From 23 July to 8 August 2021, the greatest sporting event in the world will be in Japan, in Tokyo.

Thousands of athletes from across the world will come together in the Japanese capital. It has been over 50 years since Tokyo hosted the Olympic Summer Games, and the event is therefore highly anticipated. In addition, it is being held in a unique context, nearly 10 years after the earthquake that ravaged Japan and caused the explosion at the Fukushima nuclear power station, and after the emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) led to its postponement.

This Games edition is synonymous with hope and revival, in a country that aspires to rebuild itself and have a global impact.

After the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games will make use of the same infrastructure between from 24 August to 5 September 2021.
WHERE IS TOKYO?

The capital of Japan, Tokyo, is on the island of Honshu, the largest of the archipelago which represents around 60 per cent of the country’s total surface area. With almost 14 million inhabitants living in this vibrant city, and 43 million people if we take into account its surroundings, Tokyo is the most populated urban area in the world.

In Japanese, Japan is Nihon or Nippon, which means “the sun’s origin”, probably due to the country’s position in the eastern hemisphere. This name originated in the letter from Prince Shotoku (574-622) to his Chinese counterpart, which began as follows: “From the Son of Heaven in the land where the sun rises to the Son of Heaven in the land where the sun sets” (as China is west of Japan).
The harmonised chequered emblem by Japanese designer Asao TAKOLO is based on two of country’s traditional elements: the chequerboard, or “ichimatsu moyo” and the indigo blue colour, “aizome”.

Composed of three varieties of rectangular shapes, the design represents the various participating countries, cultures and ways of thinking. The indigo and white alternate, representing the notion of full and empty, forming a circle. A neat summary of one of the core concepts of the Tokyo 2020 vision: “unity in diversity”. 

Inspired by tradition

In Japan, the chequerboard was fashionable in the 18th century under the name of “ichimatsu”, thanks to the kabuki actor Sanogawa ICHIMATSU, who liked clothes featuring this design.

The indigo blue dye “aizome”, also known as “Japan blue”, is a traditional dye that has existed for many centuries. One of its main characteristics is to help combat irritation and other skin problems caused by friction and sweating, as demonstrated by certain clothing still used in martial arts today.
The 50 pictograms, created by a team of Japanese designers led by Masaaki HIROMURA, pay tribute to their 1964 predecessors. As there are several disciplines in some of the 33 sports, there are a total of 50 pictograms.

1964 vs 2020

Tokyo 2020 pictograms
Simple schematic shapes perfectly capture the dynamics of the silhouetted athletes' movements.

They have been created in six colours: the indigo blue of the emblem, plus five traditional Japanese colours: “kurenai” (dark red), “ai” (royal blue), “sakura” (cherry blossom pink), “fuji” (violet) and “matsuba” (green).

Some history
Olympic pictograms first appeared at the 1964 Games in Tokyo, in response to the need for effective visual communication for participants and spectators from all over the world. The organisers created a language of images: pictograms of the Olympic Games were born!
THE MASCOTS

Graceful figures with big friendly eyes, pointy ears and superpowers...

Chosen by Japanese schoolchildren, the 2020 mascots, created by the illustrator Ryo TANIGUCHI, are straight out of the world of manga.

MIRAITOWA

The Olympic mascot is called Miraitowa (pronounced mi-rai-to-wa), a combination of the Japanese words “mirai” (future) and “towa” (eternity). With a blue chequered outfit, it wears a stylised samurai-style helmet.

SOMEITY

The Paralympic mascot is called Someity. This name is inspired by the Japanese word “someiyoshino”, a very popular variety of Japanese cherry tree, anglicised to sound like “so mighty”. With a pink chequered outfit, it has cherry blossom on its ears.
TOKYO 2020

OLYMPIC PROPERTIES

THE TORCH

The torch gradually opens out into five sections to create elegant metal flower petals, culminating in a “sakura” cherry blossom, from which the flames emerge.

Did you know?

Approximately 30 per cent of the torch is made from recycled aluminium originally used in temporary housing units after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster that devastated Japan’s eastern Tohoku region. Tokujin YOSHIOKA wanted this as a way of showing the world how the area affected by the disaster is getting back to normal and damaged lives are being rebuilt.

The Olympic Torch Relay

The torch relay is an integral part of the modern Olympic Games. Numerous celebrations are held along the way, allowing the local population to share in the Olympic spirit.

The slogan chosen for 2020, “Hope lights our way”, evokes a country engaged in rebuilding after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011 and the dawn of a new era.

Colour: sakura and gold
Height: 71 cm
Weight: 1,2 kg
Composition: extruded (i.e. seamless) aluminium
Fuel: gas canister
Designer: TOKUJIN YOSHIOKA INC.
THE MEDALS

Even if most people will never experience the joy of winning an Olympic medal, the Tokyo 2020 Games have given the Japanese the chance to be involved in their creation. Between April 2017 and March 2019, people were encouraged to take their old smartphones, games consoles, cameras and laptops to collection centres. In all, more than 78,985 tonnes of electronic items were collected, including more than 6.21 million phones!

This operation produced:
• 30.3kg of gold;
• 4,100kg of silver; and
• 2,700kg of bronze.
These metals have been melted down and used to make the medals.

Created by Junichi KAWANISHI, the design represents the daily striving for victory by the athletes, as well as their energy and that of the people who support them. The ribbons employ traditional Japanese design motifs, with:
- “ichimatsu moyo”, the chequered pattern; and
- “kasane no irome”, traditional kimono layering techniques for the women of the imperial court.
TIMES ARE CHANGING!

