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Gay Tokyo – the best gay hotels, bars,  
clubs & more

Tokyo is an incredible city of contrasts where you can clearly see and admire the technological advances of tomorrow mixed with a long history and vibrant culture. It has one of the largest and most intricate public transit systems in the world as well as some of the oldest temples and historical sites. Explore the unusually pristine streets despite a notable lack of garbage cans and a population of over 13 million people. As with most big cities, the sights, food, shopping, and nightlife are plentiful with more to do and see than you could cover in one trip.

## **General Tips**

Though it's undoubtedly an expensive city to visit, a bit of foresight can help to keep expenses to a minimum while visiting. For example, if you're looking for a good view of the city, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building has a free observatory versus paying to go up the Tokyo Tower.

Depending on where you're going during your visit and how long your trip is, consider getting a [JR Pass](#) because it can save you money when travelling by rail (which is a great way to travel around Japan). Essentially if you plan to go to one more major city apart from Tokyo, it should be worth it providing you with unlimited rides on JR trains for one to three weeks.

As with many destinations, the best times to go are in the Spring (March – May) and Fall (September – November). The summers are quite hot and humid, and the winters are quite cold. But in reality, Tokyo is a great destination any season with plenty to do year-round.

## **Transportation & Airport Transfer**

Tokyo has an incredibly elaborate public transportation system that can be a bit difficult to navigate with various companies owning particular lines that don't coincide with one another. But despite the difficulty in navigating it at first, the good thing is that it can take you anywhere you want to go.

*By Train*

To get to the center of Tokyo from the airport you have a few options. First, the [JR Narita Express](#) is a great option because it's the quickest (1 hour) and most comfortable departing every 25 to 40 minutes from Airport Terminal 1 Station to Ikebukuro, Shinjuku, and Shibuya Stations in Tokyo. However, it's also more expensive at around ¥4000.

For a more affordable option, take the JR Sobu Line for half the price (¥1340) and only 30 minutes longer. This is also included in the JR pass.

The cheapest train option is the Keisei Limited Express. This is a regular commuter train, meaning it is a commuter train not covered with the JR pass. It costs ¥1210 and takes an hour and a half. To get to Tokyo station in the center, transfer at Nippori Station to the JR Yamanote Line or JR Keihin-Tohoku Line.

### *By Bus*

[Limousine buses](#) to and from Tokyo's major hotels are a comfortable option at about ¥2,900 for a one-way trip, or ¥4,500 round-trip ticket. They can take just over an hour and a half depending on location.

Another affordable option is taking the [Airport Bus TYO-NRT](#) which also takes about an hour and half. Pay ¥1000 during the day and ¥2000 for late night or early morning.



## Gay Hotels in Tokyo

There aren't currently any [gay hotels](#) in Tokyo, but there are many gay-friendly options. Keep in mind public displays of affection in Japan are not common.

### *Luxury*

[The Prince Gallery Tokyo](#) – Located just minutes from Akasaka-Mitsuke Station and featuring free WiFi throughout the entire property, a sake bar, a sushi restaurant and a teppanyaki restaurant, plus a fitness center. The spa and wellness center and sauna facility are also a big draw. The neighborhood of Chiyoda is a great option for culture and city walks.

[The Ritz-Carlton](#) – Rooms start on the 45th level of the city's tallest building. Enjoy the spectacular views with floor-to-ceiling windows. Hotel amenities include seven amazing restaurants, a health and wellness area, and meeting spaces. In room amenities feature down pillows and comforters, marble bathroom with a deep tub and individual rain-shower, two TVs with one in the bathroom, and daily morning newspaper. The location is also ideal with many main attractions easily accessible on foot or by subway.

[Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo](#) – Stay in Shinjuku’s Skyscraper District, a 5-minute walk from Shinjuku Train Station. This hotel has various dining options and panoramic views of the Shinjuku skyline. Guests can also enjoy the fitness center for free or the outdoor pool at a fee. Free shuttle to Tokyo Disney Resort is also offered.

