Inside Japan Tours

General Information
for visiting Japan
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<td>11</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

This guide is designed to provide you with some useful hints and tips for getting around Japan as well as providing the essentials for your visit. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any specific questions prior to departure or any difficulties in Japan.

Contacting InsideJapan Tours

Japan Office
Tel: 052 253 6068
Mobile: 080 6942 9362 (emergencies only)
E-mail: japanoffice@insidejapantours.com

UK Office
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E-mail: info@insidejapantours.com

US Office
Tel: ++ 1 303 952 0379
Fax: ++ 1 720 890 8549
E-mail: info-usa@insidejapantours.com

Facts about Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>377,829 Km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>126,065,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo’s population</td>
<td>8 million people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Japan time is GMT + 9 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>100 volts AC. Flat 2-pin plugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialing code</td>
<td>+81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Shinto and Buddhism (most Japanese follow both of these religions) with a Christian minority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Holidays
Japanese employees work some of the longest hours in the world and few take the maximum entitled annual leave. The upside of this is that Japan does have 15 national holidays! When a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the following Monday is a public holiday.

When travelling on any of these days, expect transport to be crowded and airports, stations, attractions and accommodation to be busier. As a general rule the holidays fall as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Holiday</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st January</td>
<td>New Years Day</td>
<td>元日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Mon in Jan</td>
<td>Coming of age day</td>
<td>成人の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th February</td>
<td>Foundation Day</td>
<td>建国記念の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th or 21st March</td>
<td>Spring Equinox</td>
<td>春分の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th April</td>
<td>Showa Day</td>
<td>昭和の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Golden Week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd May</td>
<td>Constitution Day</td>
<td>憲法記念日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Golden Week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th May</td>
<td>Green Day</td>
<td>みどりの日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Golden Week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th May</td>
<td>Children’s Day</td>
<td>こどもの日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Golden Week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Mon in July</td>
<td>Marine Day</td>
<td>海の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Mon in Sept</td>
<td>Respect for the Aged Day</td>
<td>敬老の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd or 23rd Sept</td>
<td>Autumn Equinox Day</td>
<td>秋分の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Mon in Oct</td>
<td>Health Sports Day</td>
<td>体育の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Nov</td>
<td>Culture Day</td>
<td>文化の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd Nov</td>
<td>Labour Thanksgiving Day</td>
<td>勤労感謝の日</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd Dec</td>
<td>Emperor’s Birthday</td>
<td>天皇誕生日</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Many places close between 29th December and 2nd January.
Golden Week is especially busy as many people choose to travel on consecutive days depending on how the holidays fall.
2. Climate

The weather is a favourite topic of conversation in Japan. This is unsurprising given the complexity of the climate in a country spanning 20 degrees of latitude.

From the harsh winters and mild summers of Hokkaido to the sub-tropical Okinawan climate there is a great variety in Japanese weather. Even in the same city, extremes of weather can be experienced in a year - Sapporo in Hokkaido can experience temperatures of minus 10 in the winter but heat waves of 30 degrees in the summer are not a rare occurrence.

On the mainland, summer temperatures are generally between 20 and 30 degrees Centigrade. In the early part of summer (mid-June to mid-July) there is a rainy season lasting a few weeks, this is however broken up by days of fine weather. Rains come again in late summer thanks to typhoons, although these usually blow over in a day.

As a general rule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Weather Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>very hot and humid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>cold (very cold in the mountains), fairly dry and snowfall in the mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring &amp; Autumn</td>
<td>warm days and cool nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainy Season</td>
<td>June, hot and muggy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Internet

Despite being one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, free open access wifi commonly found in coffee shops and stores across the world is decidedly lacking in Japan. However, with a renewed focus on tourism for the 2020 Olympics we expect this situation to improve.

A number of chain business hotels as well as most higher-end hotels provide internet connections in their rooms although some are still via LAN cable access only (don’t forget an adapter if you have a Macbook). In the bigger cities internet cafes are abundant. To find the nearest internet café please ask at your hotel or tourist information centre. Most Manga cafes also provide cheap internet access on the go. Expect to pay around 500yen an hour. Don’t forget you can often use free wifi and computers at Tourist Information Centres often located within stations. We have provided details in the destination guides.

Portable Wifi – the best way to keep in touch on the go

If you want to guarantee a mobile phone and / or mobile internet for the duration of your trip we recommend hiring a mobile wifi router. This is a small transmitter (the size of a small mobile phone) which you can use to access the internet through a connected device such as a tablet, smartphone and PC etc on the go. You will need to charge the device daily (charger supplied). There are a number of companies offering this service and the best place to pick one up is at the airport on arrival. We recommend PuPuru or Japan Wireless with collection desks at Narita Airport. You can sign up before you go here:

http://japan_wireless.com/
(see notes below)

You can have the device sent to your hotel if you are being met at the airport. You will be charged a daily rate which is usually inclusive of all data and you will be provided with a carrying case and return envelope to send the device back at the end of the trip. This makes using apps like Skype, Viber, WhatsApp and Line a great way to keep in touch with friends on the go. Expect to pay around 10,000yen for a 2 week trip. Note: some companies charge for the days used within one calendar month so if your trip straddles two months you will usually be charged more. Japan Wireless is the exception.
Free Wifi initiatives
Visitors to Japan can sign up to a growing number of free wifi initiatives. Starbucks offers free wifi (subscription only so you must sign up when you have access to a computer). It’s best to do this before you travel. We found the interface was not the most user friendly and you do have to buy a drink to gain access (fair enough!). You may also receive regular emails about the service when you arrive home, which can of course be redirected to spam! Sign up below: http://starbucks.wi2.co.jp/sp/sma_index_en.html

A nationwide service is currently being offered by NTT (Free WIFI Japan), one of Japan’s biggest telecommunications companies. This requires you to get a card in advance from one of a handful of locations. Until March 2014 these can be picked up at Narita Airport (Gate A – ground floor T2 temporary counter) on random distribution days between 1200 and 2100hrs. We have no idea why this is temporary! If this fails, try other locations in Tokyo and northern Japan. It is best to familiarise yourself with the following website before travelling: http://flets.com/freewifi/spot.html

Card in hand, create a login and password and then you are good to go when you see the FREE WIFI and Flet’s SPOT logos. We found this to be useful but limited to a few spots, which is great if you are in the area but not worth going out of your way for. Again, it seems a bit overly complicated.

Wi2 300
Wi2 300 is a public wireless service that has a growing number of access points all over Japan, including airports, train stations, McDonald's, buses, cafes and restaurants, and many convenience stores. Advance registration is required and payment plans start from 350yen for six consecutive hours to 2000yen for a one week pass which looks like good value. You can use their website to check for access points in the areas you'll be visiting. http://300.wi2.co.jp/en/

Kyoto Wifi
Another service that requires advance registration. Kyoto provides free wifi in a number of shops, cafes and restaurants in central Kyoto. Sign up online before you travel. Service is available for 3 hours – enough time to Skype home! http://kanko.city.kyoto.lg.jp/wifi/en/
JR West is currently offering local free wifi at selected JR West Stations (see table below). To use the service, you must obtain a guest code (ID) beforehand. This is not too helpful as you need to connect using an internet enabled device – best done before you depart. The service is valid for 8 days on successful signup. 


**JR West Free Wifi Zones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto*1</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Central, West, and Underground East gates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Central, Midosuji, South, and Sakurabashi gates) and North information counter (North Gate building, 3F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Osaka*1</td>
<td>Ticket gates (East Gate), waiting rooms, and JR West Travel Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennoji</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Central and East gates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sannomiya</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Central Gate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansai-airport</td>
<td>Ticket gates (JR Gate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Kobe</td>
<td>Ticket gates and waiting areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okayama*2</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Shinkansen Gate) and waiting rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiroshima*2</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Shinkansen Gate) and waiting areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokura*2</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Shinkansen Gate) and waiting areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakata*2</td>
<td>Ticket gates (Central Shinkansen Gate), waiting rooms, and Hikari Square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 Service is not available at ticket gates or waiting rooms for the Shinkansen.  
*2 Service is only available at ticket gates, waiting rooms, and waiting areas for the Shinkansen.
4. Phones

A variety of prepaid telephone cards are available from convenience stores or vending machines. If you intend to make lots of calls home, be sure to pick up a Brastel phone card from a tourist information centre. These come with a booklet explaining how to use them. 'Credit Phones' (usually blue in colour) can be used to charge international phone calls to your credit card. Insert a 100yen coin (returnable) and enter an access number.

A direct overseas call can be made from a public telephone displaying an International and Domestic Telephone sign. The international code for the UK is 44 and for the USA and Canada is 1. Most green and grey public phones allow overseas calls.

International telephone cards are available from most convenience stores. Providers: KDDI, NTT and Softbank offer this service. These can be used with any regular payphone.

Mobile Phones

There is a lot of confusion surrounding the use of overseas mobile phones in Japan. Please note that the information given here is intended as a guide only. We cannot be responsible for charges made by operators or rental companies. You will find that charges for using a mobile phone in Japan are expensive and this is especially the case for data (e-mail and internet) - we recommend you turn off roaming on your mobile telephone to avoid a nasty surprise!

See more at: http://www.insidejapantours.com/travel-tips/#Mobile

The mobile network in Japan works on a different system to the rest of the world and until recently no overseas mobile phones would work. However, with the advent of 3G phones this has changed. The rule is basically this: If you have a 3G handset it will work. If you do not have a 3G handset it will not.

Be careful: If you ask your mobile provider they may inform you that your phone will work in Japan if it is tri-band or quad-band. It will not.

Blackberry: If you have a 3G Blackberry it WILL work in Japan. If it is not 3G it will NOT work in Japan.
Please note: The main exception to the above is that some mobile phone contracts do NOT include roaming. If your contract does not include roaming you will NOT be able to use it in Japan.

Another option is to hire a SIM card in Japan and put this into your own mobile phone which you have brought with you from home. Two companies offer this service, Softbank and Mobal Narita (only available at Tokyo Narita Airport). As of September 2010, Softbank is much cheaper for domestic calls within Japan (105 yen per minute). Calls to the US are 200 yen per minute and to the UK 250 yen. The Mobal Narita service is 240 yen for domestic and international calls. Text messages on Mobal Narita are 140 yen each. For Softbank international SMS messages are 150 yen. Data charges (internet and e-mail) for both are very high. Your phone will need to be 'unlocked' in order to be able to use the SIM card. We currently do not have any feedback on this service so would recommend either hiring a phone OR mobile wifi over this option.

Note that the SIM has to be returned and is not pre-pay. You will need to provide credit card details and will then be billed for usage.

- See more at: http://www.insidejapantours.com/travel-tips/#Mobile
5. Post Offices

The post office is the best place to withdraw cash from ATMs (see money section)

The major post offices usually have some English-speaking staff. Airmail to Europe takes four to six days to arrive. All main post offices have Poste Restante 郵便局留め (yubinkyoku-dome) and will hold mail for up to ten days.

