

Japan National Tourist Organization London Office
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Michelin to Launch Tokyo Restaurant Guide

The French bible of gastronomy is making its entry into Asia with the publication of the first edition of the Michelin guide Tokyo, scheduled for release in November 2007. After Europe, where 20 countries are covered, and the United States, the Michelin guide is pursuing its international development in Japan.

"Japan is a country where fine dining is an integral part of the culture and the art of table setting reflects a way of life that discretely combines refinement and culinary enjoyment," said Michel Rollier, the Group's Managing Partner.

When asked about the choice of Japan and Tokyo, Jean -Luc Naret, Director of the Michelin guides, replied: "The Michelin guide is pursuing its international development with the launch of the first Michelin guide Tokyo a few months from now. Japan—and Tokyo in particular—seemed the natural gateway to this continent, which is so rich in gourmet food and cooking traditions."

The publication of a Japan edition of the Michelin Guide is the result of negotiations begun in winter 2004 between the Paris office of the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) and French tire manufacturer Michelin, which produces the guides. This initiative is part of the Japanese government's Visit Japan Campaign, which aims to increase the number of foreign tourists.

"The popularity of Japanese food around the world continues to grow. We hope the release of the Michelin guide to Tokyo will inspire lovers of Japanese food to travel to Japan to try Japanese cuisine in its home country. Being the first Asian Michelin guide is a great honour for Japan. Japan is a foodie paradise and we are very

pleased that Michelin has recognized this," said Tetsuya Okuda, JNTO London Office Director.

Since last summer, European and Japanese Michelin inspectors have been making anonymous visits to restaurants and hotels in Tokyo, evaluating meals and staying overnight in hotels so that they can independently assess the quality and consistency of the services offered. Since the Michelin inspector's role is to see and experience what awaits the customer, maintaining anonymity is essential if they want to receive the same treatment as any other visitor to the establishment.

The Michelin guide offers a selection of hotels and restaurants in various comfort and price categories. For the restaurants a three-star rating in a Michelin guidebook means "exceptional cuisine, worth a journey." A two-star restaurant is described as "excellent cooking, worth a detour." One star is given to a restaurant "very good in its category."

The Michelin guide was first published in 1900 as a guide for French motorists. The practice of awarding stars to the best restaurants was introduced in 1926. Since then, Michelin has developed to become the undisputed benchmark for gourmet dining around the world. Every year, in more than 90 countries around the world, Michelin publishes some 19 million maps, atlases, tourist guides, and restaurant and hotel guides—always with the same focus on quality.

The Michelin Guide Tokyo is due to be on sale in both Japanese and English in November 2007.

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