

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

Those who live in Japan for the first time may initially feel flustered at various customs and practices that are different from those in their countries. But there is no need to worry. Once you get used to these customs, life will be much easier. This chapter, “O Other daily life issues,” explains rules and manners specific to Japan and general daily life issues including putting out garbage, keeping pets and using public services.

### 1 Personal seals

#### 1-1 Making a registered seal and a general seal

In Japan, we use personal seals (called inkan or hanko) with the family name or first name inscribed in place of signatures. You need two kinds of seals: registered seal (jitsu-in) and general seal (mitome-in). For details, please refer to "[D Other notifications, 5 Personal seals.](#)"





## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

There are many daily life rules and manners as well as lifestyle habits that are particular to Japan. This section provides concise information necessary for living comfortably in Japan, including details on putting out garbage, keeping pets, dealing with noise, room use, interaction with the neighbors and ceremonial occasions.

### 2-1 National holidays in Japan

There are 15 national holidays in Japan. Although schools, government offices and most companies are closed on national holidays, shopping centers and department stores are open as on Sundays.

#### ●List of national holidays

January 1	New Year's Day	Celebrate the start of the year
Second Monday of January	Coming-of-Age Day	Celebration for new adults to encourage them to live independently as responsible members of society.
February 11	National Foundation Day	Commemorate the foundation of the nation and foster love for the nation.
Around March 20 (varies every year)	Vernal Equinox Day	Admire nature and cherish the livings.
April 29	Showa Day	Reflect on the Showa era marked by the recovery after tumultuous years, and contemplate the future of the nation.
May 3	Constitution Day	Commemorate the enforcement of the Constitution of Japan and pray for the growth of the nation.
May 4	Greenery Day	Get close to nature and be grateful for its benefits, so as to nurture a rich spirit.
May 5	Children's Day	Respect the individuality of children and ensure their happiness, while giving thanks to mothers.
Third Monday of July	Marine Day	Appreciate the benefit of the ocean and pray for prosperity of Japan as a maritime nation.
August 11	Mountain Day	Obtain opportunities to get familiar with mountains and appreciate blessings from mountains
Third Monday of September	Respect-for-the-Aged Day	Pay respect to the elderly who had long contributed to society, and celebrate their longevity.
Around September 23 (varies every year)	Autumnal Equinox Day	Pay homage to our ancestors and commemorate the deceased
Second Monday of October	Health-Sports Day	Enjoy sport and foster sound bodies and minds.
November 3	Culture Day	Promote culture with love for peace and freedom.
November 23	Labor Thanksgiving Day	Value labor, congratulate production and thank one another.

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

December 23	The Emperor's Birthday	Commemorate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.
-------------	------------------------	---





## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-2 Rules/behavior for daily life: Garbage

#### (1) Basic rules for putting out garbage, collection days

Household garbage is collected by the municipalities (city, ward, town or village), which must be put out on set days and in a prescribed manner. We advise you to first get a pamphlet concerning garbage treatment from the municipal administrative office, so as to confirm on the locations, days and times of garbage collection as well as on the garbage separation policy. If you live in an apartment or housing complex, you should confirm the matter with the apartment manager.

#### (2) Garbage separation

Garbage separation policy varies by region. There are three broad categories of garbage for disposal purposes: combustibles, non-combustibles, and bulk garbage. Roughly speaking, garbage is separated as follows:

Combustibles	Kitchen and other food garbage, papers, woods, clothes (some of them are treated as recyclables in certain municipalities).	
Non-combustibles	Metals, glasses, porcelains, compact appliances, plastics, rubber products, etc.	
Bulk garbage	Furniture, bedding, home appliances (excluding air conditioner, television, refrigerator and laundry machine) exceeding 30 cubic centimeters in size that become useless in households, bicycles, etc.	
Recyclables	In some municipalities, cans, jars and glass bottles, PET bottles, paper packages, newspapers, etc., are collected separately as recyclables. * You need to ask the municipal administrative office for a pamphlet with details on garbage separation, so as to comply with the separation policy of that municipality.	

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

Note: Different expressions are used for types of trash depending on the region: for example, "Kanen-gomi / Funen-gomi," "Moeru-gomi / Moenai-gomi," "Moyaseru-gomi / Moyasenai-gomi," and so on for distinguishing combustibles and non-combustibles.

It used to be that the items that produce toxic gas when burned or heat up to the extent of damaging the incinerator were generally considered "non-combustibles." Recently, however, municipalities are introducing different criteria on separating garbage, so you need to be careful.