### *Mid-Range*

[Shinjuku Granbell Hotel](#) – a modern and stylish hotel located right in the lively Kabuki-cho area in Shinjuku, a 7-minute walk from Shinjuku Sanchoe Subway Station or a 10-minute walk from JR Shinjuku Station. There’s also a rooftop bar on the 13th floor terrace as well as a modern-style restaurant on the 12th floor with French and Italian cuisine.

[APA Hotel Shinjuku Gyoenmae](#) – this hotel is conveniently located just a minute walk from Shinjuku-Gyoenmae subway station. Rooms are simply decorated and you can enjoy breakfast, lunch and/or dinner at the Steak Restaurant Takumi found on the ground floor. JR Shinjuku Train Station, JR Shibuya Station, and the famous Shibuya pedestrian crossing are all easily accessible.

[Tokyu Stay Shinjuku](#) – perfectly located in the middle of the Shinjuku area near Shinjuku Sanchoe Subway Station. Some rooms even have mini-kitchens with simple kitchenware and tableware. Nearby attractions include Shinjuku Gyoen Park, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, plus many restaurants and bars can be found in the surrounding area.

### *Budget*

[Wired Hotel](#) – this a local community hotel integrated into the neighborhood of Asakusa, which is another Tokyo gay district. Here you can find gay saunas such as 24 Kaikan as well as several gay bars including Navigate, a bear spot for karaoke. With only 30 rooms, they offer a personal way to experience Tokyo. Among their facilities are a restaurant, a shared kitchen, and free WiFi. Nearby attractions include Nitenmon Gate, Asakusa Fujiasama Shrine, and Kappabashi-dori Shopping Street.

[City Hotel Lonestar](#) – conveniently situated in the gay district, this affordable hotel is ideal for the Shinjuku nightlife. Its comfortable and compact rooms include LAN internet access but there's a WiFi router available at the reception. It's walking distance to places like AiSOTOPE Lounge, Alamas Café, 24 Kaikan gay sauna and popular gay venues.

### *Apartments*

[Citadines Shinjuku Tokyo](#) – This “apart’hotel” offers well designed studios equipped with a modern kitchenette, separate living and dining areas, an en-suite bathroom, and free WiFi. Guests also have access to a launderette, gymnasium, private car park and breakfast lounge. It's located walking distance to the Shinjuku East area with the Marunouchi and Toei Shinjuku subway lines closeby.

There are also many sites for apartment rentals in Tokyo, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment. [Book AirBnB](#) →



There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterb&b](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment. Understanding Tokyo's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

## Sightseeing & Activities in Tokyo

**Tokyo Tower** – This iconic structure is the world's tallest, self-supported steel tower (13 meters taller than the Eiffel Tower) and was formerly the country's tallest until it was surpassed by the Tokyo Skytree in 2012. There's a main deck with an observatory offering an interesting view of the city plus a souvenir shop and cafe. Continue your way up to the high-top deck for a bird's eye view of Tokyo. It's ¥3000 for both decks or ¥1200 for the main deck only. [Book tour](#) →

**Meiji Jingu Shrine** – a shrine dedicated to Emperor Meiji, the first emperor of modern Japan, near the JR Yamanote Line's Harajuku Station. Completed in 1920 but rebuilt after WWII, the shrine grounds and nearby Yoyogi Park have paths for a relaxing walk. Free admission. [Book tour](#) →

**Shibuya Crossing** – likely the world's most famous intersection, this landmark has appeared in various music videos and movies like *Lost in Translation* and *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*. People going in all directions spill out into this intersection found outside Shibuya Station. The neighborhood of Shibuya is also a trendy shopping district with bars, clubs, and izakayas for casual drinks.



Hachiko Memorial Statue – a popular meeting place at Shibuya Station with a statue dedicated to the most loyal dog who continued to wait for his owner at the station for 9 years after the owner died.

