

## The Architecture and Urban Design of Tokyo

Tokyo City. Tall buildings stretch across the horizon, creating an elaborate and colorful tapestry of architectural history. To many people, Tokyo's cityscape comprises of towering, nameless beauties with histories unknown, complemented by expansive parks and winding streets just as full of hidden tales. But for our travelers – our guests – we have ready a personal tour that relays the secrets of Tokyo's skyscrapers, and shares the stories of the concepts and designers behind the city's grandeur.

Continuing our theme of opening windows, bringing travelers into the world surrounding them, we offer a tour with a professional architect, a specialist who is one of the most knowledgeable people in the world of modern Tokyo architecture and urban planning.



## An Evening With Tradition



Brilliant red against radiant white, these are the colors illuminating faces behind teahouse windows in Kyoto's Gion district. Movies and books strive to capture their essence, yet only by speaking with one can you understand the dedication, the talent, the *people* that make up all that is beautiful about Japan's geisha.

We offer our guests the chance to speak with one of these masters of Japanese tradition, and experience up-close some of Japan's most classical arts, an affair conventionally reserved for Japan's rich and well connected.

Throughout an evening of fine dining at one of Kyoto's top-tier establishments, guests are treated to a performance that has been refined through years of schooling and apprenticeship. Our personally-selected geisha and guides make the evening even more memorable as they remove communication and cultural barriers, inviting guests to participate in a few of the geisha games of old, and even encouraging them to directly ask questions about the geisha lifestyle and life in Kyoto.

By the end of the experience, guests will have fascinating stories to take home, memories to cherish, and photographs that any fellow traveler will envy. This is just one of the many windows we open for our guests.

## Tokyo Art Cruise

What movements are taking place in Tokyo's art scene as you read this? One specialist



and friend of ours knows, and is ready to introduce you to the art scene of Tokyo as only a long-time resident and connoisseur can.

After taking some time in the morning to discuss your artistic tastes with our specialist guide, you'll be treated to a customized tour through Tokyo's backstreets and alleyways where you'll meet up-and-coming, and well-

established artists in their own studios and private galleries.

## Photography in Backstreet Tokyo

All good travelers keep a camera on them to capture fleeting golden moments. This time around, capture the unique while perfecting your technique as you venture through backstreet Tokyo with our friend and professional street photographer.

Boasting extensive academic research in street photography, Japan's feminist movements, and the unique culture of Tokyo's Shinjuku district, our expert will take you well beneath the surface of photography methods and Japanese society. Take a deep breath, and dive in.



## Bar Crawling in an Endangered District



Voices carry from one intimate establishment to another in these narrow streets, and artistically creative ideas flow as freely as the fresh drinks that are poured in this sliver of Shinjuku affectionately called Golden Gai. Here, the bond between regulars and shop owners is strong; secrets are kept as such in this world where nearly everyone has a colorful past.

Allow us to introduce you to a Golden Gai regular or bar master who will guide you through the narrow roads to visit establishments and chat with the prismatic locals as if you were one of their own. The evening may take you as far as Tokyo's Kabukicho and red-light district, so prepare for a night to remember. In fact, remember it well as the coming Tokyo Olympics may take Golden Gai away from us forever. Such is progress.

## A Story of Secluded Gardens

Kyoto is known for being home to pretty gardens aplenty, but there are many that go sadly unvisited despite their beauty and detail. In these gardens, each patch of moss and every pebble is thoughtfully placed, combining to create landscapes of legend, sometimes in spaces only as big as an average-sized sedan.

Our professional garden designer will take you to these hidden havens and teach you the meaning and ideas behind the botanically beautiful designs. With her help, you may even get a chance to see and learn about one secluded estate that is usually closed off to the average passer-by.



## One More Side of Gion



Gion and Geisha seem nearly inseparable, but let it be known that Gion is a district within a very busy city, and just like any other densely-packed city district, there are small and different pockets of activity within.

Let a former hostess lead you through some of Gion's many snack bars, hostess clubs, and karaoke bars, all the while sharing with you stories of

the similar but different industries, and teaching you the rules and etiquette required in each kind of establishment. Be introduced to and chat with the colorful characters who run, work in, and patronize these places, and become a local, if only for one night.

## Calligraphy in the Modern Age

*Kanji*, or Chinese characters that make up part of the Japanese written language, are more versatile than many people give them credit for. The characters, depending on how they are written, can change a word's meaning, and can even change the atmosphere in a given room depending on the artist doing the writing.

Kanji is language, and is also an art form. There is one up-and-coming artist we can introduce you to who can tell you the meaning and philosophy that lies between and inside of each brush stroke as it's laid to paper. Through her you will see meanings beyond the set definitions for each character she writes. She will teach you about the balance required, and the zen influence she incorporates into her work. She will show you the light inside of thick black ink.



## Kyoto's Historical Cuisine



Densely packed, modern cities offer choices innumerable when it comes to delectable delights. Kyoto, with its small, winding streets is no different except for one thing: its centuries of culinary history and craftsmanship. Allow our gastronomic specialist to show you the way to Kyoto's historic makers of food, flavors, fragrances and refreshments. You'll go behind the shop-fronts and meet sake brewers,

miso makers, confectioners, tea connoisseurs, masters of pickling, preservation, *umami* and more as you get an in-depth introduction to Japan's culinary techniques, and the people who dedicate their life to their safeguarding. See the passion, detail, and nods to tradition that go into everything they create.

## Tsukiji Through the Eyes of a Chef

Observe the real reason as to why the Tsukiji Fish Market is world-renowned. In the morning you'll wade through the sea of fish and people with confidence as you view the crowded madness through the eyes of a master chef. Walking in his shoes, you will come to know what it is that culinary masters look for as they ignore the cacophony and flashy sales pitches. Not ending there, you will be invited to dinner at the chef's own restaurant where you will be presented with a meal created with all the ingredients you saw purchased earlier that day. Discussions over dinner will reveal to you why each ingredient was chosen, and how it was used. Truly a delight for all the senses.



## A Morning of Sumo

A living symbol of Japan, sumo wrestlers are dedicated and disciplined fighters that few learn much about outside of their size and manner of dress. Choose to be one of the few, and experience a morning in the life of a sumo wrestler. Silent training at dawn will reveal to you the level of discipline these fighters hold. A tour through the stable kitchens followed by a brunch consisting of homemade *chanko nabe* hot pot stew will show you another talent these wrestlers hold – cooking! During brunch, you will get the chance to ask about and hear story upon story of the sumo wrestler lifestyle. A sumo wrestler's strength lies not only in fighting, but in friendliness as well.



## Sumo Through The Eyes of an Experienced Fighter



Learn about sumo wrestling – the training, the lifestyle, the competitions – through someone who has been through it all. Sumo tournament season is an exciting time for wrestlers and spectators alike, but we invite you to make it more so by attending a

tournament with an experienced and famed wrestler who knows the sumo world like none other. As you watch the bouts one by one, he will inform you all about the hows and whys of the calls, the dress, the ceremony, the history and more.

During off season, our professional will take you through a tour of one of Japan's sumo stables where you'll be able to witness the training, living quarters, and lifestyle of Japan's famous fighters. As our experienced wrestler makes his way through the stable offering advice and sometimes even admonishments to his juniors, you'll get a truly in-depth feel for what daily life can be like for Japan's historical rock stars.

Sayonara.