Post office hours are usually: 0900-1700 Monday to Friday, 0900-1200 on Saturdays. Rural post offices may differ. Currently an airmail letter weighing less than 10 grams costs 110 yen to North America, Europe or Oceania. A postcard costs 70yen - but you will be charged extra if your writing invades the address side of the postcard!

Useful phrase:
Where is the post office?
Yubinkyoku wa doko ni arimas ka? 郵便局はどこにありますか

Post boxes are normally orange marked with the Japan Post logo: 〒

Postal ATM operating hours decrease proportionally to the size of the post office, from major post offices (typically 0700 - 2300, shorter hours on weekends) to medium sized offices (typically 0800 - 2000, shorter hours on weekends, possibly closed on Sundays) to minor offices (typically 0900 and 1600, closed on weekends) ATM services may be available outside post office opening hours. (source japan-guide.com)
6. Money

Despite being one of the first countries in the world to adopt technology allowing payment via your mobile phone, Japan is still a very cash-based society and many transactions are cash-only. This is very much the case in rural areas, much to the frustration of tourists and expats who rely on plastic! It’s better to have too much money* than to run short in the middle of nowhere. Although this situation is changing, it seems to be a slow process dictated mainly by the banks.

* Being generally very safe to travel around as a tourist, it is not uncommon to carry around large amounts of cash - but take the obvious precautions.

We recommend reading our online guide before changing money:

Cash
Places to change money: Airport, post office, banks, major hotels
You’ll need your passport handy when you change money
Please note that banks are not open on weekends and that some are unable to change money after 2pm.

Notes: 10000yen, 5000yen, 2000 yen (rare), 1000 yen
Coins: 500yen, 100yen, 50yen, 10yen, 5yen, 1yen (lightweight)

You will notice that the yen sign ¥ that we are familiar with in the west is rarely used in Japan. Instead you will often see the kanji character 円.

Large denomination bills are accepted everywhere in Japan.

Travellers’ Cheques
In our experience travellers cheques usually offer a better rate of exchange over cash (refer to our online guide above). Places to exchange: major banks, larger hotels and some duty free shops.
Credit and debit cards

Note: cards are not used as much for making purchases as in western countries and still many ATMs in Japan do not accept cards issued outside of Japan.

A few things to know before you depart:
- General bank ATMs have never accepted foreign issued Visa or Mastercards (except for Citybank which does)
- Post Office ATMs now accept Mastercard but are not usually 24hrs (only selected Post Offices in major cities Tokyo (Shinjuku and Shibuya), Kyoto and Osaka for example). Do be aware that even these close for a few hours – usually from 2000 – 0000 daily and on bank holidays and Sundays! Refer to section 5 for more information.
- 7-11 convenience store ATMs (often 24hrs) now accept: Visa, Plus, Mastercard, Maestro*, Cirrus, American Express and JCB cards and provide an English user menu
- Maestro cards* are not accepted but these have been phased out from the UK anyway

The major issuers (Visa, Mastercard, Amex, JCB, Diners) are becoming increasingly accepted in the major cities.

At a supermarket there may only be one till where you can pay with plastic and more often than not you will not be able to use a credit card.

Be aware that when visiting small islands (e.g. Ishigaki or Iriomote) or very rural areas, there may nowhere for you to draw out cash, especially if your visit falls on a weekend. Be sure to take adequate precautions.

* Maestro Cards with EMV chips:
International ATMs across Japan, including ATMs at post offices and 7-Eleven stores are currently not accepting Maestro cards with EMV chips (except cards issued in Canada and the Netherlands). Efforts are ongoing to restore acceptance of the cards (updated Jan 2014).

24hr credit card Emergency Numbers:
American Express 0120-020120 Mastercard 03-3256-6271
Visa 0120-1331363

As a rule there is NO tipping in Japan. If you do wish to show your appreciation with a cash gift (for example at a ryokan) then it is customary to place a clean, new note in an envelope.
7. Emergencies

Emergency Services

Police: dial 110
Fire / Ambulance: dial 119
You should be able to make yourself understood in simple English.

Japan Helpline: 0120-461-997 or 0570-000-911 (for emergency advice in English 24hrs)

Earthquakes
Small earthquakes happen in Japan every day. Most buildings, especially new ones, have good earthquake protection design. It is worth making yourself aware of a few basic procedures in case of a large earthquake:

Extinguish fires and turn off any electrical appliances
Take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or beneath a doorway
Stay away from windows as there is danger from splintering glass
Don’t rush outside – there is danger from falling masonry
When you arrive at hotels and Inns, locate the torch and the emergency exit instructions of the hotel. All hotel rooms should have both.
Once the tremors have subsided, follow locals to the nearest community evacuation centre where you will be able to seek advice and information about the current situation. If possible, take important documents with you
As soon as possible, get in touch with your embassy

Typhoons
Typhoons are common in the summer and autumn months. A typhoon involves a large amount of rain and strong winds. Travel by train or ferry may be temporarily cancelled during high winds and you may need to travel later or make other arrangements. If you have problems, please call our Japan office for help and advice. If you are close to the eye of the typhoon, it may be advisable to stay in. High winds can cause tree branches and other debris to fall. Also, you will get very wet!

Snow
In the winter some areas are affected by heavy snowfall. Please be aware that this may affect travel plans and you may find you have to change your plans or travel later. Again, please contact our Japan office for advice.
The Law

It goes without saying that you do not want to get on the wrong side of the law in Japan. Police generally speak very little English and even for minor offences are unlikely to be lenient or tolerant. Also note that suspects can be detained for up to 3 days without charging and this can be extended to 20 days if it is deemed necessary! If you are in any trouble, we advise phoning the helpline above as soon as possible and insisting on an interpreter from the outset. You are also entitled access to the Embassy.

A couple of laws you should know about:
Always carry your passport on you at all times – you are expected to show some form of ID if stopped for any reason.

It is an offence to cross a road on a red pedestrian light. People do get fined which is why you often see queues of people waiting patiently when there is seemingly no traffic around. Police boxes are often located on busy intersections!

The legal drinking age is 20 years old. Japan has a zero tolerance policy towards drink-driving.

Contacting your Embassy
Tokyo addresses and contact details:

**US Embassy**: Tel. 03-3224-5000
1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku

**British Embassy**: Tel. 03-3265-5511
1 Ichibacho, Chiyoda-ku

**Australian Embassy**: Tel. 03-5232-4111
2-1-14 Mita, Minato-ku

**Canadian Embassy**: Tel. 03-3408-2101
7-3-38 Akasaka, Minato-ku

**Chinese Embassy**: Tel. 03-3403-3380
3-4-33 Moto-Azubu, Minato-ku
8. Medical Matters

Before you go: Travel insurance

One of the conditions under which we accept bookings is that our clients take out travel insurance against medical and personal accident risks and have adequate baggage cover.

Before you go: Taking Prescription Drugs and Medication into Japan

Japan has quite strict rules about taking prescription drugs and medication into the country. Even some common cold remedies (see final paragraph) are not permitted so it is always worth checking prior to travelling. We advise contacting the Japan Embassy in your country for the latest information.

The information below is current as of Jan 2014 (UK Japan Embassy) and can be used as a general rule. However we would always advise on checking (as above) before travelling.

You are permitted to take up to one month’s supply of a prescribed drug and two months of an over the counter drug into Japan without obtaining prior permission. If your medication is prescribed, we advise that you take either a copy of the prescription or a letter from the doctor stating that the medication has been prescribed to you. It is also advisable to take the medication in the original packaging. If you are taking more than the quantities mentioned above, or if you need take needles, you will have to apply for an import certificate, known as a Yakkan Shoumei. Further information and the application forms, if needed, can be found on our website: www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp

Please note that there are a few exceptions to the above rule. Any medication containing pseudoephedrine (ie. Sudafed) is not permitted as this is a banned substance in Japan (under the anti-stimulant laws). If the medication contains a narcotic like codeine or morphine, then you will need to obtain a different certificate regardless of the quantity being taken into Japan.
Medical help lines
The Tokyo Metropolitan Medical Information Service (03 5285 8181) provides information on Tokyo’s hospitals in English from 9am to 8pm daily.

The AMDA International Medical Information Centre provides information on medical facilities throughout the Kansai region (including Osaka and Kyoto). English is spoken from 9am to 5pm on 06-6636-2333.

Tap Water
Water from the tap is safe to drink in all areas of Japan.

Drug Stores

We hope you won’t suffer any ailments or injuries while travelling in Japan! However you may find it necessary to visit a pharmacy, chemist or drugstore where you can buy medicine without prescription in Japan.

Here are the logos of two of the most widely found drug stores in Japan:

Matsumoto kiyoshi
マツモトキヨシ

Sun Drug
サンドラッグ
Common medicines

It can be difficult buying medicines in Japan as they don’t sell the same brands that you will be used to at home. Here’s our list of the most common Japanese medicine brands that may be helpful to you.

Cold Medicine
Benza Brokku ベンザブロック is a common brand of cold medicine produced by the Japanese pharmaceutical company Taishō Seiyaku 大正製薬.
Benza Brokku is taken 3 times a day after eating. It is not suitable for children under 7 years old.

There are 3 kinds of Benza Brokku to alleviate different cold symptoms:

1. Yellow (kiiro)  
   for a runny nose

2. Silver (gin)  
   for a sore throat and fever

3. Blue (ao)  
   for a fever or headache
Painkillers
A common Japanese painkiller for headaches or fever is called Tylenol タイレノール by Johnson&Johnson.

Mosquitoes
Japan does have mosquitoes in the summer months. Malaria is not a problem in Japan but if you are allergic to bites from mosquitoes please take appropriate precautions. Even if you do not suffer from a serious allergy, a regular, light spray of repellent can make life a lot less itchy! Anti-mosquito sprays and creams are widely available in Japan or you could bring your own from home.

Muhi ムヒ by the Japanese pharmaceutical company Ikeda Mohandō 池田模範堂 is a common Japanese roll on brand which Japanese mosquitoes seem to dislike!

Emazen Cream エマゼンクリーム made by Taishō Seiyaku 大正製薬 is useful for alleviating itchiness from insect bites or dealing with eczema and other rashes.

For useful Japanese words and phrases that may help you at the drug store or if you fall ill in Japan, please see the vocabulary list towards the end of this Info-Pack booklet.
9. Luggage Forwarding

If you are making a long journey you may want to send your luggage to your next hotel to save you from carrying it on buses and trains. Japan has a number of companies that offer excellent luggage forwarding services – referred to as “Takuhaibin 宅配便” in Japanese. You can send your bags onwards to a hotel or any of Japan’s 17 airports. This is common practice in Japan so hotels will be more than happy to hold your bags until you arrive. If you are sending bags to an airport allow a little extra time to pick them up. Don’t forget to keep your receipt to prove which bags are yours!

