

## TOKYO Besties: A Look Back at the 2nd Term of the Official Tokyo Tourism PR Team — The Past 8 Months.



The “TOKYO Besties” is a team comprised of young people that was formed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in the end of August 2023. Their mission is to showcase Tokyo’s unique sightseeing spots from a local’s perspective to young people around the world.

In its second term, the project kicked off in July 2024. Over the course of about eight months, a group of high school and university students served as members of TOKYO Besties, actively engaging in various initiatives until March. Following our previous report, this edition reflects on activities and key events from November onward.

### Creative Workshops with Former Besties and an Influencer’s Masterclass



The second workshop was held on November 17th. The main objectives were:

1. Brainstorming content ideas for future social media posts.
2. Learning video shooting and editing techniques through a lecture by an influencer.



In the first half of the workshop, the Besties exchanged ideas on potential influencer collaborations and activity plans for future content. Numerous ideas were proposed for activities to introduce to young people overseas, such as making *okonomiyaki*, creating traditional Japanese sweets (*wagashi*), and experiencing *sumo*.

Later, the first-term Besties joined the session. After introducing themselves, the new and former members exchanged insights, discussing the differences between the first and second terms, challenges they faced, and creative strategies they adopted. Additionally, everyone worked together to film a fun quiz video called the “[Tokyo Sightseeing Spot Challenge](#),” introducing some of Tokyo’s top attractions in a quiz format.



In the second half of the workshop, an influencer from a major creator agency led a lecture, sharing valuable tips on shooting and editing short-form videos. The session included feedback on the content ideas brainstormed earlier in the day, as well as a Q&A segment, allowing Besties to gain insights directly from an experienced influencer. This lecture proved to be an invaluable experience for the Besties, influencing their content planning, camera angles during filming, and editing styles in their subsequent video productions.

### **Collaborating with a Popular Influencer! Sumo Experience in Asakusa!**



The collaboration between the Besties and a popular influencer took place on January 19th. For this project, they teamed up with [Patricia O'Connor](#), a popular influencer in her 20s and a renowned influencer with 365,000 followers on Instagram (*as of the time of the event*). Patricia shares content about famous spots, food, and culture across Japan, with a particular focus on Tokyo, making her a perfect partner to help introduce Tokyo's unique experiences to a global audience.



The event kicked off in front of *Kaminarimon Gate* in Asakusa, where Patricia asked the *Besties*, “*What Japanese food/restaurant should foreigners visit?*” One *Bestie* enthusiastically responded, “*Asakusa Sumo Club!*” — leading Patricia and the group to head there together.

The [Asakusa Sumo Club](#) is an entertainment-style restaurant where guests can enjoy a one-of-a-kind dining experience combining Japanese cuisine with a live sumo performance by former wrestlers. It was one of the activity ideas proposed during the workshop. The *Besties* selected their favorite *yukata* (casual summer *kimono*), savored delicious *chanko-nabe* (sumo-style hot pot), and enjoyed the thrilling sumo action up close.

Two *Besties* even participated in the “Sumo Challenge,” dressing up as wrestlers and bravely stepping into the ring to take on real sumo wrestlers. This experience offered a unique opportunity to get hands-on with Japan’s national sport, providing insight into creating content that would resonate with international tourists while deepening their appreciation of Japanese culture.

Additionally, watching Patricia’s filming techniques up close offered invaluable lessons in content creation. It was a day filled with learning, cultural exchange, and unforgettable memories.



The Asakusa Sumo Stable experience was shared as a collaborative post on both Patricia's and TOKYO Besties' Instagram accounts, receiving an impressive 7,354 likes (*as of March 25th, 2025*). This collaboration clearly demonstrated the powerful influence of social media creators, while also serving as a major source of motivation for the Besties!

### **Welcoming Two International Students for a Culinary Experience on "Tsukishima Monja Street"!**



The second activity took place on March 2nd, where two international students—one from Poland and one from South Korea—joined three Besties for a special food experience in *Tsukishima*.

Their first stop was [Iroha](#), a long-established *monjayaki* restaurant founded in 1955. From the extensive menu, they chose the classic “Mix Monja” (beef, scallops, and fresh shrimp) and the unique “Squid Ink Monja” (squid ink, squid, and shrimp). Using the “How to Cook Monja” guide provided in the restaurant, the Besties and international students worked together to master the art of making *monjayaki*. For many of them, it was their first time experiencing the unique cooking process, making it a valuable opportunity to deepen their understanding of *monjayaki*’s origins in Tokyo’s traditional downtown culture.



After *monjayaki*, the group visited [Kyuei](#), a well-known *melon-pan* shop frequently featured in the media. *Melon-pan* is a Japanese sweet bread consisting of soft bread dough topped with biscuit crust. The characteristic grid pattern on its surface resembles a melon’s rind, giving it its name. Kyuei is famous for its dedication to freshness—only selling melon-pan that has been baked within the last hour! The Besties and international students purchased a freshly baked melon-pan and enjoyed it while sitting on a bench along the Sumida River. As they took their first bites of the warm, fluffy bread, they couldn’t help but exclaim, “*Oishii~!*” in delight.

This experience helped the Besties reconnect with Tokyo’s traditional downtown culture while also gaining fresh insights from their international guests. The cultural exchange made for a truly memorable and eye-opening day.

## Reflection Session Held on March 9th



As a final recap of the second term of this Project, a reflection session was held on March 9th.

During the session, the Besties looked back at their most successful posts, reviewing the Top 5 most-watched videos, tracking follower growth, total likes, and average reel views—allowing them to truly appreciate the progress of their account. They also reflected on the workshops, activities, and influencer collaborations, exchanging feedback and sharing their thoughts on the overall experience. This session provided a meaningful opportunity to assess their achievements and gain insights for future content creation.



During the reflection session, the Besties shared their thoughts on their experiences:

- “The fan-making activity in Asakusa was a great opportunity for everyone to bond!”
- “Collaborating with Patricia gave me a behind-the-scenes look at influencers' work, which made me even more interested in social media content creation!”
- “Seeing Tokyo through the eyes of international tourists helped me rediscover its charm!”

Additionally, they discussed their future aspirations:

- “Once I start working, I'll have more opportunities to interact with people from overseas, so I want to keep sharing Tokyo's charm!”
- “This project inspired me to start my own social media account, and I want to continue creating content!”



To commemorate the journey, the team shared a joyful picnic at Hinokicho Park, capturing lasting memories with a group photo. With that, the 2024 2nd term of “TOKYO Besties” successfully came to a close.

Through this project, the Besties embraced the perspective of international tourists, discovered new facets of Tokyo, and transformed their experiences into engaging video content to share on social media. Each member brought their unique personality and creativity to the initiative, growing into true leaders in showcasing Tokyo's charm to young audiences worldwide.

Looking ahead, we hope that “TOKYO Besties” will continue to be a platform for uncovering and sharing the hidden charm of Tokyo—reaching and inspiring even more people across the globe!

“TOKYO Besties” team members will be posting their favorite parts of Tokyo through the official Instagram and YouTube. For more content and information, visit and follow: [Instagram](#) / [YouTube](#).