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INTRODUCTION

This tour begins from just outside the Kaminarimon gate, entry point to the Nakamise that leads to the main hall of Sensoji and Asakusa Shrine.

Track 1 will explain how to use this tour and introduce important background information. Start each track after you reach the corresponding audio point. Play track 2 as you walk down the Nakamise since the crowds make it impractical to stop and listen.

Most foreigners come to Asakusa to see old Japan, but Asakusa has always been a blend with an emphasis on the new. From the late Edo period to the end of WWII, Asakusa was Japan's playground. The first motion pictures were shown here, and the first building with an elevator was in Asakusa. Imagine today's weekend crowds along the Ginza, and you can begin to imagine what the streets here looked like in its peak. In the Edo era, Asakusa was merely a point between Edo and Yoshiwara. From late Edo, Meiji, Taisho, and Showa — to the end of WWII — this was Tokyo's playground trend setter. From the end of the war Asakusa has struggled to find an identity and perhaps this, more than any other, has allowed the area to maintain a certain charm that is so attractive today.

This tour can take from between two to four hours depending on how fast you walk and how much time you spend at each audio point.

