

Glamorous

Tokyo's most iconic
shopping and
dining destination
is brimming with
luxé boutiques,
starred restaurants,
and a hot new hotel

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GINZA

Ginza is a classic Tokyo neighbourhood – with a glitzy side. Here, the shopping is bigger, brighter, and more blingy, with both international flagships and high-end heritage boutiques. And the gourmet restaurant scene doesn't get much better, as Ginza has the highest concentration of Michelin-starred eateries in Japan.

It is already the hottest place to stay for in-the-know jet-setters with an unmatched location right off the ultra-luxe Chuo-dori – a wide avenue lined with towering glass-and-steel shops. And now there's also a new luxury hotel for world travellers to try out. The 86-room Tokyo EDITION, Ginza was designed by acclaimed architect Kengo Kuma and has already made it onto savvy globetrotters' "must stay" list. Hoda Selim, a Tokyoite for the past decade as well as the hotel's new assistant chief concierge, offers some tips and tricks for first-time Ginza goers.

Luxury shopping centre Ginza Six





1 Tokyo Imperial Palace with its lush green gardens.
2 The Tsukiji Honganji temple is a must-visit.

SEE

While the shopping and dining scenes are Ginza’s unique selling points, there’s still plenty to see in the neighbourhood. “First, I would recommend going to Tsukiji Honganji Temple,” says Selim. “It’s located only 10 minutes from here, and nearby is the Tsukiji Fish Market, for street food and just walking around.”

“There is also the Kabukiza Theatre, near Tsukiji, where you can see kabuki shows and also do some shopping. Book the single act, which is around 20 to 30 minutes. Otherwise, the full act is pretty long – as it’s all in Japanese,” she adds.

While it’s not in Ginza, Selim also suggests visiting the nearby postcard-pretty Imperial Palace.

SNACK & SIP

For dining, Selim recommends visiting Koridodori, or Corridor Street, under the rail tracks. “Corridor Street is lined with little restaurants called izakaya. It’s more traditional, where you can feel the vibe of old Ginza,” she says. Try Marugin: “It’s a really great place; local and nothing fancy.”

For upscale dining, “There’s too many,” says Selim, before rattling off Ginza Ukai Tei for teppanyaki – “It’s also beautiful inside!”; Kappou Ukai “for omakase of mainly wagyu beef”; and Ginza Hachigou for chuka-soba noodles.

Counter-style sushi restaurant Sukiyabashi Jiro, the subject of the documentary *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, is one of the most requested restaurants for Selim. “It’s really hard to get a table, and the owner is in his nineties.” Another famous sushi spot is Sushi Kanesaka. “They need reservations way in advance,” says Selim – she suggests putting in a request two to three months ahead of any planned trip to the city.

Selim also proposes visitors check out the swish designer cafés nearby, like Shiseido Parlour’s Salon de Café (stop at the shop to buy some hanatsubaki biscuits to take home with you), Café Dior, and Le Café V, inside Louis Vuitton.

Another delicious delight: “Sembikiya for fruit – but really fancy fruit,” shares Selim. “All the fruit comes from Japan. It’s really famous, and here, it’s a tradition to buy fruit as a gift.”

For some post-prandial entertainment, it has to be Ginza Music Bar, a dimly lit hideout for music lovers. “They have a lot of records; jazz, pop, rock – anything! You can make a reservation, but Ginza Music Bar can also usually accommodate walk-ins after 8pm,” suggests Selim.

Of course, The Tokyo EDITION, Ginza has no shortage of venues to explore too. A study in jewel tones with handsome wood-panelled walls, Punch Room, set above the lobby on a mezzanine level, serves retro punch out of silver sharing bowls, as well as an afternoon tea.

There’s also a small bar in the lobby for afternoon tea or light snacks. Plus, on offer are international desserts like flaky French viennoiserie by Parisian pâtissier Maison Landemaine, which has an outpost in the Azabudai neighbourhood, and Italian-style panettone by Less, a modern pastry boutique with a focus on minimising waste, based in Tokyo’s Meguro City district. An outdoor bar, serving biodynamic and locally made drinks, is opening soon on the hotel’s picturesque 14th-floor rooftop.





Inside Ginza Six shopping mall

SHOP

For serious shoppers, Ginza is the place to be. Mikimoto's Ginza store is one of the largest jewellery stores in the world, with a shimmering façade made up of 40,000 glass plates. For fine jewellery fans, there's also a flagship of Niwaka, a leading Japanese brand, originating in Kyoto, which often uses traditional patterns and designs within their famed glittery baubles.

With an iridescent, rippling exterior, the seven-floor Louis Vuitton Ginza Namiki flagship is also unmissable thanks to its photogenic and futuristic design. Other big-name international flagships include Gucci, Bottega Veneta, and the recently renovated Tiffany & Co., which was also

designed by Kengo Kuma. Lastly, don't miss the shopping complex Ginza Six, which includes marques like Fendi, Kenzo, and Van Cleef & Arpels.

For something more low-key, Selim says to try Dover Street Market, created by Comme des Garçons founder Rei Kawakubo. "There are a lot of brands there, not only famous ones but also more local and urban brands as well. And there is even a museum inside the building," she reveals.

Selim also highlights Itoya: "It's eight floors of all crafts, like washi and origami papers. It's wonderful, though often crowded, so I advise taking the stairs instead of waiting for the elevator."

STAY

Despite Ginza's long-term reputation as one of Tokyo's most upmarket neighbourhoods, there are few five-star properties right in the heart of the action, making The Tokyo EDITION, Ginza a clear frontrunner. Rooms are simple, dressed in clean whites and walnut wood, and spacious by city standards (book one of the corner Premier Suites for the most natural light).

Breakfasts of Japanese rice porridge and earthy-and-sweet matcha French toast are served in the restaurant Sophie, which also open to guests for dinner and lunch.



- 1 Sleek lines and natural hues at The Tokyo EDITION, Ginza.
- 2 The view from the street.
- 3 Seasonal ingredient restaurant Sophie at EDITION.



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