

Incredible Traveler Resources



Planning Your Trip

Welcome! I'm excited that you're planning a trip to Japan. From vibrant cities and ancient temples to breathtaking mountains and hidden coastal villages, Japan is a destination unlike any other.

After living in Japan for years and traveling throughout the country, I've created these resources to help you plan with confidence and make the most of your adventure. I've also written **three Japan travel books** filled with practical advice, local insights, and firsthand experiences to help you discover the very best Japan has to offer.

Whether it's your first visit or your fifth, I hope these resources inspire you to explore, travel smarter, and create unforgettable memories. Happy travels! JP

A Journey Through Japan

[Electronic](#)
[Paperback](#)

Tokyo Treasures

[Electronic](#)
[Paper Back](#)

Touring Tokyo

[Paperback](#)

Before You Book

Passport

Before planning your trip, make sure your passport is valid. Many countries require at least six months of validity beyond your travel dates.

Visa Requirements

Check whether your country requires a visa to enter Japan. Many nationalities can visit visa-free for short stays, but requirements vary by country. The [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) of Japan gives details on the visa application procedures and provides documents.

Best Time to Visit Japan

Choosing when to visit Japan depends on the type of experience you're looking for. Every season offers something unique, from colorful festivals to breathtaking natural scenery.

My two favorite seasons are **spring** and **winter**. Spring transforms the country with beautiful cherry blossoms, while winter brings dazzling illuminations, snowy landscapes, and relaxing hot springs. No matter when you visit, Japan offers unforgettable experiences year-round.

Spring

- Large cherry blossom photo
- Months: March–May
- Best for: Cherry blossoms, pleasant weather

Summer

- Fireworks festival or green mountain landscape
- Months: June–August
- Best for: Festivals, hiking, Mount Fuji

Autumn

- Temple surrounded by colorful maple leaves
- Months: September–November
- Best for: Fall colors, photography

Winter

- Snow-covered village, ski resort, or winter illumination
- Months: December–February
- Best for: Skiing, onsen, snow festivals

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is not required for most visitors in Japan, but highly recommended. Buying [Japan Travel Insurance](#) has a lot of benefits. Typically, travel insurance covers:

- Hospital stays,
- Lost or delayed baggage
- Emergency medical treatment
- Flight delays
- Lost passport assistance

Budget expectations

One of the first things I do when planning a trip to Japan is create a travel budget. Knowing how much I plan to spend helps me choose the right flights, hotels, and activities before I even book my trip.

Be sure to budget for airfare, accommodations, transportation, meals, and the attractions you want to experience. Whether you're traveling solo, as a couple, or with your family, having a realistic budget will help you enjoy your trip with fewer surprises and more unforgettable memories.

Estimated Daily Budget (Per Person)*

Travel Style	Japanese Yen (JPY)	U.S. Dollars (USD)
 Budget	¥10,000–¥18,000	US\$62–\$111
 Mid-Range	¥20,000–¥35,000	US\$123–\$216
 Luxury	¥50,000+	US\$308+

*These estimates typically include accommodation, transportation, food, and sightseeing, but **do not include international flights or major shopping purchases.***

Typical Costs

Accommodation

Type	Japanese Yen (JPY)	U.S. Dollars (USD)
 Hostel	¥3,000–¥7,000	US\$18–\$43
 Business Hotel	¥8,000–¥18,000	US\$49–\$111

Type	Japanese Yen (JPY)	U.S. Dollars (USD)
★ Mid-Range Hotel	¥15,000–¥30,000	US\$92–\$185
✨ Luxury Hotel	¥35,000+	US\$216+

Food

Meal	Japanese Yen (JPY)	U.S. Dollars (USD)
 Convenience Store Breakfast	¥300–¥700	US\$2–\$4
 Ramen	¥900–¥1,500	US\$6–\$9
 Lunch	¥1,500–¥3,000	US\$9–\$18
 Dinner	¥1,500–¥3,500	US\$9–\$22
 Fine Dining	¥10,000+	US\$62+

Transportation

Transportation	Japanese Yen (JPY)	U.S. Dollars (USD)
 Tokyo Subway Ride	¥180–¥350	US\$1–\$2
 Local Train	¥150–¥500	US\$1–\$3
 Taxi	Varies	Higher than public transportation
 Shinkansen (Bullet Train)	Varies by route	Price depends on distance and seat type

Travel Tip: Japan's trains and subways are the fastest and most affordable way to get around. Taxis are clean and reliable but can become expensive, especially in cities like Tokyo and Osaka.

Attractions

Attraction	Typical Cost
 Temples & Shrines	Often free or a small admission fee
 Observation Decks	Usually require an admission ticket (e.g., Shibuya Sky, Tokyo Skytree)
 Theme Parks	Prices vary depending on the park and ticket type

Travel Tip: Many of Japan's most memorable experiences—such as visiting shrines, strolling through historic districts, or enjoying scenic parks—are free or very affordable, making Japan a great destination for every budget.

Ways to Save Money

Over the years, I've found that a few simple strategies can make a big difference without taking away from the experience.

-  **Stay near a train station.** You'll save both time and transportation costs, and it's much easier to get around each day.
-  **Eat at convenience stores occasionally.** Stores like 7-Eleven, FamilyMart, and Lawson offer fresh, affordable meals that are surprisingly delicious.
-  **Use an IC card.** Cards like Suica or ICOCA make traveling on trains, subways, and buses fast and convenient, and they can also be used at many vending machines and convenience stores.
-  **Book your hotels early.** Prices increase quickly during popular seasons like cherry blossom season, autumn foliage, Golden Week, and New Year's.
-  **Take advantage of free attractions.** Some of my favorite experiences in Japan—parks, shrines, temples, scenic viewpoints, and local festivals—cost little or nothing.

Budgeting Tip

I always recommend setting aside a small emergency fund for your trip. Unexpected weather, transportation delays, or last-minute hotel changes can happen, and having extra money available makes your trip far less stressful.

How many days to stay

One of the first decisions you'll make is how long to stay in Japan. Your itinerary should match the amount of time you have available.

- **3–5 Days:** Explore one city, such as Tokyo or Kyoto.
- **7 Days:** Visit two or three destinations, such as Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka.
- **10–14 Days:** Experience Japan at a more relaxed pace while visiting several regions.
- **14+ Days:** Venture beyond the major cities to places like Hakone, Hiroshima, Nara, Kanazawa, or Hokkaido.

Keep in mind that your arrival and departure days are usually travel days. If you're flying 10–14 hours or more, you'll likely lose most of those days to airports, customs, and jet lag, so don't overpack your itinerary.

Cherry blossom season vs autumn colors

People often ask me which season I prefer, and it's a difficult choice because both are incredible.

Cherry Blossom Season (Late March–Early April)

Spring is one of my favorite times to travel around Japan. Seeing the country covered in pink

cherry blossoms never gets old, and I look forward to it every year. It's also the perfect time to enjoy seasonal treats like cherry blossom ice cream, desserts, and limited-time drinks.

Autumn Colors (Late October–November)

Autumn is just as beautiful, with brilliant shades of red, orange, and yellow covering temples, mountains, and gardens. The cooler temperatures make it one of the most comfortable times of year for sightseeing.

If it's your first visit to Japan, I recommend either season. You really can't go wrong.

Typhoon season

Japan's typhoon season generally runs from **May through October**, with **August and September** being the most active months.

If you're planning to visit **Okinawa**, be aware that it experiences more typhoons than mainland Japan because of its southern location. While I've enjoyed visiting Okinawa in late summer, it's important to monitor the weather closely, as storms can occasionally disrupt flights, ferries, and outdoor activities.

If you're visiting **Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, or other parts of mainland Japan**, you could still encounter a typhoon, but direct impacts are generally less frequent than in Okinawa.

Before your trip, I always recommend checking the weather forecast and purchasing travel insurance that covers weather-related delays or cancellations. A little planning can save a lot of stress if your travel plans need to change.

Before You Fly

Download Google Maps

One of the first apps I install before every trip is **Google Maps**. In my experience, it's the easiest and most reliable way to navigate Japan's extensive train and subway system.

