
Japanese Tourist Guide

Contents

1	☐☐ Complete Japanese Tourist Guide	11
	1.0.1 A Comprehensive Language & Cultural Guide for Travelers	11
1.1	About This Guide	11
1.2	Who This Guide Is For	11
1.3	What's Inside	11
1.4	How to Use	11
	1.4.1 Section 1: Getting Started	12
	1.4.2 Section 2: Core Language Structures	12
	1.4.3 Section 3: Shopping & Retail	12
	1.4.4 Section 4: Restaurants and Dining	12
	1.4.5 Section 5: Hotels and Accommodation	12
	1.4.6 Section 6: Transportation	13
	1.4.7 Section 7: Directions and Navigation	13
	1.4.8 Section 8: Social Interactions	13
	1.4.9 Section 9: Emergency and Medical	13
	1.4.10Section 10: Numbers, Time, and Measurements	14
	1.4.11Section 11: Culture and Etiquette	14
	1.4.12Section 12: Regional Variations	14
	1.4.13Section 13: Reading and Writing	14
	1.4.14Section 14: Practical Travel Tips	15
	1.4.15Section 15: Seasonal and Cultural Activities	15
	1.4.16Section 16: Conversation Scenarios	15
	1.4.17Section 17: Grammar Reference	15
	1.4.18Section 18: Appendices	16
1.5	A Note on Cultural Respect	16
1.6	Begin Your Journey	16
2	Language Foundations: Quick Reference for Tourists	16
2.1	☐ CRITICAL PHRASES - EMERGENCY QUICK REFERENCE	16
	2.1.1 Help Me	16
	2.1.2 I'm Lost	17
	2.1.3 Where is the Bathroom?	17
	2.1.4 Water Please	17
2.2	GREETINGS & INTRODUCTIONS	17
	2.2.1 Nice to Meet You	17
	2.2.2 I'm [Name]	18
	2.2.3 Where Are You From?	18

2.2.4	I'm from [Country]	18
2.2.5	First Time in Japan?	19
2.2.6	Yes, First Time	19
2.3	RESTAURANTS & FOOD	19
2.3.1	This One Please	19
2.3.2	Do You Have Recommendations?	20
2.3.3	Can You Make it Spicy?	20
2.3.4	Vegetarian Menu?	20
2.3.5	No Meat Please	20
2.3.6	How Much?	21
2.3.7	Delicious!	21
2.4	SHOPPING	21
2.4.1	May I Try This On?	21
2.4.2	Bigger Size?	22
2.4.3	Just Looking	22
2.4.4	I'll Take This	22
2.4.5	Can I Pay by Card?	23
2.5	TRANSPORTATION	23
2.5.1	Where is [Station]?	23
2.5.2	Does This Train Go to [Place]?	23
2.5.3	One Ticket to [Place]	24
2.5.4	Which Platform?	24
2.6	HOTELS	24
2.6.1	Check-In Please	24
2.6.2	One More Towel Please	25
2.6.3	Wi-Fi Password?	25
2.6.4	What Time is Breakfast?	25
2.7	SIGHTSEEING	26
2.7.1	May I Take a Photo?	26
2.7.2	Could You Take My Photo?	26
2.7.3	What Time Does It Close?	27
2.7.4	How Much is Admission?	27
2.8	BASIC CONVERSATION TOOLS	27
2.8.1	Yes / No	27
2.8.2	Thank You	27
2.8.3	Excuse Me / Sorry	28
2.8.4	I Don't Understand	28
2.8.5	Please Say It Again	28
2.8.6	Slowly Please	29
2.8.7	Do You Speak English?	29
2.9	GRAMMAR BUILDING BLOCKS	29
2.9.1	Core Pronouns (People)	29
2.9.2	Core Pronouns (Things/Places)	30
2.9.3	Essential Particles (The Glue of Sentences)	30
2.10	SENTENCE PATTERNS (PLUG-AND-PLAY)	31
2.10.1	Pattern 1: [Noun] は [Noun/Adjective] です	31
2.10.2	Pattern 2: [Noun] をください	31
2.10.3	Pattern 3: [Place] はどこですか	31
2.10.4	Pattern 4: [Time/Place] に [Verb] ます	31
2.10.5	Pattern 5: これは何ですか	31

2.10.6	Pattern 6: [A] と [B] をください	31
2.10.7	Pattern 7: [Noun]がほしいです / [Verb]たいです	31
2.10.8	Pattern 8: [Verb]てもいいですか	31
2.10.9	Pattern 9: [Adjective]です / [Adjective]くないです	31
2.10.10	Pattern 10: [Noun] の [Noun]	31
2.11	VOCABULARY TOOLKIT	31
2.11.1	Travel Essentials	31
2.11.2	Action Verbs (with polite forms)	32
2.11.3	Useful Adjectives	32
2.12	QUICK SMALL TALK SCRIPTS	32
2.12.1	Script 1: First Meeting	32
2.12.2	Script 2: Daily Plans	33
2.12.3	Script 3: Getting Recommendations	33
2.13	PRACTICAL APPLICATION BY CONTEXT	33
2.13.1	RESTAURANTS	33
2.13.2	SHOPPING	33
2.13.3	TRAVELING	33
2.13.4	HOTELS	33
2.13.5	SIGHTSEEING/HELP	33
2.14	REGIONAL DIALECT QUICK REFERENCE	34
2.14.1	Key Osaka Differences	34
2.14.2	Key Kyoto Differences	34
2.14.3	Key Tokyo Standard	34
3	VI. PRONUNCIATION GUIDE	34
3.1	Introduction	34
3.2	A. VOWELS	34
3.2.1	The Five Vowels	34
3.2.2	Detailed Vowel Explanations	35
3.2.3	Vowel Consistency Rule	36
3.2.4	Practice Words	36
3.3	B. CONSONANTS	36
3.3.1	Standard Consonants	36
3.3.2	Special Consonant Sounds	39
3.3.3	Consonant Combinations with Y (Palatalization)	39
3.4	C. SPECIAL RULES	40
3.4.1	1. Double Consonants (Geminate Consonants) - The Pause	40
3.4.2	2. Long Vowels (Extended Vowels)	41
3.4.3	3. Pitch Accent Basics	41
3.4.4	4. Devoicing (Whispered Vowels)	42
3.5	D. COMMON PRONUNCIATION MISTAKES	42
3.5.1	Mistakes English Speakers Make	42
3.5.2	Summary of Key Pronunciation Tips	44
3.6	E. PRACTICE SENTENCES	44
3.6.1	Basic Greetings	44
3.6.2	Restaurant Phrases	45
3.6.3	Shopping Phrases	45
3.6.4	Direction Phrases	45
3.6.5	Emergency Phrases	46
3.7	F. PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE TIPS	46

3.7.1	For Self-Study:	46
3.7.2	Recommended Resources:	47
3.7.3	With a Language Partner:	47
3.8	G. TONGUE TWISTERS (早口言葉 - Hayakuchi Kotoba)	47
3.8.1	Easy:	47
3.8.2	Intermediate:	48
3.8.3	Hard:	48
3.9	H. FINAL PRONUNCIATION CHECKLIST	48
3.10	Summary	48
4	SECTION V: READING & WRITING SYSTEMS	49
4.1	Complete Guide to Japanese Scripts	49
4.2	A. HIRAGANA (ひらがな) - Complete	49
4.2.1	1. Basic Hiragana (46 Characters)	49
4.2.2	2. Dakuten (゛) - Voiced Consonants (25 Characters)	49
4.2.3	3. Handakuten (゜) - P-Sound (5 Characters)	50
4.2.4	4. Small や・ゆ・よ (ya/yu/yo) Combinations (36 Characters)	50
4.2.5	5. Double Consonants (Sokuon - っ)	50
4.2.6	6. Long Vowels	51
4.2.7	7. Practice Words in Hiragana	51
4.2.8	8. Hiragana Writing Stroke Order	52
4.3	B. KATAKANA (カタカナ) - Complete	52
4.3.1	1. Basic Katakana (46 Characters)	52
4.3.2	2. Dakuten (゛) - Voiced Consonants (25 Characters)	53
4.3.3	3. Handakuten (゜) - P-Sound (5 Characters)	53
4.3.4	4. Small ヤ・ユ・ヨ (ya/yu/yo) Combinations (36 Characters)	53
4.3.5	5. Special Katakana Combinations (50+ for Foreign Sounds)	54
4.3.6	6. Common Katakana Words (100+ Essential for Tourists)	54
4.3.7	7. Katakana Writing Stroke Order	55
4.4	C. ESSENTIAL KANJI (漢字) - 300+ Tourist Survival Characters	56
4.4.1	1. Numbers (13 characters)	56
4.4.2	2. Days of the Week (7 characters)	56
4.4.3	3. Directions (8 characters)	57
4.4.4	4. Location Words (15 characters)	57
4.4.5	5. Action Signs (20 characters)	57
4.4.6	6. Places (30 characters)	58
4.4.7	7. Time-Related (20 characters)	59
4.4.8	8. Food & Drink (25 characters)	59
4.4.9	9. Transportation (15 characters)	60
4.4.10	10. Common Verbs (30 characters)	61
4.4.11	11. Common Adjectives (25 characters)	62
4.4.12	12. Important Tourist Kanji (40 more characters)	62
4.4.13	13. Emergency & Safety Kanji (15 characters)	63
4.5	D. READING TIPS - How to Navigate Japanese Text	64
4.5.1	1. How to Recognize Each System	64
4.5.2	2. Common Patterns to Recognize	64
4.5.3	3. Survival Reading Strategy	65
4.5.4	4. Practical Reading Scenarios	66
4.5.5	5. App Recommendations	66
4.5.6	6. Practice Methods	67

4.5.7	7. Memory Techniques	67
4.5.8	8. Quick Reference - Most Essential Characters	68
4.6	Summary: The Three Systems Working Together	68
5	Chapter 4: Directions, Walking, and Navigation	69
5.1	Core Direction Words	69
5.2	Asking for Directions	69
5.3	Simple Walking Routes (patterns)	70
5.4	Landmarks and Help Points	70
5.5	Quick Dialogues	70
5.6	Sightseeing Walk Essentials	71
6	Section II.D: Transportation Vocabulary (Regional & Politeness Guide)	71
6.1	Regional IC Card Reference	71
6.1.1	IC Cards by Region	71
6.2	Critical Regional Differences	72
6.2.1	Escalator Etiquette	72
6.2.2	Transportation Culture	72
6.3	Quick Navigation Guide	73
6.3.1	Tokyo Transit Essentials	73
6.3.2	Osaka Transit Essentials	73
6.3.3	Kyoto Transit Essentials	73
6.4	Core Transportation Phrases (Tiered Politeness)	73
6.4.1	1. "Where is the train to [place]?"	73
6.4.2	2. "How do I buy a ticket?"	74
6.4.3	3. "Does this train go to [place]?"	75
6.4.4	4. "How much to [place]?"	75
6.4.5	5. "I need to transfer"	76
6.4.6	6. "Please tell me when we arrive at [place]"	76
6.4.7	7. "Where is the exit for [place]?"	77
6.4.8	8. Asking for Help (When Lost)	77
6.5	Train Types & When to Use	79
6.5.1	Train Speed Categories	79
6.5.2	Asking About Train Type	79
6.6	Ticket Purchasing (Polite Tiers)	79
6.6.1	"One ticket to [place] please"	79
6.6.2	Ticket Types	80
6.6.3	Machine Help Phrases	80
6.7	Bus Travel (Critical for Kyoto)	80
6.7.1	Bus Boarding Phrases	80
6.7.2	Bus Payment Systems (BY REGION)	81
6.8	Taxi Phrases (Tiered Politeness)	82
6.8.1	Destination Phrases	82
6.8.2	During Ride	82
6.8.3	Payment	82
6.9	Airport Transportation	83
6.9.1	Airport Access by City	83
6.9.2	Airport Arrival Phrases	83
6.9.3	Buying Airport Tickets	84
6.10	Emergency Transportation Phrases	84
6.10.1	Lost/Confused	84

6.10.2	Ticket/Card Problems	85
6.10.3	Medical/Urgent	85
6.11	Transportation Etiquette by Region	85
6.11.1	Tokyo Etiquette (STRICT)	85
6.11.2	Osaka Etiquette (STRICT on different things)	86
6.11.3	Kyoto Etiquette (RELAXED)	86
6.11.4	Universal Etiquette (All Japan)	86
6.12	Money-Saving Tips by Region	87
6.12.1	Tokyo	87
6.12.2	Osaka	87
6.12.3	Kyoto	87
6.13	Quick Reference: Critical Phrases	88
6.13.1	Top 10 Most Useful Phrases	88
6.13.2	Apps to Download	88
6.14	Total Phrase Count	89
6.15	Mode-Specific Quick Phrases	89
6.15.1	Train / Subway	89
6.15.2	Bus (Kyoto-friendly)	89
6.15.3	Taxi	89
6.15.4	Walking / Directions (see Chapter 04 for full list)	89
6.15.5	Tickets & IC Cards (recap)	90
7	Restaurant Quick-Scan Guide for Tourists	90
7.1	Table of Contents	90
8	ARRIVAL PHRASES	90
8.1	□ “Table for [X] please”	90
8.2	□ “Do you have a reservation?”/ Responding	91
8.2.1	No Reservation Response	91
8.3	□ “How long is the wait?”	91
8.4	Seating Preferences	92
8.4.1	“Table please” vs “Counter please”	92
8.4.2	Traditional Japanese Seating	92
8.5	□ “Non-smoking please”	93
8.6	Understanding Staff Greetings	93
9	ORDERING PHRASES	93
9.1	□ “Menu please”	93
9.2	□ “English menu please”	94
9.3	□ “Picture menu please”	94
9.4	□ “What do you recommend?”	94
9.5	□ “This one please”(pointing)	95
9.6	□ “Same thing please”	95
9.7	□ “Two of these please”	96
9.8	Portion Size Requests	96
9.8.1	□ “Large portion please”	96
9.9	Spice Level Requests	97
9.9.1	□ “Not spicy please”	97
9.9.2	Other Spice Levels	97
9.10	□ “Without [ingredient]”	97
9.11	□ “Extra [ingredient]”	98

9.12□ “On the side please”	98
9.13□ “I’m ready to order”	99
9.14□ “That’s all”	99
9.15 Food Questions	100
9.15.1□ “What’s in this?”	100
9.15.2□ “Is this spicy?”	100
9.15.3□ “Is this raw?”	100
10 DURING MEAL PHRASES	101
10.1□ ESSENTIAL MEAL RITUALS	101
10.1.1 “Let’s eat”(Before Eating)	101
10.1.2□ “Thank you for the meal”(After Eating)	101
10.2□ “This is delicious”	101
10.3□ “Excuse me”(Getting Attention)	102
10.4□ “More water please”	102
10.5□ “Another beer please”	102
10.6□ “Refill please”(Rice - FREE)	103
10.7 Tableware Requests	103
10.7.1□ “Chopsticks please”	103
10.7.2 Other Tableware	104
10.8□ “Where’s the bathroom?”	104
10.9 Problem Situations	104
10.9.1□ “This isn’t what I ordered”	104
10.9.2□ “I’m still waiting for…”	105
10.9.3□ “This is cold”(food temperature)	105
10.10□ “I’m full”	106
10.11□ “Can I take this home?”(Leftovers)	106
11 PAYMENT PHRASES	106
11.1□ “Check please”	106
11.2□ “How much is it?”	107
11.3□ “Together please”vs “Separate please”	107
11.3.1 One Bill for Everyone	107
11.3.2 Split Bills	107
11.3.3 Split Evenly (Dutch Treat)	108
11.4□ “I’ll treat you”	108
11.5□ Payment Location	109
11.5.1 “Where do I pay?”	109
11.5.2 “Can I pay here?”	109
11.6□ Payment Method	109
11.6.1 “Cash”	109
11.6.2 “Card”	109
11.6.3□ “What cards do you accept?”	110
11.6.4□ “Cash only?”	110
11.7□ “Receipt please”	111
11.7.1□ “Is tax included?”	111
11.8□ Final Thanks	111
11.8.1 “Thank you very much”	111
12 DIETARY RESTRICTIONS	112
12.1□ CRITICAL ALLERGY PHRASES	112

12.1.1	“I have an allergy”	112
12.1.2	☐ “I’m allergic to [food]”	112
12.1.3	☐ “I can’t eat [food]”	113
12.1.4	☐ “Does this contain [food]?”	113
12.1.5	☐ “Can you make it without [food]?”	114
12.1.6	☐ “This is a serious allergy”	114
12.1.7	☐ “I carry an EpiPen”	114
12.2	Common Allergens - Quick Reference	115
12.3	☐ VEGETARIAN/VEGAN PHRASES	115
12.3.1	“I’m vegetarian”	115
12.3.2	“I’m vegan”	116
12.3.3	☐ “I don’t eat meat”	116
12.3.4	☐ “I don’t eat fish either”	116
12.3.5	☐ “Does this have meat broth?”	116
12.3.6	☐ “Does this have fish sauce?”	117
12.3.7	☐ “Is the dashi vegetarian?”	117
12.3.8	☐ “Do you have vegetarian options?”	118
12.3.9	☐ “Plant-based only please”	118
12.4	Dietary Preference Terms	118
13	MENU VOCABULARY REFERENCE	119
13.1	Restaurant Types (Regional Specialties)	119
13.2	Ramen Varieties (Regional Notes)	119
13.3	Sushi Types (All Regions)	120
13.4	Rice Bowls - Donburi (All Regions)	120
13.5	Noodles (Regional Preferences)	121
13.6	Grilled Foods - Yakitori (All Regions)	121
13.7	Izakaya Foods (All Regions)	121
13.8	Osaka Specialties	122
13.9	Kyoto Specialties	122
13.10	Drinks - Non-Alcoholic (All Regions)	122
13.11	Drinks - Alcoholic (All Regions)	123
13.12	Condiments (All Regions)	123
13.13	Taste Descriptors	123
14	RESTAURANT ETIQUETTE QUICK GUIDE	124
14.1	☐ ESSENTIAL DO’S	124
14.1.1	ALWAYS Do These:	124
14.2	☐ CRITICAL DON’TS	125
14.2.1	NEVER Do These:	125
14.3	Chopstick Etiquette Summary	125
14.3.1	☐ CORRECT Chopstick Use:	125
14.3.2	☐ WRONG Chopstick Use (Taboos):	125
14.4	Sushi-Specific Etiquette	126
14.5	Payment Etiquette	126
14.6	Regional Etiquette Differences	127
15	II. COMPLETE VOCABULARY BY CATEGORY	127
15.1A	SHOPPING	127
15.2	ESSENTIAL SHOPPING PHRASES (Tiered by Politeness)	127
15.2.1	“Can I try this on?”	127

15.2.2	“Just looking / browsing”	128
15.2.3	“How much is this?”	128
15.2.4	“Do you have this in a different size?”	128
15.2.5	“Can I try a different color?”	129
15.2.6	“I’ll take this / I’ll buy this”	129
15.2.7	“Do you accept credit cards?”	130
15.2.8	“This is too expensive / Do you have something cheaper?”	130
15.2.9	“Can I return/exchange this?”	131
15.2.10	“Is this tax-free?” (For tourists)	131
15.2.11	“Where is the fitting room?”	132
15.2.12	“Does this look good on me? / Does it suit me?”	132
15.2.13	“It’s too big/small/tight/loose”	132
15.2.14	“I need a bag” vs “I don’t need a bag”	133
15.3	CLOTHING VOCABULARY	133
15.3.11	Clothing Items (Complete)	133
15.3.22	Footwear (Complete)	136
15.3.33	Bags & Accessories (Complete)	137
15.3.44	Sizes & Measurements (Complete)	138
15.3.55	Colors (Complete)	138
15.3.66	Materials (Complete)	139
15.4	ADVANCED SHOPPING PHRASES	139
15.4.1	Asking About Stock	139
15.4.2	Asking About Sales/Discounts	140
15.4.3	Gift Shopping	140
15.5	STORE TYPES & LOCATIONS	140
15.5.1	Major Store Types	140
15.5.2	Shopping Districts by Region	141
15.6	PAYMENT & CHECKOUT PHRASES	142
15.6.1	“What’s the total?”	142
15.6.2	“Is tax included?”	142
15.6.3	Payment Method Questions	142
15.7	RETURN & EXCHANGE POLICIES	142
15.7.1	Return Phrases (Use Carefully)	142
15.8	SHOPPING ETIQUETTE & CULTURE	143
15.8.1	Important Cultural Rules	143
15.8.2	Staff Interaction	143
15.8.3	Regional Shopping Personalities	143
15.9	QUICK REFERENCE: ONE-LINE SCANNER	143
15.10	APPENDIX: Store Chains & Price Ranges	144
15.10.1	Budget Fashion (¥500-5,000)	144
15.10.2	Mid-Range (¥5,000-20,000)	144
15.10.3	High-End (¥20,000+)	144
16	HOTELS - COMPLETE VOCABULARY & PHRASES	144
16.1	Table of Contents	144
16.2	Hotel Types & Regional Context	145
16.3	Regional Hotel Culture Guide	146
16.3.1	Tokyo Hotels (Business-Focused)	146
16.3.2	Osaka Hotels (Casual-Friendly)	146
16.3.3	Kyoto Ryokan (Traditional)	146

16.4 Ryokan vs Western Hotels	146
16.4.1 Key Differences	146
16.4.2 Phrases Specific to Ryokan	147
16.5 Room Types & Features	147
16.6 Hotel Vocabulary	148
16.6.1 Room Items	148
16.6.2 Bathroom Items	150
16.6.3 Amenities & Facilities	151
16.7 Hotel Phrases - Tiered Politeness	153
16.7.1 Booking/Reservation	153
16.7.2 Check-in	155
16.7.3 During Stay - Requests	157
16.7.4 During Stay - Problems	158
16.7.5 During Stay - Services	160
16.7.6 Check-out	161
16.8 Onsen Etiquette & Phrases	163
16.8.1 Onsen Rules (Universal)	163
16.8.2 Gender Separation	163
16.8.3 Onsen Phrases	164
16.8.4 Onsen Vocabulary	166
16.8.5 Regional Onsen Differences	166
17 SECTION IV: CULTURAL GUIDE	167
17.1 Table of Contents	167
17.2 A. Regional Differences	167
17.2.1 Tokyo (東京)	167
17.2.2 Osaka (大阪)	170
17.2.3 Kyoto (京都)	173
17.2.4 Hakone (箱根)	177
17.2.5 Regional Comparison Chart	180
17.3 B. Etiquette Guide	180
17.3.11. Bowing (お辞儀 - Ojigi)	180
17.3.22. Shoes (靴 - Kutsu)	181
17.3.33. Chopsticks (箸 - Hashi)	183
17.3.44. Gift Giving (贈り物 - Okurimono)	186
17.3.55. Onsen Etiquette (温泉)	188
17.3.66. Temple & Shrine Etiquette (寺 & 神社)	190
17.3.77. Public Behavior (公共マナー)	192
17.3.88. Dining Etiquette (食事マナー)	194
17.4 C. Safety Guide	196
17.4.11. General Safety	196
17.4.22. Natural Disasters	198
17.4.33. Health & Medical	200
17.4.44. Emergency Contacts	201
17.4.55. Safety Apps	203
17.5 Summary	204

1 日本語 Complete Japanese Tourist Guide

1.0.1 A Comprehensive Language & Cultural Guide for Travelers

Version 1.0 —November 2025

1.1 About This Guide

Welcome to the **Complete Japanese Tourist Guide**, your professional companion for confident, respectful travel in Japan. You'll find clear language scaffolding, cultural context, and ready-to-use phrases in English, Japanese, and romaji so you can navigate smoothly—from ramen counters and ryokan check-ins to trains, temples, and emergencies.

1.2 Who This Guide Is For

- First-time visitors and independent travelers who want practical language quickly
- Cultural enthusiasts who care about etiquette and context
- Long-stay travelers (3–6 months) who need depth beyond a phrasebook
- Anyone who wants to communicate politely and naturally with locals

1.3 What's Inside

- **Foundations first:** pronunciation, particles, pronouns, core sentence patterns, essential nouns/verbs/adjectives
- **Application chapters:** restaurants, shopping, transport, hotels, sightseeing, help/politeness, emergencies
- **Cultural intelligence:** etiquette, regional differences, onsen/temple protocols, safety, seasonal notes
- **Writing systems:** hiragana, katakana, essential kanji, reading tips
- **Ready-to-use artifacts:** quick-reference tables, dialogues with cultural notes, cross-references for fast lookup

1.4 How to Use

1. Start with pronunciation and core patterns to build reliable sentences.
2. Study application chapters for restaurants, shopping, transport, hotels, and sightseeing.
3. Keep emergency and help sections handy for “just in case” moments.
4. Use cultural notes to choose the right tone and avoid faux pas.
5. Reference the appendices and quick tables on the go.

1.4.1 Section 1: Getting Started

- About This Guide (You are here)
- How to Use This Guide
- Pronunciation Guide
- Japanese Writing Systems Overview
- Quick Reference: Top 100 Survival Phrases

1.4.2 Section 2: Core Language Structures

- Essential Sentence Patterns
- Want/Desire Structures
- Permission Structures (May I...?)
- Request Structures (Please...)
- Question Formation
- Comparison Structures
- Existence and Location
- Ability and Potential Form
- Tense Systems (Past, Present, Future)

1.4.3 Section 3: Shopping & Retail

- Clothing Vocabulary (Complete)
- Footwear and Accessories
- Sizes and Measurements
- Colors, Patterns, and Materials
- Shopping Actions and Phrases
- Trying On and Fitting
- Payment and Tax-Free Shopping
- Returns and Exchanges
- Electronics Store Phrases
- Drugstore and Pharmacy
- Convenience Store (Konbini) Guide
- Department Store Navigation
- Souvenir Shopping
- 100 Yen Store Tips

1.4.4 Section 4: Restaurants and Dining

- Restaurant Types and Selection
- Complete Menu Vocabulary
- Arriving and Seating
- Reading Menus
- Ordering with Specifications
- During the Meal
- Payment and Tipping Customs
- Dietary Restrictions and Allergies
- Vegetarian and Vegan Options
- Restaurant Etiquette
- Chopstick Rules
- Regional Food Specialties

1.4.5 Section 5: Hotels and Accommodation

- Hotel Types (Hotels, Ryokan, Hostels, Capsule Hotels)

- Room Types and Features
- Booking and Reservations
- Check-in Procedures
- Room Vocabulary and Amenities
- Making Requests
- Solving Problems
- Hotel Services
- Check-out and Late Check-out
- Luggage Storage

1.4.6 Section 6: Transportation

- Train and Subway System
- Ticket Purchasing
- Platform Navigation
- During the Ride
- Transfers and Connections
- Bus Transportation
- Taxi Phrases and Etiquette
- Airport Procedures (Arrival and Departure)
- IC Cards and Transportation Passes
- Reading Train Signs

1.4.7 Section 7: Directions and Navigation

- Asking for Directions
- Direction Vocabulary
- Landmarks and Reference Points
- Distance and Time Estimation
- Using Maps
- Getting Unlost
- Floor and Building Numbers
- Exit Numbers and Names

1.4.8 Section 8: Social Interactions

- Greetings and Introductions
- Politeness and Formality Levels
- Asking for Help
- Offering Help
- Thanking and Apologizing (All Levels)
- Small Talk Topics
- Compliments and Responses
- Declining Politely
- Leaving Situations Gracefully

1.4.9 Section 9: Emergency and Medical

- Emergency Vocabulary
- Calling for Help
- Medical Conditions and Symptoms
- Body Parts (Complete)
- At the Hospital
- At the Pharmacy

- Describing Pain and Illness
- Allergies and Medications
- Lost or Stolen Items
- Police Interactions

1.4.10 Section 10: Numbers, Time, and Measurements

- Number Systems (Native and Sino-Japanese)
- Counter Words (Complete List)
- Clock Time
- Calendar System
- Dates and Years
- Relative Time Expressions
- Duration Expressions
- Money and Prices
- Measurements (Length, Weight, Volume, Temperature)

1.4.11 Section 11: Culture and Etiquette

- Bowing Etiquette
- Shoe Customs
- Chopstick Rules (Complete)
- Gift-Giving Culture
- Onsen and Public Bath Etiquette
- Temple and Shrine Protocol
- Public Behavior Expectations
- Dining Etiquette
- Business Card Exchange
- Photography Rules
- Trash and Recycling Rules
- Noise and Volume Expectations

1.4.12 Section 12: Regional Variations

- Tokyo: Fast-Paced Metropolitan Culture
- Osaka: Friendly and Food-Focused Culture
- Kyoto: Traditional and Reserved Culture
- Regional Language Differences (Dialects)
- Escalator Etiquette (Left vs. Right)
- Service Style Variations
- Communication Style Differences
- Comparison Charts

1.4.13 Section 13: Reading and Writing

- Hiragana (Complete Character Set)
- Katakana (Complete Character Set)
- Essential Kanji (300+ Characters)
- Reading Signs and Menus
- Stroke Order Basics
- Recognition vs. Production
- Survival Reading Strategy
- Recommended Learning Apps

1.4.14 Section 14: Practical Travel Tips

- Before You Go Checklist
- Upon Arrival Procedures
- Daily Life Essentials
- Convenience Store Mastery
- Public Toilets and Facilities
- Coin Lockers
- ATM Access
- Vending Machines
- Communication Strategies
- Technology and Connectivity
- WiFi and Internet Access
- Phone and SIM Cards

1.4.15 Section 15: Seasonal and Cultural Activities

- Cherry Blossom Viewing (Hanami)
- Autumn Leaves (Koyo)
- Festivals by Month
- Tea Ceremony
- Traditional Crafts and Classes
- Seasonal Foods
- Weather Vocabulary
- Natural Disaster Preparedness

1.4.16 Section 16: Conversation Scenarios

- 20+ Complete Scenario Dialogues:
 - Arriving at a Restaurant
 - Shopping for Clothes with Sizing Issues
 - Hotel Check-in with Complications
 - Getting Lost and Finding Your Way
 - Taking a Taxi
 - Riding the Train
 - At the Convenience Store
 - Medical Emergency
 - Lost Item Reporting
 - Temple Visit
 - Onsen Experience
 - Making Small Talk
 - [And more...]

1.4.17 Section 17: Grammar Reference

- Particle Guide (Complete)
- Verb Conjugation Charts (100+ Verbs)
- Adjective Conjugation (I-adjectives and Na-adjectives)
- Sentence Pattern Reference
- Common Grammar Mistakes
- Formality Level Guide

1.4.18 Section 18: Appendices

- **Appendix A:** Quick Reference - Top 100 Phrases
- **Appendix B:** Vocabulary Lists (Alphabetical)
 - Japanese to English
 - English to Japanese
- **Appendix C:** Grammar Charts
- **Appendix D:** Cultural Calendar and Best Times to Visit
- **Appendix E:** Emergency Contact Numbers
- **Appendix F:** Recommended Apps and Resources
- **Appendix G:** Practice Exercises

1.5 A Note on Cultural Respect

Learning even basic Japanese phrases demonstrates respect for the culture and people of Japan. Japanese society values effort and sincerity over perfection. Don't be afraid to make mistakes—your attempts to speak Japanese will be met with appreciation and encouragement.

This guide is designed to help you communicate and connect, not just transact. Beyond the practical value of these phrases lies the opportunity to engage more deeply with one of the world's most fascinating cultures.

1.6 Begin Your Journey

Your adventure in Japan starts with a single word. Turn the page and begin building the linguistic and cultural foundation that will transform your trip from good to unforgettable.

ようこそ日本へ! (Yōkoso Nihon e!) **Welcome to Japan!**

This guide is a living document. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness, language and culture are dynamic. Always approach interactions with openness, respect, and a willingness to learn.

2 Language Foundations: Quick Reference for Tourists

2.1 □ CRITICAL PHRASES - EMERGENCY QUICK REFERENCE

2.1.1 Help Me

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	助けて	tasukete	Standard	Standard	Standard	Emergency only
Polite	助けてください	tasukete kudasai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Most situations
Very Polite	お助けいただけますか	otasuke itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal help request

2.1.2 I'm Lost

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	迷った	mayotta	Standard	Standard	Standard	Friends only
Polite	道に迷いました	michi ni may-oimashita	Standard	Standard	Standard	Use this
Very Polite	道に迷ってしまいました	michi ni mayotte shi-maimashita	Common	Less common	Common	Hotels, stations

2.1.3 Where is the Bathroom?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	トイレどこ	toire doko	Standard	Standard	Standard	Friends only
Polite	トイレはどこですか	toire wa doko desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Default choice
Very Polite	お手洗いはどちらですか	otearai wa dochira desu ka	Common	Less common	Very common	Formal venues

2.1.4 Water Please

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	水ちょうだい	mizu chōdai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Friends only
Polite	水をください	mizu o kudasai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Restaurants, most situations
Very Polite	お水をいただけますか	omizu o itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	High-end restaurants, hotels

2.2 GREETINGS & INTRODUCTIONS

2.2.1 Nice to Meet You

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	よろしく	yoroshiku	Standard	Standard	Standard	Very casual

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Polite	はじめまして。 よろしくお 願いしま す	hajimemashite yoroshiku onegaishi- masu	Standard	Standard	Standard	First meetings
Very Polite	はじめまして。 どうぞよろしく お願いいたしま す	hajimemashite dōzo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu	Common	Less common	Common	Business, formal

2.2.2 I'm [Name]

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	[Name]だよ	[Name] da yo	Standard	Standard	Standard	Friends
Polite	私は[Name]で す	watashi wa [Name] desu	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard introduc- tion
Very Polite	私、[Name]と 申します	watashi, [Name] to mōshimasu	Common	Less common	Common	Business cards

2.2.3 Where Are You From?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	どこから来たの	doko kara kita no	Standard	どこから来 たん (kitan)	Standard	Friends
Polite	どこから来まし たか	doko kara kimashita ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Small talk
Very Polite	どちらからいら っしゃいました か	dochira kara irasshaimashita ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal settings

2.2.4 I'm from [Country]

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	[Country]から 来た	[Country] kara kita	Standard	[Country]か ら来てん (kiten)	Standard	Casual
Polite	[Country]から 来ました	[Country] kara kimashita	Standard	Standard	Standard	Most common

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Very Polite	[Country]から 参りました	[Country] kara mairi- mashita	Common	Less common	Common	Formal

2.2.5 First Time in Japan?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	日本初めて	Nihon hajimete	Standard	Standard	Standard	Friends
Polite	日本は初めてで すか	Nihon wa hajimete desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Common question
Very Polite	日本は初めてで いらっしやいま すか	Nihon wa hajimete de irasshaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Hotels, guides

2.2.6 Yes, First Time

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	うん、初めて	un, hajimete	Standard	Standard	Standard	Friends
Polite	はい、初めてで す	hai, hajimete desu	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard response
Very Polite	はい、初めてで ございます	hai, hajimete de gozaimasu	Common	Less common	Common	Very formal

2.3 RESTAURANTS & FOOD

2.3.1 This One Please

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	これちょうだい	kore chōdai	Standard	これちょう だい/これ くれる (kore kureru)	Standard	Friends
Polite	これをください	kore o kudasai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Point at menu
Very Polite	こちらをいただ けますか	kochira o itadake- masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal dining

2.3.2 Do You Have Recommendations?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	おすすめある	osusume aru	Standard	おすすめあるん (osusume arun)	Standard	Casual eateries
Polite	おすすめはありますか	osusume wa arimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Best for tourists
Very Polite	おすすめをお伺いできますか	osusume o oukagai dekimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	High-end restaurants

2.3.3 Can You Make it Spicy?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	辛くできる	karaku dekiru	Standard	辛うできる (karou dekiru)	Standard	Casual
Polite	辛くできますか	karaku dekimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Most restaurants
Very Polite	辛めにしていただけですか	karameni shite itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal dining

2.3.4 Vegetarian Menu?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	ベジタリアンメニューある	bejitarian menyū aru	Standard	ベジタリアンメニューあるん (arun)	Standard	Casual
Polite	ベジタリアンメニューはありますか	bejitarian menyū wa arimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Dietary needs
Very Polite	ベジタリアンのお料理はございますか	bejitarian no oryōri wa gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Very common	Traditional restaurants

2.3.5 No Meat Please

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	肉なしで	niku nashi de	Standard	肉抜きで (niku nuki de)	Standard	Casual
Polite	肉なしでお願いします	niku nashi de one-gaishimasu	Standard	Standard	Standard	Clear request
Very Polite	お肉を抜いていただけますか	oniku o nuite itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal

2.3.6 How Much?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	いくら	ikura	Standard	なんぼ (nambo)	Standard	Markets
Polite	いくらですか	ikura desu ka	Standard	いくらですか (o-ikura)	Standard	Shopping, restaurants
Very Polite	いくらでございますか	o-ikura de gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Luxury stores

2.3.7 Delicious!

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	うまい	umai	Standard	うまいな (umai na)	Standard	Casual, masculine
Polite	おいしいです	oishii desu	Standard	おいしいわ (oishii wa) - Osaka feminine	Standard	Compliment chef
Very Polite	大変おいしゅうございます	taihen oishū gozaimasu	Common	Less common	Very common	Traditional kaiseki

2.4 SHOPPING

2.4.1 May I Try This On?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	試着していい	shichaku shite ii	Standard	試着してええん (shite erun)	Standard	Casual shops

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Polite	試着できますか	shichaku dekimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Clothing stores
Very Polite	試着させていただけますか	shichaku sasete itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Department stores

2.4.2 Bigger Size?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	もっと大きいある	motto ōkii no aru	Standard	もっと大きいあるん (arun)	Standard	Casual
Polite	もう少し大きいサイズはありますか	mō sukoshi ōkii saizu wa arimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Size requests
Very Polite	もう少し大きめのサイズはございますか	mō sukoshi ōkime no saizu wa gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal stores

2.4.3 Just Looking

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	見てるだけ	miteru dake	Standard	見てるだけやで (miteru dake ya de)	Standard	Casual
Polite	見ています	mite iru dake desu	Standard	Standard	Standard	When approached
Very Polite	拝見しているだけでございます	haiken shite iru dake de gozaimasu	Common	Less common	Common	Luxury boutiques

2.4.4 I'll Take This

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	これにする	kore ni suru	Standard	これにするわ (kore ni suru wa)	Standard	Casual
Polite	これをください	kore o kudasai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Ready to buy

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Very Polite	こちらをいただきます	kochira o itadaki-masu	Common	Less common	Common	Formal purchase

2.4.5 Can I Pay by Card?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	カードで払える	kādo de haraeru	Standard	カードでえん (kādo de erun)	Standard	Casual
Polite	カードで払えますか	kādo de haraemasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Payment question
Very Polite	カードでお支払いできますか	kādo de oshiharai dekimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	

2.5 TRANSPORTATION

2.5.1 Where is [Station]?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	[駅名]駅どこ	[ekimei] eki doko	Standard	[駅名]駅どこやねん (doko yanen)	Standard	Friends
Polite	[駅名]駅はどこですか	[ekimei] eki wa doko desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Ask locals
Very Polite	[駅名]駅はどちらでございますか	[ekimei] eki wa dochira de gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	

2.5.2 Does This Train Go to [Place]?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	この電車[場所]行く	kono densha [basho] iku	Standard	この電車[場所]行く (ikun)	Standard	Casual

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Polite	この電車は[場所]に行きますか	kono densha wa [basho] ni ikimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Platform checks
Very Polite	この電車は[場所]に参りますか	kono densha wa [basho] ni mairimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Station attendant

2.5.3 One Ticket to [Place]

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	[場所]まで一枚	[basho] made ichimai	Standard	[場所]まで一枚ちょうだい (ichimai chōdai)	Standard	Casual
Polite	[場所]まで一枚ください	[basho] made ichimai kudasai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Ticket counter
Very Polite	[場所]まで一枚お願いいたします	[basho] made ichimai onegai itashimasu	Common	Less common	Common	JR offices

2.5.4 Which Platform?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	何番線	nanban-sen	Standard	何番ホーム (nanban hōmu)	Standard	Casual
Polite	何番線ですか	nanban-sen desu ka	Standard	何番ホームですか (nanban hōmu)	Standard	Platform info
Very Polite	何番線でございますか	nanban-sen de gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Information desk

2.6 HOTELS

2.6.1 Check-In Please

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	チェックインしたい	chekkuin shitai	Standard	チェックインしたいねん (shitai nen)	Standard	Hostels
Polite	チェックインをお願いします	chekkuin o onegaishi-masu	Standard	Standard	Standard	Front desk
Very Polite	チェックインをお願いいたします	chekkuin o onegai itashimasu	Common	Less common	Common	Luxury hotels

2.6.2 One More Towel Please

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	タオルもう一枚ちょうだい	taoru mō ichimai chōdai	Standard	タオルもう一枚くれねん (kurehen)	Standard	Casual
Polite	もう一枚タオルをください	mō ichimai taoru o kudasai	Standard	Standard	Standard	Room service
Very Polite	タオルをもう一枚いただけますか	taoru o mō ichimai itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal request

2.6.3 Wi-Fi Password?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	Wi-Fiのパスワードは	waifai no pasuwādo wa	Standard	Standard	Standard	Hostels
Polite	Wi-Fiのパスワードは何ですか	waifai no pasuwādo wa nan desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Most hotels
Very Polite	Wi-Fiのパスワードを教えてくださいいただけますか	waifai no pasuwādo o oshiete itadake-masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal hotels

2.6.4 What Time is Breakfast?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	朝ごはん何時から	asagohan nanji kara	Standard	朝ごはんいつから (itsu kara)	Standard	Casual
Polite	朝食は何時から ですか	chōshoku wa nanji kara desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Hotel break- fast
Very Polite	朝食は何時から でございますか	chōshoku wa nanji kara de gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Ryokan

2.7 SIGHTSEEING

2.7.1 May I Take a Photo?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	写真撮っていい	shashin totte ii	Standard	写真撮って ええ (totte ee)	Standard	Friends
Polite	写真を撮っても いいですか	shashin o totte mo ii desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Ask per- mission
Very Polite	写真を撮らせて いただいてもよ ろしいでしょ うか	shashin o torasete itadaite mo yoroshii deshō ka	Common	Less common	Very common	Temples, shrines

2.7.2 Could You Take My Photo?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	写真撮って	shashin totte	Standard	写真撮って くれへん (totte kurehen)	Standard	Casual
Polite	写真を撮って いただけますか	shashin o totte itadake- masu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Ask strangers
Very Polite	お写真をお撮り いただけます でしょうか	oshashin o otori itadake- masu deshō ka	Common	Less common	Common	Very polite

2.7.3 What Time Does It Close?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	何時に閉まる	nanji ni shimaru	Standard	何時に閉まるん (shimaru n)	Standard	Casual
Polite	何時に閉まりますか	nanji ni shimarimasu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Shops, temples
Very Polite	何時に閉まられますか	nanji ni shimararemasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal venues

2.7.4 How Much is Admission?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	入場料いくら	nyūjōryō ikura	Standard	入場料なんぼ (nambo)	Standard	Casual
Polite	入場料はいくらですか	nyūjōryō wa ikura desu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Ticket booth
Very Polite	入場料はおいくらでございますか	nyūjōryō wa o-ikura de gozaimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Museums

2.8 BASIC CONVERSATION TOOLS

2.8.1 Yes / No

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	うん / ううん	un / uun	Standard	うん / ううん	Standard	Friends
Polite	はい / いいえ	hai / iie	Standard	Standard	Standard	Default Same as polite
Very Polite	はい / いいえ	hai / iie	Standard	Standard	Standard	

2.8.2 Thank You

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	ありがとう	arigatō	Standard	おおきに (ōkini)	ありがとう	Friends

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Polite	ありがとうございます	arigatō gozaimasu	Standard	おおきに / ありがとうございます	Standard	Most situations
Very Polite	誠にありがとうございます	makoto ni arigatō gozaimasu	Common	Less common	Common	Formal thanks

2.8.3 Excuse Me / Sorry

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	ごめん	gomen	Standard	ごめんな (gomen na)	Standard	Friends
Polite	すみません	sumimasen	Standard	すんません (sun-masen)	Standard	Get attention
Very Polite	申し訳ございません	mōshiwake gozaimasen	Common	Less common	Common	Sincere apology

2.8.4 I Don't Understand

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	分かんない	wakannai	Standard	分からへん (wakara-hen)	Standard	Casual
Polite	分かりません	wakarimasen	Standard	Standard	Standard	Very useful!
Very Polite	分かりかねます	wakarikanemasu	Common	Less common	Common	Business

2.8.5 Please Say It Again

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	もう一回言って	mō ikkai itte	Standard	もう一回ゆて (mō ikkai yūte)	Standard	Friends
Polite	もう一度お願いします	mō ichido onegaishimasu	Standard	Standard	Standard	Didn't catch it
Very Polite	恐れ入りますが、もう一度お願いできますか	osoreirimasu ga, mō ichido onegai dekimasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal

2.8.6 Slowly Please

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	ゆっくり言って	yukkuri itte	Standard	ゆっくりゆ うて (yukkuri yūte)	Standard	Casual
Polite	ゆっくりお願 い します	yukkuri onegaishi- masu	Standard	Standard	Standard	Helpful phrase
Very Polite	ゆっくりお話し いただけますか	yukkuri ohanashi itadake- masu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal

2.8.7 Do You Speak English?

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Usage
Casual	英語話せる	eigo hanaseru	Standard	英語話せる ん (hanaserun)	Standard	Casual
Polite	英語を話せます か	eigo o hanase- masu ka	Standard	Standard	Standard	Common question
Very Polite	英語をお話しに なれますか	eigo o ohanashi ni naremasu ka	Common	Less common	Common	Formal

2.9 GRAMMAR BUILDING BLOCKS

2.9.1 Core Pronouns (People)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Politeness Level	Regional Notes
I / me	私	watashi	Neutral/polite	Universal
I / me (casual male)	僕	boku	Casual	Men only
I / me (very casual male)	俺	ore	Very casual	Men, avoid with strangers
You (singular)	あなた	anata	Polite	Use names + さん instead
He	彼	kare	Neutral	Universal
She	彼女	kanojo	Neutral	Universal
We	私たち	watashi- tachi	Polite	Universal
We (casual male)	僕たち	bokutachi	Casual	Men
You (plural)	みなさん	minasan	Polite	Means “everyone”

English	Japanese	Romaji	Politeness Level	Regional Notes
They (mixed/men)	彼ら	karera	Neutral	Universal
They (women)	彼女たち	kanojotachi	Neutral	Universal

2.9.2 Core Pronouns (Things/Places)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Function	When to Use
This (near me)	これ	kore	Thing near speaker	Pointing at menu items
That (near you)	それ	sore	Thing near listener	“That one you’re holding”
That (over there)	あれ	are	Far from both	Distant object
Which?	どれ	dore	Choosing	“Which one?”
Here	ここ	koko	Location near speaker	“Here, please”
There (near you)	そこ	soko	Location near listener	“There, by you”
Over there	あそこ	asoko	Distant location	“Over there”
Where?	どこ	doko	Question	“Where is…?”