You can send your bags from most convenience stores and some hotel lobbies. Use the Japanese addresses in your Info-Pack to help and ask the shop / hotel staff to fill out the forms for you.

The most widespread company is Yamato Transport, commonly known by the nickname “Kuroneko” (black cat). You can send bags from anywhere you see this sign.

Yamato’s rivals in the Takkyubin market include: Nippon Express, Sagawa Express, Seino Transport, Footwork, and S-Line Gifu.
10. Food and Drink

One of the best things about visiting any country is sampling its cuisine and during your stay in Japan you’ll probably be wishing to do just that. Here we aim to provide a brief guide to what’s available and in the following section, a glossary to help you get some of it on to your plate.

Many Japanese restaurants specialise in one particular type of food. Sushi is of course the most famous dish, but Japanese food does not stop with raw fish; other specialities include teriyaki (marinated beef/chicken/fish seared on a hot plate), sukiyaki (thin slices of beef, bean curd and vegetables cooked in soy sauce and then dipped in egg), and tempura (deep fried sea-food and vegetables).

If everything so far sounds a bit meat and fish orientated don't be alarmed - there are vegetarian options in Japan (though vegetarians beware - dishes that seem to be without meat are often cooked in a meat or seafood broth). Try the wonderful zaru soba (buck-wheat noodles served cold), a bowl of udon (thicker noodles) in a mountain vegetable soup, tofu steak or a vegetable okonomiyaki (savoury pancake). If you are feeling adventurous you could try natto, this is a sticky and slightly smelly concoction made of fermented soya beans. The Japanese liken it to marmite - you'll either love it or hate it.

If you want a more general selection, then the best place to go is an izakaya (Japanese pub) where you will find an extensive and pretty cheap choice of food and drink. Izakaya often offer tabehodai or nomihodai - for a set price you get an hour or two to eat or drink as much as you like. Choosing exactly what to eat is made easier by well illustrated menus or plastic food displays at the doorway that Madame Tussaud would be proud of - just point and see what you get.

Western and Oriental foods are widely available in Japan. From a country that survived on a diet of mainly fish and vegetables just over a century ago, Japan has reached the stage where there is a steak house or McDonalds on nearly every corner. Italian and Indian restaurants abound too, as well as some very good Chinese and Korean places. For a late night snack, a ramen bar is a good bet, these can be found serving up steaming bowls of Chinese noodles, Japanese style, in various broths, until the small hours of the morning.
Each region of Japan also has its own specialty foods, unique to or particularly famous in that one area of the country.

These are nearly always made from locally produced ingredients. We have tried to include some of these in the food section of each of your destinations so you can enjoy the flavours of the regions.

**Ordering...**
Firstly, here is a (very!) brief guide on how to order what you want:

The easiest way to order is to use “kudasai”, which simply means “please”.
So if you want a hamburger, try “**hamburger kudasai**”

If you want to order a particular number of something, then try out the following:

- one       hitotsu
- two       futatsu
- three     mittsu
- four      yottsu

When ordering three hamburgers, use “**hamburger mittsu kudasai**”

**Top phrase to use:**
“**Gochi-so-sama-deshita**” ごちそうさまでした.

This literally means “thank you, it was a real feast.” Say this to staff as you leave and their eyes will light up!
10.1 Vegetarians & special diets

It can be tricky being vegetarian in Japan which is why we recommend reading up and planning ahead to make sure eating out is a really enjoyable experience and not a chore every mealtime. There are some fantastic vegetarian options available including Shojin ryori (Buddhist Cuisine based on a strictly vegetarian diet), tofu restaurants presenting tofu in numerous ways, a whole host of noodle dishes, rice balls and vegetable tempura to name a few. Shojin ryori is particularly famous in places like Mount Koya and Nagano where it is served up at temple stays.

It is not uncommon for people to think that fish is OK and shellfish doesn’t count so don’t be entirely surprised if you spot a random prawn on the side of the plate, baby fish in your salad or a slice of pink and white fishcake as a garnish. In fact it’s sometimes easier to mention no seafood or shellfish before ordering – be specific and maybe list a few things just to make sure! It is also worth noting that dashi (fish stock) is used as the base for many dishes.

If you are allergic to certain foods, do let us know in advance as local ryokans may not be used to dealing with specific dietary requirements. Soy sauce is commonly found in sauces and stocks and can be a problem for some.

Happy Cow is a great online resource for finding vegetarian and vegan restaurants in Japan. http://www.happycow.net/asia/japan/tokyo/

We also love this site: http://www.neverendingvoyage.com/vegetarian-survival-guide-to-japan/

In Tokyo

Some useful phrases

I am a vegetarian  

watashi wa bejitarian desu  

私はベジタリアンです

Without meat please  
niku nuki de kudasai  

肉ぬきで下さい

What do you recommend?  

O-susume wa nan desu ka?  

おすすめは何ですか

I don't eat meat or fish  
watashi wa niku to sakana ga taberaremasen  

肉と魚が食べられません

Without fish flakes please  
katsuobushi nashi de kudasai  

かつおぶしなしで下さい

Additional Vocabulary

Soy sauce  

shoyu  

醤油

Dashi  

dashi  

出汁

Shellfish  

kai  

貝

Gluten intolerant  

グルテンに弱いです

Dairy intolerant  

乳製品に弱いです

Peanut allergy  

ピーナッツアレルギーがあります
10.2 Our A-Z of Japanese Food

Bento 弁当
Bentos are box lunches. Fast, easy and cheap. The ingredients in bento vary greatly (some have sushi, some have pickles, etc.), and most bento stands will offer a wide variety, so it usually isn't difficult to find a combination you'll enjoy. Make no doubt about it: in Tokyo, bentos are your best dining value.

Fugu ふぐ
Fugu (blowfish) is possibly the most exotic and dangerous food known to mankind. If not properly prepared, it really can cause death. Fugu chefs in Japan are strictly licensed and highly trained to prevent accidents (in other words, don’t try this at home), so it’s safe to enjoy this delicious specialty.

Kaiseki 会席
This highly aesthetic dining experience is both a visual and gastronomic feast. Meals are modeled on the four seasons, and the guest is treated to many small dishes, each involving much time and skill, that evoke a particular time of year. Kaiseki meals are generally served as "set" menus, although some restaurants serve mini-kaiseki for lunch.

Kamameshi かまめし
A rice casserole dish with meats and vegetables.

Kushiage くしあげ
This style generally consists of deep-frying meats and seasonal vegetables on long skewers. Generally, the restaurant has a fixed price menu.

Nabe なべ
Nabe is old-style cooking consisting of a stew served in its pot. A particularly delicious variation is ‘kimuchi’ nabe - made with hot and spicy vegetables from Korea.

Noodles そば・うどん
You can buy noodles on just about every street corner in Japan’s major cities. Shops serve a variety, including soba (buckwheat noodles served hot or cold), udon (fat, white noodles), ramen (actually these are Chinese noodles, but still very popular in Japan), yakisoba (fried noodles), or somen (cold summer noodles). Noodle shops are great for quick meals and are generally inexpensive.
Oden おでん
An oden restaurant serves a variety of items that have been simmered in broth. Some restaurants also pride themselves on never washing out their oden pans, thus building up years and years’ worth of added flavor!

Okonomiyaki お好み焼き
Street food consisting of pancake-like mix with meat, fish, and/or vegetables added. Some restaurants permit the consumer to prepare their okonomiyaki directly at the tables.

Rice ごはん
The staple of Japanese cuisine, rice is generally eaten with every meal. It is prepared in a manner that makes it sticky enough to be easily maneuvered with chopsticks.

Robatayaki ろばた焼き
A traditional style of cooking that involves preparing meats and vegetables over a grill. All the usual suspects are prepared in robatayaki restaurants, and many include lesser known specialties such as nikujaga (meat and potato stew).

Shabu-Shabu しゃぶしゃぶ
This type of meal is prepared at your table. Thin slices of beef are prepared quickly in broth containing vegetables. Sukiyaki すきやき is similar to shabu-shabu, except the broth is made of soy sauce and sake. Traditionally, diners take what they want front the pot, and dip the food in raw egg before consuming (this step can be skipped, if you desire).

Sushi すし
Sushi and its kissing cousin, sashimi are the most well-known of Japanese foods. While many people feel uncomfortable with the idea of eating raw fish, this squeamishness disappears after a first encounter with maguro (tuna). Sashimi is just the seafood while sushi can have a variety of other ingredients, along with rice. After dipping the selection in a mix of soy sauce and wasabi (a green horseradish -- use caution at first), the entire piece is consumed in one bite -- you'll understand why if you try to consume sushi any other way.

Tempura てんぷら
Tempura are foods that have been deep fried after being dipped in a batter. The result is light and delicate (and incredibly hot -- be prepared). If you're feeling adventurous, order the teishoku 定食 (daily special), otherwise point to the appropriate plastic food display.
Teppanyaki てっぱんやき
Essentially, a teppanyaki restaurant is a Japanese steakhouse. While you don't always get the Westernized showmanship of a Benihana's, this type of restaurant does focus on preparation and presentation.

Tonkatsu とんかつ
A traditional style meal consisting of a pork cutlet coated in batter and deep fried. Again the teishoku is a good way to experiment.

Unagi うなぎ
Unagi is eel, and can be had as sushi or broiled. Unagi is considered by many Japanese to be health food.

Yakitori やきとり
Chicken grilled on skewers (the less adventurous type should take care in ordering -- yakitori chefs pride themselves on using every available part of the chicken). Yakitori-ya are usually identified by red paper lanterns hanging outside.
10.3 Ordering Sushi

With so many types of fish on offer, stepping in to a sushi restaurant can be a bit daunting. Take comfort in the fact that even Japanese aren’t pros when it comes to ordering fish because there are hundreds of varieties. Our tip is to try a few plates and see what you like, then get to know the names. Besides the recognisable salmon, mackerel, squid etc, you will come across many fish that are either not in the dictionary or your will never have heard of!

A common misconception is that sushi is raw fish. It is actually the vinegared rice that the Japanese call sushi therefore there is a wider number of sushi dishes than first expected. Here are a few of the possibilities...

**Nigiri zushi** なぎり寿司
An oblong of vinegared rice with fish placed on top. Seasoned with wasabi (Japanese horseradish).

**Maki zushi** 巻き寿司
Vinegared rice and filling rolled in nori (seaweed paper). Rolled with a bamboo mat.

**Temaki zushi** 手巻き寿司
Same as maki sushi but rolled by hand to make a conical shape.

**Inari zushi** いなり寿司
A fried tofu skin, filled with rice. Often includes other ingredients such as sesame seeds.

One of the easiest ways to enjoy sushi is to visit a conveyor-belt sushi restaurant (kaiten zushi 回転寿司 in Japanese). Here you sit in front of the belt whilst the choices of sushi roll by. The plates of sushi are usually colour coded according to price. Ordering is simple, just pick off what you want, stack the plates and when you finish your meal, the waiter will count up and calculate the bill. You only pay for what you eat and the prices normally start from about 250yen for the cheapest plates.