Some types of garbage, even if combustible, must be separated as "non-combustibles" in certain municipalities due to their distinct garbage treatment methods and community rules.

Garbage is separated based on how the municipal rule determines "combustibles" and "non-combustibles," or what they treat as recyclables, rather than whether it is physically combustible.

### **(3) Illegal dumping**

Garbage disposed of improperly will not be collected. "Illegal dumping," meaning disposing garbage at places other than the set locations without permission, is subject to punishment by law. You should never dump things illegally, as such acts will cause a nuisance to the neighbors and bring negative impacts to the surrounding environment.

### **(4) Anti-Littering Ordinance**

A number of municipalities have stipulated "anti-littering ordinance" to prohibit the littering of cigarette butts and cans on streets and other public space. In serious cases, the offender will be fined or have his/her name publicized. Even if there is no such ordinance, you should never litter.

### **(5) About how to dispose of bulk garbage**

Municipalities have different ways of collecting large size garbage such as furniture and electric appliances (excluding air conditioner, television, refrigerator, freezer and laundry machine).

In some places, certain days are set for collecting bulk garbage. In other places, you need to notify the municipal administrative office in advance, and then dispose of the garbage on the assigned day. There are also some places that require you to pay collection fees in advance. Collection fees may vary according to the size and kind of garbage.

Please confirm with the municipality or sanitation office on how to dispose of bulk garbage. Also, when disposing large-scale garbage en masse for moving out, please consult the municipal administrative office.

### **(6) About items for electric appliance recycling**

According to the Home Appliance Recycling Law (Law for Recycling of Specified Kinds of Home Appliances), air conditioner, television, refrigerator, freezer and laundry machine cannot be collected for mass disposal. Please request the retailer of original purchase or future purchase for replacement to pick up unnecessary items with fees.





## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-3 Rules/behavior for daily life: How to keep pets

#### (1) Registration of dogs

If you have a dog that is more than 90 days old, you must register the dog at the city, ward, town or village office. After completing the registration, you will be given a dog license tag (certification). Since the license tag is required for the life of the dog, it would be good to attach the license tag to the dog's collar. In the event that the dog runs away from home or becomes lost somewhere, if the person who finds it contacts the municipal administrative office or the public health center, it is almost certain that the dog can be returned to the registered owner.

The pet owner is responsible for cleaning up after the dog when out for a walk. You should take such supplies along with you when you go out for a walk. Also, there are very few apartment or condominium buildings in Japan that allow pets. Before moving in with your pet, it would be advisable for you to first confirm with the building manager or owner whether pets are allowed. Dogs that are left unleashed may cause accidents or be a nuisance to others, so please keep your dog on a leash.

#### (2) Rabies vaccination

The owner of a dog that is more than 90 days old is required by law to have their pet vaccinated against rabies once a year. Rabies shots are given collectively once a year, and all registered dog owners will be notified of the vaccination period. A notice about vaccinations is also published in the newsletter issued by the municipal administrative office. If you cannot have your pet vaccinated during the group vaccination period, you can have the animal vaccinated at a local veterinary hospital. You will receive a vaccination certificate from the veterinary hospital, which you must then bring to the municipal administrative office to apply for a certification tag for rabies vaccination.

#### (3) If you can no longer keep your pet

Pets should be treated like a family member. You are obliged to keep them with care until the end of their life. If a situation arises that force you to part with your pets, you should first find the next owner. Only if you cannot find the prospective owner despite all efforts, consult a healthcare center as to how to dispose of them.

#### (4) If your pet dies

When your dog or cat dies, in some municipalities you can have it cremated at funeral hall (fees required). For details, please refer to the municipal administrative office.



## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-4 Rules/behavior for daily life: Noise from everyday living

Various kinds of noise inside and around house caused by daily life activities are collectively called "daily life noise." Daily life noise includes (1) noises from housing equipment and facilities such as air conditioners, laundry machines, baths and toilets; (2) noises from audio equipment including pianos, stereos and televisions; and (3) pet noises caused by dogs and cats. Sometimes, sounds of using the stairs, opening and closing doors, and beating the dust out of mattresses are considered "noises."

Particularly in apartments and other housing complexes, trouble has often occurred concerning sounds heard from the adjacent floors. Although the degree to which people are irritated by complaint-causing noises varies by the individual, in the quiet of nighttime even a small sound can sound loud. At least after 21:00, it is advisable to keep the noise down.



## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-5 Lifestyle habits: Baths

#### (1) At Home

In Japan, "bathroom" (called *furo*) in home usually consists of a bathtub and a separate space to wash. People can relax in the tub after washing body and hair in the washing space.

