



HOW TO ENJOY TOKYO!

Manners & Customs Handbook



TOKYO
METROPOLITAN
GOVERNMENT

How to Use This Guide

As frequent visitors to Japan, we would like to introduce manners and customs we have observed here. These are you will likely encounter during your time in Japan. Please your stay even more enjoyable.

Arriving in Japan



This guide provides information such as basic manners and customs that stem from Japanese culture, and matters that you should be careful about during your stay. Each section contains helpful details on specific situations.



We'll be back!

Getting to your destination



1. Transportation

P.3



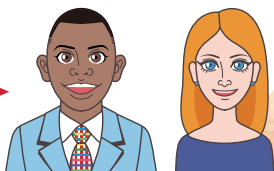
Going around town

6. Public Places/ Miscellaneous

P.18



some common Japanese
listed under six situations
check these out to make



Relaxing at your hotel

2. Lodgings and Bathing

P.6



Experiencing culture
and history

5. Cultural Facilities/ Shrines and Temples

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Enjoying the food

3. Dining Out

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Enjoying shopping

4. Shopping

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Here are some information and advice concerning transportation.
Enjoy traveling around Tokyo while being considerate to those around you!

● When boarding trains



Wait until passengers have disembarked to board the train.



It's customary to line up beside the doors to allow passengers to disembark.

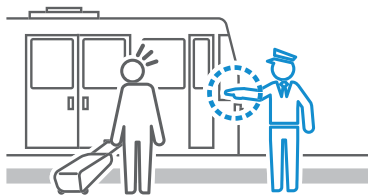
● Taking photos

Be careful of accidents when taking photos on the train platform and other areas in the station.



Taking photos near a train is very dangerous.

● Pointing by station staff



Station staff often point in the direction of an approaching train to confirm safety.



They aren't pointing at you or other passengers on the platform.

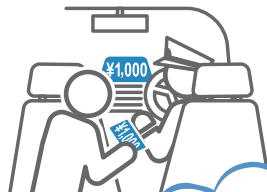
● How to use a taxi

Get a taxi at a taxi stand or raise your hand to hail one.



Taxi doors open and close automatically.

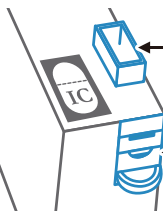
● No need to tip the driver



Remember tipping is not customary in Japan.

● How to pay bus fare

Depending on the bus system, you pay when boarding or getting off.



Fare slot

Bill insertion slot

One slot is for fare payment in coins and the other for breaking a bill.

● How to get off a bus



To get off a bus, in many cases you simply signal the driver by pressing a button as your bus approaches your stop.



Some buses stop at each stop, with no need to press a button.

Using a cell phone or smartphone



Refrain from talking on your phone while on board a train or bus.

Do not talk in a loud voice on a train or bus.

While on board



Refrain from eating in commuter trains or transit buses.



When crowded, make sure large luggage does not get in the way of passengers boarding or getting off.

Lost and found



If you left something behind on a transportation system, contact the transportation company or the police.



Lost and found

Priority seats



Please offer your seat to those in need if the train or bus is crowded.



People in need include older adults, individuals with disabilities, expectant mothers, and people with infants or toddlers.

In this section, we take up questions you may have about accommodation facilities and Japanese-style communal bathing, as well as difficulties that you may encounter. Traditional Japanese facilities in particular have their own set of manners and rules. Get a better understanding for a more enjoyable trip!

Accommodation rates



Accommodation rates increase with each additional occupant.



In most cases, rates are determined by the number of room occupants and not on a per room basis. When making a reservation, confirm how rates are set at that facility.

Tea and sweets in guest rooms

Complimentary



For a charge



Most of the time, the tea and sweets provided on the table in your room are complimentary.



Typically, you will be charged for items in the refrigerator.

Taking off your shoes



At some accommodations, you will need to take your shoes off before entering.



If toilet slippers are provided at the entrance to the bathroom, change into these slippers.



● Tatami-matted rooms



Do not enter a tatami room wearing shoes or slippers.



Tatami is a traditional Japanese flooring.

● Strong fragrances and odors



Out of consideration for others, please do not burn incense or use strong fragrances that linger in the room. Burning incense is also a fire hazard.



Bad smell!

● Bedmaking



The staff may enter your room to prepare the futon (bedding), often in the evening when you are out enjoying dinner.

If you are concerned about the staff entering your room when you are out, you should speak with them beforehand.