For higher quality sushi you should check out a specialised sushi restaurant.
Sashimi (raw fish)

Here are some of the most common types of fish you will find in restaurants.

- horse mackerel
- sweet shrimp
- botan shrimp
- yellow tail
- marbled tuna belly
- boiled shrimp
- scallop
- squid
- salmon eggs
- crab
- crab innards
- bonito
- tuna
- mackerel
- salmon
- sake marinated mackerel
- sea bass
- octopus
- eel
- sea urchin

- aji
- ama ebi
- botan ebi
- buri
- chu toro
- ebi
- hotategai
- ika
- ikura
- ikura
- ikura
- ikura
- ikura
- maguro
- saba
- salmon
- shime saba
- suzuki
- tako
- unagi
- uni

Vegetarian Sushi

tofu skin filled with rice egg
- cucumber roll
- natto (fermented soy beans) roll
- sushi roll with pickles & vegetables
- pickled daikon roll

- inari zushi
- tamago
- kappa maki
- natto maki
- futo maki
- kaiware maki

Other

tuna mayonnaise roll
- salad roll
- crab salad roll
- avocado

- tsuna maki
- sarada maki
- kani sarada maki
- abokado
10.4 Okonomiyaki (savory pancake)

Okonomiyaki お好み焼き is a pancake – Japanese style. Although it can be eaten in many restaurants across Japan, it is the specialty of Osaka and Hiroshima. The Okonomiyaki traditionally found in Osaka consists of a bowl of pancake-like batter containing diced vegetables (most often cabbage) and then the main ingredient or “ten” 天 in Japanese. Hiroshima-yaki 広島焼き has the same basic ingredients but also contains egg and soba noodles. On menus, Hiroshima-yaki is often called “Modan-yaki” モダン焼き.

Usually in an Okonomiyaki restaurant, the food is cooked in front of you or you cook the pancake yourself. Firstly, a member of the staff will light the burner at your table and oil the surface, then they will bring you your pancake mix. From this point you’re on your own. Mix the batter and pour it onto the hotplate. Using the spatula provided, shape the mixture into a rough circle. When one side is cooked (it takes around 10 minutes) flip the pancake. The easiest way to do this is to use 2 spatulas on either side. If the pancake doesn’t break you have been successful!

Okonomiyaki is best eaten with a sprinkling of dried seaweed flakes (Aonori 青のり), dried bonito fish shavings (katsuobushi かつおぶし), brown sauce ソース and mayonnaise マヨネーズ.
Ordering: When ordering okonomiyaki, you order by the filling or “ten” 天. Below is a list of the some common okonomiyaki fillings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mixed okonomiyaki</td>
<td>ミックス</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beef</td>
<td>牛天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pork</td>
<td>豚天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrimp</td>
<td>海老天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crab</td>
<td>かに天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scallop</td>
<td>ほたて天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kimuchi (spicy Korean pickle)</td>
<td>キムチ天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mushroom</td>
<td>まいたけ天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green onion and ginger</td>
<td>わぎしょうが天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spicy cod roe</td>
<td>明太子天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minced beef</td>
<td>牛ひき肉天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn</td>
<td>コーン天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuna</td>
<td>ツナ天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheese</td>
<td>野菜天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squid legs</td>
<td>きりいか天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetable</td>
<td>しょうが天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chopped squid</td>
<td>揚げ玉天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ginger</td>
<td>棒天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fried Egg</td>
<td>カレー天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can also normally order fried noodles which you can cook on the same hot plate.

**Fried Noodles (soba or udon)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stamina (hearty appetite!)</td>
<td>スタミナ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kimuchi (spicy Korean pickle)</td>
<td>キムチ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed vegetable</td>
<td>ミックス</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrimp</td>
<td>海老</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squid</td>
<td>いか</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scallop</td>
<td>帆立</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat</td>
<td>肉</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that depending on the restaurant some of these fillings may not be available, equally there may be extra fillings not listed!
10.5 Tako-yaki (Octopus dumplings)

In a similar vein to Okonomiyaki is Tako yaki タコ焼き. These are small balls of batter filled with pickled ginger, finely chopped spring onions and of course octopus. The perfect tako-yaki is crisp on the outside and light and fluffy within. Like okonomiyaki, they are eaten with aonori (seaweed flakes), katsuo bushi (fish flakes), brown sauce and mayonnaise and are often to be found on street stalls. If you are in Japan during a festival, then these are the archetypal festival food.

Ordering tako-yaki is simple, just ask for “tako-yaki kudasai”. With one order you usually get 6 balls.

10.6 Ramen (noodles)

Ramen ラーメン is probably the most popular Chinese dish eaten in Japan although the taste has been distinctly “Japanified”. It is basically noodles served up in a hot broth with a selection of different meats and vegetables. Ramen can be found everywhere from humble street stalls where you eat standing up to more refined restaurants. It can be found almost anytime of the day or night and has recently become a popular late night, after beer snack, due to its magical hangover curing properties...

Ramen restaurants often also serve a selection of other Chinese style meals such as fried rice, gyoza dumplings and spring rolls. Ramen generally comes in two flavours, salt (shio 塩) and miso (みそ). You then order the topping you would like:

- roast pork (チャーシュー)
- wonton (ワンタン)
- butter (バター)
- corn (コーン)
- curry (カレー)
- assorted fish, meat & veg (五目)

For example if you wanted, miso ramen with roast pork, you would order: “Cha-shu miso ramen kudasai”
10.7 Appetizers

thick skinned pork dumplings  
gyouza
fri‌ed dumplings  
yaki gyouza
deep fried dumplings  
age gyouza
thin skinned pork dumplings  
shu-mai
thin skinned shrimp dumpling  
ebi shu-mai
spring rolls  
haru maki
pork filled bun  
niku man
fried chicken  
kara age
spicy soup  
tan tan men
vegetables in Chinese style sauce  
umani
spring onion  
negi
onion leaves  
nira
bean shoots  
moyashi
sea weed  
wakame
shrimp  
ebi
stamina (everything!)  
sutamina
egg  
tamago
dried sea weed  
nori
10.8 Tempura

Often foreign visitors to Japan find tempura the most delicious of all the dishes on offer. The best tempura uses the freshest ingredients, and they are lightly seasoned and fried to golden crispness. The worst is a greasy, soggy mess. To find good tempura it is certainly advisable to go to a specialist tempura restaurant.

Tempura can either be ordered by the piece or you can ask for the set meal, “teishoku.” When eating tempura, you should dip it lightly in the sauce provided or squeeze over a little lemon juice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>set meal of tempura rice &amp; soup</th>
<th>tempura teishoku</th>
<th>天ぷら定食</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chef’s selection of tempura</td>
<td>tempura moriawase</td>
<td>天ぷら盛り合わせ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tempura on rice</td>
<td>ten-don</td>
<td>天丼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assortment of vege tempura</td>
<td>yasai moriawase</td>
<td>野菜盛り合わせ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Separate Tempura Pieces

#### Seafood

- shrimp: 海老  ebi
- squid: いか  ika
- scallop: 帆立貝  hotategai
- shrimp & leek: 海老かき揚げ  ebikakiage
- oyster: かき  kaki
- whitebait: しらうお  shirauo
- wrapped in seaweed & fried: いそべ巻き  isobemaki

#### Vegetables

- shiitake mushrooms: しいたけ  shiitake
- green pepper: ピーマン  pi-man
- aubergine (eggplant): なす  nasu
- Perilla leaf (a kind of herb): しそ  shiso
- pumpkin: かぼちゃ  kabocha
- sweet potato (yam): さつまいも  satsuma imo
- onion: たまねぎ  tamanegi
- carrot: にんじん  ninjin
- lotus root: れんこん  renkon
- asparagus: アスパラ  aspara
- bamboo: たけのこ  takenoko
10.9 Oodles of noodles: Soba and Udon

Soba and Udon noodles そば, うどん are another ubiquitous source of nutrition in Japan. Soba noodles are thin, brown noodles made from buckwheat flour which are eaten hot or cold, in soup or separately. They are traditional food for bringing in the New Year as the noodle length is symbolic of a long life. They are also a traditional gift when welcoming new neighbours as the word “soba” also means, “neighbour.”

Udon are thicker white noodles and are usually eaten hot. “Chanko Nabe ちゃんこ鍋” the food of sumo wrestlers uses these noodles.

Like ramen, soba and udon noodles can be found everywhere. In train stations you will often see groups of Businessmen slurping a bowl of noodles before returning home. Being in Japan allows you the opportunity to practise and use your slurp. Often a sign of bad manners in our home countries, slurping in Japan is positively encouraged - the louder the slurp the better!

When ordering, specify whether you want soba or udon and then choose the topping or flavour you want:

- plain noodles
- fried tempura batter topping (lit. racoon!)
- fried tofu topping (lit. fox)
- raw egg and sea weed (lit. moon viewing)
- fish cake, bamboo shoots & wheat cake topping
- seaweed
- wild mushrooms
- mountain vegetables
- grated mountain potato
- stamina
- tempura
- grated daikon
- miso

plain noodles かけ
fried tempura batter topping tanuki
(fit. racoon!)
fried tofu topping kitsune
(raw. fox)
raw egg and sea weed tsukimi
(lit. moon viewing)
fish cake, bamboo shoots & okame
wheat cake topping
seaweed wakame
wild mushrooms nameko
mountain vegetables sansai
grated mountain potato yamakake
stamina sutamina
tempura tenpura
grated daikon oroshi
miso

If you want to order udon noodles with mountain vegetables, for example, then ask for: “sansai udon kudasai.” To order the above dishes cold, add “hiyashi” e.g. “hiyashi sansai udon.”
**Cold Noodles**
cold plain soba
large portion of the above
soba scattered with seaweed
soba with tempura
noodles in sesame vinegar with assorted vegetables

You will often find a small selection of rice dishes served at Soba and Noodle restaurants.

- rice
- Japanese curry and rice
- chicken and egg on rice
- fried pork on rice
- tempura on rice
- beef and egg on rice

- raisu
- kare-raisu
- oyako don
- katsu don
- ten don
- gyu don
10.10 An Izakaya Initiation..!

An Izakaya is the Japanese equivalent of a pub. They serve a wide selection of foods both Japanese and non-Japanese and of course a wide selection of alcoholic beverages. Not really the place for an intimate night out but great for a crowd. The key Japanese phrase necessary for such an establishment is “Nama bi-ru onegai shimasu,” give it a try and see what you get!

The food at Izakaya style restaurants tends to come in small snack-like portions and the key to ordering is to get a selection and share them. Most Izakaya restaurants are fairly cheap.

On the street, you can identify an Izakaya by the red lantern (aka chouchin) hanging outside. You may also see a statue of a well endowed tanuki (a kind of badger).

