

# SUPER **CHEAP** TOKYO

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The Ultimate Budget Travel Guide to Tokyo and Surrounding Areas

Book Sample

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# Welcome to Tokyo



*Kaminarimon, leading up to Senso-ji Temple in Asakusa, Tokyo*

Welcome to Tokyo, capital city of Japan and one of the most exciting cities in the world. More than 13 million people live here, while the greater Tokyo metropolis houses over 35 million. With such a large population and a diverse variety of areas, Tokyo is known as a 'city of cities'. From geeky hotspots such as Akihabara, to quiet and tranquil gardens such as Kiyosumi Garden, to the bright lights of the skyscrapers of Shinjuku, Tokyo has it all.

A very favorable exchange rate has allowed Tokyo to blossom for budget travelers. While an average hostel room would have cost around \$50 in 2012, it now costs around \$30. A cheap meal starts at around \$5, while it would have cost about \$8.50 several years ago. There are also 100-yen (\$1) stores, beds from under \$10 a night and countless cheap restaurants for tourists to enjoy. With a cheap subway network and many discounts passes, those in the know can have both an affordable and supremely exciting holiday in Tokyo.

With all that there is to see, it's recommended to start by heading to the highlights, then explore some of the less touristy spots nearby. This book has been designed in a way that allows you to both see the best sights in Tokyo, as well as off-the-beaten track experiences, all while keeping costs low.

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## A little bit of history

Tokyo is a relatively new capital. In 1590 the Shoguns, Japan's military dictators, moved from Kyoto to Edo, the old name for Tokyo. While the emperor stayed in Kyoto, the real power and money moved to the new city. In the early 17th century, Edo blossomed under Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu and spread out around Edo Castle. The Shogunate finally fell in 1867, bringing Emperor Meiji into power. He opened up the country, allowing foreign culture and technology, particularly from the west, to enter the country via ports such as Yokohama.

In 1923, Tokyo was devastated by the Great Kanto Earthquake. More than 2 million people were left homeless and more than 100,000 perished. The city was further damaged by the bombing in World War Two, which destroyed much of the capital. Thankfully the city experienced rapid growth after the war and has rebuilt itself into a real powerhouse.

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## How to save on your holiday with this book

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### Things to do

This book will show you how to have an amazing holiday in Japan without blowing a hole in your pocket. You'll be shown plenty of options for free things to do in each location, as well as information on discounts or free samples. Try to do the cheaper or free activities first, then if you have enough time or feel you need to do more, try the more expensive things in the area.

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### Sample itineraries and discount passes

If you are a bit stuck, there are plenty of sample itineraries for subway or train passes, which will help to ease planning. Info on discount passes for each area will also help you to save big!

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### Budget food

Tokyo is full of budget restaurants and takeaway joints. These are included on the maps, as well as in the Budget Food sections, as they can be tricky to find if you're not a local. Don't forget to consider buying food from supermarkets or convenience stores, especially in the evening when prices are often slashed to get rid of stock. Nothing better than super cheap sushi in the evening! They are also good for drinking, as it's perfectly legal here to buy a beer and drink in public.

Most of the budget restaurants have water jugs to refill your bottle, and other spots to refill, such as from water fountains in parks, have also been included. The 100-yen shops (around \$1) are also listed, as you can buy almost anything, from microwavable curry to essential travel items. Japanese pharmacies and drug stores often have even cheaper prices for drinks and snacks as well. Buying a large bottled drink in a 100-yen shop, then using the bottle for the rest of your trip is a great way to save on money. Tap water is drinkable.

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### How to use the maps

As most of Tokyo's streets don't have names, detailed instructions for getting to places, and simple maps when appropriate, are provided so you won't spend time and money getting lost. You'll never need to get an expensive taxi. Use landmarks on the maps to help, too, and save on transportation by using the recommended walking routes.

#### Map Legend

 Convenience store	 Tourist information
 Cheap supermarket	 Recommended walking route
 100 yen store	 Budget accommodation
 Pharmacy	 Post office

