

1 Ippodo Tea Kyoto Main Store, Kyoto

Founded in 1717, Ippodo is one of Japan's most iconic teahouses—an essential stop for any tea enthusiast. The Kyoto flagship blends ancient ambiance with expert guidance and a refined selection of Japanese teas, from Bancha and Houjicha to Gyokuro and Matcha. I enjoyed a Bancha Houjicha brewed three times (¥1200), paired with a delicate pastry, and brought home 100g for ¥600. The staff were warm, knowledgeable, and happy to explain brewing techniques.

Address: Japan, 〒604-0915 Kyoto, Nakagyo Ward, Tokiwagicho, 52 寺町通二条上ル



2 Ran Hotei, Kyoto

A charming, intimate teahouse tucked into Kyoto's quieter streets, Ran Hotei is run by Randy Channell, a Canadian tea master who has lived in Japan for over 40 years. He crafts his own matcha and hosts tea ceremonies. The menu includes eight types of matcha plus select Chinese teas—like Lapsang Souchong and Keemun. They also serve other beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, making it a versatile stop for a relaxed afternoon.

Address: 64 Kamikawaracho, Nakagyo Ward, Kyoto, 604-8374, Japan



3 Ichie Teahouse, Ina

A lovely discovery along the hiking route—Ichie is a welcoming spot to rest and recharge. We sampled Hojicha, Sencha, and Matcha, accompanied by divine matcha macarons. The barista's friendly recommendations helped us choose teas based on flavor mood. Their small shop carries a thoughtful selection for takeaway.

Address: 7682-6 Nosoko, Ina, Nagano 396-0005, Japan



4 Green Tea Sen, Chino

This roadside gem opens early—perfect for hikers. I started with a fresh Sencha, followed by a Japanese black tea, both brewed expertly before my eyes. The hosts shared brewing tips and stories, and I left with a bag of Sencha for at home.

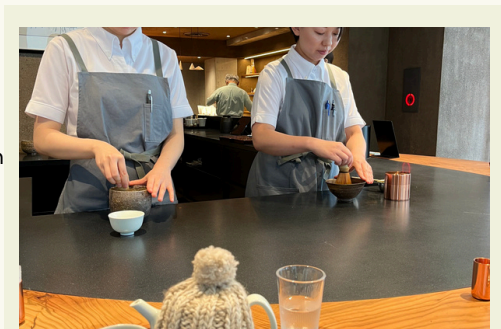
Address: 2921-1 Chino, Nagano 391-0001, Japan



5 Ippodo Tea Aoyama, Tokyo

Kyoto's famed teahouse has several Tokyo locations - this one slightly more modern, yet still steeped in tradition. We tried a Sencha Kaboku and a rare Iribancha Kyobacha (¥3000 total), my first encounter with a smoked Japanese tea. The staff explained that the Bancha leaves are smoked using branches from the same plant—an earthy, fascinating cup.

Address: Japan, 〒107-0062 Tokyo, Minato City, Minamiaoyama, 4 Chome-23-6 2F



6 Nanaya Aoyama Store, Tokyo

A playful stop for tea lovers with a sweet tooth. This shop offers seven types of matcha ice cream, plus hojicha and matcha soft serve—both superb.

The shelves hold an impressive range of teas and bottled cold brews, from ¥500 to ¥10,000. I picked up two to-go, both Sencha's. Very interesting experience, my first one with this type of bottled green tea brewed at low temperature.

Address: 2 Chome-7-12 Shibuya, Tokyo 150-0002, Japan



7 Nakajima Tea House, Tokyo

Tucked within the peaceful Hamarikyu Gardens, Nakajima Tea House offers a traditional matcha experience surrounded by nature. Guests sit on the tatami floor overlooking the pond, savoring a bowl of freshly whisked Matcha, often served with a small sweet.

It's a quiet, reflective stop—perfect for pausing mid-stroll through one of Tokyo's most beautiful gardens.

Address: 浜離宮恩賜庭園, 内, 1-1 Hamarikyuteien, Chuo City, Tokyo 104-0046, Japan



8 Nakamura Tokichi Honten, Uji

A Kyoto-region classic, just steps from Uji Station. While waiting for a seat, guests can sample teas in the adjoining shop. Once inside, I was served a blend of seven green teas—subtle and balanced—followed by a Matcha Usucha (¥1500) with Houjicha sweets.

An ideal first stop in Uji, Japan's matcha capital.

Address: Ichiban-10 Uji, Kyoto 611-0021, Japan



9 Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms, Uji

A dream for any tea devotee. The 4-hour tour (¥15,000) begins with tastings and an overview of tea types and Obubu's philosophy, followed by a stroll through the scenic mountain fields, a lunch, and hands-on brewing.

The highlight: making your own tea and whisking your own matcha.

Address: Japan, 〒619-1201 Kyoto, Soraku District, Wazuka, Sono, Otsuka- 2



10 Cafe Marumataen, Osaka

A minimalist teahouse hidden in Osaka's lively streets, blending modern simplicity with deep respect for craft. We tried a Sencha (¥500) and Gyokuro (¥800), each brewed for 4-5 rounds.

The staff even provided a fork to eat the Gyokuro leaves afterward—an umami-rich treat!

Address: 3 Chome-18-7 Higashiobase, Higashinari Ward, Osaka, 537-0024, Japan

Not enough time to visit them all? Here's our Top 3:

1. Ippodo Tea Kyoto Main Store, Kyoto
2. Ichie Teahouse, Ina
3. Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms, Uji

