people'). You may also be asked if you would like to sit at a *zashiki* (low table on the tatami) or at a *tēbūru* (table) or *kauntā* (counter). More and more restaurants these days offer the fun compromise of *hori-kotatsu* seating: you sit on the tatami, but there's a well beneath the table for you to place your legs.

Once seated you will be given an *o-shibori* (hot towel), a cup of tea or water and a menu. The *o-shibori* is for wiping your hands and face. When you're finished with it, just roll it up and leave it next to your place. Now comes the hard part: ordering. If you don't read Japanese, you can use the romanised translations in this chapter to help you, or direct the waiter's attention to the Japanese script. If this doesn't work, there are two phrases that may help: '*o-susame wa nan desuka?*' ('what would you recommend?') and '*o-makase shimasu!*' ('I leave it to you'). If you're still having problems, you can try pointing at other diners' food or dragging the server outside to point at the plastic food displays in the window if the restaurant has them.

When you've finished eating, you can signal for the bill by crossing one index finger over the other to form an X. This is the standard sign for 'cheque please'. You can also say '*o-kanjō o kudasai!*'. Remember, there is no tipping in Japan and tea and tap water are free. Usually you will be given a bill to take to the cashier at the front of the restaurant. At more upmarket places, the host of the party will discreetly ask to be excused and pay before the group leaves. Only the bigger and more international places take credit cards.

When leaving, it is polite to say to the restaurant staff '*gochisō-sama deshita!*' ('it was a real feast').

**PETER** Map pp52–3

International ¥¥¥

ピーター

☎ 6270-2763; 24th fl, Peninsula Hotel, 1-8-1 Yūrakuchō, Chiyoda-ku; set courses from ¥10,000;

🕒 11.30am–2.30pm & 6pm–midnight; 📍 JR

Yamanote Line to Yūrakuchō (west exit); E It's hard to put a price on unchecked luxury, especially when you're talking about the main dining room at the Tokyo branch of the world-famous Peninsula Hotel. Offering an eclectic breadth of international cuisine, diners can choose from a variety of offerings ranging from fatty tuna sashimi spreads to duck foie gras, and create their own unique set course. While you're sipping fine wine and spoiling your palette with some of the finest delicacies from around the world, enjoy the stunning view of Central Tokyo while pondering how good life can be.

**HUMP** Map pp52–3

Sushi ¥¥

ザハンプ

☎ 5293-4813; 2nd fl, Marunouchi MY Plaza, 2-1-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; sushi plates ¥2000-3000

🕒 11.30am–late; 📍 JR Yamanote or Marunouchi Line to Tokyo (Marunouchi exits); E

Modelled after the original Hump, a famous Los Angeles sushi spot situated near the water in Santa Monica, this Marunouchi instalment marks the increasing popularity

### PRICE GUIDE

¥¥¥	over ¥5000 a meal
¥¥	¥2000-5000 a meal
¥	¥2000 a meal or less

of California-style sushi in Tokyo. The main dining room boasts spectacular views overlooking the moat of the Imperial Palace, though diners in the know opt for the private sushi bar where you can order your California rolls directly from the chef.

**KUA 'AINA** Map pp52–3 Burgers & Sandwiches ¥

クアアйна

☎ 5220-2440; 5th fl, Marunouchi Bldg, 2-4-1

Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; burgers ¥750-1500;

🕒 11am–11pm Mon–Sat, 11am–10pm Sun; 📍 JR Yamanote or Marunouchi Line to Tokyo (Marunouchi exits); E

From the shores of Haleiwa comes this Hawaiian burger chain, which serves up the obligatory pineapple-topped burgers in a tropical-themed setting. Lovers of avocado, fabulous chips, savoury mahi-mahi fillets and innovative microbrews would be wise to pop by for lunch, even if only to watch salarymen dreaming of warmer climes.

## CENTRAL TOKYO

More a geographic area than a contiguous neighbourhood, Central Tokyo lacks a definable personality to influence its restaurant scene. However, the heart of the city is home to every imaginable type of restaurant, including a few gems that are definitely worth seeking out.

**CANAL CAFÉ** Map p56

Italian ¥¥

カナルカフェ

☎ 3260-8068; 1-9 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku; dishes around ¥2000; 🕒 5.30pm–11.30pm Tue–Sun;

📍 Namboku, Tōzai, Yūrakuchō or Toei Ōedo Line to lidabashi (exit B3); E

When summer evenings in the capital hang heavy with humidity, you may long for a cold glass of white wine and a light meal by the riverside. Sadly, Tokyo has a regrettable dearth of alfresco restaurants with breathing room, though rare canalside spots such as this lidabashi institution do exist. The speciality here is wood-fired thin-crust pizzas and Italian pastas such as scallop and shrimp in a light cream sauce, though the real reason

you're here is to savour a cocktail while soaking up the European atmosphere.

**KADO** Map p56

Traditional ¥¥

カド

☎ 3269-2410; 1-32 Akagi-Motomachi, Shinjuku-ku; dishes around ¥2000; 🕒 11.30am–11pm;

📍 Namboku, Tōzai, Yūrakuchō or Toei Ōedo Line to lidabashi (exit B3)

If you haven't had the privilege of eating dinner inside a Japanese home, a meal at Kado is a close approximation. Housed in a Shōwa-era house built in 1950, Kado reveals a rare glimpse of what life was like in Tokyo prior to the economic miracle that transformed the capital in the second half of the 20th century. Dishes, which emphasise traditional Japanese recipes and seasonal produce, are enhanced by the incredible service and familial ambience. There is no English menu, though the staff will try to accommodate you to the best of their ability.

**BEER BAR BITTER** Map p56

Belgian ¥¥

ビアバー ビター

☎ 5261-3087; 1-14 Tsukudocho, Shinjuku-ku; dishes around ¥2000; 🕒 5.30pm–late Mon–Fri;

📍 Namboku, Tōzai, Yūrakuchō or Toei Ōedo Line to lidabashi (exit C1); E

This backstreet restaurant in Kagurazaka can be tough to find (hint – look up!), though like all hidden establishments, it is certainly worth the effort. In addition to the standard Japanese pub offerings, Bitter has a number of traditional European staples on the menu including steamed mussels and shepherd's pie, though don't let these culinary concoctions distract you from the impressive Belgian beer menu.

**SEIGETSU** Map p56

Izakaya ¥¥

霽月

☎ 3269-4320; 6-77-1 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku; dishes around ¥1500; 🕒 5pm–late; 📍 Namboku,

Tōzai, Yūrakuchō or Toei Ōedo Line to lidabashi (exit C1)

In a district that is increasingly becoming dominated by chain pubs, this traditional Japanese *izakaya* is perfect for all of your dining and drinking needs, especially since there are on-call *shōchū* consultants to help you match your meal to your booze. Although there isn't an English menu, the speciality here is charcoal-grilled meats and vegetables, so you shouldn't have too many problems pointing out what you want.

## GINZA

Ginza has always been a stronghold of the city's finest restaurants, with excellent sushi, marvellous French *haute cuisine* and ethereal surroundings. It can be challenging to find a modestly priced meal in the evenings, but poking around the *resutoran-gai* (restaurant towns) of department stores can turn up good lunch deals.

### L'OSIER Map p62

French ¥¥¥

レストランロオジェ

☎ 3571-6050; 7-5-5 Ginza, Chūō-ku; set courses around ¥5000; 🕒 noon-2pm & 6-9.30pm; 📍 Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza (exit B6)

In Tokyo, French restaurants are at the top of the culinary ladder, which is why it's no small feat that local gourmets consider L'Osier to be the best around. But if you wish to analyse the foie gras yourself, you'll need to book as far as possible in advance since a table at L'Osier is a highly coveted commodity. However, once the wine hits your head and the food hits your lips, you'll key into the Art Deco-inspired surroundings and realise that Paris isn't that far away after all.

### TEN-ICHI Map p62

Tempura ¥¥¥

天一

☎ 3571-1949; 6-6-5 Ginza, Chūō-ku; set courses around ¥5000; 🕒 11.30am-9.30pm; 📍 Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza (exits A1, B3 & B6); E

Since 1930 tempura at the much esteemed Ten-Ichi has rightfully earned its reputation as supernaturally light and nongreasy. The dignified dining area at the flagship Ginza shop is a pleasure, though you can expect to spend significant coin for the privilege of dining here. Ten-Ichi is regarded as the city's best tempura, which means you're going to need a reservation if you want to dine among those in the know.

## THE WORK OF ROSANJIN KITAJOJI

Rosanjin Kitaaji (1883–1959), a revered calligrapher and sculptor, is famous for despising ugly things and the people that created and condoned them. Through his professional career, he quite rancorously attacked any form of sloppiness or mediocrity that dared call itself art.

Not surprisingly, Rosanjin was also a gourmand who was drawn to food in all its forms. As with art, in food he sought the ideal, the beautiful and the perfect. This in turn greatly influenced his pottery, which often seems to be a kind of meditation on the perfect container for the perfect dish.

If you're interested in experiencing Rosanjin's pottery first hand, you can do so by calling ahead to **Kyūbei** (above) where the attention to detailed arrangement is a fitting tribute to pottery whose form so closely follows beauty.