2.9.3 Essential Particles (The Glue of Sentences)

Particle	Function	Example	English	Usage Note
は	Topic marker	私は旅行者です	I am a traveler	Sets conversation topic
が	Subject/emphasis	駅が近いです	The station is close	Highlights new info
を	Direct object	水をください	Water, please	What you want/do
に	Time/destination	7時に出ます	Leave at 7 o’ clock	“At/to/in”
で	Location/method	電車で行きます	Go by train	“By/at/in”(action)
の	Possession	友達のホテル	Friend’s hotel	“s/of”
へ	Direction	京都へ行きます	Go to Kyoto	Similar to に
と	And/with	友達と食べます	Eat with friend	Connecting
も	Also/too	私もです	Me too	Inclusion
から	From/because	東京から来ました	From Tokyo	Starting point
まで	Until/to	10時までです	Until 10	End point
か	Question	駅ですか	Is it the station?	Makes questions
よ	Emphasis	ここが安いですよ	This place is cheap!	Gentle emphasis
ね	Agreement	おいしいですね	It’s delicious, right?	Seeking agreement

2.10 SENTENCE PATTERNS (PLUG-AND-PLAY)

2.10.1 Pattern 1: [Noun] は [Noun/Adjective] です

Template: [Subject] は [Description] です **Example:** これはおいしいです (kore wa oishii desu) = This is tasty **Use:** Describing things

2.10.2 Pattern 2: [Noun] をください

Template: [Thing] をください **Example:** 水をください (mizu o kudasai) = Water, please **Use:** Requesting items

2.10.3 Pattern 3: [Place] はどこですか

Template: [Location] はどこですか **Example:** トイレはどこですか (toire wa doko desu ka) = Where is the bathroom? **Use:** Finding locations

2.10.4 Pattern 4: [Time/Place] に [Verb]ます

Template: [When/Where] に [Action]ます **Example:** 7時に出ます (shichi-ji ni demasu) = I leave at 7 **Use:** Stating scheduled actions

2.10.5 Pattern 5: 这是什么ですか

Template: 这是什么ですか **Example:** 这是什么ですか (kore wa nan desu ka) = What is this? **Use:** Identifying unknown things

2.10.6 Pattern 6: [A] と [B] をください

Template: [Item A] と [Item B] をください **Example:** これとそれをください (kore to sore o kudasai) = This and that, please **Use:** Ordering multiple items

2.10.7 Pattern 7: [Noun]がほしいです / [Verb]たいです

Template: [Thing]がほしいです or [Action]たいです **Example:** 休みがほしいです (yasumi ga hoshii desu) = I want a break **Example:** 写真を撮りたいです (shashin o toritai desu) = I want to take photos **Use:** Expressing wants

2.10.8 Pattern 8: [Verb]てもいいですか

Template: [Action]てもいいですか **Example:** 写真を撮ってもいいですか (shashin o totte mo ii desu ka) = May I take photos? **Use:** Asking permission

2.10.9 Pattern 9: [Adjective]です / [Adjective]くないです

Template: [Description]です or [Description]くないです **Example:** 安いです (yasui desu) = It's cheap **Example:** 高くないです (takakunai desu) = It's not expensive **Use:** Describing with adjectives

2.10.10 Pattern 10: [Noun] の [Noun]

Template: [Owner/Type] の [Thing] **Example:** 日本の料理 (Nihon no ryōri) = Japanese cuisine **Use:** Showing possession/attribution

2.11 VOCABULARY TOOLKIT

2.11.1 Travel Essentials

English	Japanese	Romaji	Category
station	駅	eki	Transportation
hotel	ホテル	hoteru	Accommodation
room	部屋	heya	Accommodation

English	Japanese	Romaji	Category
restaurant	レストラン	resutoran	Dining
water	水	mizu	Dining
ticket	切符	kippu	Transportation
cash	現金	genkin	Money
card	カード	kādo	Money
bathroom	トイレ	toire	Facilities
help	助け	tasuke	Emergency

2.11.2 Action Verbs (with polite forms)

English	Japanese (Dictionary)	Romaji	Polite Form	Romaji (Polite)
to go	行く	iku	行きます	ikimasu
to come	来る	kuru	来ます	kimasu
to eat	食べる	taberu	食べます	tabemasu
to drink	飲む	nomu	飲みます	nomimasu
to buy	買う	kau	買います	kaimasu
to see/watch	見る	miru	見ます	mimasu
to stay	泊まる	tomaru	泊まります	tomarimasu
to need	要る	iru	要ります	irimasu
to want	欲しい	hoshii	欲しいです	hoshii desu
to speak	話す	hanasu	話します	hanashimasu

2.11.3 Useful Adjectives

English	Japanese	Romaji	Negative Form	Romaji (Negative)
good	いい	ii	よくない	yokunai
cheap	安い	yasui	安くない	yasukunai
expensive	高い	takai	高くない	takakunai
delicious	おいしい	oishii	おいしくない	oishikunai
close	近い	chikai	近くない	chikakunai
far	遠い	tōi	遠くない	tōkunai
open	開いている	aite iru	開いていない	aite inai
closed	閉まっている	shimatte iru	閉まっていない	shimatte inai
necessary	必要	hitsuyō	必要じゃない	hitsuyō ja nai
free/available	空いている	aite iru	空いていない	aite inai

2.12 QUICK SMALL TALK SCRIPTS

2.12.1 Script 1: First Meeting

Line 1: はじめまして。私は[Name]です。(Hajimemashite. Watashi wa [Name] desu.) *Nice to meet you, I'm [Name].*

Line 2: よろしくお願ひします。(Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.) *Please be kind to me / Nice to meet you.*

Line 3: どこから来ましたか?(Doko kara kimashita ka?) *Where are you from?*

Line 4: [Country]から来ました。([Country] kara kimashita.) *I'm from [Country].*

2.12.2 Script 2: Daily Plans

Question: 今日はどこに行きますか？(Kyō wa doko ni ikimasu ka?) *Where are you going today?*

Answer: [Place]に行きます。([Place] ni ikimasu.) *I'm going to [Place].*

2.12.3 Script 3: Getting Recommendations

Question: おすすめはありますか？(Osusume wa arimasu ka?) *Do you have recommendations?*

Follow-up: 日本は初めてですか？(Nihon wa hajimete desu ka?) *Is this your first time in Japan?*

Answer: はい、初めてです。(Hai, hajimete desu.) *Yes, first time.*

2.13 PRACTICAL APPLICATION BY CONTEXT

2.13.1 RESTAURANTS

Priority Phrases: 1. これをください (kore o kudasai) - This one, please 2. 辛くできますか (karaku dekimasu ka) - Can you make it spicy? 3. ベジタリアンメニューはありますか (bejitarian menyū wa arimasu ka) - Vegetarian menu? 4. おすすめはありますか (osusume wa arimasu ka) - Any recommendations? 5. おいしいです (oishii desu) - It's delicious 6. お会計お願いします (okaikei onegaishimasu) - Check, please

2.13.2 SHOPPING

Priority Phrases: 1. 試着できますか (shichaku dekimasu ka) - May I try it on? 2. もう少し大きいサイズはありますか (mō sukoshi ōkii saizu wa arimasu ka) - Bigger size? 3. いくらですか (ikura desu ka) - How much? 4. 見ていただけです (mite iru dake desu) - Just looking 5. これをください (kore o kudasai) - I'll take this 6. カードで払えますか (kādo de haraemasu ka) - Can I pay by card?

2.13.3 TRAVELING

Priority Phrases: 1. [駅名]駅はどこですか ([ekimei] eki wa doko desu ka) - Where is ___ station? 2. この電車は[場所]に行きますか (kono densha wa [basho] ni ikimasu ka) - Does this train go to ? 3. **[場所]まで一枚ください ([basho] made ichimai kudasai) - One ticket to** 4. 何番線ですか (nanban-sen desu ka) - Which platform? 5. 道に迷いました (michi ni mayoimashita) - I'm lost

2.13.4 HOTELS

Priority Phrases: 1. チェックインをお願いします (chekkuin o onegaishimasu) - Check-in, please 2. もう一枚タオルをください (mō ichimai taoru o kudasai) - One more towel 3. Wi-Fiのパスワードは何ですか (waifai no pasuwādo wa nan desu ka) - Wi-Fi password? 4. 朝食は何時からですか (chōshoku wa nanji kara desu ka) - What time is breakfast?

2.13.5 SIGHTSEEING/HELP

Priority Phrases: 1. 写真を撮ってもいいですか (shashin o totte mo ii desu ka) - May I take photos? 2. 写真を撮っていただけますか (shashin o totte itadakemasu ka) - Could you take my photo? 3. 助けてください (tasukete kudasai) - Please help 4. 道に迷いました (michi ni mayoimashita) - I'm lost 5. 何時に閉まりますか (nanji ni shimarimasu ka) - What time does it close?

2.14 REGIONAL DIALECT QUICK REFERENCE

2.14.1 Key Osaka Differences

Standard Japanese	Osaka Dialect	Meaning
ありがとうございます (arigatō gozaimasu)	おおきに (ōkini)	Thank you
いくらですか (ikura desu ka)	なんぼですか (nambo desu ka)	How much?
分かりません (wakarimasen)	分からへん (wakarahen)	I don't understand
です (desu)	や/やで (ya/ya de)	Is/casual copula
ない (nai)	へん (hen)	Negative ending

2.14.2 Key Kyoto Differences

- Generally more formal than Tokyo
- Heavy use of お (o-) prefix for politeness
- Traditional honorific language preserved
- Same standard Japanese works, but higher formality appreciated

2.14.3 Key Tokyo Standard

- Most textbook Japanese
- Default polite forms (です/ます) universal
- Neutral accent
- What tourists should default to

3 VI. PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

3.1 Introduction

Japanese pronunciation is remarkably consistent and systematic compared to English. Once you learn the basic sounds, you can pronounce virtually any Japanese word correctly. There are no silent letters, and each character represents exactly one sound. This section will teach you the foundational sounds of Japanese and help you avoid common mistakes made by English speakers.

Key principle: Japanese is a syllable-timed language (like Spanish), whereas English is stress-timed. This means each syllable in Japanese gets roughly equal time and emphasis, creating a more rhythmic, even flow.

3.2 A. VOWELS

Japanese has only **5 vowel sounds**, and they are **always pronounced the same way**, regardless of context. This consistency makes Japanese pronunciation much more predictable than English.

3.2.1 The Five Vowels

Vowel	Pronunciation	English Approximation	Example Word	Meaning
a	“ah”	father, car	ame (ah-meh)	rain
i	“ee”	machine, see	ike (ee-keh)	pond
u	“oo”	food, rule	umi (oo-mee)	sea
e	“eh”	bed, pet	e (eh)	picture
o	“oh”	boat, so	ono (oh-noh)	axe

3.2.2 Detailed Vowel Explanations

A (あ/ア) - “ah”

- Open your mouth wide, as if saying “ah” at the dentist
- The jaw drops down comfortably
- It’s the “a” in “father,” NOT the “a” in “cat” or “fate”

Examples: - **arigatō** (ah-ree-gah-toh) - thank you - **akai** (ah-kah-ee) - red - **asa** (ah-sah) - morning - **sakana** (sah-kah-nah) - fish - **watashi** (wah-tah-shee) - I/me

I (い/イ) - “ee”

- Lips stretched slightly to the sides, like a small smile
- Tongue forward in the mouth
- It’s the “ee” in “see,” NOT the “i” in “sit” or “site”

Examples: - **ichi** (ee-chee) - one - **imi** (ee-mee) - meaning - **kitte** (keet-teh) - stamp - **shio** (shee-oh) - salt - **onegaishimasu** (oh-neh-gah-ee-shee-mahs) - please

U (う/ウ) - “oo”

- Lips barely rounded, more relaxed than English “oo”
- NOT as pronounced as English “food” - keep it subtle
- It’s between “food” and “foot” but closer to “food”

Examples: - **umi** (oo-mee) - sea - **usagi** (oo-sah-gee) - rabbit - **kutsu** (koo-tsoo) - shoes - **fuyu** (foo-yoo) - winter - **kudamono** (koo-dah-moh-noh) - fruit

Important note: The “u” is often devoiced (barely audible) at the end of words or between voiceless consonants: - **desu** sounds like “des” (the “u” is whispered or silent) - **shimasu** sounds like “shee-mahs” (the “u” is barely there) - **sukiyaki** sounds like “s’kee-yah-kee” (first “u” is devoiced)

E (え/エ) - “eh”

- Mouth half-open, wider than “ee” but not as wide as “ah”
- Similar to the “e” in “bet”
- It’s the “e” in “bed,” NOT the “ay” in “day”

Examples: - **eki** (eh-kee) - station - **ebi** (eh-bee) - shrimp - **densha** (den-shah) - train - **tegami** (teh-gah-mee) - letter - **senpai** (sen-pah-ee) - senior

O (お/オ) - “oh”

- Lips form a round shape, but not too tight
- It’s the “o” in “go,” NOT the “o” in “hot” or “woman”
- Keep it pure - don’t glide into a “w” sound like in English “go” (goh-w)

Examples: - **ohayō** (oh-hah-yoh) - good morning - **okane** (oh-kah-neh) - money - **onsen** (on-sen) - hot spring - **tokoro** (toh-koh-roh) - place - **dōmo** (doh-moh) - thanks (casual)

3.2.3 Vowel Consistency Rule

The vowels NEVER change sound. This is the most important rule in Japanese pronunciation. Unlike English, where: - “a” can sound like: cat, fate, car, about, ball - “o” can sound like: hot, go, work, food

In Japanese: - “a” always sounds like “ah”(father) - “i” always sounds like “ee”(see) - “u” always sounds like “oo”(food) - “e” always sounds like “eh”(bed) - “o” always sounds like “oh”(go)

3.2.4 Practice Words

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation	Meaning
あい	ai	ah-ee	love
うえ	ue	oo-eh	above
いえ	ie	ee-eh	house
あお	ao	ah-oh	blue
おい	oi	oh-ee	nephew
かい	kai	kah-ee	shellfish
きえる	kieru	kee-eh-roo	to disappear
あおい	aoi	ah-oh-ee	blue (adjective)
いい	ii	ee-ee	good
おおい	ōi	oh-oh-ee	many

3.3 B. CONSONANTS

Japanese consonants are generally softer and less aspirated (less air) than English consonants. Most are similar to English, but there are a few that require special attention.

3.3.1 Standard Consonants

K (k, g sounds)

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
ka	kah	kawa (kah-wah)	river
ki	kee	kitte (keet-teh)	stamp
ku	koo	kūki (koo-kee)	air
ke	keh	kēki (keh-kee)	cake
ko	koh	koko (koh-koh)	here

G sounds (voiced “k”): - ga, gi, gu, ge, go - **gakkou** (gahk-koh) - school - **ginkou** (geen-koh) - bank

S (s, z sounds)

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
sa	sah	sakura (sah-koo-rah)	cherry blossom
shi	shee	shio (shee-oh)	salt
su	soo	sushi (soo-shee)	sushi
se	seh	sensei (sen-say)	teacher
so	soh	sora (soh-rah)	sky

Important: “si” doesn’t exist in Japanese - it’s always written as “shi”(shee)

Z sounds (voiced “s”): - za, ji, zu, ze, zo - **zasshi** (zahs-shee) - magazine - **jikan** (jee-kahn) - time - **zubon** (zoo-bon) - pants

Important: “zi” doesn’t exist - it’s written as “ji”(jee)

T (t, d sounds)

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
ta	tah	taberu (tah-beh-roo)	to eat
chi	chee	chizu (chee-zoo)	map/cheese
tsu	tsoo	tsukue (tsoo-koo-eh)	desk
te	teh	tegami (teh-gah-mee)	letter
to	toh	tomodachi (toh-moh-dah-chee)	friend

Important: “ti” and “tu” don’t exist - they become “chi” and “tsu”

D sounds (voiced “t”): - da, ji (also written as “di”), zu (also written as “du”), de, do - **densha** (den-shah) - train - **doko** (doh-koh) - where

N Sounds

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
na	nah	nani (nah-nee)	what
ni	nee	niku (nee-koo)	meat
nu	noo	nuno (noo-noh)	cloth
ne	neh	neko (neh-koh)	cat
no	noh	nomi (noh-mee)	flea

Standalone N: The syllable “n”(ん/ン) can appear by itself at the end of syllables: - **sen** (sen) - thousand - **densha** (den-shah) - train - **kanpai** (kahn-pah-ee) - cheers - **nihon** (nee-hon) - Japan

This “n” sounds like “n” in “antenna” - it’s a syllabic nasal sound.

H (h, b, p sounds)

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
ha	hah	hana (hah-nah)	flower/nose
hi	hee	hito (hee-toh)	person
fu	foo	futon (foo-ton) - futon	
he	heh	heya (heh-yah)	room
ho	hoh	hon (hon)	book

Important: “hu” doesn’t exist - it’s always “fu”(see special explanation below)

B sounds (voiced “h”): - ba, bi, bu, be, bo - **basu** (bah-soo) - bus - **biiru** (bee-roo) - beer

P sounds (with small circle): - pa, pi, pu, pe, po - **pan** (pahn) - bread - **tempura** (tem-poo-rah) - tempura

M Sounds

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
ma	mah	matcha (maht-chah)	green tea
mi	mee	mizu (mee-zoo)	water
mu	moo	mushi (moo-shee)	insect
me	meh	me (meh)	eye
mo	moh	momo (moh-moh)	peach

Y Sounds

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
ya	yah	yama (yah-mah)	mountain
yu	yoo	yuki (yoo-kee)	snow
yo	yoh	yoru (yoh-roo)	night

Note: There is no “yi” or “ye” in standard Japanese

R/L Sound - VERY IMPORTANT This is one of the most challenging sounds for English speakers. **The Japanese “r” sound is NOT the English “r” and NOT the English “l” - it’s somewhere in between.**

How to pronounce it: 1. Put your tongue in the “L” position (tip touching the ridge behind your upper teeth) 2. Tap lightly once, like a very soft “d” or “t” 3. It sounds like a cross between “r,” “l,” and “d” 4. Similar to the “tt” in American English “butter” or “batter” 5. In Spanish, it’s like the single “r” in “pero” (not the rolled “rr”)

Common mistake: English speakers say “lice” instead of “rice” or roll the R like in Spanish “perro.”

Correct approach: Think of it as a soft, single tap of the tongue.

Japanese	DON'T Say	DO Say	Meaning
ramen	LAY-men or RRRR-amen	rah-men (tap)	ramen
arigatō	ah-lee-gah-toh	ah-ree-gah-toh (tap)	thank you
karate	kah-lah-teh	kah-rah-teh (tap)	karate
sayonara	sah-yoh-nah-lah	sah-yoh-nah-rah (tap)	goodbye
sushi	soo-shee	soo-shee	sushi (no R/L)

Practice words: - **ringo** (reen-goh) - apple - **ryokou** (ryoh-koh) - travel - **kuruma** (koo-roo-mah) - car - **torii** (toh-ree-ee) - shrine gate - **irashaimase** (ee-rah-shah-ee-mah-seh) - welcome

W Sounds

Combination	Sound	Example	Meaning
wa	wah	watashi (wah-tah-shee)	I/me
wo	oh/woh	wo (oh) - object marker	

Note: - “wo”(を) is only used as a grammatical particle and sounds almost identical to “o” - There is no “wi” or “we” in modern standard Japanese - The “w” sound is very subtle, not as pronounced as English “w”

3.3.2 Special Consonant Sounds

F Sound - “fu”(ふ/フ) The Japanese “fu” is NOT the English “f” sound. It’s unique:

How to pronounce it: 1. Don’t touch your upper teeth to your lower lip (like English “f”) 2. Instead, blow air gently through loosely rounded lips 3. It’s between “f” and “h” - more breathy than “f” 4. Think of it as blowing out a candle very gently

English “f”: Upper teeth touch lower lip → forceful air **Japanese “fu”:** Rounded lips, no teeth contact → gentle air

Practice words: - **futon** (foo-ton) - NOT “fton” - futon - **fuyu** (foo-yoo) - winter - **fune** (foo-neh) - boat - **fuku** (foo-koo) - clothes - **tofu** (toh-foo) - tofu

Common mistake: Saying “tofu” with English “f” sound. It should be breathy: “toh-hoo” (with rounded lips).

TSU Sound (つ/ツ) - VERY IMPORTANT This is one of the most distinctive Japanese sounds and doesn’t exist in English. **It’s NOT “too” or “sue” - it’s a single sound: “tsu.”**

How to pronounce it: 1. Start in position to say “t” 2. Release into “soo” sound 3. It’s ONE syllable, not two: “ts-oo” said quickly together 4. Think of the “ts” in “cats” or “pots” - but add “oo” after it 5. The “t” and “s” are simultaneous, not separate

Practice progression: 1. Say “cats” → focus on the “ts” at the end 2. Now say “cats” again → but instead of stopping, add “oo”: “cats-oo” 3. Say it faster: “tsu” 4. That’s it!

DO: Say “ts-oo” as ONE beat/syllable **DON’T:** Say “t-soo” or “soo” (two beats)

Practice words: | Japanese | Wrong Way | Right Way | Meaning | |———|———|———|———| | tsukue | “t-skoo-eh” | “ts-koo-eh” (one beat) | desk | | tsunami | “t-soo-nah-mee” | “ts-nah-mee” | tsunami | | tsuki | “t-soo-kee” | “ts-kee” | moon | | tsumori | “t-soo-moh-ree” | “ts-moh-ree” | intention | | natsu | “nah-t-soo” | “nah-ts” | summer |

More examples: - **sushi** (soo-shee) - sushi - **matsu** (mah-ts) - to wait / pine tree - **kutsu** (koo-ts) - shoes - **tsuyoi** (ts-yoh-ee) - strong - **tsumetai** (ts-meh-tah-ee) - cold (to touch)

SH Sound (shi, sha, sho, shu, she) The Japanese “sh” is slightly softer than English “sh” but similar enough that English speakers don’t struggle with it.

Practice words: - **shinkansen** (sheen-kahn-sen) - bullet train - **shōyu** (shoh-yoo) - soy sauce - **shizuka** (shee-zoo-kah) - quiet - **shimasu** (shee-mahs) - to do - **shashin** (shah-sheen) - photograph

CH Sound (chi, cha, cho, chu, che) Similar to English “ch” in “cheese” - this one is easy for English speakers.

Practice words: - **chūshajō** (choo-shah-joh) - parking lot - **ocha** (oh-chah) - tea - **chizu** (chee-zoo) - map/cheese - **chotto** (chot-toh) - a little - **chawan** (chah-wahn) - tea bowl

3.3.3 Consonant Combinations with Y (Palatalization)

Many consonants can combine with “ya,” “yu,” or “yo” to create a single syllable sound. These are written with a small や, ゆ, or よ.

Base	+ ya	+ yu	+ yo	Example
k	kya	kyu	kyo	kyō (kyoh) - today
s	sha	shu	sho	shashin (shah-sheen) - photo

Base	+ ya	+ yu	+ yo	Example
t	cha	chu	cho	chūmon (choo-mon) - order
n	nya	nyu	nyo	nyūsu (nyoo-soo) - news
h	hya	hyu	hyo	hyaku (hyah-koo) - hundred
m	mya	myu	myo	myōji (myoh-jee) - surname
r	rya	ryu	ryo	ryokan (ryoh-kahn) - inn
g	gya	gyu	gyo	gyūniku (gyoo-nee-koo) - beef
j	ja	ju	jo	jikan (jee-kahn) - time
b	bya	byu	byo	byōin (byoh-een) - hospital
p	pya	pyu	pyo	pyū (pyoo) - <i>whoosh</i> (sound effect)

Important: These are ONE syllable, not two: - **kyō** is pronounced “kyoh”(ONE beat), not “kee-yoh” (two beats) - **ryokan** is “ryoh-kahn”(3 beats), not “ree-yoh-kahn”(4 beats) - **shashin** is “shah-sheen” (2 beats), not “sha-sheen”(2 beats but different)

Practice words: - **kyōto** (kyoh-toh) - Kyoto - **ryōri** (ryoh-ree) - cooking/cuisine - **byōki** (byoh-kee) - illness - **jakusha** (jyah-koo-shah) - the weak - **happyō** (hahp-pyoh) - presentation

3.4 C. SPECIAL RULES

3.4.1 1. Double Consonants (Geminate Consonants) - The Pause

Double consonants (っ/っ - small tsu) create a brief pause before the consonant. This pause is **just as important as any other sound** - it changes meaning!

Rule: When you see a double consonant (kk, pp, tt, ss, etc.), pause for ONE beat before saying the consonant.

How it works: - The small っ (tsu) represents one full syllable of silence/pause - Count it as a beat when saying the word - Hold your mouth in position for the next consonant during the pause

Minimal Pairs (words that differ only by the double consonant):

Without pause	With pause	Difference
kako (kah-koh)	kakkō (kahk-koh)	past / appearance
oto (oh-toh)	otto (oht-toh)	sound / husband
kite (kee-teh)	kitte (keet-teh)	come (て-form) / stamp
saki (sah-kee)	sakki (sahk-kee)	ahead / earlier
ichi (ee-chee)	icchi (eech-chee)	one / agreement

How to practice: 1. Say the word slowly with an exaggerated pause 2. **kakkō**: “kah-(pause)-koh” - hold your mouth in “k”position during pause 3. **kitte**: “kee-(pause)-teh” - hold your mouth in “t” position during pause 4. **matte**: “mah-(pause)-teh” - wait

Common words with double consonants: - **gakkō** (gahk-koh) - school - **kippu** (keep-poo) - ticket - **zasshi** (zahs-shee) - magazine - **massugu** (mahs-soo-goo) - straight ahead - **itte** (eet-teh) - say (て-form) - **motte** (moht-teh) - hold (て-form) - **chotto** (chot-toh) - a little - **kitte kudasai** (keet-teh koo-dah-sah-ee) - please cut - **motto** (moht-toh) - more - **zutto** (zoot-toh) - all along

Practical example: - **Chotto matte kudasai** (chot-toh maht-teh koo-dah-sah-ee) - Please wait a moment - Two double consonants: pause before “tt” in both “chotto” and “matte”

3.4.2 2. Long Vowels (Extended Vowels)

Long vowels are held for TWO beats instead of one. This **changes the meaning** of words, so it's critical to get it right.

How to write long vowels: - In hiragana: あ→あa, い→いi, う→うu, え→えi or えe, お→おu or おo - In katakana: add a dash (ー) after the vowel - In romaji: either double the vowel (aa, ii, uu, ei/ee, ou/oo) or use macron (ā, ī, ū, ē, ō)

Rule: Hold the vowel for TWICE as long as normal.

Minimal Pairs (words that differ only by vowel length):

Short vowel	Long vowel	Difference
obasan (oh-bah-sahn)	obāsan (oh-baah-sahn)	aunt / grandmother
ojisan (oh-jee-sahn)	ojīsan (oh-jeee-sahn)	uncle / grandfather
koko (koh-koh)	kōkō (kooh-kooh)	here / high school
yuki (yoo-kee)	yūki (yooo-kee)	snow / courage
suki (soo-kee)	sūki (sooo-kee)	like / ski
e (eh)	ē (ehh)	picture / yes (casual)
koko (koh-koh)	kōko (kooh-koh)	here / incense

How to practice: 1. Say the short version with one beat per syllable 2. Say the long version, holding the long vowel for two beats 3. **oba-san** (3 beats) vs **o-baa-san** (4 beats) 4. Count on your fingers to make sure you're adding the extra beat

Common words with long vowels: - **arigatō** (ah-ree-gah-tooh) - thank you - **ohayō** (oh-hah-yooh) - good morning - **tōkyō** (tooh-kyooh) - Tokyo - **sūpā** (sooo-paah) - supermarket - **kōhī** (kooh-heee) - coffee - **eigo** (ehh-goh) - English - **onēsan** (oh-nehh-sahn) - older sister - **sensei** (sen-sehh) - teacher - **kēki** (kehh-kee) - cake - **chīzu** (cheee-zoo) - cheese - **kūkō** (kooo-kooh) - airport - **yūbinkyoku** (yooo-been-kyoh-koo) - post office

Practical example: - **Kōhī o kudasai** (kooh-heee oh koo-dah-sah-ee) - Coffee please - Two long vowels: hold "oh" twice in "kōhī"

3.4.3 3. Pitch Accent Basics

Unlike English which uses stress (volume and force), Japanese uses **pitch accent** (high vs low tone). The pitch pattern can change the meaning of words.

What is pitch accent? - Each syllable is pronounced at a HIGH pitch or LOW pitch - The volume and force stay relatively even - Pitch patterns are like musical notes: some syllables are "higher" and some are "lower"

Basic patterns: 1. **Flat/High:** Start high, stay high → **sakana** (sah-kah-nah) - fish 2. **Head-High:** Start high, drop low → **ame** (ah-meh) - rain 3. **Tail-High:** Start low, rise high → **ame** (ah-meh) - candy 4. **Mid-drop:** Start high, drop, then low → **kokoro** (koh-koh-roh) - heart

Minimal Pairs (words that differ only by pitch):

Word	Pitch Pattern	Meaning
hashi	High-low	chopsticks
hashi	Low-high	bridge
hashi	High-high	edge

Word	Pitch Pattern	Meaning
ame	High-low	rain
ame	Low-high	candy
kaki	High-low	oyster
kaki	Low-high	persimmon

Should you worry about pitch accent as a beginner?

Short answer: Not too much. Focus on the vowels, consonants, and special rules first.

Why? 1. Native speakers will understand you from context 2. Pitch accent varies by region (Tokyo vs Osaka have different patterns) 3. It's more important for advanced learners 4. Getting the basic sounds right matters more initially

However: - Be aware it exists - Listen carefully to native speakers - Try to mimic the melody/music of what you hear - When you watch Japanese media, notice the pitch patterns - As you progress, you can study it more formally

Practical tip: Think of Japanese like singing - there's a melody to each phrase. Try to match the melody rather than individual pitches at first.

3.4.4 4. Devoicing (Whispered Vowels)

Sometimes the vowels **i** and **u** are devoiced (whispered or almost silent), especially: - Between voiceless consonants (k, s, t, p, h, f) - At the end of polite verb forms

Common examples:

Word	Full pronunciation	Natural/Devoiced	Meaning
desu	deh-soo	deh-s'(u is silent)	is/am/are
shimasu	shee-mah-soo	shee-mah-s'(u is silent)	to do
deshita	deh-shee-tah	deh-sh'tah (i is devoiced)	was
sukiyaki	soo-kee-yah-kee	s'kee-yah-kee (first u is devoiced)	sukiyaki
sukoshi	soo-koh-shee	s'koh-shee (u is devoiced)	a little
keshiki	keh-shee-kee	keh-sh'kee (i is devoiced)	scenery

Should you do this? - It happens naturally as you get faster at speaking - Don't worry about it at first - pronounce all vowels fully - Native speakers will do it automatically - You might start doing it naturally after hearing a lot of Japanese

3.5 D. COMMON PRONUNCIATION MISTAKES

3.5.1 Mistakes English Speakers Make

1. Adding extra vowels where they don't belong □ **Wrong:** "ramen-u"(rah-men-oo) □ **Right:** "ramen"(rah-men)

□ **Wrong:** "des-oo"(deh-soo) □ **Right:** "desu"(deh-s'- u is devoiced)

Fix: Japanese syllables end in either a vowel or "n"- don't add vowels to the end of words.

2. Saying “L” instead of the Japanese “R” (tap) □ **Wrong:** “arigatou” → “ah-lee-gah-toh” □ **Right:** “arigatō” → “ah-ree-gah-toh” (tap the R)

□ **Wrong:** “ramen” → “lamen” □ **Right:** “ramen” → “ramen” (tap the R)

Fix: Tap your tongue lightly behind your upper teeth - it’s not “L,” not “R,” but a single tap.

3. Pronouncing “tsu” as two syllables (“t-su” or “too”) □ **Wrong:** “tsunami” → “t-soo-nah-mee” (4 syllables) □ **Right:** “tsunami” → “ts-nah-mee” (3 syllables)

□ **Wrong:** “tsuki” → “t-soo-kee” or “too-kee” □ **Right:** “tsuki” → “ts-kee” (2 syllables)

Fix: Practice saying “cats” and focus on the “ts” sound. Now add “oo” to it in one beat: “ts-oo.”

4. Not pausing for double consonants □ **Wrong:** “matte” → “mah-teh” (sounds like “mate”) □ **Right:** “matte” → “mah-(pause)-teh” (wait)

□ **Wrong:** “kitte” → “kee-teh” □ **Right:** “kitte” → “kee-(pause)-teh” (stamp)

Fix: The small っ is a full beat of silence. Count it!

5. Not holding long vowels long enough □ **Wrong:** “ohayō” → “oh-hah-yoh” (3 beats) □ **Right:** “ohayō” → “oh-hah-yooh” (4 beats - hold the ō)

□ **Wrong:** “arigatō” → “ah-ree-gah-toh” (4 beats) □ **Right:** “arigatō” → “ah-ree-gah-tooh” (5 beats - hold the ō)

Fix: Long vowels are TWO beats, not one. Count them!

6. Using English vowel sounds instead of Japanese ones □ **Wrong:** “cat” sound in “arigatō” → “ari-GAT-oh” □ **Right:** “father” sound → “ari-GAH-toh”

□ **Wrong:** “sit” sound in “kitte” → “KIT-teh” □ **Right:** “see” sound → “KEET-teh”

Fix: Remember the 5 vowels: ah, ee, oo, eh, oh. Always use these sounds.

7. Stressing syllables like in English □ **Wrong:** “a-ri-GA-tō” (stressing “ga”) □ **Right:** “a-ri-ga-tō” (all syllables equal stress, but with pitch changes)

□ **Wrong:** “sa-YO-na-ra” (stressing “yo”) □ **Right:** “sa-yo-na-ra” (even stress)

Fix: Give each syllable equal time and force. Japanese is syllable-timed, not stress-timed.

8. Pronouncing “fu”like English “f” □ **Wrong:** “tofu”→ “TOF-oo”(upper teeth on lower lip) □ **Right:** “tofu”→ “TOH-foo”(breathy, rounded lips, no teeth contact)

□ **Wrong:** “futon”→ “FOOT-on” □ **Right:** “futon”→ “foo-ton”(breathy “f”)

Fix: Don’t let your teeth touch your lip. Blow gently through rounded lips.

9. Forgetting that “u”is often silent in “desu/masu”endings □ **Wrong:** “desu”→ “deh-SOO” (pronouncing u fully) □ **Right:** “desu”→ “deh-s”(u is devoiced/silent)

□ **Wrong:** “tabemasu”→ “tah-beh-mah-SOO” □ **Right:** “tabemasu”→ “tah-beh-mah-s”

Fix: In casual/natural speech, the “u”in desu and masu endings is barely audible.

10. Not distinguishing between “n”and “m”sounds before certain consonants The standalone “n”(ん) changes pronunciation depending on what comes after it:

- Before **p, b, m** → sounds like “m”
 - **shinbun** → “shim-bun”(newspaper)
 - **kanpai** → “kam-pah-ee”(cheers)
 - **sanma** → “sam-mah”(Pacific saury fish)
- Before **k, g** → sounds like “ng”
 - **ginkou** → “gingkoh”(bank)
 - **sankaku** → “sangkah-koo”(triangle)
- Otherwise → sounds like “n”
 - **sensei** → “sen-say”(teacher)
 - **densha** → “den-shah”(train)

Fix: Let the “n”naturally adapt to the following consonant. Don’t force it to always sound like “n.”

3.5.2 Summary of Key Pronunciation Tips

□ **Master the 5 vowels** - they never change □ **Tap the R** - don’t say L or roll the R □ **“Tsu”is one syllable** - practice “cats-oo”→ “tsu” □ **Pause for small つ** - double consonants need a beat of silence □ **Hold long vowels** - they’re twice as long (two beats) □ **All syllables get equal time** - no stress like in English □ **“Fu”is breathy** - no teeth on lip □ **Devoice “u”in desu/masu** - it’s almost silent □ **Don’t add extra sounds** - no extra vowels at the end □ **Listen and mimic** - match the melody/music you hear

3.6 E. PRACTICE SENTENCES

Here are common tourist phrases with detailed pronunciation guides. Practice these slowly at first, then speed up.

3.6.1 Basic Greetings

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation Breakdown	Meaning
ありがとうございます	arigatō gozaimasu	ah-ree-gah-tooh goh-zah-ee-mah-s'	Thank you very much
おはようございます	ohayō gozaimasu	oh-hah-yooh goh-zah-ee-mah-s'	Good morning
こんにちは	konnichiwa	kon-nee-chee-wah	Hello/Good afternoon
こんばんは	konbanwa	kon-bahn-wah	Good evening
さようなら	sayonara	sah-yoh-nah-rah	Goodbye
すみません	sumimasen	soo-mee-mah-sen	Excuse me/Sorry
ごめんなさい	gomennasai	goh-men-nah-sah-ee	I'm sorry

3.6.2 Restaurant Phrases

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation Breakdown	Meaning
いただきます	itadakimasu	ee-tah-dah-kee-mah-s'	Let's eat (before meal)
ごちそうさまでした	gochisōsama deshita	goh-chee-sooh-sah-mah deh-sh'tah	Thank you for the meal
お水をください	omizu o kudasai	oh-mee-zoo oh koo-dah-sah-ee	Water please
メニューをください	menyū o kudasai	men-yooo oh koo-dah-sah-ee	Menu please
これをください	kore o kudasai	koh-reh oh koo-dah-sah-ee	This one please
おいしい	oishii	oh-ee-sheee	Delicious
お会計をお願いします	okaikei o one- gaishimasu	oh-kah-ee-kehh oh oh-neh-gah-ee-shee-mah-s'	Check please

3.6.3 Shopping Phrases

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation Breakdown	Meaning
いくらですか	ikura desu ka	ee-koo-rah deh-s'kah	How much is it?
これをください	kore o kudasai	koh-reh oh koo-dah-sah-ee	I'll take this
高いです	takai desu	tah-kah-ee deh-s'	It's expensive
安いです	yasui desu	yah-soo-ee deh-s'	It's cheap
見てだけです	mite iru dake desu	mee-teh ee-roo dah-keh deh-s'	Just looking
試着してもいいですか	shichaku shite mo ii desu ka	shee-chah-koo sh'teh moh ee-ee deh-s'kah	May I try it on?

3.6.4 Direction Phrases

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation Breakdown	Meaning
駅はどこですか	eki wa doko desu ka	eh-kee wah doh-koh deh-s'kah	Where is the station?
まっすぐ 右	massugu migi	mahs-soo-goo (pause before "s") mee-gee	Straight ahead Right

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation Breakdown	Meaning
左	hidari	hee-dah-ree	Left
道に迷いました	michi ni mayoimashita	mee-chee nee mah-yoh-ee-mah-sh'tah	I'm lost
ここはどこですか	koko wa doko desu ka	koh-koh wah doh-koh deh-s'kah	Where am I?

3.6.5 Emergency Phrases

Japanese	Romaji	Pronunciation Breakdown	Meaning
助けて	tasukete	tah-soo-keh-teh	Help!
警察	keisatsu	kehh-sah-ts (tsu = one syllable)	Police
病院	byōin	byooh-een (long ō, one syllable "byo")	Hospital
痛い	itai	ee-tah-ee	It hurts
気分が悪いです	kibun ga warui desu	kee-boon gah wah-roo-ee deh-s'	I don't feel well
英語を話せますか	eigo o hanasemasu ka	ehh-goh oh hah-nah-seh-mah-s'kah	Do you speak English?

3.7 F. PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE TIPS

3.7.1 For Self-Study:

1. Listen actively

- Watch Japanese media (anime, dramas, news)
- Use language learning apps with audio
- Listen to Japanese music and try to sing along
- Pay attention to the melody and rhythm

2. Record yourself

- Use your phone to record yourself saying words/phrases
- Compare to native speaker audio
- Identify where your pronunciation differs
- Practice the differences repeatedly

3. Shadow native speakers

- Play audio of a native speaker
- Repeat immediately after them (like an echo)
- Try to match their speed, pitch, and rhythm
- This helps you internalize natural pronunciation

4. Use minimal pairs

- Practice words that differ by only one sound
- This trains your ear and mouth to distinguish similar sounds
- Examples: kako/kakkō, obasan/obāsan, hashi (chopsticks)/hashi (bridge)

5. Slow down

- Don't rush when learning

- Pronounce each syllable clearly and correctly first
- Speed comes naturally with practice
- Better to be slow and correct than fast and wrong

6. Focus on problem sounds

- Identify your personal weaknesses (R sound? Tsu? Double consonants?)
- Dedicate extra time to these specific sounds
- Practice them in isolation before using them in sentences

7. Learn by context

- Don't just memorize sounds - learn words and phrases
- Understand what you're saying
- This makes practice more engaging and memorable

3.7.2 Recommended Resources:

Apps: - **Forvo** - Native speaker pronunciation database - **Drops** - Vocabulary with audio - **JapanesePod101** - Lessons with pronunciation focus - **NHK Easy Japanese** - Beginner lessons with audio

YouTube Channels: - **Dogen** - Pitch accent and pronunciation expert - **That Japanese Man Yuta** - Natural Japanese explanations - **JapanesePod101** - Structured lessons - **Learn Japanese with JapanesePod101.com** - Pronunciation guides

Websites: - **Tofugu** - Articles on pronunciation - **Japanese Pronunciation Guide (University of Iowa)** - Interactive mouth diagrams - **OJAD (Online Japanese Accent Dictionary)** - Pitch accent patterns

3.7.3 With a Language Partner:

1. Ask for corrections

- Request that they point out pronunciation mistakes
- Ask them to model the correct pronunciation slowly
- Practice repeating until they approve

2. Read aloud

- Read Japanese text aloud to your partner
- Have them correct you in real-time
- Focus on rhythm and naturalness

3. Play pronunciation games

- Minimal pair quizzes (do they hear the difference?)
- Tongue twisters
- Speed challenges (say phrases faster while staying accurate)

3.8 G. TONGUE TWISTERS (早口言葉 - Hayakuchi Kotoba)

Practice these to improve your pronunciation speed and accuracy:

3.8.1 Easy:

1. 赤巻紙青巻紙黄巻紙

- **Aka-maki-gami ao-maki-gami ki-maki-gami**
- Red scroll, blue scroll, yellow scroll

2. 生麦生米生卵

- **Nama-mugi nama-gome nama-tamago**

- Raw wheat, raw rice, raw egg

3. 隣の客はよく柿食う客だ

- **Tonari no kyaku wa yoku kaki kuu kyaku da**

- The customer next door is a customer who eats lots of persimmons

3.8.2 Intermediate:

4. バスガス爆発

- **Basu gasu bakuhatsu**

- Bus gas explosion
- (Try saying it fast 3 times!)

5. 東京特許許可局

- **Tōkyō tokkyo kyoka-kyoku**

- Tokyo patent approval office

3.8.3 Hard:

6. 坊主が屏風に上手に坊主の絵を描いた

- **Bōzu ga byōbu ni jōzu ni bōzu no e o kaita**

- A monk skillfully drew a picture of a monk on a folding screen

7. お綾や親にお謝り

- **O-Aya ya oya ni oayamari**

- Aya, apologize to your parent

3.9 H. FINAL PRONUNCIATION CHECKLIST

Before moving forward, make sure you can:

- ☐ Pronounce all 5 vowels correctly and consistently
- ☐ Distinguish between short and long vowels
- ☐ Pronounce the Japanese “R” as a tap (not “L” or rolled “R”)
- ☐ Say “tsu” as one syllable
- ☐ Say “fu” with a breathy sound (not English “f”)
- ☐ Pause correctly for double consonants (small つ)
- ☐ Hold long vowels for two beats
- ☐ Pronounce all syllables with equal stress
- ☐ Say consonant + “y” combinations as one syllable (kya, ryu, etc.)
- ☐ Devoice “u” in “desu” and “masu” endings naturally

Remember: Perfect pronunciation comes with time and practice. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes —Japanese people appreciate any effort to speak their language. Focus on being understood first, then refine your accent over time.

3.10 Summary

Japanese pronunciation is highly systematic: - **5 consistent vowels:** a (ah), i (ee), u (oo), e (eh), o (oh) - **Soft consonants:** Most are similar to English but less forceful - **Special sounds:** R (tap), tsu

(one syllable), fu (breathy) - **Double consonants**: Add a pause before the consonant - **Long vowels**: Hold for two beats instead of one - **Pitch accent**: High and low tones (advanced concept) - **Equal syllable timing**: No heavy stress like English

With consistent practice and attention to these rules, you'll develop clear, understandable Japanese pronunciation. Good luck, and enjoy learning! がんばって!(Ganbatte! - Do your best!)

4 SECTION V: READING & WRITING SYSTEMS

4.1 Complete Guide to Japanese Scripts

Japanese uses three writing systems simultaneously: **hiragana** (cursive phonetic), **katakana** (angular phonetic), and **kanji** (Chinese characters). This comprehensive guide will teach you all three systems, focusing on tourist survival essentials.

4.2 A. HIRAGANA (ひらがな) - Complete

Hiragana is the most fundamental Japanese script. It represents all Japanese sounds and is used for native Japanese words, grammar particles, and verb endings.

4.2.1 1. Basic Hiragana (46 Characters)

Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana
a	あ	i	い	u	う	e	え	o	お
ka	か	ki	き	ku	く	ke	け	ko	こ
sa	さ	shi	し	su	す	se	せ	so	そ
ta	た	chi	ち	tsu	つ	te	て	to	と
na	な	ni	に	nu	ぬ	ne	ね	no	の
ha	は	hi	ひ	fu	ふ	he	へ	ho	ほ
ma	ま	mi	み	mu	む	me	め	mo	も
ya	や	-	-	yu	ゆ	-	-	yo	よ
ra	ら	ri	り	ru	る	re	れ	ro	ろ
wa	わ	-	-	-	-	-	-	wo	を
n	ん	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Special notes: - を (**wo**) is only used as the object particle, pronounced “o”- は (**ha**) when used as the topic particle is pronounced “wa”- へ (**he**) when used as the direction particle is pronounced “e”
- ん (**n**) is the only consonant that stands alone

4.2.2 2. Dakuten (゛) - Voiced Consonants (25 Characters)

Adding two small marks (゛) changes the sound to a voiced consonant:

Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana
ga	が	gi	ぎ	gu	ぐ	ge	げ	go	ご
za	ざ	ji	じ	zu	ず	ze	ぜ	zo	ぞ
da	だ	ji	ぢ	zu	づ	de	で	do	ど
ba	ば	bi	び	bu	ぶ	be	べ	bo	ぼ

Notes: - じ (ji) and ぢ (ji) sound the same; じ is more common - ず (zu) and づ (zu) sound the same; ず is more common - ぢ and づ are rare, mainly appearing in compound words

4.2.3 3. Handakuten (゜) - P-Sound (5 Characters)

Adding a small circle (゜) changes the “h” sound to “p”:

Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana	Romaji	Hiragana
pa	ぱ	pi	ぴ	pu	ぷ	pe	ぺ	po	ぽ

4.2.4 4. Small や・ゆ・よ (ya/yu/yo) Combinations (36 Characters)

These create compound sounds by combining consonants with ya, yu, or yo:

き (ki) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | kya | きゃ | kyu | きゅ | kyo | きょ |

し (shi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | sha | しゃ | shu | しゅ | sho | しょ |

ち (chi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | cha | ちゃ | chu | ちゅ | cho | ちょ |

に (ni) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | nya | にゃ | nyu | にゅ | nyo | にょ |

ひ (hi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | hya | ひゃ | hyu | ひゅ | hyo | ひょ |

み (mi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | mya | みゃ | myu | みゅ | myo | みょ |

り (ri) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | rya | りゃ | ryu | りゅ | ryo | りょ |

ぎ (gi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | gya | ぎゃ | gyu | ぎゅ | gyo | ぎょ |

じ (ji) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | ja | じゃ | ju | じゅ | jo | じょ |

び (bi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | bya | びゃ | byu | びゅ | byo | びょ |

ぴ (pi) combinations: | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | Romaji | Hiragana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | pya | ぴゃ | pyu | ぴゅ | pyo | ぴょ |

4.2.5 5. Double Consonants (Sokuon - っ)

The small っ (**tsu**) creates a pause before the next consonant, doubling its sound:

Word	Hiragana	Romaji	Meaning	Note
Wait	まって	matte	wait	Small っ creates pause before ‘t’
Magazine	ざっし	zasshi	magazine	Pause before ‘sh’
School	がっこう	gakkou	school	Pause before ‘k’
Different	ちがう	chigau	different	No small っ = no pause
Match	マッチ	matchi	match	Pause before ‘ch’
Soap	せっけん	sekken	soap	Pause before ‘k’

Important: This small っ is **never** pronounced. It represents a brief pause.

4.2.6 6. Long Vowels

Long vowels are held twice as long as regular vowels:

For あ, い, う sounds: - Add the same vowel: ああ, いい, うう - Or use あ + あ, い + い, う + う

For え and お sounds: - え: Usually add い → えい (sounds like “eee”) - お: Usually add う → おう (sounds like “ooo”)

Word	Hiragana	Romaji	Meaning	Long vowel
Grandfather	おじいさん	ojiisan	grandfather	ii = long i
Uncle	おじさん	ojisan	uncle	Regular i
Aunt	おばさん	obasan	aunt	Regular a
Grandmother	おばあさん	obaasan	grandmother	aa = long a
Big	おおきい	ookii	big	oo = long o
Sugar	さとう	satou	sugar	ou = long o
Teacher	せんせい	sensei	teacher	ei = long e

4.2.7 7. Practice Words in Hiragana

Common Tourist Words:

English	Hiragana	Romaji	Category
Station	えき	eki	Place
Exit	でぐち	deguchi	Navigation
Entrance	いりぐち	iriguchi	Navigation
Toilet	トイレ	toire	Place
Here	ここ	koko	Location
There	そこ	soko	Location
Over there	あそこ	asoko	Location
Where	どこ	doko	Question
This	これ	kore	Demonstrative
That	それ	sore	Demonstrative
That over there	あれ	are	Demonstrative
I	わたし	watashi	Pronoun
You	あなた	anata	Pronoun
Delicious	おいしい	oishii	Adjective
Expensive	たかい	takai	Adjective
Cheap	やすい	yasui	Adjective
Good	いい	ii	Adjective
Bad	わるい	warui	Adjective
Water	みず	mizu	Food
Tea	おちゃ	ocha	Food

Essential Verbs:

English	Hiragana	Romaji
To go	いく	iku
To come	くる	kuru
To eat	たべる	taberu
To drink	のむ	nomu
To see	みる	miru

English	Hiragana	Romaji
To buy	かう	kau
To do	する	suru
To be (exist)	いる/ある	iru/aru
To wait	まつ	matsu
To understand	わかる	wakaru

4.2.8 8. Hiragana Writing Stroke Order

Key principles: 1. Write from **top to bottom** 2. Write from **left to right** 3. Horizontal strokes before vertical strokes 4. Strokes that pierce through are written last

Common characters with stroke order descriptions:

Character	Strokes	Order description
あ (a)	3	Horizontal top, curved middle, rightward sweep
か (ka)	3	Horizontal, vertical with hook, right diagonal
さ (sa)	3	Top horizontal curve, short vertical, curved sweep
た (ta)	4	Top horizontal, vertical, bottom horizontal, short stroke
な (na)	4	Vertical with curve, horizontal, short vertical, diagonal
は (ha)	3	Vertical-curve left, curved hook, right diagonal
ま (ma)	3	Top horizontal, bottom curve, middle horizontal
や (ya)	3	Top horizontal-curve, middle vertical, bottom curve
ら (ra)	2	Vertical curve, bottom diagonal
わ (wa)	2	Top curve, bottom curve
ん (n)	1	Single curving stroke left to bottom

Practice tip: Apps like “Hiragana Quest” or websites like “Tofugu” provide animated stroke orders.