This list is by no means exhaustive. You may find some of the other menus in this section helpful when ordering at an Izakaya style restaurant. Some dishes on offer may be...

- raw fish
- assorted raw fish
- grilled aubergine
- asparagus wrapped in bacon
- deep fried tofu
- aubergine grilled with miso
- fried potato
- fried chicken
- fried squid legs
- tofu with radish and soy
- deep fried cheese
- aubergine grilled with cheese
- tomato salad
- fermented soy beans
- bowl of sweet corn with butter
- sausages
- meat and potato stew
- egg custard with vegetables and fish
- oden

- sashimi
- sashimi moriawase
- nasu yaki
- asupara be-con
- atsu age
- nasu dengaku
- poteto furai
- kara age
- geso kara age
- age dashi dofu
- cheezu age
- nasu cheezu
- hiyashi tomato
- natto
- bata-corn
- souseji
- niku jaga
- chawan mushi
- oden

- 刺身
- 刺身盛り合わせ
- なす焼き
- アスパラベーコン
- 厚揚げ
- なすでんぐく
- ポテトフライ
- から揚げ
- げそから揚げ
- 揚げだし豆腐
- チーズ揚げ
- なすチーズ
- 冷やしトマト
- 納豆
- バターコーン
- ソーセージ
- 肉じゃが
- 茶碗蒸し
- おでん
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>miso soup</td>
<td>みそ汁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese style salad</td>
<td>和風サラダ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese style salad</td>
<td>中華サラダ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seaweed salad</td>
<td>わかめサラダ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuna salad</td>
<td>ツナサラダ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raw vegetable platter</td>
<td>生野菜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice balls</td>
<td>おにぎり</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grilled rice balls</td>
<td>焼きおにぎり</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice with green tea broth</td>
<td>お茶づけ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fried udon noodles</td>
<td>やきそば</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese noodles</td>
<td>焼きうどん</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fried udon noodles</td>
<td>みそ汁</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.11 Bits on a stick…. yakitori and kushiage

Next to ramen, yakitori and kushi-age are the most popular after work snack. Yakitori is basically pieces of chicken, or parts of the chicken, on a skewer which are then barbecued. Kushi-age can be anything, meat, vegetables, fish, coated in breadcrumbs and deep fried. The way to order either yakitori or Kushi-age is to ask for the pieces individually or order a set selection. Again, the ever popular “nama bi-ru” compliments food of this kind.

Yaki Tori
grilled chicken
chicken and green onions
chicken breast
chicken cartilage
chicken wings
chicken meatballs
chicken skin
gizzard
heart
giblets
duck
sparrow

Yaki Tori
yaki tori
hasami(negima)
sasami
nankotsu
tebasaki
tskukune
kawa
sunagimo
hatsu
motsu
aigamo
suzume

Kushi-age
set meal
shrimp
scallop
squid
squid legs
shiitake mushrooms
lotus root
aubergine
tofu
cheese
onion
mushrooms wrapped in bacon
asparagus
beef
pork

Kushi-age
kushi age co-su
ebi
hotategai
ika
geso
shiitake
renkon
nasu
tofu
chi-zu
tamanegi
enoki bacon maki
asupara
gyu niku
buta niku

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### 10.12 Coffee Shops

*Western Food-
*Every damn plate
*Round

Anon (from a modern Satirical poem)

In Japan you can find coffee shops on almost every street corner offering a range of hot and cold drinks and foodstuffs. The food usually found in Coffee Shops is called in Japan “Yoshoku” which basically means “foreign foods,” though quite what country these are supposed to come from is never very clear. Japanese foreign food is definitely a culinary adventure in itself...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spaghetti meat sauce</td>
<td>supageti meet so-su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spaghetti carbonara</td>
<td>supageti carubonaara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spaghetti Neapolitan</td>
<td>supageti naporitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrimp gratin</td>
<td>ebi guratan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seafood gratin</td>
<td>shi-fuudo guratan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seafood and rice gratin</td>
<td>shi-fuudo doria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrimp pilaf</td>
<td>ebi pirafu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chicken pilaf</td>
<td>chikin pirafu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curry pilaf</td>
<td>dorai kare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curry and rice</td>
<td>kare raisu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat loaf</td>
<td>hanba-gu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salad</td>
<td>sarada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egg sandwich</td>
<td>tamago sando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ham sandwich</td>
<td>hamu sando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuna sandwich</td>
<td>tsuna sando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetable sandwich</td>
<td>yasai sando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed sandwich</td>
<td>mikkusu sando</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pizza toast</td>
<td>pizza to-suto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheese toast</td>
<td>cheezu to-suto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breakfast set</td>
<td>mornigusetto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pizza</td>
<td>piza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice pilaf wrapped in omelette</td>
<td>omuraisu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pancakes</td>
<td>hotto ke-ki</td>
<td>ホットケーキ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheese cake</td>
<td>cheezu ke-ki</td>
<td>チーズケーキ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chocolate cake</td>
<td>chocoreto ke-ki</td>
<td>チョコレートケーキ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coffee jelly</td>
<td>ko-hi zeri</td>
<td>コーヒゼリー</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruit parfait</td>
<td>furu-tsu pafe</td>
<td>フルーツパフェ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drinks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hot coffee</td>
<td>hotto co-hi</td>
<td>ホットコーヒー</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ice coffee</td>
<td>aisu co-hi</td>
<td>アイスコーヒー</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>café au lait</td>
<td>café o re</td>
<td>カフェオレ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tea</td>
<td>ko cha</td>
<td>紅茶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ice tea</td>
<td>aisu tea</td>
<td>アイスティー</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cocoa</td>
<td>cocoa</td>
<td>ココア</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orange juice</td>
<td>orenji jusu</td>
<td>オレンジジュース</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca cola</td>
<td>ko-ra</td>
<td>コーラ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melon soda</td>
<td>meron so-da</td>
<td>メロンソーダ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.13 Chain Restaurants in Japan
Or “I wonder what kind of food that place does...”

To say that there are a lot of restaurants in Japan would be an understatement. Tokyo alone has so many that if you dined out for lunch and dinner every day of your life you would have to live to the ripe old age of 109 to try them all! (There are an estimated 80,000 restaurants in Tokyo, for those who don’t want to do the maths!)

With so many places to choose from at mealtimes, making specific recommendations is tricky. Where possible we have included details of some of our favourite restaurants in the destination section of each town or city in your Info-Pack. This section however gives you an insight into the wide range of chain restaurants that exist in Japan, so that wherever you go, you will have no need to go hungry. Even the smallest town in Japan will have a couple of the options shown on the next few pages; larger cities will have them all! And before you start to worry, chain restaurants are consistently good in Japan. The country’s dense population and high regard for customer satisfaction mean that meals are prepared with care, using fresh ingredients and served with typical Japanese efficiency, along with outstanding customer service – with no tipping required! Chain restaurants also frequently offer either English menus, picture menus, or both, so ordering is simple. So if you find yourself lost in a sea of neon and unreadable Japanese script at mealtimes, take a look through the options here; chances are you are only a few paces away from a memorable meal! We have included the Japanese text for each place, so do show these pages to staff at your accommodation; they will be happy to point out those that are nearby.

Chain Izakaya
An izakaya is a Japanese pub-style restaurant. They offer a huge range of both food and drinks, and with their casual, relaxed atmosphere they can be one of the best options for evening meals, especially if different members of your group want to eat different things. Although there are of course lots of small, independent izakaya (look for the red lantern – a good clue) there are also a range of large izakaya chains, which do a very good job. These chains have the advantage that they almost always offer picture menus (and sometimes English menus), so ordering is made very easy. Look out for the following chains – all but the tiniest towns will have at least one of these, often found near train stations.
General Information

Shirokiya
白木や

Wara-Wara
笑笑

Yoronotaki
養老乃滝

Watami
わたみ

Doma Doma
土間土間

Akiyoshi (yakitori specialist)
秋吉
10.14 Other Japanese Options

**Coco Ichibanya**  
Coco 壱番屋カレーハウス  
A huge favourite in the IJT UK office, and all over Japan! ‘Kareraisu’ at its best; mild Japanese curry sauce over rice with a huge choice of tasty toppings! Be sure to ask for the English menu; one of the best we have seen in all of Japan—you won’t miss a thing. They also have the menu in French, Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, Korean, and Arabic...so no-one need miss out!

**Katsuya** かつや  
Tonkatsu (fried port cutlet) specialist. Top choice is the ‘hire’ (fillet), with a choice of ‘teishoku’ (main dish with rice, soup, salad and pickles on the side) or ‘katsudon’, a large bowl of rice with the meat piled on top. Try the creamy sesame dressing on your salad—mmm!

**Tenya** 天丼てんや  
Budget tempura specialist Picture menu, cheap, fast and cheerful. Look out for the giant prawn tempura; ask for jumbo ebi! (ジャンボー海老)

**Gyoza-no-Ohshou (“Gyoza King”!)** 餃子の王将  
Fantastic gyoza (pork and veg fried dumplings) plus a variety of Japan’s favourite Chinese dishes. Most branches have counter seats where you can watch the action as a team of chefs work furiously to keep the orders flying out—great fun.
Gyu-Kaku (Cow’s Horn) 牛角
‘Yakiniku’ – order plates of raw meat (and occasional veg) – cook ‘em at your table! Very friendly staff and sometimes an all you can drink option—ask for ‘nomihodai’ 飲み放題

Yoshinoya 吉野家
Possibly the cheapest restaurant in Japan! The first of three super-budget chains. A variety of meals on the topping-over-rice theme, with prices from just 300yen! The house special is ‘gyudon’, thinly sliced beef over a bowl of rice.

Sukiya すき屋
Similar to Yoshinoya but with a larger range of dishes and even a dedicated breakfast menu for a cheap morning fill. Prices around 500yen and options include curry-rice, soups and salads.

Matsuya 松屋
The third in this trilogy of cheap eats, same theme as Yoshinoya and Sukiya. Buy a meal ticket from the machine near the door before taking a seat and handing over your ticket.
**Kappa Sushi** かっぱ寿司
Conveyor-belt (‘kaiten’) sushi chain. The newest stores deliver your order by Shinkansen bullet train! Pick what you like from the conveyor belt or consult the touch-screen tv menus for special requests—and look out for that bullet train! Great fun for kids (and big kids!)

**Conveyor Belt Sushi** 回転すし
Easy to spot from the lines of people sat around a corner with plates of sushi making their merry way around the conveyor belt. Grab a seat, take your pick of what looks good, and pay for the plates you eat. Many places do plates at just 108 yen each – 100yen plus tax!

