

FOODS TO TRY AT NISHIKI MARKET

HANANOKI

My personal favorite, Hananoki is a family-run okonomiyaki stall that's been around for generations. The flavor and texture are unmatched, and every bite tastes handmade with care. This is easily the best okonomiyaki you'll ever have, even better than Hiroshima.

What to try:

Pork and squid okonomiyaki



UOMARUSHOTEN

A long-time family-run spot, Uomarushoten serves fish caught fresh from the morning auction. The quality is outstanding for the price, offering incredible value for premium cuts like chutoro and otoro. Everything is sliced with care and served at its freshest.

What to try:

Chutoro and otoro



ABSOLUTE HIDDEN GEMS!



HACHIMARU KITCHEN

A true hidden gem, they serve some of the best oden in Osaka. The broth is light but full of depth, and every ingredient absorbs that perfect balance of flavor.

What to try:

Daikon and egg oden

MARUFUKU

A hidden izakaya-style spot, he serves incredible quality and deep, satisfying flavors.

The dishes are simple but perfectly seasoned, and the atmosphere feels local and welcoming. This is a must visit if you want to experience real Osaka dining.

What to try:

Grilled chicken and sashimi platter





MARU

A newly opened spot, Maru combines ice cream and fruit into one refreshing treat. They serve soft cream right inside a halved melon, creating the perfect mix of sweetness and freshness. It's simple, eye-catching, and a must-try when walking through the market.

What to try:

Melon soft serve

CAFE ANNON NAMBA

A popular spot, but wow, if you have a sweet tooth, you can't miss this. The fluffy pancakes here are light, creamy, and melt the moment you take a bite. The presentation is beautiful, and the texture is perfect every time.

What to try:

Signature souffle pancake



ÉCHIRÉ MARCHÉ AU BEURRE

Off the route but well worth a visit, especially if you're traveling to another city or flying back. This place is heaven for butter lovers, offering pastries made with France's famous Échiré butter. The croissants and madeleines are rich, soft, and perfectly layered.

What to try:

Butter croissant

MOCHISHO SHIZUKU SHINMACHI

A small and elegant shop known for its handmade mochi desserts. Everything is freshly made each morning, using high-quality ingredients that keep the texture soft and delicate. This is an incredible find.

What to try:

Warabi mochi



DENDEN/ANIME TOWN



Lots of people get stuck here buying so many **figurines and Pokémon cards**. It's a haven for collectors, anime fans, and gamers looking for rare finds. Den Den Town is Osaka's version of Akihabara, packed with electronic stores, hobby shops, and arcades lined one after another.

You can find everything from model kits and vintage consoles to secondhand manga and trading cards. Prices are often better than in Tokyo, and shop owners are friendly if you're searching for something specific. It's easy to spend hours here without noticing the time.



SHINSEKAI

The retro town of Osaka!
Shinsekai was built in the early **1900s** and still keeps that old-school charm mixed with neon lights and local food stalls.

- Try **kushikatsu**, the deep-fried skewers Osaka is famous for, at one of the many small shops along Jan Jan Alley
- Ride to the top of **Tsutenkaku Tower** for classic city views and spot the Billiken statue, said to bring good luck
- Walk around at night when the signs light up and street vendors fill the place with freshly fried food and Izakayas.

SHINSEKAI KOKUSAI GEKIJOU



Be prepared for what you're about to witness. This is not suitable for kids. Shinsekai Kokusai Gekijo is one of **Osaka's last remaining adult theaters**, a relic from the city's postwar entertainment scene. It has stood for decades, showing films and performances that reflect a very different era of Japanese nightlife.

While most people just walk past it, the theater represents a raw and **unfiltered part of Shinsekai's history**. It's a reminder that Osaka has always been bold, expressive, and unafraid to show every side of its culture, even the ones that feel forgotten today.

KUSHIKATSU DARUMA



This is the **original Kushikatsu Daruma**, the place where Osaka's famous fried skewers began before expanding across the city. The shop still keeps its old charm, with the same recipe, fast service, and lively counter seating that locals have loved for decades.

The rule is simple: no double dipping in the shared sauce. Each skewer is fried to order, perfectly crispy outside and juicy inside. It's busy, noisy, and full of character, capturing the true spirit of Shinsekai and old Osaka dining.

UNDERWORLD OSAKA



This area, known as Dobutsuenmae Shotengai or Nishinari, is often referred to by locals as the “**underworld**” of Osaka. It’s an adult-only zone that very few tourists ever visit. While it’s generally safe, it’s best to walk with awareness and respect the space. This district carries decades of history and has long been associated with Osaka’s working-class roots and nightlife scene.

Locals sometimes call it “**the yakuza zone**,” though most of the people you see here today are retired or simply part of the older community that never left. You won’t find this place in any travel brochure or tourism ad. It’s one of the few remaining parts of Japan that still shows the raw, unfiltered side of city life. If you’re curious and observant, this area reveals a version of Osaka that’s rarely seen, both rough and deeply human.

MATSUNOKI DAIMYOJIN



Before heading to the final stop, pay a visit to my favorite hidden shrine in Osaka. Matsunoki Daimyojin is a hidden small local shrine that many people miss as they pass by. It dates back to the **Edo period (1600's)** and was built to protect the neighborhood from fire and bring good fortune to the local merchants.

The name Matsunoki means pine tree, a symbol of strength and long life. Locals still come here to pray for safety and good business. It's quiet, simple, and one of those places that remind you how spiritual Osaka can be once you slow down and look around.

