

A  
MUSEUM  
HOTEL  
OF  
JAPAN  
BEAUTY

# HOTEL GAJÓEN TOKYO



SMALL  
LUXURY  
HOTELS  
OF THE WORLD

*Independently minded*

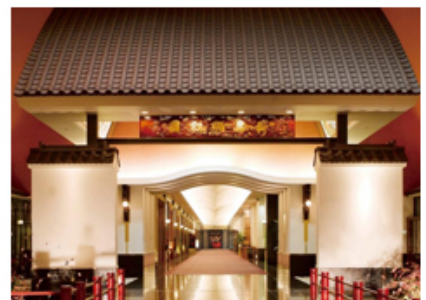


The modern Hotel Gajoen Tokyo is the product of nearly 100 years of pushing the boundaries of hospitality and experience. Built on the grounds of the feudal Hosokawa clan's villa and gardens, and subsequently renovated with a fine eye to artistic preservation, Gajoen stands as a testament to historical preservation while always forging its own unique path.

First founded in 1928 as a dining and entertainment complex on the edge of metropolitan Tokyo, within a few years Gajoen became the first integrated wedding hall in Japan, embracing a design aesthetic that was decidedly over-the-top and, by the standards of the time, luxuriously decadent.

## Set on a Feudal Lord's Estate

In the Edo Period, feudal lords from every province were required to have a primary residence in Edo (Tokyo) to be near the Shogun, and the land up and down the Meguro River was lined with the country villas and gardens of these noble families and their samurai retainers. Gajoen sits on the former villa of the Hosokawa clan, a legendary family descended from ancient Japanese emperors, and who played integral political roles during the Edo Period.





## Built for Celebrations

Meguro Gajoen was first built as a restaurant in 1928 by a young entrepreneur named Rikizo Hosokawa. While unrelated to the lords which once owned the property, Hosokawa sought to create an atmosphere where the public could be treated and served as lords themselves. Serving authentic Chinese cuisine as well as traditional Japanese dishes, at its peak Gajoen welcomed 8,000 patrons in a single day, but there was room to grow. Within a few years, the bold founder decided to change Japan's wedding culture in a big way, building an extravagant resort complex with accommodation, entertainment, and space for celebrations. Gajoen became Japan's first integrated wedding hall, setting the trend for all-inclusive wedding destinations that continues to this very day.

Once private ceremonies at homes or local shrines, weddings were becoming more extravagant as the Japanese economy grew. Hosokawa decided to go big, building multiple buildings and halls, including a traditional shrine dedicated to the famed Izumo Taisha. Couples could now host their weddings and receptions at the same location, with luxurious accommodation built for guests as the business grew. The response was tremendous, with 116 couples getting married on their busiest day. Gajoen now has two shrines and three chapels for weddings, keeping a lively, positive atmosphere for couples and their guests, but also for hotel guests who can indulge in endless people-watching from the main lobby and get a glimpse of Japanese wedding culture.

## Origins of the Art Hotel

Due to the size of the complex, Hosokawa was worried about patrons becoming bored as they walked from building to building, and intuited that integrating art would be the solution. The design aesthetic of *miyabi*, reflecting the elegance of the aristocracy, was dominant as the new resort was being constructed, and Hosokawa spared no expense. He commissioned thousands of pieces of art which were integrated throughout the halls and buildings, and created opulent rooms for parties and ceremonies. Even the public washroom was built for royalty, as the founder wanted guests to experience art even in their most solitary, private moments. For a resort open to the public, nothing like this had ever been seen, and earned Gajoen the moniker “The Palace of the Dragon King”.



Gajoen began to be renovated in the 1990s, as construction on the Meguro River made it impossible to keep the original buildings. However, unlike most construction projects of that era, Gajoen’s caretakers were obsessive with preserving the extravagant art and architecture within, carefully removing 2,500 artworks which were then reincorporated into the new facility. This includes the extravagant public washroom, which was rebuilt using the original art panels, has a bridge over a running stream, and is likely the most expensive restroom most visitors will ever see.