Google Maps provides real-time train departure and arrival times, platform numbers, transfer information, estimated travel times, and even the best train car to board for the quickest exit at your destination. Whether you're exploring Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, or traveling across the country, Google Maps makes getting around Japan simple and stress-free.

Download Google Translate or Japanese Language Apps

I use **Google Translate** almost every day while traveling in Japan, but primarily for translating signs, menus, and short phrases rather than carrying on conversations. The camera feature is especially helpful for instantly translating Japanese text.

If you'd like to learn Japanese before your trip, I recommend **Rosetta Stone** or **Transparent Language**. Both offer structured lessons that help you build practical vocabulary and confidence, making it easier to communicate with locals and enjoy a more immersive travel experience.

Language Programs I have used to study Japanese over the years:

[Pimsleur Method](#)

[Rosetta Stone](#)

[Living Language](#)

Install Suica in Apple Wallet (or prepare an IC card)

One of the first things I recommend doing after arriving in Japan is getting an **IC card**, such as **Suica** (available in eastern Japan) or **ICOCA** (common in western Japan). These rechargeable cards make traveling around Japan fast, easy, and hassle-free.

Simply tap your card to pass through train station gates, ride subways and buses, and even pay at many convenience stores, vending machines, restaurants, and coin lockers. It's one of the most useful purchases you can make and will save you time throughout your trip.

Purchase an [eSIM](#) or SIM card

When you first arrive at the airport, you want to purchase an eSIM or SIM card immediately. I would not recommend taking a chance until you arrive in the city of Tokyo, for instance.

[Unlimited Data 5G/4G SIM Card \(Multiple JP Airport PickUp\) for Japan](#)

[5G Japan SIM \(Japan Airport Pick Up\) Unlimited Data](#)

[eSIM for Japan \(QR Code delivery via email\)](#)

Reserve airport transportation if needed

After a long flight, the last thing I want to do is figure out transportation while carrying luggage. That's why I usually recommend booking your airport transfer before you arrive in Japan.

Pre-booking your transportation gives you peace of mind, helps you avoid long taxi lines, and ensures you have a reliable ride waiting for you. Whether you're traveling solo, with family, or

carrying several bags, arranging your airport transfer in advance makes the first day of your trip much smoother.

Here are some airport transportation services I recommend:

[Welcome Pickups](#)- Private airport transfers worldwide

[Kiwitaxi](#)- Airport transfers in 100+ countries

[Holiday Taxis](#)- Budget airport shuttles and private transfers

[Get Transfer](#)- Taxis with driver bidding system

[Trip.com Transfers](#)- Airport transfers booked through Trip.com

[12 Go](#)- Airport transfers plus trains, buses, and ferries in Asia.

Notify your bank

Before every international trip, I notify my bank and credit card companies of my travel dates and destinations. This simple step helps prevent your cards from being flagged for suspicious activity while you're in Japan.

I also recommend checking that your debit and credit cards will work internationally and asking whether they charge foreign transaction fees. While major hotels, department stores, and many restaurants accept credit cards, it's still a good idea to carry some cash for smaller shops, local restaurants, and temples that may only accept cash.

Pack light

One of the best travel tips I can give is to **pack light**. You'll be carrying your luggage through train stations, up staircases, across platforms, and along busy streets, so a lighter suitcase makes getting around Japan much easier.

Many hotels in Japan—especially smaller business hotels, guesthouses, and older properties—**may not have elevators**, meaning you'll need to carry your luggage up several flights of stairs. Packing light can make a huge difference.

I like to pack only the essentials and leave extra space for souvenirs, snacks, and unique finds that I discover during my trip. If you forget something, don't worry—Japan has excellent convenience stores, pharmacies, and clothing shops where you can easily purchase most everyday necessities.

Bring Comfortable Walking Shoes

If there's one thing I never compromise on when traveling in Japan, it's **comfortable walking shoes**. It's not unusual to walk **10–15 miles (16–24 km) in a single day**, especially while exploring cities like Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka.

Many of Japan's most beautiful temples, shrines, castles, and scenic viewpoints also require climbing stairs or walking up steep paths. Having a comfortable, supportive pair of shoes will make your trip much more enjoyable and help reduce foot fatigue.

Below are the walking shoes I recommend for exploring Japan. They're lightweight, supportive, and designed to keep you comfortable from your first train ride in the morning to your last sightseeing stop at night.

[Men's Cloud 6 Sneakers](#)

[Women's Cloud 6 Sneakers](#)

★ **Why Buy them:** Lightweight, breathable, and incredibly comfortable. Cloud 6 is made for long sightseeing days. Its cushioned sole reduces fatigue, so you can explore Japan from morning to night without your feet feeling worn out.

Carry a Portable Charger

One thing I've learned from traveling around Japan is that **your phone battery drains much faster than you expect**. Between using Google Maps, taking photos and videos, translating menus, and looking up train schedules, your phone will be working all day.

That's why I always travel with **at least two portable battery chargers**. One stays in my daypack while the second serves as a backup, ensuring I never have to worry about my phone dying while I'm exploring. It's one of the simplest travel essentials you can pack and can save you from a lot of frustration.

Here are the portable battery chargers I recommend:

[Anker Nano Power Bank](#)

★ **Why Buy It:** Perfect for light travelers who rely on Google Maps, translation apps, and mobile tickets. It slips easily into your pocket and provides enough power to keep your phone running during a full day of sightseeing.

[Anker Zolo Power Bank](#)

★ **Why Buy It:** The ideal companion for exploring Japan's cities. It can recharge your phone up to two times, ensuring you won't lose access to navigation, train passes, or your camera during long sightseeing days.

Arrival at the Airport

Immigration

Before landing in Japan, you'll need to complete the required **immigration and customs procedures**. Today, most travelers can speed up the process by completing their information online through [Visit Japan Web](#) before departure, which generates QR codes for immigration and customs.

If paper forms are still provided on your flight, flight attendants typically hand them out about **20–30 minutes before landing**. I recommend filling them out as soon as you receive them to save time after arrival. I also keep a pen in my carry-on bag, just in case paper forms are needed.

Taking a few minutes to prepare before landing will help you move through the airport more quickly so you can begin enjoying your trip to Japan.

Immigration (Disembarkation Card)

Japan's immigration process is straightforward and designed to verify your identity, travel plans, and the purpose of your visit before you enter the country. Immigration officers may ask a few simple questions, such as where you'll be staying, how long you'll be visiting, and the reason for your trip.

To make the process as smooth as possible, have your **passport, Visit Japan Web QR code (if applicable)**, and any requested travel information readily available. Being prepared will help you move through immigration quickly and start your Japan adventure sooner.

Customs Declaration

Before entering Japan, you'll also complete the customs declaration process. This lets Japanese Customs know what you're bringing into the country, such as large amounts of cash, food, alcohol, tobacco, or other items that may need to be declared.

For most travelers, the process is quick and straightforward. If you've completed your information through **Visit Japan Web**, you'll simply present your customs QR code upon arrival. If you're carrying items that require declaration, answer the questions honestly to help ensure a smooth entry into Japan.

Currency exchange

When I arrive in Japan, I like to withdraw **about ¥5,000–¥10,000** from an ATM before leaving the airport. Having some cash on hand gives me peace of mind in case I want to buy food, drinks, train tickets, or other small items during my first day.

While credit cards are widely accepted at convenience stores, hotels, and many restaurants, some smaller shops, local eateries, temples, and markets still prefer cash. Starting your trip with a small amount of Japanese yen helps reduce stress and ensures you're prepared wherever your travels take you.

ATMs

One of the easiest and safest ways to get Japanese yen is by using an ATM after you arrive. I almost always withdraw cash from **7-Eleven**, **FamilyMart**, or **Lawson** convenience stores, and I've never had any problems using an international debit card.

ATMs in convenience stores are easy to find, available throughout Japan, and generally accept most major foreign Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus, Plus, and other international cards. If you need more cash during your trip, you'll rarely be far from a convenience store, making it quick and convenient to withdraw additional yen.

