

THE WORD ON THE STREET



We're on our way to a wedding in Sydney and stopped off in Tokyo for a few days because it's somewhere we've always wanted to go. We're staying at a hotel in Odaiba, where the service has been excellent. In fact, everyone everywhere has been very nice; people here bend over backwards to help you. We went to Harajuku yesterday and bumped into someone who took us on a little tour of the area, showed us the Prada Building and even bought us a glass of wine! I think in any other country we'd have been a bit suspicious, but not here.

Nnaemeka and Christina from England



We're here for the K-1 event at the Tokyo Dome this weekend. We're from Holland, and five of the eight finalists are from Holland. So we're here for the fighting, but also to check out the city. We're staying at a hotel in Asakusa, which is a more traditional area than Ginza, which reminds us a bit of New York. The contrasts make it a fascinating city, and the weather has been a pleasant surprise. It's -5°C in Holland at the moment, but here it's 15°C and sunny. And so far, everyone we've met has been very kind and helpful.

K-1 lovers from Holland



We're from Bordeaux in France and are in Tokyo to promote our wine. We've been very successful, and now we're enjoying the city. It's a nice place to walk around. The people everywhere are so polite. I think I've heard "arigato gozaimasu" a thousand times since we arrived, but that's fine. We're actually on a tour of Asia and have visited China, Hong Kong and Korea. The standard of service in Japan is definitely very high. Traveling around is easy here too. All the signs are written in English now.

Jean-Michelle, Gavin and Sylvie from France

The Ginza-Marunouchi-Imperial Palace loop is one of Tokyo's most popular excursions, revealing over a manageable distance many of the stark contrasts which make the capital city such an attractive tourist destination: the old and the new, the rough and the smooth.... The Japan Journal's Alex Hendy and photographer Alfie Goodrich walked the circuit, and talked with some passing tourists along the way.



I'm a classical singer and came to Tokyo to perform at a carol concert. I'm now traveling and have visited Kyoto, Kamakura and Yokohama, as well as Tokyo. I'm enjoying it very much. Tokyo feels very safe. Japan is very clean and the people are very friendly. I get lost all the time and people help me. I use a phrase book and point, and most people seem to know a little English.

Lisa from Austria



We're here on holiday from Los Angeles. Tokyo is a good deal right now; it's close to LA and you can get a direct flight. Japan is different; so unique. We went to Yoyogi Park yesterday and it was beautiful, and then went for sushi, which was really amazing. We've found that everywhere people are very polite, gracious, attentive and accommodating, especially given that we don't speak Japanese. We have our map out and people stop and try and help. You wouldn't have that in LA. People would be like, get out of the way!

Sisters from Los Angeles



We're staying at a *ryokan* in Minowa, a workers' neighborhood near Ueno. It's very simple, but it's very beautiful, and it's a nice part of town. The room is like a little box, and with the futon on the floor there's not much room for anything else, but it's perfect. The owner is very friendly. On the first day she picked up the little one to let us have our breakfast. So it's a very familiar, homey environment. We've been eating at little red lantern restaurants in the neighborhood. The workers come in and they eat a mile an hour! The places can look shabby on the outside but the food is amazing and great value too. For 10 euros you can eat easily.

Eduardo from Spain and Dione from Australia