### KYŪBEI Map p62

Sushi &amp; Sashimi ¥¥¥

久兵衛

☎ 3571-6523; 8-7-6 Ginza, Chūō-ku; sushi plates ¥3000-5000; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 5-10pm Mon-Sat; 📍 Ginza Line to Shimbashi (exit 1)

Established in 1936, the unbelievable quality and flawless presentation of Kyūbei's sushi and sashimi spreads is still revered in restaurant-rich Ginza. If you request it beforehand – and reservations are highly recommended – the owner will arrange for your meal to be served on fine pottery thrown by Rosanjin Kitaaji (for more information, see [below](#)). In a city reluctant to apply sushi superlatives, this spot is truly considered by Tokyoites to be one of the best.

### BIRDLAND Map p62

Yakitori ¥¥

バーランド

☎ 5250-1081; 4-2-15 Ginza, Chūō-ku; set courses ¥3000-5000; 🕒 Tue-Sat 5.30-9pm; 📍 Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza (exits A1, B3 & B6); E

Commanding legions of *yakitori*-loving followers, Birdland is something of a destination for anyone in need of some seriously gourmet grilled chicken. Although *yakitori* comes in all shapes, sizes, colours and organs, you won't have a difficult time ordering here – simply choose from one of several set courses and experience firsthand how many different ways there are to cook up a bird.

### NAIR'S Map p62

Indian ¥¥

ナイル

☎ 3541-8246; 4-10-7 Ginza, Chūō-ku; set courses ¥2000-3000; 🕒 11am-8.30pm; 📍 Hibiya or Toei Asakusa Line to Higashi-Ginza (exit A2); E

Like Japan's foremost living novelist, Murakami Haruki, Nair's was born in 1949, signalling a shift in tone in postwar Tokyo. Though curry restaurants are now a dime a

## TRAVEL YOUR TASTE BUDS

Some Japanese seem to take perverse pleasure in challenging foreign visitors to try uniquely Japanese foods. Here's a rogue's gallery you may encounter:

**Basashi** (馬刺し) Raw horsemeat served sashimi style. Although the taste is surprisingly similar to beef, keep in mind that you're not eating cow.

**Fugu** (ふぐ) Globefish, aka puffer fish or blowfish. Regardless of what you call it, it's still deadly. For more information, see [p154](#).

**Kujira** (鯨) Whale meat. Need we say more?

**Natto** (納豆) Fermented soya beans that are firm in the centre and malodorous outside. When you pick one soya bean up with your chopsticks, it usually leaves gooey strings behind it. Probably the most vilified food among resident expats.

**Shiokara** (塩辛) Squid intestines that are pickled until they're pink. Verry salty. Served as a side dish or as an accompaniment to beer (you should be very drunk before trying this).

**Shirako** (白子) Literally 'white children' in Japanese, *shirako* is a term for the sperm-filled reproductive gland of the cod fish. Although it's considered a delicacy, it tastes exactly like you'd think it would.

dozen, this was one of the first to introduce naan and cardamom to Tokyo. Since quality midrange fare is a rare find in Ginza, this neighbourhood landmark tends to be extremely busy, though the crowds blend with the Bollywood music to create a festive atmosphere.

### NATARAJ Map p62

Vegetarian ¥¥

ナタラジ

☎ 5537-1515; 7th-9th fl, 6-9-4 Ginza, Chūō-ku; dishes around ¥2000; 🕒 11.30am-11pm; 📍 Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza (exit A2) Herbivores don't have it easy in Tokyo, though thankfully there is reason to rejoice at this Indian-influenced vegetarian spot. Nataraj brings its warm colours, low-key elegance and animal-friendly cuisine to this enormous three-storey branch store in the heart of Ginza. Sizable set meals include appealing choices such as pumpkin curry and chickpea pakora, which go down well with an extensive wine and beer list of domestic and international favourites.

### MIRAVILE IMPAKT

Map p62

Café ¥¥

ミラヴィル インパクト

☎ 5524-0417; 2-2-14 Ginza, Chūō-ku, Marronnier-dori, Gate 10F; desserts from ¥1500; 🕒 11am-10pm; 📍 JR Yamanote Line to Yūrakuchō (west exit); E

It's hard to know what's more striking at this trendy café – the chic modern interior of bold colours and angular furniture, or the fact that everything on the menu here

will overload your sweet tooth. Specialising in just dessert, Miravile Impakt serves up an elegant three-course meal that is rounded out by designer teas and speciality coffees.

### SAKATA Map p62

Soba &amp; Udon ¥

さか田

☎ 3563-7400; 2nd fl, 1-5-13 Ginza, Chūō-ku; noodles from ¥500; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 5.30-10pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-2pm Sat; 📍 Yūrakuchō Line to Ginza-itchōme

If you eat only one meal out, you'd do well to eat it here. Sakata is widely recognised as one of the city's most classic noodle spots, and the *sanuki udon* (a thick, silky noodle of exceptional firmness) here is divine. Gracious Sakata-san doesn't speak English but will go out of his way to feed you if you look confused. Look for the 2nd-floor sign.

### YŪRAKUCHŌ YAKITORI ALLEY

Map p62

Yakitori ¥

有楽町焼き鳥横丁

Skewers from ¥100; 📍 Chiyoda or Hibiya Line to Hibiya (exit 1)

Follow the smoke and steam that's looping its way up from under the railway tracks to this warren of rickety outdoor *yakitori* stands. Each open-air corner is tended by its own chef who knows everything you'd ever need to about the fine art of grilling chicken. These stands offer little shelter from the elements, so dress accordingly.

## TSUKIJI & SHIODOME

Right on the waterfront of Tokyo Bay, the Tsukiji neighbourhood encircles the busiest fish market on earth. It is here that any hard-working, tough-talking fisherman will be proud to tell you that you'll find the best sushi breakfast in Japan and the freshest sashimi in the world. Enjoy it now while you can, as the ageing market will uproot for bigger digs across Tokyo Bay by 2015.

### DAIWA SUSHI Map p65 Sushi & Sashimi ¥¥

大和寿司  
☎ 3547-6807; Bldg 6, 5-2-1 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; sushi spread ¥1500-3000; ☎ 5pm-1.30am Mon-Sat, closed 2nd Wed of the month; ㊟ Toei Ōedo Line to Tsukijishijō (exit A2)

Lines are pretty much unavoidable at Tsukiji's best and most famous sushi bar, but once you're past the *noren* (curtains) and your first piece of sushi hits the counter, gratification is inevitable. Unless you're comfortable ordering in Japanese, the chef's sushi sets are a good bet, which can easily be ordered by simply pointing at the picture menu. Though the staff may be too polite to say so, you're expected to eat and run so others can partake in this quintessential Tsukiji experience.

### EDOGIN Map p65 Sushi & Sashimi ¥¥

江戸銀  
☎ 3543-4401; 4-5-1 Tsukiji, Chūō-ku; sushi spread ¥1000-3000; ☎ 11am-9.30pm Mon-Sat; ㊟ Toei Ōedo Line to Tsukijishijō (exit A2)

Fat pieces of superfresh sashimi and sushi draw the crowds at this little hole-in-the-wall spot just up the way from Tsukiji Central Fish Market. The *teishoku* (定食; lunchtime set) is a steal at ¥1000, especially since the fish literally comes from up the street. Though there's nothing in the way of atmosphere, the locals who come here to eat provide the colour you need.

### SAKANA-YA AJISEN Map pp48-9 Traditional ¥

味泉  
☎ 3534-8483; 1-18-10 Tsukishima, Minato-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 5.30-10.30pm; ㊟ Yuri-kamome Line to Tsukishima (main exit)

Although this neighbourhood sake pub is hidden away from the tourist masses on the island of Tsukishima, it's the real deal, and worth seeking out if you want to sample real brews and indulge on traditional dishes. The

lack of an English menu means you'll have to work hard here if you don't speak Japanese, though it's worth the effort to sample rare *koshu* (aged sakes) and the house speciality, *anago* (braised seawater eel).

### YAPPARI TAKO Map p65 Izakaya ¥¥

やっぱりたこ  
☎ 6215-8800; 1st basement fl, Shiodome City Center, Higashi-Shimbashi 1-5-2; plates around ¥1000; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-11pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Shiodome (exit 2D)

Although Yappari Tako serves up the full complement of your standard *izakaya* offerings, the real reason you're here is to sample its speciality *tako* (たこ; octopus) dishes. If you're having hesitations about sucking down a few plates of tentacled tit-bits, the attentive staff will offer you a glass of the *shōchū* of the day in order to ease your inhibitions and relax your throat.

### DIN TAI FUNG Map p65 Dim Sum ¥¥

鼎泰豐  
☎ 5537-2081; 2nd basement fl, Higashi-Shimbashi 1-8-2, Caretta Shiodome; plates ¥300-500; ☎ 11am-9.30pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Shiodome (exit A2)

This Taiwanese-style dim sum is the perfect choice for anyone who likes to try a little bit of everything. Whether you're partial to traditional steamed dumplings and rich custard creams or more adventurous dishes such as chicken feet and fried rice flour balls, we guarantee you'll eat your fill here. There's no English menu, but this being dim sum, just inspect the carts as they whisk by your table and simply grab what looks good.

## AKIHABARA & KANDA

Kanda has a large concentration of long-standing traditional eateries, some specialising in dishes as simple as *soba*, others serving prewar favourites on traditional tatami. In stark contrast, Akihabara is home to cheap chain restaurants, few of which really stand out.