In addition, the famed Hyakudan Kaidan (The 100 Stairs) was fully preserved and given special functionality as a home for exhibitions of traditional arts and crafts. Designated a Tangible Cultural Property of Tokyo, the seven building structure climbs the cliffs and is connected by the staircase that gives its name. The Hyakudan Kaidan is the sole surviving structure of the original Gajóen , and a testament to the decadent design and opulence of Hosokawa's vision. With sculpture, colorful carvings, and artworks on every surface, the rooms themselves are pieces of art on their own, but also host curated exhibitions of art from all over the country. For hotel guests, Gajóen offers free art tours and Morning Art Yoga, further embracing the hotel's legacy promoting art, culture, and now wellness.

Not without its own contradictions, despite the ostentatious design of the rooms along The 100 Stairs, as a symbol of modesty the staircase was only built with 99 stairs.





## The Hotel: A Tradition of Service

Gajóen was founded during a time of great change in Japan. Western influence was changing society on a larger scale, and ideas of what it meant to "be Japanese" were first coming into mass consciousness. Gajóen was innovative in this time, protecting culture and tradition by serving as a training ground for young women to learn traditional arts, culture, and hospitality. In fact, Gajóen became so well known for its training that being a "graduate" of the hotel was a significant status symbol and mark of refinement. With such a strong tradition of service, Gajóen is not only renowned for its own approach to guests, but has heavily influenced the hospitality industry in Japan.

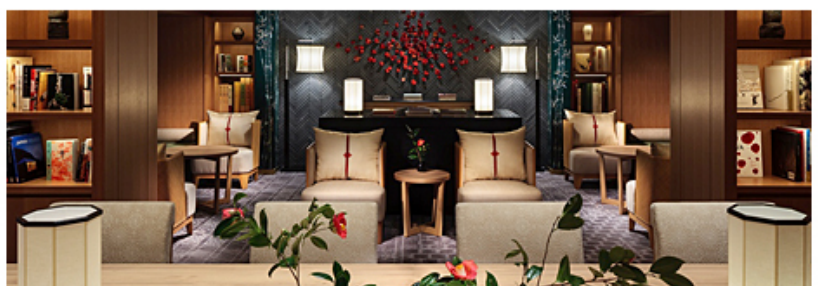




### Space as a Luxury

Just as the Daimyo lords of the past chose Meguro as a place to have space and relax, Gajoen itself has been designed with abundant space in mind. Within an expansive complex, filled with wedding halls, restaurants, and all of the trappings of a place of celebration, there are a mere 60 suites on the premises. Each suite has a minimum 80m<sup>2</sup>, nearly twice the size of most luxury hotel rooms, with both Japanese and Western-style interiors to choose from, all with city views. The twelve Japanese suites are newly renovated as of 2019, integrating traditional Japanese art and design with modern comforts, and a modern executive lounge provides comfortable, quiet space for guests.

Outside of the rooms, the Gajoen complex itself is spacious and open, with natural light streaming in from the glass ceilings, and large windows looking out onto the Japanese gardens, koi pond, waterfalls, and surrounding greenery. With koi swimming through indoor streams that run through the atrium, and original artwork lining the hallways, simply walking through the hotel is an experience in itself.





## Cuisine

Keeping with its roots, Gajóen is still home to authentic Chinese cuisine at SHUNYUKI, and five additional outlets provide variety and high quality dining experiences. Standing inside the glass-roofed atrium, TOFUTEI is a traditionally constructed thatched-roof restaurant serving Japanese cuisine amidst the bubbling indoor stream. Other options include CANOVIANO for natural Italian, the KANADE TERRACE (an American Grill), the YUI-AN cafe and bar, and the Hama steakhouse which features top wagyu prepared to perfection.

Within the atrium, the Pandora cafe and lounge serves as the perfect spot for a more casual meal, afternoon tea, and plenty of people-watching as newlyweds have their photos taken in front of the koi pond and waterfalls in the gardens just outside.

For guests seeking unique gifts, the LIEN1928 patisserie creates delicately crafted cakes, chocolates, and other sweets aligned with the history and aesthetics of Gajóen, using designs from the hotel's historic art panels as decoration.







## Access to four distinct neighborhoods

At its founding, Gajóen was distinctly suburban, green, and quiet. Perched on the bank of the Meguro River, surrounded by nature, Gajóen was a destination to escape the crowded downtown areas for space and relaxation. While times have changed, and metropolitan Tokyo has expanded well past the hotel, Gajóen has managed to stay true to its character as a quiet retreat, while still within minutes of Tokyo's trendier neighborhoods.