Picking up your eSIM/SIM

One of the first things I do after arriving in Japan is make sure my phone is connected before leaving the airport. Whether you're using a **SIM card** or an **eSIM**, having mobile data will make navigating Japan much easier.

If you're picking up a physical SIM card at the airport, ask a staff member to help activate it if needed. Before leaving, test your connection by opening Google Maps or making a quick call or message to a family member or friend. It's also important to make sure **your phone is unlocked** before your trip, as locked phones may not work with a Japanese SIM card.

Having reliable mobile data means you'll be able to use Google Maps, translate menus, check train schedules, and stay in touch throughout your trip.

Here are the SIM cards and eSIMs I recommend:

[Unlimited Data 5G/4G SIM Card \(Multiple JP Airport PickUp\) for Japan](#)

5G Japan SIM (Japan Airport Pick Up) Unlimited Data

eSIM for Japan (QR Code delivery via email)

Getting a Welcome Suica

One of the first things I recommend doing after arriving in Japan is picking up an **IC card**. These rechargeable transit cards make traveling around Japan incredibly easy.

If you're arriving in **Tokyo**, visit a **JR East Travel Service Center** to purchase a **Suica** card, or look for a **PASMO Passport** sales counter or ticket machine if available. If you're arriving in **Osaka, Kyoto, or other parts of western Japan**, you can purchase an **ICOCA** card at a **JR West** station. All three cards work on trains, subways, and buses throughout most of Japan.

Once you've loaded money onto your card, simply tap it at train station gates or on buses. You can also use it to purchase drinks from vending machines, pay at convenience stores, use many coin lockers, and even make purchases at some restaurants and shops.

An IC card is one of the most useful travel essentials in Japan and will save you time throughout your trip by eliminating the need to purchase individual train tickets.

Finding the train

I use **Google Maps** every day when traveling around Japan, and it's by far the app I recommend the most. It makes navigating Japan's train system incredibly easy, even if it's your first visit.

Simply enter your destination, and Google Maps will show you **which train to take, the platform number, transfer stations, travel time, departure times, and real-time arrival information**. In many cases, it will even recommend the best train car to board so you're closest to the correct station exit.

If you're ever unsure about which train to board, don't hesitate to ask a station attendant or a local for help. In my experience, people in Japan are friendly and willing to point you in the right direction, even if there's a language barrier.

Luggage delivery services:

One of my favorite conveniences in Japan is the [luggage delivery service](#). Instead of carrying heavy suitcases through crowded train stations, up staircases, or onto busy trains, you can have your luggage delivered directly to your next hotel.

I've found this service especially helpful when traveling between cities like **Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Hiroshima**. You can enjoy a full day of sightseeing with just a small backpack while your luggage is safely transported for you.

The service is reliable, affordable, and widely available at hotels, airports, and convenience stores. If you're traveling with multiple suitcases or visiting several cities, I highly recommend taking advantage of luggage forwarding—it makes traveling around Japan much more enjoyable.

Here are the luggage delivery services I recommend:

[Luggage Delivery Service between Tokyo Hotels and Airport/Tokyo Hotels and Tokyo Hotels](#)

[Luggage Delivery Services between Osaka/Kyoto Hotels to Kansai International Airport](#)

[Fukuoka Luggage Delivery Service by DELIBAG](#)

[Luggage Delivery Service between Okinawa Hotels and Airport](#)

[Same-day Luggage Delivery Service by ecbo \(Haneda Airport to Tokyo Hotels\)](#)

Transportation

Trains

Japan's train system is one of the things I love most about traveling here. It is **fast, clean, efficient, punctual, and one of the easiest ways to explore the country**. I've traveled across Japan—from major cities to smaller towns—almost entirely by train, and it's my preferred way to get around.

For navigation, I rely on **Google Maps** every day. It provides accurate routes, real-time departure and arrival times, platform numbers, transfer information, and estimated travel times, making even Japan's extensive rail network easy to understand.

If you're visiting Tokyo, I especially recommend using the **JR Yamanote Line**. It's my favorite train line because it forms a loop around the city and stops at many of Tokyo's most popular destinations, including **Tokyo Station, Ueno, Akihabara, Ikebukuro, Shinjuku, Harajuku, Shibuya, and Shinagawa**. For first-time visitors, it's one of the easiest and most convenient ways to explore Tokyo.

If you ever feel uncertain about which train to board, don't hesitate to ask a station attendant or a local. In my experience, people in Japan are friendly and are usually happy to help point you in the right direction.

Shinkansen

One experience I recommend to every first-time visitor is riding the **Shinkansen**, Japan's world-

famous bullet train. Traveling at speeds of up to **320 km/h (200 mph)**, it's one of the fastest, cleanest, and most comfortable ways to travel between cities.

The Shinkansen is known for its punctuality, spacious seating, and smooth ride. Depending on the route, you can choose from several seating options, including **Unreserved**, **Reserved**, **Green Car** (first class), and on select routes, the luxurious **Gran Class**, which offers larger seats and premium service.

If you've never ridden a bullet train before, I highly recommend adding it to your Japan itinerary. It's not just transportation—it's one of Japan's iconic travel experiences.

Example: Tokyo → Takasaki

Travel Time: 48 minutes

	Seat Type	Price (JPY)	Approx. USD
	Unreserved Seat	¥4,490	US\$31
	Reserved Seat	¥5,020	US\$35
	Green Car	¥6,590	US\$46
	Gran Class	¥9,740	US\$68

Prices vary depending on the route, season, and train service, but this example gives you an idea of the available seating options and costs.

Book Your Shinkansen Tickets:

[Sanyo Shinkansen Train Ticket](#)

[Osaka to Hiroshima Train](#)

[Tokyo to Kyoto Train](#)

[Tokyo to Nagoya Train](#)

[Shinagawa to Kyoto](#)

[Tokyo to Nagano](#)

Buses

While Japan's trains are my preferred way to travel, **buses are another excellent transportation option**, especially for destinations that aren't served by the rail network. I've found buses to be clean, comfortable, reliable, and an easy way to reach smaller towns, scenic areas, and popular tourist attractions.

Highway buses are also a great way to save money on long-distance travel, with routes connecting major cities like **Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, and Nagoya**. Local buses are especially useful for exploring places such as **Kyoto, Hakone, Takayama, Shirakawa-go**, and many national parks.

If you're planning to visit destinations beyond the major train routes, I highly recommend looking into Japan's bus services. They offer an affordable and convenient way to see more of the country.

Here are the bus booking services I recommend:

[Tokyo to Nagano Highway Bus](#)

[Tokyo to Mount Fuji Highway Bus](#)

[Airport Bus Ticket \(Fukuoka Airport to Hakata Station\)](#)

[Tokyo to Kyoto Night Bus](#)

[Tokyo to Lake Kawaguchi](#)

[Osaka to Tokyo Night Bus](#)

[Limousine Bus Naha Airport to Okinawa City](#)

Money

Cash vs. Credit Cards

Japan has become much more credit card friendly in recent years, and you'll have no problem using **Visa, Mastercard, American Express**, or **JCB** at most hotels, department stores, shopping malls, convenience stores, and many restaurants.

That said, I still recommend carrying some cash. During my travels, I've visited small restaurants, family-owned shops, temples, shrines, local markets, and rural areas where **cash was the only accepted form of payment**. Having a few thousand yen with you means you won't have to worry if you come across a cash-only business.

My advice is simple: **use your credit card whenever it's accepted, but always keep some Japanese yen in your wallet**. It gives you flexibility and peace of mind, no matter where your travels take you.

Tipping

One of the easiest cultural differences to remember is that **tipping is not expected in Japan**. Exceptional service is already included, and hospitality is simply part of the culture.

I learned this firsthand when I left a tip at a restaurant and the waitress actually chased me outside to return my money. She thought I had accidentally left it behind. While tipping is common in many countries, it can cause confusion in Japan.

My advice is simple: **don't tip**. Instead, thank the staff with a smile and a polite "**Arigatou gozaimasu**" (**Thank you very much**). That's the most appreciated way to show your gratitude.

