

About Japan

Getting to know about Tokyo, Japan



Basic information about Japan

Japan is an archipelago situated in northeastern Asia between the North Pacific and the Sea of Japan. The land area is smaller than the U.S. state of California at 377,873 square kilometers. It is comprised of four main islands; Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku, with over 3,900 smaller islands. Japan stretches over 2,360 miles from north to south, which results in distinctive transitions in seasons. Mountains occupy over 80% of Japan's landmass and only about 16% of the land is arable. The most famous volcano is Mt. Fuji (3,776m / 12,385 ft.) - the highest point of Japan and one of the most beautiful mountains in the world. Tōkyō (東京) is the capital of Japan. Over 12 million people live in the official metropolitan area alone. The characters that make up Japan's name (日本) mean "sun-origin" (because it lies to the east of nearby countries), which is why Japan is sometimes referred to as the "Land of the Rising Sun".

Time Zone difference from Japan – Tokyo

Standard time zone: UTC/GMT +9 hours No daylight saving time in 2012

Bangkok	-2 hours	Manila	-1 hour
Canberra	+1 hour	New Delhi	-3:30 hours
Hanoi	-2 hours	Singapore	-1 hour
Hong Kong	-1 hour	Taipei	-1 hour
Kuala Lumpur	-1 hour	Wellington	+3 hours

Businesses Hours

Banks: Mondays - Fridays - 9:00 - 15:00

Department Stores – opens daily from 10:00 to 20:00

Climate of Tokyo in November

About Japan

Autumn (September - November) is a time of changeable, unpredictable but generally mild weather.

[November]

Tokyo	Average Daytime High	Average Nighttime Low	Rainy/Snowy Days		Sunny Days	
			early month	late month	early month	late month
	17 C (63 F)	10 C (50 F)	25%	20%	55%	60%

November is one of the best times to visit Japan, as the weather is relatively dry and mild, and the autumn colors are spectacular in many parts of the country. Tourists enjoy visiting popular autumn leaf spots.

Money and Exchange

The yen (¥) is the currency of Japan and there are 4 types of Notes and 6 different coins in circulation: 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 and 10,000. yen notes; and 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 yen coins. Cash is the most common form of payment in Japan, however credit cards are widely accepted at many locations. Travelers' checks in yen or US dollars are easily exchanged for cash at the banks, but are not readily accepted at shops and restaurants. You can exchange yen at foreign exchange banks, international airports and other authorized money exchangers. At the airports, currency exchange counters are usually open during normal office hours.



Tip

There is no tipping in any situation in Japan – cabs, restaurants, personal care.

Cell phone

Due to different technologies, mobile phones from your home country may not work in Japan. Most importantly, there is no GSM network in Japan, so GSM-only phones do not work. The following are needed for a handset to work in Japan:

For Voice

About Japan

The handset must be compatible with a Japanese mobile phone network (typically 3G UMTS 2100 MHz or 3G CDMA2000 800 MHz). Compatible handsets may be used via international roaming (check with your home provider for details) or a rental or prepaid SIM card from a Japanese carrier (unlocked handsets only). Alternatively, phones with wireless network (WIFI) connectivity can use internet based telephone services (voip), such as Skype, when connected to a WIFI network.

For Data

Phones that work in Japan for voice (see above) can also receive and send data (such as e-mails and web content) via international roaming or a rental/prepaid SIM card, but note that the cost for data transfer can easily skyrocket without an appropriate data plan. Alternatively, phones with wireless network (WIFI) connectivity can take advantage of the numerous paid and free wifi hotspots found around the country. See our internet page for more details.

Rental Phones and SIM Cards

Renting is the most economical way for the average traveler to get a phone, and typically requires a picture ID and a credit card. Many companies have kiosks at the airports, while other companies will mail a phone to your hotel or to your home. You can return the phones at the airport or through the mail depending on the company.

The fees for rental phones vary and usually consist of the rental fee (typically 250-1000 yen per day) plus a usage fee (typically 70-200 yen per minute domestic outgoing, incoming calls are free). All of the companies at the airports have same day rentals, while some companies offer discounts for advanced reservations.

Calling abroad

When calling abroad from within Japan, first dial "010" (this is the international prefix to dial outside of Japan). Then dial the international code. Follow that with the area code and phone number.

