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# Japan Highlights

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## Tokyo's New Landmark It's not just the sun rising in the east

**T**okyo Sky Tree is one of the most attention-getting features of Tokyo, already the tallest structure in Japan, and it's not even finished. People living in the vicinity of the tower note its daily progress skyward, with much hope for it to become a huge attraction for visitors to the area.

The tower is being built near a main tourist attraction in Tokyo, the popular Asakusa district, one of the representative *shitamachi* areas – parts of mostly eastern Tokyo that retain old, nostalgic features. If you visit Asakusa, look to the east and you won't miss the tower.

Though it's still under construction, the tower can be seen from as far away as the top of Mount Fuji, according to a photo posted on a website affiliated with Tokyo Sky Tree ([www.1101.com/skytree/index.html](http://www.1101.com/skytree/index.html)).

### More to see by sea

Boats, known as water buses that traverse the Sumida River between Asakusa and Tokyo Bay are a popular attraction for visitors and a good option for enjoying views of Tokyo Sky Tree.

Boats run upriver from several places, including the Hinode Pier, Hamarikyu Gardens and Odaiba. A popular itinerary for visitors is to stroll the natural, scenic, Japanese-style Hamarikyu Gardens before taking the boat ride up the Sumida River to Asakusa. As the boat heads up the river, the tower will come into view near Eitaibashi Bridge. It will gradually grow larger as the boat draws nearer up until the Asakusa boarding station at the foot of Azumabashi Bridge, where you will see many visitors taking photos of the future symbol of Tokyo.

A recommendation if you are taking the boat from Asakusa in the late afternoon is to head for Odaiba Kaihin Koen (Odaiba Seaside Park) in Tokyo Bay, which allows great night views of Tokyo Tower and downtown Tokyo from across the water.

Various water bus transportation routes are provided by Tokyo Cruise and the Tokyo Mizube Line. For more information, call Tokyo Cruise at 0120-977-311 or visit [www.suijibus.co.jp](http://www.suijibus.co.jp); call the Tokyo Mizube Line Office at 03-5608-8869 or visit [www.tokyo-park.or.jp/english](http://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/english)



Tokyo Sky Tree under construction as seen in September from the Kaminarimon Street near Sensoji Temple in Asakusa, Tokyo  
CHIHO IUCHI

### What is Tokyo Sky Tree?

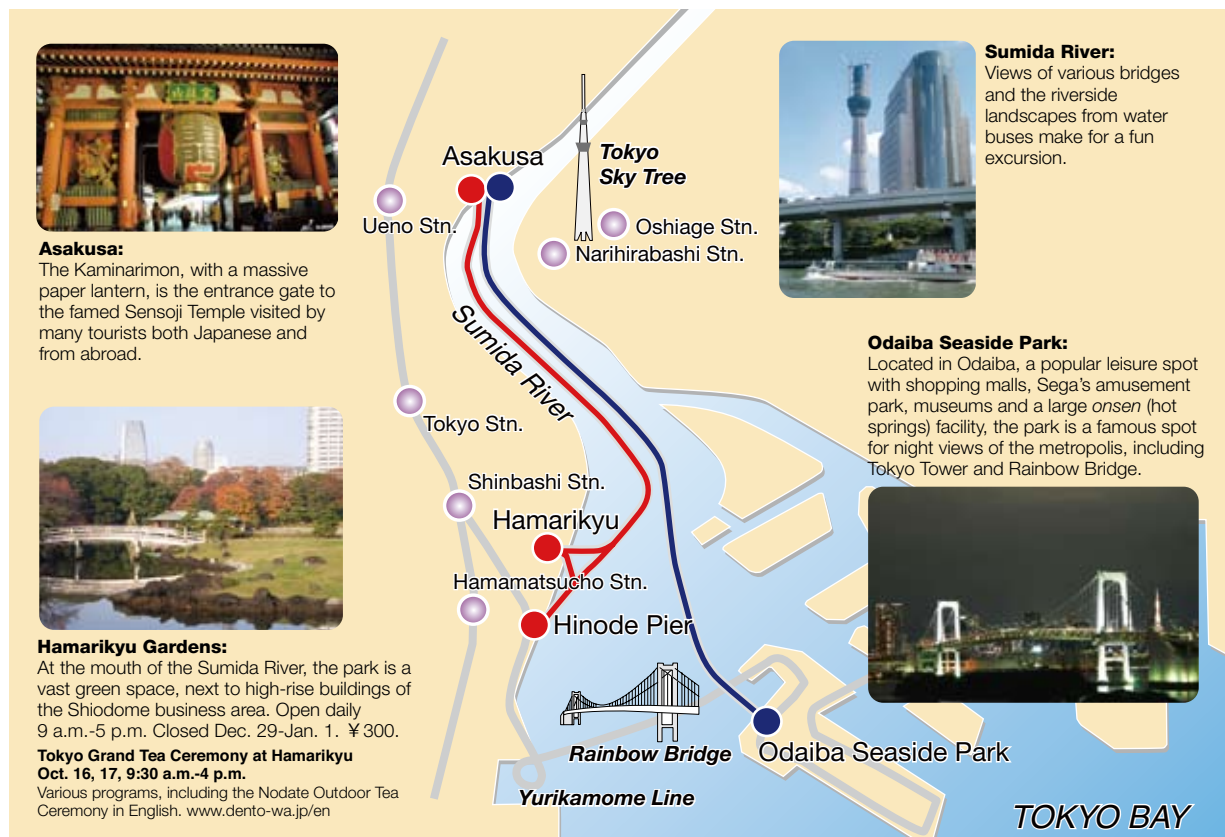
Tokyo Sky Tree is a broadcasting tower that will improve existing digital broadcasting capabilities. The tower is being built to increase signal strength by avoiding obstructions, which Tokyo Tower had faced due to the increasing number of high-rise buildings in its vicinity.