### BOTAN Map p68 Traditional ¥¥¥

ぼたん  
☎ 3251-0577; 1-15 Kanda-Sudachō, Chiyoda-ku; set courses around ¥5000; ☎ 11.30am-8.30pm Mon-Sat; ㊟ Marunouchi Line to Awajichō (exits A3 & A5) or Toei Shinjuku Line to Ogawamachi (exits A3 & A5)

Botan has been making a single, perfect dish in the same button-maker's house since before the turn of the last century. Sit cross-legged on bamboo mats as chicken *nabe* (鍋; meat cooked in broth in an iron pan with vegetables) simmers over a charcoal brazier, allowing you to take in the scent of prewar Tokyo.

### ISEGEN Map p68 Traditional ¥¥¥

いせ源  
☎ 3251-1229; 1-11-1 Kanda-Sudachō, Chiyoda-ku; set courses around ¥5000; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 4-9pm Mon-Sat, closed Sat Jun-Aug; ㊟ Marunouchi Line to Awajichō (exits A3 & A5) or Toei Shinjuku Line to Ogawamachi (exits A3 & A5)

From early autumn to midspring, this old Edo-style restaurant dishes up monkfish stew in a splendid communal tatami room. The rest of the year, when monkfish is out of season, expect the same traditional surroundings and a menu offering fresh river fish. Although there is no English menu, the communal surroundings mean that it shouldn't be too hard to point out what you want to eat.

### MARUGO TONKATSU Map p68 Tonkatsu ¥¥

とんかつ丸五  
☎ 3255-6595; 1-8-14 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku; plates ¥2000-3000; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 5-9pm Fri-Wed, closed every 3rd Wed; ㊟ JR Yamanote or JR Sōbu Line to Akihabara (Denki-gai exit)

In Akihabara's megawatt circus, Marugo sits serenely unplugged in one of the few prewar houses remaining in the area. Although the serene interior full of nostalgic diners is nothing like the *otaku* (geek) parade that's outside, Marugo survives by offerings some seriously delicious *tonkatsu* atop piles of fresh shredded cabbage.

### KANDA YABU SOBA Map p68 Soba ¥

神田やぶそば  
☎ 3251-0287; 2-10 Kanda-Awajichō, Chiyoda-ku; noodles from ¥500; ☎ 11.30am-8pm; ㊟ Marunouchi Line to Awajichō (exits A3 & A5) or Toei Shinjuku Line to Ogawamachi (exits A3 & A5); E A wooden wall and a small garden enclose this venerable buckwheat noodle shop. When you walk in, the staff singing out the orders will be one of the first signs that you've arrived in a singular, ageless place. Raised tatami platforms and a darkly wooded dining room set the stage for show-stopping *soba*.

### @HOME CAFÉ Map p68

@ほお〜むカフエ  
☎ 5294-7704; www.cafe-at-home.com; 7F Mitsuura Bldg, 1-11-4 Soto-kanda, Chiyoda-ku; ☎ 11:30am-9pm; ㊟ Sōbu Line to Akihabara (Electric Town exit)

Wanna walk on the wild side of Tokyo's fetish for *kawaii* (cuteness)? Try being served coffee by girls dressed as French maids! You'll be welcomed as *go-shujinsama* (master) the minute you barge into this café. The anime-esque staff, decked out in Victorian pinafores, is drawing in *kawaii*; titillating, perhaps, but it's no sex joint. Maid cafés are where Akihabara's *otaku* get their kicks. Dishes such as curried rice are even topped with smiley faces. Seconds, anyone?

## UENO

Holding on to its Shitamachi (Low Town) style and atmosphere, Ueno's culinary landscape pales in comparison to the bigger players inside the Yamanote (High Town). Of course, after a long day of meandering the halls of Ueno-kōen's many museums, you may want to stick around for dinner. While the local restaurants aren't doing anything cutting-edge, they are satisfyingly down-to-earth and modestly priced.

### SASA-NO-YUKI Map p72 Traditional ¥¥

笹乃雪  
☎ 3873-1145; 2-15-10 Negishi, Taitō-ku; set courses ¥2000-4000; ☎ 11am-9pm Tue-Sun; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Uguisudani (north exit)

Sasa-no-Yuki opened its doors in the thriving Edo period, and continues to serve tofu in elegant arrangements and traditional surroundings. Set meals allow you to sample a broad range of tofu delicacies, the majority of which are as inventive as they are delicious. Strict vegetarians should note that many dishes include chicken and fish stock, if not the meat itself. If you don't read Japanese, you can select from the set courses based on price.

### HANTEI Map p72 Traditional ¥¥

はん亭  
☎ 3828-1440; 2-12-15 Nezu, Bunkyo-ku; set courses ¥2000-3000; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 5-10pm Tue-Sun; ㊟ Chiyoda Line to Sendagi (south exit) Skewers of *kushiage* (fried meat, fish and vegetables) arrive at your table six at a

time, counterbalanced with small, refreshing side dishes. Though courses are predetermined, and well worth the wait, you'll have to decide when you've had enough (or they'll keep coming) and whether to drink sake or beer. The backdrop is a lovely wood-and-bamboo Meiji-era house, which emphasises the Shitamachi charm of the restaurant.

### IZU-EI Map p72

Unagi ¥¥

伊豆菜  
☎ 3831-0954; 2-12-22 Ueno, Taitō-ku; set courses ¥1500-3000; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-11pm; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Ueno (Hirokō-ji exit)  
Izu-ei specialises in *unagi* (eel), which you can take in two ways: in a *bentō* (lunch box) that includes tempura and pickled vegetables, or charcoal-grilled, sauced and laid on a bed of steamed rice, as *unagi* purists might insist. Try to get seated near an upstairs window for the best views of the large lily pads of nearby Shinobazu-ike. Although there is no English menu, there is a picture menu of sliced up eels to help you choose.

### FUTABA Map p72

Tonkatsu ¥¥

とんかつ双葉  
☎ 3835-2672; 2-8-11 Ueno, Taitō-ku; plates around ¥2000; ☎ 11am-9pm; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Ueno (Hirokō-ji exit)  
Like so many homestyle eateries, this place doesn't look like much, in its nondescript corner building, but who needs charm when you make the best *tonkatsu* on the block? It's a bit like a diner with matter-of-fact service, but it knows its stuff and needs no gimmicks beyond the edges of the plate.

### CHALET SWISS MINI Map p72

Swiss ¥

シャレースイスミニ  
☎ 3822-6034; 3-3-12 Nishi-Nippori, Arakawa-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Tue & Wed, 10am-9pm Thu-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun; ㊤ Nishi-nippori (south exit); E  
Somehow this odd little school and café works. Nestled among the temples and shrines on a hill in Shitamachi, which was spared of the bombing during the war, it looks just like a Swiss chalet on a Hollywood movie set. It serves, not surprisingly, very good fondue, pastries and sandwiches, often to children who are just being let out of class upstairs.

## ASAKUSA

Despite the fact that Sensō-ji (Asakusa Kannon-dō) is Tokyo's most-frequented tourist attraction, the neighbourhood itself retains its own working-class, laugh-out-loud character. Delightfully, almost none of the restaurants cater to tourists, and so, here you are, just another person in the neighbourhood to be fed and then sent gently on your way.

### ASAKUSA IMAHAN

Map p86

Shabu-Shabu ¥¥¥

浅草今半  
☎ 3841-1114; 3-1-12 Nishi-Asakusa, Taitō-ku; set courses ¥5000-7000; ☎ 11.30am-9.30pm; ㊤ Ginza Line to Tawaramachi (exit 3); E

It's fitting that the original branch of Imahan, the city's most famous chain of *shabu-shabu* restaurants, is located at the heart of Shitamachi. While sitting at low tables on the tatami mats, you can get happy on sake while letting your meat and seasonal vegetables simmer away. Although it's certainly an expensive affair, a meal at Imahan is the most dignified way to enjoy this much-revered Japanese culinary treat.

### KOMAGATA DOJŌ Map p86

Traditional ¥¥¥

駒形どぜう

☎ 3842-4001; 1-7-12 Komagata, Taitō-ku; set courses ¥5000-7000; ☎ 11am-9pm; ㊤ Ginza or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exits A2 & 4)

The sixth-generation chef running this marvellous restaurant is continuing the tradition of transforming the humble river fish called the *dojō* (something like an eel) into various incarnations: grilled to miso-simmered to stewed. The open seating around wide, wooden planks heightens the traditional flavour.

### SOMETARO

Map p86

Okonomiyaki ¥

染太郎  
☎ 3844-9502; 2-2-2 Nishi-Asakusa, Taitō-ku; mains ¥750-1500; ☎ noon-10pm; ㊤ Ginza Line to Tawaramachi (exit 3); E

Sometaro is a fun and funky place to try *okonomiyaki*, which are Japanese-style pancakes filled with meat, seafood and vegetables that you cook yourself. It's a friendly spot where the English menu even includes a how-to guide for even the most culinary challenged of restaurant goers.

### DAIKOKUYA Map p86

Tempura ¥

大黒家

☎ 3844-1111; 1-38-10 Asakusa, Taitō-ku; plates from ¥750; ☎ 11.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-9pm Sat; ㊤ Ginza or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit 6); E

The long line around the building should tell you something about this much-loved tempura place before you catch the unmistakable fragrance of it. Sneak off to the other branch around the corner if the line seems to put too much distance between you and your *ebi tendon* (shrimp tempura over rice).