**Convenience Stores** コンビニ
Ever-reliable, cheap, found everywhere and open all hours the convenience store is the place to go for budget food on the run – and the food is GOOD! Forget what you’ve seen back home - there is huge competition to provide the tastiest, freshest snacks and meals to Japan’s office staff, construction workers, school kids and of course, visiting foreigners! Sandwiches from 200yen, ready-meals 400-600yen.
10.15 A Taste of Home

Even the most determined “I’m here to try Japanese cuisine” visitor can find themselves craving something a little more familiar to eat after a week or so away from home. Here are a few places that offer something akin to Western cuisine. Remember however, these restaurants exist to give the Japanese a taste of something unusual and different, not to give homesick foreigners a truly authentic Italian/Chinese/American meal! Go in with an adventurous attitude and you will have a great time!

**Saizeriya**
サイゼリヤ
Italian food at bargain prices! Also a ‘Drink Bar’ which allows you free access to a dozen or so soft drinks, hot and cold.

**Gusto / Skylark**
ガスト・すかいらーく
An eclectic mix of international flavours. Usually a drink bar on offer (see left).

**Bamiyan**
バーミヤン
Chinese food, including some of the best (and cheapest) gyoza around!

**MOS Burger**
モスバーガー
Japan’s answer to the Golden Arches – but better and fresher. Rice burgers available for the vegetarians!
Bikkuri Donkey
びっくりドンキー
Hamburgers and steak. The name means “surprise donkey” – make your own joke about the meat!

Grazie Gardens
グラッチェ・ガーデンズ
Italian food, similar to Saizeriya.
10.16 Kampai!! A guide to the drinks menu...

It may surprise some to know that the Japanese like their beer – a lot. Beer and other alcoholic beverages are widely available - even from vending machines - and drinking in the evening with your work colleagues is a popular way to unwind and also provides an informal forum in which to discuss work politics. The best thing about drinking in Japan is that tales of drunken antics are never related the next day, meaning that you can make a complete fool of yourself, and it will all be forgotten about the next morning...

Japanese bars offer much the same selection of drinks as bars you would find back home. You will find the usual beers, wines and spirits and as well as sake and sake based “alco-pops.” There are also many places where alcohol can be consumed. The most popular places are Izakaya, beer gardens in the summer, smaller bars, karaoke snack bars, and seedier places where drinks are not the only thing on offer. Generally speaking you won’t pay a cover charge at an Izakaya or Beer Garden but you may have to in a smaller bar. Karaoke bars give you the chance to strut your stuff whilst under the influence but don’t usually charge extra for the privilege. “Snack Bar”, basically equals hostess bar and you will pay a hefty cover charge or pay more for drinks.

Drinking etiquette is a little different in Japan. In smaller bars you may attract the attention of a slightly inebriated businessman keen to practice his English. If this is the case, you are in for a fun night. In a bar, customers often pour drinks for each other from bottles of beer as a gesture of companionship. If you are a fellow beer drinker, reciprocate with your own bottle. A whiskey drinker may invite you to drink from his bottle and fix a drink for you. In this case, you need not reciprocate unless you have your own bottle.

The only Japanese necessary for a great night out is Kampai! かんぱい (cheers!) A selection of alcoholic drinks can be found below. Please refer to the coffee shops section for non-alcoholic drinks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>draft beer</td>
<td>本生ビール</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium sized</td>
<td>生中ビール</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large draft</td>
<td>生大ビール</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark malt</td>
<td>黒ビール</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bottled</td>
<td>メロンソーダビール</td>
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### General Information

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<th>Red Wine</th>
<th>White Wine</th>
<th>Glass of Wine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wine</td>
<td>aka wine</td>
<td>shiro wine</td>
<td>gurasu wine</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese Drinks</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sake</td>
<td>nihon shu</td>
<td>日本酒</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquor made from grain</td>
<td>shouchu</td>
<td>焼酎</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chu-hai (shochu based fruit flavoured drink)</th>
<th>lemon</th>
<th>oolong tea</th>
<th>plum</th>
<th>green apple</th>
<th>apricot</th>
<th>lime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chu-hai</td>
<td>remon</td>
<td>oorong cha</td>
<td>ume</td>
<td>ao ringo</td>
<td>anzu</td>
<td>raimu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spirits</th>
<th>vodka</th>
<th>gin</th>
<th>bourbon</th>
<th>scotch</th>
<th>rum</th>
<th>gin and tonic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uokka</td>
<td>gin</td>
<td>ba-bon</td>
<td>sucocchi</td>
<td>ramu</td>
<td>gintoniku</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soft Drinks</th>
<th>oolong tea</th>
<th>coke</th>
<th>ginger ale</th>
<th>orange juice</th>
<th>lemon soda</th>
<th>melon soda</th>
<th>grapefruit juice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oorong cha</td>
<td>kora</td>
<td>jinja aaru</td>
<td>orenji juusu</td>
<td>reomon souda</td>
<td>meron souda</td>
<td>gurepufuruitsu juusu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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10.17 The truth about Japanese wine

We have to be honest and say that if you are passionate about wine you may at first be disappointed by Japan’s seemingly limited offering. However, our assessment is largely unfair and is based on our limited experience of ordering mediocre wines in izakaya type establishments and judging by what can readily be found in Japan’s supermarkets which does in no way represent the quality wines that do exist. It is fair to say that wines commonly found in supermarkets and convenience stores tend to be lower quality imports (despite the often high price tag) so this is not the place to cast assertions. You also rarely find the vast selection of wines that are now commonplace in supermarkets in the West these days. We recommend doing a bit of prior research to seek out the best quality and choice to avoid disappointment.

Below we have listed some of our recommendations kindly provided by Yuki San who grew up in Tokyo and has a keen passion for wine. Yuki’s husband, Ben is South African and is a wine connoisseur offering wine tasting courses in Bristol so they know their stuff!

Wine shop/restaurant
Usually I go to this wine Shop/restaurant when I go back to Tokyo:

4F Fudou-Koruteli, 2-1-33 Fudou, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 156-0052
東京都世田谷区経堂 2-1-33 経堂コルティ 4F 156-0052
t. 03-3425-1222
Opening: Everyday except 1st January

The shop stocks many Japanese Wines and offers tasting sessions. The General Manager is very friendly and has experience of working in the hospitality industry in Japan – including working for a Michelin Stared restaurant.

Wineries
Kousyuu (Yamanashi) is one of the best wine producing regions in Japan. Chateau Mercian (Owned by dominant drinks manufacturer KIRIN) makes good wines from a variety of grapes including Kosyuu and Muscat Berry:
http://www.chateaumercian.com/

1425-1, Shimoiwasaki, Katsunuma You, Kousyuu-Shi, Yamanashi 409-1313
409-1313 山梨県甲州市勝沼町下 岩崎 1425-1
Tel: 0553-44-1001  FAX:0553-44-0428
Opening: 9:30am ~16:30pm
Closed:Every Tuesday, New Year Holiday closed

If you want to try wine made of these grapes, we recommended **Katsunuma Kosyuu 勝沼甲州** for its crispy, grassy and aromatic notes.


Chateau Merican also produce fantastic Syrah and Merlot

More to come... we are very keen to add to this section, so please do let us know if you come across interesting Japanese wines and of course where you tried them!
11. Social customs

One of the great things about visiting a foreign country is experiencing a different way of doing everyday things. However, it can take some getting used to and there is also plenty of scope for faux pas and embarrassment if you do things wrong. Of course, the Japanese are extremely friendly people and always keen to show you the Japanese way, but following our brief guide to social customs could help you smooth over any potentially awkward moments.

Bathing
The Onsen experience is one that every visitor to Japan should try. Bathing is very much a part of Japanese culture, however there is of course a protocol to be followed in bathing and it’s best to read up before taking a dip. Here is our guide to bathing in Japanese onsen.

In a Japanese bath, an extra-deep tub is filled to the top with very hot water, in which you sit submerged up to the neck. Most people spend about half an hour in the bath every night. Most children take their baths with their father or mother until they are in the upper grades of elementary school. The family tub is an important place for parent-child communication.

Why did Japan develop its particular style of bathing? One answer might be the climate. Japan's summers are hot and humid, and its winters are cold. Hot baths wash the body's sweat off in the summer and warm the body up in the winter. Another answer might be Japan's volcanoes. Japan is famous for its number of volcanoes, many of which are still active. In many places, hot water bubbles up from underground. These hot springs, and the presence of many fast flowing rivers with clean water, have influenced the development of Japan's bath culture.

Japanese use their baths not only to get clean but to maintain their health by warming themselves up and stimulating their circulation. Because the body is washed outside the bath, the bath water stays clean and deeply refreshing. In the hot springs or the public bath, everybody bathes in the same water, creating an unclothed companionship that facilitates amiable communication. In a bath, you can relax, recover from exhaustion, and rid yourself of stress. No wonder the Japanese love their baths.
Public Bath (Sentō)
Large public baths are fixtures in many urban neighborhoods. Their existence is recorded as far back as the mid-eighth century, when they began as free bath facilities for the community of people in residence at large temples. Men and women at this time used the same bath. In the Edo period (1603-1867), about 600 public baths provided washing facilities and places for socializing for the more than one million people who lived in the city of Edo (now Tokyo). Public baths were an essential part of most people's lives until the 1970s, by which time most households had their own baths as did many more apartments. The number of public baths nationwide declined from more than 23,000 in 1964 to fewer than 10,000 in 1991.

Modern public baths have separate facilities for men and women. Admittance is about 360 yen. Some of the more up-to-date places also have a sauna and other health facilities.

Japan is one of the few places in the world where groups of people bathe together. Many people with baths in their own homes still visit the sento in search of a place to socialize with their neighbors. Among the young set, however, bathing communally has become a source of embarrassment, and children on overnight school trips are sometimes seen wearing their bathing suits into the bath. Perhaps Japan's bath culture is changing.

Hot Springs (Onsen)
Hot springs, or onsen, are 25°C or hotter and have a certain amount of mineral content. As of 1990, 2,300 hot springs in Japan met these criteria. Full of sulphur, calcium, sodium, and other minerals, the water is efficacious against rheumatism, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses. The medical powers of hot springs are recorded as far back as the eighth-century. Buddhist priests also used hot springs as part of a ceremony of purification. The areas around famous hot springs support large resorts with numerous inns and hotels. One can also enjoy nature while soaking in an outdoor hot springs bath known as a rotenburo. Travel magazines often carry special features on hot springs, and hot springs tours run by travel agents are popular with young and old alike.

You can try some of the most famous hot springs from the comfort of your own tub. Just tear open a store-bought packet of minerals named after the hot spring of your choice and pour into your bath. But beware - the colour and aroma of such commercial bath salts usually have nothing to do with the real thing.
Bath Etiquette

Here we will introduce our recommended approach to taking a Japanese bath.

The most important thing to remember is that the bath is for soaking in only and NOT for washing in. You should therefore wash and rinse thoroughly using the provided showers or faucets before going into the bath.

1. Wash thoroughly using the showers or faucets. You can sit on the provided small stools to do this. Do not sit directly with your bottom on the floor. Wash your hair if you like.

