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## Trip Report: Tour Tokyo in Comfort and Style

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By **Kühl Editor** on February 7, 2020

Packing for an international adventure requires planning. Space limitations and weight restrictions usually dictate what goes into the suitcase and what is left behind. I usually pull out more things than can possibly fit. For my November trip to Japan, I focused on comfort and style. In Tokyo, I would be visiting an assortment of venues—both inside and out. I also knew that there was a high likelihood of precipitation, so I couldn't forget rain gear.

# Non-Stop to Tokyo

Coziness and convenience were the keys to my long flight to Tokyo. Since plane temperatures can vary, I always dress in layers. On the inbound flight, I wore my [KÜHL Shasta 3/4 Sleeve Top](#) and packed a [Helix Wrap](#) in my carry-on bag. The Helix Wrap ended up being a perfect solution to offset the coolness emanating from the adjacent window. While leggings can be super comfy, loose-fitting pants with several pockets tend to be a better option for me. I like the convenience of stashing a passport or cell phone quickly. My top choice was the relaxed fit [Splash Roll-Up Pants](#).

The excitement of being in Japan, coupled with a full itinerary forestalled the inevitable jet lag. We didn't waste any time. After a few hours of sleep, my husband and I started exploring Tokyo with our guide, Ms. Makino. My outfit included a pair of black KÜHL leggings with a matching ash-colored long sleeve [Svenna Top](#). This casual and tasteful ensemble was perfect for a full day of touring. Since I knew we wouldn't be back until dinner, I stashed my [Kozet Jacket](#) into my day bag.

## Edo-Tokyo Museum

Our first stop was the [Edo-Tokyo Museum](#) for a crash course in Japanese history. Edo is the former name for Tokyo. From the early 17th century until the mid 19th century, the Tokugawa shogunate ruled Japan from this city. By touring the permanent exhibit that included artifacts and replicas, we learned about the 400 years of history from the Edo period to the present. The feudal lord-vassal relationship of the Edo period stood in sharp contrast to the modernization of Tokyo after the emancipation. We could easily have spent the whole day absorbing history and culture. Instead, we had a quick tour that allowed us to see several more attractions by nightfall.





*Exhibit at Edo-Tokyo Museum, Tokyo, Japan*

## Tokyo Skytree Observation Deck

Before lunch, we visited the famous [Tokyo Skytree Observation Deck](#) for a panoramic view of the city. It took almost four years to complete this uniquely shaped tower, which opened in 2012. High rise tourist attractions are totally dependent on weather and can attract long lines. We lucked out. With a private tour guide, we had priority and were able to board an elevator without waiting. We zipped to the top by traveling at a maximum speed of 600 meters per minute. Taking advantage of the sunny day, we took an assortment of pictures. However, a distant haze obscured some of our long distant shots. Signage helped us identify many of Tokyo's landmarks.



*View from Skyview Observatory, Tokyo, Japan*

## Dining at Kunimi

We were treated to a special meal at [Kunimi](#), where we thoroughly enjoyed a multi-course Japanese meal. Small slices of vegetables and fish were neatly arranged in both square and round ceramic dishes. I was hooked on authentic Japanese cuisine after just one meal.





*Authentic Japanese cuisine, Kunimi, Tokyo, Japan*

## Traditional Candy Making

When offered the opportunity to learn about Amezaiku, a traditional Japanese candy, I happily agreed. Little did I know at the time that this participatory activity would have me laughing non-stop. The demonstration at the [Amezaiku workshop](#) was conducted in Japanese while Ms. Makino translated the essential steps. Follow-up information was offered in a short video with English subtitles. My attempts to follow the multi-step process of sculpting a super-hot ball of candy attached to a small stick in less than three minutes was more laborious than it appeared. While my end product fell far short of my expectations and did not resemble a rabbit, I had a hilarious and enjoyable time.





*Sandy concentrates as she tries traditional Japanese candy making*

## Sensoji Temple

To reach the Sensoji Temple, we walked through the Nitenmon Gate (the Gate of Two Deities) dating back to the

17th century. An adjacent sign stated, “used when the Tokugawa Shogun visited the shrine.” The area was filled with visitors and worshippers who scurried from one building to the next.

Ms. Makino demonstrated the ritual for purifying one’s hands and mouth. Standing in front of an array of colorful wooden blocks of wood, she described some of the prayers left behind by worshippers. Another kiosk offered the opportunity for people to make a donation in exchange for a written fortune. Good fortunes were to be taken home while bad ones were to be tied to a nearby rack. While we didn’t participate in any of these traditions, we did touch a rope connected to an oversized pair of sandals that were intended to ward off evil.