### NAMIKI YABU SOBA

Map p86

Soba ¥

並木やぶそば

☎ 3841-1340; 2-11-9 Kaminarimon, Taitō-ku; noodles from ¥500; ☎ 11am-10pm Fri-Wed; ㊤ Ginza or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa (exit A4); E  
Another member of the Yabu Soba family (see p161 for information on their sister store in Kanda) that has withstood the encroachment of high-rises, this little brown house continues to thrive as it has for almost 100 years. It specialises in tempura *soba*, which is still served at communal tables allowing for a boisterous dining experience.

## AKASAKA

This is where both fiscal and governmental business gets done. Good portions of it empty at night as limousines take officials and luminaries elsewhere for secret suppers behind thick doors. But since low-key, non-power lunches need to happen and movers and shakers often work late, Akasaka has a few real finds in comfortable quarters.

### RAKUTEI

Map p92

Tempura ¥¥¥

楽亭

☎ 3585-3743; 6-8-1 Akasaka, Minato-ku; set courses ¥3500-6000; ☎ 6-10pm; ㊤ Chiyoda Line to Akasaka (exit 5)

If the Japanese have elevated the deep-fried to an art form, then the chefs at Rakutei create masterpieces nightly. The freshest seafood and the lightest tempura batter are prepared to order, resulting in tender prawn and sweet potato that actually does melt in your mouth. Although there isn't an English menu, you can easily choose a set meal depending on how much yen you're willing to part with.

### DAIDAIYA Map p92

Asian Fusion ¥¥¥

橙家

☎ 3588-5087; 9th fl, Belle Vie, 3-1-6 Akasaka, Minato-ku; plates around ¥2000; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 5pm-midnight; ㊤ Ginza & Marunouchi Lines to Akasaka-mitsuke (exit 2); E

Although Asian fusion is all the rage outside Japan, it's still catching on in Tokyo. Of course, it's hard not to fall in love with this culinary mish-mash, especially once you've realised the benefits of eating rich Thai curries alongside innovative sushi rolls and savoury Chinese dumplings. Although the food at Daidaiya is always creative and daring, it pales in comparison to the restaurant's eye-arresting ultramodern interior.

### ASTERIX Map p92

French ¥¥

アステリックス

☎ 5561-0980; B1 fl, 6-3-16 Akasaka, Minato-ku; set courses ¥2000-3000; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-10pm Mon-Sat; ㊤ Chiyoda Line to Akasaka (exit 7)

Lunch at Asterix is a smashing deal, but dinner has its own merits – not as rushed, so you can linger over your wine while you mull the meal that is pleasantly dulling your senses just so. Portions here are large, but the dining room is petite, so reservations are advised. The menu is in French but not English, which may or may not make things easier on you.

### DELHI Map p92

Indian ¥

デリー

☎ 3560-5188; 2-14-34 Akasaka, Minato-ku; curries around ¥1000; ☎ 11.30am-9.30pm; ㊤ Chiyoda Line to Akasaka (exit 2)

Tropical cultures tout the numerous benefits of eating spicy foods; among them, the flushing of toxins when one begins perspiring with the endorphin rush (or pain, as the case may be). For those who like it hot, Delhi serves a fiery Kashmiri curry. Patrons with milder tastes will find equally delicious options on the menu.

### LOTUS PALACE Map p92

Vietnamese ¥

ロータスパレス

☎ 5114-0747; 2-14-1 Akasaka, Minato-ku; noodles from ¥750; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊤ Ginza & Marunouchi Lines to Akasaka-mitsuke; E

Lunch and dinner are an absolute steal at this foreigner-friendly Vietnamese noodle shop, which serves up set-course meals that are centred on huge bowls of *pho* (rice-noodle soup) and rounded out by

## BEAM ME TO THE KONBINI

*Konbini* (コンビニ; convenience stores) are a way of life for many Tokyoites, and even if you had never set foot in one at home you may find yourself visiting them daily here. Indeed, there seems to be a Sunkus, AM-PM, Lawson, 7-Eleven or Family Mart on just about every corner. Here's the difference: Japanese convenience-store food tends to be both fresh and of decent quality, and whether you're going home after a late night or heading out on a hike, it's hard to do better. Some of our favourite *konbini* foods:

**Inari-sushi** (いなり寿司) Sushi rice in a tofu pouch. If you find it a little sweet, cut it with soy sauce.

**Niku-man** (肉まん) Steamed buns filled with pork, pizza flavourings, curry sauce and more.

**Oden** (おでん) Fish cakes, hard-boiled egg, vegetables and more, stewing in a *dashi* (fish-stock) broth. Enjoy with hot mustard. It's not winter without it.

**Onigiri** (おにぎり) King of them all. A triangle of rice with a dollop of some treasure inside (salmon, tuna salad, marinated kelp etc), wrapped in a plastic sheath together with a sheet of *nori* (seaweed).

shrimp spring rolls and mung-bean pudding. If you need to put an extra spring in your step, the syrupy Vietnamese coffee with condensed milk will get you where you want to be.

## ROPPONGI

At any given hour, the population of Roppongi probably maintains the highest saturation of ethnic diversity (and perhaps also the highest saturation, drinkwise) in Tokyo. Long the district favoured by randy foreigners on R&R and Tokyo party people, it's also adjacent to nearby embassies and upmarket hotels. So while some Roppongi restaurants serve indifferent sustenance to those merely fuelling up for a long night, some of Tokyo's more refined culinary experiences exist amid the madness.

### CHINA ROOM

Map pp96-7

Chinese ¥¥¥

チャイナルーム

☎ 4333-8785; 6-10-3 Roppongi, Minato-ku; set courses from ¥6000; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 6-10pm; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 1c & 3); E

Located inside the world-famous Grand Hyatt Tokyo at Roppongi Hills, the China Room offers the most lavish and refined Chinese cuisine in the capital. From perfectly roasted Peking duck and fragrant shark-fin soup to rare oolong teas and handcrafted dumplings, the China Room is a feast for the senses that never fails to disappoint. In addition to widely known culinary classics, the China Room also offers rare Japanese seafood delicacies such as Niigata snow crab and Hokkaidō *uni* (sea urchin roe).

### FUKUZUSHI Map pp96-7 Sushi & Sashimi ¥¥¥

福寿司

☎ 3402-4116; 5-7-8 Roppongi, Minato-ku; sushi spreads from ¥5000; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-10pm Mon-Sat; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 3)

Arguably some of Tokyo's best sushi is served at Fukuzushi's lovely wooden counter, where the chefs can satisfy your palate with conventional favourites, but could just as easily piece together something more innovative if you wish. Reservations aren't taken at this popular spot, so plan on a few minutes' wait, though it's a small inconvenience to dine on what will probably be the best sushi dinner of your life. There are no English menus, though you can always point at whatever sliver of fish takes your fancy – if money is no object, then this is the place to go big.

### INAKAYA Map pp96-7 Traditional ¥¥

田舎屋

☎ 3408-5040; 5-3-4 Roppongi, Minato-ku; dishes around ¥2000; ☎ 5pm-5am; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Lines to Roppongi (exit 3)

Once you're bombarded with greetings at the door, the action doesn't stop at this old-guard *robatayaki* (a place that grills food that goes beautifully with booze). It's a party, it's joyous, it's boisterous – and that goes for the profusion of toothsome dishes as well as the attitude one must have when the bill arrives. Live large!

### VINOTECA Map pp96-7 Italian ¥¥¥

ヴィノテカ

☎ 5647-8301; Tokyo Midtown, Minato-ku; dishes around ¥2000; ☎ 11am-3pm & 5pm-late; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 8); E

Quite possibly one of the hottest restaurants in the city at the time of writing, this inevitable crowd pleaser offers open-air dining overlooking the gardens of Tokyo Midtown. As these tables are some of the most in-demand seats in the capital, you would be wise to book in advance (in fact it's necessary) to ensure that you don't let down your better half. Although true Italian connoisseurs may find fault in the slight Japan-isation of the menu, the food here is nevertheless spectacular, and the alfresco dining is arguably the city's best.

### HAWKER STYLE ASIAN CANTEN

Map pp96-7

Singaporean ¥

海南鶏飯食堂

☎ 5474-3200; 6-11-16 Roppongi, Minato-ku; plates around ¥1000; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6-11pm; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exits 1C & 3); E

Owned by a Japanese man who fell in love with 'chicken rice', the national dish of Singapore, Hawker Style Asian Canteen is a small slice of Southeast Asia in the heart of Roppongi. If you've never eaten chicken rice before, the dish is basically chicken and rice (no surprise there), though the accompanying sauces and broth (for cleansing the palette) can make this a truly sublime culinary experience.

### MOTI Map pp96-7

Indian ¥

モティ

☎ 3479-1939; 6-2-3 Roppongi, Minato-ku; plates around ¥1000; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6-11pm; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exits 1C & 3)

## THE GENTLE ART OF JAPANESE COOKING

Think you've got what it takes to fry up some mean tempura? The following two schools will help get you started:

**Konishi Japanese Cooking Class** (Map p102;

☎ 3714-8859; www.seiko-osp.com/private/sekigu/kjcc/index.htm; 1405 Nissei Meguro-Mansion; 3-1-7 Meguro, Meguro-ku; ㊟ Namboku or Mita Line to Meguro, west exit, or JR Yamanote Line to Meguro, main exit) Friendly English instruction with small class sizes.