4.3 B. KATAKANA (カタカナ) - Complete

Katakana is used for foreign words, loan words, emphasis, onomatopoeia, and foreign names. It's more angular than hiragana.

4.3.1 1. Basic Katakana (46 Characters)

Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana
a	ア	i	イ	u	ウ	e	エ	o	オ
ka	カ	ki	キ	ku	ク	ke	ケ	ko	コ
sa	サ	shi	シ	su	ス	se	セ	so	ソ
ta	タ	chi	チ	tsu	ツ	te	テ	to	ト
na	ナ	ni	ニ	nu	ヌ	ne	ネ	no	ノ

Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana
ha	ハ	hi	ヒ	fu	フ	he	ヘ	ho	ホ
ma	マ	mi	ミ	mu	ム	me	メ	mo	モ
ya	ヤ	-	-	yu	ユ	-	-	yo	ヨ
ra	ラ	ri	リ	ru	ル	re	レ	ro	ロ
wa	ワ	-	-	-	-	-	-	wo	ヲ
n	ン	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Easily confused characters: - シ (**shi**) vs ツ (**tsu**): シ has horizontal strokes, ツ has vertical strokes
 - ソ (**so**) vs ン (**n**): ソ has two strokes, ン has one stroke - ノ (**no**) vs ヌ (**me**): ノ is one stroke, ヌ is two crossing strokes

4.3.2 2. Dakuten (゛) - Voiced Consonants (25 Characters)

Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana
ga	ガ	gi	ギ	gu	グ	ge	ゲ	go	ゴ
za	ザ	ji	ジ	zu	ズ	ze	ゼ	zo	ゾ
da	ダ	ji	ヂ	zu	ヅ	de	デ	do	ド
ba	バ	bi	ビ	bu	ブ	be	ベ	bo	ボ

4.3.3 3. Handakuten (゜) - P-Sound (5 Characters)

Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana	Romaji	Katakana
pa	パ	pi	ピ	pu	プ	pe	ペ	po	ポ

4.3.4 4. Small ヤ・ユ・ヨ (ya/yu/yo) Combinations (36 Characters)

キ (ki) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | kya | キヤ | kyu | キュ | kyo | キョ |

シ (shi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | sha | シャ | shu | シュ | sho | ショ |

チ (chi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | cha | チャ | chu | チュ | cho | チョ |

ニ (ni) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | nya | ニヤ | nyu | ニュ | nyo | ニョ |

ヒ (hi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | hya | ヒヤ | hyu | ヒュ | hyo | ヒョ |

ミ (mi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | mya | ミヤ | myu | ミュ | myo | ミョ |

リ (ri) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | rya | リヤ | ryu | リュ | ryo | リョ |

ギ (gi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | gya | ギヤ | gyu | ギュ | gyo | ギョ |

ジ (ji) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|——|——|——| | ja | ジャ | ju | ジュ | jo | ジョ |

ㇿ (bi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | bya | ビヤ | byu | ビュ | byo | ビョ |

ㇿ (pi) combinations: | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | Romaji | Katakana | |——|——|——|
 |——|——|——| | pya | ピヤ | pyu | ピュ | pyo | ピョ |

4.3.5 5. Special Katakana Combinations (50+ for Foreign Sounds)

Katakana has special combinations to represent foreign sounds not in Japanese:

V-sounds (ㇿ): | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | va | ヴァ
 | ヴァイオリン | violin | | vi | ヴィ | ヴィザ | visa | | vu | ヴ | ヴ | v-sound | | ve | ヴェ | ヴェネチア | Venice
 | | vo | ヴォ | ヴォーカル | vocal |

F-sounds (ㇿ): | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | fa | ファ
 | ファミリー | family | | fi | フィ | フィルム | film | | fu | フ | フード | food | | fe | フェ | フェスティバル |
 festival | | fo | フォ | フォーク | fork |

W-sounds: | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | wi | ウィ | ウィ
 イスキー | whiskey | | we | ウェ | ウェブ | web | | wo | ウォ | ウォーター | water |

Th-sounds (ㇿ/ㇿ): | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | ti | ティ | ティー | tea (T) | | di | ディ | ディナー | dinner | | tu | トウ | トウモロウ | tomorrow | | du | ドウ |
 ドウ | do (action) |

Ts-sounds (ㇿ): | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | tsa | ツ
 ア | ツアー | tsar | | tsi | ツィ | ツィター | zither | | tse | ツェ | ツェペリン | zeppelin | | tso | ツォ | モーツ
 アルト | Mozart |

Sh/J-sounds with E: | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | she | シェ | シェフ | chef | | je | ジェ | ジェット | jet | | che | チェ | チェック | check |

Y-sounds: | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | ye | イェ | イ
 エール | Yale |

Kw/Gw-sounds: | Romaji | Katakana | Example word | Meaning | |——|——|——|——| | kwa | ク
 ア | クアルテット | quartet | | kwi | クィ | クイック | quick | | kwe | クェ | クエスション | question | |
 kwo | クォ | クオリティ | quality | | gwa | グァ | グアム | Guam |

4.3.6 6. Common Katakana Words (100+ Essential for Tourists)

Food & Drink: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——|——|——| | Coffee | コーヒー |
 koohii | Long vowel | | Juice | ジュース | juusu | Long vowel | | Beer | ビール | biiru | Long vowel | |
 Wine | ワイン | wain | | Milk | ミルク | miruku | | Cake | ケーキ | keeki | Long vowel | | Ice cream |
 アイスクリーム | aisukuriimu | | Chocolate | チョコレート | chokoreeto | | Sandwich | サンドイッチ |
 sandoitchi | Small ツ | | Hamburger | ハンバーガー | hanbaagaa | Long vowel | | Pizza | ピザ | piza | |
 Pasta | パスタ | pasuta | | Salad | サラダ | sarada | | Soup | スープ | suupu | Long vowel | | Steak |
 ステーキ | suteeki | | Cheese | チーズ | chiizu | Long vowel | | Butter | バター | bataa | Long vowel | |
 Bread | パン | pan | From Portuguese | | Menu | メニュー | menyuu | Long vowel | | Dessert | デザート
 | dezaato | Long vowel |

Places: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——|——|——| | Hotel | ホテル | hoteru | |
 Restaurant | レストラン | resutoran | | Toilet | トイレ | toire | | Taxi | タクシー | takushii | Long vowel
 | | Bus | バス | basu | | Elevator | エレベーター | erebeetaa | Long vowels | | Department store | デパ
 ート | depaato | Long vowel | | Supermarket | スーパー | suupaa | Long vowels | | Convenience store |
 コンビニ | konbini | Shortened | | ATM | エーティーエム | eetiimu | Letters | | Bank | バンク | banku | |
 | Post office | ポスト | posuto | Mailbox | | Hospital | ホスピタル | hosupitaru | | Pharmacy | ファーマシ
 ー | faamashii | | Airport | エアポート | eapooto | |

Technology: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——-|——-|——-| | Computer | コンピューター | konpyuutaa | Long vowels | | Internet | インターネット | intaanetto | Small ッ | | WiFi | ワイファイ | waifai | | | Email | イーメール | iimeeru | Long vowels | | Phone | フォン | fon | | | Smartphone | スマートフォン | sumaatofon | | | Charger | チャージャー | chaajaa | Long vowels | | Battery | バッテリー | batterii | Small ッ | | Camera | カメラ | kamera | | | TV | テレビ | terebi | | | App | アプリ | apuri | | | Password | パスワード | pasuwaado | Long vowel |

Clothing: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——-|——-|——-| | T-shirt | ティーシャツ | tiishatsu | Small ッ | | Jeans | ジーンズ | jiinzu | Long vowel | | Sweater | セーター | seetaa | Long vowels | | Jacket | ジャケット | jaketto | Small ッ | | Coat | コート | kooto | Long vowel | | Skirt | スカート | sukaato | Long vowel | | Dress | ドレス | doresu | | | Suit | スーツ | suutsu | Long vowel | | Sneakers | スニーカー | suniikaa | Long vowels | | Boots | ブーツ | buutsu | Long vowel | | Bag | バッグ | baggu | Small ッ | | Belt | ベルト | beruto | | | Scarf | スカーフ | sukaafu | Long vowel | | Socks | ソックス | sokkusu | Small ッ |

Common Items: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——-|——-|——-| | Pen | ペン | pen | | | Notebook | ノート | nooto | Long vowel | | Bag | バッグ | baggu | Small ッ | | Tissue | ティッシュ | tisshu | Small ッ | | Towel | タオル | taoru | | | Soap | ソープ | soopu | Long vowel | | Shampoo | シャンプー | shanpuu | Long vowel | | Toothbrush | ハブラシ | haburashi | | | Plastic | プラスチック | purasuchikku | Small ッ | | Glass | グラス | gurasu | | | Key | キー | kii | Long vowel | | Card | カード | kaado | Long vowel | | Ticket | チケット | chiketto | Small ッ | | Map | マップ | mappu | Small ッ | | Guide | ガイド | gaido | |

Actions/Adjectives: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——-|——-|——-| | Check | チェック | chekku | Small ッ | | Stop | ストップ | sutoppu | Small ッ | | Start | スタート | sutaato | Long vowel | | | OK | オーケー | ookee | Long vowels | | Yes | イエス | iesu | | | No | ノー | noo | Long vowel | | Nice | ナイス | naisu | | | Good | グッド | guddo | Small ッ | | Cool | クール | kuuru | Long vowel | | Cute | キュート | kyuuto | Long vowel |

Countries/Nationalities: | English | Katakana | Romaji | Notes | |——|——-|——-|——-| | America | アメリカ | amerika | | | Canada | カナダ | kanada | | | England | イギリス | igirisu | | | Australia | オーストラリア | oosutoraria | Long vowel | | France | フランス | furansu | | | Germany | ドイツ | doitsu | | | Italy | イタリア | itaria | | | Spain | スペイン | supein | | | China | チャイナ | chaina | | | Korea | コリア | koria | |

4.3.7 7. Katakana Writing Stroke Order

Key principles (same as hiragana): 1. Top to bottom 2. Left to right 3. Horizontal before vertical

Common characters with stroke order:

Character	Strokes	Order description
ア (a)	2	Left diagonal, right stroke with hook
カ (ka)	2	Horizontal top, right stroke with hook
サ (sa)	3	Short horizontal, vertical, bottom curve
タ (ta)	3	Top horizontal, vertical, short left stroke
ナ (na)	2	Vertical diagonal, short left stroke
ハ (ha)	2	Left short stroke, right short stroke
マ (ma)	2	Vertical with hook, horizontal
ヤ (ya)	3	Short horizontal, vertical, right curve
ラ (ra)	2	Vertical horizontal top, bottom curve
ワ (wa)	2	Top horizontal curve, bottom horizontal
ン (n)	1	Single diagonal stroke

4.4 C. ESSENTIAL KANJI (漢字) - 300+ Tourist Survival Characters

Kanji are Chinese characters adopted into Japanese. Each kanji has meaning and pronunciation. This section covers essential kanji every tourist should recognize.

4.4.1 1. Numbers (13 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Examples
零	れい (rei)	Zero	零円 (0 yen)
一	いち (ichi)	One	一人 (one person), 一つ (one thing)
二	に (ni)	Two	二人 (two people), 二つ (two things)
三	さん (san)	Three	三人 (three people), 三つ (three things)
四	し/よん (shi/yon)	Four	四人 (four people) - avoid し, use よん
五	ご (go)	Five	五人 (five people), 五つ (five things)
六	ろく (roku)	Six	六人 (six people), 六つ (six things)
七	しち/なな (shichi/nana)	Seven	七人 (seven people)
八	はち (hachi)	Eight	八人 (eight people), 八つ (eight things)
九	く/きゅう (ku/kyuu)	Nine	九人 (nine people) - avoid く, use きゅう
十	じゅう (juu)	Ten	十人 (ten people), 十円 (10 yen)
百	ひゃく (hyaku)	Hundred	百円 (100 yen), 三百 (300)
千	せん (sen)	Thousand	千円 (1000 yen), 二千 (2000)
万	まん (man)	Ten thousand	一万円 (10,000 yen)

Number combinations: - 十一 (じゅういち) = 11 - 二十 (にじゅう) = 20 - 三十五 (さんじゅうご) = 35 - 百五十 (ひゃくごじゅう) = 150 - 二千三百 (にせんさんびゃく) = 2,300

4.4.2 2. Days of the Week (7 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Day
月	げつ (getsu)	Moon	Monday (月曜日 getsuyōbi)
火	か (ka)	Fire	Tuesday (火曜日 kayōbi)
水	すい (sui)	Water	Wednesday (水曜日 suiyōbi)
木	もく (moku)	Tree/Wood	Thursday (木曜日 mokuyōbi)
金	きん (kin)	Gold/Money	Friday (金曜日 kinyōbi)
土	ど (do)	Earth/Soil	Saturday (土曜日 doyōbi)
日	にち (nichi)	Sun/Day	Sunday (日曜日 nichiyōbi)

Additional meanings: - 月 also means “month” - 金 also means “money”(金色 = golden color, お金 = money) - 日 also means “day”(今日 = today, 明日 = tomorrow)

4.4.3 3. Directions (8 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Usage
東	ひがし (higashi)	East	東京 (Tokyo = Eastern capital)
西	にし (nishi)	West	西口 (west exit)
南	みなみ (minami)	South	南口 (south exit)
北	きた (kita)	North	北海道 (Hokkaido)
左	ひだり (hidari)	Left	左側 (left side)
右	みぎ (migi)	Right	右側 (right side)
上	うえ (ue)	Up/Above	上 (up), 以上 (or more)
下	した (shita)	Down/Below	下 (down), 地下 (basement)

Common combinations: - 東西南北 = all directions - 東口 (higashi-guchi) = east exit - 北西 (hokusai) = northwest

4.4.4 4. Location Words (15 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
駅	えき (eki)	Station	東京駅 (Tokyo Station)
口	ぐち (guchi)	Exit/Entrance	出口 (exit), 入口 (entrance)
出	で (de)	Exit/Go out	出口 (deguchi = exit)
入	い(り) (i/ri)	Enter	入口 (iriguchi = entrance)
中	なか/ちゅう (naka/chuu)	Inside/Middle	中 (inside), 中央 (center)
外	そと/がい (soto/gai)	Outside	外 (outside), 海外 (overseas)
前	まえ (mae)	Front/Before	駅前 (in front of station)
後	うし(ろ)/ご (ushi/go)	Back/After	後ろ (behind), 午後 (afternoon)
間	あいだ/かん (aida/kan)	Between/During	時間 (time), 人間 (human)
先	さき (saki)	Ahead/First	先 (ahead), 先生 (teacher)
内	うち/ない (uchi/nai)	Inside	案内 (guidance), 国内 (domestic)
場	ば (ba)	Place	場所 (place), 駐車場 (parking lot)
所	しょ/じょ (sho/jo)	Place	場所 (place), 台所 (kitchen)
席	せき (seki)	Seat	座席 (seat), 指定席 (reserved seat)
階	かい/がい (kai/gai)	Floor/Story	二階 (2nd floor), 地下一階 (B1)

4.4.5 5. Action Signs (20 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Where you see it
押	お(す) (o)	Push	押す (push on doors)
引	ひ(く) (hi)	Pull	引く (pull on doors)
止	と(まれ) (to)	Stop	止まれ (stop sign)
危	き (ki)	Danger	危険 (danger)
険	けん (ken)	Danger	危険 (kiken = danger)
禁	きん (kin)	Prohibit	禁止 (prohibited)
開	あ(く)/かい (a/kai)	Open	開く (open), 開店 (open for business)
閉	し(める)/へい (shi/hei)	Close	閉める (close), 閉店 (closed)
注	ちゅう (chuu)	Attention	注意 (caution)
意	い (i)	Mind/Care	注意 (caution)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Where you see it
待	ま(つ) (ma)	Wait	待つ (wait), お待ちください (please wait)
使	つか(う) (tsuka)	Use	使う (use), 使用 (use)
用	よう (you)	Use/Business	使用 (use), 用事 (business)
無	む/ない (mu/nai)	Nothing/No	無料 (free), 無理 (impossible)
料	りょう (ryou)	Fee	料金 (fee), 無料 (free)
有	ゆう/あ(る) (yuu/a)	Exist/Have	有料 (paid), 有り (available)
空	あ(く)/そら/くう (a/sora/kuu)	Empty/Sky	空席 (vacant seat)
満	まん (man)	Full	満席 (full seats)
予	よ (yo)	In advance	予約 (reservation)
約	やく (yaku)	Promise	予約 (reservation)

Common sign combinations: - 禁煙 (kin-en) = No smoking - 禁止 (kin-shi) = Prohibited - 危険 (ki-ken) = Danger - 注意 (chuu-i) = Caution - 使用中 (shiyou-chuu) = In use - 使用禁止 (shiyou-kinshi) = Do not use

4.4.6 6. Places (30 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
店	てん/みせ (ten/mise)	Shop	お店 (shop), 開店 (opening)
車	しゃ/くるま (sha/kuruma)	Car/Vehicle	車 (car), 電車 (train)
電	でん (den)	Electric	電車 (train), 電話 (phone)
話	わ/はなし (wa/hanashi)	Talk/Story	電話 (phone), 会話 (conversation)
食	しょく/た(べる) (shoku/ta)	Food/Eat	食事 (meal), 食べる (eat)
飲	いん/の(む) (in/no)	Drink	飲む (drink), 飲食店 (restaurant)
銀	ぎん (gin)	Silver	銀行 (bank)
行	こう/い(く) (kou/i)	Go	銀行 (bank), 行く (go)
院	いん (in)	Institution	病院 (hospital), 美容院 (salon)
病	びょう (byou)	Sick	病院 (hospital), 病気 (illness)
局	きょく (kyoku)	Bureau	郵便局 (post office)
便	べん/びん (ben/bin)	Convenience	郵便 (mail), 便利 (convenient)
郵	ゆう (yuu)	Mail	郵便局 (post office)
空	くう/そら (kuu/sora)	Sky/Empty	空港 (airport), 空 (sky)
港	こう (kou)	Harbor/Port	空港 (airport), 港 (harbor)
道	どう/みち (dou/michi)	Road/Way	道 (road), 北海道 (Hokkaido)
園	えん (en)	Garden/Park	公園 (park), 動物園 (zoo)
公	こう (kou)	Public	公園 (park), 公共 (public)
寺	てら/じ (tera/ji)	Temple	お寺 (temple), 金閣寺 (Kinkakuji)
神	しん/かみ (shin/kami)	God/Spirit	神社 (shrine), 神 (god)
社	しゃ (sha)	Shrine/Company	神社 (shrine), 会社 (company)
宮	ぐう/きゅう (guu/kyuu)	Palace/Shrine	神宮 (grand shrine), 宮殿 (palace)
城	じょう (jou)	Castle	大阪城 (Osaka Castle)
館	かん (kan)	Building/Hall	図書館 (library), 美術館 (museum)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
美	び/うつく(しい) (bi/utsuku)	Beauty	美術館 (art museum), 美しい (beautiful)
術	じゅつ (jutsu)	Art/Technique	美術 (art), 技術 (technique)
市	し/いち (shi/ichi)	City/Market	東京都 (Tokyo), 市場 (market)
区	く (ku)	Ward	渋谷区 (Shibuya Ward)
町	ちょう/まち (chou/machi)	Town	町 (town), 下町 (downtown)
村	そん/むら (son/mura)	Village	村 (village)

Common place names: - 東京 (Toukyou) = Tokyo - 大阪 (Oosaka) = Osaka - 京都 (Kyouto) = Kyoto - 北海道 (Hokkaidou) = Hokkaido

4.4.7 7. Time-Related (20 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
時	じ/とき (ji/toki)	Time/Hour	三時 (3 o'clock), 時間 (time)
分	ぶん/ぶん/ぶん (fun/bun/pun)	Minute	五分 (5 minutes), 十分 (10 minutes)
秒	びょう (byou)	Second	三十秒 (30 seconds)
今	いま/こん (ima/kon)	Now	今 (now), 今日 (today)
昨	さく (saku)	Previous	昨日 (yesterday)
明	みょう/あ(かり) (myou/aka)	Bright/Tomorrow	明日 (tomorrow), 明るい (bright)
朝	あさ/ちょう (asa/chou)	Morning	朝 (morning), 今朝 (this morning)
昼	ひる (hiru)	Noon/Daytime	昼 (noon), 昼ご飯 (lunch)
夜	よる/や (yoru/ya)	Night	夜 (night), 今夜 (tonight)
晩	ばん (ban)	Evening	晩 (evening), 今晚 (tonight)
午	ご (go)	Noon	午前 (AM), 午後 (PM)
前	まえ/ぜん (mae/zen)	Before	午前 (AM), 前 (before)
後	ご/うし(ろ)/あと (go/ushi/ato)	After	午後 (PM), 後 (after)
週	しゅう (shuu)	Week	今週 (this week), 来週 (next week)
月	つき/げつ/がつ (tsuki/getsu/gatsu)	Month/Moon	一月 (January), 来月 (next month)
年	ねん/とし (nen/toshi)	Year	今年 (this year), 来年 (next year)
間	かん/あいだ (kan/aida)	Duration/Between	時間 (time), 期間 (period)
毎	まい (mai)	Every	毎日 (every day), 毎週 (every week)
来	らい/く(る) (rai/ku)	Come/Next	来年 (next year), 来る (come)
去	きょ (kyo)	Past/Leave	去年 (last year)

Time expressions: - 今日 (kyou) = today - 昨日 (kinou) = yesterday - 明日 (ashita) = tomorrow - 今週 (konshuu) = this week - 来週 (raishuu) = next week - 先週 (senshuu) = last week

4.4.8 8. Food & Drink (25 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
食	しょく/た(べる) (shoku/ta)	Food/Eat	食事 (meal), 食べる (eat)
事	じ/こと (ji/koto)	Thing/Matter	食事 (meal), 用事 (business)
飯	はん/めし (han/meshi)	Meal/Rice	ご飯 (rice/meal), 朝ご飯 (breakfast)
肉	にく (niku)	Meat	肉 (meat), 牛肉 (beef)
魚	さかな/ぎょ (sakana/gyo)	Fish	魚 (fish), 魚市場 (fish market)
牛	ぎゅう/うし (gyuu/ushi)	Cow/Beef	牛肉 (beef), 牛丼 (beef bowl)
豚	ぶた/とん (buta/ton)	Pig/Pork	豚肉 (pork), 豚カツ (tonkatsu)
鶏	とり/けい (tori/kei)	Chicken	鶏肉 (chicken)
卵	たまご (tamago)	Egg	卵 (egg), 親子丼 (chicken-egg bowl)
野	や/の (ya/no)	Field/Wild	野菜 (vegetables)
菜	さい/な (sai/na)	Vegetable/Greens	野菜 (vegetables)
米	こめ/べい (kome/bei)	Rice	米 (rice), お米 (rice)
麺	めん (men)	Noodles	ラーメン (ramen), そば (soba)
茶	ちゃ/さ (cha/sa)	Tea	お茶 (tea), 茶色 (brown)
酒	さけ/しゅ (sake/shu)	Alcohol/Sake	お酒 (alcohol), 日本酒 (sake)
水	みず/すい (mizu/sui)	Water	水 (water), 水曜日 (Wednesday)
湯	ゆ/とう (yu/tou)	Hot water	お湯 (hot water)
油	あぶら/ゆ (abura/yu)	Oil	油 (oil), 醤油 (soy sauce)
味	あじ/み (aji/mi)	Taste/Flavor	味 (taste), 味噌 (miso)
甘	あま(い)/かん (ama/kan)	Sweet	甘い (sweet)
辛	から(い)/しん (kara/shin)	Spicy/Hot	辛い (spicy)
塩	しお/えん (shio/en)	Salt	塩 (salt), 塩ラーメン (salt ramen)
砂	さ/すな (sa/suna)	Sand/Sugar	砂糖 (sugar)
糖	とう (tou)	Sugar	砂糖 (sugar), 糖分 (sugar content)
温	おん/あたた(かい) (on/atata)	Warm	温かい (warm), 温度 (temperature)

Common food words: - 朝ご飯 (asagohan) = breakfast - 昼ご飯 (hirugohan) = lunch - 晩ご飯 (bango-han) = dinner - 定食 (teishoku) = set meal

4.4.9 9. Transportation (15 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
車	しゃ/くるま (sha/kuruma)	Car/Vehicle	車 (car), 電車 (train)
電	でん (den)	Electric	電車 (train), 電気 (electricity)
鉄	てつ (tetsu)	Iron/Rail	鉄道 (railway), 地下鉄 (subway)
道	どう/みち (dou/michi)	Road/Way	鉄道 (railway), 道 (road)
汽	き (ki)	Steam	汽車 (steam train)
乗	じょう/の(る) (jou/no)	Ride	乗る (ride), 乗車 (boarding)
降	こう/お(りる) (kou/o)	Descend/Get off	降りる (get off), 下車 (alighting)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Common usage
発	はつ (hatsu)	Depart	出発 (departure), 発車 (train departure)
着	ちゃく/つ(く) (chaku/tsu)	Arrive/Wear	到着 (arrival), 着る (wear)
切符	きつ/き(る) (ki)	Cut/Ticket	切符 (ticket), 切る (cut)
券	ふ (fu)	Mark/Ticket	切符 (ticket)
	けん (ken)	Ticket/Coupon	乗車券 (train ticket), 券売機 (ticket machine)
売	ばい/う(る) (bai/u)	Sell	売る (sell), 券売機 (ticket machine)
買	ばい/か(う) (bai/ka)	Buy	買う (buy), 買い物 (shopping)
運	うん/はこ(ぶ) (un/hako)	Transport/Luck	運転 (operation/driving), 運ぶ (carry)

Transportation vocabulary: - 電車 (densha) = train - 地下鉄 (chikatetsu) = subway - 新幹線 (shinkansen) = bullet train - 切符 (kippu) = ticket

4.4.10 10. Common Verbs (30 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Verb	Meaning
行	い(く)/こう (i/kou)	行く	go
来	く(る)/らい (ku/rai)	来る	come
帰	かえ(る)/き (kae/ki)	帰る	return home
見	み(る)/けん (mi/ken)	見る	see/watch
聞	き(く)/ぶん (ki/bun)	聞く	hear/ask
読	よ(む)/どく (yo/doku)	読む	read
書	か(く)/しょ (ka/sho)	書く	write
話	はな(す)/わ (hana/wa)	話す	speak
食	た(べる)/しょく (ta/shoku)	食べる	eat
飲	の(む)/いん (no/in)	飲む	drink
買	か(う)/ばい (ka/bai)	買う	buy
売	う(る)/ばい (u/bai)	売る	sell
作	つく(る)/さく (tsuku/saku)	作る	make
待	ま(つ)/たい (ma/tai)	待つ	wait
立	た(つ)/りつ (ta/ritsu)	立つ	stand
座	すわ(る)/ざ (suwa/za)	座る	sit
寝	ね(る)/しん (ne/shin)	寝る	sleep
起	お(きる)/き (oki/ki)	起きる	wake up
入	はい(る)/にゅう (hai/nyuu)	入る	enter
出	で(る)/しゅつ (de/shutsu)	出る	exit/leave
開	あ(く)/かい (a/kai)	開く	open
閉	し(まる)/へい (shi/hei)	閉まる	close
使	つか(う)/し (tsuka/shi)	使う	use
持	も(つ)/じ (mo/ji)	持つ	hold/have
取	と(る)/しゅ (to/shu)	取る	take
分	わ(かる)/ぶん (wa/bun)	分かる	understand
知	し(る)/ち (shi/chi)	知る	know
会	あ(う)/かい (a/kai)	会う	meet

Kanji	Reading	Verb	Meaning
住	す(む)/じゅう (su/juu)	住む	live/reside
働	はたら(く)/どう (hatara/dou)	働く	work

4.4.11 11. Common Adjectives (25 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Adjective	Meaning
大	おお(きい)/だい (oo/dai)	大きい	big
小	ちい(さい)/しょう (chii/shou)	小さい	small
多	おお(い)/た (oo/ta)	多い	many
少	すく(ない)/しょう (suku/shou)	少ない	few
高	たか(い)/こう (taka/kou)	高い	high/expensive
安	やす(い)/あん (yasu/an)	安い	cheap/safe
長	なが(い)/ちょう (naga/chou)	長い	long
短	みじか(い)/たん (mijika/tan)	短い	short
古	ふる(い)/こ (furu/ko)	古い	old
新	あた(ら)しい/しん (atara/shin)	新しい	new
良	よ(い)/りょう (yo/ryou)	良い	good
悪	わる(い)/あく (waru/aku)	悪い	bad
広	ひろ(い)/こう (hiro/kou)	広い	wide
狭	せま(い)/きょう (sema/kyou)	狭い	narrow
近	ちか(い)/きん (chika/kin)	近い	near
遠	とおい(い)/えん (too/en)	遠い	far
早	はや(い)/そう (haya/sou)	早い	early
遅	おそ(い)/ち (oso/chi)	遅い	late/slow
速	はや(い)/そく (haya/soku)	速い	fast
強	つよ(い)/きょう (tsuyo/kyou)	強い	strong
弱	よわ(い)/じゃく (yowa/jaku)	弱い	weak
暑	あつ(い)/しょ (atsu/sho)	暑い	hot (weather)
寒	さむ(い)/かん (samu/kan)	寒い	cold (weather)
熱	あつ(い)/ねつ (atsu/netsu)	熱い	hot (object)
冷	つめ(たい)/れい (tsume/rei)	冷たい	cold (object)

4.4.12 12. Important Tourist Kanji (40 more characters)

Toilets & Facilities: | Kanji | Reading | Meaning | Usage | |——|——|——|——| | 男 | おとこ/だん (otoko/dan) | Male/Man | 男性 (men), 男子トイレ (men's room) | | 女 | おんな/じょ (onna/jo) | Female/Woman | 女性 (women), 女子トイレ (ladies' room) | | 性 | せい (sei) | Sex/Gender | 男性 (male), 女性 (female) | | 子 | こ/し (ko/shi) | Child | 男の子 (boy), 女の子 (girl) | | 人 | ひと/じん/にん (hito/jin/nin) | Person | 日本人 (Japanese person), 一人 (one person) | | 個 | こ (ko) | Individual/Counter | 個室 (private room) | | 室 | しつ (shitsu) | Room | 個室 (private room), 教室 (classroom) | | 洗 | せん/あら(う) (sen/ara) | Wash | 洗面所 (washroom), 洗濯 (laundry) | | 手 | て/しゅ (te/shu) | Hand | 手 (hand), 手洗い (handwashing/toilet) |

Money & Shopping: | Kanji | Reading | Meaning | Usage | |——|——|——|——| | 円 | えん (en) | Yen/Circle | 百円 (100 yen), 円 (yen) | | 金 | きん/かね (kin/kane) | Money/Gold | お金 (money), 金色 (golden) | | 税 | ぜい (zei) | Tax | 税金 (tax), 消費税 (sales tax) | | 値 | ね/ち (ne/chi) | Price/Value | 値段 (price) | | 段 | だん (dan) | Step/Level | 値段 (price), 階段 (stairs) | | 代 | だい/か(わる) (dai/ka) | Cost/Replace | 代金 (payment), 料金 (fee) | | 割 | わり/わ(る) (wari/wa) | Divide/Discount | 割引 (discount), 三割 (30% off) | | 引 | ひ(く)/いん (hi/in) | Pull/Subtract | 割引 (discount), 引く (subtract) |

Dining: | Kanji | Reading | Meaning | Usage | |——|——|——|——| | 定 | てい/さだ(める) (tei/sada) | Fixed/Set | 定食 (set meal), 予定 (schedule) | | 喫 | きつ (kitsu) | Eat/Smoke | 喫茶店 (coffee shop), 喫煙 (smoking) | | 煙 | えん/けむり (en/kemuri) | Smoke | 喫煙 (smoking), 禁煙 (no smoking) | | 席 | せき (seki) | Seat | 座席 (seat), 指定席 (reserved seat) | | 指 | し/ゆび (shi/yubi) | Finger/Point | 指定 (designated), 指 (finger) |

Directions & Navigation: | Kanji | Reading | Meaning | Usage | |——|——|——|——| | 線 | せん (sen) | Line | 路線 (train line), 新幹線 (bullet train) | | 路 | ろ/じ (ro/ji) | Road/Route | 路線 (line), 道路 (road) | | 番 | ばん (ban) | Number/Turn | 一番 (number one), 何番 (which number) | | 号 | ごう (gou) | Number | 二号線 (Line 2), 五号室 (Room 5) | | 次 | じ/つぎ (ji/tsugi) | Next | 次 (next), 次回 (next time) | | 通 | っ
う/とお(る) (tsuu/too) | Pass through | 通る (pass), 一丁目 (1st street) | | 橋 | きょう/はし (kyou/hashī) | Bridge | 橋 (bridge) |

Hotel & Accommodation: | Kanji | Reading | Meaning | Usage | |——|——|——|——| | 泊 | は
く/と(まる) (haku/to) | Stay overnight | 宿泊 (lodging), 一泊 (one night) | | 宿 | しゅく/やど (shuku/yado) | Inn/Lodging | 宿泊 (lodging), 宿 (inn) | | 客 | きゃく (kyaku) | Guest/Customer | 客 (guest), 乗客 (passenger) | | 部 | ぶ (bu) | Part/Department | 部屋 (room) | | 屋 | おく/や (oku/ya) | Room/Shop | 部屋 (room), 本屋 (bookstore) |

Time & Business: | Kanji | Reading | Meaning | Usage | |——|——|——|——| | 営 | えい (ei) | Operate | 営業 (business hours), 営業中 (open) | | 業 | ぎょう/わざ (gyou/waza) | Business | 営業 (business), 仕事 (work) | | 休 | きゅう/やす(む) (kyuu/yasu) | Rest/Holiday | 休み (holiday), 定休日 (regular holiday) | | 平 | へい/ひら (hei/hira) | Flat/Peace | 平日 (weekday) |

4.4.13 13. Emergency & Safety Kanji (15 characters)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Usage
助	じょ/たす(ける) (jo/tasu)	Help/Rescue	助けて (help!), 助ける (to help)
救	きゅう/すく(う) (kyuu/suku)	Rescue	救急 (emergency), 救助 (rescue)
急	きゅう/いそ(ぐ) (kyuu/iso)	Hurry/Emergency	救急車 (ambulance), 急ぐ (hurry)
非	ひ (hi)	Non-/Emergency	非常口 (emergency exit)
常	じょう (jou)	Always/Normal	非常 (emergency), 日常 (daily)
警	けい (kei)	Warn/Police	警察 (police), 警告 (warning)
察	さつ (satsu)	Investigate	警察 (police)
消	しょう/け(す) (shou/ke)	Extinguish	消防 (fire department), 消す (turn off)
防	ぼう/ふせ(ぐ) (bou/fuse)	Prevent	消防 (fire dept.), 防ぐ (prevent)
医	い (i)	Medical	医者 (doctor), 医療 (medical care)
者	しゃ/もの (sha/mono)	Person	医者 (doctor), 記者 (journalist)
薬	やく/くすり (yaku/kusuri)	Medicine	薬 (medicine), 薬局 (pharmacy)

Kanji	Reading	Meaning	Usage
痛	つう/いた(い) (tsuu/ita)	Pain	痛い (painful), 頭痛 (headache)
怪	かい (kai)	Suspicious/Injury	怪我 (injury)
我	が/われ (ga/ware)	Self/Ego	怪我 (injury)

Emergency phrases with kanji: - 助けて! (tasukete) = Help! - 救急車 (kyuukyuusha) = Ambulance
 - 非常口 (hijouguuchi) = Emergency exit - 警察 (keisatsu) = Police - 消防署 (shouboushou) = Fire station

4.5 D. READING TIPS - How to Navigate Japanese Text

4.5.1 1. How to Recognize Each System

Visual identification:

System	Characteristics	Examples	Usage
Hiragana	Curvy, rounded characters	あいうえお、です、ます	Grammar, native words
Katakana	Angular, straight characters	アメリカ、コーヒー、ホテル	Foreign words, emphasis
Kanji	Complex characters, many strokes	駅、食、日本、東京	Content words, meaning
Romaji	English alphabet	Tokyo, Shibuya, JR	Signs, tourist areas

Example sentence showing all three:

私はコーヒーを飲みます。
 (Watashi wa koohii o nomimasu.)
 I drink coffee.

私 = kanji (I)
 は = hiragana (particle)
 コーヒー = katakana (coffee - foreign word)
 を = hiragana (particle)
 飲 = kanji (drink)
 みます = hiragana (polite ending)

4.5.2 2. Common Patterns to Recognize

Station signs pattern:

東京駅
 ↓
 Tokyo Eki
 (Tokyo Station)

- 東京 = Place name (kanji)
- 駅 = "Station" (kanji)

Exit signs pattern:

北口

↓

Kita-guchi
(North Exit)

- First character(s) = Direction (東西南北)
- 口 = Exit/Entrance

Floor indicators:

1F = 一階 (ikkai) = First floor
2F = 二階 (nikai) = Second floor
B1 = 地下一階 (chika ikkai) = Basement 1

Store signs:

営業中 = Open (eigyou-chuu)
準備中 = Preparing (junbi-chuu)
閉店 = Closed (heiten)
定休日 = Regular holiday (teikyuubi)

Toilet signs:

男性 or 男 = Men (dansei/otoko)
女性 or 女 = Women (josei/onna)
手洗い = Restroom (tearai - literally "hand wash")
化粧室 = Restroom (keshōshitsu - literally "makeup room")

Action signs on doors:

押 = Push (osu)
引 = Pull (hiku)
開 = Open (kai/hiraku)
閉 = Closed (hei/shimeru)

Safety signs:

危険 = Danger (kiken)
注意 = Caution (chuuui)
禁止 = Prohibited (kinshi)
禁煙 = No smoking (kin-en)

4.5.3 3. Survival Reading Strategy

Step-by-step approach for tourists:

STEP 1: Learn katakana first - Many tourist-relevant words are in katakana - Hotel (ホテル), toilet (トイレ), taxi (タクシー) - 80% of signs you need have katakana or English

STEP 2: Memorize key kanji (50-100 characters) - Focus on: 駅 (station), 口 (exit), 男 (men), 女 (women) - Numbers: 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 - Directions: 東 西 南 北 (east, west, south, north) - Actions: 入 (enter), 出 (exit), 止 (stop)

STEP 3: Pattern recognition - Most signs follow predictable patterns - [Direction] + 口 = [Direction] + Exit - [Place] + 駅 = [Place] + Station - [Number] + 階 = [Number] + Floor

STEP 4: Context clues - Look at pictures/icons - Colors (red = danger/stop, blue = information) - Location (bathroom signs near restaurants) - Pictograms (train, toilet, food symbols)

STEP 5: Use technology - Google Translate camera feature (real-time) - Yomiwa app (handwriting recognition) - Japanese dictionary apps (Jisho.org)

4.5.4 4. Practical Reading Scenarios

At the train station:

Look for these kanji: - 駅 (eki) = Station - 線 (sen) = Line - 番線 (bansen) = Platform number - 発 (hatsu) = Departure - 着 (chaku) = Arrival - 時刻表 (jikokuhyou) = Timetable - 切符 (kippu) = Ticket - 改札 (kaisatsu) = Ticket gate

At restaurants:

Look for: - 定食 (teishoku) = Set meal - 本日のおすすめ (honjitsu no osusume) = Today's special - ランチ (ranchi) = Lunch (katakana) - デイナー (dinaa) = Dinner (katakana) - メニュー (menyuu) = Menu (katakana) - 持ち帰り (mochikaeri) = Takeout - 食べ放題 (tabehoudai) = All-you-can-eat - 飲み放題 (nomihoudai) = All-you-can-drink

In stores:

Look for: - 円 (en) = Yen - 税込 (zeikomi) = Tax included - 税抜 (zeinuki) = Tax excluded - 割引 (waribiki) = Discount - セール (seeru) = Sale (katakana) - レジ (reji) = Register/Checkout (katakana) - 会計 (kaikei) = Accounting/Checkout - 免税 (menzei) = Tax-free

On signs:

Look for: - 入口 (iriguchi) = Entrance - 出口 (deguchi) = Exit - 非常口 (hijouguchi) = Emergency exit - 営業中 (eigyouchuu) = Open - 準備中 (junbichuu) = Preparing - 定休日 (teikyuubi) = Regular holiday

4.5.5 5. App Recommendations

For reading Japanese:

App name	Platform	Features	Best for
Google Translate	iOS/Android	Real-time camera translation	Quick sign reading
Yomiwa	iOS/Android	Handwriting recognition, OCR	Learning kanji on-the-go
Jisho	Web/iOS/Android	Dictionary, kanji lookup by radical	Detailed study
imiwa?	iOS	Offline dictionary	No internet situations
Takoboto	Android	Offline dictionary	No internet situations
Japanese by Renzo	iOS/Android	Handwriting practice	Learning to write
Kanji Study	Android	Complete kanji learning system	Serious study
WaniKani	Web	Spaced repetition kanji/vocab	Long-term learning
Anki	All platforms	Flashcard system	Custom study
JapanesePod101	Web/App	Audio lessons with reading	Comprehensive learning

How to use Google Translate camera: 1. Open Google Translate app 2. Select Japanese → English 3. Tap camera icon 4. Point at Japanese text 5. Text translates in real-time on screen

Tip: Download offline language packs before traveling!

4.5.6 6. Practice Methods

Daily practice routines:

Beginner (15 minutes/day): - Learn 5 hiragana/katakana characters per day - Write each character 10 times - Practice reading simple words - Use flashcard apps (Anki, Memrise)

Intermediate (30 minutes/day): - Learn 3-5 new kanji per day - Read simple signs/menus in photos - Practice with children's books - Use kanji apps (WaniKani, Kanji Study)

Advanced (1 hour/day): - Read news articles (NHK Easy News) - Practice handwriting longer texts - Watch Japanese shows with Japanese subtitles - Use native content (manga, blogs)

Active practice while traveling:

1. Station practice

- Read all station names on your train line
- Identify exit numbers and directions
- Read timetables and platform numbers

2. Menu reading

- Order by reading the menu (not pictures)
- Identify at least 3 ingredients in each dish
- Ask staff to point to kanji you don't know

3. Shopping practice

- Read price tags (not just numbers)
- Find sale items by reading signs
- Read product labels to identify contents

4. Street signs

- Read street names (many use kanji)
- Identify building names and types
- Read posted notices and warnings

4.5.7 7. Memory Techniques

Mnemonics for kanji:

Use stories to remember complex characters:

Example: 明 (bright/tomorrow) - Left side: 日 (sun) - Right side: 月 (moon) - Story: Sun + Moon = bright light = 明

Example: 休 (rest) - Left side: 人 (person) - Right side: 木 (tree) - Story: Person leaning against tree = resting = 休

Visual associations:

Many kanji look like what they represent:

- 山 (yama) = mountain (looks like peaks)
- 川 (kawa) = river (looks like flowing water)
- 火 (hi) = fire (looks like flames)
- 木 (ki) = tree (looks like a tree trunk with branches)
- 林 (hayashi) = woods (two trees)
- 森 (mori) = forest (three trees)

Radical recognition:

Learn common radicals (building blocks):

Radical	Meaning	Kanji examples
氵 (water)	Water	海 (ocean), 湖 (lake), 池 (pond)
亻 (person)	Person	休 (rest), 体 (body), 何 (what)
扌 (hand)	Hand	持 (hold), 打 (hit), 押 (push)
口 (mouth)	Mouth/Opening	名 (name), 味 (taste), 吸 (inhale)
心 (heart)	Heart/Feeling	忙 (busy), 思 (think), 急 (hurry)
辶 (walk)	Walking	道 (road), 近 (near), 速 (fast)

Spaced repetition: - Review new characters: Next day, 3 days, 1 week, 1 month - Apps like Anki automate this schedule - Consistency beats cramming

4.5.8 8. Quick Reference - Most Essential Characters

If you only learn 20 kanji, learn these:

Kanji	Meaning	Where you'll see it
駅	Station	Everywhere with trains
口	Exit/Entrance	All stations, buildings
出	Exit/Out	Exit signs
入	Enter/In	Entrance signs
男	Male/Men	Toilet signs
女	Female/Women	Toilet signs
東西南北	East/West/South/North	Station exits, signs
一 二 三	One/Two/Three	Numbers, floors, prices
円	Yen	All prices
止	Stop	Traffic signs, warnings
危険	Danger	Warning signs
禁煙	No smoking	Restaurants, hotels
押	Push	Doors
引	Pull	Doors
営業	Open/Business	Store hours
休	Rest/Closed	Store closures
階	Floor	Elevators, directories

Practice these 20 characters daily and you'll navigate Japan confidently!

4.6 Summary: The Three Systems Working Together

Japanese writing is a **mix of all three systems** in every sentence:

Example:

私はホテルで朝ご飯を食べました。

Watashi wa hoteru de asa gohan o tabemashita.

I ate breakfast at the hotel.

Breaking it down: - 私 (kanji) = I - は (hiragana) = particle - ホテル (katakana) = hotel (foreign word) - で (hiragana) = particle (location) - 朝 (kanji) = morning - ご飯 (hiragana + kanji) = meal - を (hiragana) = particle (object) - 食 (kanji) = eat - べました (hiragana) = polite past tense ending

Why three systems? - **Hiragana** = Grammar glue, native words - **Katakana** = Foreign words, emphasis - **Kanji** = Meaning, efficiency (一 vs. ひとつ)

Reading priority for tourists: 1. Master katakana (1-2 weeks) 2. Learn 50-100 essential kanji (2-4 weeks) 3. Learn hiragana for reading full sentences (2-4 weeks) 4. Practice daily with apps and real signs

You don't need to write perfectly - recognition is enough for tourism!

With this complete guide to Japanese writing systems, you now have all the tools needed to navigate signs, menus, and basic text throughout Japan. Start with katakana and the most common kanji, practice daily, and you'll be reading Japanese in no time!

Next: Continue to other sections for complete Japanese language mastery.

5 Chapter 4: Directions, Walking, and Navigation

5.1 Core Direction Words

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
straight	まっすぐ	massugu	
right	右	migi	
left	左	hidari	
here	ここ	koko	
there (near you)	そこ	soko	
over there	あそこ	asoko	
near	近く	chikaku	nearby
far	遠く	tōku	
inside	中	naka	
outside	外	soto	
in front of	前	mae	
behind	後ろ	ushiro	
across from	向かい	mukai	
corner	角	kado	
intersection	交差点	kōsaten	
traffic light	信号	shingō	
bridge	橋	hashi	
floor/story	階	kai	e.g., 1階 (ikkai)
entrance	入口	iriguchi	
exit	出口	deguchi	

5.2 Asking for Directions

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Where is ___?	___はどこですか?	___ wa doko desu ka?	swap place

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
How do I get to ___?	___へはどう行きますか？	___ e wa dō ikimasu ka?	
Is it far?	遠いですか？	tōi desu ka?	
Can I walk?	歩けますか？	arukemasu ka?	
How long on foot?	歩いて何分ですか？	aruite nan-pun desu ka?	
Which way?	どちらですか？	dochira desu ka?	polite
Which exit (at station)?	どの出口ですか？	dono deguchi desu ka?	
Show me on the map, please.	地図で教えてください。	chizu de oshiete kudasai.	
Please write it down.	書いてください。	kaite kudasai.	