## Meguro History

Within easy walking distance, guests can explore both traditional and modern sites. Otori Shrine, founded in the 800s, is the oldest shrine in the area and host to annual events such as the long-running Sanma Matsuri (pike fish festival) and the legendary Tori no Ichi market where business owners come to participate in a loud and lively marketplace for oversized and ostentatious lucky charms to generate good luck in the coming year. A few minutes away, the Meguro Fudo temple, also founded in the 800s, has a large complex in a quiet neighborhood, and is home to daily ceremonies that can be joined or observed by the public.

Just next door to Gajóen is Daienji, a small but significant temple with 500 stone Buddhas placed in memorial to a fire in the 1700s that started at the temple, and spread to burn down 1/3 of the entire city.





## Modern Lifestyle

Sitting just on the edge of Tokyo's busier areas, Gajoen maintains its peaceful atmosphere, yet still give easy access to four distinct neighborhoods; the Meguro Station area, Nakameguro, Daikanyama, and Ebisu. All are within a few minutes by taxi, but for guests who like to walk it's possible to explore on foot and catch everything in between.

The Meguro area around Gajoen has changed dramatically in recent years, with more and more modern bars, restaurants, and shops opening up. It's also a well-known destination for ramen, with innumerable noodle shops operating within quaint post-war buildings along Meguro Street. Further down that same road you'll find dozens of antique and interior shops on either side of the street, a popular destination for those seeking unique furniture, antiques, and rare items for their homes.



The Meguro River, flowing next to Gajoen, is lined with over 800 cherry trees stretching four kilometers, and is one of Tokyo's most popular spots during the cherry blossom season. In any season the paths are always filled with joggers and people out for a stroll, but it's also the perfect connection point to walk to the low-key casual, but upscale Nakameguro neighborhood. About a 20 minute walk (or a few minutes by taxi), Nakameguro is home to boutiques, bars, cafes restaurants, and is a popular destination for creatives.

Just up the hill from Nakameguro lies Daikanyama, more oriented towards the fashionable crowd, and dotted with trendy boutiques, upscale restaurants, cafes, and Tokyo mainstays such as the Daikanyama T-Site complex and the UNIT live house.

Walking a few minutes from Daikanyama is Ebisu, ranked the most popular area for living in Tokyo, and especially popular in the evenings when the bars and restaurants are packed with locals. The Ebisu Yokochi building, a lively complex that mixes many bars and restaurants in one large open space, is always a popular destination for locals and visitors alike, and the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum hosts regular themed exhibitions, including anime and video game content for children.





## Rooms

### Suites

All suites are spacious and well-furnished at 80~240m<sup>2</sup>, and feature in-room saunas and whirlpool baths. Suites have garden or city views, two double beds or one king-size bed, complimentary high-speed WiFi access and climate control.



## Japanese

The authentic Japanese rooms are fully floored with tatami mats and have the soft touch of a ryokan, the traditional Japanese inns. With 80~120m<sup>2</sup> of space, the rooms have garden or city views, Japanese-style whirlpool baths, steam saunas complimentary high-speed WiFi access and climate control. With tasteful traditional artworks and décor, these are our most traditionally styled rooms and a rarity in Tokyo.



## Japanese Modern

The Japanese Modern rooms are 80~110m<sup>2</sup> and incorporate both Japanese and Western styles, with a ryukyu tatami space set up in the corner for socializing or relaxing. Perfect for traveling with family and friends, with two double beds and plenty of space. Rooms have garden or city views, whirlpool bath, steam sauna complimentary high-speed WiFi access and climate control.





## Location

### Address

Shimomeguro 1-8-1, Meguro-ku,  
Tokyo 153-0064

Tel. +81 3 3491 4111



### Access



#### Access from the airport



#### Access from Meguro Station

By Train



- Free hotel shuttle (3 per hour during service hours)
- 3min walk from Meguro Station (JR Yamanote Line, Tokyu Meguro Line, Nanboku Subway Line, Mita Subway Line)
- 2min by taxi

By Car



3min drive from the Meguro Ramp on the #2 Expressway