To make local/national calls within the country you are in just dial the numbers they dial without adding any international codes.

Public phones

The number of public phones seems to have decreased in recent years due to the popularity of cell phones, but they are still numerous. Public telephones take coins and/or telephone cards. 10-yen and 100-yen



About Japan

coins can be used, and unused 10-yen coins are returned after the call is completed, however no change is given for partial use of 100-yen coins. Prepaid telephone cards cost 1,000-yen for 105-unit cards and 500-yen for 50-unit cards. Telephone cards are available from vending machines, kiosks at train stations, convenience stores and NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Co.) offices. Local calls are possible from any public phone, but international calls can only be made from certain phones.

Electrical power and plug



The electrical power throughout Japan is 100 Volt which is different from North America (110V), Central Europe (220V) and most other countries. Furthermore, the current in Eastern Japan (including Tokyo, Yokohama, Tohoku, Hokkaido) is on 50 Hertz and Western Japan (including Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Shikoku, Kyushu) uses 60 Hertz. Japanese electrical plugs are the flat two-pin type, similar to North American outlets. Basic North American electrical items will function reasonably well in Japan without an adapter and vice versa, but this frequency difference may cause damage if you are intending to use sensitive equipment. It is recommended you use a frequency converter when traveling throughout the country. Some electronic equipment such as European ones which operate on 220V may need a transformer. Transformers are available at Japanese electronics shops and many hotels have 110V and 220V outlets for use with foreign appliances.

Water

Tap water in Japan is basically safe to drink and treated with ozone or chloride. Amounts of chemicals used in treatment vary according to the quality of the water sources.

Post Service

Post offices are open Mon-Fri 9:00-17:00 (9:00-19:00 at some offices); closed on Saturday and Sunday and Holidays. You can buy postcards and stamps at post offices, convenience stores and kiosks at train stations.

	Asia	N.America/Europe	S.America/Africa
Post	70	70	70
Aerograms	90	90	90
letters(25g)	110	110	130
letters(50g)	190	190	230
Greeting cards	110	110	130

About Japan

Transportation

From Airports

Tokyo has two airports: Narita Airport, which handles the majority of international flights, is located 60 km outside of central Tokyo, while Haneda Airport is located more centrally.

Narita Airport

Easiest: Limousine bus direct to major hotels, ~120 minutes (subject to traffic), ¥3,000

Fastest: Skyliner to Nippori and Ueno Stations, under 45 minutes, ¥2,400; Narita Express to Tokyo Station, Shibuya, Shinjuku, Yokohama, 55 minutes and ¥2,940 to Tokyo Station (Japan Rail Pass valid)

Suica & Narita Express (for foreign tourists arriving at Narita Airport)

The Suica & NEX package combines a ticket for the Narita Express airport train with a Suica prepaid card at a heavily discounted cost. It is available as one way or round trip version and can be purchased at Narita Airport only by travelers who hold a non-Japanese passport.

The one way version for 3500 yen (5000 yen for green car) consists of 1) a one way trip from Narita Airport to Tokyo (or Yokohama) by Narita Express and 2) a Suica card worth 2000 yen (500 yen refundable deposit plus 1500 yen worth of train fares).

The round trip version for 5500 yen (8000 yen for green car) consists of 1) a round trip from Narita Airport to Tokyo (or Yokohama) and back to Narita Airport within a two week period and 2) a Suica card worth 2000 yen (500 yen refundable deposit plus 1500 yen worth of train fares).

Haneda Airport

International flights operate into Haneda from 18 cities, with a number of these flights landing and departing during the late evening hours. Free shuttle buses run every 6 minutes between 5 AM and Midnight, connecting the International terminal with both Domestic terminals.

The easiest and most scenic way from Haneda to the city is the Tokyo Monorail running to Hamamatsucho for ¥470, from where you can connect to almost anywhere in Tokyo on the JR Yamanote line. The monorail has a station at each of Haneda's three terminals. From the International Terminal, trains reach Hamamatsucho in as little as 14 minutes on the nonstop services; the domestic terminals are about 5 minutes further down the line. JR East maintains a Travel Service Center for foreigners in the International Terminal (open daily

About Japan

11:00 to 18:30) where vouchers can be exchanged for the Japan Rail Pass and JR East Rail Pass. The Tokyo Monorail is fully covered with either pass.

