

Maps Not Apps

TOKYO

Mindful Travel City Guide

CONTRIBUTED BY LINDO KORCHI

THERE'S MORE TO TOKYO

...than anime and the world's busiest places.

Many guides will advise you to check out Akihabara, the district of anime, manga, and cosplay. They'll exalt the impressiveness of Shibuya, the world's largest crossing, and Shinjuku, where you can glimpse the world's busiest train station.

The travel guides, blogs, apps, and even friend's echo the same melody; reciting the same old, typical, tourist spots again and again. Instead, here's a guide to original spots that offer a peaceful experience, in one of the world's best cities for just such a mindful moment.

Prices and other logistical details are correct as of January 2016.

A MINDFUL CITY GUIDE, ONE OF A COLLECTION FOUND ON MAPS NOT APPS.

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SENDAGI



Tokyo is known for its tall buildings. If you're interested in seeing real Japanese neighborhoods like those in anime, then head on over to Sendagi.

Since there really isn't much to do, it's quite quiet and doesn't attract many travelers. As you walk through the narrow alleys, you'll witness residents riding their bikes, children playing, and a typical, everyday Japanese lifestyle that you normally don't see in the guides. Within the same vicinity, you can also discover Yanaka Cemetery (above), which is quite popular during the summer due to the cherry blossom season. It's a perfect, silent place to be still and observe.

Tips: Take the nearest JR train to Sendagi Station. Once there, you'll see little alleys leading to neighborhoods, which you can just choose from and explore. To get to Yanaka Cemetery from the station, it's a thirteen minute walk.

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ASAKUSA

Located in the popular Asakusa district is Senso-ji Temple, this is Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple, so it's no surprise Senso-ji maintains a constant flow of tourists & residents within the area.

Thankfully, there's a way to experience the temple (above) without the crowd. Once evening comes around, most travelers gather in the city, such as Shibuya & Shinjuku. As they enjoy the nightlife, you'll be able to walk along the Nakamise (narrow shopping street leading to Senso-ji) with an abundant amount of space, while experiencing the temple without the crowds. Any time between 11pm – 4am is a great time to relax, think, and soak up the peaceful atmosphere that is Senso-ji.

Tips: Take the nearest JR train to Asakusa Station. Once there, it's only a five minute walk to this free, 24-hour attraction.



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SETAGAYA

Do you wish you could explore a traditional side of Japan? If you can't make it to Kyoto during your trip, then no worries.

Thankfully, Tokyo also has its fair share of nature and tradition. Head over to Todoroki Valley (above), located in Setagaya ward & only twenty minutes outside of Shibuya, and you'll be transported away. As you walk through the paved trail, observe the river stream, take in the fresh air, touch the rocks, and walk the short bridges, you may begin to question if you really want to go back to the city.

Tip: Take the nearest JR train to Todoroki Station. Once there, it's only a two minute walk.

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AKASAKA

If you really enjoy nature, landscape, and architecture, then there's no doubt you'll have both the Shinjuku Gyoen Garden and the Tokyo Imperial Palace on your list – but so will everyone else.

Interestingly enough, there lies hidden beauty right behind these two tourist hotspots, which is located in central Tokyo. One stop would be the Toyokawa Inari Shrine, which displays an abundant amount of fox statues & red lanterns (above).

Within the same area, you'll also be able to see Akasaka Palace (opening April 2016), the State Guesthouse of the Government of Japan, & Togu Palace, the official residence of Prince Naruhito, who is the son of the Emperor of Japan – now those are offbeat locations where you can escape the crowds for now.

Tips: Take the nearest JR train to Akasaka-mitsuke Station. Once there, it's only a seven minute walk to the shrine; the palace's are within the same vicinity.

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RYOGOKU

If you enjoy history but aren't able to make it to Hiroshima or Nagasaki, where the two atomic bombs were dropped during World War II, you can still explore the history during those horrible years at Ryogoku.

While it's true that the district is recognized as the center of the sumo world, the district also offers rich history to appreciate. Explore the Tokyo Memorial Hall, which serves to remember the victims during the Tokyo air raids in WWII. The Great Kanto Earthquake Memorial Museum (above) , Meiji-period style garden, & Tokyo Memorial Hall are all located at Yokoamicho Park in Ryogoku.

Tips: Take the nearest JR train to Ryogoku Station. Once there, it's only an eight minute walk.

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