

Japan Trip '25



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Overview:

Japan Trip '25 was an idea conceived by Shiwei and his friends in Vancouver during their Freshman year. It is an extensive itinerary detailing a month-long, hypothetical trip to Japan in Shiwei's graduation year, 2025.

Things worth experiencing:

Things which would add to the trip, and would only take a couple of hours, or minutes.

Convenience store food/items, and Vending Machines: Convenience-store standards are much higher in Japan than they are in the West. If you are interested, or want more information on this subject, please watch this [video](#).

Camping: Camping may not be feasible, given time constraints; I would simply recommend day-hikes around the countryside, like Hida, or Hakone.

Hot Springs, and Tea Houses: Hot Springs towns are common in Japan, but found rarely outside its borders. I highly recommend we go to such places at least a few times. Tea Houses are quite rare, but provide a unique atmosphere wherein you feel much more relaxed after the experience.

Local Delicacies: There are so many local foods in Japan. I'll list just a few here:

- Wagyu/Kobe Beef (Kobe)
- Ramen (especially Ramen from Hokkaido)
- Conveyor belt food (Anywhere)
- Yakiniku, and Okonomiyaki (Osaka?)
- Soft Serve Ice Cream, Sea Food, Hokkaido Melon products, and Jingsukan (Hokkaido)

'Izakayas' are very popular in Japan. Essentially, they are restaurants with private rooms.

Explore suburb/residential areas: If we are going to Japan for a month, we may as well also explore the suburbs and more quiet streets which it has to offer.

Anime movie / anime every night, at around 8:00-9:00 PM. Nominations for shows to such an activity may be found **here:** [📺 Animes to watch July '24](#) In the years before our trip, we should slowly accumulate classics and incorporate them into this list.

Capsule Hotels: Quite rare outside Japan, and a worthwhile experience given the price.

Special "Overnight" Trains Seen outside Japan, but a worthwhile experience nonetheless.

Justification:

So, why should I come on this trip? Why Japan, of all places? and why for a month? Graduating high school is one of the big turning points which define your life. It only happens once. After graduating university, my brother has had to work for his paid time off, and only has about 14 days of paid-vacation per year. After high school, we may not have the time to pull off a trip of this length again, between adult responsibilities and stresses like retirement, etc. I decided on a month long trip to Japan because, personally, this is where I would wish to spend my graduation vacation. I'm very big on Japanese culture (maybe you are, too) and have wanted to visit the country even before I entered High School. A month long trip to Japan, would be a great memory for me (and perhaps you!) to leave behind as your last experience as a high schooler. I think too, it would be a great growth experience. For me (and probably you) this would be the first time that I would go out on an extensive trip in a foreign country, with no real supervision nor restrictions to speak of. I think that this trip would teach us many things; not just to be appreciative of different cultures, lifestyles, etc. but also how to plan out an extensive trip like this, how to plan for unforeseen events, and how to act responsibly without guidance. In a sense, this may also be considered a precursor to your experience in University (if you plan on attending) You will most likely be in charge of keeping yourself in check and being responsible for balancing your school, work, and social life. Its just that here, you have the added benefit of knowing that if you screw up, there will be little consequences.

Tokyo - 13 days: By far, the biggest event is Tokyo - This city is what Japan is known for. Therefore, I believe that 13 or so days is plenty of time to complete the things we want to do in this massive city. Keep in mind, anything which you would still want to do can be done again in the last 2 or so days of the Japan trip.

Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto - 10 days: Tokyo, despite being probably the star of the Japan Trip Itinerary, will lose its magic after prolonged exposure. To take a short breather from everything anime, we would travel to Osaka, and Kyoto. Osaka, well, I don't know what Osaka has, but it probably has a lot! Kyoto is known for its traditional Japanese culture¹ and the Airbnb I have scouted out caters specifically to that atmosphere. In these 10 days, we take a breather, and stay peaceful for a bit.

Hokkaido - 5 days: Hokkaido contains year-round skiing resorts, and various other gems which I am sure we can visit.

Hida - 2 days: Hida is somewhat like Hokkaido, except even more remote. We would rent out a lodge for a couple of days, and travel to see the rural areas of Japan.

¹ I have no source, too bad for you.

Tokyo 2.0 - 2 days: This last journey back to Tokyo is mostly out of convenience. I am not sure if we could secure decently cheap flights from Hida all the way to whichever city we choose to leave in, so a trip back to Tokyo is necessary. Additionally, Tokyo is probably the most exciting town out of the many many other cities we have visited. After visiting progressively more rural areas during our trip, it would be best if we ended our journey in an exciting way.

Detailed Itinerary

Summary:

- 13 days in Tokyo
- 5 days in Osaka (2 day trips to Kobe, 1 day trip to Nara)
- 5 days in Kyoto
- 5 days in Hokkaido
- (Optional)** 5 days in Okinawa
- 2 days in Hida
- 2 days in Tokyo
- Total: **33 days (38 days)**

Hypothetical Schedule:

June 30th/July 1st (PST): All 5 people arrive at SFO, and board a plane to Tokyo, Japan at around Noon. 26 hours later (adjusting for the time zone difference) we arrive at Haneda or Narita Airport. The time in Tokyo would be around 2-4PM on July 1st (JST). At the airport, we would also take some time to receive our Japan Rail passes, acquire an [IC card](#), and get a Japanese Sim Card. 2-3 hours are spent settling into our Airbnb / hotel. I would recommend going out to eat, and shopping for initial supplies, but nothing more as we'd still be adjusting to the local time zone. We arrive back at home with nothing to do at around 9:00-10:00 PM.

