

@MATTJHANNAN PRESENTS

Tokyo Neighborhoods Guide

東京エリアガイド

8 neighborhoods, 30+ spots, no tourist shit.

8 NEIGHBORHOODS

30+ SPOTS

GOOGLE MAPS LINKS

Plz do not just go to Shibuya Crossing, take a video, and leave. The real city is in the neighborhoods where you feel out of place and can't find any other foreigners. You're half way across the world, time to do weird shit and come back with a story.

— Matt

Your Neighborhood Cheat Code

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The GOAT. Not up for discussion.

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Every single one of these is a short train ride from Shinjuku or Shibuya.

You literally have no reason not to go.

The Chuo Line Game

The JR Chuo Line runs east-west through the best neighborhoods in Tokyo. Two of the eight neighborhoods in this guide are on it. But every single stop on this line has something worth finding.



My Favorite Game

1. Get on the Chuo Line going west from Shinjuku.
2. Pick a random stop. Any stop. Get off.
3. Walk in zigzags through the backstreets.
4. Find the oldest, most beat-up looking izakaya you can.
5. Walk in. Sit down. Say "toriaezu nama de."
6. ("To start off, draft beer." Max aura. It's the magic phrase.)
7. Kanpai everyone around you.

You're going to have the best night of your life.

とりあえず生で

toriaezu nama de = "to start off, draft beer" - max aura phrase in Japan

Nakano

My #1. No Debate.

This is the GOAT neighborhood. I've said it a thousand times and I'll say it again - Nakano is the best area in Tokyo. Bar hop through tiny backstreets, dig through five floors of vintage manga and toys, eat soft serve with 8 flavors in one cone, and be the only tourist doing any of it.

Nakano Broadway Nakano · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Five floors of otaku paradise. Mandarake shops, vintage toys, rare records, retro games. Way better than Akihabara and way less crowded.

Mandarake Nakano Nakano Broadway · \$-\$\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

The mothership. Multiple specialty stores inside Broadway - manga, figures, doujinshi, vintage vinyl. Each floor is a different rabbit hole.

Daily Chico Nakano Broadway · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Soft serve spot inside Broadway. Get the 8-flavor tower - it's absurd and it's like 400 yen. You'll understand when you see it.

Sun Mall Shotengai Nakano · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Covered shopping arcade from the station to Broadway. Thrift stores, cheap eats, local shops. Walk slow and explore.

Hakata Standard Nakano · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Hakata-style food with incredible vibes. Friendly staff, delicious and affordable. Fukuoka cuisine in the heart of Nakano - and yes, home of the Hakata Bijin.

Maguro Mart Nakano · \$\$-\$\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Reserve ahead - tough to get in. They put an entire tuna in front of you and you just eat out of it. Hole-in-the-wall but world-class. Worth every yen.

BAR HOPPING TIP

The tiny bar streets near the station are where the magic happens. Just point at what looks good and say onegaishimasu. You'll figure it out.

WHERE TO STAY

Steps from Broadway. Chuo Line to Shinjuku in 10 min.

[Check hotels →](#)

Koenji

Tokyo's Punk Rock Neighborhood.

Koenji is where Tokyo's counterculture lives. Punk rock venues, better thrifting than Shimokitazawa in my opinion, covered arcades with zero tourists, and cheap standing bars where nobody cares what you look like.

Junjo Shotengai Koenji · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Covered arcade with local shops, cheap food stalls, and zero tourists. The kind of place where the owner knows every regular by name.

Koenji Vintage Strip Koenji South Exit · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Dozens of vintage and thrift shops concentrated around the south exit. Just walk around and dig through stuff, you'll find gold. Budget 2-3 hours minimum.

Standing Bars near Station Koenji · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Cheap standing bars (tachinomi) all around the station. Beer and a skewer for under 500 yen. This is how locals drink.

Jirokichi Koenji · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Koenji's oldest live house, open since 1975. Basement venue, live music every night. Jazz, rock, punk - check jirokichi.net for the schedule. Shows start at 7:30.

Snack Nonno Koenji · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Koenji's first snack bar, been around since 1970. Under the train tracks near the station. Coffee shop by day, mama-san bar by night. You need some Japanese but the

WHERE TO STAY

Cheapest hotels on the Chuo Line. Zero tourists at night.

[Check hotels →](#)

Shimokitazawa

What Williamsburg Wishes It Was.

Shimokita is Tokyo's indie neighborhood. Vintage shops, tiny theaters, craft beer, and stupid good abura soba. It got a massive redevelopment recently but somehow didn't turn corporate.

