

Travel Tips for visiting Japan

For you to be ready for the trip, let's learn about some basic travel information.

- Currency Export regulations:

Foreign currencies : up to USD 10,000.-, or its equivalent. Amounts exceeding USD 10,000.-, or its equivalent must be declared.

Amounts exceeding USD 10,000./ JPY 1million, or its equivalent must be declared.

- Customs

The submission of "Customs Declaration" form at the Customs Clearance required. Personal effects and unaccompanied baggage for personal use are free of duties and/or taxes within the allowance specified below;

- Currency

The unit of Japanese currency is " yen".

Coins are available in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500, and bank notes in denominations of 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 and 10,000 yen.

EXCHANGE CURRENCY: You can exchange USD to JPY at airport exchange counter upon arrival in Japan. You can also buy yen at foreign exchange banks and other authorized money exchangers.

ATM: you can also withdraw money by using your credit card though ATM mostly located at convenience stores and airports.

- Use of Credit cards

You can use a credit card at most of the big chain restaurants. However, credit cards aren't quite as ubiquitous here as they are in other countries, so you may not be able to use them at small, privately managed restaurants that can only accept cash. We strongly recommend you to bring cash in Japanese yen with you when you dine out here. Note : TOKI accept credit card.

- Electrical

The voltage used throughout Japan is uniformly 100 volts, A.C. and the applicable plug type is TYPE A electrical plug with two flat parallel pins. There are two kinds of frequencies in use; 50 Hertz in eastern Japan and 60 Hertz in western Japan (including Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka). But most equipments are not affected by this difference. Should you bring and use your own appliance from your country which is not applicable for the voltage and plug type in Japan, please make sure to use an adapter / converter.



• Greetings

Before the trip let's learn some Japanese greeting phrases which are used in everyday life there!

"OHAYOO GOZAIMASU." -----Good morning

"KONNICHIIWA"-----Hello / Good afternoon.

"KONBANWA."-----Good evening.

"SUMIMASEN."-----Excuse me.

"ARIGATO GOZAIMASU."-----Thank you.

Japanese people often bow when they greet showing their respect. Men bow with their hands straight to their sides. Women typically bow with their hands in front of them.



■ ETIQUETTE & OTHERS

1) SHOES

Please take your shoes off by the door before you go into the house / some building. Not all of places though.

2) Public Bath / ONSEN

Please undress everything in the changing area, no bathing suits allowed in the public bath. Remember to wash yourself first at the shower area before entering the bath.



4) NO TIPPING

There is no tipping required in any situation in Japan — cabs, restaurants, personal care. If you want to show the appreciation for their special service or anything, however, of course you may do tipping.

5) WASHLET—electronic Japanese toilet

You might have heard about this Japanese high-tech toilet. The basic function you should be aware is the "Oshiri(おしり)--Spray" functions meaning a wash for your behind. This wash function can replace toilet paper, although in restrooms with these toilets, toilet paper is provided. You can also adjust the water pressure with the +-button below the "spray/bidet" and "stop" buttons. And now it's time to flush. Sometimes a handle. Sometimes a handle with two kanji: 大 and 小. Switch the handle in the direction of 大 for a "big flush" and 小 for a "small flush" .If it's an automatic sensor panel just like the one below, just hold your hand over it until the toilet flushes.



6) GARBAGE

If you take a walk in a city in Japan, you might notice how clean without garbage on the streets while how difficult to find trash cans. No matter how difficult, you can't just throw away but carry around your garbage until you find one. So how do Japanese keep it clean?

Trash cans are usually grouped together in an open space, and trashes have to be divided into several categories (e.x. combustible trash, non-combustible trash, recyclable trash) for proper disposal.

7) Wi-Fi and Internet connection:

Wi-Fi system has gradually set up in Japan but it is not well generalized. You may be able to find Wi-Fi connection in hotels (in some places it is limited only at lobby) and some cafes, but hotels in rural area often do not have the Wi-Fi system. Hostel TOKI has Wi-Fi service available in any area of the facility, But if you are going around, we recommend you to rent a pocket Wi-Fi or buy SIM card (usually cheaper than pocket Wi-Fi) at the airport upon arrival.



8) Service water at restaurants

Each country has different styles when it comes to water served at restaurants. Some country it is served for free, some only has bottled waters with charges just like you order any other drinks. Here in Japan, Water is provided free of charge at restaurants. A waiter usually brings water to you, but you may have to help yourself to water at some of the more casual shops.



9) Compulsory appetizer at Izakaya restaurants

Compulsory appetizer is a small dish of food given to all customers at most of Japanese Izakaya restaurants. The customer does not decide on what they receive and the cost of the appetizer is charged to the bill regardless of whether it was eaten or not. So you might freak out if you see the charges without knowing about this system. But take it easy, this charge replaces a seating charge which is a charge for occupying a table.

10) Payments

-Advance payment system (food tickets)

At certain restaurants like ramen shops, you sometimes pay in advance of your order. In shops with an advance payment system, you purchase a food ticket for the food you would like to eat instead of ordering dishes. In shops like this, you purchase the ticket for your desired meal from an automatic food ticket machine, take a seat, and pass the ticket to a staff member to complete the order. To identify whether or not the shop has an advance payment system, please check whether or not there is an automatic food ticket machine near its entrance.



-How to settle the payments in general restaurants

Except for restaurants with an advance payment system involving food tickets, you generically make your payment at the cash register in Japanese restaurants. When a waiter provides you with the last of your ordered dishes, he or she confirms that your order was correctly provided, and leaves the bill on the table. After the meal, you bring the bill to the cash register to make your payment. Also, you don't need to tip your waiter. In some fancy restaurants, you can settle the bill by calling the waiter to your table instead of going to the register.

11) Escalator Rule

Many first time visitors to Japan may notice an etiquette Japanese people observe when traveling on an escalator. People pay attention to where they stand on an escalator: one side is for standing, one side is for walking. Interesting thing is that Kansai region and Kanto region have different escalator rule.

In the Kanto region, of which Tokyo is the largest city, people stand on the left, while in eastern region of Kansai, home of Osaka as well as Kyoto, Kobe and Nara, everyone stands on the right. But don't worry, you don't need to think about the rule too much, just follow the person in front of you in whichever region you are. :)



12) Nimoca IC card : Chargeable transportation card

IC cards are rechargeable cards that can be used to pay fares on public transportations and to make payments at some vending machines, shops and restaurants by simply touching the card on a reader. There are many kinds of IC cards issued by different transportation operators and companies across Japan but the most popular one here in Fukuoka is Nimoca issued by Nishitetsu local transportation company which covers Nishitetsu trains and buses in greater Fukuoka & selected transportation in other big cities all over Japan. This card makes it much easier for you to travel around especially as you don't need to buy train tickets one by one. You can buy this card at the ticket machine and ticket counter inside the train stations. Please ask staffs for details at the front desk if you are interested in having Nimoca as TOKI also sells with JPY500 deposit.



Have a safe trip :)