



## IC Cards

One essential item you'll need in Japan is an IC Card (IC stands for integrated circuit). This is a prepaid, reloadable card you can use for train travel, vending machines, and other purchases. Luckily, you can purchase them easily at most stations, and add money there too. As you pass through the ticket gate, you hold the card over the card reader as you pass by and the fare is automatically deducted. If there is any problem, there is someone at the ticket gate to help you. I say it's essential because the train stations are crowded and busy! This makes it easy to get through the gates without stopping to buy new tickets each time. It's also a souvenir you can take home :)



### Websites:

For more information on IC Cards:  
[https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2359\\_003.html](https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2359_003.html)

### Tokyo Area

Suica: <https://www.jreast.co.jp/e/pass/suica.html>  
Pasmo: <https://www.pasmo.co.jp/visitors/en/>

### Osaka Area

ICOCA: <https://www.jr-odekake.net/icoca/>



# Train Travel

The rail system in Japan is extensive, punctual, clean, quiet, and efficient. If you are lost, someone is always happy to help. Even when it's very crowded, people wait in line patiently and don't crowd the doors. Train etiquette is centered on being considerate of others, and ensuring a pleasant journey for everyone. Some train etiquette and facts:

- You'll notice that stations have different melodies that play, depending on whether a train is arriving or leaving. As trains arrive, the melody is supposed to wake you up, and make you more alert. As you depart, it's supposed to relax you and give a sense of relief.
- Keep noise to a minimum and put your phone on mute. It's rude to talk loudly to your travel companions, or on the phone. If you're listening to music, use headphones and make sure the sound isn't leaking out.
- Most Japanese do not eat or drink on the train, except for water. Unless you're on the shinkansen, save it for your destination. Also, refrain from applying makeup, smoking, or personal grooming.
- Don't litter. Make sure you take your trash with you.
- Try not to take up too much room. Keep your luggage close or on the overhead shelf. Save priority seats for others in need. If you leave something behind it will be turned in to lost and found, so check.
- Many Japanese work long hours and sleep on the train ride home. It's not unusual to end up with someone sleeping on your shoulder!
- If it's crowded and you're standing, hold onto the hand strap and turn so you're facing the seated passenger. It can be so crowded during rush hours that white-gloved 'pushers' are squeezing people in so the doors can close!
- If you plan to go to several cities during your stay, then it makes sense to purchase the Japan Rail Pass, which allows unlimited travel on Japan Railway trains for a week or more. Hop on the bullet train (shinkansen) for an unforgettable and comfortable experience. You'll be able to buy snacks and drinks on board, enjoy wifi, or enjoy the passing countryside.
- The train stations are a destination themselves, many with shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. You can pick up a bento for your train travel, or drinks from the many vending machines.

From the world-renowned bullet trains, to the local trains, you have many options to see the country.

To find out more  
website:  
<https://www.japanstation.com/>