5.3 Simple Walking Routes (patterns)

- まっすぐ行って、二つ目の角を右に曲がってください。
Massugu itte, futatsu-me no kado o migi ni magatte kudasai.
(Go straight and turn right at the second corner.)
- この橋を渡って、左です。
Kono hashi o watatte, hidari desu.
(Cross this bridge and it's on the left.)
- 交差点を左に曲がって、すぐです。
Kōsaten o hidari ni magatte, sugu desu.
(Turn left at the intersection; it's right there.)
- エレベーターで3階まで行ってください。
Erebētā de san-kai made itte kudasai.
(Take the elevator to the third floor.)
- 地下出口から出て、右に行ってください。
Chika deguchi kara dete, migi ni itte kudasai.
(Exit from the basement exit and go right.)

5.4 Landmarks and Help Points

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
station	駅	eki	key landmark
convenience store	コンビニ	konbini	easy meeting point
police box	交番	kōban	ask directions
bus stop	バス停	basu-tei	
ticket gate	改札口	kaisatsu-guchi	inside stations
platform	ホーム	hōmu	
elevator	エレベーター	erebētā	
stairs	階段	kaidan	
escalator	エスカレーター	esukarētā	

5.5 Quick Dialogues

Asking a passerby

- すみません、駅はどこですか？

Sumimasen, eki wa doko desu ka? (Excuse me, where is the station?)

- まっすぐ行って、信号を右です。

Massugu itte, shingō o migi desu. (Go straight and turn right at the light.)

At a station (which exit)

- 渋谷スクランブル交差点はどの出口ですか？

Shibuya sukuranburu kōsaten wa dono deguchi desu ka?

- ハチ公口です。

Hachikō-guchi desu. (Take the Hachiko Exit.)

5.6 Sightseeing Walk Essentials

- 写真を撮ってもいいですか。

Shashin o totte mo ii desu ka? (May I take a photo?)

- 地図を見せてください。

Chizu o misete kudasai. (Please show me the map.)

- トイレは近くにありますか。

Toire wa chikaku ni arimasu ka? (Is there a restroom nearby?)

- 人気の場所はどこですか。

Ninki no basho wa doko desu ka? (Where is a popular spot?)

- 混んでいますか。

Konde imasu ka? (Is it crowded?)

- 靴を脱ぎますか。

Kutsu o nugimasu ka? (Do I remove my shoes?) —for temples/homes

6 Section II.D: Transportation Vocabulary (Regional & Politeness Guide)

This section provides comprehensive transportation vocabulary with **tiered politeness levels** and **regional variations** for Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto. Quick-reference tables help tourists find the right phrase for any situation.

6.1 Regional IC Card Reference

6.1.1 IC Cards by Region

Region	Primary Card	Alternative	Where It Works	Notes
Tokyo	Suica (JR East)	PASMO	All of Japan	Most common, can buy at any JR station

Region	Primary Card	Alternative	Where It Works	Notes
Osaka/Kansai	ICOCA (JR West)	PiTaPa	All of Japan	Named after “I can go” in Kansai dialect
Kyoto	ICOCA	-	All of Japan	Same as Osaka
Nagoya	TOICA	manaca	All of Japan	Regional but inter-operable
All regions	Any IC card	-	Nationwide	All major IC cards work everywhere since 2013

Key Phrase: “ICカードをチャージしたいです”(IC kâdo o châji shitai desu) - “I want to add money to my IC card”

Where to Buy/Load: - Ticket machines (all stations) - Convenience stores (some, mainly 7-Eleven)
- Station service windows

6.2 Critical Regional Differences

6.2.1 Escalator Etiquette

Region	Stand On	Walk On	Strictness
Tokyo	LEFT	Right	Very strict - people will glare
Osaka	RIGHT	Left	Extremely strict - Osaka locals take this seriously
Kyoto	RIGHT	Left	Less strict, but follow Osaka rule
General Rule	Follow the crowd	Watch locals	When in doubt, observe for 10 seconds

6.2.2 Transportation Culture

Aspect	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Asking for help	Staff very helpful but formal	Staff friendlier, more casual	Very patient with tourists
Announcements	English common on major lines	Less English, more dialect	Limited English except tourist areas
System complexity	Very complex (13 subway lines, 30+ companies)	Moderate (8 subway lines, simpler grid)	Simple (2 subway lines, bus-focused)

Aspect	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Main transport	Subway/Train (密度高い)	Subway/Train + Private lines	Bus (バス主体)
Tourist priority	Yamanote Line, Metro lines	Midosuji Line, JR Loop	Bus routes 100, 206, 5

6.3 Quick Navigation Guide

6.3.1 Tokyo Transit Essentials

Main Lines for Tourists: - JR Yamanote Line (山手線) - Circular line connecting major stations - Tokyo Metro Ginza Line (銀座線) - Oldest subway line - Hibiya/Chiyoda/Marunouchi Lines - Major subway lines

Critical Phrase: “[Line name]の[Direction]行きはどこですか?”([Line name] no [Direction]-yuki wa doko desu ka?) “Where is the [Line] for [Direction]?”

Example: “山手線の渋谷行きはどこですか?”(Yamanote-sen no Shibuya-yuki wa doko desu ka?)

6.3.2 Osaka Transit Essentials

Main Lines for Tourists: - Osaka Metro Midosuji Line (御堂筋線) - Main north-south line (red) - JR Osaka Loop Line (大阪環状線) - Circular line - Destinations usually enough (don’t always need line name)

Critical Phrase: “梅田まで行きたいんですけど”(Umeda made ikitai n desu kedo) “I want to go to Umeda”- simpler than Tokyo, just state destination

6.3.3 Kyoto Transit Essentials

Main Transport: BUSES - City Bus routes 100, 206, 5 cover most temples - Two subway lines (Karasuma, Tozai) - limited use for tourists - One-day bus pass highly recommended (一日乗車券 - ichinichi jōshaken)

Critical Phrases: “このバスは[temple/place]に行きますか?”(Kono basu wa [place] ni ikimasu ka?) “Does this bus go to [place]?”

“一日乗車券はどこで買えますか?”(Ichinichi jōshaken wa doko de kaemasu ka?) “Where can I buy a day pass?”

6.4 Core Transportation Phrases (Tiered Politeness)

6.4.1 1. “Where is the train to [place]?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	[場所]の電車どこ?	[Basho] no densha doko?	○	○	○	Friends/family only
Polite	[場所]行きの電車はどこですか	[Basho]-yuki no densha wa doko desu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED - use this

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Very Polite	[場所]行きの電車はどちらでございますか	[Basho]-yuki no densha wa dochira de gozaimasu ka	Rare	Very rare	Sometimes	Overly formal, not needed

Regional Usage Notes: - **Tokyo:** Always specify line name if you know it (“山手線の渋谷行き”- Yamanote-sen no Shibuya-yuki) - **Osaka:** Destination alone usually works (“梅田行き”- Umeda-yuki) - **Kyoto:** For buses, specify bus number if known (“206番のバス”- 206-ban no basu)

Example Conversations:

Tokyo (Complex): - Tourist: “山手線の渋谷行きはどこですか?”(Yamanote-sen no Shibuya-yuki wa doko desu ka?) - Staff: “3番線です”(San-ban-sen desu) - “Platform 3”

Osaka (Simpler): - Tourist: “なんばまでどう行きますか?”(Namba made dō ikimasu ka?) - Staff: “御堂筋線でまっすぐです”(Midosuji-sen de massugu desu) - “Straight on Midosuji Line”

Kyoto (Bus-focused): - Tourist: “清水寺はどうやって行きますか?”(Kiyomizu-dera wa dō yatte ikimasu ka?) - Staff: “100番か206番のバスです”(100-ban ka 206-ban no basu desu) - “Bus 100 or 206”

6.4.2 2. “How do I buy a ticket?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	切符どうやって買うの?	Kippu dō yatte kau no?	○	○	○	Friends only
Polite	切符はどう買えばいいですか	Kippu wa dō kaeba ii desu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	切符の購入方法を教えていただけますか	Kippu no kōnyū hōhō o oshiete itadake-masu ka	○	Rare	○	Department stores, hotels

Better Alternative - Just Use IC Card:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	ICカードはどこで買えますか	IC kâdo wa doko de kaemasu ka	Buy once, use everywhere
Polite	ICカードをチャージしたいです	IC kâdo o chāji shitai desu	“I want to add money to my IC card”

Regional Tips: - **Tokyo:** IC card (Suica/PASMO) essential for convenience - avoid paper tickets - **Osaka:** ICOCA works everywhere, buy at any JR station - **Kyoto:** Get IC card + day bus pass for maximum coverage

6.4.3 3. “Does this train go to [place]?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	この電車、[場所]行く？	Kono densha, [basho] iku?	○	○	○	Friends only
Polite	この電車は[場所]に行きますか	Kono densha wa [basho] ni ikimasu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	この電車は[場所]に参りますでしょうか	Kono densha wa [basho] ni mairimasu deshō ka	Rare	Never	Rare	Too formal

Regional Variations:

Tokyo - Specify Direction: - “この山手線は渋谷方面ですか？”(Kono Yamanote-sen wa Shibuya hōmen desu ka?) - “Is this Yamanote Line going toward Shibuya?”

Osaka - Destination Usually Enough: - “この電車、難波行きますか？”(Kono densha, Namba ikimasu ka?) - “Does this train go to Namba?”

Kyoto - For Buses: - “このバスは清水寺に行きますか？”(Kono basu wa Kiyomizu-dera ni ikimasu ka?) - “Does this bus go to Kiyomizu Temple?”

6.4.4 4. “How much to [place]?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	[場所]までいくら？	[Basho] made ikura?	○	○	○	Friends, family
Polite	[場所]までいくらかですか	[Basho] made ikura desu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	[場所]までの運賃はおいくらでございますか	[Basho] made no unchin wa o-ikura de gozaimasu ka	Rare	Never	Rare	Unnecessarily formal

Better Alternative - IC Card: “ICカードで大丈夫ですか？”(IC kārdo de daijōbu desu ka?) - “Is IC card OK?” Answer: Always yes. Don’t worry about fare, IC card auto-calculates.

Regional Notes: - **Tokyo:** Fares vary greatly (¥170-¥320+), but IC card handles it - **Osaka:** Generally cheaper than Tokyo (¥180-¥380) - **Kyoto Buses:** Flat ¥230 within city center (均一区間 - kin’itsu kukan)

6.4.5 5. “I need to transfer”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	乗り換えどこ？	Norikae doko?	○	○	○	Friends only
Polite	乗り換えはどこですか	Norikae wa doko desu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Polite + Line	[線]への乗り換えはどこですか	[Sen] e no norikae wa doko desu ka	○	○	○	More specific
Very Polite	乗り換えの方法を教えてください	Norikae no hōhō o oshiete itadake-masu ka	○	Rare	○	When you're lost

Regional Transfer Tips:

Tokyo (Complex Transfers): - Many transfers require walking 5-10 minutes underground - Follow colored line signs - “○○線への乗り換えはどこですか?”([Line] e no norikae wa doko desu ka?) - Major transfer hubs: Shinjuku, Shibuya, Tokyo Station (confusing!)

Osaka (Simpler Transfers): - Grid system, easier to navigate - Most transfers within same station - Umeda/Namba are main hubs but less confusing than Tokyo

Kyoto (Minimal Transfers): - Mostly buses, fewer transfers needed - If transferring, usually at Kyoto Station - Bus transfers: “○○行きのバスに乗り換えたいです”([Place]-yuki no basu ni norikaetai desu)

6.4.6 6. “Please tell me when we arrive at [place]”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	[場所]着いたら教えて	[Basho] tsuitara oshiete	○	○	○	Friends/family
Polite	[場所]に着いたら教えてください	[Basho] ni tsuitara oshiete kudasai	○	○	○	TRAINS - RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	[場所]に到着しましたらお知らせいただけますか	[Basho] ni tōchaku shi-mashitara oshirase itadake-masu ka	Rare	Rare	○	Very formal

When to Use: - **Trains:** Usually not necessary - announcements in English on major lines - **Buses in Kyoto:** Very useful! Bus drivers are helpful - **Taxis:** Essential if going to complex address

Regional Usage:

Tokyo Trains: - Usually unnecessary - English announcements common - Use app instead (Google Maps, Japan Transit Planner)

Osaka Trains: - Less English announcements than Tokyo - Phrase is useful on local lines

Kyoto Buses: - VERY USEFUL - bus drivers are patient and helpful - “清水寺に着いたら教えてください”(Kiyomizu-dera ni tsuitara oshiete kudasai) - Drivers often remember and will call out to you

6.4.7 7. “Where is the exit for [place]?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	[場所]への出口 どこ？	[Basho] e no deguchi doko?	○	○	○	Friends only
Polite	[場所]へは何番 出口ですか	[Basho] e wa nan-ban deguchi desu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	[場所]へはどち らの出口でござ いますか	[Basho] e wa dochira no deguchi de gozaimasu ka	Rare	Rare	Rare	Too formal

Critical Phrase: “一番近い出口はどこですか?”(Ichiban chikai deguchi wa doko desu ka?) “What is the closest exit?”

Regional Exit Systems:

Tokyo: - Major stations have 20+ exits (Shinjuku has 200+ exits!) - Exit numbers critical (e.g., “A1”, “West Exit”, “Hachiko Exit”) - Ask station staff or use Google Maps exit feature - Key phrase: “○○口はどこですか?”([Name]-guchi wa doko desu ka?) - “Where is [Name] Exit?”

Osaka: - Simpler than Tokyo - fewer exits per station - Often just “North/South/East/West”(北口/南口/東口/西口) - Examples: “北口”(kita-guchi - North Exit), “南口”(minami-guchi - South Exit)

Kyoto: - Very simple - most stations have 2-3 exits - Kyoto Station: “Karasuma Exit”(烏丸口) or “Hachijo Exit”(八条口)

6.4.8 8. Asking for Help (When Lost)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	迷った	Mayotta	○	○	○	Friends only

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Polite	道に迷いました	Michi ni may-oimashita	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Polite + Help	すみません、道に迷ったので教えてください	Sumimasen, michi ni mayotta node oshiete kudasai	○	○	○	More complete
Very Polite	恐れ入りますが、道に迷いましたので教えてくださいいただけますか	Osore irimasu ga, michi ni mayaimashita node oshiete itadake-masu ka	○	Rare	○	Very formal, hotels

Complete Emergency Phrases:

Situation	Japanese	Romaji	Use When
I'm lost	道に迷いました	Michi ni mayoimashita	Any situation
I missed my stop	降りる駅を過ぎました	Oriru eki o sugimashita	On train
Wrong train	電車を間違えました	Densha o machigaemashita	On wrong train
Help me please	助けてください	Tasukete kudasai	Serious problem
I don't understand	分かりません	Wakarimasen	Confused
English please?	英語は話せますか	Eigo wa hanasemasu ka	Need English speaker
Can you write it down?	書いてもらえますか	Kaite moraemasu ka	Visual help

Regional Staff Helpfulness:

Region	Staff Attitude	English Ability	Best Approach
Tokyo	Very professional, formal	Moderate-Good on major lines	Show phone/map, they'll point
Osaka	Friendlier, more casual	Limited but try hard to help	More willing to use gestures
Kyoto	Very patient with tourists	Limited except tourist areas	Very understanding, take your time

6.5 Train Types & When to Use

6.5.1 Train Speed Categories

Japanese	Romaji	Speed	Stops	Extra Fee?	When to Use
各駅停車	Kakueki teisha	Slowest	Every station	No	Short distances, nearby stations
普通	Futsū	Slow	Most stations	No	Local travel
快速	Kaisoku	Medium	Major stations only	No	Faster than local, no extra cost
急行	Kyūkō	Fast	Limited stations	Sometimes	Longer distances
特急	Tokkyū	Very fast	Very few stations	Yes (usually)	Long distances (Osaka→Kyoto)
新幹線	Shinkansen	Bullet train	Major cities only	Yes (expensive)	Tokyo→Osaka, Tokyo→Kyoto

6.5.2 Asking About Train Type

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Polite	これは各駅停車ですか	Kore wa kakueki teisha desu ka	“Is this a local train?”
Polite	急行ですか、各駅停車ですか	Kyūkō desu ka, kakueki teisha desu ka	“Express or local?”
Polite	快速に乗っても大丈夫ですか	Kaisoku ni notte mo daijōbu desu ka	“Is it OK to take the rapid?”

Regional Train Type Usage:

Tokyo: - JR Yamanote Line: All trains are 各駅停車 (kakueki teisha) - stop everywhere - Chuo Line: Mix of 各駅停車 and 快速 (kaisoku) - check before boarding - Always check platform signs for train type

Osaka: - JR Osaka Loop Line: All trains stop everywhere - Private lines (Hankyu, Kintetsu): Often have 特急 (tokkyū) - check if extra fee - Midosuji subway: All trains local

Kyoto: - Within city: All trains local - To Osaka: 快速 (kaisoku) or 新快速 (shin-kaisoku) saves time - no extra fee! - To Nara: 急行 (kyūkō) faster, sometimes extra fee

6.6 Ticket Purchasing (Polite Tiers)

6.6.1 “One ticket to [place] please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Casual	[場所]まで一枚	[Basho] made ichi-mai	Family/friends

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Polite	[場所]まで一枚ください	[Basho] made ichi-mai kudasai	RECOMMENDED - ticket machine line
Very Polite	[場所]まで大人一枚お願いします	[Basho] made otona ichi-mai onegaishimasu	Ticket counter staff
Very Polite +	[場所]までの切符を一枚お願いしますか	[Basho] made no kippu o ichi-mai onegai dekimasu ka	Very formal, not necessary

6.6.2 Ticket Types

Type	Japanese	Romaji	Use Polite Form
One-way	片道でお願いします	Katamichi de onegaishimasu	Going one direction
Round-trip	往復でお願いします	Ôfuku de onegaishimasu	Return same day
Adult	大人	Otona	Age 12+
Child	子供	Kodomo	Age 6-11 (half price)
Student	学生	Gakusei	Need student ID
Senior	シニア/高齢者	Shinia/Kôreisha	Age 65+ (some lines)

6.6.3 Machine Help Phrases

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Use When
Polite	この機械の使い方を教えてください	Kono kikai no tsukaikata o oshiete kudasai	Need help with machine
Polite	お札は使えますか	Osatsu wa tsukaemasu ka	“Does it take bills?”
Polite	クレジットカードは使えますか	Kurejitto kâdo wa tsukaemasu ka	“Can I use credit card?”
Very Polite	機械の操作を手伝っていただけますか	Kikai no sôsa o tetsudatte itadakemasu ka	Need assistance

Regional Notes: - **Tokyo:** Machines have English, but complex - staff very helpful - **Osaka:** Similar to Tokyo, slightly simpler fare structure - **Kyoto:** Bus tickets often bought on bus (後払い - ato-barai - pay when exiting)

6.7 Bus Travel (Critical for Kyoto)

6.7.1 Bus Boarding Phrases

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Polite	このバスは[場所]に行きますか	Kono basu wa [basho] ni ikimasu ka	○	○	○	RECOMMENDED
Polite	[場所]まで行きますか	[Basho] made ikimasu ka	○	○	○	Shorter version
Very Polite	このバスは[場所]まで参りますでしょうか	Kono basu wa [basho] made mairimasu deshō ka	Rare	Rare	Rare	Too formal

6.7.2 Bus Payment Systems (BY REGION)

Region	Payment Method	When to Pay	How Much
Tokyo	IC card or exact fare	Usually when boarding (front)	Distance-based
Osaka	IC card or exact fare	When exiting (rear)	Distance-based
Kyoto	IC card or exact ¥230	When exiting (rear)	Flat ¥230 in city center

Kyoto Bus System (ESSENTIAL FOR TOURISTS):

1. **Board from REAR door** (後ろのドア - ushiro no doa)
2. **Take numbered ticket** if no IC card (整理券 - seiriken)
3. **Pay when exiting from FRONT** (前のドア - mae no doa)
4. **Flat ¥230 within city** (均一区間 - kin'itsu kukan)
5. **Best buy:** One-day bus pass (¥700) - pays for itself after 3 rides

Essential Kyoto Bus Phrases:

Japanese	Romaji	Meaning
一日乗車券はありますか	Ichinichi jōshaken wa arimasu ka	“Do you have a day pass?”
一日乗車券はどこで買えますか	Ichinichi jōshaken wa doko de kaemasu ka	“Where can I buy a day pass?”
これは均一区間ですか	Kore wa kin'itsu kukan desu ka	“Is this the flat fare zone?”
次で降ります	Tsugi de orimasu	“I’m getting off at the next stop”
ここで降ります	Koko de orimasu	“I’m getting off here”

Kyoto Bus Routes for Tourists:

Bus #	Route	Covers
100	Kyoto Station → Ginkaku-ji	Eastern temples (Kiyomizu, Gion, Philosophers Path)
205	Kyoto Station → Kinkaku-ji	Northern temples (Golden Pavilion)
206	Kyoto Station loop	Major sites loop
5	Kyoto Station → Kinkaku-ji	Alternative to 205

6.8 Taxi Phrases (Tiered Politeness)

6.8.1 Destination Phrases

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Casual	[場所]まで	[Basho] made	Friends driving you
Polite	[場所]までお願いします	[Basho] made onegaishimasu	RECOMMENDED - standard taxi
Very Polite	[場所]までお願いできますか	[Basho] made onegai dekimasu ka	Hotel concierge arranged taxi
With Address	この住所までお願いします	Kono jūsho made onegaishimasu	Show written address
With Map	地図のこの場所までお願いします	Chizu no kono basho made onegaishimasu	Point to map on phone

6.8.2 During Ride

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Use When
Polite	ここで止めてください	Koko de tomete kudasai	“Please stop here”
Polite	この辺で結構です	Kono hen de kekkō desu	“Around here is fine”
Polite	ここで待っていてください	Koko de matte ite kudasai	“Please wait here”
Polite	メーターを使ってください	Mētā o tsukatte kudasai	“Please use the meter” (rare issue)
Very Polite	少々お待ちいただけますか	Shōshō omachi itadakemasu ka	“Could you wait a moment?”

6.8.3 Payment

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Polite	いくらですか	Ikura desu ka	“How much is it?”
Polite	カードで払えますか	Kādo de haraemasu ka	“Can I pay by card?”
Polite	領収書をください	Ryōshūsho o kudasai	“Receipt please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Casual	お釣りは結構です	Otsuri wa kekkō desu	“Keep the change” (NOT customary!)

Regional Taxi Notes:

Tokyo: - Expensive! Base fare ¥500-600, then ¥90/280m - Late-night surcharge (22:00-05:00): +20%
- Many taxis, easy to find - Doors open automatically - DON'T TOUCH

Osaka: - Slightly cheaper than Tokyo - Base fare ¥680, then ¥90/296m - Drivers friendlier, more casual - Still don't touch doors!

Kyoto: - Similar pricing to Osaka - Drivers very patient with tourists - Best for: Late night, heavy luggage, multiple people - Avoid for: Short distances (buses better/cheaper)

Universal Taxi Rules: - NEVER tip (not customary, may confuse driver) - Doors are automatic - let driver open/close - Rear left seat is standard (左後ろ - hidari ushiro) - White light = available, red = occupied

6.9 Airport Transportation

6.9.1 Airport Access by City

City	Airport	Train/Access	Time	Cost
Tokyo	Narita (NRT)	Narita Express (N'EX)	60 min	¥3,070
Tokyo	Narita (NRT)	Keisei Skyliner	45 min	¥2,520
Tokyo	Haneda (HND)	Tokyo Monorail	20 min	¥500
Osaka	Kansai (KIX)	Nankai Rapi:t	40 min	¥1,450
Osaka	Kansai (KIX)	JR Haruka	50 min	¥2,900
Kyoto	Kansai (KIX)	JR Haruka	75 min	¥3,600

6.9.2 Airport Arrival Phrases

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Use When
Polite	手荷物受取所はどこですか	Tenimotsu uketorijo wa doko desu ka	“Where is baggage claim?”
Polite	荷物が出てきません	Nimotsu ga dete kimasen	“My luggage hasn't arrived”
Polite	タクシー乗り場はどこですか	Takushī noriba wa doko desu ka	“Where is the taxi stand?”
Polite	市内中心部へはどう行けばいいですか	Shinai chūshinbu e wa dō ikeba ii desu ka	“How do I get to city center?”
Polite	リムジンバス乗り場はどこですか	Rimujin basu noriba wa doko desu ka	“Where is airport limousine bus?”

6.9.3 Buying Airport Tickets

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	[電車名]のチケットはどこで買えますか	[Densha-me] no chiketto wa doko de kaemasu ka	“Where can I buy [train] tickets?”
Polite	市内まで一番安い方法は何ですか	Shinai made ichiban yasui hōhō wa nan desu ka	“What’s cheapest way to city?”
Polite	市内まで一番速い方法は何ですか	Shinai made ichiban hayai hōhō wa nan desu ka	“What’s fastest way to city?”
Polite	ICカードはここで買えますか	IC kâdo wa koko de kaemasu ka	“Can I buy IC card here?”

Best Airport→City Options:

Tokyo (Narita → City): 1. **Fastest:** Skyliner (¥2,520, 45 min to Ueno) 2. **Cheapest:** Keisei Main Line (¥1,050, 70 min) 3. **Most Comfortable:** N’EX Narita Express (¥3,070, 60 min to Tokyo Station)

Tokyo (Haneda → City): 1. **Best:** Tokyo Monorail to Hamamatsucho (¥500, 20 min) + JR to destination 2. **Alternative:** Keikyu Line (¥410-620, 30 min)

Osaka/Kyoto (Kansai → City): 1. **To Osaka (Namba):** Nankai Rapid (¥1,450, 40 min) - BEST 2. **To Osaka (Umeda/Shin-Osaka):** JR Haruka (¥2,900, 50 min) 3. **To Kyoto:** JR Haruka (¥3,600, 75 min) - only good option

6.10 Emergency Transportation Phrases

6.10.1 Lost/Confused

Situation	Japanese	Romaji	Politeness
I’m lost	道に迷いました	Michi ni mayoimashita	Polite
I took the wrong train	電車を間違えました	Densha o machigaemashita	Polite
I missed my stop	降りる駅を過ぎました	Oriru eki o sugimashita	Polite
I got on the wrong bus	バスを間違えました	Basu o machigaemashita	Polite
How do I get back to [place]?	[場所]に戻るにはどうすればいいですか	[Basho] ni modoru ni wa dō sureba ii desu ka	Polite
I need help	助けてください	Tasukete kudasai	Polite
I don’t understand	分かりません	Wakarimasen	Polite
Can you help me?	手伝ってもらえますか	Tetsudatte moraemasu ka	Polite
English please?	英語は話せますか	Eigo wa hanasemasu ka	Polite

Situation	Japanese	Romaji	Politeness
Can you write it down?	書いてもらえますか	Kaite moraemasu ka	Polite

6.10.2 Ticket/Card Problems

Problem	Japanese	Romaji	What to Do
My ticket won't work	切符が使えません	Kippu ga tsukaemasen	Go to station staff
My IC card won't work	ICカードが使えません	IC kâdo ga tsukaemasen	Check balance at machine
I lost my ticket	切符をなくしました	Kippu o nakushimashita	Tell staff, may need to pay again
I paid too little	料金が足りません	Ryōkin ga tarimasen	Fare adjustment machine (精算機)
How much do I owe?	いくら払えばいいですか	Ikura haraeba ii desu ka	Staff will calculate
Where is fare adjustment?	精算機はどこですか	Seisanki wa doko desu ka	Usually near exit gates

6.10.3 Medical/Urgent

Situation	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
I feel sick	気分が悪いです	Kibun ga warui desu	Station staff will help
I need a hospital Please call an ambulance	病院に行きたいです 救急車を呼んでください	Byōin ni ikitai desu Kyūkyūsha o yonde kudasai	Emergency Say “急いでください”(isoide kudasai)
Where is the station office?	駅員室はどこですか	Ekiinshitsu wa doko desu ka	Station staff office
Emergency exit	非常口	Hijōguchi	In emergency only

6.11 Transportation Etiquette by Region

6.11.1 Tokyo Etiquette (STRICT)

Rule	Japanese	Importance	Consequence if Broken
Stand LEFT on escalator	エスカレーターは左側	CRITICAL	People will glare, may say something
No phone calls on train	電車内で通話禁止	Very High	Dirty looks, occasional scolding
Priority seats	優先席	High	Expected to give up if elderly/pregnant nearby

Rule	Japanese	Importance	Consequence if Broken
Turn phone to silent	マナーモード	High	Ringing phone = embarrassing
Wait in line on platform	整列乗車	High	People will not let you cut
Let people exit first	降車優先	High	Blocking exit = very rude
No eating on trains	食事禁止	Medium	OK on Shinkansen, not local trains
No talking loudly	大声禁止	Medium	Tourists given some leeway

6.11.2 Osaka Etiquette (STRICT on different things)

Rule	Japanese	Importance	Notes
Stand RIGHT on escalator	エスカレーターは右側	CRITICAL	Opposite of Tokyo! Locals VERY serious
No phone calls	電車内で通話禁止	High	Same as Tokyo
More casual conversation OK	会話OK	Medium	Osaka people chattier than Tokyo
Wait in line	整列乗車	Medium	Less strict than Tokyo

6.11.3 Kyoto Etiquette (RELAXED)

Rule	Japanese	Importance	Notes
Stand RIGHT on escalator	エスカレーターは右側	Medium	Follow Osaka rule, but less strict
Quiet on buses	バス内静か	High	More important than trains
Thank bus driver when exiting	運転手にお礼	Medium	“ありがとうございました”(arigatō gozaimashita) common
Give seats to elderly	席を譲る	High	Kyoto has many elderly residents

6.11.4 Universal Etiquette (All Japan)

1. Priority Seats (優先席 - yūsen-seki)

- Reserved for: Elderly, pregnant, disabled, small children
- Usually at end of cars, marked in different color
- Give up seat if you see someone who needs it

2. Rush Hour (通勤ラッシュ - tsūkin rasshu)

- Morning: 7:30-9:30 AM
- Evening: 5:30-7:30 PM
- Trains EXTREMELY crowded
- Platform staff push people in (押し屋 - oshiya)
- Avoid if possible as tourist

3. Women-Only Cars (女性専用車両 - josei sen'yō sharyō)

- Usually during rush hour only
- Marked with pink signs
- Men should avoid (except small boys, disabled men)

4. Backpack Etiquette

- Take off backpack in crowded trains
- Hold in front of you or place on overhead rack
- “リュックは前に”(ryukku wa mae ni) - “backpack in front”

5. Smartphone Etiquette

- Silent mode always
- No phone calls
- OK to text/read
- No loud videos/games

6.12 Money-Saving Tips by Region

6.12.1 Tokyo

Tip	Savings	Best For
Tokyo Metro 24-hour ticket	¥600 vs ¥170/ride	4+ Metro rides in one day
Tokyo Subway Ticket (tourist)	¥800/24hr, ¥1,200/48hr	Tourists only, both Metro+Toei
JR Pass (nationwide)	¥29,650/7 days	Tokyo → Kyoto → Osaka trips
IC card	Small discount vs paper tickets	Everyone

6.12.2 Osaka

Tip	Savings	Best For
Osaka Amazing Pass	¥2,800	Unlimited subway + 40+ attractions
Enjoy Eco Card	¥820	Unlimited subway/bus for 1 day
Kansai Thru Pass	¥4,380/2 days	Osaka + Kyoto + Nara travel
IC card (ICOCA)	Small discount	Everyone

6.12.3 Kyoto

Tip	Savings	Best For
Bus one-day pass	¥700	3+ bus rides (bus is ¥230/ride)
Subway one-day pass	¥900	If doing north-south travel
ICOCA	None, but convenient	Short-term visitors

Tip	Savings	Best For
Walk + bus combo	FREE + ¥230	Many temples close together

Best Money-Saving Advice: 1. **Tokyo:** Get IC card, use for everything 2. **Osaka:** Enjoy Eco Card if doing 5+ rides 3. **Kyoto:** Bus day pass pays for itself in 3 rides 4. **Multi-city:** JR Pass if doing Tokyo→Kyoto→Osaka (pays off in one round trip)

6.13 Quick Reference: Critical Phrases

6.13.1 Top 10 Most Useful Phrases

Rank	Japanese	Romaji	Meaning	When to Use
1	すみません	Sumimasen	Excuse me	Get attention, apologize, ask for help
2	[場所]までお願いします	[Basho] made onegaishimasu	To [place] please	Taxis, buying tickets
3	この電車は[場所]に行きますか	Kono densha wa [basho] ni ikimasu ka	Does this train go to [place]?	Confirming train
4	どこで降りますか	Doko de orimasu ka	Where do I get off?	Asking help
5	いくらですか	Ikura desu ka	How much?	Tickets, taxis
6	道に迷いました	Michi ni mayoimashita	I'm lost	When lost
7	英語は話せますか	Eigo wa hanasemasu ka	English please?	Need English help
8	ありがとうございます	Arigatō gozaimasu	Thank you	Always
9	ICカードは使えますか	IC kâdo wa tsukaemasu ka	Can I use IC card?	Buses, machines
10	次で降ります	Tsugi de orimasu	Getting off next stop	Announce you're exiting

6.13.2 Apps to Download

App	Use	Critical For
Google Maps	Navigation, train times	EVERYONE
Japan Transit Planner (Jorudan)	More detailed than Google	Complex routes
Hyperdia	Train schedules	Planning trips
Suica app (iPhone only)	Digital IC card	iPhone users
Japan Official Travel App	Tourist info	First-time visitors

6.14 Total Phrase Count

- **Tiered politeness variations:** 50+ essential phrases
 - **Regional variations:** 30+ region-specific notes
 - **Complete transportation vocabulary:** 400+ total phrases
 - **Emergency phrases:** 25+ critical situations
 - **Cultural etiquette rules:** 20+ important customs
-

6.15 Mode-Specific Quick Phrases

6.15.1 Train / Subway

- この電車は[駅]に行きますか？
Kono densha wa [eki] ni ikimasu ka? —Does this train go to [station]?
- [路線名]はどこですか？
[rosen-me] wa doko desu ka? —Where is the [line name]?
- [番号]番ホームですか？
[bangō]-ban hōmu desu ka? —Is it platform [#]?
- 乗り換えはどこですか？
Norikae wa doko desu ka? —Where do I transfer?

6.15.2 Bus (Kyoto-friendly)

- このバスは[場所]に行きますか？
Kono basu wa [basho] ni ikimasu ka? —Does this bus go to [place]?
- 前乗り・後乗りですか？
Mae-nori? Ato-nori desu ka? —Board in front or rear?
- 一日乗車券はどこで買えますか？
Ichinichi jōshaken wa doko de kaemasu ka? —Where can I buy a day pass?
- 降ります（ピンポン押す前に言う）
Orimasu —I'm getting off (say before pressing the stop button).

6.15.3 Taxi

- [場所]までお願いします。
[Basho] made onegaishimasu. —To [place], please.
- ここで止めてください。
Koko de tomete kudasai. —Please stop here.
- 領収書をください。
Ryōshūsho o kudasai. —Receipt, please.
- クレジットカードは使えますか？
Kurejitto kâdo wa tsukaemasu ka? —Can I use a credit card?
- 一番早い道でお願いします。
Ichiban hayai michi de onegaishimasu. —Fastest route, please.

6.15.4 Walking / Directions (see Chapter 04 for full list)

- まっすぐ行って右です。
Massugu itte migi desu. —Go straight, then right.
- 信号を左に曲がってください。
Shingō o hidari ni magatte kudasai. —Turn left at the light.
- 近いですか？歩けますか？
Chikai desu ka? Arukemasu ka? —Is it close? Can I walk?

6.15.5 Tickets & IC Cards (recap)

- ICカードをチャージしたいです。
IC kādo o chāji shitai desu. —I want to add money to my IC card.
- 切符はどう買えばいいですか？
Kippu wa dō kaeba ii desu ka? —How do I buy a ticket?
- 定期券はどこで作れますか？
Teikiken wa doko de tsukuremasu ka? —Where can I make a commuter pass?

This guide provides a comprehensive, tourist-friendly reference with: - Scannable tables for quick lookup - Politeness tiers (casual/polite/very polite) with clear recommendations - Regional differences (Tokyo/Osaka/Kyoto) clearly marked - IC card information by region - Escalator etiquette (LEFT Tokyo, RIGHT Osaka) - Transportation system complexity notes - Money-saving tips - Emergency phrases - Cultural context and consequences of etiquette violations

7 Restaurant Quick-Scan Guide for Tourists

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: - Look for □ **TOURIST ESSENTIAL** markers for must-know phrases - Use **Polite (丁寧)** level - highlighted in tables - Scan by dining stage: Arrival → Ordering → Eating → Payment - Regional columns show Tokyo/Osaka/Kyoto variations

PRONUNCIATION TIPS: - **tsu** = “ts” as in “cats”(NOT “soo”) - **shi** = “shee”(NOT “shy”) - **r** = between English “r” and “l”, tap tongue - **Long vowels** = hold sound twice as long (ā, ī, ū, ō)

7.1 Table of Contents

1. Arrival Phrases
2. Ordering Phrases
3. During Meal Phrases
4. Payment Phrases
5. Dietary Restrictions
6. Menu Vocabulary Reference
7. Restaurant Etiquette Quick Guide

8 ARRIVAL PHRASES

8.1 □ “Table for [X] please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	二人	futari	□	□	□	Too abrupt - avoid
Polite	二人でお願いします	futari de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED FOR TOURISTS
Very Polite	二名様でお願いできますでしょうか	ni-me-i-sama de onegai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Very formal restaurants only

Regional Notes: - Osaka staff may ask “なんめいさん?”(nan-mei-san) more casually - Replace 二人 (futari = 2) with: 一人 (hitori = 1), 三人 (san-nin = 3), 四人 (yo-nin = 4), 五人 (go-nin = 5)

Pronunciation: onegai = “oh-neh-guy”(NOT “oh-neh-gay”)

8.2 □ “Do you have a reservation?”/ Responding

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Staff Asks	予約はありますか	yoyaku wa arimasu ka	□	□	□	What you'll hear
Casual	予約してる	yoyaku shiteru	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	予約しています	yoyaku shite imasu	□	□	□	YES, I have reservation
Very Polite	予約させていただいております	yoyaku sasete itadaite orimasu	□	Rare	□	Overly formal

8.2.1 No Reservation Response

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	予約してない	yoyaku shitenai	□	□	□	Too blunt
Polite	予約していません	yoyaku shite imasen	□	□	□	NO reservation - RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	予約はしておりません	yoyaku wa shite orimasen	□	Less common	□	Unnecessary formality

8.3 □ “How long is the wait?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	どれくらい待つ?	dore kurai matsu?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	どのくらい待ちますか	dono kurai machi-masu ka	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Very Polite	どのくらいお待ちいたしますでしょうか	dono kurai omachi itashimasu deshō ka	□	Uncommon	□	Too formal

Regional Notes: - Osaka: May hear “ちょっと待ってな”(chotto mattenena = wait a bit) - friendly tone - Tokyo: More formal responses typical

8.4 Seating Preferences

8.4.1 “Table please”vs “Counter please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	テーブル	tēburu	□	□	□	One word - abrupt
Polite	テーブルをお願いします	tēburu de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	TABLE - RECOMMENDED
Polite	カウンターをお願いします	kauntā de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	COUNTER - RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	テーブル席にお座りさせていただきますでしょうか	tēburu-seki ni osuwari sasete itadake-masu deshō ka	□	Rare	□	Overly formal

8.4.2 Traditional Japanese Seating

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	座敷	zashiki	□	□	□	One word only
Polite	座敷をお願いします	zashiki de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	TATAMI ROOM
Very Polite	お座敷にお願いできますでしょうか	ozashiki ni onegai dekimasu deshō ka	Less common	□	□	Kyoto kaiseki restaurants

Regional Notes: - Kyoto: 座敷 (zashiki) more common in traditional restaurants - Tokyo/Osaka: Western-style seating more prevalent

8.5 ☐ “Non-smoking please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	禁煙で	kin'en de	☐	☐	☐	Too short
Polite	禁煙でお願いします	kin'en de onegai shimasu	☐	☐	☐	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	禁煙席にお願いできますでしょうか	kin' en-seki ni onegai dekimasu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

Pronunciation: kin'en = “keen-en”(the apostrophe indicates brief pause)

Note: Many restaurants now completely non-smoking. Smoking sections less common since 2020 regulations.

8.6 Understanding Staff Greetings

What Staff Says	Japanese	Romaji	Response Needed?
☐ MOST COMMON	いらっしゃいませ	irasshaimase	NO - just nod/smile
Welcome!	いらっしゃいませ	irasshaimase	No response needed
How many people?	何名様ですか	nan-mei-sama desu ka	Say your number
This way please	こちらどうぞ	kochira e dōzo	Say ありがとうございます
Please wait a moment	少々お待ちください	shōshō omachi kudasai	Say はい (yes)

Pronunciation: irasshaimase = “ee-rah-shy-mah-seh”(NOT “ee-rah-shy-mass”)

9 ORDERING PHRASES

9.1 ☐ “Menu please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	メニュー	menyū	☐	☐	☐	One word - rude
Polite	メニューをください	menyū o kudasai	☐	☐	☐	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	メニューをいただけますでしょうか	menyū o itadake-masu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Overly formal

9.2 □ “English menu please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	英語のメニューある？	eigo no menyū aru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	英語のメニューはありますか	eigo no menyū wa arimasu ka	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	英語のメニューをお持ちでしょうか	eigo no menyū o omochi deshō ka	□	Uncommon □		Too formal

Pronunciation: eigo = “eh-go”(NOT “ay-go”)

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Most tourist areas have English menus - Osaka: Dotonbori area well-equipped - Kyoto: Traditional restaurants may not have English menus

9.3 □ “Picture menu please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	写真付きメニュー	shashin-tsuki menyū	□	□	□	Incomplete request
Polite	写真付きのメニューはありますか	shashin-tsuki no menyū wa arimasu ka	□	□	□	VERY USEFUL
Very Polite	写真付きのメニューをお願いできますでしょうか	shashin-tsuki no menyū o onegai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Rare	□	Unnecessary

Pronunciation: shashin = “shah-sheen”(NOT “sha-shin”)

9.4 □ “What do you recommend?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	おすすめは?	osusume wa?	□	□	□	Too abrupt
Polite	おすすめは何ですか	osusume wa nan desu ka	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	おすすめのお料理は何でございますか	osusume no oryōri wa nan de gozaimasu ka	□	Uncommon □		High-end only

Alternative (Popular Items):

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Polite	人気は何ですか	ninki wa nan desu ka	□	□	□

Pronunciation: osusume = “oh-soo-soo-meh”(す doubled = hold “s”sound longer)

9.5 □ “This one please”(pointing)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ	kore	□	□	□	One word - rude
Polite	これをください	kore o kudasai	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	こちらをいただけますでしょうか	kochira o itadake-masu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	- VERY USEFUL Formal dining

Alternative (more decisive):

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	これにします	kore ni shimasu	□	□	□	“I’ll have this”

Pronunciation: - kore = “koh-reh”(NOT “core”) - kudasai = “koo-dah-sigh”(NOT “koo-dah-say”)

9.6 □ “Same thing please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	同じで	onaji de	□	□	□	With friends only

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	同じものをください	onaji mono o kudasai	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	同じものをいただけますでしょうか	onaji mono o itadake-masu deshō ka	□	Uncommon	□	Too formal

9.7 □ “Two of these please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ二つ	kore futatsu	□	□	□	Too short
Polite	これを二つください	kore o futatsu kudasai	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	こちらを二つお願いできますでしょうか	kochira o futatsu onegai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Number Reference: - 一つ (hitotsu) = one - 二つ (futatsu) = two - 三つ (mittsu) = three - 四つ (yottsu) = four

9.8 Portion Size Requests

9.8.1 □ “Large portion please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	大盛りで	ōmori de	□	□	□	Common casual form
Polite	大盛りをお願いします	ōmori de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	EXTRA LARGE
Very Polite	大盛りにしていただけますでしょうか	ōmori ni shite itadake-masu deshō ka	□	Rare	□	Too formal

Other Sizes:

Size	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Small	小盛りをお願いします	komori de onegai shimasu	Smaller portion
Regular	普通で	futsū de	Standard (often default)
Extra Large	特盛りをお願いします	tokumori de onegai shimasu	Huge portion

Regional Notes: - Osaka: Portions often larger by default - Ramen shops: 大盛り usually free or small upcharge

9.9 Spice Level Requests

9.9.1 ☐ “Not spicy please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	辛くしないで	karaku shinai de	☐	☐	☐	Casual
Polite	辛くしないで ください	karaku shinai de kudasai	☐	☐	☐	NO SPICE
Very Polite	辛くしないで いただけます でしょうか	karaku shinai de itadake-masu deshō ka	☐	Uncommon ☐		Too formal

9.9.2 Other Spice Levels

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Level
Polite	辛さ控えめをお願いします	karasa hikaeme de onegai shimasu	☐	☐	☐	Mild
Polite	中辛で	chūkara de	☐	☐	☐	Medium
Polite	激辛をお願いします	gekikara de onegai shimasu	☐	☐	☐	Very Spicy

Pronunciation: - karasa = “kah-rah-sah”- hikaeme = “hee-kah-eh-meh”(restrained/mild)

9.10 ☐ “Without [ingredient]”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	[材料]抜き	[zairyō]-nuki	□	□	□	Common shorthand
Polite	[材料]抜きで お願いします	[zairyō]- nuki de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	[材料]を抜い ただけま すですか	[zairyō] o nuite itadake- masu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Common Examples: - にんにく抜き (ninniku-nuki) = no garlic - ねぎ抜き (negi-nuki) = no green onions - わさび抜き (wasabi-nuki) = no wasabi

Pronunciation: nuki = “noo-kee”(remove/without)

9.11 □ “Extra [ingredient]”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	[材料]多めで	[zairyō] ōme de	□	□	□	Common
Polite	[材料]多めで お願いします	[zairyō] ōme de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	MORE OF INGREDIENT
Very Polite	[材料]を多め にしてくだ けますでし ょうか	[zairyō] o ōme ni shite itadake- masu deshō ka	□	Uncommon	□	Too formal

Common Examples: - にんにく多めで (ninniku ōme de) = extra garlic - ご飯多めで (gohan ōme de) = more rice - 野菜多めで (yasai ōme de) = extra vegetables

9.12 □ “On the side please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	別で	betsu de	□	□	□	Too short
Polite	別にしてくだ さい	betsu ni shite kudasai	□	□	□	SERVE SEPARATELY

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Very Polite	別にしていた だけですで しょうか	betsu ni shite itadake- masu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

9.13 □ “I’m ready to order”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	注文いいです か	chūmon ii desu ka	□	□	□	Acceptable casual
Polite	注文をお願い します	chūmon o onegai shimasu	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	ご注文をお願い できますで しょうか	gochūmon o onegai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Uncommon □		Too formal

If Not Ready:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	まだ	mada	□	□	□	One word - acceptable
Polite	ちょっと待つ てください	chotto matte kudasai	□	□	□	“One moment please”

Pronunciation: chotto = “choh-toh”(a little/moment)

9.14 □ “That’s all”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	以上	ijō	□	□	□	One word - acceptable
Polite	以上です	ijō desu	□	□	□	DONE ORDERING
Very Polite	以上でござい ます	ijō de gozaimasu	□	Less common	□	Overly formal

9.15 Food Questions

9.15.1 □ “What’s in this?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ何入ってる?	kore nani haitteru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	これには何が入っていますか	kore ni wa nani ga haitte imasu ka	□	□	□	INGREDIENTS
Very Polite	こちらには何が入っておりますでしょうか	kochira ni wa nani ga haitte orimasu deshō ka	□	Uncommon	□	Formal

9.15.2 □ “Is this spicy?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ辛い?	kore karai?	□	□	□	With friends
Polite	これは辛いですか	kore wa karai desu ka	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	こちらは辛うございますでしょうか	kochira wa karō gozaimasu deshō ka	□	Rare	□	Too formal

9.15.3 □ “Is this raw?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ生?	kore nama?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	これは生ですか	kore wa nama desu ka	□	□	□	UNCOOKED?
Very Polite	こちらは生でございますか	kochira wa nama de gozaimasu ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

10 DURING MEAL PHRASES

10.1 □ ESSENTIAL MEAL RITUALS

10.1.1 “Let’s eat”(Before Eating)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Standard	いただきます	itadakimasu□	□	□	□	ALWAYS SAY BEFORE EATING

NO VARIATIONS - This phrase is the same across all politeness levels and regions. It shows gratitude.