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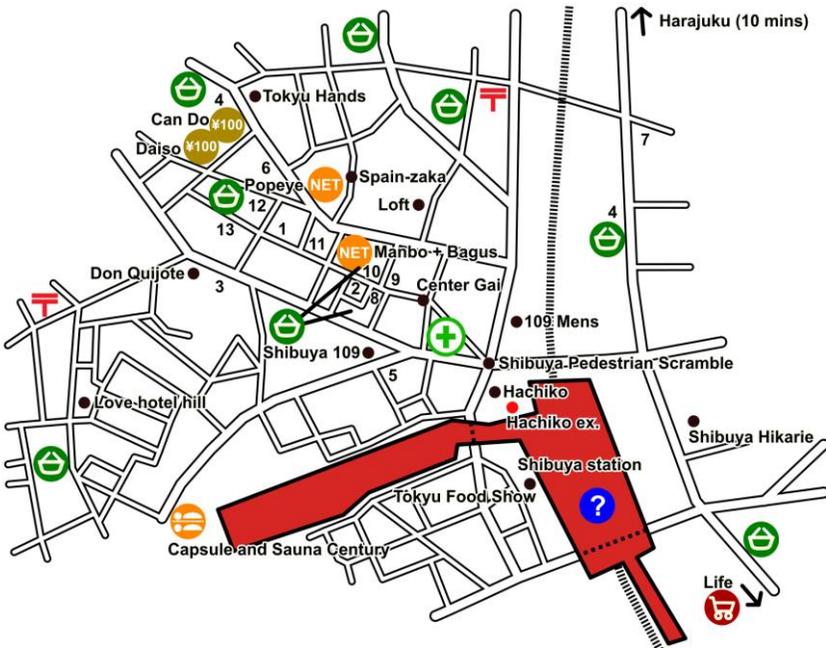
### Free wifi locations

Most of the tourist spots in Tokyo are pretty well connected up to wifi these days. There is really no need to buy expensive rental phones or wireless internet adapters for the phone networks because of this. In the rare case that wifi is difficult to find, wifi location information is included in this book.

## Shibuya sample chapter (渋谷)



One of Tokyo's most lively and colorful neighborhoods, Shibuya is most famous as a youth fashion hotspot and the busiest road crossing you will ever see. Originally the site of a castle belonging to the Shibuya clan, since the introduction of the **Yamanote Line** it has become one of the main clubbing, shopping and entertainment areas in Tokyo.



The station is a real maze, so use the locations on the map (e.g. Hachiko or Shibuya Hikarie) with the boards inside the station that direct visitors to the corresponding exits.

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## Things to do

### Free activities near station

#### Shibuya pedestrian scramble (スクランブル交差点)

Every few minutes thousands of people walk over the world's most famous road crossing. Make sure you bring a camera! Best spot is on the second floor of Starbucks. *Hachiko exit*

#### Hachiko statue (ハチ公)

The famous statue and meeting point in Shibuya. After his owner died, a dog called Hachiko came to the station every day to meet his owner. The dog became famous and this statue was made in dedication to him. A cute cat has also made the statue its home, so be sure to take a photo of Shibuya's most iconic spot. *Hachiko exit*

#### Love hotel hill (ラブホテル坂)

Shibuya is an expensive place to live, so many people still live with their family. Many therefore head over to this prized love hotel area for a bit of privacy with their partner. This area is full of these hotels offering rooms for very cheap prices. Even if you are not staying, it's definitely worth a walk around to see all the cheesy architecture and bright lights. *All night! • Take a left after Don Quijote and walk up*

### Free sample heavens

#### Tokyu Food Show (東急フードショー)

A treasure chest of Japanese food, plus international stalls to spice things up. With countless stalls, you can spend lots of time just wandering around, trying out free samples as you go. *10am-9pm • Basement of Tokyu Department Store, west side of station*

#### Shibuya Hikarie (渋谷ヒカリエ)

A new department store with modern shops, restaurants and a nice food area downstairs. Has even more stalls handing out free samples than Tokyu Food Show, so try lots and see what you like. *10am-9pm • Exit 15 / east exit*

#### Center Gai (渋谷センター街)

Shibuya's main shopping street, also known as Basketball Street. Center Gai is full of game arcades, fast food restaurants, fashion boutiques and bars. The food options are excellent and the area comes to life in the evening, with plenty of raucous businessmen and teenagers. *Across the Shibuya pedestrian scramble*

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## Shopping around Shibuya station

#### Shibuya 109

Worth a walk around to see what is hot and what is not in the world of youth fashion in Japan. 109 is the place to be for upcoming brands, and regarded as a stamp of quality for them. Staff are very friendly and will help you out if you don't know what things are! *10am-9pm • Exit 3A*

#### Tokyu Hands (東急ハンズ)

Full of crazy, strange Japanese goods for you to laugh at and enjoy. Back scratchers, weird massage chairs, crazy robot toys and some unimaginable goods. Great for souvenirs and any novelties you want to take home. *10am-9pm • 5 minutes down Inokashira Dori*

#### Don Quijote (ドン・キホーテ)

Cheaper prices than Tokyu Hands, this megastore has everything from second-hand jewelry to clothes, to cheap snacks. They also have takeout sushi and other items for lunch. *10am-4:30am • Exit 3A, then down the road to left*

### 100-yen shops

**Can Do (キャンドウ)** - Opposite Tokyu Hands. 10am-10pm

**Daiso (ダイソー)** - Another great 100-yen shop nearby. 10am-9pm

### Pharmacy (ドラッグストア)

Matsumoto Kiyoshi (薬 マツモトキヨシ) is on the way to 109 (24h).