Flamingo Shimokitazawa · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

The vintage store everyone talks about. Curated Americana, denim, leather. Multiple floors. Worth the hype.

Bonus Track Shimokitazawa · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

New-ish complex near the station with indie shops, a bookstore, coffee, and a record store. Feels like a small-town main street somehow ended up in Tokyo.

Shimokita Brewery Shimokitazawa · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Craft beer in a chill, open space. Good for afternoon drinking. Try whatever's seasonal.

Aburagami Sohonten Shimokitazawa · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Criminally underrated abura soba. Oil noodles - no broth. Mix it up, add the vinegar and chili oil. Life-changing for under 1000 yen.

Shimokita Standing Bars Shimokitazawa · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Tiny standing bars scattered around the back streets. Pick one that looks full - that's how you know it's good.

WHERE TO STAY

Odakyu line — Shinjuku in 10 min, Shibuya in 3.

[Check hotels →](#)

Ebisu

Where You Go to Drink, but Fancy.

Ebisu is where you go when you want to feel a little fancy without the nightclub douchebag energy. Amazing bars, a yokocho where people hit on each other, and some of the best cocktail spots in the city.

Ebisu Yokocho Ebisu · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Indoor food alley with like 20 tiny stalls. Yakitori, sashimi, oden, fried stuff. Known for people hitting on each other. Loud, smoky, chaotic, perfect.

Bar Trench Ebisu · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Tiny dark bar with serious absinthe-focused cocktails. These guys know exactly what they're doing so just don't be loud.

Bar Martha Ebisu · \$\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Big space. Crazy record collection. Good food. Talking loud is banned. Perfect date spot. Same owner as Bar Nica.

Ebisu Yokocho → Bar Trench → Bar Martha is the god-tier Ebisu night.

— Matt

WHERE TO STAY

One of the best neighborhoods to base yourself. Walkable, close to everything.

[Check hotels →](#)

Shibuya

Fuck the Crossing.

Do the crossing, take the photo, get it out of your system. Now here's the real Shibuya - the parts most tourists never see. Tiny golden-gai-style alleyways, vinyl bars, and food halls that go hard at night.

Grandfather's Shibuya · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Used to be big with models. Cheap drinks. Group-style seating so you end up talking to strangers. Both bar and table seats.

Music Bar Cave Shibuya · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Perfect date spot. Vinyl DJ always playing. Surprisingly good food. Free beef jerky. Gets busy - make a reservation. Order the AYB Sour.

Miyashita Park Shibuya · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Rooftop park on top of a shopping complex. Lay down and picnic in front of the Starbucks. Lots of people filming TikTok dances. Shibuya Yokocho downstairs goes hard

Chillax Shibuya Shibuya (Udagawa) · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Independent shisha lounge. 60+ flavors, small space, laid-back terrace vibes. Good way to wind down after a loud Shibuya night. Open until 1am.

Grandfather's → Music Bar Cave → shisha at Chillax is the Shibuya night route.

— Matt

WHERE TO STAY

Most first-timers stay here. Solid choice — nightlife on your doorstep.

[Check hotels →](#)

Ikejiri-Ohashi

The Sleeper Neighborhood.

One stop from Shibuya on the Den-en-toshi line. Nobody talks about this neighborhood. That's exactly why it's good. Quiet residential streets, a few incredible coffee shops, and restaurants where you're eating with locals only.

Hakata-nomiya Ikejiri-Ohashi · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

The name is a pun - the owner is Miya from Hakata, so it's "Hakata no Miya" and "Hakata nomiya" (Hakata drinking spot). Great Fukuoka food, amazing energy.

Good People & Good Coffee Ikejiri-Ohashi · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Tiny coffee stand run by the same barista since 2012. Blends named after pop-culture references. Pour-over done right. An anchor of Ikejiri's quiet coffee scene.

After School Brewery Ikejiri-Ohashi · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Craft brewery inside a converted junior high school. Drink beer next to visible brewing tanks in a former classroom with an outdoor terrace.

Lanterne Ikejiri-Ohashi · \$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Modern izakaya with big arched windows. Excellent karaage, seasonal fruit sours, solid shochu list. Cool without trying too hard. Opens at 5pm.

Massif Ikejiri-Ohashi · \$\$-\$\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

All-day spot: coffee and sourdough mornings, creative lunch sets, wine-bar dinners. Renovated building. Neighborhood canteen energy with serious quality.

