

## SOME TIPS FOR TRAVELLING IN JAPAN



This document has been created just for help people to have a general idea of some required things in case of travelling in Japan. We strongly recommend you to check the official documents and official responsible offices (es: Embassy, etc) in your local country and also in Japan by the responsible Japanese authorities for the official information and the most detailed and updated news.

### **About Entry and Immigration Requirements:**

#### **Entry Requirements - Passport Validity**

You must hold a valid passport to enter Japan. Your passport must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay and acceptable to the immigrations authorities. Be careful to check in advance all the procedures to receive or update your passport, to have required eventually specific documents, visa, etc with your local public entities and consider that in some countries is also required an additional period of passport's validity beyond this.

A specific visa issued by the Government of Japan can be also required in some cases. However, a visa is not required for natives from 61 countries and regions with which the Government of Japan has a Visa Exemption Arrangement, and whose visit is within 90 days (length may vary according to country) of stay for tourism, business, visiting friends or relatives but not to be engaged in any income-earning activity.

If you are coming from a country that has not concluded a Visa Exemption Arrangement with the Japanese Government, or if the purpose of your visit is for medical stay, long-term or work, you will need to apply for a visa at the Japanese Embassy or Consulate General in your native country.

For details: [http://www.mofa.go.jp/j\\_info/visit/visa/index.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/index.html)

#### **Entry Requirements - Entry Procedures**

Prior to your arrival in Japan, a blank DISEMBARKATION/EMBARKATION card will be distributed to you on the plane which you need to fill out before proceeding to the immigration gate. Be sure to have available with you at what hotel/place will you be staying in Japan included of address and telephone number. The officer will collect the disembarkation part and staple the embarkation portion onto your passport on the page where the seal of "Landing Permit" is stamped. When leaving Japan, you will need to show this stapled portion to the immigration officer for him to collect, so it is important that you do not lose it. You can find an example of the form here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/anaguma/5501454566/lightbox/>

When entering Japan, you will also need to clear customs, which is done by filling out the CUSTOMS DECLARATION card handed to you on the plane. If you have items to declare or unaccompanied baggage(duplicate forms are needed) this form is important. The following is a short description of examples you must declare: unaccompanied articles, prohibited articles (narcotic drugs, marihuana, firearms, explosives, counterfeits, pornography, articles that infringe on intellectual property rights, etc.), restricted articles (hunting guns, swords, internationally protected endangered animals and plants, live animals, plants, meat products, vegetables, fruit, rice, etc.), goods exceeding duty-free allowance, commercial goods or samples, items requested by someone else to carry into Japan. You can find an example of the form here: [http://www.customs.go.jp/kaisei/youshiki/form\\_C/C5360-B.pdf](http://www.customs.go.jp/kaisei/youshiki/form_C/C5360-B.pdf)

Since November 2007, in accordance with a partial amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, all foreign visitors entering Japan must be FINGERPRINTED and DIGITALLY PHOTOGRAPHED during entry procedures. Those refusing to be fingerprinted or photographed will be denied entry to Japan. Persons under the age of 16 years are exempt.

### **Entry Requirements - Travelling with Children**

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries, including Japan, may ask to see documentary evidence of parental responsibility before allowing the children to enter or leave the country.

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### **About General Issues:**

#### **General – Health**

It is better to take with you a stock of general personal medicines that can cover you in different health aspects avoiding contraindications due to the use of different medicines.

Besides, if you have a pre-existing medical condition, please be sure to take with you the specific medicines you will need. Ensure your medication is legal in the country you are visiting – contact the Embassy of the country to which you are travelling.

A consult with your doctor before travelling is also advisable.

When you are in Japan you can find drug-stores that sell a lot of generic medicines and/or dedicated pharmacies usually near to a hospital.



Drug-store

#### **General - Insurance**

You should take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling, including insurance against medical costs, loss of belongings, theft, cancellation of your journey etc. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you for all the activities you want to undertake. Keep belongings, especially your passport, safe.

## General – Emergency Services

In cases of emergency in Japan, for the police dial **110**.

For the fire or ambulance services, dial **119**.

Calls above are free of charge from any phone, including pay phones.

### Additional Useful Numbers:

**Emergency Translation Service** which is a phone interpreter for foreign patients visiting a hospital or clinic, dial 03-5285-8185.

**AMDA International Medical Information Center:** They offer various services such as providing foreigners with medical information and a free telephone interpretation service, dial 03-5285-8088.

\*You should contact your insurance/medical assistance company promptly if you are referred to a medical facility for treatment.

\*If you have an insurance with you, you should show the doctors the document of the insurance, but usually you should have available an enough quantity of money that make you able to manage the first emergent situation. Medical facilities are good in Japan, but the cost of treatment is high.