**A Taste of Culture** (☎ 5716-5751; http://tasteofculture.com) Offers Japanese cooking courses and market tours in various locations around the city.

Loved by local expats, Moti maintains a loyal base of foodies who come for the set lunches and well-seasoned curries. Settle into one of the comfortable booths and watch as first one embassy staffer and then another comes and goes. Moti can fill to the rafters around noon.

### YAKINIKU TORAJI INTERNATIONAL

Map pp96-7

Yakiniku ¥¥

焼肉トラジインターナショナル

☎ 5786-2888; Roppongi Hills, Roppongi 6-chōme; plates ¥750-1000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ Hibiya or Toei Ōedo Line to Roppongi (exit 1C); E

Although it originates from the humble Korean dish known as *bulgogi*, *yakiniku* (grilled meat) at this Roppongi Hills establishment is anything but ordinary. Choose from a variety of immaculate cuts of meat, and then slow roast them over charcoals. Next, dip your perfectly cooked slices of meat in a variety of sauces before popping them into your mouth – delicious!

## EBISU & DAIKANYAMA

Ebisu and Daikanyama, though not on most short-term visitors' radar, are home to a grown-up creative community of 30- and 40-something designers, artists and architects. As such, the neighbourhoods are full of independent boutiques and European-style cafés, and the area's sophisticated aesthetics and flavours reflect a hip and worldly population.

### MUSHROOM Map p102

French ¥¥

マッシュルーム

☎ 5489-1346; 2nd fl, 1-16-3 Ebisu-Nishi, Shibuya-ku; set courses from ¥3000; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6-11pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (west exit) Chef Yamaoka's obsession with the taming of the 'shroom has sprouted this very cosy little French bistro, whose décor is dominated by a mushroom motif, of course. Three-course set lunches are amazing value and will transport you elsewhere – without the mind-altering side effects of course. Japanese skills will help in making a reservation, and French skills will help in interpreting the menu.

### RICO'S KITCHEN

Map p102

International ¥¥

リコスキッチン

☎ 5791-4649; 2nd fl, 4-23-7 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; plates around ¥2000; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6-11pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (east exit)

From light and fruity California wines to juicy New Zealand rack of lamb, this international bistro brings together the best flavours from around the globe to create some truly innovative meals. With vaulted wooden ceilings and hand-brushed walls, the setting at Rico's Kitchen is personal and relaxed, which makes this the perfect spot for slowing down and enjoying the art of fine cuisine.

## ZEST CANTINA EBISU

Map p102 Mexican ¥

ゼストキャンティーナ恵比寿  
☎ 5475-6291; 1-22-19 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1500-2000; ☎ 11.30am-3.30am Mon-Sat; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (east exit); E  
You'd be forgiven for thinking you were eating Tex-Mex somewhere in America after walking into this cavernous Ebisu institution. Although the jumbo margaritas, enormous bowls of nachos and sizzling hot plates of fajitas are reason enough to stop

by, there's something endearing about Japanese waiting staff in cowboy boots and hats.

## TOKI-NO-MA Map p102 Izakaya ¥

時の間  
☎ 5722-8600; 2nd fl, 2-3-14 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; plates around ¥1500; ☎ 4.30pm-late; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (west exit)  
True to the Ebisu spirit, this *izakaya* is a class act. For your drinking pleasure, the attentive staff can recommend any number of limited-edition sakes, which change constantly depending on the season. For your eating pleasure, the attentive staff can recommend any number of unique dishes including *satusma-ryouri* (Kyūshū-style cuisine), wild game birds and a full assortment of seafood delicacies. Although there is no English menu, set courses are available if you can't speak Japanese.

## SELF-CATERING

Even if you're here with money to burn, a visit to an everyday market or to the food halls in the more elegant department store basements (see p171) is well worth the time. Traditional family-owned shops are dotted around the city, and most sell seasonal produce (such as summer melons, autumn persimmons and winter strawberries) and daily basics such as fish, seaweed and rice. International supermarkets cater to Western palates. Although they charge import prices, fussy resident expats would starve without them.

- **Kinokuniya International Supermarket** (Map p110; ☎ 3409-1236; 3-11-7 Kita-Aoyama, Minato-ku; ☎ 9.30am-8pm; ⑨ Chiyoda, Ginza or Hanzōmon Line to Omote-sandō, exit B2) Kinokuniya carries expat lifesavers such as Marmite and peanut butter, Belgian chocolate and herbal tea. Foreign imports such as cheese, salami and Finnish bread generally fetch high prices, much like the flawless fruit in the produce section. An interim store at 3.11.13 Minami-Aoyama (p110) is located just further south along Aoyama-dōri.
- **Meidi-ya** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 3401-8511; 7-15-14 Roppongi, Minato-ku; ☎ 10am-9pm; ⑨ Hibiya Line to Roppongi, exit 2) Established in the 19th century, not too long after strangers in black ships started arriving on Japan's shores, Meidi-ya specialises in higher-end groceries for foreign predilections. It's a mid-sized store with a corresponding selection of goods, so you should find ample fixings for a picnic. There are other locations throughout the city.
- **National Azabu** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 3442-3181; 4-5-2 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku; ☎ 9.30am-7pm; ⑨ Hibiya Line to Hiro-o, exit 2) Based in Azabu, where a high concentration of expats also happen to base themselves, National Azabu carries an impressive array of expat staples such as imported cheeses, wines, Vegemite and natural foods as well as hard-to-find produce. Also notable is the pharmacy with English-speaking staff and the small bookshop upstairs.
- **Natural House** (Map p110; ☎ 3498-2277; 3-6-18 Kita-Aoyama, Minato-ku; ☎ 10am-10pm; ⑨ Chiyoda, Ginza or Hanzōmon Line to Omote-sandō, exit B4) Natural House serves the ecoconscious trendsters around Aoyama, meeting a growing demand for whole foods and organic produce. Along with bricks of rye loaves and pricey but nutritious *ben-tō* (boxed lunch), Natural House also peddles natural beauty products and health supplements.
- **Yamaya** (Map p92; ☎ 3583-5657; 2-14-33 Akasaka, Minato-ku; ☎ 10am-9pm; ⑨ Chiyoda Line to Akasaka, exit 2) Yamaya's shelves are stuffed primarily with European wines, though there's also a representative selection of American and Australian grape as well. Most branches are discount retailers and offer some imported packaged foods in addition to wines and liquors.

## MONSOON Map p102 Asian Fusion ¥

モンズーンカフェ  
☎ 5789-3811; www.global-dining.com; 4-4-6 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 11.30am-3.30am Mon-Sat; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (east exit); E  
Monsoon serves up a variety of pan-Asian cuisine from peanut satays to steamed shrimp dumplings in an evocative tropical café setting. Alfresco seating and fruity cocktails help stave off the oppression of Tokyo's notoriously muggy summers, while tropical lagers and spicy curries will help you escape the depression of Tokyo's notoriously grey winters.

## CAFFÉ MICHELANGELO

Map p102 Café ¥

カフェミケランジェロ  
☎ 3770-9517; 29-3 Sakuragaokachō, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥500-1000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (west exit); E  
Stylish Daikanyama is exactly the locale this Parisian-style café is meant to occupy. The smart set comes here to be seen, but you could just as easily blend into the background. Pavement seating makes it a fine summertime lunch stop, with lovely reasonably priced lunch sets to enjoy with wine.

## CAFÉ ARTIFAGOSE Map p102 Café ¥

カフェアルトファゴス  
☎ 5489-1133; 20-23 Daikanyama, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥500-1000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu (west exit); E  
Follow your nose towards the yeasty scent of baking bread, and you'll wind up at Café Artifagose where strong coffee and fine cheese and bread are your reward. If the neighbourhood shops tempt you more than a leisurely lunch does, pick up a pastry for later.

## SHIBUYA

After seeing the teenagers cruising Shibuya crossing and clusters of young fashionistas awaiting their cohorts at Hachikō Plaza, your attention span might only allow you a quick bite at a greasy spoon near the station before darting back into the melee. But for those nights when you need a bigger gastronomic thrill, stray outwards onto the streets speaking away from Shibuya Station and discover the neighbourhood's more sophisticated delights.

## COUCAGNO Map p106 French ¥ ¥ ¥

クーカーニョ  
☎ 3476-3000; 40th fl, Cerulean Tower, 26-1 Sakuragaokachō, Shibuya-ku; set courses from ¥6000; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 5.30-10pm; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit); E  
Few restaurants in Tokyo can claim more stunning views than the highly praised Coucagno, which occupies the 40th floor of the Cerulean Tower, one of the most dramatic buildings in both Shibuya and Tokyo. From such lofty heights, the Shibuya street scene looks as if it's populated by tiny ants, though attention quickly shifts to the food once the chef gets going. As you'd expect, everything from the delicate sauces drizzled across your roast duck to the perfect crust atop your *crème brûlée* is indeed a class act.

## KUJIRAYA Map p106 Traditional ¥ ¥ ¥

鯨屋  
☎ 3461-9145; 2-29-22 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku; set courses from ¥5000; ☎ 11am-10pm; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)  
We'll leave it to you and your dinner companions to debate the ethics of this surprisingly popular restaurant, which serves nothing but whale meat. Conservation, environmentalism and morality aside, there are few places in the world where you can sample whale sashimi, fried blubber and fin steaks, though you're going to have to leave your politics at the door. Although there is no English menu, you can order set menus based on price – whale meat isn't cheap, which is probably to do with the fact that they're endangered.

