



19.03.24 - 19.04.01

Japan

By. ____ stevenocchipinti 외 1 명

DAY 1

19.03.24.March 24, 2019 12:00:00 AM GMT



We left home at 9:53pm, got to the airport, checked in our bags, got through security, slowly walked through the gift shops and sitting at the gate by 10:30pm!

Now we've got a 2hr wait for our flight.



Melbourne Airport



비행기를 타고



DFS, Tokyo Narita Airport

DAY 2

19.03.25.March 25, 2019 12:00:00 AM GMT



Arrived at Narita Airport, sorted out transport to the hotel and sim cards.

The last few times I've been here, sim cards were a little hard to source. Unlike most other countries, we couldn't

just go to a convenience store to buy one, we either needed to organise them in advance, get them from the airport or go to very specific stores.

While we are here we compared prices from a few stalls in the arrival lobby. The first stall you see had the most expensive prices and the ones furthest from the gate had the best prices!

We got a 6GB for 30 days for ¥4500 and an unlimited data for 30 days for ¥5500



DFS, Tokyo Narita Airport



버스를 타고



The Westin Tokyo



Arrived at the Westin and got upgraded to an executive room overlooking Tokyo tower thanks to Rach. The Westin host took us to our room and made sure we settled in nicely. We were also greeted with a welcome platter of sweets which we quickly enjoyed. I couldn't rest too long as my heart was set on getting Tonkatsu at a place I had googled in Melbourne near Ebisu station.



We went to Kimukatsu. The tonkatsu specialty is 25 layers of pork fried. We got the original set and the pork fillet set too and shared. It hit the spot and was just what I needed after a long trip into Tokyo.



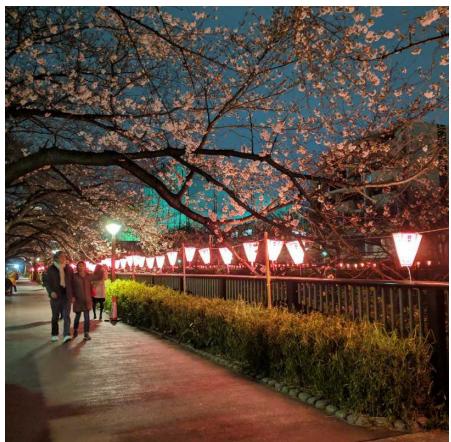
Now that we had our savoury hit we had to have something sweet to satisfy our cravings and there is so much to be tempted by in Tokyo! First stop Steve wanted a hot chocolate from the vending machine and boy it was hot when it came out he couldn't hold it for long! Then we went by Dean and Deluca and couldn't resist a cream cheese and strawberry muffin 😊. We then explored Ebisu a little more (well for me it means looking at food) and then made it back to the hotel.

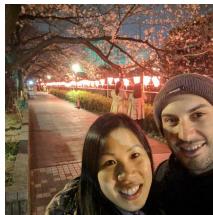


Made it back to the hotel and noticed our other welcome gift of a mini bottle of Yamazaki whisky. Can't thank Rach enough for this amazing hotel and perks, including buffet breakfasts and happy hour from 5:30pm-7:30pm. We're going to head there after freshening up in the room and then off to Nakameguro to see the cherry blossom promenade by night!



After a bath, a nap and freshening up we went to the lounge on our floor for complimentary snacks and drinks. They had sushi, cookies, nuts, chips, beer and other small canapes. The sushi looked cool with little decorations for the cherry blossoms.





From the hotel we went for a twenty minute walk down to Nakameguro to look at the cherry blossoms at night.

The weather wasn't too bad and the walk was really pleasant. On the way back we went via some backstreets, seeing the quiet suburban streets was pretty nice too.

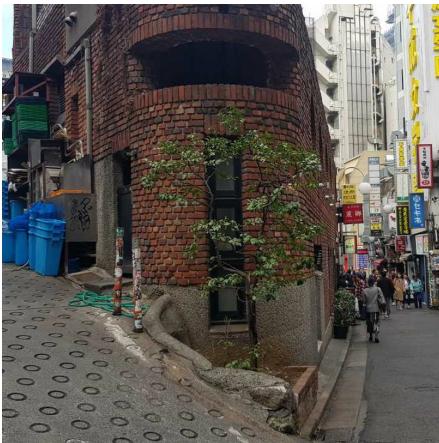
It's been a nice first day here!