● Check-in times, etc.

Check-in and check-out times are set. In-house restaurant operating hours are also fixed.



Make sure to check these times in advance.

Room fixtures and amenities

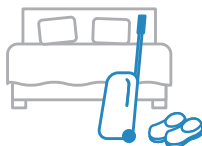
Please treat the room fixtures and items provided for your use with care.



Do not take anything other than complimentary amenities home with you.

Leaving items in the room

NO



When you check out, do not leave behind suitcases, clothing or shoes in the room. You might have to pay for the disposal costs.



Emergency escape routes

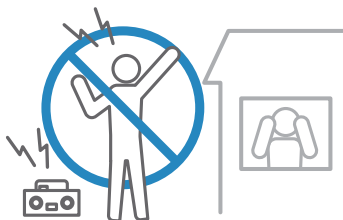


Make sure to check the escape routes in case of an emergency.



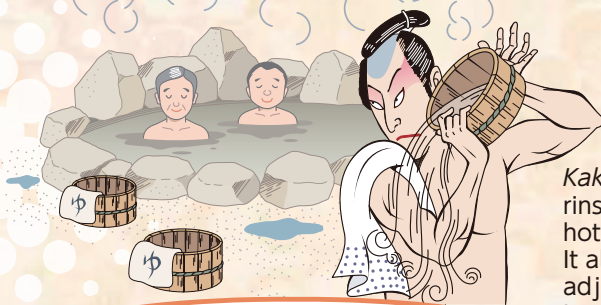
Short-term private accommodations

Be sure to keep voices and noise down so as not to disturb nearby residents.



Adhere to the rules of the facility, including waste disposal rules.

Onsen hot springs and public baths



Kakeyu is the practice of rinsing the body off with hot water to cleanse it. It also helps your body adjust to the temperature of the bath.

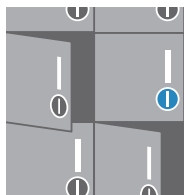
Before entering the bath, thoroughly rinse your body with hot water (*ka-keyu*) or wash with soap and rinse it off. Don't attempt to drain any of the communal baths.



In the dressing room



Use the lockers provided to store your clothes and valuables. They're your responsibility.



Lock



Secure your locker key by placing the band around your wrist while you bathe.

When using a communal bath



Full nudity is a requirement at most baths.



*A majority of communal baths do not permit bathing in a swimsuit. In addition, most do not welcome those with tattoos. Check in advance with the facility to verify their rules.

Bath

This is not a pool!
Don't swim,
splash around or
immerse your
head.



It's courtesy to keep your towel and hair out of the bath water.

Be careful, too. Surfaces around the bath and the floor of the bath itself are often slippery.

Following the bath



Lightly towel off before
leaving the bathing area
for the dressing room.

Inside the bath area

Do not do your
laundry in the
bath area or in
the bath itself.



Use your hotel's or ryokan's coin
laundry facilities or laundry
services.

Shower curtain



If your room has a
western-style bathroom,
close the shower curtain
when showering.

Make sure the shower
curtain falls inside the tub.



Here are some customs and etiquette rules related to dining in Japan. Note that ordering and payment methods may vary depending on the type of establishment.

● Dietary restrictions and food allergies



There is a growing number of restaurants that can accommodate dietary restrictions and food allergies.



使用食材表示



Ingredients are listed on the menu.

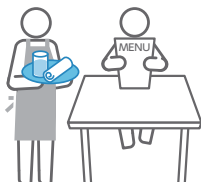
Ingredient symbols

Some restaurants use symbols on their menus to indicate the presence of common food allergens and other ingredients.

If you are concerned, check with the restaurant when booking a table or placing an order.

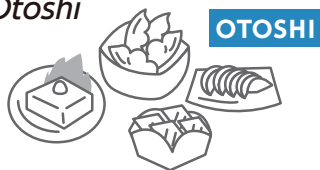
● Water and *oshibori*

At many restaurants, you will be offered a glass of water and an *oshibori*, a wet hand towel.



Water is typically provided at no cost for consumption inside the restaurant.

● *Otoshi*



At drinking establishments like *izakaya* pubs, you may be served an appetizer called an *otoshi* to go with your ordered drink.



This *otoshi* is often automatically added to your bill as a cover charge.

Japanese eating etiquette ①



In Japan, it's normal to eat with a bowl in one hand and chopsticks in the other.