In many households, especially if living with family members, people do not refill the bathtub for every person, but instead keep the same water in until the last person takes a bath. To keep the water clean, you need to wash yourself thoroughly before soaking in the bathtub. In that way, remaining water can be used for laundry, or other needs in case of emergency such as earthquake.

In Japan, bathrooms tends to get mildewed due to high humidity. Regular cleaning can prevent this.

#### (2) At *sentō* (public baths)

You can use paid public baths called *sentō* if you do not have a bathroom in your home. *Sentō* has separate rooms for males and females, each consisting of a big common tub and large washing space. When using *sentō*, you must bring towels, soaps and other amenities for yourself (wash-basins are provided). Sharing a common tub with other people, you must always wash your body first before soaking, so that everyone can feel comfortable bathing. Available times and fees can vary slightly depending on the establishment. Usually they are open from around 15:00 to 23:00, with the fee around 400 yen for one adult.

In some places called "super *sentō*" and "*kenko rando* (health spa)," fees can be higher (somewhere around 800-2000 yen) as they have more facilities such as variety tubs and saunas.

People with tattoos are not admitted in most of these places.



## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-6 Lifestyle habits: Toilets

In Japan, there are basically two types of toilet: a Japanese-style (*washiki*) toilet with a bowl positioned at the height of the floor, which you squat over facing the hemispherical hood, and a seat-type Western-style (*yoshiki*) toilet. Most public buildings have restrooms equipped with these two types.

Some restrooms have slippers provided. In that case, you must change to slippers, but make sure to take them off when leaving. Occasionally, you may come across public restrooms without toilet papers, so it is advisable to always carry pocket-sized tissue papers with you, especially for women.



## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-7 Lifestyle habits: Indoors

#### (1) Taking off your shoes at the entrance hall

In most homes in Japan, people take off their shoes at the entrance hall when entering home. Some people use slippers or indoor shoes at home except on tatami mats. In a building used by many people such as schools and hospitals, they may keep their shoes on, or else change to slippers provided.

#### (2) Futon and tatami mats

*Futon* (Japanese-style bedding) are usually laid out directly over the *tatami* mats, and are folded during the daytime to be kept inside a closet. Like bed linens, *futon* absorb sweat from the body, so it is advisable to hang them outside to dry on sunny days.

Bedding basically consists of a mattress-like *futon* called *shiki-futon*, a comforter-like futon called *kake-buton* and a pillow. Some people use a hard mattress under *shiki-futon*.

To keep *tatami* mats clean, it is best to use vacuum cleaners and brooms regularly, and occasionally wipe them with dampened (well wrung out) cloth.

### 2-8 Town associations/neighborhood associations

Most places in Japan have community associations called *chonai-kai* (town association) or *jichi-kai* (neighborhood association). For details, please refer to "[M Housing/Moving, 1-1 Japanese Housing, \(6\) Town and Neighborhood Associations.](#)"



## 2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

### 2-9 Ceremonial occasions

People in Japan hold ceremonies known as *kei-cho* (*kei* stands for congratulation, *cho* for condolence) for special occasions which are collectively called *kan-kon-so-sai*: *kan* stands for turning points of life such as birth and coming of age, *kon* stands for marriage and wedding, *so* stands for funeral and memorial ceremony, and *sai* stands for annual celebrations such as New Year's Day, mid-summer Bon Festival, July 7 Tanabata Festival and Shichigosan (literally meaning "seven-five-three," for celebrating children's growth). Among these, *kon* and *so* ceremonies in particular have many rules and practices to be observed. You may feel more comfortable about these by asking for a brief explanation from older Japanese acquaintances.

When a close friend is having a celebratory event such as marriage, birth, employment or entrance to school, there is a custom for you to present goods or money. For giving money, you put it inside a special envelope called *shugi-fukuro*.

When attending funerals, men wear black suits, white shirts and black ties. Women also usually wear black. For sending money, you put it inside a special envelope called *fushugi-fukuro* and hand to the receptionist. Details for funerals and weddings can vary depending on the religion, so it is best to seek advice from people familiar with the ceremonials.