July 2nd-July 12th: Depending on certain circumstances, we should all wake up at around 8-10AM. Assuming we all require time to wake up, shower, and chill, we should be out of the house by 12:00AM - 1:00PM. This leaves us with around 7-10 hours before we return home. Potential activities to do can be found [here](#).

July 13th: On our last day in Tokyo, we'd go to Tokyo Station to board the Bullet Train to Osaka. After arriving at the city, we should roughly have checked into our Airbnb at 8:00-9:00 PM. Afterwards, we should go eat out, and buy some supplies, and return around 10:00-11:00 PM.

July 14th-17th: Our first official day in the *Kansai region* (Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto). From here on out, we can indulge in any of the activities listed here. For readability, I have clumped up activities one can fit in a day [here](#).

July 18th: We depart from our Osaka residence, and head to the Kyoto Airbnb. Because these two cities are so close to each other, there is a likely chance that we will spend a very small amount of time actually traveling on the trains, and will be able to do something in Kyoto on the 19th. Potential Activities may be found [here](#).

July 19th-22nd: These 4 days are essentially a repeat of July 19th, except we have even more time to do similar activities. Refer above for the Kyoto Itinerary.

July 23rd: The Trip from Kyoto to Hokkaido will take roughly 4.5 hours, quite a long time for a bullet train. I suggest that we immediately settle into our Airbnb and chill for the night.

July 24th-July 27th: Our days in Hokkaido are limited. This is especially problematic due to the large size of Hokkaido. One has to spend their time wisely here. That being said, the Itinerary for Hokkaido can be found [here](#).

(Optional) Okinawa trip: Okinawa is really beautiful. I would heavily consider going here. But we'd need to add more days here. It will ultimately be decided closer to the date if this should be included. I've included a potential itinerary [here](#) for those interested. Note that this slight detour adds some logistical complexity to the Japan Trip (you can only get there by ferry/airplane, and the public transportation is less extensive than the rest of Japan) in addition to being one of the most expensive places to add onto our roster, with the ferry itself being about 13,000 yen for a 1 way ticket to the capital, Naha. The total cost for adding Okinawa into our Itinerary could cost around 700-900\$

July 28th-29th: We travel from Hokkaido to Hida, a quiet city in the rural areas of Japan. Really, there isn't much to see in Hida. We are simply here to rest up and enjoy some quiet. [Here](#) is our small itinerary for Hida.


July 30th-August 1st: We travel back from Hida to Tokyo to spend our last few days in the big city. refer back to the [Tokyo Itinerary](#) for things to do, if we have not already completed them.

August 2nd: Everyone leaves Japan, traveling back to their chosen destination. At around noon, JST, everyone goes to Narita or Haneda and boards their flight. We arrive, 13 hours later, at 11:00AM, PST. So ends the Japan Trip.

Logistical Issues

(in order from most to least important)

Budget:

 **Japan Trip Costs** According to the costs calculated here, the base costs per person should amount to some 5,000\$ CAD. This number includes the round trip plane ticket, large transportation costs (traveling between cities/to remote tourist destinations) food costs, and housing costs. Note, however, that base costs are about 4,000\$ CAD. This new figure does **not include** entertainment fees like buying merchandise, souvenirs, inter-city travel fees, like subways, and entry fees for sites like museums and amusement parks. Expect to be paying 800\$-2000\$ more on such items, depending on how much you are willing to spend. I calculated entertainment costs to be around 1250\$, but that can go higher or lower depending on your budget. Entertainment costs are some 2200 yen per day, which is converted to about 27\$ everyday. 31 days of 27\$ worth of daily entertainment is around 820\$²

Acquiring Funds:

At least 4800\$ on a trip may sound like a lot of money; please hear me out. I doubt any parent would deny this request if it was phrased to them in the correct way, and certain compromises were made. For example, one could phrase this Japan trip as a 'last hurrah' of sorts to finish off their high school career on a particularly strong note. In addition, certain aspects of Japan trip could be compromised; for example, we could cut out the Okinawa arc, and it would save us around 700\$ USD, or we could reduce spending on food costs, etc. and save 300-400\$ that way. In addition, this is honestly not that much money, especially considering the fact that we will be going to Japan for more than a month; The minimum of about 4800\$ spread out across 33 days is some 150\$ per day. This might actually be less than the rent on some 2 bedroom luxury apartments in Cupertino; I personally estimate that this is just a bit shy of a month's living expenses for me and my brother. Furthermore, most trips sponsored by your local High School cost far more per day than this. I have heard of school-sponsored field trips which go to 3-4 thousand for just a week or two.

Items to Bring:

You will need a checklist of items to bring to the Japan trip, which will be found [here](#).

Travel Insurance:

I recommend getting travel insurance just in case something really bad happens on the trip. The price for Travel Insurance shouldnt exceed around 200\$, and should be around 100-150 dollars.

² <https://www.budgetyourtrip.com/japan>

Extra Resources

Itinerary:

-  Tokyo Itinerary: Japan Trip '24
-  Osaka region Itinerary: Japan Trip '24
-  Kyoto Itinerary: Japan Trip '24
-  Hokkaido Itinerary: Japan Trip '24
-  Hida Itinerary: Japan Trip '24
-  Okinawa Itinerary: Japan Trip '24


Items Checklist:

-  Items Checklist: Japan Trip '24

Costs Spreadsheet

-  Japan Trip Costs

Anime List

-  Animes to watch July '24

Miscellaneous Resources

-  15 Tips for First-Time Travellers to Japan | japan-guide.com

[Customs that will get you cancelled if you don't follow them](#)

[Tipping Etiquette in Japan](#)