DAY 3

19.03.26.March 26, 2019 12:00:00 AM GMT



What a great start to day 2, buffet breakfast! We decided to try the breakfast at the restaurant at the lobby as we have 3 places to choose from. We ate a big breakfast and ready to start the day ☺.



We caught the train one stop to Shibuya. It was crowded as usual but this time Hachiko was surrounded in cherry blossoms! There were also a couple of cats nestled in there which attracted a lot of attention.



We aimlessly wondered through a bunch of stores in the station and out on the streets including bic camera (two multistorey buildings of electronics), Uniqlo, a Mega Don Quijote (a massive store that sells everything!) and a bunch of other random ones before taking a break at a cafe.



Recharged from our break, we went to Bic Camera to look at bluetooth keyboards for Steve. After Steve decided we found an arcade and played a 'washing machine' game or what Steve referred to it as. It was a music game we need to press and slide around and on the screen to the beat. Then Steve tried a new game that involved playing to the beat but with a keyboard. Gaming is big in Japan so it was fun to give it ago. We then went upstairs to check out their VR games floor. This involved many VR games like a theme park style.



Off to Inokashira we went. I had planned our 2 year celebration at a little restaurant famous for Wagyu for Steve's gift which is near Inokashira Park which is recommended to view during Spring. We took the train and arrived and it was beautiful! The cherry blossoms were out and quite a few people had set up spots for picnic and viewing of the blossoms. Steve started getting

some nice shots and using his camera skills. We walked around the lake taking in the beauty of Sakura season. It was nice in the park as it was still peaceful.



Dinner time! We found the famous restaurant; Kichijouji Satou located above the butcher. They are famous during

the day for their deep fried crumbed meatball and when we arrived there was still a line coming from the butcher.

We were tempted to try it but decided to save our tummies for the set meal of Matsusaka wagyu (one of the top 3 grades of wagyu in Japan).

We had to climb up very steep stairs and we're welcomed to a floor that can only fit 18 people. We ordered our set and they cooked it on the teppayaki grill in sight. The meat came with salad, miso, veggies and sauce. Prior to cooking the meat they showed us it uncooked to get our approval. This was one of the best steaks I've had. It melted in our mouth.

DAY 4

19.03.27.March 27, 2019 12:00:00 AM GMT



After another big buffet breakfast we headed out to Shinjuku Gyo-en to meet Bec's friends, it wasn't many stops on the train and we got there a little early so we strolled around the park taking in the sights.

It's a great spot for hanami, there are a lot of cherry

blossoms here! We came here at the perfect time too, most of the trees had blossoms, the weather was pretty nice and there were people everywhere! There were kids running around, lots of photographers, people sleeping, meditating, painting, sketching, a few in traditional Japanese outfits, some playing music and even a couple doing acro-yoga.





We met up with Alice, Arisu and Kanzan for a little picnic.

It was so nice for Steve to meet them for the first time and for me to meet little Kanzan! It was almost exactly 3 years ago when I came last to Tokyo for Arisu and Alice's wedding. Kanzan had so much energy and is so much like his father, this massive park was the perfect place for him to spend it! It was so lovely to catch up in a beautiful park with small bites in the lovely sun. We can't wait to see Arisu, Alice and Kanzan in Melbourne soon 😊.



After a nice picnic we spent a little more time in the park exploring and taking photos. It is a very picturesque place! I felt like I should have brought my dSLR (which I've been leaving in the hotel), but my phone was doing fairly well and it much lighter!



Last night we went in search of matcha soft serve and couldn't find any but on the way out of the park there was a small stand selling it along with a few other little desserts!



On our way back from Shinjuku gyoen to the station I saw a mochi place and thought we should try one while we're here. We bought mochi with red bean and shared it on the street! We then ventured to Isetan food market to check out all the food and bought one gyoza each just to try! After that we went to the station to buy our bullet train tickets for our trip to Izu tomorrow ☺.



While looking around for dinner we passed through Kabukicho and thought why not go through the iconic red light district of Shinjuku. We passed the famous robot show that Tokyo is known for. There were a couple of robots you could pose with so we decided to do a selfie with others on the robots in the background ✅.



