



What Was Edo?

Edo, the former name of Tokyo, became Japan's political center when Tokugawa Ieyasu established his shogunate there in 1603. By the early 1700s, the city underwent rapid development and had grown into a thriving metropolis with an estimated population of 1 million.

A Peaceful Era

The Edo period, which lasted for about 260 years, was one of the longest stretches of peace in world history. People from all over Japan—including samurai and townspeople—gathered in Edo, where vibrant cultural activities flourished.



TOKYO
METROPOLITAN
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Tokyo Metropolitan Government is
sharing the fascinating history and culture of Edo.
For more information, scan the QR code



EdoTokyo
The Spirit of Tokyo

Edo: The Foundation of Modern Tokyo

Edo, the predecessor of Tokyo, grew into one of the world's largest cities of its time. From the daily lives of its people blossomed a rich and unique culture—both tangible and intangible. Today, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is casting new light on Edo, sharing its deep and fascinating legacy with the world.



Did you know?

Fascinating Facts About Edo!

Environment



Eco-Friendly Edo: The Power of Mottainai*!

Kimono, Japan's traditional attire, was repurposed in many ways—from sleepwear to diapers or cleaning cloths. When the fabric became too tattered, it became kindling. Even the ashes were collected and sold, then reused as fertilizer or pottery glaze.

*Mottainai reflects a mindset of respecting resources, avoiding waste, and using things with gratitude.

Education

In the late Edo period, foreign dignitaries were amazed by the high literacy rate among commoners. Edo citizens studied at temple schools using practical educational textbooks. This widespread literacy led to a boom in witty novels and comic stories.



Sushi Took Off from Edo's Food Stalls!

Most sushi shops in Edo were street stalls or mobile vendors. Sushi was displayed in large wooden boxes at the counter, and customers picked their favorite pieces. Back then, sushi was 2–3 times bigger than today, and these sushi-toppings were usually cooked or marinated—not raw.

Foods



Arts



Japonisme: The Cultural Wave That Amazed the World

French printmaker Félix Bracquemond discovered Hokusai Manga, used as packing for ceramics. Captivated by its beauty, he shared it with fellow artists, sparking the Japonisme movement in Europe. Vincent van Gogh famously copied Hiroshige's prints, like Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake and Plum Estate, Kameido.

Policies

Fun and Culture, Courtesy of the Shogun

Shogun Yoshimune, the 8th Tokugawa shogun, planted cherry trees along the banks of the Sumida River and later opened the area to the public for hanami (cherry blossom viewing). Until then, Hanami was limited to Kan'eiji Temple in Ueno, but thanks to Yoshimune, more people could enjoy this cherished spring tradition.