Wanting to engage new audiences and make the Games even more attractive, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) offers each host country the possibility to include new sports on the Olympic programme.

But don’t worry…

Adding these new sports does not affect the number of athletes or events in the sports already on the Olympic programme. And the next host cities are not obliged to include them, either. For example, the Paris 2024 Organising Committee has decided to keep surfing, skateboarding and sport climbing, but to add another new sport: breaking.

Trad or fun? Popular! The Tokyo 2020 choices

The Organising Committee for the Games in Tokyo opted for five sports that combine traditional and new elements. The idea is to engage young people and reflect the current trend of increasingly urban sport.

Karate, baseball/softball, sport climbing, surfing & skateboarding

18 events
474 athletes
A first: same number of men and women
SKATEBOARDING

4 Events
Street & Park

Characteristics
Skateboarding developed in the USA at the end of the 1940s. The sport was created by surfers seeking the same sensations on the street that they found on the waves. By the 1990s, skateboarding had become popular all over the world and created its own counter-culture.

Assets
While this spectacular sport rhymes with flexibility and coordination, it allows the development of living spaces through skate parks in urban spaces. The “rider” spreads a creative non-conformist culture, imbued with a spirit of escape, mixing the intoxication of speed with the taste of surpassing oneself in the wildest figures.
NEW SPORTS

KARATE

8 Events
Kata: pre-arranged sets of movements
Kumite: conventional combat between two opponents
3 weight categories

Characteristics
Even though karate is today associated with Japan, its origins go back more than a thousand years to China and India. The Japanese branch of karate, meaning “empty hand”, appeared on the islands of Okinawa around 1507, when a royal decree prohibited the use of weapons. While karate was known in northern Asia for centuries, it did not spread to the rest of the world until after the Second World War. Karate has even become part of popular culture thanks to cult martial arts films like The Karate Kid in 1984.

Assets
A long-standing part of traditional Japanese culture, karate requires concentration and a sense of observation. A true philosophy of life, it requests respect for others, humility, or the use of courteous and respectful language.
TOKYO 2020

NEW SPORTS

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

2 Events
Baseball (men)
Softball (women)

Characteristics
Baseball as we know it today developed in the USA in the 1830s thanks to Abner DOUBLEDAY. It quickly spread across Asia, starting with Japan, where it has been one of the country’s favourite sports since the end of the 19th century.

The female version of baseball, softball, which was created in 1887 again in the USA, developed throughout the 20th century. The first softball world championships were held in 1965 with women’s teams, and a year later with men’s teams.

Assets
Baseball is not only focused on studying the trajectory of the balls. It develops rapid decision-making and requires a sense of collective organization and strategy.
SPORT CLIMBING

2 Events
Event combining lead, speed and bouldering

Characteristics
Climbing, both indoors and outdoors, developed in the 19th century when the enthusiasm for mountaineering reached its zenith in Europe. The first Alpine clubs were created in England in 1857, but it was after the Second World War that climbing really took off, especially in the USA, which dominated the climbing world in the 1960s.

Synonymous with healthy living and respecting the environment, climbing has now taken over the city, as it can be practised on indoor climbing walls in the heart of any city.

Assets
This sport develops not only balance but also concentration and analytical skills: it is necessary to decipher the «map» of the block. At the foot of the walls, we advise each other a lot, we also assure each other what promotes trust in each other.
NEW SPORTS

SURFING

2 Events
Shortboard (women)
Shortboard (men)

Characteristics
Originating in the Pacific islands, in particular Hawaii, surfing — or “he’e nalu” in Hawaiian — was being practised already in the 15th century as part of various rituals. The chiefs of tribes gained respect by defying the sea and its waves on long wooden boards, demonstrating their strength and superiority. For their part, the Polynesians competed against one another in the form of duels, with the winner then enjoying greater standing within his community.

Hawaii’s Duke KAHANAMOKU is regarded as the father of modern surfing. Already in 1912, this three-time Olympic swimming champion wanted surfing to be part of the Olympic Games! “Wave riding” is by definition a sport that is close to nature.

Assets
Father of sliding sports, surfing very quickly claimed the values of freedom and closeness to nature.

Involved in the preservation of the coastline and oceans, surfers are key players in the fight to protect the environment.
Like the rest of the planet, Japan is facing major environmental challenges. For these Games, the city of Tokyo has taken a number of environmentally responsible civic initiatives in line with the slogan for this edition: “Be better, together – for the planet and the people”:

- Make use of the legacy of the 1964 Games by holding competitions at venues such as the Yoyogi National Gymnasium;
- Recycle certain materials; and
- Use carbon-neutral transport.
TOKYO 2020

SUSTAINABLE, UNIFYING GAMES

The podiums
The podiums are made from recycled plastic collected by the public or recovered from the sea as part of an initiative by Procter & Gamble and the Games Organising Committee.

The cars
Toyota is supplying a range of zero-emission vehicles, including fuel cell electric ones, in line with Japan’s carbon emission reduction objectives.

Around 200 APMs (Accessible People Movers) to transport visitors and staff will be used for people with accessibility problems (elderly and disabled people, pregnant women and families with small children). These all-electric vehicles will be used for short journeys, and have a maximum speed of 19 km/h. Their battery gives them a maximum range of around 100km.

Bedding
The airweave Inc. company is providing a broad range of products for the Olympic Village: beds, mattresses, pillows, pillow cases, duvets, etc.

In all, 18,000 beds will be needed for the Olympic Games and 8,000 for the Paralympic Games.

The innovation here is that these beds are made of reinforced cardboard, which can take weights of up to 200kg. In addition, each mattress can be personalised for each athlete. Perfect for achieving their Olympic dreams!