**Slurp,
Slurp,
Slurp**



Slurping is common and accepted when eating noodle dishes like soba or udon.

Japanese eating etiquette ②



It's considered polite to finish everything on your plate.

Avoid dropping any food on the table or floor when enjoying a meal.

Minimum orders



When dining in a group, you are usually expected to order at least one item per person.

Bringing in and taking home food

In general, customers cannot bring in outside food or take home leftovers.



If you are unsure of the store policy, ask the staff.

Self-service

At some restaurants, customers are expected to return used dishes and clear the table.

Return station



If you are unsure of the store policy, ask the staff.

Payment

At the register



At your table



Ask the staff whether you should pay at your table or at the register.



Tipping is not customary at restaurants in Japan and will almost certainly be refused.

Canceling a reservation

Sorry, but I'd like to cancel my reservation.



Be sure to cancel your reservation if you become unable to go.

You may need to pay a cancellation fee.



Meal-ticket vending machines

Some restaurants take orders by having customers purchase meal tickets at a vending machine.



1. Insert money



2. Push button



3. Receive ticket



4. Exchange for meal

Ticket vending machines are typically located by the store entrance.

This section introduces helpful information to know before you go shopping in Japan. Be careful to avoid disturbing other customers when you shop!

● Listed prices



There are two levels of consumption tax: 10% and 8%. The 8% rate mainly applies to food and beverages (excluding eat-in meals and alcoholic beverages).



Product prices are listed with consumption tax included.

*Consumption tax rates above are current as of March 31, 2025.

● Tax exemptions

Foreign visitors can shop tax-free (no consumption tax) or duty-free (no consumption tax, customs duties, liquor tax, tobacco tax, etc.).



Symbol mark for tax-free shops



Japan. Tax-free Shop

Tax-free shops can be found all over the city, while duty-free shops are mainly located in the departure areas of international airports.

● Price discounts

Can I get 50% off?

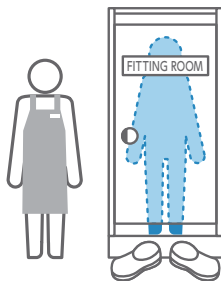
Sorry, no discounts.



Very few shops in Japan allow haggling over prices.



Trying on clothes



Ask a shop employee before trying on a piece of clothing.

Some shops limit the number of items you can bring into the fitting room.

Clothing sizes

Japanese clothing sizes are often listed in terms of S, M, and L.



Men's sizes (cm)

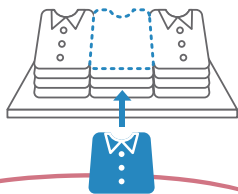
	Height	Chest	Waist
S	162-168	85-91	71-77
M	167-173	89-95	75-81
L	172-178	93-99	79-85
XL	177-183	97-103	83-89

E.g., JASPO standard sizes

Specifications may vary by brand and manufacturer.

*1 in = 2.54 cm / 1 ft = 30.48 cm

Examining products



If you pick up a product but decide not to buy it, return it to its original location.

Avoid touching products unnecessarily.



Opening products before payment



Never open any products before you pay for them.



If you wish to confirm the contents of a product prior to payment, check with an employee.

Plastic bags



Most stores charge for plastic bags. It's a good idea to bring your own shopping bags.

Smoking and drinking



It's illegal to purchase cigarettes and alcohol if you are under the age of 20.

under 20 years old



Payment...①

Not all stores accept credit cards or e-money. Always have some cash on hand to be safe!



Accepted



Not accepted



Many shops will display a list of accepted forms of payment at the storefront or by the register.

Payment...②



Tipping is not customary when shopping.

Come again.



Thank you.

Express your gratitude in words instead of a tip.



Here are some important things to know when visiting cultural facilities, shrines, and temples. Japan's cultural assets have been preserved and passed down for generations, so please show respect to them and their local communities!



Cultural properties

Cultural properties and exhibits that can't be touched should be admired from a distance.



Never graffiti in any location!

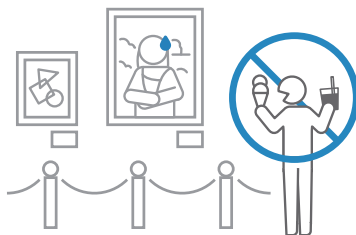
No photography

Refrain from taking photos in areas where photography is prohibited.



Do not enter off-limits areas for any reason, including to take photos.

Eating and drinking



Refrain from eating and drinking inside galleries and museums, and on paths leading to shrines and temples.