2. Rinse thoroughly using the showers or faucet in order not to take any soap suds into the bath tub.

3. Soak in the bath tub (remove the water cover if there is one first). The water temperature should be between 38 and 42 degrees centigrade, and the water should be deep enough that an adult can sit submerged up to the neck. Fifty years ago the bath tubs were made of wood, but nowadays they are made of tile, plastic or stainless steel.

4. No towels are allowed in the water but you can use a small vanity towel (size of a hand towel) to cover yourself as you approach the bath or to wrap around your head when in the bath. Tie up long hair to avoid letting it hang in the water.

5. Never pull out the plug, and if the bathwater was covered then please replace the cover so that the water remains hot for the next person.

You can get into and out of the bath as many times as you like and many larger bath houses will have saunas and cold plunge baths to enjoy! Please also be aware that unfortunately, due to strong associations in Japan between tattoos and gang membership, most onsen do not allow customers with tattoos. However if your tattoo is only small, it is fine to cover it with a plaster. It is also not recommended for women to use public baths during their period.
Language Immersion

Bath-Inspired Vocabulary

**Yukata** 浴衣 (Bathing Clothes) A summer kimono made of cotton. In the Heian period (794-1185), it was used as an after-bath robe, but by the Edo period it became summer casual wear. Today, yukata are worn both at summer festivals or for fireworks displays and at inns and hotels in place of pajamas.

**Hadaka no Tsukiai** 裸の付き合い (Naked Companionship) A friendship in which nothing is hidden, as when people take a bath naked together.

**Furoshiki** 風呂敷 (Bath Spread) A 70- to 220-square cm piece of silk or cotton cloth. In the Edo period, people would wrap their washbowls in these clothes to take to the public bath; when they changed clothes they would stand on one of these spread on the floor and then wrap their clothes in the cloth. That's how the furoshiki got its name. This multipurpose cloth can be used to wrap and carry anything of any shape, from vegetables to a jar. Nowadays, the furoshiki has been replaced as a way of carrying things by bags.

**Yumizu** 湯水 (Hot and Cold Water)
Something that is everywhere. Example: He uses money like hot and cold water (in English: as if it grew on trees; as if it were water).

Reference: Wagaya no Ofuro 50 Nen-shi 1995, Furo Bunka Kenkyuukai
Original text: *The Japan Forum Newsletter* No.6 "A day in The Life" June 1996.
Upon Reaching your Ryokan (or any Japanese house)
Take your shoes off just as you walk in the entrance (right before where the slippers are placed) and put on the slippers. The slippers are used for walking inside the ryokan on the corridor, lobby, dining hall and to the bath. The shoes are handled by the ryokan and will be placed at the entrance when you wish to go out. For short strolls near the ryokan you can use the ryokan's sandal or geta (wooden clogs).

Unlike western style hotels, ryokan are not open around the clock. The front lobby and entrance will close at a certain time. Confirm that time and if you should foresee a delay, inform the ryokan of this. Furthermore, the check-in/check-out times differ with various ryokans so it's wise to confirm this with the ryokan.

Inside the room
When you open the door to your room take off your slippers before getting on to the tatami (straw mat floor.) Do not walk on the tatami with your slippers. The tatami is always stepped upon barefoot or with your socks. The rule of thumb is you can squat or lie down on the tatami. In a standard Japanese room there will be a table and cushions (zabuton).

A yukata (robe) is also provided for each person. You can use this as a robe as well as pyjamas, and you may wear it outside of your room. During cold periods you will also be provided with an outer robe (tanzen) to wear over the yukata. Always wear the tanzen over the yukata. (Not the other way around!!)

On the wall of a Japanese room there will generally be a tokonoma (alcove), and at the window a shoji (paper sliding screen.) You should remember that the tokonoma is for placing flower vases and hanging scrolls and is not to be used as a storage room: please enquire as to where to place your luggage. The shoji as you will see is made of paper, therefore, on rainy days or at night be sure to close the outside glass window. In ryokan you won’t find a bed - the Japanese normally sleep on futons. Sleeping on quilts laid out directly on the tatami (straw mat) will give a different experience from sleeping on beds.
Eating
First of all we'll cover using chopsticks or ‘hashi’ as they are known in Japanese. Don’t worry if you are no chopstick expert, a little practice really does go a long way. Lots of Japanese children still struggle with chopsticks come the ages of nine or ten. However, it might be as well to have a go before you visit Japan as many Japanese style restaurants and noodle bars will not have knives and forks available (and however bad your chopstick control may be, it’s probably less embarrassing than eating your noodles with your fingers!!). Also, remember never to pass food between chopsticks (i.e from your set to the person sat next to you) as this is part of a ritual associated with death. Another death related symbol is standing a pair of chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice. Leaving your chopsticks in this manner may cause offence (as anyone who's seen 'Wolverine' should know!!). Finally, when taking food from a communal dish, turn the chopsticks upside down and use the part that has not been in your mouth to select items.

You’ll probably visit a noodle bar during your stay in Japan (especially if you’ve decided to join one of our guided tours - because our ‘buddies’ love ramen!). You’ll hear all manner of slurping noises going on around you. This may not be the done thing in the West but in Japan this is the way to show a true appreciation of your food. No slurp indicates No like so get slurping and show the cook how much you appreciate his efforts! And when all your noodles are gone, feel free to pick up your bowl and devour the delicious stock.

Oshibori
In most Japanese restaurants you will immediately be presented with a hot (or cool in the summer) wet towel. This oshibori should be used to wipe the hands clean before dining. If you want to use the oshibori to wipe your face, remember its hands first then face. And never blow your nose into your oshibori! It's considered rude in Japan to blow your nose at the table at all, so always head to the toilets to do so.

Drinking
When drinking in public, always allow someone else to fill your glass (tricky if there are just two of you), and never allow the glasses of your companions to become completely empty – although that is unlikely as your companion will probably wait patiently for a top up! It is customary to pour for your seniors.
Drinking culture
While the Japanese have reputations as heavy drinkers, some Japanese do practice a kind of "one-drink maximum" rule. However, many others do not - aided by the knowledge that what is done whilst drunk and outside the office, will generally (unless it’s illegal) not be held against you in the morning when you get to work. It is appropriate to exercise moderation (and, oddly, to have some beverage remaining in your glass when you're ready to leave the establishment)..... Happy dining!
Japanese Toilets

So on to the tricky issue of the traditional Japanese-style toilet. When presented with this porcelain trough, with not a hint of a seat in sight, the question immediately springs to mind of how on earth one is supposed to use this contraption.

However, do not fear, for what follows is a brief, easy to understand, but fortunately not overly detailed set of instructions. Hopefully, with a bit of luck they should prove to be your complete solution to a potentially embarrassing situation.

Japanese style toilets may be encountered anywhere. Lots of restaurants, bars, and ryokan have Western style facilities. However, there are some that don’t.

The receptacle is usually on a raised floor. The opening is rectangular with a sort of hood over one end.

Climb up on the raised floor and stand flat-footed astride the opening with your face towards the hood. Then bend down into a crouching or squatting position, making sure that your rear is over the opening and not protruding beyond it. The position may not be comfortable but it is sanitary because no part of your body comes in direct contact with the fixings. For men, you can relieve yourself by standing on the lower floor and aiming for the opening. Please aim carefully!

The most commonly heard word for toilet is **ote-arai** and **to-ire** (pronounced oh-tay-arae and toe-ee-ray). To ask for the washroom, simply say "toire doko?" (Toilet, where?). The word for toilet easiest to remember is **benjo**, pronounced like two Western first names: ben-joe. However, priggish people object to the word just like some Westerners avoid the word "toilet".

As for the high tech toilets with dials, buttons, displays and some with remote controls, these are best explored yourself. Have fun!
12. Our Essential Guide to Japanese

First off, don’t be scared to give Japanese a go. Yes it’s hard when you are used to European languages but it is quite logical. You will be surprised at how much English and other foreign words have been adapted in to the Japanese language. This helps a lot for basic understanding – especially for ordering food and drinks. Most people will be shocked that you have made the effort so learning Japanese can be extremely rewarding once you master the basics.

Japanese is a combination of 3 systems of writing: Kanji （漢字）which are Chinese ideograms and the phonetic syllabaries Katakana （カタカナ）and Hiragana（ひらがな）. This sounds a nightmare and in all honesty it is! However, it does make complete sense once you begin to learn the importance of the characters. The following is a brief overview of the Japanese language intended to help you enjoy your trip. Learning some of the words and phrases we’ve included would come in handy in all sorts of situations, but don’t feel overwhelmed if it seems like too much information—you don’t have to memorize all of it (unless you’re really ambitious)! Japanese people are always keen to practise their English with foreigners, which can be helpful if you’re in a bit of a jam; but beat them to it and try out some Japanese; they will no doubt be very surprised and very appreciative!

12.1 Pronunciation

The pronunciation of Japanese is very straightforward; all the letters and syllables are pronounced as described below and there are no silent letters, but when a word ends in -su it is mostly contracted to -ss. So for example toire meaning toilet is pronounced 'toy re' and ohayo gozaimasu meaning good morning is 'oh high oh gozaimass'.

***A note on long vowels***

Long vowels in Japanese are different than those in the English language. In English, a short vowel is pronounced entirely differently than its long counterpart. In Japanese however, a long vowel is pronounced the same as a regular one; the sound is simply sustained twice as long.
Regular vowels

a = “ah”  
i = “ee”  
u = “oo” (like foot)  
e = “eh”  
o = (like okay)

ae as in two separate sounds ah-eh  
ai as in thai  
ie as in two separate sounds ee-eh  
ue as in two separate sounds oo-eh  
oi as in voice  
g a hard sound in girl  
s as in mass (not z)  
y as in yet  
n as in garden

12.2 General words

Please  
Thank you  
(very much)  
That was a great meal  
Yes  
No  
Ok

Kudasai/onegaishimasu  
Domo arigato  
(gozaimasu)  
gochisō sama deshita  
hai  
iie/chigaimasu  
ökē

I’m [insert nationality]  
British  
American  
Canadian  
Australian

[insert country] jin desu  
igirisu  
amerika  
canada  
osutoraria

Greetings

Hello  
Good morning  
Goodnight  
Goodbye  
How are you?  
I’m fine/healthy  

konnichiwa  
ohayō gozaimasu  
oyasumi nasai  
sayōnara  
O genki desu ka?  
genki desu

こんにちは  
おはようございます  
おやすみなさい  
さよなら  
お元気ですか  
元気です
12.3 Emergencies

Nobody wants to think of something bad happening to them while they’re enjoying their travels, but it’s always better to be prepared! Here are some phrases you can use in case of emergency:

(Please) Help!
I need to go to hospital

ensation (kudasai)!
Byōin ni tsurete ite kudasai

Please call ...
An ambulance
The police

Please call ...
... o yonde kudasai
kyūkyū-sha keisatsu

(Please) Help!
I need to go to hospital

ensation (kudasai)!
Byōin ni tsurete ite kudasai

Please call ...
An ambulance
The police

(Please) Help!
I need to go to hospital

ensation (kudasai)!
Byōin ni tsurete ite kudasai

Please call ...
An ambulance
The police

12.4 Medical Information

We hope you won’t get sick while travelling in Japan, but here is some helpful Japanese just in case:

