

CHRISTINE IZEKI | BJÖRN NEUMANN

111

PLACES

IN TOKYO

THAT YOU



SHOULDN'T

MISS

emons:

2 The 3-D Trick Art Museum

Become part of a work of art

Be as acrobatic as a ninja or as bold as a torero facing up to a raging bull. Take a trip back in time into Japanese history, get frightened out of your wits by monsters in a haunted house or by a skeleton that strokes your head. All of this is possible in the 3-D Trick Art Museum.

Because this museum works according to its own rules. You are not merely allowed to take photographs of the works of art and touch them – you can even walk on them in your shoes. The focus is on enjoyment. The museum exhibits 3-D images based on the principle of optical illusion. The technique known as *trompe l'oeil* conjures spatial depth that does not truly exist on a flat surface. If three-dimensional things such as people are part of the motif, the effect is particularly striking on a photo. And if your facial expression on the photo is dramatic enough, people who are not initiated into the secret will be amazed and have no doubt that you were balancing on a narrow beam above a deep abyss, even though there was nothing dangerous at all about the way the photograph was taken. The more talent as an actor you demonstrate, the more fun you will have later when looking at the images.

In 1987 Kazumune Kenju, the best-known exponent of trick art in Japan, founded the first creative studio for this genre. In 1991 the first 3-D trick art museum was then opened. Since then, this entertaining form of art has become well known internationally. Many exhibitions were held in the USA, as well as in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea.

In Tokyo there are two trick art museums. One of them is located in Hachioji, the other in Odaiba. Here we recommend the latter, because, in addition to a ‘best of’ collection from across the country, there is also an exhibition of motifs of old Japan. Famous works of art from the Edo period were taken as the models for the images.



Address 東京トリックアート迷宮館, Tokyo Trick Art Museum, Decks Tokyo Beach Island Mall 4F, Daiba 1-6-1, Minato-ku, 135-0091 Tokyo, www.trickart.info | **Getting there** Yurikamome Line to Odaiba-Kaihinkoen, 2-minutes walk, and Rinkai Line to Tokyo-Teleport, 5-minute walk | **Hours** Daily 11am-9pm | **Tip** On the fourth floor of the building next door is the Takoyaki Museum. It is not a classic museum but a collection of small restaurants that serve a speciality from Osaka: octopus balls in spicy sauce.

61 The Mound Grave

Burial site of one of the first residents of Tokyo

Since the seventh century, long before Edo and later Tokyo become the seat of government for Japan, this province was called Musashi. Musashi-no-Kuni, which literally means Musashino Country, covered a great deal of the area that is now Tokyo, Kanagawa and Saitama. The city of Fuchu, today to the west of Tokyo, was the seat of the provincial government, which is exactly what Fuchu means: provincial administration.

In addition to government buildings and temples, the area was densely dotted with the graves of leading government servants. Over the centuries, these kofun ('old graves'), as such sites are called, became overgrown and eventually resembled small hills. One of these tombs, close to the Nishifu train station right next to the Kumano Shrine, was excavated at the beginning of this century. The structure, which had partly collapsed, was reconstructed.

As a result, today it is possible to admire once again this large structure, which measures approximately 30 by 30 metres and has three stages: on the square base there stands a second section, also square in plan, and on this in turn a circular third stage. The two upper sections are lined with round stones that were brought here from the nearby river Tama. On the side facing the shrine is an entrance, closed with big stone slabs.

In a museum that seems extremely oversized in relation to the number of exhibits, details of the excavation and reconstruction of the kofun are presented. Visitors can also put on a helmet and take a flashlight to enter a replica of the tomb chamber. One of the main attractions, in a glass case in the middle of the room, is a facsimile of one of the few items found in the grave: a small decorated sword tip. When it was opened, a few glass beads and nails were found, but neither a body nor a coffin. Earlier 'visitors' had taken them as a souvenir.



Address 武蔵府中熊野神社古墳, Musashino-Fuchu-Kumano-Jinja-Kofun, Nishifu-cho 2-9-5, Fuchu-shi, 183-0031 Tokyo | **Getting there** JR-Nambu Line to Nishifu, 7-minute walk | **Hours** Museum Tue-Sun 9am-5pm*, free admission | **Tip** On the other side of the Nishifu train station you can get an impression of the appearance of the kofun before reconstruction: a further grave mound in a park there is still covered with earth and overgrown by trees.

