

# Encounter the Ancient and Modern Architecture of Japan

**Japan: a country where the old and the new exist side by side. Be steeped in the rich culture and history embodied in Japan's sublime architecture.**

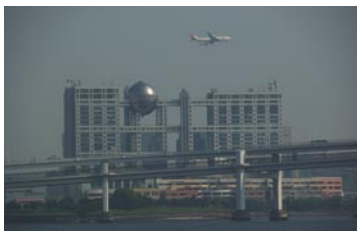


Roppongi Hills Mori Tower  
Photo: © Yasufumi Nishi / © JNTO

The 'now' in Tokyo's architecture can be seen in *Roppongi Hills* and the Fuji Television Headquarters Building.

Tokyo's central entertainment district, Roppongi, is frequented by many foreign residents and international travelers. The reason being that following the Second World War, restaurants and bars catering to westerners were opened, and the embassies of various countries came to be studded around the Roppongi district. One of the most striking and conspicuous domestic complexes in the area is *Roppongi Hills*. Comprised of shops, restaurants, an art gallery, a nine-screen cinema complex, a hotel, offices and more, *Roppongi Hills* is crowded and lively both at night and during the day. In the centre of *Roppongi Hills* the prodigious *Mori Tower* is a must-see, with the geometric design of its motif, reminiscent of Japanese Origami and feudal armour helmets, giving a sense of the traditions of Japan.

In the newly developed district of Odaiba, facing out towards Tokyo Bay, is the major television company, Fuji Television's headquarters building, at the top of which a vast orb hangs in the sky, creating a unique and futuristic scene. With a diameter of 32 metres, the orb houses an observation gallery accessible to the general public. With Tokyo's cluster of high-rise buildings visible from the gallery, including *Tokyo Tower* and the new *Sky Tree* currently under construction, and the beautiful sight of Mount Fuji in the distance, the building is visited daily by crowds of sightseers.



Fuji Television Headquarters Building in Odaiba  
Photo: © Yasufumi Nishi / © JNTO

The ancient capital, Kyoto's historical temple, *Kiyomizudera* and *Byodoin*.

Approximately 500km west of Tokyo, at the centre of ancient Japan around 1,200 years ago, lies the flourishing city of Kyoto. Kyoto is home to streets that boast hundreds of shrines, temples and other ancient structures, through which a sense of Japan's history can be felt, making it one of the foremost tourist destinations in the world. One of the most popular temples, *Kiyomizudera's*, main building, lies in a hollow in the mountains, appearing to lean out from an 18 metre cliff. In the spring the cherry blossoms bloom, and in the summer the temple is surrounded by the bright green of the trees. The autumn brings the changing colours of the leaves, and in the winter the scene is shrouded in snow. Each of the four seasons brings a special beauty to be enjoyed.



Kiyomizudera in autumn  
Photo: © Y.Shimizu / © JNTO



Byodoin  
Photo: © JNTO

Reflected in the lake of the gardens is the exquisite form of *Byodoin*. Constructed around 1,000 years ago, when *Jodo Shinko*, a religion that sought utopia in the afterlife, was permeating society. Extending down both sides of the hallway, the building resembles the magnificent bird of folk tales, the Chinese phoenix, on the verge of taking flight. This extraordinary sight is why the hall is known in modern times as Phoenix Hall. *Byodoin* is so well loved that it is featured on the 10 Yen coin, with the Chinese phoenix that embellishes its rooftop featuring on the 10,000 Yen note.

Conveying the disaster of the Second World War, *Genbaku Dome*; Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

Located about 400km west of Kyoto, Hiroshima is known as the site of the first nuclear weapon deployed during war, on August the 6th, 1945. Built in 1914, the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall was the site of numerous expositions that attracted great numbers of people. However, the hall is now known by its common name, the 'Atomic Bomb Dome', a ruin that wordlessly conveys the devastation caused by the atomic bomb. The facade of the building remains, with a five-storey staircase leading to the copper-plated elliptical dome, architecture that was both modern and exceptional in pre-war Japan. Being a mere 160 metres from ground zero, exposed to the blast and the heat it generated, the rooftop, flooring, and the majority of the walls disintegrated, leaving the stripped steel cage of the dome miraculously spared from destruction. Currently listed by the UNESCO World



Genbaku Dome  
Photo: © Y.Shimizu / © JNTO

Heritage Centre as the 'Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum', it stands as a symbol of Japan's continuing appeal for lasting world peace and the eradication of nuclear weapons, with the desire that such a catastrophe should never occur again.