In March 2010, the Sky Tree exceeded Tokyo Tower's height of 333 meters. At the time of its completion, expected in December 2011, Sky Tree will be 634 meters tall.

Within the tower will be broadcasting facilities, two observation decks (at 350 meters and 450 meters high), shops, restaurants and cafes.

Already open is the Tokyo Sky Tree Information Plaza, located at the adjacent Narihira-bashi Station. It offers video images of what the view will look like from the completed observation decks as well as information about Sky Tree itself.

Access: Oshiage Station (Tokyo Metro Hanzomon Line or Toei Asakusa Line); Narihira-bashi Station (Tobu Isesaki Line)



## TOKYO: AT A GLANCE

### Local event Mikoshi Festival

*Mikoshi* are portable shrines that are prominent parts of traditional festivals. At the Oedo Mikoshi Matsuri, more than 2,000 people will gather to help carry 13 *mikoshi* around Kiba Park. There will also be many exhibitions and performances of traditional Japanese music and dance.



**Oedo Mikoshi Matsuri in Kiba Park:** Oct. 10, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; near Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo 4-6-1 Hirano, Koto-ku; 15-min. walk from Kiba Station (Tokyo Metro Tozai Line); [www.mikoshimatsuri.com](http://www.mikoshimatsuri.com) (Japanese only)



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### Japanese art Ukiyo-e

*Ukiyo-e* (Japanese genre painting) became popular during the Edo Period (1603-1867), as it portrayed ordinary people's lifestyles in low-priced, multicolored woodblock prints. The Ukiyo-e Ota Memorial Museum of Art, just steps away from the crowded Omotesando avenue, provides visitors with a comfortable environment to appreciate well-preserved Japanese art.

**Ukiyo-e Ota Memorial Museum of Art: "Ukiyo-e Collection from the Museum fur Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg"** Oct. 1-Nov. 28, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. ¥1,000. Closed Mon. (open Oct. 11 and closed Oct. 12). 1-10-10 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku; 5-min. walk from JR Harajuku Station and Meiji-jingumae Station (Tokyo Metro Chiyoda, Fukutoshin lines); 03-3403-0880

### Traditional drama Kabuki

Kabuki, a classical Japanese dance-drama, was established in the Edo Period (1603-1867) and became popular with ordinary people. As Kabukiza in Ginza is currently closed and being rebuilt, its performances are being staged at the Shinbashi Enbujo until 2013. The other major venue in Tokyo is the National Theater. Headsets with English commentary are available.



"Kokusenya Kassen" ("The Battles of Coxinga"): Nov. 3-26 (at noon; Nov. 9, 19, 4:30 p.m.) at the National Theater; ¥1,500-¥12,000.

**Shinbashi Enbujo:** 6-18-2 Ginza, Chuo-ku; 3-min. walk from Tsukiji-Shijo Station (Toei Oedo Line); 03-3541-3581

**National Theater:** 4-1 Hayabusacho, Chiyoda-ku; 5-min. walk from Hanzomon Station (Tokyo Metro Hanzomon Line); 03-3265-7411



**Ginza Mitsukoshi**  
10 a.m.-8 p.m.; 4-6-16 Ginza, Chuo-ku; 1-min. walk from Ginza Station (Tokyo Metro Ginza, Hibiya, Marunouchi lines); 03-3562-1111

### Shopping Ginza Mitsukoshi

Mitsukoshi, the Tokyo-based international department store chain, reopened its Ginza branch on Sept. 11. Ginza Mitsukoshi has been a landmark of the luxurious shopping district since 1930. After a grand-scale renovation, the reopened Ginza Mitsukoshi aims to attract more varied and younger customers with its own selected products. Also, the store houses the Ginza Tourist Information booth on the 2nd floor.

### Souvenirs Kiddy Land

Kiddy Land, a toy store known for its huge variety of goods depicting famous characters, such as Hello Kitty and Pokémon, is a popular souvenir hunting spot. The temporary Harajuku Cat Street Branch opened in September as the flagship shop is closed for renovations.



**Kiddy Land Harajuku Cat Street Branch:** 11 a.m.-9 p.m. (Sat., Sun., holidays, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m.); 6-14-2 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku; 4-min. walk from Meiji-jingumae Station (Tokyo Metro Chiyoda, Fukutoshin lines); 03-3409-3431; [www.kiddyland.co.jp](http://www.kiddyland.co.jp)



### Hands-on Ninja experience

Urban Ninja Tokyo, a martial arts group, provides lessons at restaurant Ninja Yashiki in the Kabukicho area of Shinjuku, all presented with English translations. The 90-minute Ninja Dojo Visit program lets you train and try special meditation, use ninja stars, practice swordsmanship and other ninja martial arts while wearing a traditional costume.

**Ninja Dojo Visit at Ninja Yashiki:** Mon. and Thu. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. (1 p.m.-3 p.m. upon request); Ashibe Kaikan Building 5F, 2-36-3 Kabukicho, Shinjuku-ku; for a group of two to 15 people, ¥15,000 per person; reservations required three days in advance; 090-8055-9978 or 090-3691-8165; [urban-ninja@mail.goo.ne.jp](mailto:urban-ninja@mail.goo.ne.jp); <http://ninjawarriors.ninja-web.net>