TOBITA SHINCHI



Go with caution. **Never take photos or film here under any circumstance.** Tobita Shinchi is an adult-only area and one of Osaka's most secretive districts. What you'll see is something that will stay with you for a long time, showing a side of Japan that is rarely spoken about or shown to the public.

The area has existed since the early 1900s and operates under a legal restaurant business license. It was rebuilt after the war and still follows its own quiet system and traditions. While it's completely safe to walk through, it's important to stay respectful and aware. This is the other side of the moon, a hidden world that reveals a deeper layer of Osaka's history.



TONKATSU NEW BABE NAMBA

A popular spot with a twist, Tonkatsu New Babe in Namba serves tonkatsu in a surprisingly refined way. They use branded pork and cook it slowly at low temperature so it stays juicy and tender.

What to try:

The rib loin or fillet cutlets

UNASHIGE

A local favorite of mine, Unashige is near where I stay, and I firmly believe you won't find a better unagi restaurant in Osaka. The eel is grilled perfectly — not too smoky, not too sweet, but just right in balance.

What to try:

Hitsumabushi or unaju



OJISAN TO NIHONSHU



Ojisan to Nihonshu (**Old man & Sake**) is an absolute hidden gem. You will meet a true master chef here who takes pride in every dish he serves. The space is small and warm, with an atmosphere that feels more like visiting a friend's home than a restaurant. Every plate is carefully prepared, balanced in flavor, and beautifully presented.

He also has an **incredible selection of rare sake**, many of which you won't find anywhere else in Osaka. Each one is personally chosen and paired with the food he serves. If you appreciate craftsmanship, authenticity, and conversation over good sake, this is a place you'll remember long after you leave.



NIKU NO TENMAYA KAGURATEI

A local favorite known for high-quality wagyu grilled to perfection. Each bite is rich, tender, and full of flavor, served with freshly cooked rice in a clay pot.

What to try:

Thick-cut wagyu tongue

魚屋のトラットリア アレグロペッシ エ 難波店

Arguably one of the best Japanese-Italian cuisines you'll ever have. This restaurant near Namba serves seafood sourced fresh from a local fish market and prepares it with Italian techniques. .

What to try:

Seafood carpaccio



STAND AFRO スタンドアフロ

If you want to know some locals, this is where you go to. It's a casual standing bar with great drinks and surprisingly incredible food for its size. The atmosphere is friendly, lively, and easy to enjoy.

What to try:

Highball and karaage + his personal recommendation for the day.



日本酒食堂 SO-KEN

They run a self-service style and keep prices uniform, making it easy and approachable. You'll find around 30 varieties of sake at any given time, many rare or hard to find. Their food menu includes creative small dishes that match well with the drinks. Must-try if you're into Sake!



BAR NAYUTA

A hidden speakeasy in Amemura known for world-class cocktails made entirely from scratch. There's no menu — the bartender creates each drink based on your taste and mood, using house-made infusions and seasonal ingredients.

What to try:

Ask for a custom cocktail



BAR AGRÉABLE

A quiet cocktail bar in Shinsaibashi with warm wood interiors, dim lights, and a calm, welcoming mood. The bartenders don't just mix drinks — they listen and craft something special based on what you like.

What to try:

Ask for a house original



RBCB – ROCKBAR CHERRYBOMB

A rock-lovers' paradise hidden on the 5th floor in Higashi-Shinsaibashi, RBCB – Rock Bar Cherry Bomb has been serving local and traveling fans alike for over a decade.

What to try:

Tacos on Tuesday and craft beer pours — order their house “Cherry Bomb” cocktail.

BAR LOUNGE KUMOKUMO-

Perfect for a date night. Bar Lounge KUMOKUMO sits on the top floor of Hotel Royal Classic, offering sweeping panoramic views of Osaka's skyline.

What to try:

The “Sky Atelier Box” – a curated dining set with appetizers, grilled beef, pasta and dessert, paired with a signature cocktail.



LUNCH/DINNER – IZAKAYAS



L&L

A laid-back dining bar in the heart of Amemura with a relaxed feel and good mix of food, drinks, and shisha. L&L Bar & Restaurant serves Mediterranean and European dishes, cocktails, wine, and even hookah.

What to try:

Flaming cocktail

BAR AMARO

Arguably one of Shinsaibashi's low-key cocktail gems, Bar Amaro offers an intimate space with around 12 seats and counter seating.

What to try:

Ask for a signature cocktail — they focus on creative drinks tailored just for you.



A photograph of Osaka Castle, a large multi-tiered Japanese castle with green roofs and white walls, viewed through the branches of cherry blossom trees in bloom. The text "OSAKA HIGHLIGHTS" is overlaid in large white letters.

OSAKA HIGHLIGHTS

- **Osaka Castle** – iconic landmark beautifully lit at night
- **Amemura** (Amerikamura) – creative district for shopping, street art, and food
- **Kuromon Market** – 200-year-old market packed with fresh seafood and local snacks
- **Shinsaibashi Shopping Street** – lively shopping arcade ending at the Glico sign
- **Hozenji Yokocho** – quiet stone alley with a moss-covered Buddha and old Osaka charm
- **Den Den Town** – anime, games, and collectible paradise
- **Shinsekai** – retro Osaka with kushikatsu, neon lights, and Tsutenkaku Tower
- **Tobita Shinchi** – Underworld Osaka