2026 Japan Sakura Connectivity Report

Baseline Edition — Pre-Bloom Network Performance Study

Connectivity Lab | Field Measurements by Conn-Scout Japan
Network Infrastructure: au (KDDI)
Last updated: March 4, 2026

This report documents baseline mobile network performance at key Tokyo cherry blossom locations before peak bloom congestion begins. The dataset establishes a reference point for evaluating network resilience during the 2026 sakura season, with planned follow-up measurements during peak bloom and an expansion to Kyoto in mid-March.

1. Executive Summary

Cherry blossom season can turn parks into temporary high-density network zones. During peak viewing windows, simultaneous photo/video sharing and livestream bursts shift the performance bottleneck from downlink speed to uplink capacity and responsiveness. To establish a pre-season baseline, Connectivity Lab measured real-world performance across three major Tokyo sakura hotspots.

Key Findings (Baseline)

- Low idle latency across sites (19–34 ms), indicating responsive routing under pre-bloom load.
- Strong downstream capacity at Meguro River (272 Mbps) with stable uplink (69.2 Mbps).
- Ueno Park showed the most uplink-forward profile (73.5 Mbps upload), relevant to social sharing and short-form video.
- Shinjuku Gyoen remained stable with responsive upload responsiveness (33 ms), though observed uplink throughput was lower (12.4 Mbps).

What This Baseline Represents

- A reference dataset collected before peak bloom crowd density.
- A foundation for Baseline vs Peak comparisons later in March (Tokyo), plus Kyoto expansion in mid-March.

2. Study Design and Measurement Framework

Network & Test Profile Specification

All measurements were conducted using a native local travel eSIM profile on the au mobile network (KDDI infrastructure). Devices connected to 5G where available with automatic LTE fallback depending on local radio conditions. This configuration reflects typical traveler usage with local network access rather than international roaming routing.

Recorded Metrics

- Download throughput (Mbps)
- Upload throughput (Mbps)
- Idle latency (ms)
- Download responsiveness (ms)
- Upload responsiveness (ms)

Notes on Interpretation

During seasonal tourism surges, uplink demand typically increases due to high-volume photo uploads, short-form video posting, and livestream initiation. For this reason, this report treats upload throughput and responsiveness as primary indicators for crowd resilience, alongside latency stability.

3. Tokyo Baseline Field Measurements

Field measurements were collected between February 27 and March 4, 2026. Each row below reflects a verified test session at a representative point within the location.

Location	Time stamp (Local)	Network Status	Download (Mbps)	Upload (Mbps)	Idle Latency (ms)	DL Responsiveness (ms)	UL Responsiveness (ms)
Meguro River	Feb 27, 2026 — 17:17	🟢 Seamless	272	69.2	19	592	179
Shinjuku Gyoen	Feb 28, 2026 — 18:46	🟠 Stable	79.5	12.4	34	513	33
Ueno Park	Mar 4, 2026 — 18:36	🟠 Stable	68.6	73.5	23	389	88

Meguro River (Baseline)

A dense urban riverside corridor with high photo-taking activity, especially during evening illumination periods.

Field notes:

- Highest observed download throughput in baseline set (272 Mbps).
- Low idle latency (19 ms) suggests strong proximity to urban infrastructure.
- Upload throughput remained strong (69.2 Mbps), supporting media sharing workflows.
- Upload responsiveness (179 ms) indicates moderate uplink reaction time during sustained activity.

Shinjuku Gyoen (Baseline)

A wide open garden environment with large lawns and walking paths—often a primary sakura destination for visitors.

Field notes:

- Stable downlink (79.5 Mbps) with moderate idle latency (34 ms).
- Lower upload throughput (12.4 Mbps) relative to other sites in this baseline set.
- Upload responsiveness (33 ms) remained highly responsive, suggesting low routing delay despite lower uplink capacity at the moment of test.

Ueno Park (Baseline)

A major urban park and tourism cluster that typically experiences intense crowd density during sakura peak season.

Field notes:

- Upload throughput exceeded download (73.5 Mbps vs 68.6 Mbps), favorable for social uploads and live sharing.
- Idle latency remained low (23 ms), indicating strong responsiveness under moderate load.
- Upload responsiveness (88 ms) suggests solid uplink reactivity for bursty media posting behavior.

4. Baseline Analysis — What the Numbers Suggest

Latency Profile

Idle latency across sites ranged from 19–34 ms, consistent with responsive local network routing under pre-bloom conditions. This baseline band provides a useful comparison point for evaluating latency inflation during peak crowd density later in March.

Uplink Readiness for Social Sharing

While download throughput often remains adequate even under load, traveler experience during seasonal events is frequently constrained by uplink availability and responsiveness—especially for posting high-resolution photos, uploading short videos, and starting live streams.

- Meguro River and Ueno Park showed strong baseline uplink capacity (69.2 Mbps and 73.5 Mbps).
- Shinjuku Gyoen’s baseline uplink was lower in this specific session (12.4 Mbps), making it a key site to revisit during peak bloom.

Operational Implication for Peak Measurements

- Re-test the same micro-locations (same entrance/bridge/lawn edge) to improve Baseline vs Peak comparability.
- Use a consistent time window (e.g., late afternoon) to control for diurnal traffic variation.
- Prioritize recording 5G vs LTE attachment state alongside metrics (and note any fallback events).

5. Infrastructure Insight — Direct vs Detour Routing

These measurements were conducted using native local access on au (KDDI infrastructure). Native local connectivity typically routes traffic directly through Japan’s domestic mobile core to local services. In contrast, some international roaming configurations can introduce additional routing distance by traversing overseas carrier infrastructure before reaching local Japanese endpoints. Under high-density conditions, longer routing paths can make responsiveness degradation more visible.

6. Planned Updates (Tokyo Peak + Kyoto Expansion)

Tokyo Peak Bloom Crowd Stress Test (Late March)

- Repeat measurements at the same Tokyo locations during full bloom peak density.
- Track latency variance, uplink stability, and any LTE fallback frequency under load.
- Publish Baseline vs Peak comparison table and interpretation.

Kyoto Measurements (Mid-March)

- Add Kyoto cherry blossom locations to capture a different tourism topology (historic districts, narrower streets, concentrated flows).
- Compare Tokyo vs Kyoto baseline/peak patterns as data accrues.

How to Use This Report

- This Baseline Edition acts as the reference snapshot for pre-bloom conditions.
- Peak Bloom updates will be appended to the same canonical report to preserve continuity and authority.

Document Info

- **Version:** v1.0 (Baseline Edition)
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- **Status:** Finalized Baseline (Pre-Bloom)

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