For dinner we went in search for a sushi train restaurant and found one not too far away. Unlike a lot of sushi train places that have dishes going around for the picking, this one has screens at each seat where you place an order and the dish comes flying out from the back at a pretty quick pace and stops right on front of you It was pretty cool! There was also matcha tea which made Bec happy!



We picked up a few little snacks from the nearby convenience store for dessert and relaxed for our last night in this fancy hotel.

DAY 5

19.03.28.March 28, 2019 12:00:00 AM GMT



This time for breakfast we went to Victor's, which is a fancy French restaurant in our hotel on the top floor, which thanks to Rachael was also included!

The food was really nice and we almost had the whole place to ourselves. Bec had yoghurt with berries, French toast and minute steak with an egg and veggies. I had a blueberry smoothie, a really fluffy pancake and the minute steak with egg and veggies too.



The Westin Tokyo



트램을 타고



Shinagawa



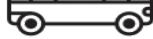
기차를 타고



三島



트램을 타고



버스를 타고



Shuzenji



버스를 타고



Yugashima





Our journey was around three hours from our Tokyo accommodation to the ryokan in Izu where we'll spend the next three nights. It's nice to get out of the city and into the country for a little bit, there's a big contrast between the two here!





We finally arrived at Tatsuta Ryokan and Bec did a great job speaking Japanese to check us in, booking our breakfast and dinner times and understanding where things are. There are public baths that are separated by gender but there are four private baths which are free to use so long as they are not in use by others at the time.

We got to our room and ate our welcome gift biscuits which were little pig shaped cones with red bean paste inside, drank some tea and got into our yukata before going to find a free bath.

The baths were really nice! We didn't bring our phones so I can't upload any photos yet but we'll probably get some photos next time we go!



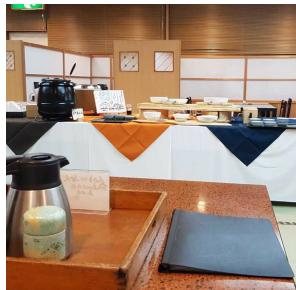
After checking out the baths we went to dinner by the river where they set up a kotatsu for us, which is a little table with blankets and a heater built in!

The food was really nice and there was so many little dishes using local ingredients! The highlights were a fish dish that had a really nice, sweet sauce; an amazing sashimi platter and a sweet potato ball in a syrup sauce. We also had some tofu, ochazuke (soupy rice), a prawn, shabu-shabu (hot-pot) and some fruit and cake for dessert. They even have is a couple of onigiri (triangle rice

ball with a seaweed wrap) to take back to our room with us. We can't wait to see what will be for dinner the next 2 nights 😊.

DAY 6

19.03.29.March 29, 2019 12:00:00 AM GMT



Breakfast was served in the dining hall where we had our

own little booth right opposite the buffet. They had our table already setup with an assortment of little dishes. The main attractions were a skewered horse mackerel and the nikujaga, a casserole in a tomato sauce base.



We decided to go for a walk into town and check out a

couple of shrines and a cherry blossom park. We arrived at the shrine but weren't sure where the cherry blossom park was so went past the shrine and up a path that wasn't well defined into shrubbery. We decided to come down as it wasn't the right place.

When we came down we bumped into a old Japanese lady and she asked us where we were going. I told her we were looking for the park and she told me we were going the wrong way and took us back to the shrine and pointed the way to get there, through the cemetery in the shrine. She showed us some wild plants along the way she uses to make tempura and she also gave us a quick history of the shrine. She was very cute.



We followed the old lady's instructions but as we went further there was a gate closing us off from a path further up. We decided to open the gate and it took us to a mini shrine with torii gates. You could see some of the cherry blossoms from the park in the background but we still weren't at the actual park because we could see the walking path higher up in the distance but didn't know

how to get to it!



We went back down to the road and followed it a bit further and saw another entrance. It was all closed too but the sign said it was only closed for wildlife and we were allowed in. The path up here had an amazing view! The

pink cherry blossoms were really bright and stood out from the rest of the landscape. We basically had the park to ourselves too which made for a nice stroll in this sleepy town.



From the park we walked a little further into town and

stopped by the visitor centre, we were planning on hiring bicycles from there and going down to a waterfall tomorrow but the lady there said it's better to walk rather than ride so then we headed back to the ryokan.

We got back, changed in to our yukata and tried another one of the private baths. It's so nice to relax here with the sound of the running river in the background after a long walk!