## MAYU (COCOON) Map p106 Wine Bar ¥ ¥

繭  
☎ 5453-0301; 40-3 Kamiyamachō, Shibuya-ku; plates around ¥2000; ☎ 6pm-late; ⑨ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit); E  
Arguably the strangest restaurant you've ever seen, the ultrachic interior of this trendy spot is highlighted by several fi-breglass cocoons, each of which can seat up to four people. Although the cuisine is international with a strong European influence, the focus here is on the wine, with dishes chosen by the chef to highlight the selected bottles of the day. It can certainly get pricey to sample a few different bottles and dishes, but sipping wine and dining on homemade pasta in the comfort of your

own cocoon is about as surreal a dining experience as you can imagine.

**SONOMA** Map p106 Californian ¥

ソノマ  
☎ 3462-7766; 2-25-17 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1500-2000; ☎ 6-11.30pm Sun-Thu, 6pm-4am Fri & Sat; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit); E

Favourites such as polenta fries and pork chops with sage, brown sugar and apples form the mainstay of this unpretentiously inspired and priced Californian fusion menu. The interior resembles a Sonoma wine country restaurant and the menu is complemented by a strong selection of Californian wines.

**EL CASTELLANO** Map p106 Spanish ¥

エルカステリャーノ  
☎ 3407-7197; 2nd fl, 2-9-12 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥500-2000; ☎ 6-11pm Mon-Sat; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (east exit); E

El Castellano's success could be attributed to the warmth of its owner, who casts a friendly eye over the evening's progress and affectionately greets his regulars with sunny Spanish hospitality. But that would discount the definite draw of his homestyle cooking, including a mean paella and the sangria that goes so well with it.

**OKINAWA** Map p106 Okinawan Izakaya ¥¥

沖縄  
☎ 3464-2576; 1st basement fl, Shibuya Deli Tower, 2-23-13 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku; plates around ¥1000; ☎ 5.30-11pm; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit); E

If you've never been to the far-flung tropical islands of Okinawa, then this speciality *izakaya* will have you racing to the travel agent. Start things off right with a cold Orion Beer or a potent glass of *awamori* (Okinawan-style *shōchū*), and then jump right into Okinawan staples such as *mimiga* (pig ears), *suki-soba* (Okinawan-style *soba*) and *rafute* (stewed pork with brown sugar).

**SHIZENKAN II** Map p106 Vegetarian ¥

自然館  
☎ 3486-0281; 3-9-2 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥500-1500; ☎ 11am-8pm Mon-Sat; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (east exit); E

Strict vegans and vegetarians looking to sample Japanese favourites may find it tough in Tokyo, though Shizenkan II fills

the gap with gluten cutlets and substantial lunch sets of prettily arranged piles of vegies. The food is flavourful and packs a nutritional wallop, and there's even a health food shop in the front part of the restaurant in case you're looking to stock the fridge at home.

## HARAJUKU & AOYAMA

Like the boutiques and galleries that flank Omote-sandō, and the winding lanes that diverge from it, the cafés and eateries in this area experiment relentlessly and insist on finding new directions. New takes on old standards abound and Western fuses with Japanese as chefs strive to become inventors in order to make a name. Surprisingly, all this innovation can be had without sacrificing comfort and beauty in the name of economy.

**NOBU** Map p110 Modern Japanese ¥¥¥

信  
☎ 5467-0022; 6-10-17 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku; set courses from ¥6000; ☎ 11.30am-3.30pm & 5.30-10pm Mon-Fri, 6-11.30pm Sat & Sun; ㊤ Chiyoda, Ginza or Hanzōmon Line to Omote-sandō (exit B1); E

Stemming from a childhood wish to become a sushi chef, Nobu Matsuhisa now has namesake restaurants in cities on four continents. His 1993 foray into the New York scene was financed by Robert De Niro, with subsequent Nobu restaurants established in Milan, Paris, London, Melbourne and Tokyo. His stunning, cutting-edge Japanese food doesn't come cheap, but the experience of eating here is simply phenomenal.

**FONDA DE LA MADRUGADA**

Map p110 Mexican ¥¥¥

フオンダドラマ ドゥルガーダ  
☎ 5410-6288; 2nd basement fl, 2-33-12 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; plates around ¥2000; ☎ 5.30pm-2am Sun-Thu, 5.30pm-5am Fri & Sat; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Takeshita exit); E

Mariachis stroll through the enclosed courtyard – in a basement hacienda! – as you tuck into *chiles rellenos* (stuffed chillies) or appraise the *mole* (savoury, spicy chocolate sauce) drizzled over chicken or enchiladas. This is one of the few authentic Mexican restaurants in Tokyo free of grim guacamole and unfortunate Tex-Mex flourishes.

**TETSUGEN NIKUSHO** Map p110 Izakaya ¥¥

鐵玄 肉匠  
☎ 5774-4533; 1-5-6 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1500-2000; ☎ 6pm-1am; ㊤ Chiyoda, Ginza or Hanzōmon Line to Omote-sandō (exit A2)  
There's no shortage of bizarre (at least to a Western palate) delicacies on offer at Tetsugen Nikusho, which offers refined rustic yet sophisticated ambience in the heart of Tokyo. Depending on how brave (or drunk) you're feeling, you can sample a whole range of traditional Japanese meats including rabbit, boar, deer, horse and frog as well as a whole bunch of sea critter parts that don't really translate into English. Sadly, there isn't an English menu on offer, though sometimes it's better not to know what you're eating.

**NATURAL HARMONY ANGOLO**

Map p110 Vegetarian ¥¥

ナチュラルハーモニーアングロ  
☎ 3405-8393; 3-38-12 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1500-2000; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 6-9pm Tue-Sun; ㊤ Ginza Line to Gaienmae (exit 2)

Downshift to the pace of Natural Harmony Angolo, where the wholesome food is pure and so is the smoke-free air. The menu is largely vegetarian, augmented with some fish dishes; set meals featuring the delicately prepared vegetables *du jour* come with a choice of white or brown rice. Try some cold, cloudy sake with your meal and meditatively decompress.

**HANNIBAL DEUX** Map p110 North African ¥¥

ハンニバル ドゥ  
☎ 3479-3710; 3-53-3 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1000-3000; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 5.30pm-midnight; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Takeshita exit); E

Even if you've never been to Tunisia (or had Tunisian food for that matter), you'll recognise the fiery tajines and savoury couscous dishes on offer at this North African restaurant. The chef and much of the staff do in fact come from Tunisia, which is about all the proof you need that the food here is about as authentic as you'll find in Japan.

**MOMINOKI HOUSE**

Map p110 Japanese Health Food ¥

モミノキハウス  
☎ 3405-9144; 2-18-5 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥1000-2000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku (Takeshita exit); E  
Boho Tokyoites and personages such as

Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder have descended into Mominoki House's multi-level, rabbit warren of a dining room since 1976. Chef Yamada's menu consists mostly of Japanese wholefoods, much of it vegetarian but also including organically raised Australian perch and Hokkaidō venison. Food here is lovingly prepared, and enriching to both body and soul.

**MAISEN** Map p110 Tonkatsu ¥

まい泉  
☎ 3470-0071; 4-8-5 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥750-1000; ☎ 11am-10pm; ㊤ Chiyoda, Ginza or Hanzōmon Line to Omote-sandō (exit A2)  
Set in a converted public bathhouse, Maisen is rightfully famous for its *tonkatsu* – choose from shrimp, pork or premium *kurobuta* (black pig). There's also a takeaway window for picking up *bentō* of *tonkatsu* accompanied by packets of Maisen's savoury dipping sauce.

**NABI** Map p110 Yakimiku ¥

ナビ  
☎ 5771-0071; 2-31-20 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku; plates ¥500-1000; ☎ 11am-2.30pm & 6-11.30pm; ㊤ Chiyoda, Ginza or Hanzōmon Line to Omote-sandō (exit A2)  
Paying tribute to its progressive surroundings, Nabi offers an organic spin on the traditional Korean dish of *yakiniku*. While you're grilling your meat and veg at your private tabletop barbecue, stop for a moment to appreciate the fact that you're eating healthily and making the environment a cleaner place at the same time.

## SHINJUKU

At the end of the work day, a few million sturdy pairs of shoes carry Shinjuku's workforce out of office doors towards the train stations. To avoid the worst of rush hour, most stop along the way for *yakitori* or *rāmen* or a more convivial sit-down affair with colleagues. Once inside most eateries on the east side of the station, the pace slows and the light show outside disappears. On the west side, restaurants within the towers of the luxury hotels are designed for the view-hungry.

**NEW YORK GRILL** Map p116 Continental ¥¥¥

ニューヨークグリル  
☎ 5323-3458; 52nd fl, Park Hyatt Hotel, 3-7-1-2 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; set courses from

¥6000; 11.30am-2.30pm & 5.30-10.30pm;  
 ④ Toei Ōedo Line to Tochōmae (exit A4); E  
 You may not be staying at the Park Hyatt, but don't let that stop you from ascending to the 52nd floor to swoon over the stunning views of the city below. Splurge on a romantic, sumptuous supper backlit by sparkling night-time lights and live jazz. And yes, in case everything looks a bit familiar, the adjacent **New York Bar** (p181) was in fact where Bill Murray drank glass upon glass of Suntory whiskey in Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*. Reservations are advised, especially on weekends and for brunch.