WHY THIS IS HERE

Not every great neighborhood needs 40 spots. Sometimes the move is just being somewhere quiet, one stop from chaos. That's Ikejiri-Ohashi.

WHERE TO STAY

One stop from Shibuya. Quiet, local, way cheaper hotels.

[Check hotels →](#)

Sangenjaya

Dive Bars and Backstreets.

Two stops from Shibuya. Sangenjaya - or Sancha if you're a local - is where Tokyo goes to drink cheap and eat well. The Triangle Zone area is a maze of tiny bars that feels like stepping back in time.

Sankaku Chitai (Triangle Zone) Sangenjaya · \$

[Google Maps](#)

A maze of tiny, cramped bars and restaurants crammed into narrow alleys. Most places seat 6-8 people. Pick a door and see what happens.

A-Bridge Sangenjaya · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Rooftop bar with sunset views. Chill, indie feel. Go early for golden hour, stay for the vibe. One of the best lowkey rooftop spots in the city.

Sushi Daidokoya Sangenjaya · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

Conveyor belt sushi in the alley behind the McDonald's. Featured on Solitary Gourmet. No-frills, legit fish, and the kind of place you'd never find without a tip.

3cha Work Sangenjaya · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Coworking cafe with a few locations in Sancha. Hit the one with the common space on the 3rd floor (narrow staircase up). Good coffee, drop-in friendly, get work done.

Sangenjaya → Ikejiri-Ohashi is a 15-minute walk. Combine them in one night.

— Matt

WHERE TO STAY

Two stops from Shibuya. Stay here to drink where locals actually go.

[Check hotels →](#)

Hiroo

The Chill Expat Neighborhood.

Hiroo is where a lot of expats live and it has a completely different energy from the rest of Tokyo. Quiet, leafy streets, a traditional sento, good cafes, and one of the best parks in the city.

Hiroo-yu Hiroo · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Clean, old-school, traditional neighborhood bathhouse. Just locals soaking after work, the way it's supposed to be.

Hiroo Shotengai Hiroo · \$-\$\$

[Google Maps](#)

The main shopping street from the station. Old-school shotengai but with an upscale, international twist - indie cafes, bakeries, boutiques. Small-village feel in central

Arisugawa Park Hiroo · Free

[Google Maps](#)

Beautiful park in the middle of the neighborhood. Ponds, walking paths, benches. Good spot to bring a coffee and just sit for a while.

Nem Coffee & Espresso Hiroo · \$

[Google Maps](#)

Tiny husband-and-wife coffee spot a few minutes from the station. Serious specialty coffee, La Marzocca machine, super intimate space. No interior photos allowed.

Hiroo-yu → dinner → walk through Arisugawa Park at night. Trust me.

— Matt

WHERE TO STAY

Leafy streets, good coffee, peaceful. The chill expat neighborhood.

[Check hotels →](#)

All 8 Neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOOD	VIBE	BEST FOR	\$ LEVEL	TRAIN LINE
Nakano Google Maps	Otaku + Local	Thrift, Bars, Food	\$	JR Chuo
Koenji Google Maps	Punk + Vintage	Vintage Shopping	\$	JR Chuo
Shimokitazawa Google Maps	Indie + Creative	Vintage, Coffee	\$\$\$	Odakyu / Keio
Ebisu Google Maps	Fancy + Bars	Date Night, Bars	\$\$-\$\$\$	JR Yamanote
Shibuya Google Maps	Iconic + Layered	Nightlife, Food	\$\$\$	JR Yamanote
Ikejiri-Ohashi Google Maps	Quiet + Local	Coffee, Craft Beer	\$\$\$	Den-en-toshi
Sangenjaya Google Maps	Dive Bar + Raw	Cheap Drinks, Food	\$	Den-en-toshi
Hiroo Google Maps	Chill + Expat	Sento, Parks	\$\$\$	Hibiya

Screenshot this page. You'll use it more than you think.

ありがとう

That's Everything.

Go wander around, eat weird stuff, talk to strangers. You'll figure it out.

WANT THE FULL 132-PAGE GUIDE?

The Tokyo Bible

Every neighborhood, bar, restaurant, and local move I know.
It's almost ready. Get on the list.

[Get on the Waitlist](#)

DM me a pic if you hit any of these spots

Or tell me about a neighborhood I should add

Want the full manners + bar guide?

DM me 'guide' on Instagram for the free version.

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From Tokyo. Real neighborhoods, real spots, no tourist shit.

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