MEIJI SHRINE

明治神宮

Hours: 0600 – 1800
Open: Daily Closed: None

The MEIJI (May-jee) SHRINE is one of Tokyo's biggest and best-known Shinto shrines. The memorial was established November 1, 1920 to honor the Emperor Meiji, who, with Empress Shoken, ruled Japan from 1868 - 1912. Much was done in the name of Emperor Meiji during his reign, including shifting the imperial capital from Kyoto to Tokyo. His son reigned during the Taisho period (1912 - 1926), and his grandson Hirohito (Emperor Showa) reined from 1926-1988. Strictly speaking, Meiji, Taisho and Showa are not the names of the monarchs themselves, but of their reign periods. Currently, the reign of Emperor Akihito is called Heisei.

The shrine is located in a large park in fashionable Harajuku. Walking down a broad, straight pathway surrounded by tall trees, you pass through two enormous torii (or gates) to reach the main shrine enclosure. Just inside the entrance of the main shrine is a fountain where visitors rinse their hands and mouth before approaching the shrine itself. A leaflet is available at one of the booths inside the compound explaining Shinto rituals and etiquette. You may observe a blessing ceremony going on, perhaps for a newborn baby, or a child's birthday, or even a wedding.

The iris garden, to the left of the pathway leading to the shrine, was once the private garden of a great warlord; today it is open to all. Its narrow paths twist through patches of woods, opening suddenly to views of a pond filled with huge, brightly colored carps. The irises reach their peak in June and July.

A short walk from the main shrine will bring you to the shrine "Treasure House" of museum, where personal possessions of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken are displayed. Their elaborate ceremonial kimono and spectacular gilded carriages are particularly notable.

☞HOW TO GET THERE:

From Yokosuka

1. Go to YOKOSUKA CHUO 横須賀中央 Station and buy a ¥780 transfer ticket for HARAJUKU 原宿, which is on the JR YAMANOTE ＪＲ 山手線 Line in Tokyo.

2. Go to track #2 and board a GREEN KANJI or RED KANJI train bound for SHINAGAWA 品川.

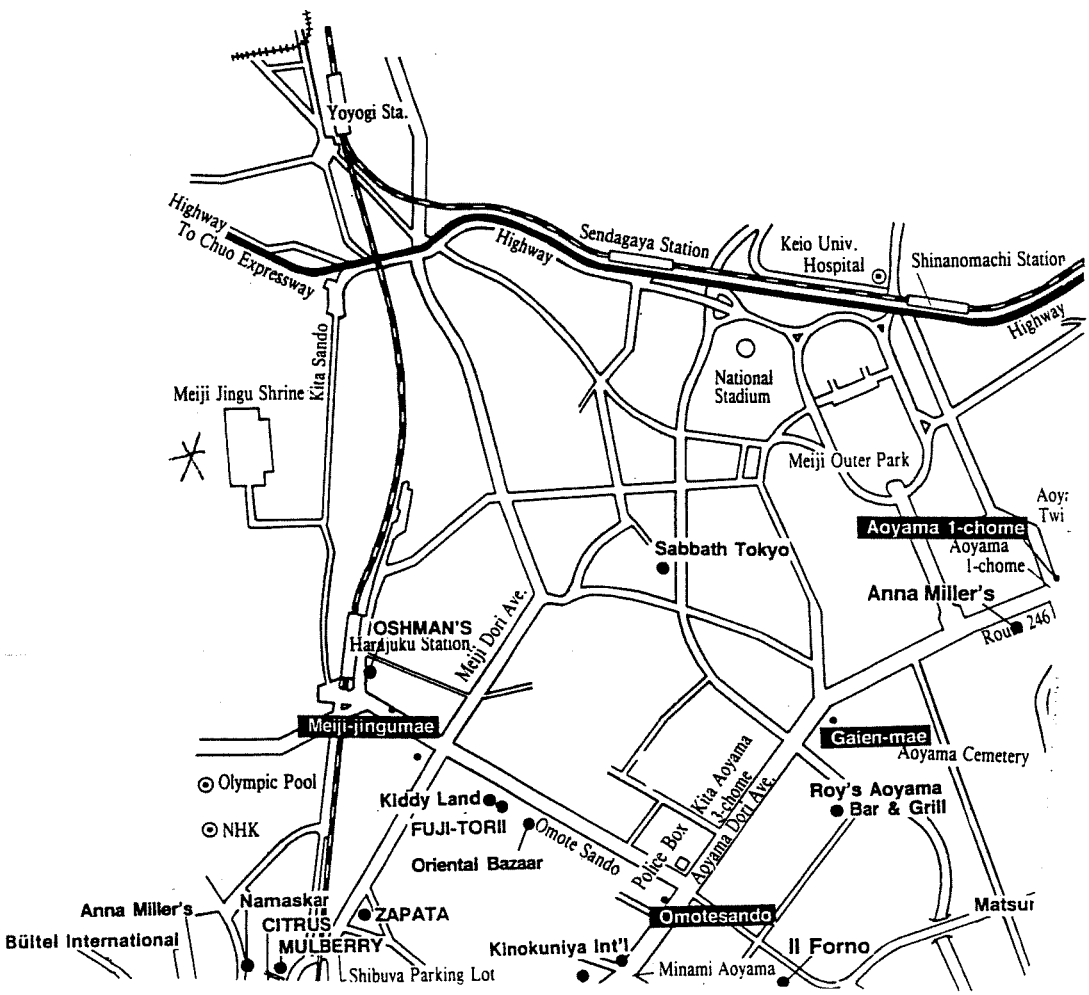
3. At SHINAGAWA品川, transfer to JR YAMANOTE Line. Pass through the wicket leading to JR Line (bilingual signs to show the way), but do not give up your ticket.

4. Go to track #2 and take JR YAMANOTE Line train six stops to HARAJUKU 原宿.

5. After leaving the station through the main exit, orient yourself to the map on the other side of this page. Look to the right and you will see a large intersection. It's easy to recognize by the large pedestrian overpass. Near that overpass, look again to your right and you will see the bridge crossing the train tracks. The entrance to the shrine complex is just across this bridge.

From Ikego

1. Go to JIMMUJI 神武寺 Station and buy a ¥710 transfer ticket for HARAJUKU 原宿, which is on the JR YAMANOTE ＪＲ 山手線 Line in Tokyo.

2. Take a train from track #2 to KANAZAWA BUNKO 金沢文庫, and then transfer to a GREEN or RED KANJI KANJI train to SHINAGAWA 品川 station.

3. **Continue with #3 above.**