



TOKYO

Orderly and efficient, Tokyo is a city where old and new are forever juxtaposed

Words by ROB GOSS



LAY YOUR HEAD

Situated inside the hip Roppongi Hills urban development and in a prime location for both business and entertainment, the Grand Hyatt offers 389 rooms that combine sleek furnishings and natural tones to create a contemporary cool atmosphere. After dining at one of the Hyatt's seven renowned restaurants, don't pass on a drink at Maduro, the most opulent of the hotel's three bars and holds one of the best whiskey lists in town. **Grand Hyatt Tokyo, 6-10-3 Roppongi, Minato-Ku, Tokyo. Tel: +81 3 4333 1234, www.tokyo.grand.hyatt.com**

If you want something different from the chic, but rowdy surrounds of Roppongi, try the more refined ambience of the Ginza area and stay at one of the newest international hotels to have set up in Tokyo. The luxurious 314 room Peninsula Tokyo is just a five-minute walk from the most expensive square metre of real estate in the land and the high-end department stores, restaurants and boutiques that have given Ginza its reputation as the most prestigious place to shop in Japan. **The Peninsula Tokyo, 1-8-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo. Tel: +81 3 6270 2888, www.tokyo.peninsula.com**

CLEAR YOUR PLATE

Tucked away in backstreets not far from the Grand Hyatt, Inakaya West combines traditional robatayaki (county-style grilling) with a touch of theatrics for a dining experience that is not to be missed. The restaurant has no menus and no price lists, just dish names pasted across the walls and raw ingredients placed on the wooden counters surrounding the large cooking grill that serves as the centre point of the rustic interior. To order, simply point and then cover your ears as the staff relay your order at the top of their lungs to the chefs, who will respond with equal enthusiasm. **Inakaya West, 4-10-11 Roppongi Minato-ku, Tokyo. Tel: +81 3 5775 1012, www.roppongiinakaya.jp**



Clockwise from far left: Grand staircase at the Peninsular Tokyo; New York bar at the Park Hyatt; Views of Mt Fuji from Hakone.

OUT OF TOWN

For a break from Tokyo, take a train (www.odakyu.jp/english) two hours west to the natural surrounds of Hakone, an area known for its stunning views of Mt. Fuji, hot spring resorts and outdoor activities. The best places to stay are the traditional Japanese inn (ryokan) where, after enjoying a multi-course dinner typically based around seafood and local vegetables, you can soak in a communal hot spring and then fall asleep on a futon laid out across the tatami mat flooring of your room. **JAPANICAN (www.japanican.com)** can help you arrange tours and accommodation.

INSIDER TIPS

For many visitors to Japan the country's cuisine is a major attraction. One way to experience a wide range of Japanese tastes is to visit the basement-level food floors of the major department stores around lunch time and take advantage of the free samples many of the stalls place on their counters. Mistukoshi in Ginza is particularly good, with tasters of everything from pickled vegetables and tofu varieties, to dried fish and even sweets on offer. **[E]**

RAISE YOUR GLASS

After dinner, head for at nightcap at the Park Hyatt's New York Bar 52 floors up, overlooking the neon-lit streets of Shinjuku, from the same seat where Bill Murray drowned his frustrations each night in Sofia Coppola's confusion-laden romp through Tokyo, 'Lost in Translation'. New York Bar boasts the largest selection of American wines in Japan, on top of an extensive line up of classic and original cocktails and fine cognacs. **Park Hyatt Tokyo, 3-7-1-2 Nishi Shinjuku, Tokyo 163-1055. Tel: +81 3 5322 1234, www.tokyo.park.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp**

MAX OUT YOUR CREDIT

When the shopping urge hits, hop on the subway and make a beeline for Omotesando (Ginza, Hanzomon and Chiyoda lines). This tree-lined avenue running between Harajuku and Aoyama-dori is known for its upscale shopping and is home to such international brands as Louis Vuitton and Gucci, as well as the recently built, and ultra trendy, Omotesando Hills shopping centre. If the 100+ shops and restaurants in Omotesando Hills don't satisfy your shopping desires, try exploring the numerous boutiques that dot the area's backstreets to get a glimpse of the latest fashions to hit, or that are about to hit, Japan. **Omotesando Hills Tel: +81 3 3497 0310, www.omotesandohills.com**

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