

## Local Guide

### Weather

It is relatively sunny with clear weather in May in Japan. The temperature can rise during the day time.  
Average Daytime High: 24°C (75°F)                      Average Nighttime Low: 15°C (59°F)

### Currency

The yen is the official currency of Japan. Foreign currency exchange is available at banks and hotels, but please note that you are required to present your passport wherever you choose to exchange money in Japan.

### Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely accepted in Japan. However, small shops at train stations, convenience stores, vending machines and some train ticket machines may only take cash. It is highly recommended that you bring some cash with you for small purchases and for getting around.

### Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are accepted at most hotels and banks in Japan.

### ATMs

Japanese ATM services are provided through a combination of traditional ATMs and CDs (cash dispensers) that only process withdrawals. ATMs and CDs are widely available, but do not usually accept foreign debit and credit cards unless they are operated by an international bank. The only places you can withdraw cash using foreign debit/credit cards are at the airport, post offices and 7-Eleven convenience stores. The machines have an English menu and will take major debit and credit cards including Visa, Plus, Mastercard, Maestro, Cirrus, American Express and JCB.

### Tipping

Service charges are usually included, and tipping is simply not a custom in Japan. Not only are tips not expected, in most cases if you try to leave a tip you'll be turned down. To show your gratification, a smile and a simple "Thank you" or "Arigato" is all that's expected and will be greatly appreciated.

### Business Hours

Banks:	9:00 - 15:00 (closed on weekends)
Post Offices:	9:00 - 17:00
Supermarkets:	9:00 - 20:00 (closed on weekends)
Department stores:	10:00 - 20:00
Restaurants:	9:00 - 23:00
Bars:	18:00 - 24:00
Convenience stores:	24 hours

\* Please note that these are just general guidelines and opening hours may vary.

### Water

It is safe to drink tap water in Japan unless indicated otherwise.  
You can easily purchase bottled mineral water at stores and vending machines as well.

**Smoking**

Many urban areas now prohibit smoking in public spaces, including on streets and in most train stations. Also some restaurants have either created designated smoking areas, have introduced non-smoking sections or have no-smoking rules during lunch hours.

**Tax**

The consumption tax in Japan (the equivalent of VAT or GST) is 8% and is generally included in the price shown on the price tag.

**Cell phones**

NTT Docomo, Softbank, Au, KDDI and Y-mobile are major cell phone carriers in Japan. While Wi-Fi has become increasingly available in many places, you should not assume that you will always be able to use Wi-Fi, and you should also understand that Wi-Fi connectivity may vary from place to place.

**Electricity**

Voltage: 100 Volts  
Frequency: 60 Hz in Western Japan (including Osaka)  
50 Hz in Eastern Japan (including Tokyo)  
Plugs: two, non-polarized pins

**Transportation**

The Japanese public transportation system (railways and buses) is very efficient. Taxis are another convenient way to get around. However, not all taxi drivers speak English, so we suggest that you have the address or a map of your destination handy when taking a taxi.

**Safety**

Although Japan is considered to be one of the safest countries in the world, petty crimes such as pick-pocketing do sometimes occur. Accordingly, you should always look after your personal belongings, especially in crowded places.