



Tuesday, April 29, 2008



1. TAKE MALARIA PILL!!

2. Train to Harajuku



3. Visit Meiji Shrine

- a. Holy site so central to Japanese culture that 3.2 million people visited it last New Year's Day
- b. Pass through gates made of 1,700 year old cypress toward the shrine where there's always something going on – maybe a sword-wielding competition that features dozens of men and women in hakama (kimonos with pants) slicing the air, or a wedding procession starring a bride dressed in a bindingly white kimono

4. Train to Ueno

Ueno Park is home to museums, ponds, a zoo, an amusement park, shrines, monuments, and more. The Tokyo National Museum houses the world's largest collection of Japanese art; not far from it is the quirky Shitamachi (Downtown) Museum on the park's southeast corner. Its first floor features a re-created merchant neighborhood in old Edo with a cobbler, a sweets shop, an instrument maker, and a craftsman sharpening knives.

5. Lunch: Ueno Yabu Soba

6. Take train to Asakusa

Asakusa—the heart of old Edo and a popular spot for both domestic and international visitors. Walk away from the river toward Kaminari-mon, or Thunder Gate, whose fearsome gods guard the entrance to Sensoji Temple.

7. On your way back to greet the thunder gods, stop at the **Asakusa** (Day 1, Site 6) tourist information center right across the street for an English map

Through the gates, Nakamise-dori bustles with vendors' stalls selling souvenirs ranging from the sublime to the silly, including kimono-cloth purses and samurai wigs. Snack your way down the alley on Asakusa's famous ningyoyaki, sweet bean-filled minicakes shaped like faces, or sembei, salty rice crackers. Follow the crowds into Sensoji Temple, built in the seventh century, and have your fortune told. Slip a 100-yen coin into the slot and shake a metal can until a numbered stick pops out. Ask a bystander to read the Chinese characters, match it to the correct drawer, and pull out a fortune with an often-cryptic English translation. (Example: "To study the truth in deep mountain, he is a real splendid man superior to all.")





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8. At the foot of Azuma-bashi bridge, there's a station of Suijo-Bus (water-bus). Take Suijo-Bus to **Hamarikyu Gardens**

The Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868) summered here and hunted duck on these vast grounds. The farther you stroll from the 300-year-old pine at the gates, the more the roar of the city dies away and a sense of utter tranquility descends. Depending on the time of year, the gardens spill over with peonies, hydrangea, azalea, and wisteria. Cross the ancient cedar bridge to the wooden teahouse, built in 1707, and step into the tatami rooms for green tea and a sweet.



9. Train / Walk to hotel

10. Dinner: **Imahan** (several locations with one in Ginza)

a. Kojun Building 5F, 6-8-7 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
TEL: 81-3-3571-5333

Hours AM11:30 to PM10:00

No holidays, Closed for New Year Day

b. Appears to have limited seating. Ask hotel concierge about making a reservation

11. Head back to hotel and sleep.