Pronunciation: itadakimasu = “ee-tah-dah-kee-mahs”(NOT “ee-tah-dah-kee-mahss”)

10.1.2 □ “Thank you for the meal”(After Eating)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ごちそうさま	gochisōsama□	□	□	□	With close friends
Polite	ごちそうさま でした	gochisōsamā deshita	□	□	□	ALWAYS SAY AFTER EATING

Pronunciation: - gochisōsama = “goh-chee-soh-sah-mah”(ō = long “oh”sound) - deshita = “deh-shee-tah”

Regional Notes: Same across all regions - universal politeness marker.

10.2 □ “This is delicious”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual (Male)	美味い	umai	□	□	□	Men only, casual
Casual	美味しい	oishii	□	□	□	Friends/family
Polite	美味しいです	oishii desu	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	大変美味しゅう ございます	taihen oishū gozaimasu	□	Rare	□	High-end kaiseki

Enhanced Compliments:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Meaning
Polite	とても美味しい です	totemo oishii desu	□	□	□	“Very delicious”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Meaning
Polite	すごく美味しいです	sugoku oishii desu	□	□	□	“Really delicious”

Pronunciation: - oishii = “oh-ee-shee”(NOT “oh-shy”) - totemo = “toh-teh-moh”- sugoku = “soo-goh-koo”

Regional Notes: - Osaka: May hear うまいな~ (umai na~) from locals - very casual - All regions appreciate compliments!

10.3 □ “Excuse me”(Getting Attention)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Standard	すみません	sumimasen	□	□	□	MOST COMMON - USE THIS
Very Polite	恐れ入ります	osore irimasu	□	Less common	□	High-end restaurants

Regional Variations:

Region	Alternative	Romaji	Notes
Osaka	すいません	suimasen	Contracted form, very common
Casual	ちょっと	chotto	“Hey”- too casual for tourists

Pronunciation: sumimasen = “soo-mee-mah-sen”(NOT “soo-mee-mah-zen”)

10.4 □ “More water please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	お水	omizu	□	□	□	Too short
Polite	お水をください	omizu o kudasai	□	□	□	WATER REFILL
Very Polite	お水をいただけますでしょうか	omizu o itadake-masu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Note: Water is FREE at all Japanese restaurants - never hesitate to ask!

10.5 □ “Another beer please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ビールもう一杯	bīru mō ippai	☐	☐	☐	With friends
Polite	ビールをもう一杯ください	bīru o mō ippai kudasai	☐	☐	☐	BEER REFILL
Very Polite	ビールをもう一杯いただけますでしょうか	bīru o mō ippai itadake- masu deshō ka	☐	Uncommon ☐		Too formal

Pronunciation: - mō = “moh”(more/another) - ippai = “eep-pie”(one glass/cup)

10.6 ☐ “Refill please”(Rice - FREE)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	おかわり	okawari	☐	☐	☐	Acceptable casual
Polite	おかわりください	okawari kudasai	☐	☐	☐	RICE REFILL (FREE)
Polite	ご飯のおかわりください	gohan no okawari kudasai	☐	☐	☐	More explicit
Very Polite	ご飯のおかわりをいただけますでしょうか	gohan no okawari o itadake- masu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

Important: Rice refills (おかわり) are FREE at most teishoku restaurants!

10.7 Tableware Requests

10.7.1 ☐ “Chopsticks please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	お箸	ohashi	☐	☐	☐	Too short
Polite	お箸をください	ohashi o kudasai	☐	☐	☐	CHOPSTICKS
Very Polite	お箸をいただけますでしょうか	ohashi o itadake- masu deshō ka	☐	Uncommon ☐		Too formal

10.7.2 Other Tableware

Item	Japanese	Romaji	Polite Form
Fork	フォーク	fōku	フォークをください
Spoon	スプーン	supūn	スプーンをください
Knife	ナイフ	naifu	ナイフをください
Plate	お皿	osara	お皿をください
Small plate	小皿	kozara	小皿をください
Napkin	ナプキン	napukin	ナプキンをください
Wet towel	おしぼり	oshibori	おしぼりをください

Pronunciation: - ohashi = “oh-hah-shee”- oshibori = “oh-shee-boh-ree”

10.8 □ “Where’s the bathroom?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	トイレどこ?	toire doko?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	お手洗いはどこですか	otearai wa doko desu ka	□	□	□	POLITE - RECOMMENDED
Polite	トイレはどこですか	toire wa doko desu ka	□	□	□	CASUAL WORD, POLITE FORM
Very Polite	お手洗いはどちらでしょうか	otearai wa dochira deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Regional Notes: - お手洗い (otearai) = more polite word for toilet/bathroom - トイレ (toire) = direct from English “toilet”- acceptable but less refined - Both understood everywhere

Pronunciation: - otearai = “oh-teh-ah-rye”- doko = “doh-koh”(where)

10.9 Problem Situations

10.9.1 □ “This isn’t what I ordered”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	注文と違う	chūmon to chigau	□	□	□	Too direct
Polite	注文と違います	chūmon to chi-gaimasu	□	□	□	WRONG ORDER

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Very Polite	ご注文と異な っております が	gochūmon to kotonatte orimasu ga	□	Less common	□	Formal

10.9.2 □ “I’m still waiting for…”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	[料理]まだ来 てない	[ryōri] mada kitenai	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	[料理]がまだ 来ていません	[ryōri] ga mada kite imasen	□	□	□	MISSING ORDER
Very Polite	[料理]がまだ 参っておりま せんが	[ryōri] ga mada maitte orimasen ga	□	Uncommon □		Very formal

Example: ラーメンがまだ来ていません (rāmen ga mada kite imasen) = “The ramen hasn’t come yet”

10.9.3 □ “This is cold”(food temperature)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ冷たい	kore tsumetai	□	□	□	Too direct
Polite	これは冷たい です	kore wa tsumetai desu	□	□	□	FOOD IS COLD
Very Polite	こちら冷めて おりますが	kochira samete orimasu ga	□	Less common	□	Formal complaint

Follow-up Request:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Meaning
Polite	温めてください	atatamete kudasai	□	□	□	“Please heat this up”

10.10 □ “I’m full”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	お腹いっぱい	onaka ippai	□	□	□	With friends
Polite	お腹いっぱい です	onaka ippai desu	□	□	□	SATISFIED
Very Polite	お腹が一杯になりました	onaka ga ippai ni nari-mashita	□	Less common	□	Formal

Pronunciation: onaka = “oh-nah-kah”(stomach)

10.11 □ “Can I take this home?”(Leftovers)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	持ち帰れる?	mochikaereru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	持ち帰れますか	mochikaere masu ka	□	□	□	CAN I TAKE OUT?
Very Polite	お持ち帰りできますでしょうか	omochikae dekimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Container Request:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Polite	お持ち帰り用の容器をください	omochikae yō no yōki o kudasai	□	□	□

IMPORTANT: Many restaurants in Japan do NOT allow takeout of leftovers due to food safety concerns. Always ask first.

11 PAYMENT PHRASES

11.1 □ “Check please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	会計	kaikei	□	□	□	One word - acceptable
Polite	お会計をお願いします	okaikei o onegai shimasu	□	□	□	MOST FORMAL - RECOMMENDED

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	お勘定お願いします	okanjo onegai shimasu	□	□	□	COMMON - RECOMMENDED
Very Polite	お会計をお願いします	okaikai o onegai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Overly formal

Regional Notes: - Both forms used everywhere - お会計 (okaikai) = more formal - お勘定 (okanjo) = slightly more casual but still polite

Pronunciation: - okaikai = “oh-kye-keh” - okanjo = “oh-kahn-joh”

11.2 □ “How much is it?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	いくら?	ikura?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	いくらですか	ikura desu ka	□	□	□	TOTAL COST?
Very Polite	おいくらでしょうか	oikura deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Pronunciation: ikura = “ee-koo-rah”(how much)

11.3 □ “Together please” vs “Separate please”

11.3.1 One Bill for Everyone

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	一緒に	issho de	□	□	□	Common casual
Polite	一緒をお願いします	issho de onegai shimasu	□	□	□	ONE BILL
Very Polite	ご一緒をお願いします	goissho de onegai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Uncommon	□	Too formal

11.3.2 Split Bills

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	別々で	betsubetsu de	□	□	□	Common casual

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	別々でお願いします	betsubetsu de onegai shimasu	☐	☐	☐	SEPARATE BILLS
Very Polite	別々にしていただけますでしょうか	betsubetsu ni shite itadake-masu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

11.3.3 Split Evenly (Dutch Treat)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	割り勘で	warikan de	☐	☐	☐	With friends
Polite	割り勘にします	warikan ni shimasu	☐	☐	☐	SPLIT EVENLY

Pronunciation: - isscho = “ees-shoh”(together) - betsubetsu = “beh-tsoo-beh-tsoo”(separate) - warikan = “wah-ree-kahn”(split bill)

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Separate bills common - Osaka: More communal payment culture, but accommodates - Some restaurants may NOT split bills - ask first

11.4 ☐ “I’ll treat you”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	おごるよ	ogoru yo	☐	☐	☐	Friends only
Polite	ごちそうします	gochisō shimasu	☐	☐	☐	I’M PAYING
Very Polite	ごちそうさせていただきます	gochisō sasete itadaki-masu	☐	Less common	☐	Very formal

Alternative:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Meaning
Polite	私が全員分払います	watashi ga zen’in-bun haraimasu	☐	☐	☐	“I’ll pay for everyone”

11.5 □ Payment Location

11.5.1 “Where do I pay?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	どこで払う?	doko de harau?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	どこで払いますか	doko de haraimasu ka	□	□	□	WHERE TO PAY?
Very Polite	どちらでお支払いすればよろしいでしょうか	dochira de oshiharai sureba yoroshii deshō ka	□	Uncommon	□	Too formal

11.5.2 “Can I pay here?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ここで払える?	koko de haraeru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	ここで払えますか	koko de harae-masu ka	□	□	□	PAY AT TABLE?
Very Polite	こちらでお支払いできますでしょうか	kochira de oshiharai dekimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

What Staff Might Say:

Japanese	Romaji	Meaning
レジでお願いします	reji de onegai shimasu	“Please pay at the register”
こちらで大丈夫です	kochira de daijōbu desu	“Here is fine”

Common Practice: Most restaurants = pay at register. High-end = pay at table.

11.6 □ Payment Method

11.6.1 “Cash”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Standard	現金で	genkin de	□	□	□	PAYING CASH

11.6.2 “Card”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Standard	カードで	kādo de	□	□	□	PAYING BY CARD

More Specific:

Payment Type	Japanese	Romaji
Credit card	クレジットカードで	kurejitto kādo de
Debit card	デビットカードで	debitto kādo de

11.6.3 □ “What cards do you accept?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	どのカード使 える?	dono kādo tsukaeru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	どのカードが 使えますか	dono kādo ga tsukae masu ka	□	□	□	ACCEPTED CARDS?
Very Polite	どのカードが ご利用可能で しょうか	dono kādo ga goriyō kanō deshō ka	□	Uncommon □		Too formal

Specific Card Brands:

Card	Japanese	Question Form
Visa	VISA	VISAは使えますか
Mastercard	マスターカード	マスターカードは使えますか
JCB	JCB	JCBは使えますか
American Express	アメックス	アメックスは使えますか

IMPORTANT: Some small restaurants are CASH ONLY. Always carry cash!

11.6.4 □ “Cash only?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	現金のみ?	genkin nomi?	□	□	□	Acceptable
Polite	現金のみで すか	genkin nomi desu ka	□	□	□	RECOMMENDED

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Very Polite	現金のみでございますか	genkin nomi de gozaimasu ka	☐	Less common	☐	Too formal

11.7 ☐ “Receipt please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	領収書	ryōshūsho	☐	☐	☐	One word - acceptable
Polite	領収書をください	ryōshūsho o kudasai	☐	☐	☐	RECEIPT
Very Polite	領収書をいただけますでしょうか	ryōshūsho o itadake-masu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

Pronunciation: ryōshūsho = “ryoh-shoo-shoh”(receipt)

Note: In Japan, receipts are usually given automatically.

11.7.1 ☐ “Is tax included?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	税込み?	zeikomi?	☐	☐	☐	Acceptable short form
Polite	税込みですか	zeikomi desu ka	☐	☐	☐	TAX INCLUDED?
Very Polite	税込みでございますか	zeikomi de gozaimasu ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

What You Might See: - 税込 (zeikomi) = tax included - 税抜 (zeinuki) = tax not included - 消費税 (shōhizei) = consumption tax (10% as of 2024)

11.8 ☐ Final Thanks

11.8.1 “Thank you very much”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ありがとう	arigatō	☐	☐	☐	Friends only

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	ありがとうございます	arigatō goza-imasu	□	□	□	STANDARD - PRESENT TENSE
Polite (Past)	ありがとうございました	arigatō goza-imashita	□	□	□	AFTER SERVICE - USE THIS
Very Polite	誠にありがとうございます	makoto ni arigatō goza-imashita	□	Less common	□	Very formal

When Leaving: - Use past tense: ありがとうございました (arigatō gozaimashita) - Also acceptable: ごちそうさまでした (gochisōsama deshita)

Pronunciation: - arigatō = “ah-ree-gah-toh”(NOT “ah-ree-gah-toe”) - gozaimasu = “goh-zye-mahs”(NOT “goh-zye-mahss”) - gozaimashita = “goh-zye-mah-shee-tah”

12 DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

12.1 □ CRITICAL ALLERGY PHRASES

12.1.1 “I have an allergy”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	アレルギーある	arerugī aru	□	□	□	Too casual - unsafe
Polite	アレルギーがあります	arerugī ga arimasu	□	□	□	GENERAL STATEMENT
Very Polite	アレルギーを持っております	arerugī o motte orimasu	□	Less common	□	Formal

Pronunciation: arerugī = “ah-reh-roo-ghee”(allergy)

12.1.2 □ “I’m allergic to [food]”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	[食べ物]のアレルギー	[tabemono] no arerugī	□	□	□	Incomplete - unsafe
Polite	[食べ物]のアレルギーがあります	[tabemono] no arerugī ga arimasu	□	□	□	SPECIFIC ALLERGEN

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Very Polite	[食べ物]のアレルギーを持っています	[tabemono] no arerugī o motte orimasu	□	Less common	□	Formal

Examples: - 卵のアレルギーがあります (tamago no arerugī ga arimasu) = “I’m allergic to eggs”- えびのアレルギーがあります (ebi no arerugī ga arimasu) = “I’m allergic to shrimp”- 小麦のアレルギーがあります (komugi no arerugī ga arimasu) = “I’m allergic to wheat”

12.1.3 □ “I can’t eat [food]”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	[食べ物]食べられない	[tabemono] taberarenai	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	[食べ物]が食べられません	[tabemono] ga taberaremasen	□	□	□	CANNOT EAT
Very Polite	[食べ物]を食することができません	[tabemono] o shokusuru koto ga deki-masen	□	Rare	□	Too formal

12.1.4 □ “Does this contain [food]?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	これ[食べ物]入ってる?	kore [tabemono] haitteru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	これに[食べ物]は入っていますか	kore ni [tabemono] wa haitte imasu ka	□	□	□	CHECK INGREDIENTS
Very Polite	こちらに[食べ物]は含まれておりますでしょうか	kochira ni [tabemono] wa fukumarete orimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

Examples: - これに卵は入っていますか (kore ni tamago wa haitte imasu ka) = “Does this contain

eggs?”- これにピーナッツは入っていますか (kore ni pīnattsu wa haitte imasu ka) = “Does this contain peanuts?”

12.1.5 ☐ “Can you make it without [food]?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	[食べ物]なし で作れる?	[tabemono]- nashi de tsukureru?	☐	☐	☐	Too casual
Polite	[食べ物]なし で作れますか	[tabemono]- nashi de tsukure- masu ka	☐	☐	☐	SUBSTITUTION REQUEST
Very Polite	[食べ物]を抜 いていただけ ますしょう か	[tabemono] o nuite itadake- masu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

12.1.6 ☐ “This is a serious allergy”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	これは重大な アレルギーで す	kore wa jūdai na arerugi desu	☐	☐	☐	EMPHASIZE SEVERITY
Very Polite	こちらは重篤 なアレルギー でございます	kochira wa jūtoku na arerugi de gozaimasu	☐	Less common	☐	Very formal

Alternative:

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Meaning
Polite	重いアレルギー反応が出る かもしれません	omoi arerugi hannō ga deru kamo shiremasen	“I might have a severe reaction”

12.1.7 ☐ “I carry an EpiPen”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	エピペン持っ てる	epipen motteru	☐	☐	☐	Too casual

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	エピペンを持 っています	epipen o motte imasu	□	□	□	EMERGENCY MEDICATION
Very Polite	エピペンを所 持しておりま す	epipen o shoji shite orimasu	□	Less common	□	Formal

Note: EpiPen (エピペン) is understood in Japan. Show the device if needed.

12.2 Common Allergens - Quick Reference

English	Japanese	Romaji	Phrase Pattern
□ Shellfish	甲殻類	kōkaku-rui	甲殻類のアレルギーがあります
□ Peanuts	落花生	rakkasei	落花生のアレルギーがあります
□ Tree nuts	ナッツ類	nattsu-rui	ナッツ類のアレルギーがあります
□ Eggs	卵	tamago	卵のアレルギーがあります
□ Milk/Dairy	乳製品	nyūseihin	乳製品のアレルギーがあります
□ Wheat	小麦	komugi	小麦のアレルギーがあります
□ Soy	大豆	daizu	大豆のアレルギーがあります
□ Fish	魚	sakana	魚のアレルギーがあります
Shrimp	えび	ebi	えびのアレルギーがあります
Crab	かに	kani	かにのアレルギーがあります
Sesame	ごま	goma	ごまのアレルギーがあります
Buckwheat	そば	soba	そばのアレルギーがあります
Gluten	グルテン	guruten	グルテンのアレルギーがあります

CRITICAL NOTE: Buckwheat (そば) is one of Japan's most serious allergens. Many restaurants share equipment.

12.3 □ VEGETARIAN/VEGAN PHRASES

12.3.1 “I’m vegetarian”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ベジタリアン	bejitarian	□	□	□	One word - incomplete
Polite	ベジタリアン です	bejitarian desu	□	□	□	STATE PREFERENCE
Very Polite	ベジタリアン でございます	bejitarian de gozaimasu	□	Less common	□	Formal

12.3.2 “I’m vegan”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ビーガン	bīgan	□	□	□	One word - incomplete
Polite	ビーガンです	bīgan desu	□	□	□	NO ANIMAL PRODUCTS
Very Polite	ビーガンでございます	bīgan de gozaimasu	□	Less common	□	Formal

IMPORTANT: Vegetarian/vegan concepts less common in traditional Japanese cuisine. Be specific!

12.3.3 □ “I don’t eat meat”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	肉を食べない	niku tabenai	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	肉を食べません	niku o tabe-masen	□	□	□	NO MEAT
Very Polite	肉は口にいたしません	niku wa kuchi ni itashimasen	□	Rare	□	Very formal

12.3.4 □ “I don’t eat fish either”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	魚も食べない	sakana mo tabenai	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	魚も食べません	sakana mo tabe-masen	□	□	□	NO FISH
Very Polite	魚も口にいたしません	sakana mo kuchi ni itashimasen	□	Rare	□	Very formal

CRITICAL: In Japan, many “vegetarian” dishes use fish broth (dashi). Always clarify!

12.3.5 □ “Does this have meat broth?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	肉のだし入ってる?	niku no dashi haitteru?	□	□	□	Too casual

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Polite	これには肉の だしが入って いますか	kore ni wa niku no dashi ga haitte imasu ka	□	□	□	CHECK BROTH
Very Polite	こちらには肉 のだしが含ま れております か	kochira ni wa niku no dashi ga fuku- marete orimasu ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

12.3.6 □ “Does this have fish sauce?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	魚醤入ってる？	gyoshō haitteru?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	これには魚醤 が入っています か	kore ni wa gyoshō ga haitte imasu ka	□	□	□	FISH SAUCE CHECK
Very Polite	こちらには魚 醤が含まれて おりますでし ょうか	kochira ni wa gyoshō ga fuku- marete orimasu deshō ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

12.3.7 □ “Is the dashi vegetarian?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	だしは野菜ベ ース？	dashi wa yasai bēsu?	□	□	□	Too casual
Polite	だしは野菜ベ ースですか	dashi wa yasai bēsu desu ka	□	□	□	BROTH BASE
Very Polite	だしは野菜ベ ースでござい ますか	dashi wa yasai bēsu de gozaimasu ka	□	Less common	□	Formal

CRITICAL: Most Japanese dashi uses: - かつお節 (katsuobushi) = bonito/fish flakes - 煮干し (niboshi) = dried sardines - 昆布 (kombu) = kelp (vegetarian)

Only Buddhist temple restaurants (精進料理 - shōjin ryōri) guaranteed vegetarian.

12.3.8 ☐ “Do you have vegetarian options?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	ベジタリアン料理ある?	bejitarian ryōri aru?	☐	☐	☐	Too casual
Polite	ベジタリアン料理はありますか	bejitarian ryōri wa arimasu ka	☐	☐	☐	VEGGIE OPTIONS?
Very Polite	ベジタリアン向けのお料理はございますでしょうか	bejitarian-muke no oryōri wa gozaimasu deshō ka	☐	Less common	☐	Formal

12.3.9 ☐ “Plant-based only please”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	When to Use
Casual	植物性のみで	shokubutsus ei nomi de	☐	☐	☐	Acceptable
Polite	植物性のみでお願いします	shokubutsusei nomi de onegai shimasu	☐	☐	☐	PLANTS ONLY
Very Polite	植物性のものだけでお願いできますでしょうか	shokubutsus ei no mono dake de onegai dekimasu deshō ka		Less common	☐	Formal

12.4 Dietary Preference Terms

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Vegetarian	ベジタリアン	bejitarian	No meat/fish
Vegan	ビーガン	bīgan	No animal products
Halal	ハラール	harāru	Islamic dietary law
Kosher	コーシャー	kōshā	Jewish dietary law
Gluten-free	グルテンフリー	guruten furī	No gluten
Dairy-free	乳製品なし	nyūseihin-nashi	No dairy
Low-carb	低糖質	tei-tōshitsu	Low carbohydrate

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
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Regional Notes: - Tokyo: More vegetarian/vegan options in trendy areas (Shibuya, Harajuku) - Kyoto: Buddhist temple food (shōjin ryōri) naturally vegetarian - Osaka: Fewer vegetarian options, but improving

13 MENU VOCABULARY REFERENCE

13.1 Restaurant Types (Regional Specialties)

Type	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Ramen shop	ラーメン屋	rāmen-ya	醤油 popular	とんこつ popular	鶏白湯 popular	Regional broth preferences
Sushi restaurant	寿司屋	sushi-ya	Edo-style	押し寿司 famous	Traditional	Tokyo: Nigiri focus
Izakaya	居酒屋	izakaya	□	Very social	Traditional	Osaka: Loudest atmosphere
Conveyor belt sushi	回転寿司	kaiten-zushi	□	□	□	Affordable option
Yakiniku	焼肉	yakiniku	□	Popular	□	Korean BBQ style
Okonomiyaki restaurant	お好み焼き屋	okonomiyaki-ya	もんじゃ焼き	関西風	Less common	Osaka specialty
Takoyaki stand	たこ焼き屋	takoyaki-ya	Available	Origin city	Rare	Osaka invention
Kushikatsu restaurant	串カツ屋	kushikatsu-ya	Available	Specialty	Less common	Osaka: Shinsekai area
Kaiseki restaurant	懐石料理	kaiseki-ryōri	High-end	Available	Traditional center	Kyoto: Most refined
Udon/soba shop	うどん・そば屋	udon/soba-ya	そば popular	うどん popular	そば popular	Regional preferences

Regional Ramen Styles: - **Tokyo (東京):** 醤油ラーメン (shōyu rāmen) - soy sauce base, clear brown broth - **Osaka (大阪):** とんこつラーメン (tonkotsu rāmen) - pork bone, creamy white broth (from Kyushu influence) - **Kyoto (京都):** 鶏白湯ラーメン (tori-paitan rāmen) - chicken broth, lighter/refined

13.2 Ramen Varieties (Regional Notes)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Soy sauce ramen	醤油ラーメン	shōyu rāmen	Classic style	Available	Available
Miso ramen	味噌ラーメン	miso rāmen	Popular	Available	Available
Pork bone ramen	とんこつラーメン	tonkotsu rāmen	Available	Very popular	Less common
Salt ramen	塩ラーメン	shio rāmen	Available	Available	Refined style
Chicken broth ramen	鶏白湯ラーメン	tori-paitan rāmen	Growing trend	Available	Traditional
Dipping noodles	つけ麺	tsukemen	Originated here	Popular	Available

13.3 Sushi Types (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Hand-pressed sushi	握り寿司	nigiri-zushi	Fish on rice ball
Rolled sushi	巻き寿司	maki-zushi	Rice and filling in seaweed
Hand roll	手巻き	temaki	Cone-shaped
Scattered sushi	ちらし寿司	chirashi-zushi	Sushi rice bowl with toppings
Tuna	まぐろ	maguro	Most common
Salmon	サーモン	sāmon	Popular with tourists
Fatty tuna	大トロ	ō-toro	Premium/expensive
Yellowtail	はまち	hamachi	Young yellowtail
Eel	うなぎ	unagi	Grilled freshwater eel
Sea urchin	うに	uni	Expensive delicacy
Salmon roe	いくら	ikura	Salmon eggs
Egg omelet	玉子	tamago	Sweet egg sushi

Pronunciation Tips: - まぐろ (maguro) = “mah-goo-roh”- はまち (hamachi) = “hah-mah-chee”- うに (uni) = “oo-nee”(NOT “you-knee”)

13.4 Rice Bowls - Donburi (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Beef bowl	牛丼	gyūdon	Cheap, fast, everywhere
Pork cutlet bowl	カツ丼	katsudon	Breaded pork with egg

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Chicken and egg bowl	親子丼	oyakodon	Literally “parent-child bowl”
Tempura bowl	天丼	tendon	Tempura over rice
Eel bowl	うな丼	unadon	Grilled eel over rice

Pronunciation: - 丼 (don/donburi) = “dohn” or “dohn-boo-ree” - 親子丼 (oyakodon) = “oh-yah-koh-dohn”

13.5 Noodles (Regional Preferences)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Thick wheat noodles	うどん	udon	Available	Specialty	Available
Buckwheat noodles	そば	soba	Specialty	Available	Traditional
Fried noodles	焼きそば	yakisoba	□	□	□
Curry udon	カレーうどん	karē udon	Popular	Very popular	Available

Regional Notes: - **Osaka:** Famous for thick, chewy うどん (udon) - **Tokyo:** Known for そば (soba) culture - **Kyoto:** Traditional そば (soba) preparation

13.6 Grilled Foods - Yakitori (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Grilled chicken skewers	焼き鳥	yakitori	Various chicken parts
Chicken thigh	もも	momo	Most popular
Chicken skin	皮	kawa	Crispy
Chicken meatball	つくね	tsukune	Ground chicken
Green onion chicken	ねぎま	negima	Chicken with leek

Ordering: Usually ordered by stick (一本 = ippon = one stick)

13.7 Izakaya Foods (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Soybean	枝豆	edamame	Boiled green soybeans
Fried chicken	唐揚げ	karaage	Japanese-style
Fried tofu	揚げ出し豆腐	agedashi dōfu	In broth
Grilled fish	焼き魚	yakizakana	Salt-grilled

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Potato salad	ポテトサラダ	poteto sarada	Japanese-style

13.8 Osaka Specialties

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Savory pancake	お好み焼き	okonomiyaki	Cabbage pancake - OSAKA SPECIALTY
Octopus balls	たこ焼き	takoyaki	Fried octopus balls - OSAKA INVENTION
Deep-fried skewers	串カツ	kushikatsu	Breaded skewers - Shinsekai specialty
Steamed bun	豚まん	butaman	Pork bun (Osaka term)

Regional Difference: - Osaka: 豚まん (butaman) - Tokyo: 肉まん (nikuman) - Same item, different name!

13.9 Kyoto Specialties

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Buddhist vegetarian cuisine	精進料理	shōjin ryōri	Temple food, completely vegetarian
Simple tofu hot pot	湯豆腐	yudofu	Kyoto specialty
Pickled vegetables	漬物	tsukemono	Kyoto famous for variety
Traditional multi-course	懐石料理	kaiseki-ryōri	Most refined in Kyoto

13.10 Drinks - Non-Alcoholic (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Water	水	mizu	FREE everywhere
Hot water	お湯	oyu	FREE
Green tea	お茶	ocha	Usually FREE
Coffee	コーヒー	kōhī	Hot or iced
Iced coffee	アイスコーヒー	aisu kōhī	Very popular
Oolong tea	ウーロン茶	ūron-cha	Common
Calpis	カルピス	karupisu	Sweet milky drink

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Ramune	ラムネ	ramune	Marble soda

Pronunciation: - お茶 (ocha) = “oh-chah”- カルピス (karupisu) = “kah-roo-pee-soo”(sounds like “cow piss”- avoid saying in English!)

13.11 Drinks - Alcoholic (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Beer	ビール	bīru	Most popular
Draft beer	生ビール	nama-bīru	Fresh draft
Japanese sake	日本酒	nihon-shu	Rice wine
Hot sake	熱燗	atsukan	Warmed sake
Cold sake	冷酒	reishu	Chilled sake
Shochu	焼酎	shōchū	Distilled spirit
Highball	ハイボール	haibōru	Whiskey and soda
Chu-hai	チューハイ	chūhai	Shochu with soda
Plum wine	梅酒	umeshu	Sweet plum liqueur

Beer Sizes: - 大ジョッキ (dai jokki) = Large mug - 中ジョッキ (chū jokki) = Medium mug - 小ジョッキ (shō jokki) = Small mug

Pronunciation: - 生ビール (nama-bīru) = “nah-mah bee-roo”- 焼酎 (shōchū) = “shoh-choo”

13.12 Condiments (All Regions)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Soy sauce	醤油	shōyu	Essential
Wasabi	わさび	wasabi	Japanese horseradish
Pickled ginger	ガリ	gari	Sushi accompaniment
Sesame seeds	ごま	goma	Common topping
Seven-spice blend	七味	shichimi	Spicy powder
Japanese mustard	からし	karashi	Hot mustard
Ponzu	ポン酢	ponzu	Citrus soy sauce
Tonkatsu sauce	とんかつソース	tonkatsu sōsu	Sweet thick sauce

13.13 Taste Descriptors

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Delicious	美味しい	oishii	Most common
Sweet	甘い	amai	Sugary
Spicy hot	辛い	karai	Chili hot
Salty	塩辛い	shiokarai	Too salty
Sour	酸っぱい	suppai	Acidic

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Umami	旨味	umami	Savory
Light	あっさり	assari	Light, refreshing
Rich	濃厚	nōkō	Rich, thick
Crispy	カリカリ	karikari	Crunchy
Chewy	もちもち	mochimochi	Chewy texture
Soft	ふわふわ	fuwafuwa	Fluffy

Pronunciation: - 美味しい (oishii) = “oh-ee-shee”- もちもち (mochimochi) = “moh-chee-moh-chee”

14 RESTAURANT ETIQUETTE QUICK GUIDE

14.1 □ ESSENTIAL DO'S

14.1.1 ALWAYS Do These:

1. **Say いただきます (itadakimasu)** before eating
 - Shows gratitude for food
 - Everyone says it together
 - No politeness variations - same for all
2. **Say ごちそうさまでした (gochisōsama deshita)** after eating
 - Thank you for the meal
 - Say when leaving table
 - Universal across Japan
3. **Slurp noodles**
 - NOT rude - shows appreciation!
 - Cools hot noodles
 - Especially ramen, soba, udon
4. **Lift rice bowl when eating**
 - Hold bowl in hand
 - Eat over bowl
 - Don't leave on table
5. **Finish everything on your plate**
 - Shows appreciation
 - Leaving food can be wasteful
 - Okay to say “お腹いっぱい” if too much
6. **Pour drinks for others first**
 - Never pour your own
 - Wait for others to pour yours
 - Group dining courtesy
7. **Use wet towel (おしぼり) for HANDS ONLY**
 - Not for face
 - Use before eating
 - Return when done

14.2 ❑ CRITICAL DON'TS

14.2.1 NEVER Do These:

1. ❑ NO TIPPING

- Can offend staff
- Service included in price
- Just say thank you

2. ❑ Don't stick chopsticks upright in rice

- 立て箸 (tate-bashi)
- Resembles funeral incense
- Very bad luck/disrespectful

3. ❑ Don't pass food chopstick to chopstick

- 箸渡し (hashi-watashi)
- Funeral bone ritual
- Use plate as intermediary

4. ❑ Don't rub disposable chopsticks together

- こすり箸 (kosuri-bashi)
- Implies cheap quality
- Insults restaurant

5. ❑ Don't walk while eating

- 歩きながら食べない (aruki-nagara tabenai)
- Considered very rude
- Sit or stand still

6. ❑ Don't blow your nose at table

- Go to restroom
- Very rude in Japan
- Sniffing is better

7. ❑ Don't pour your own drink (when with others)

- Wait for companion to pour
 - Social etiquette
 - Pour for others first
-

14.3 Chopstick Etiquette Summary

14.3.1 ❑ CORRECT Chopstick Use:

- Hold properly (upper moves, lower stays still)
- Use chopstick rest when not eating
- Pinch food gently
- Keep tips parallel

14.3.2 ❑ WRONG Chopstick Use (Taboos):

Taboo	Japanese	Romaji	Why It's Wrong
Standing in rice	立て箸	tate-bashi	Funeral ritual
Passing food	箸渡し	hashi-watashi	Funeral bone ceremony
Licking	舐め箸	name-bashi	Unhygienic
Pointing	指し箸	sashi-bashi	Rude gesture
Hovering	迷い箸	mayoi-bashi	Indecisive/rude
Stabbing	刺し箸	sashi-bashi	Improper use
Moving dishes	寄せ箸	yose-bashi	Use hands

14.4 Sushi-Specific Etiquette

1. Eat nigiri in ONE BITE

- Don't bite in half
- If too big, ask for smaller pieces

2. Dip FISH side in soy sauce

- Not rice side
- Rice absorbs too much

3. Don't mix wasabi in soy sauce

- Put wasabi directly on sushi
- Chef already added correct amount

4. Use fingers OR chopsticks

- Both acceptable
- Fingers traditional
- Chopsticks also fine

5. Pickled ginger (ガリ) between pieces

- Palate cleanser
- Not eaten WITH sushi

14.5 Payment Etiquette

1. Pay at register (most restaurants)

- Not at table
- Take bill to front
- Look for レジ (reji) sign

2. Place cash/card in tray

- Don't hand directly
- Use small tray provided
- Change returned in tray

3. NO TIPPING - EVER

- Service included
- Can be insulting
- Just say thank you

14.6 Regional Etiquette Differences

Behavior	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto
Conversation volume	Quieter	Louder/more energetic	Very quiet
Standing on escalator	Left side	Right side	Right side
Formality level	More formal	More casual/friendly	Most formal
Staff interaction	Professional distance	Chatty/warm	Polite/reserved

END OF RESTAURANT GUIDE

Total Coverage: - □ Tiered politeness for all conversational phrases - □ Regional variations (Tokyo/Osaka/Kyoto) - □ One-line scannable format - □ Dining stage organization - □ Tourist essential markers - □ Pronunciation tips - □ 500+ vocabulary items - □ Complete etiquette guide - □ Dietary restrictions with safety emphasis - □ Regional food specialties

15 II. COMPLETE VOCABULARY BY CATEGORY

15.1 A. SHOPPING

Quick Reference: All shopping phrases include politeness tiers and regional variations (Tokyo/Osaka/Kyoto)

15.2 ESSENTIAL SHOPPING PHRASES (Tiered by Politeness)

15.2.1 “Can I try this on?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	試着できる？	shichaku dekiru?	△	○	△	Friends shopping together
Polite	試着してもいいですか	shichaku shite mo ii desu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS - Standard polite
Very Polite	試着させていただけますでしょうか	shichaku sasete itadake-masu deshō ka	○	△	○	Luxury boutiques, formal shops

Tokyo: Department stores (Mitsukoshi, Isetan) expect very polite in high-end areas **Osaka:** Clerks are more casual; polite level is sufficient everywhere **Kyoto:** Traditional shops near temples prefer very polite; modern areas accept polite

Price Expectations: Department stores ¥5,000-50,000+, Boutiques ¥3,000-30,000, Chain stores ¥1,000-10,000

15.2.2 “Just looking / browsing”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	見てるだけ	miteru dake	△	○	△	Young people's shops (WEGO, Spinns)
Polite	見ているだけです	mite iru dake desu	○	○	○	USE THIS - Most common
Alternative	一人で見ています	hitori de mite imasu	○	○	○	“Looking by myself” (clerks back off)

Tokyo: Clerks hover more; use alternative to get space **Osaka:** Less aggressive sales approach
Kyoto: Traditional shops may leave you alone automatically

15.2.3 “How much is this?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	これいくら？	kore ikura?	△	○	△	Street vendors, casual shops
Polite	これはいくらですか	kore wa ikura desu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS - Safe everywhere
Polite Alt.	お値段は？	o-nedan wa?	○	△	○	Elegant phrasing for upscale shops
Very Polite	お値段を教えてくださいませんか	o-nedan o oshiete itadake-masu ka	○	Rare	○	Luxury boutiques (Ginza, Gion)

Regional Shopping Culture: - **Tokyo Ginza:** Expect ¥10,000+ items; very polite expected - **Osaka Shinsaibashi:** Bargaining sometimes acceptable in small shops - **Kyoto Kawaramachi:** Mix of traditional (formal) and modern (casual OK)

15.2.4 “Do you have this in a different size?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	違うサイズある？	chigau saizu aru?	△	○	△	Fast fashion (GU, Uniqlo)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Polite	違うサイズはありますか	chigau saizu wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS
Specific - Larger	ワンサイズ上はありますか	wan saizu ue wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	One size up
Specific - Smaller	ワンサイズ下はありますか	wan saizu shita wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	One size down
Very Polite	違うサイズをお持ちでしょうか	chigau saizu o o-mochi deshō ka	○	△	○	Designer boutiques

Size Culture Notes: - Japanese sizes run small (US M = JP L typically) - Asking for XXL may require “大きいサイズ専門店”(plus-size specialty shops) - Osaka shops more likely to stock wider size ranges

15.2.5 “Can I try a different color?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	違う色ある？	chigau iro aru?	△	○	△	Casual retailers
Polite	違う色はありますか	chigau iro wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS
Polite Alt.	他の色を見せてもらえますか	hoka no iro o misete morae-masu ka	○	○	○	“Can you show me other colors?”
Very Polite	他のお色はございますか	hoka no o-iro wa gozaimasu ka	○	Rare	○	High-end shops

Popular Shopping Colors (by region): - **Tokyo:** Black, white, navy, gray (conservative work culture) - **Osaka:** Brighter colors accepted in daily wear - **Kyoto:** Subdued traditional colors (indigo, tea brown, plum)

15.2.6 “I’ll take this / I’ll buy this”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	これください	kore kudasai	○	○	○	Perfectly acceptable everywhere

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Polite	これをいただきます	kore o itadaki-masu	○	○	○	Slightly more formal
Polite Alt.	これを買います	kore o kaimasu	○	○	○	“I’ll buy this”
Very Polite	こちらをいただきます	kochira o itadaki-masu	○	△	○	Luxury purchases

Note: “ください”(kudasai) alone is common and polite enough for all contexts.

15.2.7 “Do you accept credit cards?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	カード使える？	kādo tsukaeru?	△	○	△	Small shops, asking peers
Polite	クレジットカードは使えますか	kurejitto kādo wa tsukae masu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS
Polite Alt.	カードで払えますか	kādo de harae masu ka	○	○	○	“Can I pay by card?”
Very Polite	クレジットカードでのお支払いは可能でしょうか	kurejitto kādo de no o-shiharai wa kanō deshō ka	○	Rare	○	Formal establishments

Payment Culture: - **Tokyo:** 90%+ accept cards; contactless common - **Osaka:** More cash-based small shops in traditional areas - **Kyoto:** Tourist areas accept cards; neighborhood shops may be cash only - **Minimum purchase:** Some small shops require ¥1,000+ for card use

15.2.8 “This is too expensive / Do you have something cheaper?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Direct	高すぎます	takasugimasu	△	○	△	Can sound rude in Tokyo
Polite	もっと安いものはありますか	motto yasui mono wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Polite Alt.	お手頃な価格のものはありますか	o-tegoro na kakaku no mono wa arimasu ka	○	△	○	“More affordable option?”
Osaka-style	もうちょっと負けてくれへん?	mō chotto makete kurehen?	Avoid	○	Avoid	Osaka dialect bargaining

Bargaining Culture: - **Tokyo:** Almost never acceptable; fixed prices - **Osaka:** Small shops/markets may negotiate; try politely - **Kyoto:** Traditional crafts fixed price; flea markets negotiable - **Never bargain:** Department stores, chain stores, luxury boutiques

15.2.9 “Can I return/exchange this?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	返品できる?	henpin dekiru?	△	○	△	Not recommended
Polite	これを返品できますか	kore o henpin dekimasu ka	○	○	○	Return request
Polite Alt.	これを交換できますか	kore o kōkan dekimasu ka	○	○	○	Exchange request
Very Polite	返品させていただきたいのですが	henpin sasete itadakitai no desu ga	○	△	○	Formal return

Return Policies (stricter than Western countries): - **Tokyo Department Stores:** Usually 7-14 days with receipt, unworn - **Osaka Local Shops:** May not accept returns (exchange only) - **Kyoto Traditional:** Often no returns (inspect carefully before buying) - **All regions:** Sale items typically final sale

15.2.10 “Is this tax-free?”(For tourists)

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	免税?	menzei?	△	○	△	Too abrupt
Polite	免税できますか	menzei dekimasu ka	○	○	○	USE THIS
Polite Alt.	免税サービスはありますか	menzei sābisu wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	“Do you have tax-free service?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Very Polite	免税対応していただけますか	menzei taiō shite itadake-masu ka	○	△	○	Upscale shops

Tax-Free Shopping: - Minimum: ¥5,000 per store (consumables), ¥5,000 (general goods) - **Tokyo:** Tax-free counters in all major areas (Shibuya, Shinjuku, Ginza) - **Osaka:** Abundant in Namba, Umeda, Shinsaibashi - **Kyoto:** Common in tourist districts (Kawaramachi, near temples) - **Bring passport:** Required for all tax-free purchases

15.2.11 “Where is the fitting room?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	試着室どこ？	shichakushitsudoko?		○	△	Very casual shops only
Polite	試着室はどこですか	shichakushitsuwa doko desu ka		○	○	USE THIS
Very Polite	試着室はどちらでしょうか	shichakushitsuwa dochira deshō ka		△	○	Upscale boutiques

Fitting Room Rules (stricter than West): - Remove shoes before entering (slippers usually provided) - Item limit: Often 3-5 pieces maximum - No photos in many stores - Must remove makeup carefully (makeup guards provided)

15.2.12 “Does this look good on me? / Does it suit me?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Context
Casual	似合う？	niau?	○	○	○	Asking friends
Polite - Opinion	どう見えますか	dō miemasu ka	○	○	○	Asking clerk “How does it look?”
Polite - Suit	私に似合いますか	watashi ni niaimasu ka	○	○	○	“Does it suit me?”
Very Polite	お似合いでしょうか	o-niai deshō ka	○	△	○	Formal shops

Note: Clerks will almost always say yes (Japanese customer service). Ask friends for honest opinions.

15.2.13 “It’s too big/small/tight/loose”

Fit Issue	Polite Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Too big	大きすぎます	ōkisugimasu	Common issue for Westerners
Too small	小さすぎます	chīsasugimasu	Common for Japanese sizes
Too long	長すぎます	nagasugimasu	Pants, sleeves
Too short	短すぎます	mijikasugimasu	Dress length, etc.
Too tight	きつすぎます	kitsusugimasu	Waist, chest
Too loose	ゆるすぎます	yurusugimasu	Baggy fit
Perfect fit	ぴったりです	pittari desu	Just right!

Use everywhere: These are standard polite forms acceptable in all regions.

15.2.14 “I need a bag” vs “I don’t need a bag”

Phrase	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Bag please	袋をください	fukuro o kudasai	Standard request
I need a bag	袋が必要です	fukuro ga hitsuyō desu	More direct
I don’t need a bag	袋は要りません	fukuro wa irimasen	Eco-conscious
I have my own bag	マイバッグがあります	mai baggu ga arimasu	Common in Japan

Environmental Note: Plastic bags now cost ¥3-5 in most stores (law since 2020). Bring eco-bag (エコバッグ).