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## Budget food

### Budget chain restaurants on map

- 1) **Tenka Ippin (天下一品)** - ramen. *Ramen from 700 yen • 11am-3am*
- 2) **Matsuya (松屋)** - rice bowls and curry. *Gyudon bowls from 290 yen • 24h*
- 3) **Ootoya (大戸屋)** - Japanese set meals. *Sets from 750 yen • 11am-11pm*
- 4) **Hidakaya (日高屋)** - ramen and gyoza dumplings. *Ramen from 390 yen • 10:30am-3:30pm*
- 5) **Yoshinoya (吉野家)** - gyudon and curry. *Bowls from 330 yen • 24h*
- 6) **Sukiya (すき家)** - gyudon and curry. *Bowls from 360 yen • 24h*
- 7) **Tenya (天丼てんや)** - tempura. *Bowls from 500 yen • 11am-11pm*
- 8) **Wendy's First Kitchen (ファーストキッチン)** - cheap soups, burgers and pasta. *Pasta from 580 yen, burgers from 370 yen • 5am-1am*

### Local budget food

Best spots along Center Gai, in order from the station.

- 9) **Yanbaru Okinawa Soba (やんばる 沖縄そば)** - Set dishes and soba from Okinawa. *Noodles from 650 yen • 11am-11:30pm*
- 10) **Yaro Ramen (野郎ラーメン)** - Large sized ramen. *Ramen from 500 yen • 24h*
- 11) **Kamukura Ramen (どうとんぼり神座)** - Big menu, with English explanations on how to eat it and vegetarian options. *Ramen from 680 yen • 9am-8am*
- 12) **Shakey's Pizza (シェーキーズ)** - All-you-can-eat pizza restaurant, with Japanese and seasonal themed flavors. *Lunch time: adults 930 yen, teens 600 yen, under junior high school age 380 yen. Dinner time: 1540 yen, 1030 yen, 510 yen • 11am-11pm*
- 13) **Okonomiyaki Mura (お好み焼 むら)** - All-you-can-eat Japanese pancakes, called Okonomiyaki. *90 mins for 1980 yen or Okonomiyaki from 780 yen • 4pm-2am*

### Cheap supermarkets (スーパー)

Life Supermarket (ライフ渋谷東店) is a 10/15-minute walk away from Shibuya station on Meiji Dori, to the south and along the narrow river (9am-1am).

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## How to get there and away

From Shinjuku station, take the **JR Yamanote Line** to Shibuya station (6 mins, 150 yen). From Tokyo station, take the **JR Yamanote Line** to Shibuya station (24 mins, 190 yen). Also on Tokyo Metro **Fukutoshin**, **Hanzomon** and **Ginza** lines. *Recommended rail passes: Tokyo Subway Ticket, Tokyo Metro 24-hour Ticket, Tokyo Metropolitan District Pass*

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## Tourist information (観光案内所)

Inside Shibuya station (in the Tokyu Line and Tokyo Metro Line area), on the second basement floor and near Miyamasuzaka Center exit (10am-7pm). They also have free wifi if you need it, just ask at the desk for the access code.

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## Recommended budget accommodation in Shibuya (sample)

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### Nearby hostels and guest houses

#### Khaosan Hostels (カオサン)

This well-known guesthouse chain has a variety of cheap and clean guesthouses in central locations. They all have their own unique theme, so they are a bit nicer to stay at than a dull YHA hostel. *Dorms from 2200 yen, private rooms from 3400 yen* • <http://khaosan-tokyo.com/en/>

#### GrapeHouse Koenji (female only) (ゲストハウス グレープハウス高円寺)

This ladies only hostel has a great reputation and gets full up easily, so try to book as early as possible. Friendly staff can help you to get around. *Dorms from 3500* • *Koenji station* • <http://grapehouse.jp/en/>

#### Shrek Watta House

A nice guesthouse, we have stayed here several times. Has both western and Japanese style tatami mat rooms. Run by a nice old man, this place has a nice open kitchen with loads of free travel resources. *Private rooms from 2150 yen* • *Musashi-Seki station, near Shinjuku station* • <http://www.shrek-watta-house.com/index.html>

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### Capsule hotels

#### Capsule and Sauna Century Shibuya (Men only) (カプセルホテル渋谷)

Cheap capsule hotel right in the center of Shibuya. *Capsules from 3500 yen* • *West side of station*

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### Internet cafes

Head down Inokashira Dori, parallel to Center Gai for a good selection of net cafes:

#### Bagus (バグース)

Large choice of comics, clean showers and good selection of free drinks. *Night pack (ナイトパック) available from 9pm: 6 hours (6 時間ナイトパック) from 1150 yen. 9 hours (9 時間ナイトパック) from 1800 yen*

#### Media Cafe Popeye (メディアカフェポパイ)

Modern net cafe with free drinks, showers and printing services. *Night pack (ナイトパック) available from 6pm: 6 hours (6 時間ナイトパック) from 950 yen. 12 hours (12 時間ナイトパック) from 1380 yen*

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