Sales Tax

Japan has a **10% consumption tax** on most goods and services. At many stores and restaurants, the price you see already includes the tax, while others display prices **before tax**, with the final amount added at checkout.

As you shop, don't be surprised if your total is slightly higher than the price on the shelf. If you're making larger purchases, many stores also offer **tax-free shopping** for eligible international visitors, which can help you save money on souvenirs and other purchases.

Tax-Free Shopping

One of the perks of visiting Japan is **tax-free shopping**. Many department stores, electronics retailers, pharmacies, and souvenir shops offer tax-free purchases to eligible international visitors.

To receive the tax exemption, simply present your **passport** at participating stores before paying. Most stores also require a **minimum purchase amount**, so look for the "**Tax-Free**" sign when shopping. It's an easy way to save money on souvenirs, cosmetics, electronics, and other purchases during your trip.

Japanese Etiquette

Escalators

When using escalators in Japan, stand on one side and leave the other side open for people who wish to walk. This is a common courtesy and helps keep pedestrian traffic moving smoothly.

Keep in mind that **the side you stand on depends on the region**. In **Tokyo and most of eastern Japan**, people typically stand on the **left**. In **Osaka, Kyoto, and much of western Japan**, people generally stand on the **right**. If you're unsure, simply follow the people around you.

Talking on Trains

One thing you'll quickly notice about Japan's trains is how **quiet and peaceful** they are. Most passengers keep conversations low, avoid speaking loudly, and refrain from making phone calls while riding.

Over the years, I've occasionally been on trains where groups of tourists were speaking very loudly. It changed the atmosphere of the train and stood out because it wasn't consistent with local customs. When we travel, it's important to remember that we're guests in another country, and showing respect for local etiquette helps create a positive experience for everyone.

If you need to answer a phone call, it's considered polite to wait until you get off the train or move to a designated area if one is available. By keeping noise to a minimum and following local customs, you'll blend in with the culture and help preserve the calm, respectful atmosphere that makes Japan's public transportation so enjoyable.

Trash Cans

One thing that surprises many first-time visitors is that **public trash cans are relatively rare in Japan**. Don't be surprised if you find yourself carrying your trash for a while before finding a place to throw it away.

I've often found myself holding onto an empty drink bottle or food wrapper until I came across a trash bin or returned to my hotel. It's simply part of traveling in Japan. If you buy food or drinks from a **7-Eleven, FamilyMart, or Lawson**, you'll usually find trash bins inside or just outside the store for customer use.

I recommend carrying a small plastic bag in your backpack or daypack so you can keep your trash with you until you find an appropriate place to dispose of it. It's a simple habit that will make your travels much easier.

Shoes Indoors

Removing your shoes is an important sign of **respect** in Japan. You'll be expected to take off your shoes when entering many homes, traditional accommodations (**ryokan**), some temples, and certain restaurants.

I've eaten at several restaurants with **tatami mat seating**, where guests remove their shoes before stepping onto the tatami floor. You'll usually find a designated area or shoe lockers near the entrance.

If you're unsure whether to remove your shoes, simply look to see what others are doing or check for signs near the entrance. Following this simple custom shows respect for Japanese culture and helps you enjoy a more authentic experience.

Onsen Etiquette

Visiting a Japanese **onsen (hot spring)** is one of my favorite experiences in Japan. It's a wonderful way to relax after a long day of sightseeing, but it's important to follow a few simple customs.

Before entering the hot spring, **wash and rinse your body thoroughly** at one of the shower stations. The baths are meant for soaking, not for bathing, so everyone is expected to enter the water clean.

In most onsen, **swimsuits are not permitted** unless the facility specifically allows them. You'll also want to keep your small towel out of the water and follow any posted rules.

If you have **tattoos**, be aware that some traditional onsen still do not allow guests with visible tattoos because of long-standing cultural associations. Policies are becoming more flexible, especially in tourist-friendly areas, but it's always a good idea to check the rules in advance. If possible, **cover small tattoos with waterproof tattoo covers** or choose a tattoo-friendly onsen.

Respecting these customs will help you enjoy one of Japan's most relaxing and memorable cultural experiences.

Queueing

One of the things I admire most about Japan is how orderly people are when waiting in line. Whether you're boarding a train, waiting for an elevator, or purchasing something at a store, people patiently line up and wait their turn.

When you arrive at a train station, you'll often see lines marked on the platform showing exactly where passengers should wait. Simply join the end of the line and wait until it's your turn to board. There's no need to rush or push.

Japan's trains are also known for being **extremely punctual**, often arriving within seconds of their scheduled time. I recommend arriving at the platform a few minutes early so you have plenty of time to find the correct boarding location before your train arrives.

Following this simple etiquette is an easy way to respect local customs and helps keep Japan's transportation system running smoothly.

Eating While Walking

One cultural difference many visitors notice is that **eating while walking is generally discouraged** in Japan. While it's not illegal, it's considered more polite to enjoy your food near the shop where you purchased it or in a designated eating area before continuing on your way.

During my travels, I've occasionally seen tourists eating while walking through busy areas like Tokyo. It often stands out because it's not the local custom, and you may notice people looking on with curiosity. Taking a few minutes to stop and enjoy your food where you bought it is a simple way to respect Japanese etiquette and blend in with the local culture.

If you're visiting a street food market or festival, look for designated eating areas or follow the example of the people around you.

Temple Etiquette

Japan's temples and shrines are beautiful places to visit, but they are also **active places of worship**. I encourage you to be respectful by speaking quietly, giving worshippers space, and avoiding loud conversations while exploring the grounds.

Be mindful not to block entrances, pathways, or areas where people are praying. You'll also notice that some temples and shrines prohibit photography inside certain buildings or sacred areas. Always look for posted signs and follow the rules.

By showing respect for these sacred places, you'll not only have a more meaningful experience but also help preserve the peaceful atmosphere that makes Japan's temples and shrines so special.

Food

Convenience Stores

One of my favorite things about traveling in Japan is the **convenience stores**. Stores like **7-Eleven**, **FamilyMart**, and **Lawson** offer an incredible selection of fresh meals, snacks, desserts, and drinks at very affordable prices.

I've actually filmed **24-hour and even 196-hour food challenge videos** featuring nothing but convenience store food. That's how impressed I've been with the quality. The freshness, taste, and variety are on a completely different level than what many travelers are used to back home.

Whether you're looking for a quick breakfast, a delicious lunch, a late-night meal, or just a snack between attractions, Japan's convenience stores rarely disappoint. Don't be afraid to try the sandwiches, onigiri (rice balls), fried chicken, ramen noodles, okonomiyaki, bentos, desserts, and seasonal drinks—you may find that some of your favorite meals in Japan come from a convenience store.

Ordering from Vending Machines

One unique experience you'll find in Japan is ordering from **ticket vending machines**, especially at ramen shops, curry restaurants, and other casual eateries. Instead of ordering with a server, you'll purchase your meal from the machine first and then hand the ticket to the staff.

Most machines are easy to use, and many now offer English language options or photos of the meals. While an increasing number accept credit cards or IC cards, **many still accept cash only**, which is another great reason to keep some **Japanese yen** with you.

If it's your first time using one, don't worry. Simply follow the instructions on the screen, purchase your meal, and enjoy one of Japan's most convenient and authentic dining experiences.

Water Safety

One of the great things about traveling in Japan is that **tap water is safe to drink almost everywhere**. The water is clean, high quality, and perfectly safe, making it easy to refill your reusable water bottle throughout your trip.

Personally, I've ordered **tap water at restaurants all over Japan** and have never had any issues. In my experience, the water has always been clean, refreshing, and safe to drink.

Bringing a reusable water bottle is an easy way to save money, stay hydrated, and reduce plastic waste while exploring Japan.

Food Allergies

If you have **food allergies**, I highly recommend carrying a **translated allergy card** in Japanese that clearly lists your allergies. While some larger restaurants and chain restaurants provide allergen information or English menus, many smaller restaurants do not.

During my travels, I've found that **English menus become much less common outside of major cities** like Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto. Showing a Japanese allergy card to the staff is one of the easiest ways to communicate your dietary needs and can help prevent misunderstandings.