93__ The Swimming Pool

Pack your swimwear

In summer, when the thermometer rises above 30 degrees Celsius, a lot of people in Tokyo have only one thing in mind: they long to cool down and feel refreshed. A large proportion of the inhabitants of this city of nine million then set off for one of the few open-air pools, with results that are sometimes bizarre. If you would like to avoid the masses, it is recommended not to go swimming in the O-Bon period in August, when most Japanese take a holiday from work. At other times, too, when the weather is hot during the school holidays and at weekends, the pools can be overcrowded. On the other hand, if the sky is cloudy and the temperatures not quite so high, the all-weather pools are often scenes of emptiness, even during the high season.

The Seibuen Yuenchi Pool lies at the edge of the city, between Tokyo and Saitama Prefecture. Thanks to several attractions for visitors, cooling-off in the water here is the ultimate in bathing: the pool has a wave machine, no fewer than six tube-like water chutes and the so-called nagare pool, in which swimmers drift gently through the water, drawn by the pull of the current. Several paddling pools are available for small children.

One of the regulations may seem strange to foreigners: to ensure that everything runs smoothly during the peak season, for safety reasons all swimmers have to leave the water for 5 minutes, once every 30 minutes. When the pool superintendent blows a whistle, you should leave the pool without delay.

Since 2016 there have been moonlight swimming sessions in this pool. The colourful lights of the adjacent amusement park, reflected on the surface of the water, create a magical mood. This event is called the night pool. In its first year it happened only on Fridays, and every day during the O-Bon period. Depending on the number of visitors, there may be changes to the opening hours.



Address 西武園遊園地プール, Seibuen Yuenchi Pool, Yamaguchi 2964, 359-1145 Tokorozawa, +81 (0) 429 221 371, www.seibuen-yuenchi.jp/information (only Japanese) | **Getting there** Seibuen Line to Seibuen, 5-minute walk | **Hours** Daily 9am-5pm, night pool Fri and O-Bon period daily 5-9pm (swimming season is early July to early Sept) | **Tip** Seibu-Yuenchi amusement park is on the same site. For admission to both, you can save money by buying a combined ticket.



95—The Tamagawa Aqueduct

Water for a thirsty city

The place that is now Tokyo was once an idyllic fishing village called Edo. In 1603 the shogun, Ieyasu Tokugawa, decided to found a new capital city here. The settlement grew with enormous speed. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Edo had a population of more than one million. Since this time the city, renamed Tokyo in 1868, has been one of the largest in the world.

As the inhabitants needed supplies of water for drinking and extinguishing fires, the shogun ordered the construction of a dam in the river Tama on the Musashino Plateau, at a distance of 40 kilometres from the capital. The brothers Shoemon and Seiemon, under the supervision of the ruler of the city of Kawagoe, Nobutsuna Matsudaira, were given the task of building the dam and a canal. Construction work started in 1653, and the aqueduct was completed in only 18 months. The brothers, who were ordinary farmers before they received this huge commission, were honoured for their outstanding work, and henceforth were permitted to bear the surname Tamagawa. A monument to the two stands in Hamura Park.

Before this system of water supply was completed, the only source was the Kanda Aqueduct, which was inadequate to meet demand. A canal with a length of 43 kilometres was built. It starts in present-day Hamura and ends in the city centre at the Okido Gate in Yotsuya. In some places the aqueduct is extremely narrow, but it always carries enough water for the flow to reach its destination.

The Tamagawa Canal is a good place to get away from the bustle of the big city for a while. The section close to Tamagawajosui train station is especially beautiful. Luxuriant vegetation and the splashing of the water have a calming effect. You can take a wonderful walk or ride a bike along the canal bank. Since 2003, the aqueduct has been recognised as a national historical landmark.

Address 玉川上水, Tamagawajosui, Saiwai-cho 6-36-1, Tachikawa-shi, 190-0002 Tokyo | **Getting there** Seibu-Hajjima Line and others to Tamagawajosui | **Tip** In the Kawagoedo-Ryokuchi woodland stands a kominka, an old residence of middle-class citizens that can be visited free of charge.



