The Imperial Palace, home of the imperial family, stands on the former site of Edo Castle. Located in the heart of Tokyo, the Palace grounds are vast, replete with gardens, moat, and high stone walls. The gardens - Kokyo Gaien and Higashi Gyoen (Imperial East Garden) - provide the primary sights since the remaining Palace grounds are usually closed to the public (more info. can be found on the page 2 of this leaflet). A walk alongside the moat, particularly during the Cherry Blossom season, is an attraction as well. The Nijubashi (Double bridge) is a copy of Kyoto’s Fushimi Castle bridge. It spans from the moat at the entrance to the Palace and provides the only good view into the grounds. Built where Edo Castle stood during the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Imperial Palace was completed in late 1800’s. Destroyed by air-raids during the world war II, the place was rebuilt in 1968. Ordinarily it’s impossible to enter the grounds without an invitation. However, on the Emperor’s Birthday, December the 23rd, and on January the 2nd of each year the gates are opened. Tens of thousands of visitors take advantage of this unique opportunity to see the royal family.