*Sandy and Ira ward off bad luck at Sensoji Temple, Tokyo, Japan*

Before exiting through the red, gold, and green colored Hozomon Gate, we strolled by the Main Hall and the five-story Pagoda. We found ourselves on Nakamise-Dori Street, a shopping street dating back several centuries.



Souvenirs, crafts, and street vendors selling sweet and savory snacks were ubiquitous. After meandering through this area, we exited through the Kaminarimon Gate or Thunder Gate.

## Rickshaw Ride

A short distance away, we climbed into a foot-powered rickshaw offered by [Ebisuya](#). As the late afternoon temperature was starting to dip, I slipped on my [Kozet Jacket](#), and a red velour blanket was placed over our laps. For 30 minutes, our U.S. college-educated, athletic guide ran through the streets of Tokyo. Even though it was rush hour, we were able to enjoy the moment and not be distracted by the vehicles. At a leisurely speed, it was easy to admire Tokyo's skyline. Dusk offered a different aspect to the city as lights began to glow on previously viewed landmarks.



*Sharing a rickshaw ride at dusk, Tokyo, Japan*

## Mori Building Digital Art Museum

Cooler temperatures and a torrential rainstorm made us adjust our plans for our second day of touring Tokyo. Our outdoor tour was canceled a few days earlier, so we had the flexibility to find indoor alternatives when we read the forecast for inclement weather. Most of our fellow cruise ship passengers trudged through the pelting rain at outdoor venues and returned to the cruise ship drenched.

Luckily, I had packed a waterproof hybrid shell that adequately protected me from the elements when we walked to and from taxis. To remain comfortable throughout the day, I wore my [Trista Hoody](#) and Splash Roll-Up Pants. In my day pack, I carried my Kozet Jacket to combat cooler temperatures.

Art became our focus when we toured the highly acclaimed [Mori Building Digital Art Museum](#) and the [Mori Museum](#) in the Roppongi Hills Mori Tower. The heavy cloud cover prevented us from seeing anything at the Tokyo City View, also located at Roppongi Hills. In between our museum visits, we stopped for lunch.

The digital artwork at the Mori Building Digital Art Museum dazzled our senses as we wandered from room to room in an impressive 10,000 square meter space filled with colorful lights and musical tones. My imagination wandered as I walked from one room to the next. Sometimes the digital projections rippled into the next space, and other times I was startled by a different scene.

Lines formed wherever entry was restricted. In the Floating Nest, we relaxed on suspended netting during our allotted time in the enclosed space. Children and adults walked up a flight of stairs to the Athletic Forest-Future Park, where interactive activities captured the attention of everyone.



*Athletic Forest – Future Park, Mori Digital Museum, Tokyo, Japan*

## Sushi at Roku Roku

Before meeting our guide at the Mori Museum, we looked for a sushi restaurant in the Roppongi Hills Mall and were able to be seated at [Roku Roku](#), in the adjacent Grand Hyatt hotel. We happily ordered a Nigiri sushi



business lunch that included a daily appetizer, eight pieces of nigiri sushi, noodles, and a dessert.



*Nigiri sushi at Roku Roku, Tokyo, Japan*

# Mori Museum

At the Mori Museum, Ms. Mishina escorted us through the exhibit, *Future and the Arts, AI, Robotics, Cities, Life —How Humanity Will Live Tomorrow*. In the first area, we looked at fascinating models of cities of the future. Displays included renewable energy, clean technology, and various forms of natural energy. In another room, visitors gathered around an area with entertainment robots. Hopefully, animal robots will never replace man’s best friend, the family pet.



*Robotic dog at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan*

Other exhibits showcased technological applications to improve body parts and performance. Some of the innovative ideas stretched into the realm of genetic manipulation and abuse of technology. These exhibits called into question the ethical side of cutting-edge developments.

Near the exit, some people sat on benches in a room with floor to ceiling projections invoking a sense of meditation. Most of the images had a calming effect.

## Embarking on a Immersive Cruise

After a full day of touring, we caught a taxi and returned to our cruise ship docked in Yokohama. For two



additional weeks, we circled Japan and stopped at seven Japanese ports of call and Busan, South Korea.

*When Sandy Bornstein isn't trekking in Colorado or writing, she's [traveling with her husband Ira](#). After living as an international teacher in Bangalore, India, Sandy published an award-winning book, *May This Be the Best Year of Your Life*, as a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone. Among other things, Sandy writes about family, intergenerational, and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences.*

*While in Tokyo, Sandy and Ira were hosted by the Tobu Railway Co, Ltd. They were provided a complimentary stay at the [Tobu Hotel Levant Tokyo](#), a private full-day tour, admission to all attractions, a Japanese lunch, and a private tour of the Mori Art Museum.*



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