104 The Village Experience

Art, culture and nature

Have you always wanted to find out the secrets of origami? Or do you enjoy making merry little gnomes out of acorns and pine cones? This village is exactly the right place for all lovers of craftwork.

At weekends craft workshops are held at Hachikokuyama-Taiken-no-Sato. The themes are usually related to the season of the year. Telephone in advance to find out about programmes and dates. Origami paper and materials from the woods are provided free of charge. For the use of leather and metal, a small fee has to be paid. While a member of staff explains how to proceed with more complicated tasks, for simpler activities such as scissor-cutting silhouettes there are sets of instructions, in which everything is shown in diagrams, step by step. The staff are friendly and pleased to help if anyone gets stuck with their work. Other participants in the course, often from an older age group, assist if someone has difficulty in following the instructions, and help until you have really mastered all the steps in the work.

At the back of the building is an exhibition dedicated to the lives of people in the past in the Sayama region. Among the highlights are several exhibits from the Jomon era, which are rarely to be seen in Japan. On the grounds of the village, close to the entrance, there stands a small white building with a gabled roof. This is a traditional storehouse, known as a kura, of which several have survived in this area.

If you would like to stretch your legs for a little while after taking part in the cultural activities, the woods of Hachikokuyama are a suitable place for taking a lengthy walk. This swathe of forest serves as the border between two prefectures, those of Tokyo and Saitama. The hilly countryside as you approach the woodland is very picturesque, and it is especially beautiful in this area when the cherry trees are in blossom in spring.



Address 八国山たいけんの里, Hachikokuyama-Taiken-no-Sato, Noguchicho 3-48-1, Higashi-Murayama-shi, 189-0022 Tokyo, +81 (0) 423 902 161 | **Getting there** Seibuen Line to Seibuen, 8-minute walk | **Hours** Wed-Sun 9.30am-5pm (last admission 4.30pm)*, admission free | **Tip** The nearby Kitayama Park is a source of varied motifs for photographers all year round, especially when the iris are in flower in June.



111 Zoo of the Continents

See the animals

Ueno Zoo became world-famous thanks to its panda. However, if the animals could decide where they prefer to spend their days, they would probably choose to live in Tama Zoo in Hino, as they have very large compounds there. This zoo, which was opened in 1958, covers an area of more than 52 hectares. It is so large that visitors can hardly see all of it in a single day, and therefore the free shuttle bus at their disposal is an extremely practical measure. On the busiest days of the year, this service is restricted to senior citizens, persons with handicaps and visitors with small children.