## KUSHIYA MONOGATARI

Map p116 Traditional ¥¥  
 串家物語  
 ④ 5728-2494; 1st basement fl, Shibuya Cine Tower, 2-6-17 Dōgenzaka, Shibuya-ku; set course ¥2500; ④ 4-10.30pm; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Shibuya (Hachikō exit)

The Tokyo branch of this popular Osaka chain specialises in *kushiage*, which are deep-fried skewers of grilled meats, fish and vegetables. For the bargain price of only ¥2500, you have up to two hours to fry up at your tabletop as many skewers as you'd like, though this is one of the few Japanese foods where it's probably best to go easy and consider your waistline.

**DAIDAYA** Map p116 Asian Fusion ¥¥  
 橙屋

④ 5362-7173; 3rd fl, Shinjuku Nowa Bldg, 3-37-12 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; plates around ¥2000; ④ 5pm-midnight; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Shinjuku (east exit); E  
 Unabashedly cool with modern Balinese-style design accents from floor to ceiling, this ultrasophisticated Asian fusion restaurant offers a *nouvelle* take on this already inventive cuisine. Dishes such as Kyshu-style sausages with homemade wasabi-mayonnaise are individually crafted works of art, and are presented in slow but steady stages to allow for the maximum amount of appreciation.

**IMAHAN** Map p116 Traditional ¥  
 今半  
 ④ 5361-1871; 14th fl, 5-24-2 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku; plates around ¥1500; ④ 11am-11pm; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Shinjuku (new south exit); E  
 Upstairs from the huge Takashimaya Times

Square branch of Tōkyū Hands department store, Imahan is all about beef. Apart from the house specialities of *sukiyaki* and *shabu-shabu*, Imahan serves such delicacies as *fugu*, marbled beef sashimi and scaled-down *kaiseki* dinners. Come with comrades, as this cookery is meant to be shared for maximum merriment.

**DADA CAFÉ** Map p116 Café ¥  
 ダダカフェ

④ 3350-2245; 5-23-10 Sendagaya, Shinjuku-ku; plates around ¥1000; ④ 11.30am-11pm; ④ JR Yamanote to Yoyogi (east exit)  
 This retro café, which is housed in a 70-year-old tenement building straight out of the Shōwa era, is a charming spot to reminisce about a Tokyo most of us have never known. While taking tea and noshing on immaculate spreads of honest Japanese cooking, take a moment to reflect on the Zenlike beauty of your surroundings.

**PARK HYATT DELICATESSEN**  
 Map p116 Deli ¥¥

パークハイアットデリカテッセン  
 ④ 5323-3635; 1st fl, Park Hyatt Hotel, 3-7-1-2 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; sandwiches around ¥1000; ④ 8am-8pm; ④ Toei Ōedo Line to Tochōmae (exit A4); E  
 Stop by the Park Hyatt Hotel for what is undoubtedly Tokyo's top spot for New York-style sandwiches, which will make even the most hardened New Yorker sob for home. Everything from the sesame-seed-coated crusty loaves of bread to the protein-packed slabs of cured Parma ham is either homemade on-site or imported direct from the source, which is why everything here just tastes so damn good.

**CHRISTON CAFÉ** Map p116 Izakaya ¥  
 クリントンカフェ

④ 5287-2426; 8th fl, 5-17-13 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; plates ¥500-1000; ④ 5-11pm Mon, 5pm-5am Tue-Sat; ④ Marunouchi Line to Shinjuku-sanchōme (exit B5)  
 Irreverent in the most orthodox sense of the word, this cathedral-like *izakaya* fetishises the Catholic aesthetic and turns this dining experience into something your inner goth will love. Reservations are definitely required here to feast on small plates to share with your brethren under gigantic altars and doleful images of the pietà.

## DEPACHIKA

Hungry for the next culinary novelty, OLs (office ladies) and *o-bāsan* (grandmotherly types) prowl the mazes of *depachika*, the cavernous food halls in department store basements. *Depachika* often take up several floors, housing a staggering array of foodstuffs of the highest order, freshly prepared and often gorgeously packaged for presentation as gifts. Depending on the most *au courant* food trends, you could find black truffle oil or dessert vinegar just round the corner from the more traditional 573 grades of the season's green tea and *wagashi* (delicate candies). Though samples are harder to come by these days, the sharp-eyed will find nibbles of sublime chocolate, sesame-seed *sembei* (crunchy rice crackers) and dried squid.

Large department stores are often attached to major train stations – *über*-convenient for picking up museum-quality *ben-tō* (boxed lunch) for dinner, picnic items for a sunny afternoon or a fancy gift of flower-shaped *okashi* (sweets).

If you can read Japanese, do as obsessive OLs do and monitor the day's specials on [www.depachika.com](http://www.depachika.com). If not, descend into one of the following basements, among Tokyo's best *depachika*.

**Isetan** (Map p116; ④ 3352-1111; 3-14-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; ④ 10am-8pm; ④ Marunouchi or Toei Shinjuku Line to Shinjuku-sanchōme, exits B3, B4 & B5) The grandmother of them all.

**Matsuya** (Map p62; ④ 3567-1211; 3-6-1 Ginza, Chūō-ku; ④ 10.30am-7.30pm; ④ Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza, exits A12 & A13) An upmarket Ginza stalwart. Also has branches in Asakusa and Ahikabara (see p137).

**Mitsukoshi** (Map p62; ④ 3241-3311; 4-6-16 Ginza, Chūō-ku; ④ 10am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sun; ④ Ginza, Hibiya or Marunouchi Line to Ginza, exit A7) Classic style and status at this Ginza institution. Further outlets can be found in Ikebukuro, Marunouchi and Ebisu (see p136).

**Seibu** (Map p122; ④ 3981-0111; 1-28-1 Minami-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku; ④ 10am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Ikebukuro, east exit) Spanning several city blocks, with a particularly comprehensive spice market.

**Takashimaya Times Square** (Map p116; ④ 5361-1111; 5-24-2 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku; ④ 10am-8pm, closed some Wed; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Shinjuku, new south exit) Like the 15-storey department store above it, this *depachika* is enormous.

**KINKANTEI** Map p116 Soba ¥  
 きんかん亭

④ 3356-6556; 2-17-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; noodles from ¥500; ④ 7pm-late; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Shinjuku (east exit)  
 Although the heart of Tokyo's gay district is the last place you'd expect to find a 200-year-old *soba* shop, Kinkantei is the real thing. Although purists swear that *soba* this traditional should just be eaten as is, more avant-garde diners can dress their dishes up with a whole slew of treats including the restaurant's signature deep-fried *nattō* (fermented beans) wrapped in seaweed.

**OMOIDE-YOKOCHŌ** Map p116 Yakitori ¥  
 思い出横丁

Nishi-Shinjuku 1-chōme, Shinjuku-ku; skewers from ¥100; ④ JR Yamanote Line to Shinjuku (west exit)  
 Literally translated as 'Memory Lane' (and less politely known as 'Piss Alley') Omoide-yokochō will be but a memory when it's razed to make way for new development by mid-2009. A remnant of postwar Tokyo, the alley is lined with wooden shacks selling *yakitori* and cold beers to long-time regulars – stop by around 7pm to indulge in a few skewers and preemptive nostalgia.

## IKEBUKURO

After an afternoon spent wandering around Ikebukuro, you'll have noticed that many of the area's eateries are jammed with young salarymen with a bit of time on their hands. Accordingly, many places are very cheap and rather uninspired. However, nearby Takadanobaba, which is located at the crossroads of several universities, has its artsy cafés and international restaurants catering to students with big appetites and smaller budgets.

**SHAMAIM** off Map p122 Israeli ¥¥  
 シャマイム

④ 3948-5333; 2nd fl, Art Bldg, 4-11 Sakae-cho, Nerima-ku; buffet ¥2000; ④ 5pm-midnight, Tue-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; ④ Seibu-Ikebukuro Line to Ekoda (south exit); E

A quick train ride from Ikebukuro will bring you to this Israeli-owned restaurant, which serves up an incredible all-you-can-eat feast that'll have you dreaming about a trip to the Middle East. Gorge yourself on pita, hummus, meat skewers, cucumber salads and rice pilaf, but be sure to save some room for a hot cup of mint tea, some syrupy baklava and the obligatory apple

sheesha. The restaurant is located across the street from the south exit of Ekoda station, which is three stops away from Ikebukuro on the Seibu-Ikebukuro line.

### SASASHŪ Map p122

Izakaya ¥

笹屋  
☎ 3971-9363; 2-2-6 Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 5-10pm Mon-Sat; ㊟ Marunouchi Line to Ikebukuro (exit C5)

Sasashū's Japanese-style façade is easy to pick out between the modern concrete strip joints nearby. This relaxed *izakaya* is known for its highbrow sake selection and its traditional hearth, as well as some more unusual offerings including a rich and hearty *kamonabe* (duck stew). Japanese skills are helpful here, but you can also point at what others are enjoying to order for yourself.