[Toyosu Fish Market](#) – this newly opened market at Shijo-mae Station took over for the original Tsukiji Market in 2018. There are three buildings, two for seafood and one for fruits and vegetables. Observe it in action from observation windows and dine at one of the restaurants in the area. [Book tour →](#)

[Roppongi Hills](#) – a modern entertainment and shopping complex. A great example of a city within a city. The building complex is equipped with offices, apartments, shops, restaurants, a hotel, art museum, and observation deck. [Book tour →](#)

Sengakuji Temple – located near Shinagawa Station and famous for its graveyard where the “47 Ronin” are buried. The samurai story became very popular as a kabuki play and many people visit the temple to pay respect by burning incense there.





## Tokyo Gay Tours

[Tokyo Gay Night Tour](#) – A guided nighttime tour to discover Tokyo's gay bars in Shinjuku Nichome for karaoke, a complimentary drink in each bar, and cute guys. [Book tour →](#)

[LGBT Tokyo Then and Now](#) – an evening walking tour of the LGBT scene with a local guide. Find Tokyo's LGBT-friendly neighborhoods, bars, restaurants, and bookshops. Learn about past and present cultural and social LGBT issues. Plus enjoy dinner and two drinks. [Book tour →](#)

[Lesbian/Queer Bar-hopping](#) – Follow a mixed Japanese lesbian for a tour through the gay district, it's history, and it's local culture. She knows about mixed bars, women's bars, and nearby [parties](#). [Book tour →](#)

## Shopping

**Shinjuku** – One of Tokyo's largest shopping areas around Shinjuku Station. This district has major department stores as well as Japan's largest electronics retailers, plus unique shops and boutiques found on the streets and underground.

**Shibuya** – Located around Shibuya Station, this district inspires many of Japan's youth fashion trends. There are many small fashion stores and small boutiques with high fashion and designer brands along its streets. Stop by Mega Don Quijote for a unique visit to Japan's largest discount goods store offering anything from raw meats to alcohol, souvenirs, clothing, household items, and electrical appliances.

**Harajuku** – Two not so similar parallel shopping streets. On Omotesando find upscale boutiques, cafes, and leading designer brands. On Takeshita find youth fashion and crammed shops and cafes for the teenage crowd. Check out Kiddy Land for a silly four floor retail shop of Japanese and American toys or WEGO for affordable trend setting fashion.

**DiverCity Tokyo Plaza** – a shopping mall in Odaiba. Go there to find familiar fashion brands like H&M and Zara or simply to check out the Unicorn Gundam, a 19.7m statue from the iconic robot series with daily shows as it transforms from Unicorn mode to Destroy mode.

## Restaurants and Cafes

Shinjuku Omoide Yokocho – go here for an alley of small restaurants and open food stalls known for cheap beers and skewers of grilled *yakitori*.

[Kurand Sake Market](#) – enjoy all you can drink sake at multiple locations including Shinjuku and Shibuya. It's an affordable option that also allows you to bring your own food.

Okamalt – an LGBT book cafe in the gay district of Ni-chome. The well-known bar owner, Ogura-san is also known as the drag queen Margarete, who you can see at “Department H”. Have a drink and grab a book Sunday to Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 8 pm only.

[Gossip](#) – another LGBT-friendly cafe and bookstore as well, with queer related books in Japanese and some in English.

[Cocolo Cafe](#) – a popular cafe and restaurant for the LGBT community with a good selection of teas, coffee, and homemade cakes at a reasonable price.



## Tokyo Gay Bars

Shinjuku Ni-chome is Tokyo's main gay scene. As for the nightlife, it's a "go big or go home" situation. Ideally you want to take public transit home after the bars, but unfortunately all the train lines close at midnight and buses are near nonexistent. The solution here for Tokyo's bar hopping youth is to stay out until 5am when the train lines open again. It can make for a long night, but taxis charge an initial ¥710 to start and ¥250 for each subsequent kilometer.

[Gold Finger](#) – a corner pub-style bar with specialty nights, like FTM Bois Bar as well as holiday-centric parties. It's women and non-male identifying folk focused, though all genders are welcome during the week. However, Saturdays are strictly female-only.