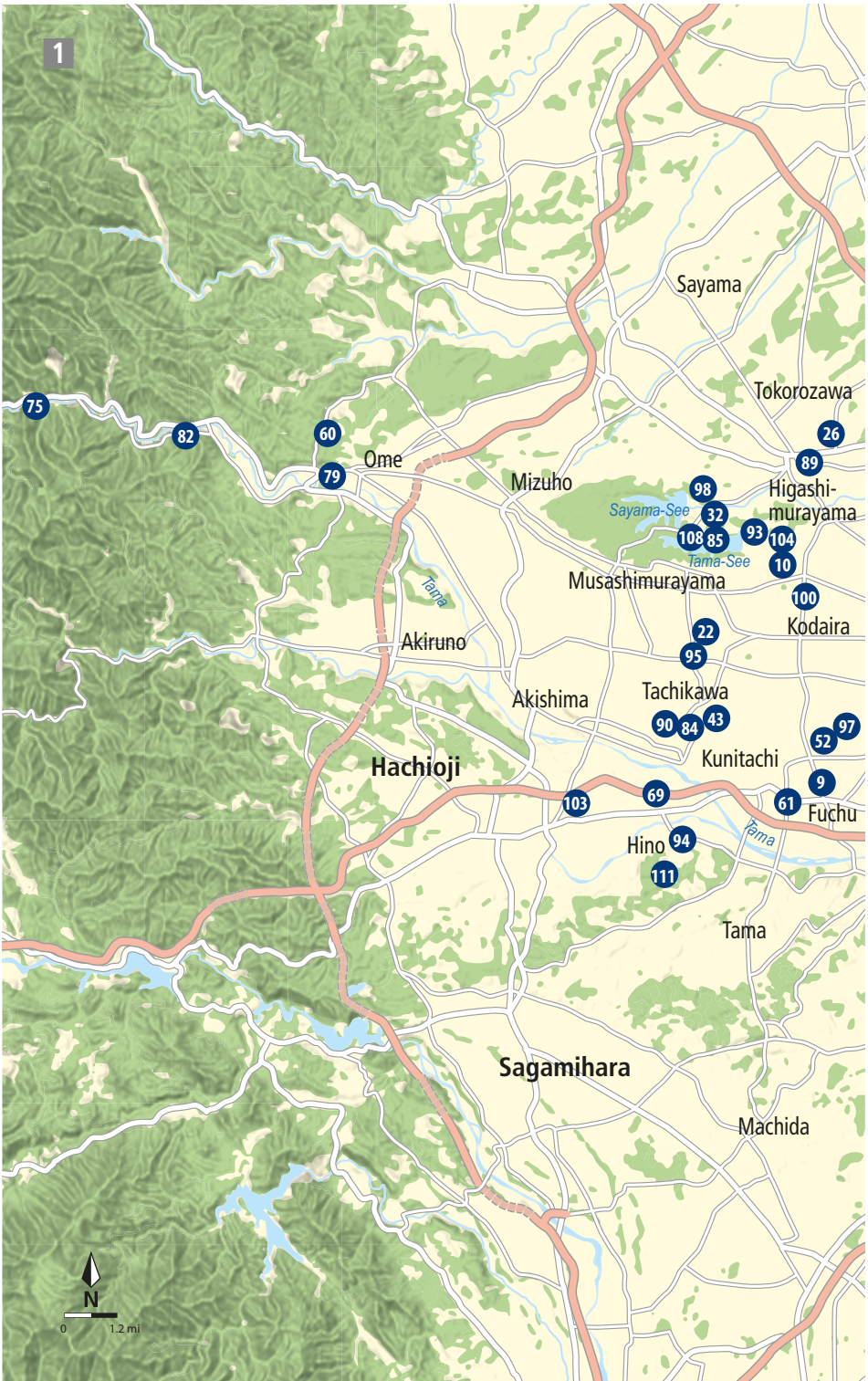
Tama Zoo is divided according to geographical areas: there is an African, an Asian and an Australian garden. Each of them is home to animals that are typical of one part of the world. There is also an insect house.

One of the biggest attractions is the lions' compound, through which you can ride in a safari bus and observe the big cats close up. This bus service has recently been suspended, as the lion compound is getting a thorough modernisation. It will probably be reopened in 2019.

A further popular feature is the skywalk. If you are in luck, you will be able to watch the orangutans balancing up there at a dizzying height. The skywalk is 150 metres long, and the rope is suspended 15 metres above the ground. The chimpanzees delight onlookers with displays of their dexterity – they have learned how to open drinks cans that they have bought from dispensing machines. The chimps also have no difficulties in operating a gatchagatcha, a vending machine for toys. Other animals take a more relaxed approach to their day. The koalas are happiest when they are asleep in the branches of eucalyptus trees, whereas the tapirs prefer sunbathing in the mud. The cute lesser pandas are a big hit with children. If you like animals, you will love Tama Zoo.

Address 多摩動物公園, Tama Zoo, Hodokubo 7-1-1, Hino-shi, 191-0042 Tokyo |
Getting there Tama monorail to Tama-Dobutsukoen | **Hours** Tue–Thu 9.30am–5pm
(last admission 4pm)* | **Tip** Keio Rail Land near the zoo entrance is the railway museum
of the Keio Line. An attractive outdoor exhibition was added in 2013.





Sayama

Tokorozawa

Ome

Mizuho

Higashi-murayama

Sayama-See

Tama-See

Musashimurayama

Akiruno

Kodaira

Akishima

Tachikawa

Hachioji

Kunitachi

Hino

Tama

Sagamihara

Machida