Starting on February 1, 2011, JR East will sell a special Suica fare package, called "Suica & Monorail", exclusively to foreign visitors. The cost includes a discounted fare on the Tokyo Monorail (one-way or round-trip), ¥1500 to use on rail travel in Tokyo or on purchases at locations that accept the Suica card, and a ¥500 deposit. The "Suica & Monorail" ticket is sold only from the JR East Service Center at the international terminal, and can be purchased using cash or credit card. It can also be recharged with additional funds, but only by paying cash. The one-way ticket is ¥2400, and the round-trip ticket costs ¥2700; the return trip to Haneda must be taken within 10 days.

Although Tokyo's trains, subways and buses are operated by more than ten different companies with different fare systems, the Suica and PASMO prepaid cards can be used on all of them. Suica is the rechargeable prepaid IC card of JR East, valid on virtually all trains, subways and buses in the Greater Tokyo region.



General information for transportation

<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/transportation/>

Tokyo Metro Basic information on using the subway.

<http://www.tokyometro.jp/en/index.html>

[MAP]

- **JR EAST Railway** Lines Network map

http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/info/map_a4ol.pdf

- **Tokyo Metro subway map**

<http://www.tokyometro.jp/en/subwaymap/index.html>

Taxi

Taxi fares typically start around 600-700yen for the first two kilometers and increase by roughly 100 yen for every additional 500 meters traveled. The cost also increases when the taxi is not moving for a prolonged time. Late in the evening (typically 10pm to 5am), rates are raised by typically 20 percent.

A plate on the dashboard in the lower corner of the windshield indicates whether a taxi is vacant or not. A red plate indicates that the taxi is vacant, while a green plate indicates the opposite (see illustration below). During the night a light on the roof of a taxi can indicate that the taxi is vacant.

About Japan

When you board a taxi, the vehicle's left rear door is opened and closed remotely by the driver. You are not supposed to open or close it by yourself. Furthermore, you are not supposed to tip taxi drivers, as the service is included in the price.

If you do not speak Japanese, or your destination is not a well known place, it is recommended to give your driver the precise address of your destination on a piece of paper or, even better, point it out on a map, since the Japanese address system can be confusing even to local taxi drivers.

For more information on Japanese transportation, please visit:

<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/transportation/index.html>)

Immigration

Below is a basic introduction to the Japanese immigration system. Please contact your closest Japanese embassy or consulate outside Japan or an immigration bureau inside Japan for official advice.

[Tourists and Business Travelers]

If you are a citizen of one of the over 50 countries, with which Japan has a "general visa exemption arrangement", you need only a valid passport to enter Japan as a "temporary visitor". Otherwise, you need to obtain a visa before entering the country. Temporary visitors from most countries are allowed to stay for up to 90 days.

If you are a citizen of Austria, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Switzerland or the United Kingdom, you have the possibility to extend your stay for up to six months. You still initially enter Japan on a 90 day permit, but can then apply for an extension at an immigration bureau in Japan.

Temporary visitors are not allowed to engage in any paid activities. However, short term studies at Japanese language schools are permitted.

All foreign tourists in Japan are required to carry their passports with them at all times.

Security

Norma murder in Japan is 0.44 per 100,000 inhabitants in the city, and so together with Singapore constitute the safest countries in Asia. Theft and other crimes are also very rare in Japan. There is even a service bureau for lost and found things. If you have lost something here, then you will get it back.

The nationwide emergency phone numbers are:

Police: 110

Ambulance/Fire: 119

About Japan

During and after an earthquake

Japan has the dubious distinction of being one of the most seismically active regions in the world, and more than 1,000 earthquakes occur each year in Japan. Fortunately most of them are too small to notice without sensitive seismic equipment.

Falling objects, toppling furniture and panic present the greatest dangers during an earthquake. Try to protect yourself under a table or doorway. Do not run outside, and try to remain as calm as possible. If you are in the streets, try to find protection from glass and other objects that may fall from surrounding buildings.

For general information on Japan, please visit:

<http://www.visitjapan.jp/eng/top.html>