This section introduces customs and manners to keep in mind when in a public place. Whether you are sightseeing or exploring the city, always be considerate of those around you!

● Littering

Do not litter!



Dispose of trash in the appropriately labeled bin. If there are no garbage cans nearby, take your trash with you.

● Waiting in line / Using escalators



It's impolite to cut in line or to save spots for family members and friends.



When on an escalator, you may see people walking up one side. For your safety, however, you should stand still while holding the handrail. If you are in a hurry, use the stairs instead.

● Restrooms



When using a squat toilet, face the hood of the toilet.



Used toilet paper should be flushed, not thrown in the trash.

Japan has both western-style toilets and Japanese-style squat toilets.





● Taking a break



Avoid sitting on roads, side-walks and other places not designed for sitting.



● Smoking



Smoking is generally prohibited inside public buildings. Many localities also prohibit smoking outside, including on the street and in parks. If you wish to smoke, do so at a designated smoking area.



● Public alcohol consumption



The consumption of alcohol in public places, such as on the street and in parks, may be prohibited at certain hours and locations.



Please obey the rules.

● Loud voices



Keep your voice down when you are in a public space.





● Photography



Refrain from taking photos when there are other people around.



It's dangerous to take photos on roads.

● Wi-Fi

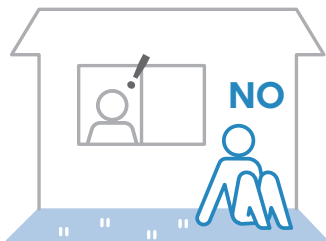
Free Wi-Fi services are available in various public places.



Different services may require different steps to connect.

*Do not use your smartphone while walking.

● Trespassing



Stay off of private property.

● Traffic rules

Obey traffic signals and use crosswalks when crossing the street.



Operating a motor vehicle or bicycle after consuming any amount of alcohol is against the law.



● Crowds



If you want to avoid crowds, try sightseeing on weekdays, mornings, and evenings.



● Beating the heat

Japan gets very hot in the summer. Take frequent breaks and stay hydrated.



When outdoors, use a parasol or wear a hat to protect yourself from the sun.

Useful Websites (Safety and Security)



Safety tips for travelers

<https://www.jnto.go.jp/safety-tips/eng/index.html>

This website, run by the Japan Tourism Agency, provides international visitors to Japan with advice on traveling safely and information about natural disasters.

Useful Disaster & Emergency Information

<https://www.gotokyo.org/en/plan/health-safety/index.html>

A webpage listing resources and apps that are useful in the event of a disaster.



Metropolitan Police Department: "Tips for protecting yourself from crime or other trouble"

https://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/multilingual/english/safe_society/victim_of_crime/ninpo.html

Learn helpful tips for keeping yourself safe as a tourist.

Medical Information Net (NAVII)

<https://www.iryuu.teikyouseido.mhlw.go.jp/znk-web/juminkanja/S2300/initialize>

A searchable database of medical facilities and pharmacies that offer multilingual services.



Useful Websites



GO TOKYO <https://www.gotokyo.org/en/index.html>

The official Tokyo travel guide website,
featuring the most up-to-date information about Tokyo sightseeing.

How to have a smooth visit to Tokyo

<https://www.gotokyo.org/jp/plan/customs-culture/index.html>

Learn about Japanese manners and customs that are helpful
to know to make your Tokyo trip as enjoyable as possible.



Tokyo Events and Tickets

<https://www.tickets.gotokyo.org/en>

Conveniently purchase tickets for sightseeing facilities,
performances, and more, via the GO TOKYO website.



Tokyo Tourist Information Center Online Tourist Guide

<https://www.gotokyo.org/en/plan/online-tourist-guide/index.html>

A free online tourism consultation service operated by the
Tokyo Tourist Information Center that you can use from
anywhere in the world with a computer or smartphone.



EAT TOKYO <http://www.menu-tokyo.jp/index.php?lang=en>

Search for Tokyo restaurants that best suit your tastes!

TOKYO FREE Wi-Fi

<http://www.wifi-tokyo.jp/>

A free public Wi-Fi service available at locations such as the
Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, public gardens, and
museums.



Emergency Numbers

Police
(for accidents and crimes)



TEL.110

Ambulance/Fire department
(for injury, illness, fire, etc.)



TEL.119



TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

Tourism Division,
Bureau of Industrial and Labor Affairs
2-8-1, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-8001, JAPAN

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