### TAVERNA Map p122

Italian ¥

タベルナ  
☎ 3232-1997; 2-5-10 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku; plates around ¥1000; ☎ 5-10.30pm Mon-Sat; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Takadanobaba (main exit); E

There are reasons why some people eat here every night, and why the sommelier, who started hanging around 23 years ago while still a student at Waseda, finally landed a job. Authenticity's a part of it, but the charm of the owner probably clinches such unflagging loyalty. Easily the warmest Italian joint in the city, and you can't beat the price.

### MARMARA Map p122

Turkish ¥

マmara  
☎ 3227-5940; 4-9-9 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku; plates around ¥1000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Takadanobaba (main exit); E

The tiny wooden shack that marks the entrance and dispenses dirt-cheap takeaway kebab is so small you might pass it by without remark. Once through the door, however, you'll see the stairs leading down to the spacious seating area where there's sometimes live music, but always solicitous staff and a dizzying choice of Turkish delights.

### KAO TAI Map p122

Thai ¥

カオタイ  
☎ 3204-5806; 2-14-6 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku; curries around ¥1000; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 5-10pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Takadanobaba (main exit)

From the bamboo-framed doorway to its snug dining room, Kao Tai feels like a warm slice of Southeast Asia. Most dishes are

small-plate affairs, allowing you to sample and share while swigging a Singha. While not the most complicated Thai food around, the room's feel more than makes up for it.

### BEN'S CAFE Map p122

Café ¥

ベンズカフェ  
☎ 3202-2445; 1-29-21 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku; plates ¥500-1000; ☎ 11.30am-11.30pm Sun-Thu, 11.30am-12.30am Fri & Sat; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Takadanobaba (main exit); E

Local Waseda students and expats come to Ben's to quell cravings for bagels or Belgian beer – or just to chill. The patio out front is a good place to sip wine and watch life amble by on warm evenings. Ben's also hosts poetry readings and art exhibitions by local artists, and it has wi-fi access.

### GYROS HERO

Map p122

Greek ¥

ヒーロスヒーロー  
☎ 3205-8207; 2-14-5 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku; plates ¥500-1000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Takadanobaba (main exit); E

A popular student haunt that offers great value for your yen, Gyros Hero puts together some seriously monster pitas, packed to the gills with meat and salad, and served up with sauces and golden fries. The Greek-inspired décor of soft pastels and pictures of tiny sun-drenched isles is a world away from the concrete and neon outside.

### AKIYOSHI Map p122

Yakitori ¥

秋吉  
☎ 3982-0601; 3-30-4 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku; plates around ¥500; ☎ 5-11pm; ㊟ JR Yamanote Line to Ikebukuro (west exit)

## JAPANESE BREAKFAST

A traditional Japanese breakfast consists of rice, miso soup and pickles, some kind of cooked egg, a piece of grilled fish and a cup of green tea. Tokyoites are also known to be fond of *nattō* (fermented soya beans; see the boxed text, p159) for breakfast, mixed into the rice with a dab of hot mustard.

That said, the breakfast of choice for more and more Japanese these days is a cup of coffee, a thick slab of white toast, an egg and a small green salad. You can enjoy this as a *mōningu setto* (モーニングセット; morning set) at small coffee houses for between ¥450 and ¥600. Many hotels serve both Western- and Japanese-style breakfasts.

If in the mood for *yakitori*, Akiyoshi is an approachable, ebullient place to partake. The open grill at centre stage ignites a festive, sociable space. The chefs work quickly to help move traffic along, but that doesn't mean you can't sit comfortably through several small courses and at least one conversation. There is no English menu, though ordering is simple with the picture menu.

## SUMIDA RIVER

Primarily a suburban residential area, the neighbourhoods east of Sumida-gawa are home to few noteworthy restaurants that are worth seeking out. However, if you have any interest in trying *chankonabe* (ちゃんこ鍋), the sumō wrestler's staple, it's worth heading to Ryōgoku for lunch or dinner.

### TOMOEGATA

Map p122

Chankonabe ¥¥

ヒーロスヒーロー  
巴湯  
☎ 3632-5600; 2-17-6 Ryōgoku, Sumida-ku; set course from ¥1500; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ JR Sōbu Line to Ryōgoku (west exit)

Given the preponderance of sumō stables in Ryōgoku, it's only natural that you'd find restaurants serving the calorie-rich *chankonabe*. Recipes vary for this hearty stew, but count on beef, chicken, pork, fish and/or seasonal vegetables. Tomoegata has been serving it for generations – go with a group, or eat it all by yourself if you want to become big like a sumō wrestler.

## ODAIBA & AROUND

This artificially constructed pleasure island serves as a quick and easy escape for stressed out Tokyoites looking for a little R&R. Not surprisingly, Odaiba is home to dozens of restaurants catering to every conceivable taste and budget. Eating in Odaiba also means food with a view, especially if you cosy up alongside a picture window and gaze out across the bay.

### ŌSHIMA ENDOMAE-DOKORO

Map p131

Sushi & Sashimi ¥¥¥

大志満江戸前処  
☎ 5556-4808; 30th fl, Hotel Grand Pacific Le Meridien, 2-6-1 Daiba, Minato-ku; sushi spread from ¥6000; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ Yurikamome Line to Daiba (south exit); E

The 30th floor of the Hotel Grand Pacific Le Meridien affords broad views of the cranes,

lifts and skyscrapers on the opposite shore. How charming then at such a soaring height that this little spot, with its tiny counter and virtuosic sushi chefs, makes you feel like a bird in a very warm nest. If you're travelling with a loved one, dining on sushi of this quality at such lofty heights is a romantic and altogether memorable experience, especially if the weather is cooperating.

### TSUKIJI TAMA SUSHI

Map p131

Sushi & Sashimi ¥¥

築地玉寿司  
☎ 3599-6556; 5th fl, Decks Tokyo Beach, 1-6-1 Daiba, Minato-ku; sushi spread from ¥2500; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ Yurikamome Line to Odaiba Kaihin-kōen (main exit); E

Settle yourself near the windows and sip from a huge, earthy cup of green tea while you wait for your sushi, which will come immaculately presented and perfectly fresh. The menu also includes set meals and *udon* if you prefer, though either way, this is a pleasant corner from which to take in good Japanese food and bay views.

### HIBIKI Map p131

Japanese Pub ¥

響  
☎ 3599-5500; 6th fl, Aquacity Odaiba, 1-7-1 Daiba, Minato-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ Yurikamome Line to Daiba (south exit); E

The inventive menu at this Japanese pub-style restaurant emphasises top-quality meats and hearty side dishes, all of which perfectly accompany the extensive selection of booze on offer. However, don't let all of this fine food and drink distract you from the incredible views of the Rainbow Bridge sweeping across Tokyo Bay.

### GOMPACHI

Map p131

Izakaya ¥

権八  
☎ 3599-4807; 4th fl, Aquacity Odaiba, 1-7-1 Daiba, Minato-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 11am-11pm; ㊟ Yurikamome Line to Daiba (south exit); E

The Glien Passage theme park is home to every conceivable type of restaurant, though Gompachi, a traditional *izakaya*, gets top marks for its sweeping views and delicious *robatayaki* (grilled skewers). There is an English menu available, though with all the wafting aromas of delicious roasting meats, chickens, fish and seafood filling the air, it is not necessary to look at a menu to figure out what you want to eat.

**LES DEUX BLEUE** Map pp48–9

Café ¥

レドゥブルー

☎ 3536-8326; 1st fl, LaLaPort Toyosu, 2-4-9

Toyosu, Minato-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 11am-

11pm; 🚶 Yurikamome Line to Toyosu (main exit); E

Spend a bit of time in Tokyo, and you'll quickly realise that the Japanese are avid dog lovers. Considering that a day out at Odaiba should be about the whole family, this dog-friendly café serves up tasty treats for both humans and their canine companions. Fill up on meaty burgers or tofu treats, though be sure to save some for Spot – after your meal, you can both burn off the calories by running around the fenced-in dog enclosure.

**T Y HARBOR BREWERY**

Map pp48–9

Brew Pub ¥

ティーワイ ハーバーブルワリー

☎ 5479-4555; Bond Street, 2-1-3 Higashi-Shina-

gawa, Minato-ku; plates ¥1000-1500; ☎ 11.30am-

2.30pm &amp; 5.30-10pm; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to

Shinagawa (east exit); E

Sometimes a good beer can be hard to find, especially in a country that favours mass-produced lagers instead of fostering

a culture of microbrews. Fortunately, this American-style brew pub serves up any number of original homebrews that are sure to take the edge off while simultaneously pleasing the palate.

**TEN-TEN TSUNE-TSUNE KAITENBO**

Map p131

Dim Sum ¥

点点常常回転坊

☎ 3599-6705; 7th fl, Decks Tokyo Beach, 1-6-1

Daiba, Minato-ku; plates around ¥500; ☎ 11am-

11pm; 🚶 Yurikamome Line to Odaiba Kaihin-kōen

(main exit); E

There is no shortage of great Chinese restaurants in 'Little Hong Kong', though we can promise you that you have never seen anything quite like this novelty dim sum spot. Drawing inspiration from *kaiten-zushi* (conveyor-belt sushi) restaurants, Ten-ten Tsune-tsune Kaitenbou (try saying that with your mouth full!) offers conveyor-belt dim sum feasts to hungry shoppers in need of a dumpling-fuelled boost. Although there is a limited English menu available, it is not hard to simply grab what looks good!