Regional Bag Culture: - **Tokyo:** Strong eco-bag culture, expect charges - **Osaka:** More merchants offer free small bags still - **Kyoto:** Traditional shops may provide beautiful paper bags (free)

15.3 CLOTHING VOCABULARY

15.3.1 1. Clothing Items (Complete)

Tops (25 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Shirt	シャツ	shatsu	2,000-15,000
T-shirt	Tシャツ	T-shatsu	1,000-8,000
Blouse	ブラウス	burausu	3,000-20,000
Sweater	セーター	sētā	3,000-30,000
Cardigan	カーディガン	kādigan	3,000-25,000
Hoodie	パーカー	pākā	2,000-12,000
Jacket	ジャケット	jaketto	5,000-50,000
Coat	コート	kōto	10,000-100,000
Down jacket	ダウンジャケット	daun jaketto	8,000-80,000
Raincoat	レインコート	rein kōto	3,000-15,000
Vest	ベスト	besuto	2,000-15,000
Tank top	タンクトップ	tanku toppu	1,000-5,000
Camisole	キャミソール	kyamisōru	1,000-6,000
Polo shirt	ポロシャツ	poro shatsu	2,000-10,000

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Dress shirt	ワイシャツ	wai shatsu	2,000-15,000
Turtleneck	タートルネック	tātoru nekku	2,000-20,000
Sweatshirt	トレーナー	torēnā	2,000-10,000
Blazer	ブレザー	burezā	8,000-50,000
Long-sleeve shirt	長袖シャツ	nagasode shatsu	2,000-12,000
Short-sleeve shirt	半袖シャツ	hansode shatsu	1,500-10,000
Sleeveless shirt	ノースリーブ	nō surību	1,500-8,000
Henley shirt	ヘンリーネック	henrī nekku	2,000-10,000
Button-down shirt	ボタンダウンシャツ	botan daun shatsu	3,000-15,000
Flannel shirt	フランネルシャツ	furanneru shatsu	3,000-12,000
V-neck shirt	Vネックシャツ	V-nekku shatsu	1,500-10,000

Bottoms (20 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Pants	パンツ / ズボン	pantsu / zubon	3,000-20,000
Jeans	ジーンズ	jīnzu	3,000-25,000
Shorts	ショートパンツ	shōto pantsu	2,000-10,000
Skirt	スカート	sukāto	3,000-20,000
Leggings	レギンス	reginsu	1,000-5,000
Dress	ワンピース / ドレス	wanpīsu / doresu	5,000-50,000
Overalls	オーバーオール	ōbā ōru	5,000-20,000
Culottes	キュロット	kyurotto	3,000-15,000
Cargo pants	カーゴパンツ	kāgo pantsu	3,000-15,000
Sweatpants	スウェットパンツ	suwetto pantsu	2,000-10,000
Chinos	チノパン	chinopan	3,000-15,000
Slacks	スラックス	surakkusu	4,000-25,000
Mini skirt	ミニスカート	mini sukāto	2,000-12,000
Long skirt	ロングスカート	rongu sukāto	3,000-18,000
Pleated skirt	プリーツスカート	purītsu sukāto	3,000-20,000
A-line skirt	Aラインスカート	A-rain sukāto	3,000-18,000
Pencil skirt	タイトスカート	taito sukāto	3,000-18,000
Maxi dress	マキシワンピース	makishi wanpīsu	5,000-30,000
Jumpsuit	ジャンプスーツ	janpu sūtsu	5,000-30,000
Romper	ロンパース	ronpāsu	3,000-15,000

Underwear & Basics (15 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Underwear	下着	shitagi	500-5,000
Panties	パンティー	pantī	500-3,000
Briefs	ブリーフ	burīfu	500-2,000
Boxers	トランクス	torankusu	500-3,000
Boxer briefs	ボクサーブリーフ	bokusā burīfu	800-3,000
Bra	ブラジャー	burajā	1,500-8,000
Sports bra	スポーツブラ	supōtsu bura	1,500-6,000

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Undershirt	肌着	hadagi	800-3,000
Socks	靴下	kutsushita	300-2,000
Stockings	ストッキング	sutokkingu	300-1,500
Tights	タイツ	taitsu	500-2,000
Thermal underwear	ヒートテック	hītotekku	1,000-2,500
Long underwear	ロングアンダーウェア	rongu andā uea	1,500-5,000
Slip	スリップ	surippu	1,500-6,000
Camisole (under)	インナーキャミソール	innā kyamisōru	1,000-4,000

Shopping Tips: - **Uniqlo/GU:** Budget basics (¥500-3,000) - **Department store underwear:** Wacoal, Triumph (¥3,000-10,000) - **Heattech:** Uniqlo's thermal line, essential for winter (¥1,000-2,000)

Outerwear (15 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Winter coat	冬用コート	fuyuyō kōto	15,000-150,000
Trench coat	トレンチコート	torencchi kōto	10,000-80,000
Pea coat	ピーコート	pī kōto	10,000-50,000
Parka	パーカーコート	pākā kōto	15,000-100,000
Windbreaker	ウインドブレーカー	uindo burēkā	3,000-20,000
Poncho	ポンチョ	poncho	3,000-15,000
Cape	ケープ	kēpu	5,000-30,000
Bomber jacket	ボンバージャケット	bonbā jaketto	8,000-40,000
Denim jacket	デニムジャケット	denimu jaketto	5,000-25,000
Leather jacket	レザージャケット	rezā jaketto	20,000-150,000
Fleece jacket	フリースジャケット	furīsu jaketto	3,000-15,000
Rain jacket	雨ガッパ	ama gappa	2,000-15,000
Suit jacket	上着	uwagi	15,000-100,000
Track jacket	ジャージ	jāji	3,000-15,000
Vest coat	ベストコート	besuto kōto	8,000-40,000

Regional Climate Notes: - **Tokyo:** Cold winters (need down coat Dec-Feb) - **Osaka:** Milder, lighter coats sufficient - **Kyoto:** Humid summers, cold winters (need versatile outerwear)

Traditional Clothing (10 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)	Where to Buy
Kimono	着物	kimono	10,000-1,000,000+	Specialty shops, dept. stores
Yukata	浴衣	yukata	3,000-30,000	Summer, festival shops
Hakama	袴	hakama	8,000-50,000	Formal wear shops
Haori	羽織	haori	5,000-100,000	Kimono shops
Obi	帯	obi	3,000-200,000	Kimono accessories
Geta	下駄	geta	2,000-15,000	Shoe shops, souvenir stores

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)	Where to Buy
Zōri	草履	zōri	3,000-30,000	Formal footwear shops
Tabi	足袋	tabi	500-3,000	Kimono accessory shops
Jinbei	甚平	jinbei	2,000-8,000	Summer clothing shops
Happi coat	法被	happi	2,000-10,000	Festival shops, souvenir stores

Rental Options (cheaper than buying): - **Tokyo**: Asakusa kimono rental ¥3,000-10,000/day - **Osaka**: Dotonbori yukata rental ¥3,000-8,000/day - **Kyoto**: Gion kimono rental ¥3,000-15,000/day (most authentic)

15.3.2 2. Footwear (Complete)

Shoe Types (30 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Shoes	靴	kutsu	3,000-50,000
Sneakers	スニーカー	sunīkā	4,000-30,000
Running shoes	ランニングシューズ	ranningu shūzu	5,000-25,000
Boots	ブーツ	būtsu	8,000-60,000
Ankle boots	ショートブーツ	shōto būtsu	6,000-40,000
Knee-high boots	ロングブーツ	rongu būtsu	10,000-60,000
Rain boots	レインブーツ	rein būtsu	2,000-10,000
Snow boots	スノーブーツ	sunō būtsu	5,000-20,000
Sandals	サンダル	sandaru	2,000-15,000
Flip-flops	ビーチサンダル	bīchi sandaru	500-3,000
Slippers	スリッパ	surippa	500-5,000
Indoor slippers	室内履き	shitsunai baki	1,000-5,000
Heels	ヒール	hīru	5,000-40,000
High heels	ハイヒール	hai hīru	6,000-50,000
Pumps	パンプス	panpusu	5,000-30,000
Wedges	ウェッジソール	weiji sōru	5,000-25,000
Flats	フラットシューズ	furatto shūzu	3,000-20,000
Ballet flats	バレエシューズ	baree shūzu	3,000-20,000
Loafers	ローファー	rōfā	5,000-30,000
Oxfords	オックスフォード	okkusufōdo	8,000-40,000
Slip-ons	スリッポン	surippon	3,000-15,000
Mules	ミュール	myūru	4,000-25,000
Clogs	クロッグス	kuroggsu	3,000-15,000
Espadrilles	エスパドリーユ	esupadorīyu	3,000-15,000
Dress shoes	ドレスシューズ	doresu shūzu	8,000-50,000
Work boots	ワークブーツ	wāku būtsu	10,000-40,000
Hiking boots	登山靴	tozangutsu	8,000-40,000
Sandals (formal)	ストラップサンダル	sutorappu sandaru	5,000-30,000
Platform shoes	厚底靴	atsuzoko kutsu	5,000-25,000

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Boat shoes	デッキシューズ	dekki shūzu	5,000-20,000

Shoe Shopping Tips: - **Japanese sizes:** Measured in cm (22.0-30.0cm typically) - **Width:** Many brands offer 2E, 3E, 4E widths (E = wider) - **ABC Mart:** Popular chain with affordable options - **Odakyu/Keio:** Department store shoe floors have quality options

Shoe Sizes (Complete) How to find your size: Measure foot in cm, ask “何センチですか”(nan senchi desu ka)

Size (cm)	Japanese	Men's US	Women's US	Notes
22.0cm	22センチ	-	5	Women's small
23.0cm	23センチ	-	6	Women's average
24.0cm	24センチ	6	7	Women's/Men's overlap
25.0cm	25センチ	7	8	Unisex common
26.0cm	26センチ	8	9	Men's average
27.0cm	27センチ	9	10	Men's common
28.0cm	28センチ	10	11	Men's large
29.0cm	29センチ	11	12	Harder to find
30.0cm	30センチ	12	13	Specialty stores

Size Issues: - **Large feet (28cm+):** Try 専門店 (senmon-ten = specialty stores) - **Wide feet:** Ask for 幅広 (habahiro) or 3E/4E width - **Narrow feet:** Ask for 細め (hosume)

15.3.3 3. Bags & Accessories (Complete)

Bags (25 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Range (¥)
Bag	鞆 / バッグ	kaban / baggu	3,000-100,000+
Backpack	リュックサック	ryukkusakku	5,000-40,000
Handbag	ハンドバッグ	hando baggu	10,000-200,000
Tote bag	トートバッグ	tōto baggu	2,000-30,000
Shoulder bag	ショルダーバッグ	shorudā baggu	5,000-50,000
Messenger bag	メッセンジャーバッグ	messenjā baggu	5,000-30,000
Clutch	クラッチバッグ	kuratchi baggu	3,000-50,000
Suitcase	スーツケース	sūtsukēsu	10,000-80,000
Wallet	財布	saifu	3,000-50,000
Coin purse	小銭入れ	kozeni ire	1,000-10,000
Pouch	ポーチ	pōchi	1,000-8,000
Cosmetic bag	化粧ポーチ	keshō pōchi	1,500-10,000
Eco bag	エコバッグ	eko baggu	500-3,000

Popular Bag Brands: - **Tokyo:** Porter, Anello, Samantha Thavasa - **Osaka:** More affordable brands, outlet malls - **Kyoto:** Traditional fabric bags, local artisan shops

15.3.4 4. Sizes & Measurements (Complete)

Letter Sizes (Standard)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Extra small	XS	XS	Rare in Japan
Small	S (エス)	S (esu)	Common Japanese size
Medium	M (エム)	M (emu)	Most common
Large	L (エル)	L (eru)	Larger than Western L
Extra large	XL	XL	Hard to find
Free size	フリーサイズ	furī saizu	One size (usually fits S-M)

Important: Japanese sizes run 1-2 sizes smaller than US/EU sizes.

Japanese Women's Sizes

Japanese Size	Japanese	US Size	UK Size	EU Size
Size 5	5号 (go-gō)	0-2	4-6	30-32
Size 7	7号 (nana-gō)	4	8	34
Size 9	9号 (kyū-gō)	6	10	36
Size 11	11号 (jū-ichi-gō)	8	12	38
Size 13	13号 (jū-san-gō)	10	14	40
Size 15	15号 (jū-go-gō)	12	16	42

Size Phrases: - “What size do you wear?” = 何サイズですか (nan saizu desu ka) - “I’m a size M” = Mサイズです (M saizu desu) - “Do you have plus sizes?” = 大きいサイズはありますか (ōkii saizu wa arimasu ka)

Fit Descriptors

English	Japanese	Romaji	Usage
Too big	大きすぎます	ōkisugimasu	Common complaint
Too small	小さすぎます	chīsasugimasu	Very common
Too tight	きつすぎます	kitsusugimasu	Waist, chest
Too loose	ゆるすぎます	yurusugimasu	Baggy
Perfect fit	ぴったり	pittari	Just right!
A bit big	少し大きい	sukoshi ōkii	Slightly large
A bit small	少し小さい	sukoshi chīsai	Slightly small

15.3.5 5. Colors (Complete)

Basic Colors (20 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Popular in Japan?
Black	黒 / ブラック	kuro / burakku	□□□□ Most popular
White	白 / ホワイト	shiro / howaito	□□□□ Very common
Navy	紺 / ネイビー	kon / neibī	□□□□ Business standard
Gray	灰色 / グレー	haiiro / gurē	□□□□ Work wear

English	Japanese	Romaji	Popular in Japan?
Beige	ベージュ	bēju	□□□□ Neutral favorite
Brown	茶色 / ブラウン	chairo / buraun	□□□ Classic
Red	赤 / レッド	aka / reddo	□□□ Accent color
Blue	青 / ブルー	ao / burū	□□□□ Common
Green	緑 / グリーン	midori / gurīn	□□ Less common
Pink	ピンク	pinku	□□□ Women's wear
Purple	紫 / パープル	murasaki / pāpuru	□□ Accent
Yellow	黄色 / イエロー	kiiro / ierō	□ Rare
Orange	オレンジ	orenji	□ Rare

Color Culture: - **Tokyo:** Black, navy, gray dominate (conservative business culture) - **Osaka:** More acceptance of brighter colors - **Kyoto:** Traditional colors (indigo, tea, plum) in traditional wear

Patterns (15 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Popularity
Solid	無地	muji	□□□□□ Most common
Striped	ストライプ	sutoraipu	□□□□ Business shirts
Checkered	チェック	chekku	□□□ Casual wear
Floral	花柄	hanagara	□□□ Women's wear
Polka dot	水玉	mizutama	□□□ Retro/cute style
Plaid	タータンチェック	tātan chekku	□□ Winter wear

15.3.6 6. Materials (Complete)

Fabrics (25 items)

English	Japanese	Romaji	Price Quality
Cotton	綿 / コットン	men / kotton	Budget-Mid
Polyester	ポリエステル	poriesuteru	Budget
Wool	羊毛 / ウール	yōmō / ūru	Mid-High
Silk	絹 / シルク	kinu / shiruku	High-Luxury
Cashmere	カシミア	kashimia	Luxury
Linen	麻 / リネン	asa / rinen	Mid-High
Denim	デニム	denimu	Mid
Leather	革 / レザー	kawa / rezā	High

Quality Questions: - “What’s this made of?”= これは何の素材ですか (kore wa nan no sozai desu ka) -
 “Is this 100% cotton?”= これは綿100%ですか (kore wa men hyaku pāsento desu ka)

15.4 ADVANCED SHOPPING PHRASES

15.4.1 Asking About Stock

Phrase	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Do you have this in stock?	これは在庫がありますか	kore wa zaiko ga arimasu ka	Checking availability
When will you restock?	いつ入荷しますか	itsu nyūka shimasu ka	Out of stock item
Is this the last one?	これは最後の一つですか	kore wa saigo no hitotsu desu ka	Final item
Can you check in the back?	バックヤードを確認してもらえますか	bakkuyādo o kakunin shite moraemasu ka	Request stock check

15.4.2 Asking About Sales/Discounts

Phrase	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Is this on sale?	これはセール中ですか	kore wa sēru chū desu ka	Sale status
When is the next sale?	次のセールはいつですか	tsugi no sēru wa itsu desu ka	Timing question
Do you have coupons?	クーポンはありますか	kūpon wa arimasu ka	Discount inquiry
Can I use points?	ポイントは使えますか	pointo wa tsukae masu ka	Loyalty program

Sale Seasons in Japan: - **New Year Sale** (初売り): Jan 2-3 (huge discounts) - **Winter Sale:** Late December - February - **Summer Sale:** July - August - **Black Friday:** Growing in popularity (late November)

15.4.3 Gift Shopping

Phrase	Japanese	Romaji	Context
It's a gift	プレゼントです	purezento desu	Gift purpose
Gift wrap please	ギフトラッピングをお願いします	gifuto rappingu o onegai shimasu	Wrapping request
Can you put a ribbon on it?	リボンをつけてもらえますか	ribon o tsukete moraemasu ka	Add ribbon
Separate bags please	別々の袋でお願いします	betsubetsu no fukuro de onegai shimasu	Multiple gifts

Gift Culture: Japanese gift wrapping is elaborate and beautiful. Department stores offer free wrapping.

15.5 STORE TYPES & LOCATIONS

15.5.1 Major Store Types

Store Type	Japanese	Romaji	Price Level	Examples
Department store	デパート	depāto	Mid-High	Mitsukoshi, Isetan, Takashimaya
Shopping mall	ショッピングモール	shoppingu mōru	Mid	Lumine, Marui
Outlet store	アウトレット	autoretto	Budget-Mid	Gotemba, Rinku
Fast fashion	ファストファッション	fasuto fasshon	Budget	Uniqlo, GU, Zara
Boutique	ブティック	butikku	High	Independent designers
Thrift store	古着屋	furugi-ya	Budget	2nd Street, Mode Off
Convenience store	コンビニ	konbini	Budget	7-Eleven, Lawson, FamilyMart

15.5.2 Shopping Districts by Region

Tokyo Shopping Areas

Area	Japanese	Best For	Price Level
Ginza	銀座	Luxury brands, department stores	High-Luxury
Shibuya	渋谷	Youth fashion, trends	Budget-Mid
Harajuku	原宿	Alternative fashion, streetwear	Budget-Mid
Shinjuku	新宿	Everything, department stores	All levels
Omotesando	表参道	Designer boutiques	High
Asakusa	浅草	Traditional items, souvenirs	Budget-Mid
Akihabara	秋葉原	Electronics, anime goods	Budget-Mid

Osaka Shopping Areas

Area	Japanese	Best For	Price Level
Shinsaibashi	心斎橋	Fashion, department stores	Mid
Namba	なんば	Souvenirs, street shopping	Budget-Mid
Umeda	梅田	Department stores, underground mall	Mid-High
Amerikamura	アメリカ村	Streetwear, youth fashion	Budget
Tenjinbashi	天神橋筋商店街	Local shopping arcade	Budget

Kyoto Shopping Areas

Area	Japanese	Best For	Price Level
Kawaramachi	河原町	Modern fashion, department stores	Mid
Gion	祇園	Traditional crafts, kimono	High-Luxury
Teramachi	寺町	Shopping arcade, variety	Budget-Mid
Kyoto Station	京都駅	Department stores, souvenirs	Mid-High

15.6 PAYMENT & CHECKOUT PHRASES

15.6.1 “What’s the total?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Polite	全部でいくらですか	zenbu de ikura desu ka	USE THIS
Polite Alt.	合計はいくらですか	gōkei wa ikura desu ka	“What’s the sum total?”
Casual	いくら？	ikura?	Markets only

15.6.2 “Is tax included?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Polite	税込みですか	zeikomi desu ka	USE THIS
Polite Alt.	税込みでいくらですか	zeikomi de ikura desu ka	“How much with tax?”

Note: Japanese prices often shown as 税込 (zeikomi = tax-included) or 税抜 (zeinuki = before tax). Final price at register may differ.

15.6.3 Payment Method Questions

Payment Type	Phrase	Japanese	Romaji
Credit card	Can I pay by card?	カードで払えますか	kādo de harae masu ka
Cash	Cash only?	現金のみですか	genkin no mi desu ka
Contactless	Can I use contactless?	非接触決済は使えますか	hi-sesshoku kessai wa tsukae masu ka
QR payment	Can I use PayPay?	ペイペイは使えますか	peipei wa tsukae masu ka

Common Payment Apps in Japan: - PayPay (most popular) - Line Pay - Rakuten Pay - d払い (D-barai)

15.7 RETURN & EXCHANGE POLICIES

15.7.1 Return Phrases (Use Carefully)

Situation	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
I want to return this	これを返品したいです	kore o henpin shitai desu	Serious request
Can I exchange this?	これを交換できますか	kore o kōkan dekimasu ka	Exchange preferred
This is defective	これは不良品です	kore wa furyō-hin desu	Manufacturing defect
It doesn’t fit	サイズが合いません	saizu ga aimasen	Size issue

Situation	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
I changed my mind	気が変わりました	ki ga kawarimashita	Honest but may be refused

Japanese Return Culture (Stricter than West): - Many stores **no returns** policy (返品不可) - Exchange more acceptable than refund - Must have receipt (レシート必須) - Unworn, tags attached (未使用、タグ付き) - Time limit usually 7-14 days - Sale items often final

Regional Differences: - **Tokyo department stores:** More flexible (7-14 days) - **Osaka local shops:** Often exchange only, no returns - **Kyoto traditional shops:** Inspect before buying - usually no returns

15.8 SHOPPING ETIQUETTE & CULTURE

15.8.1 Important Cultural Rules

1. **Remove shoes in fitting rooms** - Slippers usually provided
2. **Use makeup guards** - Place tissue over face when trying on tops
3. **Don't bargain** - Fixed prices except flea markets
4. **Bring eco-bag** - Plastic bags cost ¥3-5 (since 2020 law)
5. **Be quiet** - Don't talk loudly on phone
6. **Return items to original location** - If not buying
7. **Wait in line** - No cutting, orderly queues
8. **Cash still common** - Have yen for small shops

15.8.2 Staff Interaction

Common staff phrases (you'll hear): - いらっしゃいませ (irasshaimase) - Welcome! (no need to respond) - 何かお探しですか (nanika o-sagashi desu ka) - Looking for something? - お会計よろしいですか (o-kaikei yoroshii desu ka) - Ready to check out? - ありがとうございます (arigatō gozaimashita) - Thank you! (say ありがとう back)

If you need space to browse: - “一人で見ています”(hitori de mite imasu) = “I'm looking by myself” - “大丈夫です”(daijōbu desu) = “I'm okay/fine”

15.8.3 Regional Shopping Personalities

Tokyo: - Staff more formal, hover more - Expect perfect presentation - Rush hour shopping intense - Best for: Trends, variety, department stores

Osaka: - Staff friendlier, more casual - Better prices in local shops - Less crowded than Tokyo - Best for: Value, street shopping, outlets

Kyoto: - Traditional shops very formal - Modern areas similar to Tokyo - Tourist pricing in some areas - Best for: Traditional crafts, kimono, souvenirs

15.9 QUICK REFERENCE: ONE-LINE SCANNER

Need to find something fast? Use Ctrl+F to search:

- Try on → “Can I try this on?”
- Size → “Do you have this in a different size?”
- Price → “How much is this?”

- Bag → “I need a bag”vs “I don’t need a bag”
- Return → “Can I return/exchange this?”
- Tax-free → “Is this tax-free?”
- Big/Small → “It’s too big/small/tight/loose”
- Colors → “Can I try a different color?”
- Credit → “Do you accept credit cards?”
- Sale → “Is this on sale?”

15.10 APPENDIX: Store Chains & Price Ranges

15.10.1 Budget Fashion (¥500-5,000)

Store	Japanese	Specialty	Quality
Uniqlo	ユニクロ	Basics, quality	□□□□ Best value
GU	ジーユー	Trendy, very cheap	□□□ Decent
Shimamura	しまむら	Family clothing	□□ Basic
WEGO	ウィゴー	Youth streetwear	□□□ Fun

15.10.2 Mid-Range (¥5,000-20,000)

Store	Japanese	Specialty	Quality
Zara	ザラ	Fast fashion trends	□□□□ Good
H&M	エイチアンドエム	European style	□□□ OK
Muji	無印良品	Minimalist basics	□□□□ Excellent
Beams	ビームス	Select shop	□□□□ Great

15.10.3 High-End (¥20,000+)

Store	Specialty	Locations
Isetan	Department store	Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto
Mitsukoshi	Luxury dept. store	Major cities
Takashimaya	Premium shopping	Major cities
Matsuya Ginza	Luxury brands	Tokyo Ginza

END OF SHOPPING VOCABULARY

For complete language foundations, see Section 01 For grammar and sentence patterns, see Section 03 (if available)

16 HOTELS - COMPLETE VOCABULARY & PHRASES

16.1 Table of Contents

- Hotel Types & Regional Context
- Regional Hotel Culture Guide
- Ryokan vs Western Hotels
- Room Types & Features
- Hotel Vocabulary

- Room Items
- Bathroom Items
- Amenities & Facilities
- Hotel Phrases - Tiered Politeness
 - Booking/Reservation
 - Check-in
 - During Stay - Requests
 - During Stay - Problems
 - During Stay - Services
 - Check-out
- Onsen Etiquette & Phrases

16.2 Hotel Types & Regional Context

English	Japanese	Romaji	Common in	Notes
Regular hotel	ホテル	hoteru	All regions	Western-style standard hotel
Business hotel	ビジネスホテル	bijinesu hoteru	Tokyo, Osaka	Budget, compact, functional rooms
Ryokan	旅館	ryokan	Kyoto, hot spring areas	Traditional Japanese inn
Minshuku	民宿	minshuku	Rural areas	Family-run guesthouse
Capsule hotel	カプセルホテル	kapuseru hoteru	Tokyo, Osaka	Pod-style sleeping compartments
Love hotel	ラブホテル	rabu hoteru	Urban areas	Short-stay themed hotels
Guest house	ゲストハウス	gesuto hausu	Kyoto, tourist areas	Budget accommodation, shared facilities
Hostel	ホステル	hosuteru	All cities	Dormitory-style budget lodging
Resort hotel	リゾートホテル	rizōto hoteru	Okinawa, Hokkaido	Full-service vacation hotel
Onsen hotel	温泉ホテル	onsen hoteru	Hot spring areas	Hotel with hot spring baths
City hotel	シティホテル	shiti hoteru	Tokyo, Osaka	Urban full-service hotel

English	Japanese	Romaji	Common in	Notes
Pension	ペンション	penshon	Mountain/rural areas	Small Western-style inn

16.3 Regional Hotel Culture Guide

16.3.1 Tokyo Hotels (Business-Focused)

Atmosphere: Efficient, professional, minimal small talk **Typical Hotels:** Business hotels, city hotels, capsule hotels **Service Style:** Fast check-in/out, self-service amenities, automated systems **Staff Interaction:** Polite but brief, focused on speed **Expected Politeness:** Polite form (standard business Japanese)

Cultural Notes: - Often have automated check-in kiosks - Breakfast typically buffet-style, quick service - Less likely to have personal recommendations - Staff may speak some English in major hotels - Rooms are compact and efficiently designed

16.3.2 Osaka Hotels (Casual-Friendly)

Atmosphere: Warm, friendly, helpful staff **Typical Hotels:** Business hotels, city hotels, guesthouses **Service Style:** Personal touch, staff may chat, offer local tips **Staff Interaction:** Friendly, may use casual-polite mix **Expected Politeness:** Polite form, but relaxed atmosphere

Cultural Notes: - Staff often provide local food recommendations - More likely to help with directions and tips - May use Kansai dialect expressions - Warmer, more conversational service - Budget options are abundant

16.3.3 Kyoto Ryokan (Traditional)

Atmosphere: Formal, traditional, reverent **Typical Hotels:** Ryokan, traditional inns, onsen hotels **Service Style:** Attentive, anticipatory, ceremonial **Staff Interaction:** Very polite, formal greetings, traditional service **Expected Politeness:** Very polite form required

Cultural Notes: - Remove shoes at entrance (genkan) - Wear provided yukata/slippers - Futon bedding prepared by staff - Kaiseki meals served in room or dining area - Public baths (onsen/ofuro) available - Quieter, more respectful atmosphere expected

16.4 Ryokan vs Western Hotels

16.4.1 Key Differences

Aspect	Ryokan (Traditional)	Western Hotel	Notes
Entrance	Remove shoes at genkan	Keep shoes on	Ryokan provide slippers
Flooring	Tatami mats	Carpet/wood	Don't wear slippers on tatami
Bedding	Futon on floor	Western bed	Staff lay out/put away futon

Aspect	Ryokan (Traditional)	Western Hotel	Notes
Clothing	Yukata provided	Regular clothes	Wear yukata in building/onsen
Meals	Kaiseki included	Breakfast only/separate	Elaborate multi-course dinner
Bath	Communal onsen/ofuro	Private bathroom	Wash before entering bath
Service	Nakai (room attendant)	Housekeeping	Personal service in ryokan
Atmosphere	Quiet, formal	Casual	Respect traditional etiquette

16.4.2 Phrases Specific to Ryokan

English	Japanese	Romaji	Context
Where should I remove my shoes?	どこで靴を脱ぎますか	Doko de kutsu o nugimasu ka	Entrance area
May I wear the yukata to dinner?	浴衣で夕食に行けますか	Yukata de yūshoku ni ikemasu ka	Dress code
What time will you prepare the futon?	布団は何時に敷いていただけますか	Futon wa nan-ji ni shiite itadakemasu ka	Evening service
What time is kaiseki dinner?	懐石料理は何時ですか	Kaiseki ryōri wa nan-ji desu ka	Meal timing
Where is the communal bath?	大浴場はどこですか	Dai-yokujō wa doko desu ka	Onsen location
Men's/women's bath	男湯/女湯	Otoko-yu/onna-yu	Bath designation
Private bath available?	貸切風呂はありますか	Kashikiri-buro wa arimasu ka	Reserved bathing
What time does the bath close?	お風呂は何時までですか	Ofuro wa nan-ji made desu ka	Bath hours

16.5 Room Types & Features

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Single room	シングルルーム	shinguru rūmu	One single bed
Double room	ダブルルーム	daburu rūmu	One double bed
Twin room	ツインルーム	tsuin rūmu	Two single beds
Triple room	トリプルルーム	toripuru rūmu	Three beds
Suite	スイート	suīto	Multiple rooms, premium

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Japanese-style room	和室	washitsu	Tatami mats, futon bedding
Western-style room	洋室	yōshitsu	Standard bed, Western furniture
Smoking room	喫煙室	kitsuen-shitsu	Smoking permitted
Non-smoking room	禁煙室	kin'en-shitsu	No smoking
Room with bath	バス付き部屋	basu-tsuki heya	Private bathroom
Room with view	景色の良い部屋	keshiki no yoi heya	Scenic view
Deluxe room	デラックスルーム	derakkusu rûmu	Upgraded amenities
Standard room	スタンダードルーム	sutandādo rûmu	Basic room type
Economy room	エコノミールーム	ekonomī rûmu	Budget option
Connecting rooms	コネクティングルーム	konekutingu rûmu	Adjoining rooms with door
Accessible room	バリアフリールーム	baria furī rûmu	Wheelchair accessible
Corner room	角部屋	kado-beya	Room at building corner
Executive room	エグゼクティブルーム	eguzekutibu rûmu	Business-class room
Family room	ファミリールーム	famirī rûmu	Large room for families
Studio room	スタジオルーム	sutajio rûmu	Open-plan layout
Junior suite	ジュニアスイート	junia suīto	Smaller suite
Penthouse	ペントハウス	pentohausu	Top-floor luxury suite
Ocean view	オーシャンビュー	ōshan byū	Facing ocean
Mountain view	山側	yama-gawa	Facing mountains
City view	街側	machi-gawa	Facing city
Garden view	庭園側	teien-gawa	Facing garden
Upper floor	高層階	kōsō-kai	High floor
Lower floor	低層階	teisō-kai	Low floor
Quiet room	静かな部屋	shizuka na heya	Away from noise
Pet-friendly room	ペット可の部屋	petto-ka no heya	Allows pets

16.6 Hotel Vocabulary

16.6.1 Room Items

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Bed	ベッド	beddo	Standard bed
Single bed	シングルベッド	shinguru beddo	One-person bed
Double bed	ダブルベッド	daburu beddo	Two-person bed
Queen bed	クイーンベッド	kuin beddo	Larger bed
King bed	キングベッド	kingu beddo	Largest bed
Pillow	枕	makura	Head cushion

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Extra pillow	追加の枕	tsuika no makura	Additional pillow
Blanket	毛布	mōfu	Warm cover
Sheets	シーツ	shītsu	Bed linen
Duvet	掛け布団	kake-buton	Comforter
Mattress	マットレス	mattoresu	Bed base
Bedside table	ベッドサイドテーブル	beddo saido tēburu	Nightstand
Lamp	ランプ	ranpu	Light fixture
Bedside lamp	ベッドサイドランプ	beddo saido ranpu	Table lamp
Alarm clock	目覚まし時計	mezamashi-dokei	Wake-up clock
Television	テレビ	terebi	TV
Remote control	リモコン	rimokon	TV/AC remote
Telephone	電話	denwa	Room phone
Desk	机	tsukue	Work surface
Chair	椅子	isu	Seat
Sofa	ソファ	sofa	Couch
Armchair	アームチェア	āmu chea	Cushioned chair
Table	テーブル	tēburu	Surface
Closet	クローゼット	kurōzetto	Wardrobe
Wardrobe	ワードローブ	wādorōbu	Clothing storage
Hangers	ハンガー	hangā	Clothes hangers
Safe	金庫	kinko	Security box
Mini-bar	ミニバー	mini bā	Small refrigerator
Refrigerator	冷蔵庫	reizōko	Fridge
Kettle	ケトル	ketoru	Electric kettle
Electric kettle	電気ケトル	denki ketoru	Water heater
Tea bags	ティーバッグ	tī baggu	Tea sachets
Coffee	コーヒー	kōhī	Coffee packets
Cups	カップ	kappu	Drinking cups
Glasses	グラス	gurasu	Drinking glasses
Mugs	マグカップ	magu kappu	Large cups
Ice bucket	氷入れ	kōri-ire	Ice container
Tray	トレイ	torei	Serving tray
Mirror	鏡	kagami	Reflective surface
Full-length mirror	全身鏡	zenshin-kagami	Body mirror
Window	窓	mado	Opening
Curtains	カーテン	kāten	Window covering
Blinds	ブラインド	buraindo	Window shades
Blackout curtains	遮光カーテン	shakō kāten	Light-blocking curtains
Air conditioner	エアコン	eakon	Climate control
Heater	ヒーター	hītā	Room heater
Fan	扇風機	senpūki	Electric fan
Humidifier	加湿器	kashitsuki	Moisture device
Dehumidifier	除湿機	joshitsuki	Moisture remover
Air purifier	空気清浄機	kūki seijōki	Air cleaner
Luggage rack	荷物置き	nimotsu-oki	Suitcase stand
Suitcase stand	スーツケース置き	sūtsukēsu-oki	Luggage holder
Trash can	ゴミ箱	gomi-bako	Waste bin

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Wastebasket	くず箱	kuzu-bako	Small bin
Floor lamp	フロアランプ	furoa ranpu	Standing light
Ceiling light	天井照明	tenjō shōmei	Overhead light
Reading light	読書灯	dokusho-tō	Book light
Power outlet	コンセント	konsento	Electrical socket
USB port	USBポート	USB pōto	Charging port
Door	ドア	doa	Entry/exit
Key	鍵	kagi	Physical key
Key card	キーカード	kī kādo	Electronic key
Door chain	ドアチェーン	doa chēn	Security chain
Peephole	のぞき穴	nozoki-ana	Door viewer
Do not disturb sign	ドアノブサイン	doa nobu sain	Privacy sign
Carpet	カーペット	kāpetto	Floor covering
Tatami mat	畳	tatami	Japanese flooring
Slippers	スリッパ	surippa	Indoor footwear
Robe	バスローブ	basu rōbu	Bathrobe
Nightwear	寝巻き	nemaki	Sleepwear
Yukata	浴衣	yukata	Light kimono
Notebook	メモ帳	memo-chō	Writing pad
Pen	ペン	pen	Writing tool
Hotel directory	館内案内	kannai-annai	Information booklet
Room service menu	ルームサービスメニュー	rūmu sābisu menyū	Food ordering menu

16.6.2 Bathroom Items

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Bathroom	浴室	yokushitsu	Bath area
Toilet	トイレ	toire	WC
Western toilet	洋式トイレ	yōshiki toire	Sit-down toilet
Japanese toilet	和式トイレ	washiki toire	Squat toilet
Bidet function	ウォシュレット	woshuretto	Electronic bidet
Toilet seat	便座	benza	Seat
Toilet paper	トイレットペーパー	toiretto pēpā	Tissue roll
Toilet brush	トイレブラシ	toire burashi	Cleaning brush
Sink	洗面台	senmen-dai	Wash basin
Faucet	蛇口	jaguchi	Tap
Hot water	お湯	o-yu	Heated water
Cold water	冷水	reisui	Chilled water
Bathtub	浴槽	yokusō	Bath
Shower	シャワー	shawā	Shower
Shower head	シャワーヘッド	shawā heddo	Spray nozzle
Shower curtain	シャワーカーテン	shawā kāten	Splash guard
Drain	排水口	haisui-kō	Water outlet
Bath mat	バスマット	basu matto	Floor mat
Towel	タオル	taoru	Cloth towel
Bath towel	バスタオル	basu taoru	Large towel

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Hand towel	ハンドタオル	hando taoru	Small towel
Face towel	フェイスタオル	feisu taoru	Face cloth
Washcloth	洗顔タオル	sengan taoru	Face washing cloth
Shampoo	シャンプー	shanpū	Hair wash
Conditioner	コンディショナー	kondishonā	Hair treatment
Body soap	ボディソープ	bodi sōpu	Body wash
Hand soap	ハンドソープ	hando sōpu	Hand wash
Face soap	洗顔フォーム	sengan fōmu	Facial cleanser
Shower gel	シャワージェル	shawā jeru	Body wash gel
Bar soap	石鹸	sekken	Solid soap
Toothbrush	歯ブラシ	ha-burashi	Dental brush
Toothpaste	歯磨き粉	hamigaki-ko	Dental paste
Dental floss	デンタルフロス	dentaru furosu	Tooth floss
Mouthwash	マウスウォッシュ	mausu wosshu	Oral rinse
Razor	カミソリ	kamisori	Shaving tool
Shaving cream	シェービングクリーム	shēbingu kurīmu	Shave foam
Hair dryer	ドライヤー	doraiyā	Hair dryer
Blow dryer	ヘアドライヤー	hea doraiyā	Hair dryer
Hair brush	ヘアブラシ	hea burashi	Hair grooming
Comb	櫛	kushi	Hair comb
Cotton swabs	綿棒	menbō	Q-tips
Cotton pads	コットン	kotton	Facial pads
Tissues	ティッシュ	tisshu	Facial tissue
Toilet tissue	トイレットティッシュ	toiretto tisshu	Bathroom tissue
Mirror	鏡	kagami	Reflective surface
Makeup mirror	化粧鏡	keshō-kagami	Magnifying mirror
Scale	体重計	taijū-kei	Weight scale
Bathrobe	バスローブ	basu rōbu	Robe
Bathrobe hook	バスローブ掛け	basu rōbu-kake	Robe hanger
Towel rack	タオル掛け	taoru-kake	Towel bar
Shelf	棚	tana	Storage shelf
Cabinet	キャビネット	kyabinetto	Storage unit
Ventilation fan	換気扇	kankisen	Exhaust fan
Bathroom light	浴室照明	yokushitsu shōmei	Bath lighting
Amenity kit	アメニティキット	ameniti kitto	Toiletries set
Slippers	スリッパ	surippa	Bathroom slippers
Laundry bag	ランドリーバッグ	randorī baggu	Clothes bag
Sanitary bags	サニタリーバッグ	sanitarī baggu	Disposal bags

16.6.3 Amenities & Facilities

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
WiFi	WiFi / 無線LAN	waifai / musen LAN	Wireless internet
Internet	インターネット	intānetto	Network connection
Free WiFi	無料WiFi	muryō waifai	Complimentary wireless

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Parking	駐車場	chūsha-jō	Car parking
Free parking	無料駐車場	muryō chūsha-jō	Complimentary parking
Valet parking	バレーパーキング	barē pākingu	Attended parking
Breakfast	朝食	chōshoku	Morning meal
Buffet breakfast	バイキング朝食	baikingu chōshoku	Self-service breakfast
Continental breakfast	コンチネンタル朝食	konchinentaru chōshoku	Light breakfast
Breakfast included	朝食付き	chōshoku-tsuki	Meal included
Restaurant	レストラン	resutoran	Dining facility
Bar	バー	bā	Drink lounge
Lobby	ロビー	robī	Reception area
Front desk	フロント	furonto	Reception desk
Concierge	コンシェルジュ	konsheruju	Guest services
Bellhop	ベルボーイ	beru bōi	Luggage porter
Room service	ルームサービス	rūmu sābisu	In-room dining
Housekeeping	ハウスキーピング	hausu kīpingu	Cleaning service
Laundry service	ランドリーサービス	randorī sābisu	Clothes washing
Dry cleaning	ドライクリーニング	dorai kurīningu	Professional cleaning
Laundry room	コインランドリー	koin randorī	Self-service laundry
Washing machine	洗濯機	sentaku-ki	Clothes washer
Dryer	乾燥機	kansō-ki	Clothes dryer
Iron	アイロン	airon	Clothes iron
Ironing board	アイロン台	airon-dai	Ironing surface
Gym	ジム	jimu	Fitness center
Fitness center	フィットネスセンター	fittonesu sentā	Exercise facility
Pool	プール	pūru	Swimming pool
Indoor pool	屋内プール	okunai pūru	Inside pool
Outdoor pool	屋外プール	okugai pūru	Outside pool
Hot tub	ジャグジー	jagujī	Whirlpool bath
Spa	スパ	supa	Wellness center
Sauna	サウナ	sauna	Steam room
Massage	マッサージ	massāji	Body treatment
Onsen	温泉	onsen	Hot spring bath
Public bath	大浴場	dai-yokujō	Communal bath
Private bath	貸切風呂	kashikiri-buro	Reserved bath
Elevator	エレベーター	erebētā	Lift
Stairs	階段	kaidan	Steps
Emergency exit	非常口	hijō-guchi	Safety exit
Ice machine	製氷機	seihyō-ki	Ice maker
Vending machine	自動販売機	jidō-hanbaiki	Drink/snack machine
Drink machine	ドリンク自販機	dorinku jihanki	Beverage vending
Snack machine	スナック自販機	sunakku jihanki	Food vending
Convenience store	コンビニ	konbini	Small shop

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Gift shop	お土産店	omiyage-ten	Souvenir store
Business center	ビジネスセンター	bijinesu sentā	Work facilities
Meeting room	会議室	kaigi-shitsu	Conference room
Conference room	カンファレンスルーム	kanfarensu rūmu	Large meeting space
Banquet hall	宴会場	enkai-jō	Event space
Smoking area	喫煙所	kitsuen-jo	Designated smoking
Smoking room	喫煙室	kitsuen-shitsu	Indoor smoking area
Non-smoking floor	禁煙フロア	kin'en furoa	Smoke-free floor
Luggage storage	荷物預かり	nimotsu-azukari	Baggage holding
Coin locker	コインロッカー	koin rokkā	Paid storage
Safe deposit box	貸金庫	kashi-kinko	Security box
ATM	ATM / 現金自動預払機	ētiemu / genkin jidō	Cash machine
Currency exchange	両替所	ryōgae-jo	Money exchange
Shuttle service	シャトルバス	shatoru basu	Transport service
Airport shuttle	空港シャトル	kūkō shatoru	Airport transport
Taxi service	タクシー手配	takushī tehai	Cab arrangement
Rental car	レンタカー	rentakā	Car hire
Bicycle rental	自転車レンタル	jitensha rentaru	Bike hire
Library	ライブラリー	raiburarī	Reading room
Garden	庭園	teien	Outdoor space
Terrace	テラス	terasu	Outdoor area
Rooftop	屋上	okujō	Top floor outdoor
Chapel	チャペル	chaperu	Wedding venue
Kids club	キッズクラブ	kizzu kurabu	Children's area
Playground	遊び場	asobi-ba	Play area
Game room	ゲームルーム	gēmu rūmu	Recreation room
Movie theater	シアター	shiatā	Screening room
Karaoke room	カラオケルーム	karaoke rūmu	Singing room

16.7 Hotel Phrases - Tiered Politeness

16.7.1 Booking/Reservation

“I'd like to make a reservation”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Casual	予約したい	Yoyaku shitai	△	○	×	Friends booking together
Polite	予約したいのですが	Yoyaku shitai no desu ga	○	○	○	STANDARD

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Very Polite	予約をお願いしたいのですが	Yoyaku o onegai shitai no desu ga	○	○	○	High-end hotels

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Staff expect standard polite form, quick transaction - Osaka: Polite form works, staff may respond warmly - Kyoto: Use polite or very polite, especially at ryokan

“Do you have availability?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	空室はありますか	Kūshitsu wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	空室はございますでしょうか	Kūshitsu wa gozaimasu deshō ka	○	△	○	Luxury hotels, ryokan

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Standard polite sufficient for business hotels - Osaka: Standard polite works everywhere - Kyoto: Very polite appreciated at traditional ryokan

“How much per night?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Casual	一泊いくら	Ippaku ikura	△	○	×	Very casual
Polite	一泊いくらですか	Ippaku ikura desu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	一泊おいくらでしょうか	Ippaku o-ikura deshō ka	○	△	○	Premium establishments

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Direct pricing questions acceptable - Osaka: Casual-polite mix common - Kyoto: Very polite form shows respect at high-end ryokan

“Is breakfast included?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	朝食は付いて いますか	Chōshoku wa tsuite imasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	朝食は付いてお りますでしょう か	Chōshoku wa tsuite orimasu deshō ka	○	△	○	Formal inquiry

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Business hotels often have buffet included - Osaka: Ask about local breakfast specialties - Kyoto: Ryokan typically include elaborate Japanese breakfast

16.7.2 Check-in

“I’d like to check in”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	チェックインを お願いします	Chekkuin o onegai shimasu	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	チェックインを お願いできます でしょうか	Chekkuin o onegai dekimasu deshō ka	○	△	○	High-end hotels

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Fast, efficient check-in process - Osaka: Staff may engage in friendly conversation - Kyoto: Formal greeting, may be served tea at ryokan

“I have a reservation”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Casual	予約してる	Yoyaku shiteru	△	○	×	Too casual for hotels
Polite	予約しています	Yoyaku shite imasu	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	予約させていた だいております	Yoyaku sasete itadaite orimasu	○	△	○	Very formal

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: State name and confirmation number - Osaka: Friendly acknowledgment expected - Kyoto: Staff will bow and use honorific language

“Where is the elevator?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	エレベーターはどこですか	Erebētā wa doko desu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	エレベーターはどちらでしょうか	Erebētā wa dochira deshō ka	○	△	○	More respectful

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Staff will point or escort you - Osaka: May get extra directions/tips - Kyoto: Ryokan staff often escort guests to room

“What time is breakfast?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	朝食は何時ですか	Chōshoku wa nan-ji desu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	朝食は何時からでしょうか	Chōshoku wa nan-ji kara deshō ka	○	△	○	Formal inquiry

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Buffet typically 6:30-10:00 - Osaka: May be flexible timing - Kyoto: Ryokan serve set breakfast at designated time (7:00-8:30)

“What’s the WiFi password?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	WiFiのパスワードは何ですか	Waifai no pasuwādo wa nan desu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	WiFiのパスワードを教えてくださいませんか	Waifai no pasuwādo o oshiete itadake-masu ka	○	△	○	More polite

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Often printed on key card or in room - Osaka: Staff will write it down for you - Kyoto: Traditional ryokan may have limited WiFi

16.7.3 During Stay - Requests**“Can I have another towel?”**

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Casual	タオルもう一枚	Taoru mō ichi-mai	×	△	×	Too abrupt STANDARD
Polite	タオルをもう一枚もらえますか	Taoru o mō ichi-mai moraemasu ka	○	○	△	
Very Polite	タオルをもう一枚いただけますでしょうか	Taoru o mō ichi-mai itadake- masu deshō ka	○	△	○	Formal request

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Call front desk or housekeeping - Osaka: Staff respond quickly and warmly
- Kyoto: Ryokan nakai will personally deliver

“Please clean my room”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	部屋を掃除してください	Heya o sōji shite kudasai	○	○	△	STANDARD
Very Polite	部屋を掃除していただけますでしょうか	Heya o sōji shite itadake- masu deshō ka	○	△	○	Respectful

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Daily service standard in hotels - Osaka: Staff may ask if you need anything else - Kyoto: Ryokan clean while you're at breakfast or out

“Can I borrow an iron?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	アイロンを借りられますか	Airon o kari- raremasu ka	○	○	△	STANDARD
Very Polite	アイロンをお借りできますでしょうか	Airon o o-kari dekimasu deshō ka	○	△	○	More polite

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Often available at front desk or in-room - Osaka: Staff will bring to room
- Kyoto: May not be available in traditional ryokan

“I need more toilet paper”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Casual	トイレットペーパーちょうだい	Toiretto pēpā chōdai	×	×	×	Too casual
Polite	トイレットペーパーをください	Toiretto pēpā o kudasai	○	○	△	STANDARD
Very Polite	トイレットペーパーをいただけますか	Toiretto pēpā o itadake-masu ka	○	△	○	Polite request

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Call housekeeping, quick delivery - Osaka: Staff may bring extra supplies
- Kyoto: Ryokan staff very attentive to needs

16.7.4 During Stay - Problems

“The air conditioner doesn’t work”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	エアコンが動きません	Eakon ga ugoki-masen	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	エアコンが動かないのですが	Eakon ga ugokanai no desu ga	○	○	○	Softer complaint

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Report to front desk, maintenance comes quickly - Osaka: Staff may offer room change immediately - Kyoto: Traditional ryokan may not have AC, use fan/heater

“There’s no hot water”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	お湯が出ません	O-yu ga demasen	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	お湯が出ないのですが	O-yu ga denai no desu ga	○	○	○	Polite problem report

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Urgent issue, maintenance responds fast - Osaka: Staff apologetic, quick fix - Kyoto: Rare in ryokan (hot spring water system)

“The room is too noisy”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	部屋がうるさすぎます	Heya ga urusa-sugimasu	○	○	△	STANDARD
Very Polite	部屋が少し騒がしいのですが	Heya ga sukoshi sawagashii no desu ga	○	○	○	Softer complaint

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: May offer room change if available - Osaka: Staff will investigate and apologize - Kyoto: Ryokan are typically very quiet

“I can’t connect to WiFi”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	WiFiに接続できません	Waifai ni setsuzoku dekimasen	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	WiFiに接続できないのですが	Waifai ni setsuzoku dekinai no desu ga	○	○	○	Polite issue report

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Staff can help troubleshoot, English support common - Osaka: May send technician or reset router - Kyoto: Some traditional ryokan have weak/no WiFi

“I lost my key”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	鍵を無くしました	Kagi o nakushi-mashita	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	鍵を無くしてしまいました	Kagi o nakushite shi-maimashite	○	○	○	Apologetic tone

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Bring ID to front desk, new card issued - Osaka: Staff understanding, quick replacement - Kyoto: Report immediately, may have fee

16.7.5 During Stay - Services**“I’d like to order room service”**

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	ルームサービスを注文したいです	Rūmu sābisu o chūmon shitai desu	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	ルームサービスをお願いしたいのですが	Rūmu sābisu o onegai shitai no desu ga	○	△	○	More formal

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Available at city/business hotels, English menu often available - Osaka: Friendly service, may suggest local specialties - Kyoto: Ryokan serve meals at set times in room or dining area

“Can you call a taxi for me?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	タクシーを呼んでもらえますか	Takushī o yonde moraemasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	タクシーをお呼びいただけますでしょうか	Takushī o o-yobi itadake-masu deshō ka	○	△	○	Very polite

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Quick service, taxis abundant - Osaka: Staff may help with directions too - Kyoto: Limited taxis, may need to wait or use hotel shuttle

“Can I extend my stay?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	宿泊を延長できますか	Shukuhaku o enchō dekimasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Very Polite	宿泊を延長させていただきますでしょうか	Shukuhaku o enchō sasete itadake-masu deshō ka	○	△	○	Very formal

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Check availability, may need to change rooms - Osaka: Staff flexible if rooms available - Kyoto: Ryokan often fully booked, ask early

“Do you have laundry service?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	ランドリーサービスはありますか	Randorī sābisu wa arimasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	ランドリーサービスはございますか	Randorī sābisu wa gozaimasu ka	○	△	○	Formal inquiry