## General – Lost/Stolen Passports

If your passport is lost or stolen in Japan, you should report this to the local police (at a police station, rather than at a kōban/police box) and obtain a police report. You will need to present the police report to the your Country Consular Section or your Country Embassy in Tōkyō.

## General – Asking for directions? Or any security problems?

The police box/ kōban are neighborhood police stations located in a lot of places in Japan, especially near the rail/metro stations. The officers are usually friendly and cooperative, even if their English is usually of basic level. You can ask for directions and if you have any problems, they are an useful and supportive help.



## General - Phone network

Most mobile phones will not work in Japan, even in roaming mode. You should check with your service provider if you wish to use your mobile phone in Japan. (and even in those cases, you will be 100% sure of their complete functionalities just trying it directly at place).

You can use green public telephones to make a national and foreign call. The public telephone usually are near the rail stations or near of some convenient stores. In order to use them you need to fill in at least 10 yen that make you able to start to open the line and then fill in more coins (10 yen, 100 yen coins are suitable). You should remember your international telephone code number and start with it. (ex: Japan, 0081-, Italy 0039-, Germany 0049-...). For details about How To Dial from and to Japan: [http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2223\\_how.html](http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2223_how.html)

You can also use specific international pre-paid cards that you can fill in the public telephones and purchase them usually at the convenient stores when available. It is possible to find also specific and convenient cards for foreigners called Brastel cards (yellow cards). For further details, see:

<http://www.brastel.com/Pages/eng/spc/fromjapan.html>

It is also possible to rent a mobile phone at the Tōkyō Narita airport and drop off when you leave Japan at the same place at the airport or in any same telephony companies' shops you can find in Japan. Typically renting a mobile phone requires a picture ID and a credit card. The fees for rental phones vary and usually consist of the rental fee (typically 250-1000 yen per day) plus a usage fee.

## General - Money

Japan is mainly a cash society. The Japanese currency is the Yen. Credit and Debit cards issued outside Japan, as well as Cirrus, Maestro, Link and Delta cash cards, are NOT widely accepted. Few banks or cash machines will provide cash drawn on such cards. Japanese post offices do have cash machines, which will accept Visa, Delta and Cirrus cards during hours of business. Citibank and Seven-Eleven ATMs will also take certain foreign credit and debit cards. Cash machines do not operate 24 hours a day. They generally close at 21:00 hours or earlier and may not operate at the weekends. You should check with your bank before travelling and take sufficient alternative sources of money for the duration of your stay.



Post office (see the symbol 〒)

## General – Internet

Japan usually is not a wireless-free open society. The people who travel in Japan for short-term can use internet in dedicated places such as specific public libraries, manga cafes, some hotels.

## General – Electrical appliances

The voltage in Japan is 100 Volt, which is different from North America (120V), Central Europe (220V) and most other regions of the world. In the area of Tōkyō and North of Japan is 50Hz (60Hz for South of Japan). Japanese electrical plugs have two, non-polarized pins, as shown here below. Purchase an adaptor in advance is advisable.



## General – Transport

**Train:** Remember to keep the train/metro ticket until you get out.

Train/Metro Route Finder (in English): <http://www.jorudan.co.jp/english/>

Japan Rail Pass: if you decide to travel for long distance (ex: Tōkyō-Kyoto, Tōkyō-Hiroshima, etc), try to consider to purchase BEFORE coming in Japan a special Japan Rail Pass for foreigners. For details: <http://www.japan-rail-pass.com/train-japon/>

**Bus:** you can pay directly the travel bus fee inside of the bus when you get out. For details see: <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2015.html>

**Taxi:** Outside stations you'll most often find a dedicated taxi waiting area.



Vacant



Occupied

## Natural Disasters - Earthquakes and Tsunamis

As Japan is in a major earthquake zone you should familiarize yourself with safety procedures in the event of an earthquake or tsunami, and take note of instructions e.g. in hotel rooms. Latest tsunami warnings and advisories are published on the Japan Meteorological Agency website.

(<http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/en/menu.html>)

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**Quick Glossary:**

Hospital: byōin / Police: keisatsu / Fireman: shōbōshi / Ambulance: kyūkyūsha / Post Office: yubinkyoku

(rail) Station: eki / Train: densha / Metro: chikatetsu / Airport: kūkō / Telephone: denwa

Internet: intanetto / Medicine: kusuri / Allergies: arerugi

**Sources:**

<http://ukinJapan.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/travel-advice#health>

<http://jin.icic.or.jp/en/travel/information/disembarkation-embarkation/>

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/j\\_info/visit/visa/index.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/index.html)

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2225.html>

<http://www.japanfamilyguide.com/health/8-medical-resources-for-foreigners-and-emergency-translation-services>

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