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Busses and Ferries Getting Around Tokyo by Lek Boonlert

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Tokyo has the largest and most expedient public transportation system in the world, and the buses are part of this overall system, with very few sections of the city lacking some form of train, metro or bus service accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is important to note, however, that regardless of when you choose to use the bus system, most of them do not accept the fare cards that work with the train and metro; all fees must be paid upon boarding from the front door, with buses relying upon a fixed fare regardless of the distance travelled.

No matter if you are going from your Tokyo hotel on one side of the city to a restaurant completely on the other side of the city, or on your way back from one of the many gardens to whichever of the Tokyo hotels you have chosen to stay at for the duration of the trip, the fare will be the same. Toei buses cost 200 yen while private buses cost 210 yen. Keep in mind that the fares are not transferable from bus to bus. If you get on one bus and have to transfer to another, you will need to pay the fare again on the next bus.

While part of the overall mass transit system of Tokyo, the bus system is not as reliable as the metro or trains given the fact that they carry fewer passengers, run far less frequently, and are extremely slow in comparison to the metro or trains which can zip a passenger from their Tokyo hotel to the other side of the city in a relatively short amount of time. However, if you are someone who is not in a hurry and you want a chance to see the top side of Tokyo at a leisurely pace, buses are the best way to do so. However, keep in mind that bus stops are often very well-hidden, and asking for directions from the nearest Tokyo hotels is one of the best ways to find out if there is a bus stop in your area that is not visible to the untrained eye. Also bear in mind that most of the time the bus system relies on Japanese, not English, which can be frustrating for travellers.

Above and beyond the regular buses are the water buses, or ferries, which operate along the Sumida River and in Tokyo Bay, connecting most of the main sections of the city. These are more leisurely in nature, and are a very relaxing way to experience the waterfront areas of Tokyo, including the futuristic Himiko Ferry, designed by anime and manga artist Leiji Matsumoto.

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