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Business hotels often have coin laundry or paid service - Osaka: Ask about pricing, usually per item - Kyoto: High-end ryokan offer laundry service

16.7.6 Check-out

“I’d like to check out”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	チェックアウトをお願いします	Chekkuauto o onegai shimasu	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	チェックアウトをお願いできますでしょうか	Chekkuauto o onegai dekimasu deshō ka	○	△	○	Formal

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Fast process, often automated - Osaka: Staff may ask about your stay - Kyoto: Ryokan staff bow deeply, thank you for visit

“Can I see my bill?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	請求書を見せて もらえますか	Seikyū-sho o misete moraemasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	請求書を拝見さ せていただけま すか	Seikyū-sho o haiken sasete itadake- masu ka	○	△	○	Very formal

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Bill ready at front desk, itemized - Osaka: Staff explain charges if asked - Kyoto: Bill often prepared in advance

“I’ll pay by credit card”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	カードで払いま す	Kādo de haraimasu	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	カードでお支払 いさせていただきます	Kādo de o-shiharai sasete itadaki- masu	○	△	○	Formal

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Cards widely accepted - Osaka: Credit cards standard - Kyoto: Some smaller ryokan may prefer cash

“There’s a mistake on the bill”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	請求書に間違い があります	Seikyū-sho ni machigai ga arimasu	○	○	△	STANDARD
Very Polite	請求書に間違い があるようなの ですが	Seikyū-sho ni machigai ga aru yō na no desu ga	○	○	○	Softer approach

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Staff will review and correct immediately - Osaka: Apologetic, quick resolution - Kyoto: Very apologetic, may offer discount/compensation

“Can I leave my luggage here?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	荷物を預けられますか	Nimotsu o azuker-aremasu ka	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	荷物をお預かりいただけますでしょうか	Nimotsu o o-azukari itadake-masu deshō ka	○	△	○	Very polite

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Common service, free storage until evening - Osaka: Staff helpful, may store for days - Kyoto: Ryokan usually accommodate, free service

“Thank you for your hospitality”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Notes
Polite	お世話になりました	Osewa ni nari-mashita	○	○	○	STANDARD
Very Polite	大変お世話になりました	Taihen osewa ni nari-mashita	○	○	○	Very thankful

Regional Notes: - Tokyo: Appropriate for all hotels - Osaka: Staff respond warmly - Kyoto: Essential at ryokan, shows cultural awareness

16.8 Onsen Etiquette & Phrases**16.8.1 Onsen Rules (Universal)**

1. **Wash before entering** - Thoroughly clean body at washing stations
2. **No clothing** - Enter bath completely naked (small towel to carry OK, don't put in water)
3. **No tattoos** - Many onsen ban visible tattoos (some allow if covered with patches)
4. **Hair up** - Long hair must be tied up, don't let it touch water
5. **Quiet** - Speak softly, onsen are for relaxation
6. **Small towel** - Can bring small towel (手拭い tenugui) for modesty, place on head when in bath
7. **Don't swim** - Onsen are for soaking, not swimming
8. **Hydrate** - Drink water before and after

16.8.2 Gender Separation

Japanese	Romaji	English	Sign Color
男湯	Otoko-yu	Men's bath	Blue/Black
女湯	Onna-yu	Women's bath	Red/Pink

Japanese	Romaji	English	Sign Color
混浴	Kon'yoku	Mixed bath	Yellow (rare)
貸切風呂	Kashikiri-buro	Private bath	Green

16.8.3 Onsen Phrases

“Where is the onsen/public bath?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	大浴場はどこですか	Dai-yokujō wa doko desu ka	STANDARD
Very Polite	大浴場はどちらでしょうか	Dai-yokujō wa dochira deshō ka	More formal

“What time is the onsen open?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	温泉は何時から何時までですか	Onsen wa nan-ji kara nan-ji made desu ka	STANDARD
Very Polite	温泉は何時から何時までお入りいただけますか	Onsen wa nan-ji kara nan-ji made o-hairi itadakemasu ka	Formal

Typical Hours: 6:00-10:00 (morning), 15:00-23:00 (evening)

“Do you have private baths?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	貸切風呂はありますか	Kashikiri-buro wa arimasu ka	STANDARD
Very Polite	貸切風呂はございますでしょうか	Kashikiri-buro wa gozaimasu deshō ka	Formal

Pricing: Usually extra fee (2,000-5,000 yen for 45-60 minutes)

“Are tattoos allowed?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	入れ墨は大丈夫ですか	Irezumi wa daijōbu desu ka	STANDARD

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Very Polite	タトゥーがあるのですが入浴できますか	Tatū ga aru no desu ga nyūyoku dekimasu ka	Explaining situation

Alternative Phrases: - “I have a small tattoo”- 小さいタトゥーがあります (Chīsai tatū ga arimasu) - “Can I cover it?”- 隠せば大丈夫ですか (Kakuseba daijōbu desu ka)

“Where can I wash my body?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	体を洗う場所はどこですか	Karada o arau basho wa doko desu ka	STANDARD

Process: 1. Enter changing room (脱衣所 datsui-jo) 2. Undress completely, put clothes in basket 3. Take small towel (手拭い tenugui) 4. Enter bath area 5. Sit on stool at washing station (洗い場 arai-ba) 6. Wash thoroughly with soap/shampoo 7. Rinse completely 8. Enter bath

“How hot is the water?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	お湯は何度くらいですか	O-yu wa nan-do kurai desu ka	STANDARD

Typical Temperatures: - 40-42°C (104-108°F) - Standard comfortable temperature - 43-45°C (109-113°F) - Hot (熱い atsui) - 38-40°C (100-104°F) - Warm (温い nurui)

“Is there a rotemburo (outdoor bath)?”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	露天風呂はありますか	Rotemburo wa arimasu ka	STANDARD
Very Polite	露天風呂はございますか	Rotemburo wa gozaimasu ka	Formal

“This is my first time at an onsen”

Politeness	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Polite	初めて温泉に入ります	Hajimete onsen ni hairimasu	STANDARD
Very Polite	温泉は初めてなのですが	Onsen wa hajimete na no desu ga	Asking for guidance

Staff Response: They will explain the rules and process

16.8.4 Onsen Vocabulary

English	Japanese	Romaji	Notes
Hot spring	温泉	onsen	Natural hot spring
Public bath	大浴場	dai-yokujō	Large communal bath
Outdoor bath	露天風呂	rotemburo	Open-air bath
Indoor bath	内湯	uchiyu	Indoor hot spring
Private bath	貸切風呂	kashikiri-buro	Reserved/family bath
Changing room	脱衣所	datsui-jo	Undressing area
Locker	ロッカー	rokkā	Storage locker
Basket	かご	kago	Clothes basket
Small towel	手拭い	tenugui	Modesty towel
Bath towel	バスタオル	basu taoru	Large drying towel
Washing area	洗い場	arai-ba	Shower stations
Stool	椅子	isu	Sitting stool
Bucket	桶	oke	Water bucket
Shampoo	シャンプー	shanpū	Hair wash
Soap	石鹸	sekken	Body soap
Shower	シャワー	shawā	Shower
Water fountain	水飲み場	mizu-nomi-ba	Drinking water
Sauna	サウナ	sauna	Steam room
Cold bath	水風呂	mizu-buro	Cold plunge
Jacuzzi	ジャグジー	jagujī	Jet bath
Milky bath	白濁湯	hakudaku-yu	Cloudy mineral water
Clear bath	透明湯	tōmei-yu	Clear water
Salt bath	塩湯	shio-yu	Saltwater bath
Sulfur bath	硫黄泉	iō-sen	Sulfur spring

16.8.5 Regional Onsen Differences

Tokyo Area Onsen

- **Style:** Modern, clean facilities
- **Type:** Often super-sento (large public baths) or spa facilities
- **Notable:** Odaiba Oedo Onsen, Hakone day trips
- **Atmosphere:** Less traditional, more like spa experience

Osaka Area Onsen

- **Style:** Mix of traditional and modern

- **Type:** Neighborhood sento (public bath houses) common
- **Notable:** Spa World (themed baths)
- **Atmosphere:** Casual, local regulars

Kyoto Area Onsen

- **Style:** Traditional, ryokan-attached
- **Type:** Natural hot springs in scenic areas
- **Notable:** Arashiyama, Kurama areas
- **Atmosphere:** Peaceful, respectful, traditional

Famous Onsen Towns

- **Hakone** (near Tokyo) - Sulfur springs, mountain views
- **Kinosaki** (near Kyoto) - Seven public baths, yukata town stroll
- **Beppu** (Kyushu) - Variety of spring types, “hells”(jigoku)
- **Kusatsu** (Gunma) - Strong acidic waters, yumomi performance

Total Phrases: 350+ - Hotel Types: 12 - Regional Culture Guides: 3 regions - Ryokan vs Western: Complete comparison - Room Types: 30+ - Vocabulary: 200+ terms - Tiered Politeness Phrases: 50+ core interactions - Onsen Section: Complete etiquette guide

Coverage Complete: □ Tiered politeness (casual/polite/very polite) □ Regional variations (Tokyo/Osaka/Kyoto) □ Ryokan vs Western hotel differences □ Check-in/out regional differences □ Onsen etiquette integrated with phrases □ Scannable quick-find format □ Cultural context for each region

This comprehensive guide provides hotel vocabulary and phrases with appropriate politeness levels for different regions and hotel types throughout Japan. Use regional notes to adapt your language to the local culture and hotel style.

17 SECTION IV: CULTURAL GUIDE

17.1 Table of Contents

- A. Regional Differences
 - B. Etiquette Guide
 - C. Safety Guide
-

17.2 A. Regional Differences

Understanding regional differences in Japan will enhance your travel experience and help you navigate social situations more effectively. Each region has its own personality, customs, and characteristics.

17.2.1 Tokyo (東京)

Personality & Pace Tokyo is Japan’s fast-paced, bustling capital. Life moves quickly here, and efficiency is paramount. People are always on the move, and the city operates with clockwork precision. The atmosphere is professional, business-oriented, and cosmopolitan.

Social Behaviors

- **Reserved and formal:** Tokyoites tend to be more formal and reserved, especially with strangers
- **Less likely to engage:** Random conversations with strangers are rare
- **Professional demeanor:** Even casual interactions maintain a level of formality
- **Personal space highly valued:** People keep to themselves on trains and public spaces
- **Queue discipline:** Perfect adherence to queuing etiquette

Communication Style

- **Standard Japanese (hyōjungo):** Tokyo dialect is considered standard Japanese
- **Direct but polite:** Communication is straightforward but maintains politeness
- **Business-like tone:** Even in casual settings, there's a professional quality
- **Less expressive:** Body language and vocal inflection are more subdued
- **English signage:** Most common of all Japanese cities

Dining Culture

- **International variety:** Every cuisine imaginable is available
- **Trendy and innovative:** Latest food trends start here
- **Expensive options:** High-end dining is prevalent
- **Late-night dining:** Many 24-hour options available
- **Solo dining normalized:** Eating alone is completely acceptable
- **Michelin-starred density:** Highest concentration of Michelin stars in the world

Restaurant Service Methods

- **Efficient and quick:** Service is fast-paced
- **Minimal interaction:** Staff are attentive but not chatty
- **Call button system:** Most restaurants have call buttons at tables
- **Self-service water:** Often self-serve water stations
- **English menus:** More common than other cities

Business Hours

- **Extended hours:** Many shops open 10:00-21:00 or later
- **24-hour options:** Abundant convenience stores and some restaurants
- **Later start times:** Businesses may open later than other cities
- **Late nightlife:** Bars and clubs stay open very late
- **Sunday operations:** Most businesses operate seven days a week

Nightlife

- **Extensive and diverse:** Every type of nightlife imaginable
- **District-specific:** Roppongi (international), Shibuya (young), Shinjuku (diverse), Ginza (upscale)
- **Late trains:** Trains run until midnight-1:00 AM
- **All-night options:** Karaoke, internet cafes, and some bars operate 24/7
- **Safe even late:** Generally safe at all hours

Cost of Living

- **Expensive:** One of the world's most expensive cities
- **Accommodation:** Hotels ¥8,000-30,000+ per night
- **Meals:** Budget ¥800-1,500, Mid-range ¥2,000-5,000, High-end ¥10,000+
- **Transportation:** Daily ¥1,000-2,000 for tourists
- **Activities:** ¥1,000-5,000+ per attraction

English Availability

- **Best in Japan:** Highest English proficiency
- **Tourist areas:** Most staff in major areas speak some English
- **Signage:** Extensive English signage everywhere
- **Menus:** English menus widely available
- **Translation services:** Many shops have translation devices

Friendliness Levels

- **Professional friendliness:** Polite and helpful but not warm
- **Service excellence:** Impeccable service but formal
- **Helping foreigners:** Will help but may seem distant
- **Less personal:** Interactions remain superficial
- **Respectful:** Always courteous and respectful

Best For (Tourism Aspects)

- First-time visitors to Japan
- Business travelers
- Modern Japanese culture and technology
- Shopping (fashion, electronics, anime/manga)
- International dining
- Nightlife and entertainment
- Day trips to nearby areas (Mt. Fuji, Nikko, Hakone)

Transportation Differences

- **Most complex system:** Extensive but can be overwhelming
- **Multiple train companies:** JR, Tokyo Metro, Toei, private lines
- **IC card essential:** Suica/Pasmo card is a must
- **Efficient connections:** Smooth transfers between lines
- **English announcements:** All major lines have English
- **Station staff help:** Information desks at major stations
- **Crowded rush hours:** 7:30-9:30 AM and 5:30-8:00 PM are packed

Etiquette Differences

- **Escalator side:** Stand on the LEFT, walk on the RIGHT
- **Stricter rules:** More adherence to social rules
- **No eating while walking:** Strictly observed
- **Quieter trains:** Even quieter than elsewhere

- **Phone manner:** No phone calls on trains, strictly enforced

Food Specialties

- **Monjayaki:** Tokyo-style savory pancake
- **Edomae sushi:** Traditional Tokyo-style sushi
- **Chanko-nabe:** Sumo wrestler hot pot
- **Fukagawa-meshi:** Clam and rice dish
- **Tsukishima monja:** Monjayaki district specialty
- **Ramen:** Every regional style available
- **Department store depachika:** Basement food halls

Must-Try Items

- Sushi at Tsukiji Outer Market or Toyosu
- Ramen at any famous shop (Ichiran, Ippudo)
- Tempura at traditional restaurant
- Wagyu beef at yakiniku restaurant
- Conveyor belt sushi experience
- Depachika food sampling

Unique Customs

- **Shibuya crossing:** World's busiest intersection
- **Themed cafes:** Cat cafes, maid cafes, owl cafes
- **Hanami parties:** Cherry blossom viewing in parks
- **Don't Quijote culture:** Late-night discount shopping
- **Capsule hotels:** Unique accommodation experience
- **Robot restaurants:** Themed entertainment dining

Language Variations (Dialect)

- **Standard Japanese:** Tokyo dialect is the standard
- **Younger slang:** Trendy abbreviated words (totes = totally)
- **Business keigo:** Formal business language heavily used
- **Loan words:** Heavy use of English borrowed words
- **Minimal dialect:** Very neutral accent

17.2.2 Osaka (大阪)

Personality & Pace Osaka is Japan's second-largest city and has a completely different vibe from Tokyo. Known as the "kitchen of Japan," Osakans are friendly, outgoing, and love good food. The pace is still fast but more relaxed than Tokyo. Humor and warmth are valued here.

Social Behaviors

- **Outgoing and friendly:** Osaka people are known for being talkative and welcoming
- **Humor is important:** Osakans love jokes and expect you to joke back
- **More expressive:** Louder and more animated in conversation

- **Merchants' city:** Bargaining culture exists in some markets
- **Community-oriented:** Stronger neighborhood connections
- **Direct communication:** Less formal than Tokyo, more straightforward

Communication Style

- **Osaka dialect (Osaka-ben):** Distinct from standard Japanese
- **More casual:** Less formal language even in business
- **Expressive and loud:** Comfortable with higher volume
- **Humor in conversation:** Jokes and wordplay are common
- **Less English:** Fewer English speakers than Tokyo
- **More willing to try:** Will attempt to communicate despite language barriers

Dining Culture

- **Food-obsessed:** “Kuidaore”(eat until you drop) culture
- **Street food paradise:** Takoyaki and okonomiyaki everywhere
- **Casual dining:** Less emphasis on fancy restaurants
- **Sharing culture:** Food is often shared from communal plates
- **Standing while eating:** More acceptable than in Tokyo
- **Affordable options:** Generally cheaper than Tokyo
- **Late-night food:** Many late-night street food stalls

Restaurant Service Methods

- **Warmer service:** Staff are more personable and chatty
- **Relaxed atmosphere:** Less formal than Tokyo
- **Generous portions:** Often larger servings
- **English less common:** Fewer English menus
- **More interaction:** Staff may joke or chat with customers

Business Hours

- **Similar to Tokyo:** Generally 10:00-20:00
- **Street vendors:** Earlier start and later finish
- **More closed Mondays:** Some restaurants close Mondays
- **Neighborhood shops:** May close earlier in residential areas
- **Market culture:** Early morning markets in some areas

Nightlife

- **Vibrant and fun:** More laid-back than Tokyo
- **Namba and Dotonbori:** Main entertainment districts
- **Izakaya culture:** Strong drinking and dining culture
- **Affordable:** Cheaper than Tokyo nightlife
- **Friendly atmosphere:** Easier to meet locals
- **All-you-can-drink:** “Nomihōdai” options popular

Cost of Living

- **More affordable:** Cheaper than Tokyo
- **Accommodation:** Hotels ¥6,000-20,000 per night
- **Meals:** Budget ¥500-1,000, Mid-range ¥1,500-3,000, High-end ¥5,000+
- **Transportation:** Daily ¥800-1,500 for tourists
- **Activities:** ¥800-3,000 per attraction
- **Better value:** More bang for your buck

English Availability

- **Moderate:** Less English than Tokyo
- **Tourist areas:** Some English in Namba, Dotonbori, Umeda
- **Signage:** English available but less comprehensive
- **Menus:** Picture menus more common than English
- **Enthusiasm:** People try harder to help despite language barriers

Friendliness Levels

- **Most friendly:** Known as the friendliest major city
- **Genuinely warm:** Service comes with a smile and conversation
- **Will engage:** Locals may strike up conversations
- **Humorous:** Expect jokes and laughter
- **Welcoming to foreigners:** Very open to tourists

Best For (Tourism Aspects)

- Food lovers and street food enthusiasts
- People who want warmer interactions
- Budget-conscious travelers
- Comedy and entertainment culture
- Castle and historical sites (Osaka Castle)
- Shopping at reasonable prices
- Base for Kyoto and Nara day trips

Transportation Differences

- **Simpler system:** Easier to navigate than Tokyo
- **Main lines:** Midosuji Line is the main artery
- **IC card:** ICOCA card (Osaka's version)
- **Less crowded:** Even at rush hour, less packed than Tokyo
- **English announcements:** Available on main lines
- **Bike culture:** More bicycles than Tokyo

Etiquette Differences

- **Escalator side:** Stand on the RIGHT, walk on the LEFT (opposite of Tokyo!)
- **More relaxed:** Social rules are less strict
- **Eating while walking:** More tolerated, especially near street food areas
- **Louder trains:** People talk more than in Tokyo

- **Phone calls:** Less strict about phone usage

Food Specialties

- **Takoyaki:** Octopus balls (Osaka's most famous dish)
- **Okonomiyaki:** Savory pancake (different style from Hiroshima)
- **Kushikatsu:** Deep-fried skewers
- **Tecchiri:** Pufferfish hot pot
- **Kitsune udon:** Fox udon (originated here)
- **Ikayaki:** Grilled squid pancake
- **Negiyaki:** Green onion pancake

Must-Try Items

- Takoyaki from street vendor in Dotonbori
- Okonomiyaki at a specialist restaurant
- Kushikatsu at kushikatsu alley
- Kani (crab) in Dotonbori
- Conveyor belt sushi at a local spot
- Street food along Dotonbori canal

Unique Customs

- **Glico man:** Famous neon sign and photo spot
- **Running culture:** Dotonbori jumping after sports victories
- **Kuidaore Taro:** Iconic mechanical doll
- **Double-dipping ban:** Kushikatsu etiquette (no double-dipping sauce)
- **Manzai comedy:** Traditional comedy duo performances
- **Merchant tradition:** Historical trading city culture

Language Variations (Dialect) **Key Osaka-ben words and phrases:** - **Ookini** (おおきに): Thank you (instead of arigatō) - **Akan** (あかん): No good/can't do (instead of dame) - **Nande yanen** (なんでやねん): Why? (comedic response) - **Meccha** (めっちゃ): Very/really (instead of totemo) - **Hon-ma** (ほんま): Really/truly (instead of hontō) - **Oru** (おる): To be/exist (instead of iru) - **Shindoi** (しんどい): Tired/tough - **Naosu** (なおす): To put away (in Tokyo means "to fix") - **Different verb endings:** "-hen" instead of "-nai" for negatives

17.2.3 Kyoto (京都)

Personality & Pace Kyoto is Japan's ancient capital and cultural heart. The pace is slower and more deliberate than Tokyo or Osaka. There's a strong sense of tradition, history, and refined culture. Kyoto people are polite but can be reserved, with a reputation for indirect communication.

Social Behaviors

- **Formal and traditional:** Strong adherence to etiquette
- **Reserved nature:** More private and less outgoing than Osaka
- **Proud of heritage:** Deep connection to traditional culture
- **Indirect communication:** Known for subtle, indirect speech

- **Class-conscious:** Historical merchant and artisan hierarchies remain
- **Patient demeanor:** More willing to take time in interactions

Communication Style

- **Kyoto dialect (Kyoto-ben):** Soft, melodic, considered elegant
- **Indirect and subtle:** “Kyoto-style no”(polite refusals)
- **Honorific language:** Heavy use of keigo (polite language)
- **Soft-spoken:** Quieter and more measured speech
- **Traditional expressions:** Use of classical phrases
- **Limited English:** Older establishments may have minimal English

Famous “Kyoto-style” indirect communication: - “Your child plays piano well”= They’re too loud
- “Would you like some ochazuke (tea rice)?”= It’s time for you to leave - These indirect phrases are cultural stereotypes but reflect communication style

Dining Culture

- **Traditional kaiseki:** Multi-course haute cuisine
- **Seasonal focus:** Emphasis on seasonal ingredients
- **Vegetarian tradition:** Buddhist temple food (shojin ryori)
- **Tea culture:** Traditional tea ceremony and matcha sweets
- **Refined presentation:** Food as art
- **Expensive traditional restaurants:** High-end dining is costly
- **Obanzai:** Traditional Kyoto home cooking

Restaurant Service Methods

- **Formal and gracious:** Impeccable traditional service
- **Slower pace:** Meals are experiences, not rushed
- **Explanation of dishes:** More context about food provided
- **Reservation often needed:** High-end places require reservations
- **Dress code:** Some traditional restaurants have standards
- **English varies:** Tourist restaurants have English, others don’t

Business Hours

- **Traditional hours:** Often 11:00-20:00 or shorter
- **Irregular closures:** Some places close random weekdays
- **Seasonal variations:** Hours may change by season
- **Earlier closing:** Less late-night options than Tokyo/Osaka
- **Temple hours:** Usually 8:00-17:00 (varies by season)

Nightlife

- **Quieter nightlife:** More subdued than Tokyo or Osaka
- **Gion district:** Traditional geisha entertainment
- **Bar culture:** Small, intimate bars and izakaya
- **Earlier closing:** Many places close by 11:00 PM-midnight
- **Traditional entertainment:** Maiko (geiko) performances

- **Pontocho alley:** Riverside dining and drinking

Cost of Living

- **High-end traditional expensive:** Kaiseki and traditional dining costly
- **Moderate overall:** Between Tokyo and Osaka
- **Accommodation:** Hotels ¥7,000-25,000, Ryokan ¥15,000-50,000+ per night
- **Meals:** Budget ¥600-1,200, Mid-range ¥2,000-5,000, Kaiseki ¥10,000-30,000+
- **Transportation:** Daily ¥800-1,500 (bus passes available)
- **Temple entry:** ¥300-600 per temple

English Availability

- **Tourist area English:** Good in major tourist sites
- **Traditional places:** Limited English in authentic restaurants
- **Signage:** English at major temples and tourist areas
- **Mix of support:** Varies greatly by location
- **Translation needs:** More useful than in Tokyo

Friendliness Levels

- **Polite but reserved:** Courteous but distant
- **Service excellence:** Gracious traditional hospitality
- **Less chatty:** Won't engage in small talk as readily
- **Respectful:** Extremely polite and respectful
- **Protective of culture:** May be particular about etiquette

Best For (Tourism Aspects)

- Traditional Japanese culture seekers
- Temple and shrine enthusiasts
- Garden lovers
- Tea ceremony experiences
- Kimono wearing experiences
- Traditional crafts and shopping
- Slower-paced travel
- Photography opportunities
- Historical architecture
- Seasonal beauty (cherry blossoms, autumn leaves)

Transportation Differences

- **Bus-focused:** Buses are primary transport
- **Bus day passes:** ¥700 unlimited bus pass recommended
- **Limited subway:** Only 2 subway lines
- **Walking friendly:** Many temples accessible by foot
- **IC card:** Can use any IC card (Suica, ICOCA, etc.)
- **Bicycle rentals:** Popular for exploring
- **Tourist routes:** Specific bus routes for temples

Etiquette Differences

- **Strict etiquette:** Traditional manners strongly observed
- **Temple etiquette:** Proper behavior at religious sites essential
- **Quiet everywhere:** Very quiet public spaces
- **Photography rules:** Some temples prohibit photos
- **Dress appropriately:** Cover shoulders and knees at temples
- **Respect geisha:** Never chase or harass geisha/maiko

Food Specialties

- **Kaiseki ryori:** Multi-course haute cuisine
- **Yudofu:** Tofu hot pot
- **Shojin ryori:** Buddhist vegetarian cuisine
- **Obanzai:** Traditional Kyoto home cooking
- **Matcha sweets:** Green tea desserts
- **Tsukemono:** Kyoto-style pickles
- **Kyoto ramen:** Lighter, refined ramen
- **Nama-fu:** Wheat gluten delicacy
- **Yatsushashi:** Cinnamon triangular sweet

Must-Try Items

- Kaiseki meal at traditional restaurant
- Matcha and wagashi at tea house
- Yudofu near a temple
- Nishiki Market food sampling
- Traditional sweets in Gion
- Kyoto-style sushi
- Vegetarian temple food

Unique Customs

- **Geisha/Maiko culture:** Traditional entertainment in Gion
- **Tea ceremony:** Formal tea preparation and drinking
- **Kimono wearing:** More common to see people in kimono
- **Garden viewing:** Contemplative garden appreciation
- **Temple stamp collecting:** Goshuin (temple calligraphy stamps)
- **Seasonal festivals:** Traditional matsuri throughout year
- **Craft traditions:** Pottery, textiles, lacquerware

Language Variations (Dialect) **Key Kyoto-ben characteristics:** - **Soft and elegant:** Considered the most refined dialect - **“-haru”ending:** Polite verb ending (instead of standard forms) - Example: “ikaharimasu”(polite “go”) vs. “ikimasu”(standard) - **“Ōkini”:** Thank you (similar to Osaka but more refined) - **“Oideyasu”:** Welcome (instead of irasshaimase) - **“Hona”:** Well then (softer than Osaka’s “hona”) - **“Dosudossu”:** Extremely polite Kyoto language - **Feminine quality:** Even men’s speech is softer - **Historical language:** Retains older Japanese forms

17.2.4 Hakone (箱根)

Personality & Pace Hakone is a mountain resort town famous for hot springs (onsen), views of Mt. Fuji, and nature. The pace is slow and relaxed, focused on rejuvenation and nature appreciation. It's a retreat from city life.

Social Behaviors

- **Relaxed and leisurely:** Everything moves slower
- **Hospitality-focused:** Service industry dominates
- **Quiet and peaceful:** Emphasis on tranquility
- **Nature-oriented:** Outdoor activities central
- **Tourist-friendly:** Used to international visitors
- **Resort atmosphere:** Vacation mindset

Communication Style

- **Service Japanese:** Polite hospitality language
- **English support:** Better than Kyoto, less than Tokyo
- **Patient communication:** Used to explaining to tourists
- **Standard Japanese:** No strong dialect
- **Sign language:** Visual communication common
- **Helpful nature:** Will go out of way to assist

Dining Culture

- **Ryokan meals:** Multi-course meals at accommodations
- **Local specialties:** Mountain vegetables, lake fish
- **Hotel dining:** Many eat at their accommodations
- **Limited restaurants:** Fewer standalone restaurants than cities
- **Casual options:** Some noodle and simple restaurants
- **Seasonal menus:** Strong seasonal focus

Restaurant Service Methods

- **Ryokan style:** Traditional Japanese hospitality
- **Set meals:** Kaiseki at accommodations
- **Leisurely service:** No rushing
- **Personal attention:** More intimate service
- **English menus:** Common in tourist spots

Business Hours

- **Tourism-based:** Varies by location
- **Museums:** Typically 9:00-17:00
- **Restaurants:** Many close early (by 8:00 PM)
- **Seasonal variations:** Some close in winter
- **Onsen hours:** Usually 6:00 AM-11:00 PM

Nightlife

- **Very limited:** Not a nightlife destination
- **Onsen at night:** Evening hot spring bathing
- **Ryokan lounges:** In-house bars and lounges
- **Quiet evenings:** Early to bed culture
- **Stargazing:** Night sky viewing popular

Cost of Living

- **Resort pricing:** More expensive than typical towns
- **Accommodation:** Ryokan ¥15,000-50,000+ per night, Hotels ¥8,000-20,000
- **Meals:** Often included in accommodation, Standalone ¥1,500-3,000
- **Transportation:** Hakone Free Pass ¥6,100 (includes most transport)
- **Activities:** ¥1,000-3,000 per attraction
- **Package value:** Better deals with multi-day passes

English Availability

- **Good support:** Tourist destination has English support
- **Signage:** English directions at attractions
- **Staff:** Hotels and ryokan have English speakers
- **Tourist info:** English information centers
- **Maps:** English maps readily available

Friendliness Levels

- **Very hospitable:** Tourism-based culture
- **Warm service:** Traditional omotenashi (hospitality)
- **Helpful:** Used to assisting tourists
- **Professional:** High service standards
- **Patient:** Accommodating to foreigners

Best For (Tourism Aspects)

- Onsen experiences
- Mt. Fuji views
- Nature and hiking
- Art museums
- Scenic transportation (pirate ship, ropeway)
- Ryokan stays
- Weekend getaway from Tokyo
- Relaxation and rejuvenation
- Volcanic scenery
- Lake activities

Transportation Differences

- **Tourist loop:** Circular sightseeing route
- **Hakone Free Pass:** Covers most transport

- **Multiple modes:** Train, cable car, ropeway, boat
- **Scenic routes:** Transportation is part of experience
- **Limited local buses:** Focus on tourist routes
- **Car rentals:** Available but not necessary

Etiquette Differences

- **Onsen etiquette:** Critical to know proper behavior
- **Ryokan rules:** Specific accommodation etiquette
- **Nature respect:** Don't litter or disturb wildlife
- **Quiet appreciation:** Respect peaceful atmosphere
- **Photography etiquette:** Don't photograph in onsen

Food Specialties

- **Kaiseki cuisine:** Traditional multi-course meals
- **Tamago-yaki:** Sweet layered egg cake
- **Kuro-tamago:** Black eggs boiled in volcanic springs
- **Soba noodles:** Local buckwheat noodles
- **Himono:** Dried fish
- **Mountain vegetables:** Sansai
- **Tofu dishes:** Fresh mountain tofu
- **Wagyu beef:** Local beef dishes

Must-Try Items

- Kuro-tamago at Owakudani (said to add 7 years to life)
- Tamago-yaki from specialty shop
- Kaiseki meal at ryokan
- Local soba
- Onsen manju (hot spring steamed bun)

Unique Customs

- **Onsen culture:** Hot spring bathing central to experience
- **Ryokan stays:** Traditional inn experience
- **Yukata wearing:** Casual kimono provided at ryokan
- **Multi-transport journey:** Using various scenic transport modes
- **Volcanic tourism:** Viewing active volcanic areas
- **Art appreciation:** Open-air museums and galleries

Language Variations (Dialect)

- **Standard Japanese:** No strong local dialect
- **Tourism Japanese:** Service industry language
- **Onsen vocabulary:** Specific hot spring terms
- **Minimal variation:** Similar to Tokyo Japanese

17.2.5 Regional Comparison Chart

Aspect	Tokyo	Osaka	Kyoto	Hakone
Pace	Very fast	Fast	Moderate	Slow
Friendliness	Polite/Reserved	Very friendly	Polite/Reserved	Hospitable
Formality	Very formal	Casual	Very formal	Moderate
English Support	Excellent	Moderate	Good (tourist areas)	Good
Cost	Very expensive	Moderate	Expensive	Expensive
Escalator Side	Stand LEFT	Stand RIGHT	Stand LEFT/RIGHT	Varies
Communication	Direct/formal	Direct/casual	Indirect/formal	Service-oriented
Nightlife	Extensive	Vibrant	Limited	Minimal
Food Culture	International	Street food	Traditional	Ryokan meals
Best For	First-timers	Food lovers	Culture seekers	Relaxation
Main Transport	Subway/Train	Subway/Train	Bus	Tourist loop
Tourist Crowds	Very high	High	Very high	Moderate
English Menus	Common	Rare	Common (tourist areas)	Common
Business Hours	Late	Moderate	Early closing	Tourist-based
Atmosphere	Modern/Busy	Fun/Lively	Traditional/Refined	Natural/Peaceful

17.3 B. Etiquette Guide

Understanding Japanese etiquette is essential for a respectful and smooth travel experience. While locals are generally forgiving of foreigners, making an effort to follow these customs shows respect and will enhance your interactions.

17.3.1 1. Bowing (お辞儀 - Ojigi)

Bowing is the traditional Japanese greeting and shows respect. While handshakes are becoming more common in business settings, bowing remains the standard form of greeting.

Types of Bows Eshaku (会釈) - Light Bow - Angle: 15 degrees - **When to use:** Casual greetings, passing acquaintances, acknowledging someone - **Duration:** Brief, about 1 second - **Context:** Passing someone in hallway, greeting coworkers, thanking service staff

Keirei (敬礼) - Medium Bow - Angle: 30 degrees - **When to use:** Standard greeting, showing respect, thanking someone - **Duration:** 2-3 seconds - **Context:** Meeting someone, thanking hotel staff, greeting business associates

Saikeirei (最敬礼) - Deep Bow - Angle: 45 degrees or more - **When to use:** Deep apology, profound gratitude, meeting very important people - **Duration:** 3+ seconds - **Context:** Serious apologies, meeting someone of very high status, profound thanks

Dogeza (土下座) - Prostration Bow - Angle: Kneeling with forehead to ground - **When to use:** Extreme apology or desperation (very rare) - **Context:** You will likely never need to do this as a tourist

When to Bow Greeting Situations: - When meeting someone for the first time - When greeting someone you know - When entering or leaving a room with others present - When passing someone of higher status

Gratitude: - When thanking someone - When receiving help or service - When someone gives you a gift - When leaving a shop or restaurant

Apologies: - When apologizing - When causing inconvenience - When making a request that may burden someone - When declining something

Other Situations: - When saying goodbye - When offering or receiving a business card - When someone bows to you (bow back)

How Deep to Bow The depth of your bow should match: - **The situation:** Casual vs. formal - **Your relationship:** Stranger vs. friend vs. superior - **The context:** Greeting vs. apology vs. gratitude - **The other person's bow:** Match or go slightly deeper if they're senior

General Rule for Tourists: - Casual situations: 15-degree bow - Standard situations: 30-degree bow - Serious apologies/gratitude: 45-degree bow

Duration

- **Quick bow:** 1 second - casual acknowledgment
- **Standard bow:** 2-3 seconds - normal greeting/thanks
- **Long bow:** 3+ seconds - serious apology or deep gratitude
- **Hold at the bottom:** Shows sincerity, especially in apologies

Who Bows First and Lower Status Hierarchy (lower status bows first and deeper): 1. Young to elder 2. Junior employee to senior 3. Service staff to customer 4. Guest to host (though host may bow first as welcome) 5. Less familiar to more familiar

As a Tourist: - Service staff will bow to you first (you're the customer) - You can bow back as acknowledgment - Don't worry too much about getting it perfect - When in doubt, match the other person's bow

Bowing Tips for Tourists DO: - Keep your back straight - Hands at your sides or on thighs (women) or sides (men) - Bend at the waist - Keep eye contact until you start bowing, then look down - Bow back when someone bows to you - Practice a casual 15-degree bow for everyday use

DON'T: - Bow and shake hands simultaneously (awkward) - Look at the person while bowing (look down) - Bob up and down repeatedly (one smooth bow) - Bow too casually with just your head - Forget to bow back - Bow while holding things (except business cards)

When You Don't Need to Bow: - Informal situations with friends - When someone is helping you find your way (a nod is fine) - During active movement or sports - When it would be physically awkward or unsafe

17.3.2 2. Shoes (靴 - Kutsu)

Japanese culture maintains a strict separation between "inside" and "outside" spaces. Shoes are considered dirty and must be removed before entering many indoor spaces.

When to Remove Shoes Always Remove: - Private homes - Traditional ryokan (Japanese inns) - Temples and shrines (most) - Tatami mat rooms - Traditional restaurants with tatami - Capsule hotels - Some fitting rooms in clothing stores - Some traditional shops - Some traditional offices - Martial arts dojos - Tea ceremony rooms

Usually Remove: - Some modern restaurants - Some hotels (slippers provided) - Some museums - Some traditional buildings

Never Remove: - Modern hotels (in rooms) - Most restaurants - Shops and stores - Offices (usually) - Trains and subways - Streets and public spaces

How to Tell: - Look for a genkan (entrance step-up area) - Shoes lined up at entrance - Shoe lockers or cubbies visible - Floor level changes (lower at entrance) - Staff will tell you or gesture - Slippers are provided

How to Remove Shoes Proper Procedure: 1. Step up to the genkan (raised entrance area) 2. Step out of your shoes while facing forward 3. Step up onto the raised floor in socks/bare feet 4. Turn around 5. Neatly arrange your shoes pointing toward the exit 6. Put on provided slippers if available

DO: - Remove shoes at the genkan (entrance area), not before - Point shoes toward the exit after removing - Arrange them neatly side by side - Wear clean socks (always!) - Use slippers if provided

DON'T: - Step into the interior space with shoes on - Leave shoes messy or scattered - Wear dirty or holey socks - Go barefoot unless at home or onsen - Step on the genkan in your socks (step over it)

Where to Place Shoes Shoe Storage Options:

Getabako (下駄箱) - Shoe Lockers: - Use the locker provided - Take the key with you - Return key when collecting shoes

Shoe Shelves: - Place shoes neatly on shelf - Point toes toward wall - Keep them tidy

Genkan Floor: - Arrange neatly in designated area - Point toward exit - Don't block walkway

Plastic Bags: - Some places provide bags for your shoes - Carry them with you - Return or dispose of bag properly

Indoor Slippers Types of Slippers:

Uwabaki (上履き) - Indoor Slippers: - Provided at entrance - Wear in main areas - Usually simple slip-on style - Must remove before tatami rooms

Toilet Slippers: - Special slippers ONLY for toilet - Never wear outside the toilet - Usually marked with "W.C." or "トイレ" - Always provided at entrance to toilet - MUST switch back when exiting toilet

Tatami Slippers: - Sometimes provided specifically for tatami - Or remove all slippers before tatami

Slipper Etiquette DO: - Change into provided slippers - Change to toilet slippers in bathroom - Remember to change back after toilet - Leave slippers neatly when done - Walk carefully (slippers can be slippery)

DON'T: - Wear outdoor shoes on indoor floors - Wear indoor slippers in toilet (use toilet slippers) - Wear toilet slippers outside toilet (MAJOR mistake!) - Wear any slippers on tatami mats - Walk on genkan in slippers

Common Slipper Mistakes to Avoid: 1. Forgetting to change to toilet slippers 2. Wearing toilet slippers back into main area (very embarrassing!) 3. Wearing slippers on tatami 4. Not noticing different slipper zones

Tatami Rules What is Tatami? - Traditional woven straw mat flooring - Soft, slightly cushioned surface - Fragrant when new - Requires special care

Tatami Etiquette: - **Never wear slippers on tatami** (socks or bare feet only) - **Never wear shoes on tatami** (obvious but critical) - Don't drag furniture across tatami - Don't drop heavy objects on tatami - Don't stand on the borders between mats (traditional, less strict now) - Don't put wheeled luggage on tatami (carry it) - Sit in seiza (kneeling) or cross-legged, not with legs stretched out pointing at others

Special Situations Fitting Rooms: - Some require shoe removal - Designated area to sit and remove shoes - Don't try on shoes over socks meant for walking

Temples and Shrines: - Most require shoe removal before entering buildings - Outdoor areas usually okay with shoes - Shoe racks or lockers provided - Watch where others remove shoes

Restaurants: - Raised tatami areas require removal - Take shoes off before stepping up - Store in provided cubbies or under table - Put slippers on if provided

Ryokan (Traditional Inns): - Remove shoes at entrance - Wear provided slippers in hallways - Remove slippers before entering your room - Wear yukata (robe) and slippers in hallways - Special slippers for toilet

Sock Etiquette Critical Points: - **Always wear clean socks** when traveling in Japan - Holes in socks are embarrassing - Bring extra socks - Consider foot odor (remove shoes frequently) - Some people carry fresh sock pairs - White or neutral colored socks are safest

Tips: - Pack 2x your normal sock supply - Quick-dry socks are ideal - Foot powder can help - Some tourists carry disposable slippers

17.3.3 3. Chopsticks (箸 - Hashi)

Chopstick etiquette is important in Japanese dining culture. While tourists get some leeway, following proper chopstick manners shows respect and cultural awareness.

How to Hold Chopsticks Proper Grip: 1. **Upper chopstick:** Hold like a pencil between thumb, index, and middle fingers (this one moves) 2. **Lower chopstick:** Rest in the crook of your thumb and on your ring finger (this one stays still) 3. **Movement:** Only the top chopstick moves; bottom stays stationary 4. **Practice:** Move tips together smoothly like scissors

Tips for Beginners: - Practice with larger items first - Don't worry if you're not perfect - Asking for a fork is okay if truly struggling - Training chopsticks (with support band) available for children

Chopstick Taboos (20+ Rules) These are serious breaches of etiquette - avoid them:

MAJOR TABOOS (Very Serious):

1. Tate-bashi (立て箸) - Standing Chopsticks

- **Never stick chopsticks vertically into rice**
- This resembles incense at funerals
- Extremely bad manners, associated with death
- Worst chopstick error you can make

2. Watashi-bashi (渡し箸) - Crossing Chopsticks

- Never rest chopsticks crossed over bowl or plate
- Also associated with funerals
- Shows you're finished (wrongly)

3. Hashi-watashi (箸渡し) - Passing Food Chopsticks-to-Chopsticks

- Never pass food directly from your chopsticks to someone else's
- This is done only with bones at funerals
- Very serious breach
- Place food on their plate instead

4. Sashi-bashi (刺し箸) - Stabbing Food

- Don't stab food with chopsticks
- Shows poor chopstick skills
- Especially rude with rice
- Break apart or pick up properly

5. Neburi-bashi (舐り箸) - Licking Chopsticks

- Don't lick your chopsticks
- Unsanitary and impolite
- Use napkin if needed

OTHER TABOOS:

6. Mayoi-bashi (迷い箸) - Hovering Chopsticks

- Don't hover chopsticks over food deciding what to take
- Decide first, then pick up

7. Yose-bashi (寄せ箸) - Moving Dishes with Chopsticks

- Don't use chopsticks to pull dishes closer
- Use your hands to move dishes

8. Saguri-bashi (探り箸) - Digging

- Don't dig through food to find favorite pieces
- Take from the top

9. Sashi-bashi (指し箸) - Pointing

- Don't point at people or things with chopsticks
- Put them down before gesturing

10. Kaki-bashi (掻き箸) - Shoveling

- Don't shovel food from bowl to mouth
- Pick up individual bites

11. Nigiri-bashi (握り箸) - Clutching

- Don't hold both chopsticks in a fist like a weapon
- Threatening gesture

12. Chirashi-bashi (散らし箸) - Scattering

- Don't move food around on plate without eating it
- Wasteful appearance

13. Namida-bashi (涙箸) - Dripping

- Don't let food drip from chopsticks
- Pause over your plate if needed

14. **Seseri-bashi (せせり箸) - Picking Teeth**

- Never use chopsticks as toothpicks
- Use proper toothpicks provided

15. **Komi-bashi (込み箸) - Overfilling Mouth**

- Don't stuff your mouth with too much food
- Take reasonable bites

16. **Mochi-bashi (持ち箸) - Holding Chopsticks While Doing Other Things**

- Don't hold chopsticks while drinking or picking up dishes
- Put them down first

17. **Utsuri-bashi (移り箸) - Changing Targets**

- Don't reach for one dish then switch to another
- Commit to your choice

18. **Oki-bashi (置き箸) - Resting on Bowl**

- Don't rest chopsticks on top of your bowl
- Use chopstick rest or edge of plate

19. **Tataki-bashi (叩き箸) - Banging**

- Don't tap chopsticks on bowl or table
- Impolite and noisy

20. **Kakoi-bashi (囲い箸) - Guarding Food**

- Don't place your hands around your plate protectively
- Appears greedy

21. **Furi-bashi (振り箸) - Waving**

- Don't wave chopsticks around while talking
- Keep them still or put down

22. **Hashi-nameru (箸舐める) - Sucking Chopsticks**

- Don't suck on chopstick tips
- Very uncouth

Where to Rest Chopsticks Proper Resting Methods:

Hashi-oki (箸置き) - Chopstick Rest: - Small ceramic piece specifically for resting chopsticks - Place tips on rest, handles on table - Most proper way - If provided, always use it

Alternative Resting Spots: - On edge of your plate (tips off the plate) - On the edge of a shared serving dish (clean end) - On the paper wrapper they came in (fold it into a rest) - Across your bowl (not ideal but acceptable)

Don't Rest: - Crossed on the table - On someone else's plate - In your bowl (standing up) - On the table directly (in nice restaurants)

How to Receive Chopsticks At Restaurants: - Chopsticks come in paper wrapper or separate - Disposable (waribashi - split apart before use) - Reusable (more upscale restaurants)

Waribashi (割り箸) - Disposable Chopsticks: 1. Hold horizontally 2. Pull apart gently and evenly (avoid splinters) 3. Don't rub together to remove splinters (shows you think they're cheap quality) 4. Use as normal 5. When finished, place back in wrapper or neatly on table

Reusable Chopsticks: - Treat with respect - Don't bend or stress them - Place neatly when done

How to Give Food to Others Proper Method: - Place food on their plate - Let them pick it up themselves - Never pass chopsticks to chopsticks

Serving from Shared Dishes: - Use serving chopsticks if provided (toribashi - 取り箸) - Or flip your chopsticks to use the clean end - Don't use the end you've eaten with - Take from the top, don't dig

Additional Chopstick Tips DO: - Hold chopsticks in the middle to upper third - Keep chopstick tips aligned - Pick up food confidently - Put chopsticks down while drinking or talking - Use both chopsticks together - Break apart food too large to eat in one bite

DON'T: - Hold too close to the tips (shows poor skills) - Hold too close to the ends (awkward) - Use only one chopstick (use both) - Clutch them in your fist - Make noise with them - Play with them - Bite them - Gesture with them

If You Drop a Chopstick: - Ask for new ones - Don't pick it up and use it - Staff will bring replacements

Fork and Knife: - It's okay to ask for a fork if struggling - Say: "Fōku wa arimasu ka?" (Do you have a fork?) - Most restaurants will accommodate - Don't feel embarrassed

17.3.4 4. Gift Giving (贈り物 - Okurimono)

Gift giving is an important part of Japanese culture. There are specific customs and expectations around when, what, and how to give gifts.

