



# FIT FOR ROYALTY

CHRISTINE CUNANAN writes about what makes the Palace Hotel Tokyo different

Hotel views don't get any better than this. There I was on a clear winter afternoon doing my laps in the swimming pool of the Palace Hotel and I could see the Imperial Palace each time I went up for air.

It was quite surreal, but I quickly got used to the amazing scenery from the hotel. From my private balcony on the top floor, for instance, I gazed out onto the roofs of the main buildings inside the palace grounds, the **Palace Hotel** being the only hotel in central **Tokyo** with rooms that actually open to fresh air and proper outdoor seating areas.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE CUNANAN



## CENTER OF TOKYO

Then, there's the location, which truly beats every other hotel if you're a history buff. Every day, I took my pick for a scenic walk: I could either walk across the ancient bridge over the palace moat right next to the hotel; or I could cross the street and enter the gardens of the Imperial Palace through an access gate at the doorstep of the hotel that few tourists are aware of, for a pleasant stroll through the most uncrowded greenery possible in the center of one of the largest and most dynamic cities in the world. On this walk, you'll see the original wooden guard houses and even one of the four remaining stone watchtowers.

The Imperial Palace is also accessible from several other luxury hotels in Tokyo, but these are all on the outer perimeters. Then there's the famous circular jogging route around it that every fitness buff who lands in Japan with running shoes in his or her luggage must do to tick this experience off their bucket list.

However, it's only the Palace Hotel, one of Tokyo's top hotels, that can really claim access to these hallowed grounds – and not just because of the views. The jogging route around the Imperial Palace is mostly along a public sidewalk; but setting foot in the gardens qualifies as a proper entry into a domain most people only view from the outside; and this makes all the difference.

## THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

Being right next to the official home of the Emperor of Japan, the Palace Hotel also has an atmosphere of genteel elegance unequaled by other hotels. One feels this instantly, upon walking through the doors and being greeted by the hotel staff obviously trained via decades of service since the hotel itself was reconstructed on the site of an old hotel of the same name, that was one of the most prestigious hotels in Japan.

In Tokyo just for three days, I chose the Palace Hotel for these two factors, as well

From the Palace Hotel, I just crossed the street every morning and entered the gardens of the Imperial Palace for a pleasant stroll through the most tranquil greenery imaginable in the center of one of the most dynamic cities in the world.

as for its minimalist and spacious rooms that are easy on the eyes and its excellent restaurants. **Crown Restaurant**, the Western-style fine dining venue, serves exquisite meals that are meant to long be remembered, while **Tatsumi**, its intimate six-seater tempura bar, is simply unparalleled. It's wonderful to just take the elevator down to have meals in restaurants that can stand on their own as temples of dining. Quite simply, there is no better place to call home in Tokyo than this hotel fit for an emperor and right next to his official home. ■

**PALACE HOTEL TOKYO**  
[www.en.palacehoteltokyo.com](http://www.en.palacehoteltokyo.com)