If you have a severe allergy, always inform the restaurant staff before ordering and consider using **Google Translate** or an allergy card to ensure your needs are clearly understood.

Vegetarian Options

Vegetarian options are becoming more common in Japan, especially in larger cities and popular tourist destinations. However, many dishes that appear to be vegetarian are made with **dashi**, a traditional broth that is often prepared with **fish (bonito flakes)**.

If you follow a vegetarian diet, I recommend asking the staff whether the dish contains meat or fish-based broth before ordering. Carrying a **translated dietary card** or using **Google Translate** can make communicating your dietary preferences much easier, particularly at smaller restaurants where English may not be spoken.

Must-Try Foods

Don't leave Japan without trying these iconic Japanese dishes. Each one offers a unique taste of Japan's incredible food culture.



Sushi

★ Why You Should Try It

Japan's world-famous fresh seafood served over perfectly seasoned rice.

 Dish	★ Why You Should Try It
 Ramen	Rich, flavorful broth with handmade noodles and delicious toppings.
 Tempura	Light, crispy seafood and vegetables fried to perfection.
 Yakitori	Grilled chicken skewers seasoned with salt or savory tare sauce.
 Yakiniku	Grill premium cuts of beef, pork, or chicken right at your table.
 Shabu-Shabu	Thinly sliced beef and vegetables cooked in a simmering hot pot.
 Okonomiyaki	A savory Japanese pancake loaded with meats, seafood, and vegetables.
 Tonkatsu	Crispy breaded pork cutlet served with shredded cabbage and tangy sauce.
 Wagyu & Kobe Beef	World-renowned Japanese beef known for its incredible marbling and tenderness.
 Japanese Curry	A rich, mildly sweet curry served over rice with your choice of meat or vegetables.

JP Incredible Travel Tip

Don't leave Japan without trying each of these dishes at least once. Some of my favorite travel memories have come from discovering incredible local restaurants and experiencing Japan's amazing food culture one meal at a time.

Safety

Is Japan Safe?

Japan is widely regarded as one of the **safest countries in the world**, with low crime rates, clean cities, and a culture that values respect and consideration for others. While it's always wise to practice basic travel awareness, most visitors find Japan to be an incredibly safe place to explore.

I've walked through many parts of **Tokyo at night** and have always felt safe. Throughout my years of traveling across Japan, I've never experienced any problems. Of course, as with any destination, it's still important to keep an eye on your belongings and use common sense, especially in busy tourist areas.

For most travelers, you'll likely find that Japan is one of the easiest and most comfortable countries to visit with confidence.

Emergency Numbers

If you need emergency assistance in Japan, **dial 110 for the police and 119 for fire or medical emergencies (ambulance)**. These numbers are available throughout the country and are free to call.

While many emergency operators can assist in English, especially in larger cities, this is not always the case. If you need help, **speak slowly, remain calm, and clearly explain your**

location and the nature of the emergency. If you're with a Japanese speaker, ask them to assist you with the call whenever possible.

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are a normal part of life in Japan, and most are **small and brief**. If you experience one during your trip, stay calm, follow instructions from local authorities, and move to a safe location if necessary. Japan has some of the world's strictest building codes, so buildings are designed to withstand earthquakes.

Before your trip, I recommend downloading an **earthquake alert app**. These apps provide real-time notifications for earthquakes, tsunamis, and other emergencies, helping you stay informed wherever you are.

Recommended Apps:

-  [NERV Disaster Prevention](#) – My top recommendation for real-time earthquake, tsunami, and weather alerts in English.
-  [Safety Tips](#) – Created for international visitors with emergency alerts and evacuation information in multiple languages.
-  [Yurekuru Call](#) – Provides earthquake early warnings and countdown alerts before shaking reaches your location.

While major earthquakes are uncommon, having one of these apps installed will give you added peace of mind during your travels.

Lost Items

Japan has one of the **best lost-and-found systems in the world**. It's surprisingly common for lost wallets, phones, backpacks, cameras, and other valuables to be turned in to a nearby train station, police box (**koban**), or lost-and-found office.

I've heard many stories of tourists accidentally leaving bags and personal belongings on trains, only to have railway staff recover the items and return them through the station's lost-and-found system. This level of honesty is one of the things that makes traveling in Japan so remarkable.

If you lose something, **don't panic**. Contact the nearest train station, the lost-and-found office, or a nearby **koban** as soon as possible. There's an excellent chance your belongings will be waiting for you.

Police Boxes (Koban)

Koban are small neighborhood police stations found throughout Japan. Police officers can help with directions, assist if you've lost something, provide emergency assistance, or answer questions during your travels. They're a valuable resource, especially if you're visiting Japan for the first time.

While traveling in Japan, you are **legally required to carry your passport** as a foreign visitor. On occasion, police officers may ask to see your passport during an identity check, so it's best to keep it with you whenever you're out exploring. Although these checks are not common for most tourists, being prepared will make the interaction quick and straightforward.

Hospitals

Japan has excellent healthcare, but not all hospitals have English-speaking staff. [Travel insurance](#) is highly recommended.

Internet

Wi-Fi

Free Wi-Fi is available at many **airports, train stations, hotels, cafés, and convenience stores** throughout Japan. However, the connection can be inconsistent, and coverage isn't always reliable, especially when you're traveling between locations.

I recommend **not relying solely on public Wi-Fi**. Having an **eSIM, SIM card, or pocket Wi-Fi** will provide a much more dependable internet connection, making it easier to navigate with Google Maps, translate Japanese, and stay connected throughout your trip.

eSIMs

An **eSIM** is one of the easiest and most convenient ways to stay connected while traveling in Japan. You can **purchase and activate it before you arrive**, allowing you to have mobile data as soon as your plane lands.

I personally recommend using an eSIM because there's **no physical SIM card to install or keep track of**. As long as your phone is **eSIM-compatible and unlocked**, setup only takes a few minutes. It's a great option for using **Google Maps, Google Translate, messaging apps, and social media** throughout your trip.

My Recommendation: Purchase and activate your eSIM before leaving home so you're connected the moment you arrive in Japan.

SIM Cards

If your phone isn't **eSIM-compatible**, a **physical SIM card** is an excellent alternative. You can purchase SIM cards at most major airports in Japan, electronics stores, and many travel service counters.

I recommend having the staff **install and activate the SIM card** before you leave the airport. Before walking away, make a quick phone call or browse the internet to make sure everything is working properly. Also, be sure your phone is **unlocked** before traveling to Japan, as locked phones may not accept a foreign SIM card.

Pocket Wi-Fi

If you're traveling with **family or friends**, a **pocket Wi-Fi** device is one of the best ways to stay connected. It provides **fast, reliable internet** for multiple devices at the same time, making it perfect for sharing with your travel group.

I especially recommend a **pocket Wi-Fi that includes a free power bank**. Not only will you have dependable internet throughout the day, but you'll also be able to recharge your phone while using Google Maps, taking photos, and recording videos. It's a convenient all-in-one solution for staying connected during your trip.

[Unlimited 4G LTE WiFi \(Japan Airport Pickup\) with Free Power Bank](#)

Common Mistakes

Buying a JR Pass When You Don't Need One

One of the biggest mistakes first-time visitors make is **buying a JR Pass when they don't actually need one**. While the pass can save money for travelers covering long distances in a short period, many visitors spend **more on a JR Pass than they would by purchasing individual train tickets**.

I recommend planning your itinerary first and comparing the total cost of your train travel before buying a pass. If you're spending most of your time in **Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, or Okinawa**, a JR Pass often isn't worth the cost. However, if you're traveling between multiple regions by **Shinkansen**, it may provide good value.

Take a few minutes to compare prices before you buy—you could save a significant amount of money.

