

mabuhay

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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UP THE CAPITAL

Nothing says Maligayang Pasko
like our all-Pinoy gift ideas and
a jolly holiday guide to Manila

From Osaka to Vancouver:
the future of coffee

Blasting flowers into outer space:
Tokyo's modern ikebana

Cultivating community in
Auckland's urban gardens

A full-page photograph of a barista in a cafe. The barista, a man with a beard wearing a blue shirt, is pouring coffee from a small pitcher into a glass cup. The scene is lit by bright sunlight streaming through large, multi-paned windows on the left, creating a warm, golden glow on the wooden counter and the barista's face. In the background, a dark brick wall is visible, and a large, modern coffee machine stands to the right. The overall atmosphere is cozy and professional.

Feel the buzz

From New York's concrete jungle to Osaka's warren of charming backstreets, our specialty coffee guide profiles purveyors around the globe – including Singapore, Sydney and Vancouver – providing city residents with unique ways to caffeinate at all hours of the day

2 Osaka

Much like its tea culture, Osaka's specialty coffee scene is thriving, thanks to its baristas' unwavering commitment to honing their craft

Japan, the country where coffee often comes in a minimart can, now has a thriving coffee culture, and Osaka is quickly emerging as a hub. The city's cafés may not get as much attention as their counterparts in Tokyo, but they have much to offer. Quality aside, there's the diversity of experiences – from ordering takeaway at a two-seater café one day to sipping on coffee served out of a ceramic cup in an industrial warehouse the next. Baristas train vigorously and take pride in their craft. The result? Perfect cups of handmade, artisanal joe. – **Dana Ter**



Mel Coffee Roasters

This new, compact roaster-and-café feels a bit like a laboratory, with kettles, hand drips and grinders on the wooden countertop. It makes sense, given that owner Masahiko Fumimoto was an engineer before moving with his wife, Rie, a former banker, to Melbourne, Australia, where they both fell in love with specialty coffee. Masahiko recommends a Kenyan coffee for its lemon and grapefruit flavors. "Kenyan coffee is always amazing because it has so much acidity compared to beans from elsewhere," he says. "This is very sweet, even when light-roasted." fb.com/melcoffeeroasters

Takamura Wine & Coffee Roasters

One of the larger specialty coffee shops in Osaka is located in a two-floor industrial warehouse, with ample space to display an impressive collection of wine and coffee beans sourced from around the world. Though the pairing of wine and coffee might seem odd, the idea is to treat coffee as seriously as wine by understanding its origin, taste and texture, as well as the process of making it. There's much to sample, so plan on staying for an entire afternoon. takamuranet.com





Sanwa Coffee Works

Originally a tonkatsu restaurant that opened in 1959, Takashi Nishikawa, the third-generation owner, re-opened the place in 2011 as a specialty coffee shop. "I learned the basics of coffee roasting from my father," he says, adding that Osakans prefer dark-roasted, bitter coffees, but that they are slowly warming up to beans with lighter and fruity notes. Nishikawa recommends Costa Rica Tarrazú beans: "It feels like you are biting into a mouth-watering fruit such as an orange or pineapple!" fb.com/sanwacoffee



Café Bahnhof

A novelty when it opened in Fukushima Ward in 2003, the German-inspired café used to serve coffee and sweets, though the focus is now on specialty coffee and teaching home-brewing classes. The interiors and service mix traditional European charm and Japanese confectionery-store influences, and the coffee is served in blue-and-white porcelain teacups. Try the medium- or dark-roasted Sumatra varieties for their rich flavor and acidic notes. fb.com/cafeacademy



Lilo Coffee Roasters

This spot fits an impressive amount of roasting equipment and 20 types of beans into a small shop. Owner Keita Nakamura is self-taught. "I visited roasters all over Japan to taste their coffee and asked how they roasted their beans," he reveals. He explains that Osaka's embrace of specialty coffee arises from its similarities to Japanese tea culture, as a lot of care and craftsmanship goes into making a perfect cup. "It's something that we can be proud of." fb.com/lilocoffeeroasters

Mill Pour Espresso

Situated in the Shinsaibashi shopping area, one of central Osaka's first specialty coffee shops was designed by owner Toshiharu Furushou to have a candy-store ambiance. The snug, two-seater venue specializes in espressos and flat whites, and while Mill Pour doesn't use social media to attract customers, its owner's excellent reputation has spread through word of mouth. The coffees served here are light and creamy – perfect for ordering to-go or to enjoy on the outdoor benches.

3-6-1 Minamisenba Cho-ku