[Tokyo R Bar](#) – a new cafe bar in the Roppongi area that's popular with the gay community. Enjoy deep house and international music every weekend.

[EAGLE Tokyo](#) – an international gay bar in Shinjuku Ni-chome. Go for good drinks made by bearish staff and to meet locals and international visitors. The space becomes a [party](#) on weekends with DJs, drag queens, and gogo boys for your viewing pleasure.

[Campy! Bar](#) – located on the main street in Shinjuku Ni-chome, a lively gay bar featuring local celebrity Bourbonne. All are welcome and even the straight folk stop by. It's free to enter but expect to buy a drink for around ¥500-800.

[Dragon Men](#) – you'll find the expat and international crowd at this gay bar with outdoor seating. Go to cruise and socialize or for their daily happy hour 6-9pm.

## Tokyo Gay Clubs and Parties

Japan used to have a "no dancing after midnight" law which was quite the bummer for club goers, but luckily the dated ban was uplifted in 2015. Now dancing is permitted so long as it's not too dark, requiring clubs to meet a particular lighting requirement.

*Clubs*

**Arty Farty** – a popular dance club with a large bar and dance floor. Expect a fun, packed crowd on weekends. They offer reasonably priced drinks and a hand stamp to enter The Annex for free.

**The Annex** – a late-night gay dance club in Shinjuku by the owners of Arty Farty. It has a cruising area in the back and attracts a mixed crowd.

### *Parties*

**VITA Tokyo** – a large, popular gay dance party held at various venues multiple times throughout the year with occasional pool parties, international DJs, dancers and shows.

**HUNKS Underwear Party @ Boiler Room** – a men-only gay dance party held every month featuring a DJ, gogo dancers, and a dark room. The ¥2500-3000 entry includes a drink.

### **Tokyo Gay Sauna's & Cruising Bars**

**HAAARD** – the name says it all. This cruising spot is for muscular guys who are 18- 49. It has a gym space, cruising areas, showers, plus lots of toys to play with. The fetish parties held on Monday are quite popular.

**Men's Club MEAT** – a private cruise club that mostly targets masculine men in their 20s-40s. The spacious venue has lockers, showers, a dark room, and private cabins on 4 levels. Enjoy refreshments and WiFi onsite. There are also weekly themed events.

**BodyBreath** – A popular gay cruising location with locals, though foreigners are welcome. There's a mixed crowd and it can get quite busy, especially on weekends. It has cruising areas, showers, lockers, and private rooms. It's open 24/7.

**GATE IN** – a smaller, simpler cruise space near Tokyo Station for 18 to 40-year old's, preferably in suits or naked on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

## Gay Events in Tokyo

[Tokyo Rainbow Pride](#) – an annual weeklong celebration in April consisting of a parade and several parties. It's Japan's largest pride event which started on August 28, 1994.

## Day Trips from Tokyo

[Kyoto](#) – this city is a bit far from Tokyo and certainly deserving of more than a one-day visit, but if one day is all you have it's also worth your time. You can take a super-speed bullet train round trip and enjoy views of Mt Fuji along the way. Then visit Sanjusangen-do Hall, Fushimi Inari Taisha, and Kiyomizu-dera Temple. [Book tour →](#)



[Yokohama](#) – just 25 minutes from Tokyo Station, Yokohama is the second largest city in Japan and has the largest Chinatown in the country. Enjoy beautiful views across Minato-Mirai waterfront at night and visit one or both ramen museums (the Cup Noodle Museum and the Shin-Yokohama Raumen Museum). Check out the art scene, tree-house cafes, or the Sankei-en Gardens. [Book tour →](#)

[Kamakura](#) – a beautiful city about an hour from Tokyo with a number of historic monuments. A visit to see the Great Buddha at Kotoku-in Temple is a must. [Book tour →](#)

**Mt. Fuji** – get out of the city and into nature with a full day trip to Mt. Fuji, Lake Ashi, and Hakone National Park. Enjoy spectacular views and also visit the bright red shrine atop Mt. Komagatake. Then easily return to Tokyo by bullet train the same evening. [Book tour →](#)