Book Your JR Passes:

[JR Haruka Kansai Airport Hello Kitty themed Express Ticket](#)

[JR Whole Japan Rail Pass](#)

[JR Tokyo Wide Pass](#)

[JR West Kansai Wide Area Pass](#)

[JR Hokkaido Rail Pass](#)

Book Your Shinkansen Tickets:

[Sanyo Shinkansen Train Ticket](#)

[Osaka to Hiroshima Train](#)

[Tokyo to Kyoto Train](#)

[Tokyo to Nagoya Train](#)

[Shinagawa to Kyoto](#)

[Tokyo to Nagano](#)

Staying Too Far from a Train Station

One mistake I've made is **booking a hotel too far from the nearest train station**. While the room may be less expensive, the extra walking can quickly become exhausting—especially when you're carrying luggage.

I still remember rolling heavy suitcases **30 minutes to my hotel late at night** because I had booked accommodation far from the station and there were no taxis available. It wasn't the best way to start my trip.

I recommend choosing a hotel **within a 5–10 minute walk of a train station** whenever possible. You'll save time, reduce transportation costs, and make it much easier to explore Japan each day. Your feet—and your luggage—will thank you.

Overpacking

You'll do **a lot of walking** in Japan, so packing light can make your trip much more enjoyable. You'll often be carrying your luggage through busy train stations, up and down staircases, and along city streets to your hotel.

I've learned this lesson the hard way. There have been several trips where I **overpacked** and later wished I had brought less. Not only did I have to haul heavy suitcases around Japan, but I also needed extra space for the souvenirs I purchased along the way.

I recommend packing only what you truly need and leaving some room in your suitcase for the items you'll want to bring home. Traveling with lighter luggage will make navigating Japan much easier and far less stressful.

Trying to Visit Too Many Cities

One of the biggest mistakes I made while traveling in Japan was **trying to see too much in a single trip**. It's tempting to fill your itinerary with as many destinations as possible, but constantly moving from city to city can become exhausting.

On one trip, I spent **28 days traveling by train from Hokkaido all the way to Fukuoka**, stopping in city after city along the way. While it was an incredible experience, I realized afterward that I had tried to cover too much. I was so focused on getting to the next destination that I didn't spend enough time enjoying the places I had traveled so far to see.

Looking back, I would have chosen **fewer destinations and stayed longer in each one**. Slowing down allows you to discover local neighborhoods, try more restaurants, revisit favorite attractions, and experience each city at a more relaxed pace.

My recommendation is simple: **don't measure your trip by how many cities you visit—measure it by how well you experience each one**. Sometimes spending an extra day in a destination creates the memories you'll remember long after your trip is over.

Carrying Too Much Cash

While Japan is increasingly accepting credit cards, I recommend carrying enough cash to comfortably cover your daily expenses. Smaller restaurants, temples, local markets, and rural attractions may still accept **cash only**.

Here are my general recommendations for how much cash to have available during your trip:

Trip Length Recommended Yen Approximate USD*

3 Days	¥30,000–¥50,000	\$210–\$350
7 Days	¥70,000–¥100,000	\$490–\$700
14 Days	¥140,000–¥200,000	\$980–\$1,400
30 Days	¥300,000–¥450,000	\$2,100–\$3,150

*Approximate conversion based on **¥143 = \$1 USD**. Exchange rates will vary.

My Recommendation

I don't recommend carrying your entire travel budget in cash. Instead, withdraw enough yen for **several days at a time** and use your credit card whenever possible. If you need more cash, **7-Eleven, FamilyMart, and Lawson ATMs** are easy to find throughout Japan and generally accept international debit and credit cards.

For peace of mind, I usually keep **¥10,000–¥20,000** in my wallet each day and the rest in a secure location, such as my hotel safe or separate luggage compartment. This way, I'm prepared for cash-only purchases without carrying more money than necessary.

Not Using Luggage Forwarding

Another mistake many first-time visitors make is **dragging large suitcases from city to city**. While Japan's trains are excellent, navigating crowded stations, stairs, and platforms with heavy luggage can quickly become exhausting.

Instead, take advantage of **Japan's luggage delivery service**. You can have your suitcase delivered directly to your next hotel, allowing you to travel with just a small backpack or overnight bag. I've used this service many times, and it's one of the most convenient travel tips I can recommend.

Your luggage usually arrives the next day, and the cost is well worth the convenience. Instead of wrestling with heavy bags, you'll be free to enjoy train stations, sightseeing, and transfers with far less stress.

[Luggage Delivery Service between Tokyo Hotels and Airport/Tokyo Hotels and Tokyo Hotels](#)

[Luggage Delivery Services between Osaka/Kyoto Hotels to Kansai International Airport](#)

[Fukuoka Luggage Delivery Service by DELIBAG](#)

[Luggage Delivery Service between Okinawa Hotels and Airport](#)

[Same-day Luggage Delivery Service by ecbo \(Haneda Airport to Tokyo Hotels\)](#)

Underestimating Walking Distances

A mistake many first-time visitors make is **underestimating how much walking they'll do in Japan**. It's common to walk **10–15 miles (16–24 km) a day** while sightseeing, often climbing stairs at train stations, temples, castles, and parks.

I learned this firsthand while visiting **Nikko**. I assumed one attraction was only a short walk away, but it ended up taking **40–50 minutes on foot**. By the time I arrived, I was glad I had worn comfortable walking shoes.

My recommendation is to bring supportive footwear and expect to walk much more than you normally would on vacation. Comfortable shoes can make the difference between ending your day energized or exhausted.

Not Booking Popular Attractions

Many of Japan's most popular attractions now require **advance reservations**, especially during busy travel seasons. One example is Japan's famous **theme cafés**. I've visited **more than 70 theme cafés across Japan**, and virtually every one required a reservation in advance. Waiting until you arrive often means discovering that all the available time slots are already booked.

If there's a popular attraction or unique experience on your itinerary, I recommend reserving it as early as possible. A little planning before your trip can save you from disappointment and help ensure you don't miss out on the experiences you're most excited about.

Forgetting to Reserve Shinkansen Seats During Holidays

Bullet trains can fill up quickly during **Golden Week, New Year's, Obon, and other major holidays**. If you're traveling during these busy periods, I strongly recommend reserving your seat in advance.

I learned this lesson the hard way while traveling from **Tokyo to Fukuoka** during Golden Week. I assumed I could simply buy a ticket at the station, but all the reserved seats were sold out. I ended up standing in a crowded non-reserved car for **nearly the entire four-hour journey**. It was one of the least enjoyable train rides I've had in Japan.

If your travel dates fall during a holiday period, book your Shinkansen as early as possible. Reserving a seat will make your journey far more comfortable and save you from a long trip spent standing with your luggage.

Assuming Everyone Speaks English

Many signs, train stations, and tourist attractions include **English translations**, making it easier to get around. However, it's a common mistake to assume that because one person speaks English, everyone else will too. In reality, English proficiency varies widely, especially outside major tourist areas.

Learning a few simple Japanese phrases—such as **hello (konnichiwa)**, **thank you (arigatō gozaimasu)**, **excuse me (sumimasen)**, and **please (onegaishimasu)**—can go a long way. Even a small effort to speak Japanese is often appreciated and can make your interactions smoother and more enjoyable.

Useful Japanese Phrases

Hello

Konnichiwa (こんにちは) — A friendly greeting during the day.

Thank You

Arigatou gozaimasu (ありがとうございます) — A polite way to say thank you.

Excuse Me

Sumimasen (すみません) — Used to get attention, apologize, or say excuse me.

Where Is...?

...wa doko desu ka? (...はどこですか?) — Ask where something is.

Train Station

Eki (駅) — The Japanese word for train station.

Bathroom

Toire (トイレ) — The easiest way to ask for a restroom.

I Don't Understand

Wakarimasen (分かりません) — Useful when you're confused.

Please

Onegaishimasu (お願いします) — A polite way to say please. For example, if you are ordering a drink at a restaurant.

Yes

Hai (はい)

No

Iie (いいえ)

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I Drink the Tap Water?

Yes. Tap water is clean, safe, and drinkable throughout Japan.

Is Japan Expensive?

Japan can fit almost any budget, with options ranging from budget hostels to luxury hotels.

Is Cash Still Needed?

Yes. While card acceptance has improved, some smaller businesses accept yen only.

Can I Use My Credit Card?