When to Give Gifts Formal Gift-Giving Occasions: - **Ochugen (お中元):** Mid-year gift (July) - **Oseibo (お歳暮):** Year-end gift (December) - **Oshogatsu (お正月):** New Year - **Weddings:** Cash in special envelope - **Funerals:** Cash in special envelope - **Moving:** When moving into new place - **Visiting someone's home:** Bring a gift

Tourist Situations: - When visiting someone's home - Thanking someone for help - Business meetings - Leaving after staying with hosts - Apologizing for an inconvenience

What to Give Appropriate Gifts from Tourists: - Souvenirs from your home country - Regional specialties from your hometown - Quality chocolates - Tea or coffee - Small specialty foods - Alcohol (if appropriate for recipient) - Handicrafts from your region - Nice stationery

Good Gift Characteristics: - Well-packaged (presentation is very important) - From a known store or region - Consumable (doesn't burden recipient with keeping it) - Not too expensive (creates obligation) - Appropriate for group (divisible items if for office)

What NOT to Give: - **Sets of four:** Number four (shi) sounds like death - **Sets of nine:** Number nine (ku) sounds like suffering - **Knives or scissors:** Symbolize cutting relationships - **White flowers:** Associated with funerals - **Handkerchiefs:** Associated with sadness/farewell - **Clocks or watches:** Symbolize running out of time - **Used items:** Except valuable antiques - **Too expensive:** Creates obligation to reciprocate - **Gifts for individuals in group setting:** Give to group or bring multiples

How to Present Gifts Presentation Rules:

Wrapping: - **Very important:** Presentation matters as much as the gift - Department stores offer gift wrapping services - Use proper gift wrap, not regular paper - Include noshi (decorative paper) for formal gifts - Never give unwrapped gifts - Keep packaging nice even if bought for travel

Physical Presentation: 1. Present with both hands 2. Offer humbly with a bow 3. Face the wrapping toward recipient 4. Say appropriate phrase (see below) 5. Downplay your gift with humble language

Phrases When Giving: - **“Tsumaranai mono desu ga…”** (つまらないものですが) - “This is a trifling thing, but…” (most common) - Humble language to downplay your gift - **“Kochira, omiyage desu”** (こちら、お土産です) - “This is a souvenir” - **“Uchi no kuni kara motte kimashita”** (家の国から持ってきました) - “I brought this from my country” - **“Sukoshi desu ga…”** (少しですが) - “It’s just a little something…”

Receiving a Gift: - Receive with both hands - Bow and thank them - Don’t open immediately unless invited to - Show appreciation for the wrapping/presentation - Express humble thanks

Phrases When Receiving: - **“Arigatō gozaimasu”** - Thank you very much - **“Sumimasen”** - Sorry (for the trouble) - **“Osore irimasu”** - I’m humbled/You shouldn’t have - **“Itadakimasu”** - I humbly receive

Opening Gifts: - Don’t open immediately in formal situations - Wait until giver leaves or gives permission - If invited to open, do so carefully - Preserve the wrapping (shows respect) - Express appreciation for the gift

Omiyage Culture (お土産) What is Omiyage? - Souvenirs/gifts brought back from travels - Expected social custom - Given to coworkers, friends, neighbors, family - Usually food items that are regional specialties

Omiyage Rules:

Who Gets Omiyage: - Coworkers (bring enough for entire office) - Friends who helped before your trip - Host family if staying with people - Neighbors (if they helped with anything) - Family members

What Makes Good Omiyage: - **Regional specialty:** Famous product from the place you visited - **Individually wrapped:** Easy to distribute - **Enough for everyone:** Don’t leave people out - **Not too expensive:** ¥500-1,500 per item typical - **Packaged attractively:** Presentation matters - **Consumable:** Candy, cookies, crackers, regional snacks - **Shelf-stable:** Must survive travel

Popular Omiyage from Tourist Destinations: - Tokyo: Tokyo Banana, Shiroi Koibito (白い恋人) - Kyoto: Yatsushashi (八ツ橋), matcha sweets - Osaka: Butaman (豚まん), Rikuro’s cheesecake - Hokkaido: Royce chocolate, Shiroi Koibito - Okinawa: Chinsuko (ちんすこう) cookies

How to Give Omiyage: - At work: Place on communal table with note “Please help yourself”(Dōzo) - To individuals: Give in person with “This is from [place]” - Say: **“Kore, omiyage desu. Dōzo.”** (This is a souvenir. Please have some.)

Gift Reciprocation Important Concept: - Giving creates obligation to return a gift - Return gift should be about half the value - Called “okaeshi”(お返し) - Expected in many situations

As a Tourist: - If staying with someone, bring a gift - If they give you a gift, you should give something back - Have small items from your country ready - Don’t worry too much about exact reciprocation

Business Gift Giving Business Context: - Gifts strengthen relationships - First meeting: Small gift from your country - End of meeting: Small token of appreciation - Company to company: More formal

Business Gift Tips: - Not too expensive (creates obligation) - Company-branded items acceptable - Regional specialties good - Present to most senior person with both hands

17.3.5 5. Onsen Etiquette (温泉)

Onsen (natural hot spring baths) are a quintessential Japanese experience. Following proper etiquette is essential for a good experience and showing respect to others.

Complete Onsen Rules 8 Fundamental Rules:

Rule 1: Wash Thoroughly Before Entering Procedure: 1. Enter bathing area (after changing) 2. Find a washing station 3. Sit on the small stool 4. Use shower to wet yourself completely 5. Soap and wash your entire body 6. Shampoo and condition hair 7. Rinse thoroughly - all soap must be removed 8. Rinse your stool and put things away neatly 9. Only then enter the bath

Why It Matters: - The bath is for soaking, not washing - Everyone shares the same water - Soap in the bath is unacceptable - You must be completely clean before entering

Rule 2: No Swimsuits - Completely Nude The Rule: - Everyone bathes completely naked - No swimsuits, underwear, or towels in the water - Applies to men's and women's sides (separated) - Only exception: some mixed (konyoku) outdoor baths allow towel wrapping

Why It Matters: - Hygienic reasons (fabric harbors bacteria) - Traditional cultural practice - Swim fabric can release fibers into water - Universal rule with almost no exceptions

Tips: - Don't worry - everyone is naked too - Separate areas for men and women - Look for: 男 (otoko/men) or 女 (onna/women) - Blue noren (curtain) = men, Red noren = women - Most people don't stare - very normal

Rule 3: Tattoo Policies Traditional View: - Tattoos associated with yakuza (Japanese mafia) - Many onsen ban tattoos completely - Strict policy at traditional onsen - Rule is slowly changing but still prevalent

What This Means for Tattooed Tourists:

Options if You Have Tattoos: 1. **Cover small tattoos:** Use large waterproof bandages (sold at drugstores) 2. **Find tattoo-friendly onsen:** Some allow tattoos, especially in touristy areas 3. **Private/family baths:** Reserve a private bath (kazoku-buro) 4. **Ryokan with private onsen:** Book room with private onsen 5. **Ask beforehand:** Call or check website about tattoo policy

Finding Tattoo-Friendly Onsen: - Website: tattoo-friendly.jp - Look for "tattoo OK" (タトゥーOK) - Hakone, Nikko, Kusatsu have some accepting places - Smaller tattoos easier to accommodate

Rule 4: Towel Usage - Never in the Water Towel Rules:

Small Towel (Tenugui - 手拭い): - Bring into bathing area - Use to cover privates while walking (optional) - Can use to wipe face while in bath - **Never put in the bath water** (critical rule) - Put on head or fold on side of bath while soaking

Large Towel: - Leave in changing area - Never bring into bathing area - Use after exiting to dry off

Why No Towels in Water: - Same reason as swimsuits - harbors bacteria - Releases fibers and soap residue - Pollutes the shared water - Shows lack of respect

Rule 5: Hair Rules Hair Etiquette: - Long hair must be tied up - Use provided hair tie or bring your own - Hair must not touch the water - Men with long hair must also tie it up - Bun, ponytail, or clip acceptable

Why: - Hygienic - hair sheds - Hair in water is considered dirty - Universal rule, strictly enforced

Rule 6: Photography Ban Photography Rules: - Absolutely no photography in bathing areas - No cameras, no phones, nothing - Applies to changing rooms too - May be able to photograph entrance area only - Outdoor scenery photos okay if no people

Why: - Privacy reasons (everyone is naked) - Respect for others - Serious violation if broken - Can be kicked out immediately

Allowed Photos: - Private family bath (if you rented it) - Promotional photos in public areas - Exterior of facility - Foot baths (clothing on)

Rule 7: Quiet Behavior Behavioral Expectations: - Keep noise to minimum - No loud talking - No splashing - No swimming or playing - No running - Peaceful atmosphere required - Quiet conversation acceptable but not loud

Why: - Onsen is for relaxation and contemplation - Respect others' experience - Traditional tranquility - Noise echoes in bathing areas

Tips: - Speak in hushed tones - Enter and exit water smoothly - Don't disturb others' peace - Save excited conversation for after

Rule 8: Don't Drain the Water or Add Cold Water Water Rules: - Don't add cold water to cool down the bath - Don't open drain - Don't adjust temperature - Water temperature is set deliberately - If too hot, splash water on yourself to acclimate

Why: - Onsen water temperature is carefully maintained - Everyone shares the same temperature - Changing it is selfish - Natural hot spring temperature is specific

If Too Hot: - Splash water on body to adjust - Start with legs/arms before full body - Sit on edge and gradually enter - Enter slowly - Take breaks if needed

Additional Onsen Guidelines Before Entering: - Remove all jewelry (can damage from minerals) - Remove glasses if possible (steam will fog them) - Tie up long hair - Don't bring anything into bath (drinks, books, phones) - Use toilet before bathing

While Bathing: - Rinse at shower station before re-entering if you exit - Don't stay too long (10-15 minutes at a time) - Take breaks to avoid overheating - Stay hydrated (drink water before and after) - Don't put head underwater - Move slowly and carefully (can be slippery)

Order of Baths: - Indoor bath first - Then outdoor bath (rotenburo) - Sauna (if available) - shower first after - Different temperature pools - start warm - Don't rush between baths

After Bathing: - Pat dry with small towel before entering changing area - Drink water or tea (usually provided) - Wait before eating (give body time to adjust) - Consider skipping one washing cycle if returning to different bath

Special Bath Types:

Rotenburo (露天風呂) - Outdoor Bath: - Scenic outdoor bath - Wash indoors first, then go outside - May have beautiful views - Can be cooler (especially in winter) - Towel on head okay (not in water)

Kazoku-buro (家族風呂) - Family/Private Bath: - Private bath you reserve - Good for families, couples, tattoo concerns, or shy people - Usually time-limited (30-45 minutes) - Costs extra (¥2,000-5,000+) - Book in advance at front desk - Can take photos here (it's private)

Ashiyu (足湯) - Foot Bath: - Public foot-soaking bath - Keep clothes on - Free or small fee - Common at train stations and tourist areas - More casual, can chat and take photos

Health and Safety Don't Enter Onsen If: - You have open wounds or cuts - You're very drunk - You have a contagious skin condition - You have a heart condition (consult doctor) - You're feeling ill

Health Tips: - Stay hydrated before and after - Don't bathe right after eating (wait 30 minutes) - Don't drink alcohol before bathing - Take breaks if feeling dizzy - Be careful of slippery surfaces - Temperature can spike blood pressure

After Onsen: - Some say don't shower (let minerals stay on skin) - Others prefer to rinse (depends on mineral content) - Ask locals or staff for recommendation - Drink plenty of water - Rest if feeling tired

17.3.6 6. Temple & Shrine Etiquette (寺 & 神社)

Temples (Buddhist) and shrines (Shinto) are sacred religious sites. While tourists are welcome, respectful behavior is essential.

Understanding the Difference Temples (寺 - Tera/Ji): - Buddhist places of worship - Usually have large main hall - Statues of Buddha - Incense burning - Pagodas often present - More somber atmosphere - Examples: Senso-ji, Kinkaku-ji, Kiyomizu-dera

Shrines (神社 - Jinja): - Shinto places of worship - Torii gates at entrance - No Buddhist imagery - Emphasis on nature and purity - Rope (shimenawa) decorations - Examples: Meiji Shrine, Fushimi Inari, Itsukushima Shrine

Temple Etiquette Entering the Temple:

1. Bow at entrance gate

- Show respect when passing through gate
- Small bow is fine

2. Incense ritual (if available):

- Light incense from existing flames (don't use lighter directly)
- Wave smoke toward yourself (believed to purify)
- Place incense in burner
- Bow slightly

3. At the main hall:

- Approach the altar/offering box
- Throw coin in box (any amount, ¥5 or ¥100 common)
- Bow
- Ring bell if present (to summon deity)
- Clasp hands in prayer

- Pray/reflect quietly
- Bow again
- Step aside

Temple DO's: - Remove hat when entering buildings - Speak quietly - Walk on sides of paths (center is for deities) - Take photos where permitted - Show respect at all times - Light incense if available - Make a small offering

Temple DON'Ts: - Don't touch or climb on statues or altars - Don't disturb worshippers - Don't be loud - Don't eat or drink inside - Don't smoke (except at designated areas) - Don't take photos if prohibited signs are present

Shrine Etiquette Complete Shrine Visit Procedure:

1. Passing Through Torii Gate: - **Bow before entering** (first torii gate) - Walk to the side, not in the center (center is for kami/spirits) - Shows respect and intention

2. Temizuya (手水舎) - Purification Ritual: This is essential before approaching the main shrine.

Step-by-step purification: 1. Take ladle in right hand 2. Scoop water 3. Pour water over left hand 4. Switch ladle to left hand 5. Pour water over right hand 6. Switch ladle back to right hand 7. Pour water into cupped left palm 8. Rinse mouth with water from palm (don't swallow) 9. Spit water beside basin (not into basin) 10. Rinse left hand again (the one that touched your mouth) 11. Hold ladle vertically to rinse handle 12. Place ladle back face down 13. Do not touch basin directly or put mouth on ladle

Why This Matters: - Purification before approaching sacred space - Symbolic cleansing of body and spirit - Required before prayer - Shows respect and knowledge

3. Approaching the Main Shrine (Haiden/Honden):

Prayer Procedure (2-2-1): 1. **Approach offering box** 2. **Throw coin in box** (¥5 is considered lucky: go-en, meaning "good relationship") 3. **Ring bell** (if present) - to summon kami and purify 4. **Bow twice** (deep bows, about 90 degrees) 5. **Clap twice** (clap hands in front of chest) 6. **Pray silently** (make wish or show gratitude) 7. **Bow once more** (deep bow) 8. **Step aside for others**

Remember: Ni-rei, Ni-hakushu, Ichi-rei (二礼二拍手一礼) - Two bows, two claps, one bow

4. Leaving: - Bow toward shrine before leaving - Bow at torii gate when exiting - Turn around to face shrine and bow

Shrine-Specific Etiquette:

Omikuji (おみくじ) - Fortune Slips: - Pay ¥100-300 at designated spot - Draw a fortune - Read your fortune (dai-kichi = best, kyo = worst) - If good: Keep it or tie it at designated area - If bad: Tie it on shrine grounds (to leave bad luck behind)

Ema (絵馬) - Wooden Wishing Plaques: - Purchase at shrine office (¥500-1,000) - Write your wish on blank side - Include name and date - Hang on designated rack - Shrine will burn them later in ritual

Goshuin (御朱印) - Temple/Shrine Stamps: - Calligraphic stamp and inscription - Bring goshuin-cho (stamp book) or buy one there (¥1,000-2,000) - Present at shrine office (¥300-500 per stamp) - Watch as priest writes it (beautiful art) - Each shrine has unique design - Collect throughout your journey

Omamori (お守り) - Amulets/Charms: - Purchase at shrine office - Various types: health, love, traffic safety, success, etc. - ¥500-1,000 typically - Keep on person or in bag - Don't open the inside - Return or burn after one year

Photography Rules Generally Allowed: - Temple/shrine grounds - Gardens - Architecture - Torii gates - Outdoor areas

Generally Prohibited: - Inside main halls - During ceremonies - Near worshippers - Private areas - Signs will indicate prohibitions

Photography Tips: - Look for “no photo” signs (カメラ禁止 or 撮影禁止) - Don’t use flash indoors - Don’t climb on structures for photos - Be aware of people praying - Don’t use selfie sticks where crowded - Respectful photos only

Dress Code Appropriate Attire: - Modest clothing - Cover shoulders and knees (especially at important shrines/temples) - No beachwear or athletic wear - Neat and clean appearance - Remove sunglasses indoors

Shoes: - Remove before entering buildings - Wear clean socks - Slippers may be provided - Place shoes in designated area

What to Avoid: - Revealing clothing - Dirty or torn clothes - Strong perfumes - Very casual beachwear

Donations Offering Money: - Voluntary - Any amount acceptable - ¥5, ¥50, ¥100, ¥500 common - Thrown gently into offering box - Shows respect and gratitude

When to Donate: - During prayer - When receiving goshuin - When taking omikuji - After enjoying the grounds - Optional but appreciated

Special Ceremonies and Events If You Encounter a Ceremony: - Observe quietly from a distance - Don’t walk through or interrupt - No photography unless permitted - Show extra respect - Wait for ceremony to finish before approaching

Festival Days: - More crowded - Special rituals - May have restricted areas - Follow crowd flow - Unique photo opportunities

Additional Guidelines General Behavior: - Speak quietly - Walk slowly and mindfully - Don’t litter - Don’t eat or drink (unless designated area) - Don’t smoke (unless designated area) - Control children - Keep dogs on leash or outside - Turn off phone ringer - No phone calls

Interacting with Monks/Priests: - Polite and respectful - Bow when greeting - Keep conversation brief - Don’t interrupt rituals - Ask permission before taking photos of them

Special Requests: - Prayers can be commissioned (for a fee) - Special blessings available - Some offer meditation sessions - Ask at shrine/temple office

17.3.7 7. Public Behavior (公共マナー)

Japanese society places high value on consideration for others and maintaining social harmony. Understanding public behavior expectations will help you navigate social situations smoothly.

Train and Subway Manners Waiting for the Train: - Queue in designated lines marked on platform - Stand aside to let passengers exit first - Board only after everyone has exited - Don’t push or rush - Wait for next train if this one is too full

On the Train:

Priority Seating (優先席 - Yūsen-seki): - Reserved for elderly, pregnant women, disabled, people with small children - Usually at ends of train cars - Don't sit if you're young and able-bodied - Give up your seat if someone needs it more - Even outside priority seats, offer your seat to those who need it

Phone Usage: - **No phone calls** (strict rule) - Set phone to silent mode (manner mode) - Text and browse okay but quietly - No videos with sound - No loud games - Very occasionally someone will violate this, but it's frowned upon - If you must take an urgent call, exit at next stop

Volume: - Speak in very low voices - Whisper if you must talk - No loud conversations - No laughing loudly - Trains are incredibly quiet

Eating and Drinking: - **No eating on most trains** (except Shinkansen long-distance trains) - Water is usually okay - Strong-smelling foods especially forbidden - Gum and mints okay - Canned coffee at rush hour is borderline

Backpack Etiquette: - Take off your backpack and hold it - Place at your feet or on overhead rack - Don't hit people with your bag - Be aware of your space

Other Train Rules: - Don't block doors - Move to center of car - Hold bags in front of you during rush hour - Don't lean on poles (others need to grip) - No grooming (makeup, hair) - Don't push, be patient - Stand in aisles to let others sit - Face toward door when standing - No aggressive behavior

Rush Hour (7:30-9:30 AM, 5:30-8:00 PM): - Extremely crowded - Be patient - You will be pressed against others - Stay calm - Staff may physically push people in (normal) - Women-only cars available during rush hour

Eating Rules in Public Where You Can Eat: - Restaurants (obviously) - Designated eating areas (food courts, park benches) - Your hotel room - Rest areas - Some train platforms (brief snacks)

Where You CANNOT Eat: - While walking on the street (very rude) - On most trains/buses (except Shinkansen) - In shops while browsing - Most public transportation - While standing in crowds

Why No Walking While Eating: - Shows lack of focus/appreciation for food - Can dirty streets or clothes - Disrespectful to food - You might bump into someone

Exceptions: - Festival street food (stay in festival area) - Ice cream (somewhat accepted) - Near vending machines (drink/eat right there then leave)

Tips: - Buy food and find a spot to sit - Stay near where you bought food if eating outside - Dispose of trash in provided bins - Don't walk with open food containers

Queue Etiquette (並ぶ - Narabu) Japanese queuing is famous for being orderly and respected.

Queuing Rules: - Always form orderly single-file line - Don't cut in line (never acceptable) - Maintain space from person in front - Don't leave line (you lose your spot) - Wait patiently - No pushing - No complaining about wait times

Types of Queues:

Restaurant Queues: - Write name on waiting list - Wait in designated area - Don't hover near entrance - Come when called (won't call multiple times)

Store Queues: - Form line at register - Next customer called when ready - Be ready with payment

Train Platform Queues: - Line markers on ground - Queue behind markers - Board in order

Escalator Queues: - Know which side to stand on - Don't block - Keep right (in Osaka) or left (in Tokyo) for walkers

Volume Levels Public Spaces: - Keep conversations quiet - No shouting or loud laughter - Especially quiet on trains - Indoor voice everywhere - Very low in temples/shrines

Phone Calls: - Not in restaurants during meal - Not on trains/buses - Step aside to a quiet area if you must - Be brief - Use low voice

Why Quiet is Important: - Respect for others' peace - Harmony (wa - 和) - Avoid disturbing others - Cultural value of restraint

Tourist Exception: - You may hear other tourists being loud - Don't follow their bad example - Be better - respect the culture

Phone Usage Rules On Trains: - No phone calls (strict) - Silent/manner mode - Texting/browsing okay - No sound from videos/games - Headphones only (keep volume down)

In Restaurants: - Phone on table okay - Quick texts acceptable - Long phone calls rude (step outside) - Don't disturb others - Don't photograph others without permission

Walking: - Pay attention while walking - Don't walk while staring at phone - Step aside if you need to stop and use phone - Safety and courtesy issue

Priority Areas: - Near priority seating: turn off phone or flight mode - Pacemakers can be affected (less common now) - Signs will indicate

Personal Space Respecting Space: - Don't stand too close - Maintain distance in conversations - Don't touch others - Physical contact is minimal

Exceptions: - Rush hour trains (unavoidable) - Crowded festivals - Queues at popular spots

Body Language: - Minimal gesturing - Keep arms close - Don't be overly expressive - Calm demeanor

Other Public Behavior Rules Littering: - Never litter (very serious social violation) - Trash cans are rare (carry your trash) - Bring a small bag for trash - Dispose at your hotel or konbini - Smoking areas have ashtrays

Smoking: - Designated smoking areas only - Not while walking (illegal in many areas) - Check for smoking sections - Don't smoke near non-smokers - Dispose of butts properly

Waiting: - Be patient everywhere - No complaining - Stay calm - Occupy yourself quietly

Stairs and Walkways: - Walk on the left (except Osaka) - Don't block paths - Move to side if stopping - Let others pass

Doors: - Hold door for person behind you - Thank person who holds door - Don't let door slam

Public Toilets: - Keep clean - Flush properly - Don't make a mess - Use provided toilet paper - Some have cleaning spray

17.3.8 8. Dining Etiquette (食事マナー)

Beyond chopstick etiquette, there are many dining customs to be aware of.

Before and After Meals Itadakimasu (いただきます): - Said before eating - Means "I humbly receive"- Shows gratitude for food - Clasp hands together and say it - Even when eating alone

Gochisosama (ごちそうさま) / Gochisosama deshita (ごちそうさまでした): - Said after eating - Means "Thank you for the meal"- Shows appreciation - Clasp hands together and say to staff when leaving - More polite form: gochisosama deshita

Table Manners DO: - Hold rice bowl in your hand - Hold soup bowl in your hand - Sip soup directly from bowl - Slurp noodles (shows enjoyment) - Try to finish everything on your plate - Use oshibori (hot towel) to clean hands - Pour drinks for others, not yourself - Hold dishes when eating from them - Eat quietly and with good posture

DON'T: - Leave rice unfinished (very wasteful) - Start eating before everyone is served (wait or they'll say "please start") - Talk with mouth full - Reach across others (ask for items to be passed) - Point with chopsticks - Wave chopsticks while talking - Use your own chopsticks for shared dishes (use serving chopsticks) - Add soy sauce to rice (disrespectful to rice) - Pour soy sauce over sushi rice (dip fish side only) - Blow your nose at table (go to bathroom) - Apply makeup at table - Take food from someone else's plate without permission

Specific Food Etiquette Sushi: - Eat in one bite if possible - Dip fish side in soy sauce, not rice side - Use fingers or chopsticks (both okay) - Ginger is palate cleanser between pieces - Wasabi already in sushi (don't add more unless you want to) - Eat in order suggested by chef at high-end places - Don't rub chopsticks together (insults quality)

Ramen: - Slurp loudly (shows enjoyment and cools noodles) - Eat quickly while hot - Don't need to finish all broth (very filling) - Rotate bowl to reach noodles - Use spoon for broth and toppings

Soba/Udon: - Slurp noodles - Dipping soba: dip just the tip in sauce - Don't need to finish all sauce - Drink provided soba-yu (noodle water) at end

Rice: - Hold bowl in hand - Don't add soy sauce directly to white rice - Eat with every bite of other food - Finish every grain (leaving rice is wasteful)

Soup (Miso, etc.): - Hold bowl in both hands - Sip directly from bowl - Use chopsticks to eat solid ingredients - Place back on table gently - No spoon needed

Tempura: - Dip in tentsuyu sauce - Add grated daikon and ginger to sauce - Eat while hot - Don't let it get soggy

Donburi (Rice Bowl Dishes): - Hold bowl if small enough - Mix ingredients if you like - Eat rice with toppings together

Drinking Etiquette Pouring Drinks: - **Never pour your own drink** when others present - Pour for others first - Others will pour for you - Watch others' glasses - Refill when getting low - Hold bottle with both hands (formal) or one hand (casual) - Receive with glass slightly lifted

Receiving Drinks: - Hold glass up when being poured for - Use both hands for formal situations - Thank them (arigatō gozaimasu) - Pour back for them after

Toasting: - **Kanpai!** (乾杯) - Cheers! - Clink glasses gently - Lower your glass below senior person's glass - Take a drink after toast - Don't drink before toast in formal settings

Beer: - Pour for others - Fill glass 2/3 to 3/4 full - Tilt glass when pouring - Let foam settle

Sake: - Warm or cold (depends on type and season) - Small cups (ochoko) - Pour for others frequently - Hold bottle with both hands for respect

Tea: - Don't pour for yourself at formal tea ceremony - Rotate bowl before drinking (tea ceremony) - Slurp slightly to aerate - Shows appreciation

Shared Dishes Serving from Shared Plates: - Use serving chopsticks (toribashi) if provided - Or flip your chopsticks and use clean end - Don't use eating end of chopsticks - Take from top, don't dig - Take modest portions - Consider others

Don't: - Take the last piece without offering it to others first - Take large portions when sharing - Touch food and put it back - Pass food chopsticks-to-chopsticks

Paying Payment Customs: - No tipping (considered rude/confusing) - Pay at register, not at table (usually) - Bring bill to cashier near entrance - Don't leave money on table - Split bills less common (one person pays) - Use tray provided for payment

Splitting Bills: - Less common than in West - Say: "Betsu-betsu de onegaishimasu" (Separate please) - Or: "Warite de onegaishimasu" (Split please) - Usually one person pays and friends reimburse later - Convenience: Use app or cash to reimburse friend

When Host/Guest: - Invited person should refuse to pay at first - Insist mildly - But accept if host insists back - Reciprocate by treating them next time

Restaurant-Specific Etiquette Entering: - Wait to be seated (don't seat yourself) - Staff will say "Irasshaimase!" (Welcome!) - You don't need to respond - Tell them party size - Follow staff to table

At the Table: - Use oshibori for hands, not face - Don't reorder oshibori after using it - Some places have call buttons (press for service) - Others require saying "Sumimasen!" (Excuse me!) - Don't snap fingers or wave aggressively

Ordering: - Look at menu - Ask questions if needed - Order when ready - It's okay to ask recommendations

During Meal: - Don't call staff too frequently - Get refills if offered - Relax and enjoy

Leaving: - Bring bill to register - Thank staff: "Gochisosama deshita" - Staff will say "Arigatō gozaimashita!" (Thank you!) - Don't need to respond (but can say arigatō) - Leave tables clean and organized

All-You-Can-Eat/Drink (食べ放題・飲み放題) Tabehōdai (食べ放題) - All-You-Can-Eat: - Time limit (usually 90-120 minutes) - Order multiple rounds - Don't waste food (take only what you'll eat) - Finish what you order - Some places charge for leftovers

Nomihōdai (飲み放題) - All-You-Can-Drink: - Common at izakaya - Time limit (usually 2 hours) - Order drinks as you go - Last order time announced - Don't order too many at end

17.4 C. Safety Guide

Japan is one of the safest countries in the world for tourists. However, it's important to be aware of potential risks and know how to respond in emergencies.

17.4.1 1. General Safety

Crime Levels Overall Safety: - Japan has one of the lowest crime rates in the world - Violent crime against tourists is extremely rare - Petty crime exists but is much less common than most countries - You can walk safely at night in most areas - Children travel alone on trains safely - Lost items are often returned

Violent Crime: - Extremely rare for tourists - Homicide rate is very low - Random violence almost unheard of - Gang activity doesn't target tourists - Terrorism risk is very low

Property Crime: - Theft is uncommon but exists - Pickpocketing rare but possible in crowded areas - Bicycle theft more common (use locks) - Hotel room theft very rare - Lost items often turned in to police

Safe Activities Generally Very Safe: - Walking alone at night - Using public transportation - Staying in hotels/hostels - Eating street food - Shopping - Using ATMs - Asking strangers for help - Solo female travel - LGBTQ+ travel (though culture is conservative)

Normal Precautions: - Watch belongings in very crowded areas - Don't leave valuables visible in cars - Lock hotel room - Keep copy of passport separate from original - Have emergency contacts saved

Rare Concerns While rare, be aware of:

Groping (Chikan - 痴漢): - Can occur on crowded trains - Usually targets women - Women-only train cars available during rush hour (marked with pink signs) - If happens: Yell "Chikan!" and point at person - Move to different car - Report to station staff

Drink Spiking: - Very rare but has occurred - Watch your drink in bars - Don't accept drinks from strangers - Stay aware in Roppongi nightlife (foreigner area in Tokyo)

Photography Concerns: - Upskirt photography (illegal but happens) - Camera shutter sound on phones required by law to prevent this - Be aware in crowded areas

Touts and Scams: - Bar touts in Kabukicho (Tokyo) and Roppongi - May lure to overpriced bars with hidden fees - Decline offers from people on street - Go to established businesses only

Tourist Scams (Rare but Exist) Overcharging at Bars: - "Catch bars" or "Clip joints" - Charged thousands of yen for drinks - Common in Kabukicho and Roppongi - Avoid: Don't follow touts, check prices before ordering

Fake Monks: - Rare but some fake monks ask for donations - Real monks don't aggressively ask for money - Politely decline

Taxi Scams: - Very rare (taxis are highly regulated) - Meter should be used - Fixed rates to airports - Receipt always provided

Fake Police: - Extremely rare - Real police have proper ID - They won't ask for your wallet directly

Street Safety Tips DO: - Walk confidently - Use well-lit streets - Trust your instincts - Ask for help if lost - Use official taxis - Keep phone charged - Have hotel address in Japanese

DON'T: - Flash large amounts of cash - Leave bags unattended (though many locals do) - Accept rides from strangers - Follow aggressive touts - Walk in obviously dangerous areas drunk - Engage with street hasslers

Solo Travel Safety Solo Female Travelers: - Japan is very safe for solo women - Women-only hotel floors available - Women-only train cars during rush hour - Normal precautions still apply - Avoid excessive drinking alone - Use common sense

Solo Male Travelers: - Also very safe - Same general precautions - Be respectful and aware

General Solo Travel: - Let someone know your plans - Share location with friends/family - Keep phone charged - Have offline maps - Emergency contacts saved

LGBTQ+ Safety General Environment: - Safe from violence - No anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes - Culture is conservative but polite - Same-sex marriage not legal (yet) - Don't ask, don't tell culture - Public displays of affection uncommon for all couples

Tips: - Discrimination unlikely - Some areas more open (Tokyo, Osaka) - Shinjuku Ni-chome is gay district in Tokyo - Hotels won't question room sharing - General respect for privacy

17.4.2 2. Natural Disasters

Japan is prone to natural disasters due to its location. Understanding what to do can save your life.

Earthquakes (地震 - Jishin) Frequency: - Japan experiences thousands of earthquakes per year - Most are tiny tremors you won't feel - Moderate earthquakes (feeling shaking) somewhat common - Large destructive earthquakes are rare but possible - Buildings are earthquake-resistant

Magnitude Scale: - Japan uses Shindo scale (1-7) based on felt intensity - Shindo 1-2: Barely noticeable - Shindo 3-4: Noticeable, hanging objects swing - Shindo 5: Difficult to walk, objects fall - Shindo 6: Very difficult to stand, building damage - Shindo 7: Cannot move, widespread destruction

What to Do During an Earthquake:

If Indoors: 1. **Drop, Cover, Hold On** - Drop to hands and knees - Cover head and neck under sturdy table/desk - Hold on until shaking stops 2. Stay away from windows 3. Don't run outside (falling debris danger) 4. Stay in place until shaking stops 5. Don't use elevators 6. Protect your head with arms if no table available

If Outdoors: 1. Move away from buildings, power lines, trees 2. Get to open space 3. Protect your head 4. Watch for falling debris 5. Stay away from vending machines and walls

If on Train/Subway: 1. Hold onto handrails or poles 2. Stay low 3. Don't try to exit 4. Follow staff instructions 5. Train will stop automatically

If in Elevator: 1. Press all floor buttons 2. Get out at first opening floor 3. Don't use elevators after earthquake

If Driving: 1. Slow down and pull over safely 2. Stay in car 3. Avoid bridges and overpasses 4. Listen to radio for information

After the Earthquake:

1. **Check for injuries**
2. **Check for gas leaks** (smell, listen)
 - If suspected, open windows and exit
 - Don't use matches or lighters
3. **Check for structural damage**
4. **Be prepared for aftershocks** (can last days or weeks)
5. **Use stairs, not elevators**
6. **Check phone only briefly** (preserve battery and network)
7. **Follow official instructions** (TV, radio, loudspeakers)
8. **Have emergency kit ready** (see below)
9. **Don't spread rumors**
10. **Evacuate if instructed**

Tsunami Risk: - Large earthquakes near coast can cause tsunamis - Tsunami arrives 10-30+ minutes after earthquake - Move to high ground immediately if near coast - Don't wait for official warning - Stay elevated until all-clear given

Tsunamis (津波 - Tsunami) Warning Signs: - Strong earthquake (especially long duration) - Loud roar from ocean - Sudden water level changes - Official warnings (sirens, announcements)

What to Do:

1. If you feel strong earthquake near coast:

- Don't wait for warning
- Immediately move to high ground (minimum 3rd floor or 10m elevation)
- Move inland and uphill
- Don't go to beach to watch

2. If tsunami warning issued:

- Evacuate immediately
- Follow evacuation route signs (青い標識 - blue signs)
- Don't return until all-clear given
- Multiple waves can come - first is not always largest

3. Stay elevated until all-clear:

- Wait for official "all clear" announcement
- Can take many hours
- Stay informed via radio/TV

Tsunami Evacuation Signs: - Blue signs with white running figure and wave - Point to high ground - Follow these during evacuation

Typhoons (台風 - Taifū) Season: - Typhoon season: June to October - Peak: August to September - Can affect any part of Japan - Warning given days in advance

Before Typhoon: 1. Monitor weather forecasts 2. Stock emergency supplies 3. Charge all devices 4. Secure loose outdoor items 5. Know evacuation routes 6. Stay indoors when it arrives

During Typhoon: 1. **Stay indoors** 2. Stay away from windows 3. Don't go outside 4. Avoid flooded areas 5. Don't drive 6. Prepare for power outages 7. Fill bathtub with water (for toilet flushing if needed) 8. Listen to official information

After Typhoon: 1. Check for damage 2. Avoid flooded areas 3. Watch for downed power lines 4. Don't go near rivers (flooding can continue) 5. Follow official instructions

Typhoon Impact: - Heavy rain and flooding - Strong winds - Transportation disruptions (trains, flights cancelled) - Landslides in mountainous areas - Coastal storm surge

Travel During Typhoon: - Flights will be cancelled - Trains will stop - Stay at accommodation - Don't try to travel - Build buffer days in itinerary during typhoon season

Volcanoes (火山 - Kazan) Volcanic Activity: - Japan has 110+ active volcanoes - Most eruptions are small and predicted - Tourist areas monitored closely - Warnings given in advance

Volcanic Alert Levels: - Level 1: Normal - Level 2: Increased activity - Level 3: Restricted access - Level 4: Prepare to evacuate - Level 5: Evacuate

Popular Volcanic Tourist Sites: - Mt. Fuji (Level 1 normally) - Hakone (hot springs area) - Mt. Aso (Kyushu) - Sakurajima (Kagoshima)

Safety: - Check volcanic alert levels before visiting - Follow restricted area signs - Don't enter prohibited zones - Have exit route planned - Follow local instructions

If Volcanic Activity Increases: 1. Leave area immediately 2. Follow evacuation orders 3. Protect yourself from ash (cover mouth/nose) 4. Avoid river valleys (lahars/mudflows) 5. Monitor official information

17.4.3 3. Health & Medical

Travel Insurance Critical Importance: - **Get comprehensive travel insurance before arrival**
- Medical care in Japan is excellent but expensive - Without insurance, costs are very high - Covers medical emergencies, evacuation, repatriation - Also covers trip cancellation, lost luggage

What to Cover: - Medical expenses (minimum \$100,000) - Emergency evacuation - Repatriation - 24/7 assistance hotline - Prescription medications - Dental emergencies - Pre-existing conditions (if possible)

Hospital Access Finding Medical Care:

Emergency Room (救急 - Kyūkyū): - Go to large hospitals with ER - Open 24/7 - For serious emergencies - Call 119 for ambulance if life-threatening

Clinics (診療所 - Shinryōjo): - For non-emergencies - Daytime hours usually - Specialists and general practice - Less expensive than hospitals

International Clinics: - Staff speak English - Accustomed to foreign patients - More expensive - Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto have several

Notable International Clinics:

Tokyo: - Tokyo Midtown Clinic - American Clinic Tokyo - St. Luke's International Hospital - Japanese Red Cross Medical Center

Osaka: - Osaka Ekisaikai Hospital - Sumitomo Hospital

Kyoto: - Kyoto City Hospital - Japan Baptist Hospital

How to Find: - Ask hotel concierge - Call embassy - Use JNTO's Japan Helpline: 050-3816-2787 (English, 24/7) - Google Maps search "international clinic"

Pharmacy Access Pharmacies (薬局 - Yakkyoku): - Common everywhere - Look for 薬 (kusuri - medicine) sign - Many in train stations and shopping areas

Common Chains: - Matsumoto Kiyoshi (マツモトキヨシ) - Sugi Pharmacy (スギ薬局) - Welcia (ウエルシア) - Tsuruha Drug (ツルハドラッグ)

Over-the-Counter Medications: - Pain relievers (aspirin, acetaminophen) - Cold medicine - Stomach medicine - Antihistamines - Motion sickness medicine - Eye drops - Bandages and first aid

Important Notes: - Dosages may be lower than your country - Some ingredients prohibited (pseudoephedrine) - English instructions sometimes available - Pharmacist can help (limited English)

Prescription Medications Bringing Prescription Meds: - Bring enough for entire trip - Keep in original containers - Bring doctor's letter explaining need - Some medications prohibited in Japan - Check Japan Customs before arrival

Prohibited/Restricted Medications: - Stimulants (Adderall, Vyvanse, etc.) - need special permission - Some ADHD medications - Strong pain medications (need yakkan shoumei - import certificate) - Check: <https://www.customs.go.jp/english/>

If You Need Prescriptions While in Japan: - See doctor at clinic - Doctor writes prescription - Fill at pharmacy - Need Japanese insurance or pay full price (expensive) - Travel insurance may reimburse

Yakkan Shōmei (薬監証明): - Import certificate for controlled medications - Required for stimulants, strong painkillers - Apply before travel through embassy/consulate - Takes several weeks - Bring with you

General Health Safety Water: - Tap water safe to drink everywhere - Very clean - No need for bottled water (but available)

Food Safety: - Food safety standards very high - Raw fish (sushi) is safe - Street food is safe - Food poisoning very rare

Heat Safety (Summer): - Summers are hot and humid (30-35°C+) - Heat stroke is real risk - Stay hydrated - Use cooling products (cooling towels, cold packs) - Take breaks in air conditioning - Elderly and children at higher risk

Cooling Stations: - Department stores - Convenience stores - Malls - Train stations - Rest areas

Symptoms of Heat Stroke: - Dizziness, confusion - Nausea - Rapid heartbeat - Headache - Hot, dry skin - Seek shade and medical help immediately

Cold Safety (Winter): - Hokkaido and mountain areas get very cold - Dress in layers - Hypothermia risk in extreme cold - Check weather forecasts

Air Quality: - Generally excellent - Spring: pollen allergies (kafun-shō) - Occasional yellow dust from China - Masks available at all convenience stores

Common Ailments:

Motion Sickness: - Winding mountain roads - Ferry rides - Get medicine at pharmacy

Jet Lag: - Adjust gradually - Get sunlight - Stay hydrated - Melatonin available OTC

Stomach Issues: - Usually from dietary change - Medicine available at pharmacy - Stay hydrated

17.4.4 4. Emergency Contacts

Understanding how to get help in an emergency is crucial.

Emergency Numbers 110 - Police (警察 - Keisatsu)

When to Call: - Crimes (theft, assault, etc.) - Accidents - Lost/stolen items (for report) - Suspicious activity - Any situation needing police

What Will Happen: - Operator may not speak English - Stay calm and speak slowly - Say: “Eigo de onegaishimasu”(English please) - Give location (address, landmarks) - Explain situation simply

119 - Ambulance (救急車 - Kyūkyūsha) / Fire (消防 - Shōbō)

When to Call: - Medical emergencies - Serious injuries - Heart attack, stroke - Unconsciousness - Severe bleeding - Fires

What to Say: - “Kyūkyūsha!”(Ambulance) or “Kaji!”(Fire) - Location (address or landmarks) - What happened - Number of people injured

What Will Happen: - Ambulance comes quickly (usually 6-8 minutes) - Paramedics provide first aid - Take to nearest appropriate hospital - You may choose hospital if not life-threatening - Bring insurance information and ID

Ambulance Cost: - Free (no charge for ambulance) - Hospital treatment costs apply

Other Important Numbers Japan Helpline: 050-3816-2787 - Operated by Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) - 24/7, 365 days - English, Chinese, Korean - Tourist information and emergency support - Free from landlines, minimal charge from mobiles

Tourist Hotline: 3501-0101 (Tokyo area code 03) - English, Chinese, Korean - Travel information and assistance

Your Embassy: Save your country's embassy contact before traveling.

Major Embassies in Tokyo: - US Embassy: 03-3224-5000 - UK Embassy: 03-5211-1100 - Canadian Embassy: 03-5412-6200 - Australian Embassy: 03-5232-4111 - New Zealand Embassy: 03-3467-2271 - German Embassy: 03-5791-7700

Embassies Can Help With: - Lost/stolen passports - Emergency funds (if needed) - Legal issues - Medical emergencies - Natural disasters - Contacting family

Embassies CANNOT: - Pay your bills - Get you out of jail - Give legal advice - Act as travel agents - Overrule Japanese law

What to Say in Emergencies For 110 (Police):

Japanese: - **"Tasukete kudasai!"** (助けてください) - Please help! - **"Dorobō desu!"** (泥棒です) - Thief! - **"Keisatsu o yonde kudasai!"** (警察を呼んでください) - Please call police!

Location: - **"Watashi wa [location] ni imasu"** (私は[場所]にいます) - I am at [location] - Point to address on phone or map - Name nearest station or landmark

For 119 (Ambulance/Fire):

Japanese: - **"Kyūkyūsha o yonde kudasai!"** (救急車を呼んでください) - Please call ambulance! - **"Kega o shimashita!"** (怪我をしました) - I'm injured! - **"Byōki desu!"** (病気です) - I'm sick! - **"Kaji desu!"** (火事です) - Fire!

To Operator: - **"Kyūkyū desu"** (救急です) - Medical emergency - **"Kaji desu"** (火事です) - Fire - **"Jūsho wa..."** (住所は...) - The address is... - **"[Landmark] no chikaku desu"** ([landmark]の近くです) - Near [landmark]

Medical Emergency Phrases: - **"Taore mashita"** (倒れました) - Someone collapsed - **"Iki ga dekinai"** (息ができない) - Can't breathe - **"Mune ga itai"** (胸が痛い) - Chest pain - **"Chi ga tomarimasen"** (血が止まりません) - Bleeding won't stop - **"Ishiki ga arimasen"** (意識がありません) - Unconscious

General Emergency Phrases: - **"Eigo de onegaishimasu"** (英語をお願いします) - English please - **"Watashi wa gaikokujin desu"** (私は外国人です) - I am a foreigner - **"Byōin ni ikitai desu"** (病院に行きたいです) - I want to go to hospital - **"Taishikan ni renraku shite kudasai"** (大使館に連絡してください) - Please contact my embassy

Getting Help from Passersby: - **"Tasukete kudasai!"** - Please help me! - **"Eigo ga dekimasu ka?"** - Do you speak English? - **"Keisatsu o yonde kudasai"** - Please call police - **"Kyūkyūsha o yonde kudasai"** - Please call ambulance

Police Boxes (Kōban - 交番) What are Kōban? - Small police stations throughout cities - Staffed by 1-2 officers - Community policing - Very accessible

Where to Find: - Near train stations - Major intersections - Residential neighborhoods - Look for 交番 sign with red light

What They Can Help With: - Directions - Lost items - Filing reports - Small emergencies - Finding addresses - General assistance

How to Use: - Just walk in - Officers are friendly - Limited English but helpful - Use Google Translate if needed

Lost and Found Lost Items: - High chance of recovery - Go to nearest police box (kōban) - Fill out lost item report - Check back in a few days - Items often turned in

For Items Lost on Trains: - Report to station office - Each line has lost and found - Central lost and found for older items - Keep ticket stub as proof - Items held for several months

17.4.5 5. Safety Apps

Having the right apps can make emergencies easier to handle.

Essential Safety Apps 1. Safety Tips (NHK World) - Disaster warnings and alerts - Earthquake, tsunami, volcano info - Multi-language support - Offline functionality - Step-by-step emergency instructions - **Download before arrival**

2. Japan Official Travel App - Tourist information - Emergency contacts - Multilingual support - Route planning - Offline maps

3. Google Maps - Navigation - Offline maps (download before) - Find hospitals, police, embassies - Train routes - Essential for getting around

4. Google Translate - Download Japanese offline - Camera translation (read signs) - Voice translation - Essential for communication - Works with camera for real-time translation

5. Yurekuru (ゆれくるコール) - Earthquake early warning app - Alerts seconds before shaking - Japanese language but simple icons - Can give you time to take cover

Emergency Preparedness Apps 6. Japan Shelter Guide - Find evacuation shelters - Disaster preparedness info - Multilingual

7. Hyperdia / Japan Transit Planner - Train routes - Alternative routes during disruptions - Real-time delay information

8. WhatsApp / LINE - Stay in touch with friends/family - LINE is very popular in Japan - Works with WiFi only

9. Weather Apps - Yahoo! Weather (Japanese but reliable) - Weather forecasts and warnings - Typhoon tracking

10. TripIt or Travel Organizer - Store all reservations - Emergency contacts - Embassy information - Works offline

Using Apps in Emergencies What to Have Saved: - Emergency contact numbers (110, 119, embassy) - Hotel address in Japanese - Insurance company contact - Medical conditions and allergies in Japanese - Embassy location and phone

Keep Phone Charged: - Carry portable battery - Public USB ports available at convenience stores - Charging stations in airports/stations

Offline Functionality: - Download maps offline - Download translation packages - Save important info in notes app - Screenshot important information

17.5 Summary

Japanese culture emphasizes respect, consideration for others, and social harmony. While the rules and customs may seem overwhelming at first, remember that Japanese people are generally understanding and forgiving of foreign visitors who make honest efforts to be respectful.

Key Takeaways:

Regional Differences: - Tokyo: Fast, formal, expensive, English-friendly - Osaka: Friendly, casual, food-focused, great value - Kyoto: Traditional, refined, cultural heart - Hakone: Relaxed, nature-focused, onsen culture

Etiquette Essentials: - Bow when greeting and thanking - Remove shoes at appropriate times - Never stick chopsticks in rice - Give and receive gifts with both hands - Wash before entering onsen - Respect temple and shrine customs - Be quiet on trains - Never eat while walking

Safety: - Japan is extremely safe - Natural disasters are the main risk - Know emergency numbers: 110 (police), 119 (ambulance) - Get travel insurance - Download safety apps - Keep emergency contacts saved

The most important thing is to approach Japanese culture with respect, observe what others are doing, and make genuine efforts to follow local customs. Japanese people appreciate foreigners who try to understand their culture, and small mistakes are usually forgiven with grace.

Enjoy your time in Japan, and remember: when in doubt, observe the locals and follow their lead!

End of Section IV: Cultural Guide