Body parts (Internal organs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>shinzō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lung</td>
<td>hai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stomach</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pancreas</td>
<td>suizō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intestine</td>
<td>chō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liver</td>
<td>kanzō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kidney</td>
<td>jinzō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bladder</td>
<td>bōkō</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medical supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>painkillers</td>
<td>itamidome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penicillin</td>
<td>penisirin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirin</td>
<td>asupirin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ointment</td>
<td>nankōyaku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanitary pads</td>
<td>seiriyōnapukin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plasters</td>
<td>bansōkō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bandages</td>
<td>hōtai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m ill!</td>
<td>koko ga itai desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It hurts here</td>
<td>ここが痛いです</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am bleeding</td>
<td>Shukketsu desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a broken bone</td>
<td>Kossetsu desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a burn</td>
<td>Yakedo desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel sick</td>
<td>kimochi ga warui desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a fever</td>
<td>netsu ga arimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a cold</td>
<td>kaze o hikimashita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a cough</td>
<td>seki ga demasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel dizzy</td>
<td>memai ga shimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that I have eaten something bad</td>
<td>nanika henna monoo tabeta to omoimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have diabetes</td>
<td>watashi wa tōnyōbyō desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asthma</td>
<td>watashi wa zensoku mochi desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m pregnant</td>
<td>watashi wa ninshin siteimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (don’t) have health insurance</td>
<td>watashi wa hoken ni haitte imasu(imasen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>我は健康保険に入っています(せん)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Sustainable Tourism
- doing your bit in Japan

The concept of sustainable tourism may seem to be less relevant when travelling in Japan than in other parts of the world. You are unlikely to see evidence of widespread poverty, environmental degradation or exploitation of people or animals during your time in Japan. However there are plenty of ways in which a little thought can go a long way in reducing any negative impact your trip to Japan may have on the country, whether environmental, social or economic.

Environmental – Reducing waste

Litter
Litter is conspicuous by its absence from the streets of Japanese cities – generally speaking! The Japanese are well disciplined in taking their litter home with them, or making sure that it finds its way to the appropriate bin or recycling box, so please do your best to do likewise! A convenience store is the best bet for litter bins/trash cans (and you'll be lucky to find one anywhere else!)

Plastic Bags
Presentation is everything in Japan, and whatever you purchase will be carefully wrapped, wrapped and possibly wrapped again before you are allowed to carry it out of the shop. Please do your bit by refusing bags wherever they are not required.

Disposable Chopsticks (waribashi 割り箸)
The widespread use of disposable wooden chopsticks may seem like a senseless waste, but a little history and culture is necessary here. Back in the day only royalty and the well off could afford to use a fresh set of unused chopsticks at each meal while the poorer masses used and reused theirs. Later, making a few sets of chopsticks was a thrifty way to use up waste wood left over from making furniture or other large items. Today however vast areas of forest are being destroyed to make enough disposable chopsticks for each of Japan’s 20 million populations to use nearly 200 pairs a year. Much of this wood comes from overseas, along with many of Japan’s natural resources, having a huge environmental impact. However in Japan where the customer is king, providing a fresh set of chopsticks shows that you are respecting your customer, with the
wastage being a secondary issue.

You can make a difference by carrying your own chopsticks. 100yen stores have a colourful selection, or check out the Tokyu Hands department store in Shinjuku or Shibuya, Tokyo for a range of handy extendable chopsticks with their own carrying case! A couple in Japan for two weeks eating out twice a day would get through 50 pairs of wooden chopsticks, so you CAN make a difference!

**Bottles of drink**
If you are in Japan during the warmer months you may find you get through rather a lot of plastic bottles, especially if you take advantage of the army of vending machines that are ever-present in Japan. Although most of these bottles do find their way to the recycling plant you can cut down on the bottles considerably by refilling one or two with water from your hotel before heading out. Most hotels have a water cooler in the lobby, or will be happy to fill bottles for you. Tap water is very safe to drink in Japan, so you can even just fill up in your room.

**Heating / Air conditioning**
If you are in Japan during summer or winter you are likely to be very thankful for one of the above. However, you can do your bit to reduce the use of heating/cooling systems and still keep your room at a pleasant temperature. In Japanese-style accommodation you may find that the attentive staff will switch on the heating/air con in advance of your return in order to have the room pleasant for your return. Exactly how far in advance of your return your suitcase, spare clothes and toothbrush are enjoying this pleasant temperature is hard to know, but if you are happy to wait a few minutes while your room temperature adjusts on your return, and can get your point across to staff, request that they don’t turn on the heater/air-con in advance of your return.
Social – Getting on with the locals
Many people are concerned at the proliferation of opportunities for committing social gaffes and causing offence to the Japanese while in their country. There are certainly plenty of rules of etiquette and social conventions, but on the whole you are unlikely to cause grave offence. However it is good to be prepared and know a few small things that you can do to show respect to Japanese customs and social conventions.

Shoes
There will of course be many occasions on which you are asked/expected to remove your shoes in Japan. Sometimes these occasions will be more obvious than others, but as a general rule if you are entering a building and stepping up onto a higher level you are likely to have to take your shoes off. Your shoes should come off at this step up, not just anywhere within the general vicinity, so taking 10 steps into the building then taking them off is no good; nor is being over-prepared and taking your shoes off ten paces in advance of the building and walking your socks up the path and into the building! Another easy rule to remember is that you should never be wearing anything other than socks on your feet when on tatami matting – bare feet are fine, shoes are definitely not!

Tipping
This is generally not done in Japan. Leaving coins behind at a restaurant or in a taxi will likely lead to confusion and you may find yourself in an awkward situation where the recipient tries desperately to return the tip to you. You are better off simply enjoying the good service and offering a big ‘thank you’ (in your best Japanese of course!) afterwards. If a particular member of staff goes out of their way (especially over a number of days, such as hotel staff) to help you, then a small cash gift (1000-2000yen), carefully folded and sealed in an envelope is an appropriate gift. For more spontaneous acts of kindness any small items from your home country, such as stamps, coins, photographs or postcards will be warmly received.

Bargaining/haggling
Again this simply does not take place in Japan. The price shown will be a fair reflection of the value of the goods and by showing unwillingness to pay this amount you may cause confusion, if not offence.

The only exception to this rule is if you are making a significant purchase (over 10,000yen), where a discreet enquiry may get you a 5-10% discount.
Economic - Spreading the money around

Poverty may not be a word that you immediately associate with Japan, but while it is one of the richest countries in the world, and the vast majority of people have a comfortable standard of living, things are not the same for everyone across the country.

Rural Areas
Rural areas in Japan have been suffering from depopulation for a number of years, as youngsters leave for the bright lights of the cities and large agricultural corporations squeeze out small local farmers and their livelihoods. Some rural areas are turning to tourism as an alternative source of income and by spending some of your time and money outside of the major cities you will be supporting those who have suffered from the negative effects of depopulation.

Local businesses
Despite the dominance of huge corporate conglomerate companies there are still a huge number of local, family-run businesses in Japan. Your accommodation may well already be arranged for you, but where you spend your money at mealtimes can make a difference. Walking into a mysterious local restaurant where you may become the centre of attention may not be for everyone, but if you are prepared to give it a go you will almost always be rewarded with endless kindness, enthusiasm, and perhaps even a free cup of sake from the salaryman in the corner! Picture menus and plastic food displays make ordering a doddle; remember that it is hard to find a bad meal in Japan and foreigners being ripped off are almost unheard of, so relax and give it a go!
Tohoku earthquake and tsunami relief fund

On March 11th 2011, the biggest earthquake ever to hit Japan (and the fifth biggest earthquake in recorded history) hit the Tohoku region, measuring a magnitude of 9.0. This was quickly followed by a devastating tsunami. Waves of up to 40 metres, the same height as a 14 storey building, travelled up to 10km inland. Approximately 16,000 people are known to be dead or missing as a result and tens of thousands of people were made homeless.

It’s a testament to the stoicism and organisational skills of the Japanese that within a matter of days roads had been cleared and temporary accommodation set up. However a full clean-up operation will take years and an estimated bill of £350 billion.

In 2011 we raised over £25,000 for the Japanese NGO, Civic Force who were at the forefront of relief efforts in Tohoku. The charity provided initial emergency shelter to victims and has since been involved in the strategic distribution of volunteers, essential goods and funds to those most in need.

Bristol & Boulder Half Marathons
Exactly six months after the tsunami, eight InsideJapan staff ran the Bristol Half Marathon raising extra funds for Civic Force through sponsorship. Split into two teams, the ‘Samurai Striders’ and the ‘Wasabi Warriors’, all eight completed the 13.1 mile course in times ranging from 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours 40 minutes; a great effort! Not willing to be left out, Mat Eccles manager of our Colorado office, ran the Boulder Half Marathon in under 90 minutes on a very hilly course!

Compared to the West, charity donations by individuals are rare in Japan; most people expect donations to come from companies, or from government taxes, so charities face a huge challenge in increasing awareness and raising funds. We are proud to have supported Civic Force since the Tohoku Tsunami.

It’s Just Not Mud
In 2012 we decided to lend our support to a small grassroots organisation working in the tsunami devastated town of Ishinomaki. ‘It’s Just Not Mud’ was set up by a young British man, Jamie El Banna, who is working tirelessly to coordinate Japanese and Western volunteers in the big clean up; removing mud and debris from homes, schools and local businesses. Jamie and his team also help out in temporary housing shelters, supporting the local community through the organisation of educational events and distribution of free goods.
To find out more about ‘It’s Not Just Mud’ and make a donation please visit their website: www.itsnotjustmud.com

Previous charity work
In previous years we have supported the Shinshu Asiatic Black Bear Study Group and the Tyler Foundation (a child cancer charity in Japan), as well as the Cots of Tots campaign and The Travel Foundation both based in our hometown of Bristol, UK. For more information please look at our website: www.insidejapantours.com/sustainable-tourism
AiTO Sustainable Tourism Policy
As Members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AiTO) we at InsideJapan Tours have a commitment to ensure that we practise and promote sustainable tourism.

AiTO has produced 5 key guideline objectives for its members:

1. To protect the environment – its flora, fauna and landscapes

2. To respect local cultures – traditions, religions and built heritage

3. To benefit local communities – both economically and socially

4. To conserve natural resources – from office to destination

5. To minimise pollution – through noise, waste disposal and congestion

In addition to these guidelines we believe that educating people about Japan and the Japanese people before and during their trip is the key to giving people a better understanding of the country, its population and the possible impacts their visit may have on both.

AiTO, the Association of Independent Tour Operators, is an organisation representing over 150 of Britain's best specialist tour operators. For more details go to www.aito.co.uk