Most hotels, department stores, cafes, and larger restaurants accept major credit cards.

Is Tipping Expected?

No. Tipping is not part of Japanese culture and is generally unnecessary.

Can I Speak English?

English is common in tourist areas, but learning a few Japanese phrases is always appreciated.

Is Public Wi-Fi Common?

Free Wi-Fi is available in many places, but having your own data connection is more reliable.

Is Japan Good for Solo Travelers?

Absolutely. Japan is one of the safest and easiest countries in the world for solo travel. I've traveled solo through **about 60% of Japan's prefectures**, giving me the opportunity to experience destinations that many visitors never see.

What Should I Pack?

Comfortable walking shoes, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, a portable charger, an umbrella, and clothes appropriate for the season.

Can I Use My Phone?

Yes. An eSIM, local SIM card, or Pocket Wi-Fi will keep you connected throughout your trip.

Tokyo Attractions

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Observation Decks & City Views	Tokyo Skytree • Tokyo Tower • MAGNET by Shibuya109 Crossing View • Sunshine 60 Observatory • Roppongi Hills Observation Deck • Shibuya Sky

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Theme Parks & Family Attractions	Tokyo Disney Resort • Sanrio Puroland • LEGOLAND Discovery Center Tokyo • Asakusa Hanayashiki • KidZania Tokyo • Tokyo Joypolis • Shibuya Go-Karting • teamLab Borderless • teamLab Planets • Art Aquarium Museum Ginza • Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter • Ron Mueck Museum • Tokyo National Museum • National Museum of Nature and Science • Tokyo Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum • Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum • Artizon Museum • Tokyo Trick Art Museum • Madame Tussauds Tokyo • Small Worlds Tokyo • Unko Museum Tokyo
	Museums & Art	
	Aquariums & Animal Experiences	Sunshine Aquarium • Sumida Aquarium • Shinagawa Aquarium • UWS Aquarium GA☆KYO • Anitouch Aqua City Odaiba
	Shows & Entertainment	Samurai Restaurant Show • Asakusa Sumo Club Sumo Show • Ninja + Kabuki Tokyo • Konica Minolta Planetarium
	Anime & Character Experiences	100% Doraemon & Friends
	Sports & Interactive Experiences	Tokyo Dome Tour • Tokyo Dome Roller Skate Arena
	Cultural Experiences	Asakusa Temple Kimono Rental & Photo Experience
	Sightseeing Tours	Hop-On Hop-Off Tokyo Bus Tour

Kyoto Attractions

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Observation Decks & Scenic Views	Kyoto Tower • Garden Museum Hiei • Amanohashidate & Ine Sightseeing 2-Day Pass
	Scenic Rail & River Experiences	Sagano Romantic Train (Sagano Scenic Railway) • Kyoto Arashiyama Scenic Train & Hozugawa River Boat Ride Day Trip • Eizan Cable Car
	Historic Temples & Shrines	Kiyomizu-dera Temple • Fushimi Inari Taisha • Katsuo-ji Temple • Ohara Sanzen-in Temple • Kifune Shrine • Special Temple Viewing with Priests
	Historic Sites & Palaces	Kyoto Imperial Palace • Nijo Castle
	Nature & Scenic Areas	Arashiyama Bamboo Forest

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Historic Districts & Walking Tours	Gion District • Gion & Geisha District Guided Walking Tour • Pontocho Alley • Sannenzaka & Ninenzaka • Kyoto Night Pub Crawl: Pontocho & Gion Hidden Alley Bars Tour
	Museums & Art	teamLab Biovortex Kyoto • Kyoto Railway Museum • Kyoto Aquarium • Kyoto International Manga Museum • Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art • Tate Museum Exhibition
	Shows & Cultural Entertainment	GEAR Non-Verbal Theatre • Kyoto Sumo Stable Experience
	Hands-On Experiences	Electric Pottery Wheel Experience
	Kimono Experiences	Arashiyama Kimono Rental Experience • Cat-Themed Kimono Experience
	Guided Tours	Kyoto Customizable Full-Day Guided Tour • Kyoto One-Day Private Walking Tour
	Popular Day Tours	Arashiyama Bamboo Forest & Nara Park Deer Tour • Nijo Castle, Arashiyama Bamboo Grove & Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion) Tour • Kyoto World Heritage One-Day Tour (Kinkaku-ji, Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, Togetsukyo Bridge, Sanjusangen-do Temple, Kiyomizu-dera, Sannenzaka & Ninenzaka; optional A5 Kobe Beef lunch)

Osaka Attractions

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Observation Decks & Scenic Views	Umeda Sky Building • Tsutenkaku Tower • Sakishima Cosmo Tower Observatory • HEP FIVE Ferris Wheel • Tempozan Giant Ferris Wheel
	Theme Parks & Family Attractions	Universal Studios Japan • Hirakata Park • LEGOLAND Discovery Center Osaka • Ikoma Sanjo Amusement Park
	Historic Sites & Landmarks	Osaka Castle
	Museums & Art	Osaka Museum of History • Osaka Science Museum • Sakai Green Museum • Ukiyo-e Museum
	Aquariums & Animal Experiences	NIFREL Interactive Aquazoo • Tennoji Zoo
	Shows & Entertainment	The Sumo Hall Hirakuza • Osaka Night Fusion • Tempo Harbor Theater • SBI Mai Hanabi

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Nature & Gardens	teamLab Botanical Garden Osaka
	Hot Springs & Wellness	Solaniwa Onsen
	Iconic Districts & City Highlights	Dotonbori Naniwa Sightseeing Boat • Goda Bridge Adventure
	Cultural Experiences	Kimono & Yukata Rental & Photo Shoot
	Guided Tours	Osaka Private & Personalized City Highlights & Hidden Gems Tour
	Cruises & Waterfront Experiences	Osaka Bay Cruise Santa Maria
	Interactive Attractions	Osaka Miracle World

Kyushu Attractions

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Volcanoes & Natural Wonders	Mount Aso • Kusasenri Grasslands • Takachiho Gorge • Shiraito Falls • Akiyoshido Cave • Kinrinko Lake
	Scenic Bridges & Coastal Views	Tsunoshima Bridge • Motonosumi Shrine • Water Torii at Nyoirin-ji Temple • Hebu Kari Observatory
	Historic Sites & Castles	Kumamoto Castle • Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine
	Observation Decks & City Views	Fukuoka Tower • Mt. Sarakura Night View • Mojiko Retro Observation Deck
	Museums & Interactive Art	teamLab Forest Fukuoka • Kyushu National Museum
	Aquariums & Animal Experiences	Uminonakamichi Marine World • Kyushu Natural Zoological Park (African Safari) • Micro Pig Café
	River Cruises & Boat Experiences	Fukuoka Nakasu River Cruise • Yanagawa River Boating Experience • Miyazaki Boat Ride with Beef Lunch
	Food & Cultural Experiences	Yame Central Tea Plantation
	Hot Springs & Scenic Towns	Yufuin • Beppu • Umi Jigoku (Sea Hell) • Kamado Jigoku (Cooking Pot Hell)

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Day Trips & Guided Tours	Miyazaki & Kumamoto Day Trip • Fukuoka: Akiyoshido Cave & Motonosumi Shrine Tour • Kyushu: Nyoirin-ji Temple & Kinrinko Lake Water Torii Tour • Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine, Yufuin & Beppu Tour • Kyushu: Mojiko, Karato Market, Tsunoshima Bridge & Motonosumi Shrine Tour • Kyushu Oita Healing Journey (Optional Yufuin no Mori Train, Yufuin, African Safari, Umi Jigoku & Kamado Jigoku)
	Sports & Entertainment	Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks Baseball Game
	Nagasaki Highlights	Huis Ten Bosch • Glover Garden • Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Dome • Nagasaki Peace Memorial Museum • Hashima (Battleship Island) Cruise

