

Japan National Tourist Organization London Office
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Michelin Confirms Tokyo as Top Gourmet Destination

On Monday 19 November, Michelin Guides announced they have awarded 191 stars to 150 restaurants in Tokyo -- more stars than in any other city in the world, including Paris. Eight Tokyo restaurants have been awarded the coveted 3-star rating: Japanese restaurants Kanda, Koju and Hamadaya, French restaurants Quintessence, Joel Robuchon and L'osier, and sushi restaurants Sukiyabashi Jiro and Sushi Mizutani. A total of 150 restaurants which earned at least one star appear in the Tokyo guidebook, with more than 60% of them specializing in Japanese dishes. Among them, 25 are two-starred and 117 are one-starred. The number of starred restaurants - Paris and London boast 148 between them - beats all other locations covered by the guides. Tokyo was now, said the compilers, the undisputed "world leader" in fine dining.

At a news conference held in Tokyo, Jean-Luc Naret, director of the Michelin Guide, said, "There were a lot of surprises about high quality of Japanese restaurants during one year of research. It was proved that Tokyo is one of the world's shining gastronomic cities." A team of three undercover European and two Japanese inspectors spent a year and a half visiting 1,500 of Tokyo's estimated 160,000 restaurants to decide on the ratings, according to Michelin. The famed guidebook series rates restaurants on excellence in cooking, service, decor and upkeep.

There were so many top restaurants that all entries in Michelin's Tokyo edition have at least one star, a first for any city, Naret said. Five of the eight awarded top honors served Japanese cuisine, while three were French restaurants. Michelin also crowned 82-year-old Jiro Ono of Sukiyabashi Jiro sushi restaurant in central Tokyo as the world's oldest three-star chef. The Michelin Guide Tokyo, Michelin's first Asian guide, goes on sale in Japan on Thursday 22 November in English and Japanese. In the UK it goes on sale in January 2008.

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