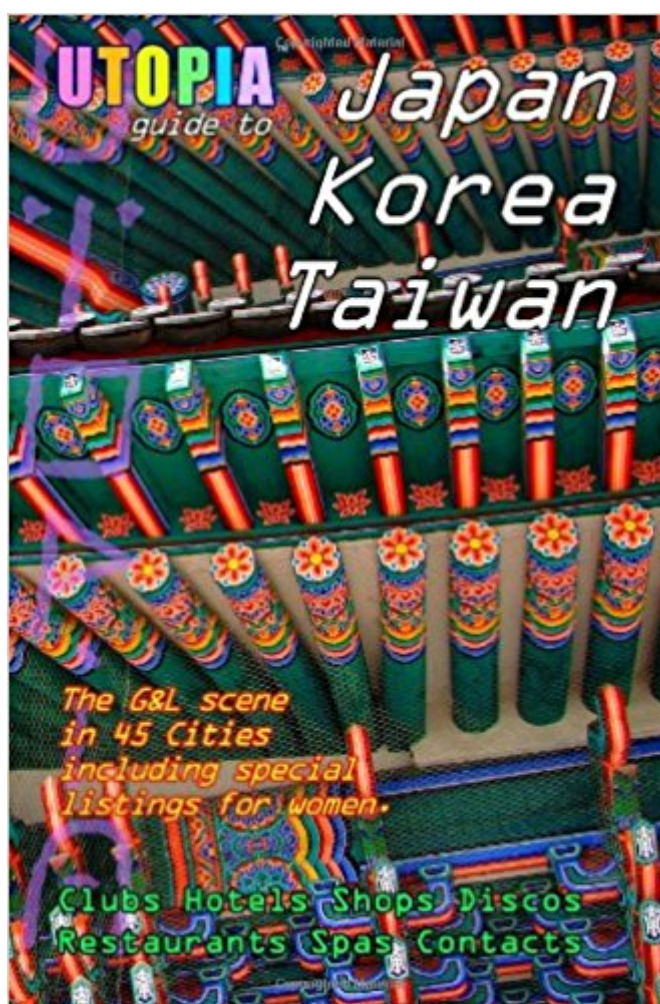


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Utopia Guide To Japan, South Korea & Taiwan : The Gay And Lesbian Scene In 45 Cities Including Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Seoul, Pusan And Taipei





Synopsis

Utopia has assembled the world's first ever travel guide to gay and lesbian life in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Listings include organizations, bars, discos, accommodations, spas, restaurants, and more. A special section of the book highlights groups, clubs, and businesses that are especially welcoming for women. Enjoy dozens of savvy comments and recommendations from local Utopians and gay travelers alike. The Utopia Guide to Japan, South Korea & Taiwan offers a landmark first look at East Asia's vibrant gay and lesbian scene.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"These fun pages dish out the spice on even the most buttoned-up spots in Asia." -- TIME Magazine

TIME Traveler "A really good place to start looking for information... excellent coverage of gay and lesbian events and activities across Asia." -- Lonely Planet

John Goss, along with partners from Singapore and Thailand, founded Utopia, Southeast Asia's first gay and lesbian center, in Bangkok in 1994. A year later he launched the Utopia-Asia.com web portal which has grown over the last decade to become the Internet's most respected GLBT resource for Asia. An artist and recipient of a US National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, John's photographs were recently published in the landmark cultural book, *Very Thai* (2005), and were shown in a solo exhibition, *Sacred Realm*, at the Four Seasons Hotel, Bangkok (2005).

Only the naive would believe that modernization brought homosexuality to Japan. The Utopia Guide

to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan introduces the present state of homosexuality in East Asia, via its historical and literary vintage, and brings it to a manageable head in this must-have handbook. Drink deep! Utopia is well known as the world's most comprehensive and authoritative English-language resource on gay Asia. As a matter of course, the book, too, covers everything you want to know about the scene in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. The Utopia Guide to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan is organized alphabetically and covers pretty much every town that has at least one gay bar. The mammoth size of the task means that the editor makes use to a large extent on the up-to-date feedback of gay men and women via the Utopia website for details such as directions and type of clientele, and in some entries the reader is directed to a Utopia URL. This guide is anything but bare and goes far beyond being a mere 'how to get there' manual. It is comprehensive in the types of establishments it covers: bars, saunas, discos, bookshops, restaurants, cafes, shops and salons. Furthermore, it is written with a sensitive finger on the social, cultural and political pulse of the three countries it covers. It turns the most casual riffler into a reader with its knowing commentary on various gay issues and evocative descriptions of various gay scenes and areas. A particularly memorable example of commentary is its textbox on p.114 about the state of homosexuality in Korea. And for pure descriptive stimulation, this excerpt from the memorable introductory sketch of Shinjuku Ni-Chome sticks in the mind: "While just a gaudy speck on the hemline of Tokyo's neon kimono, Ni-Chome is the main hub of Tokyo's gay scene. A carnival of shadows from dusk to dawn, here you will find 24-hour love motels, fetish mix boxes (no frills sex spaces), noodle dens and gay pride boutiques - all catering to the parade of intoxicated salarymen, transgender hostesses, gangster pimps, Sumo wrestlers, public masturbators and sexual samurai of every clan." Who could resist?! One small fault in the Tokyo pages is that it fails to distinguish between bars and what are predominantly dance clubs (specifically Ace and Arty Farty). However, to anyone who has employed the guide to get as far as Ni-Chome itself, what better way to approach that guy than with 'Where can we dance?' Otherwise, directions to often difficult-to-find establishments are set out in meticulous and easy-to-follow detail, and there are ample tips, depending on the establishment, to make your experience there as enjoyable as possible. The frequent 'Comments from Utopians' are especially helpful, being up to the minute information from the ground via the Utopia website. Note that these comments supplement the main coverage, and are not merely used in its stead. The look of the book is clean. Its cover features the dazzling kaleidoscope of color that is a Korean temple roof, and inside layout is spacious with generously sized font and interspersed with photos every four or five pages. Establishments that offer a discount to Utopia members are clearly marked. As the beginning of the Guide's introduction says

`This guide is a slice of pink life, frozen in time on Apr 15, 2006 ... By the time you read this book, no doubt some venues will have closed, moved, or morphed, while many others will have emerged into the light of day or into the neon splash of night.' In other words, get it while it's hot!

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