Hokkaido Attractions

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Observation Decks & Scenic Views	Mount Moiwa Ropeway • Goryokaku Tower • JR Tower Observation Deck • Sapporo TV Tower • Okurayama Ski Jump Lift & Olympic Museum
	Museums & History	Historical Village of Hokkaido • Hokkaido Museum • Hoheikan • Olympic Museum
	Aquariums & Animal Experiences	AOAO Sapporo Aquarium • Noboribetsu Bear Park • Noboribetsu Marine Park • Asahiyama Zoo • Asahiyama Zoo Penguin Walk
	Parks, Gardens & Nature	Northern Horse Park • Hell Valley (Jigokudani) • Cape Chikyu • Mount Yotei • Lake Toya • Blue Pond • Farm Tomita • Ningle Terrace • Kamui Cape • Otaru Canal
	Shows & Cultural Experiences	Sapporo Sumo Show Experience • Japanese Pop Culture Show • Noboribetsu Date Jidaimura Cultural Park • Hokkaido Farm Experience
	Family Attractions	Giant Ferris Wheel Noria • Sky Lantern Project Hokkaido
	Winter Sports & Snow Activities	Hoshino Resorts Tomamu Private Ski Lesson • Sapporo Teine Ski Resort (Bus & Lift Ticket) • Niseko Grand Hirafu Ski Tour • Lake Hill Farm Snowmobile Experience • Hoheikyo Electric Bus & Sapporo Kokusai Ski Resort

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Cruises & Outdoor Adventures	Mombetsu Drift Icebreaker Cruise
	Guided Tours & Day Trips	Hokkaido Customizable Private Car Charter • Jozankei & Great Buddha Head Tour • Mount Yotei & Lake Toya Tour • Flower Sea Tour (Blue Pond & Farm Tomita) • Otaru, Kamui Cape & Blue Cave Tour • Noboribetsu Hell Valley & Cape Chikyu Day Trip • Asahiyama Zoo & Biei One-Day Tour • Otaru, Cape Kamui & Yoichi Distillery Tour
	Cities & Scenic Districts	Otaru Canal • Jozankei Onsen • Biei • Yoichi Distillery

Okinawa Attractions

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Aquariums & Marine Life	Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium
	Nature & Outdoor Attractions	Gyokusendo Cave • Blue Cave Boat Tour • Ishigaki Stalactite Cave • Iriomote Island • Yubu Island
	Parks & Gardens	Neo Park Okinawa • Southeast Botanical Gardens • Dino Park Yanbaru Subtropical Forest • Okinawa Fruits Land • Nago Pineapple Park
	Theme Parks & Family Attractions	JUNGLIA Okinawa • Okinawa World • teamLab Future Park Okinawa
	Historic Sites & Cultural Villages	Nakijin Castle Ruins • Ryukyu Mura • Murasaki Mura • Ishigaki Yaima Village
	Zoos & Animal Experiences	Okinawa Zoo & Museum
	Observation Decks & Scenic Views	Kouri Ocean Tower Observation Deck
	Diving & Snorkeling	Blue Cave Diving & Snorkeling • Kerama Islands Snorkeling (with Pick-up) • Whale Shark Diving & Snorkeling • Whale Shark Snorkeling Experience • Miyako Island Sea Turtle & Coral Reef Snorkeling • Onna Village Natural Beach & Snorkeling • Ishigaki Island Blue Cave Exploration (Half-Day) • Phantom Island Landing & Snorkeling • Tokashiki Island Boat Snorkeling • Okinawa EGG Diving Cosplay & Snorkeling • Sea Turtles & Clownfish Snorkeling Experience

Icon	Category	Attractions
	Water Activities	Glass Bottom Boat Tour • Chatan Parasailing Experience • Minna Island Water Activities • Onna Village Banana Boat & Snorkeling • Okinawa Sea Fishing
	Island Tours & Day Trips	Iriomote Island & Yubu Island Tour • Ishigaki Island Full-Day Mangrove Tour
	Unique Experiences	Okinawa EGG Diving Cosplay Experience

Tokyo – Top 10 Hotels

Hotel	Area
Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo	Shinjuku
Hotel Gracery Shinjuku	Shinjuku
Hotel Metropolitan Tokyo Marunouchi	Tokyo Station
Mitsui Garden Hotel Ginza Premier	Ginza
Richmond Hotel Premier Tokyo Schole	Oshiage (Tokyo Skytree)
Hotel Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku	Shinjuku
Cerulean Tower Tokyu Hotel	Shibuya
Tokyo Bay Shiomi Prince Hotel	Tokyo Bay
Hotel Metropolitan Edmont Tokyo	Iidabashi
The Prince Park Tower Tokyo	Minato

Kyoto – Top 10 Hotels

Hotel	Area
Hotel Granvia Kyoto	Kyoto Station
HOTEL THE CELESTINE Kyoto Gion	Gion
Cross Hotel Kyoto	Kawaramachi
Richmond Hotel Premier Kyoto Shijo	Downtown Kyoto
The Hotel Seiryu Kyoto Kiyomizu	Higashiyama
Hotel Vischio Kyoto	Kyoto Station
The Gate Hotel Kyoto Takasegawa	Kawaramachi
Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyoto Sanjo	Central Kyoto
Nohga Hotel Kiyomizu Kyoto	Higashiyama
Hotel Monterey Kyoto	Karasuma

Osaka – Top 10 Hotels

Hotel	Area
<u>Swissôtel Nankai Osaka</u>	Namba
<u>Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka</u>	Namba
<u>Cross Hotel Osaka</u>	Dotonbori
<u>Hotel Hankyu RESPIRE Osaka</u>	Umeda
<u>Candeo Hotels Osaka Namba</u>	Namba
<u>Dormy Inn Premium Namba</u>	Namba
<u>Hotel Universal Port</u>	Universal Studios
<u>LIBER HOTEL Osaka</u>	Universal Studios
<u>Art Hotel Osaka Bay Tower</u>	Bentencho
<u>Centara Grand Hotel Osaka</u>	Namba

Fukuoka – Top 10 Hotels

Hotel	Area
<u>Hotel Nikko Fukuoka</u>	Hakata
<u>JR Kyushu Hotel Blossom Hakata</u>	Central Hakata
<u>Miyako Hotel Hakata</u>	Hakata
<u>THE BLOSSOM HAKATA Premier</u>	Hakata
<u>Mitsui Garden Hotel Fukuoka Gion</u>	Gion
<u>Nishitetsu Hotel Croom Hakata</u>	Hakata
<u>Solaria Nishitetsu Hotel Fukuoka</u>	Tenjin
<u>Hotel Forza Hakataeki Chikushi-Guchi</u>	Hakata
<u>Cross Life Hakata Tenjin</u>	Tenjin
<u>Richmond Hotel Fukuoka Tenjin</u>	Tenjin

Okinawa – Top 10 Hotels

Hotel	Area
<u>Halekulani Okinawa</u>	Onna
<u>Hyatt Regency Seragaki Island Okinawa</u>	Onna
<u>Hotel Monterey Okinawa Spa & Resort</u>	Onna
<u>Rizzan Sea Park Hotel Tancha Bay</u>	Onna
<u>ANA InterContinental Manza Beach Resort</u>	Onna
<u>Hoshino Resorts BEB5 Okinawa Seragaki</u>	Onna
<u>Ala MAHAINA Condo Hotel</u>	Motobu
<u>Hotel Mahaina Wellness Resorts Okinawa</u>	Motobu
<u>Hilton Okinawa Chatan Resort</u>	Chatan
<u>Southern Beach Hotel & Resort Okinawa</u>	Itoman

Hokkaido – Top 10 Hotels

Hotel	Area
<u>JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo</u>	Sapporo
<u>Cross Hotel Sapporo</u>	Sapporo
<u>Keio Plaza Hotel Sapporo</u>	Sapporo
<u>Sapporo Grand Hotel</u>	Sapporo
<u>Hotel Monterey Edelhof Sapporo</u>	Sapporo
<u>La'gent Stay Sapporo Odori</u>	Sapporo
<u>JR Inn Asahikawa</u>	Asahikawa
<u>Hilton Niseko Village</u>	Niseko
<u>The Westin Rusutsu Resort</u>	Rusutsu
<u>OMO7 Asahikawa by Hoshino Resorts</u>	Asahikawa