Kinds of ceremony	Meaning and content	Rules and practices
Kan	Turning points of life such as birth and coming of age	There is a custom to present goods or money to a close friend having a celebratory event. Gift money is put inside a special envelope called <i>shugi-fukuro</i> .
Kon	Marriage and wedding	There is a custom to present goods or money to a close friend at marriage. Gift money is put inside a special envelope called <i>shugi-fukuro</i> .
So	Funeral and memorial ceremony	When attending funerals, men wear black suits, white shirts and black ties. Women also usually wear black. For sending money, put it inside a special envelope called <i>fushugi-fukuro</i> and hand to the receptionist.
Sai	Annual celebrations such as New Year's Day, Bon Festival, Tanabata Festival and Shichigosan	

\* Details can vary depending on the religion and the region



### 3 Basic services in daily life

This section explains about lifeline utilities: electricity, gas and water, as well as postal services inside and outside Japan and use of public transportations.

#### 3-1 Electricity

##### (1) How to start using services, electricity fees

Electricity is provided to each house via electric meter. Electricity is stopped for unused houses. When moving in, make sure to notify the electricity company in advance to have access to power. After completing the application, you can have access to power by turning on the circuit breaker switch. Electricity supplied to homes has an average voltage of 100V. Appliances made in other countries have different voltage settings, so please purchase adapters (available in appliance stores) before using them.

Electric bill is sent every month with the statement of payments and other details. A person in charge checks the meter before sending the bill. Payment can be made through automatic transfer from your bank or postal savings accounts or directly at banks, postal offices and convenience stores.

##### (2) Frequency

Electricity has a frequency of 50Hz in eastern Japan and 60Hz in western Japan. Most electric appliances sold in Japan are adapted to both frequencies, so the difference causes almost no problem. Nevertheless, if you are moving to the region with the different frequency, or if you live near the border and are uncertain which your area belongs to, please consult a nearby appliance store just in case.

##### (3) In the case of a power outage

In case of a sudden blackout, first check the circuit breaker. Circuit breaker is located at the wall or above the entrance. It is good to check its location when moving in. If the breaker switch is down, turn it up (ON) to have power returned. If power is still not returned, contact the electricity company. For that, you need to have a "contract number."

Even when there is no general power outage, power can sometimes be cut off automatically if you are using too many appliances at once. If the breaker switch is down, unplug all appliances you are currently using, and turn the breaker switch back on.

##### (4) Upon cancellation (moving out)

When moving out to return to your country or for other reasons, you must notify the electricity company at least three or four days in advance. After clarifying your name, address, day of moving out, new contact information,

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

and contract number, they will give you instructions to follow. In most cases, electricity fees are settled through account transfer or by having the bill sent to your new address.

### ●Procedures outline

To start using service	Notify the electricity company. After completing the application, turn on the circuit breaker switch.
Frequency	Eastern Japan: 50Hz Western Japan: 60Hz
In case of a sudden blackout	[Power outage] Check the circuit breaker. If the breaker switch is down, turn it up (ON). If power is not returned, contact the electricity company (need to have a “contract number”). [Automatic power off] If you are using too many appliances at once, unplug all appliances, and turn the breaker switch back on.
Upon cancellation (moving out)	Notify the electricity company at least three or four days in advance, and follow their instructions.



### 3 Basic services in daily life

#### 3-2 Gas

##### (1) City gas and LP gas

There are two kinds of household gas: city gas (toshi-gas) and household LP gas (propane gas). Each requires special equipment. City gas equipment cannot be used for propane gas, nor propane gas equipment for city gas. Identify which gas you are using, and use proper equipment accordingly. When purchasing new equipment or moving from other regions, be sure to confirm the kind of gas you are using.

Gas fees can be paid in the same way as electricity fees.

##### (2) How to start using services

- City gas: Notify the gas company of the day you start using the gas. A person in charge will come to open the valve. Safety check and explanation on use will be provided at the same time.
- LP gas: If your house is equipped for propane gas (LP gas), contact the retailer to apply for using the gas. As in the case of city gas, a person in charge will come to check the equipment and give explanation on how to use and handle them.

##### (3) Gas leak

The smell of gas, an orange flame remaining when using the kitchen stove, and an unusual odor when using gas equipment are some of the signs indicating a gas leak, which can cause fires and other major accidents. When you notice these signs, take the following steps

1. Shut off the gas valve and open the window;
2. Switch off all gas and electric appliances;
3. Contact the gas company.

In order to not panic in emergencies like a gas leak, have the contact phone number of the nearby gas company outlet posted where it can be easily seen.

##### (4) Upon cancellation (moving out)

When moving out, make sure to notify the gas company in advance and let them know the day you will stop using the service. A person in charge will come to close the valve and settle the fees.

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

### ●Procedures outline

To start using service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• City gas: Notify the gas company of the day you will start using the gas. A person in charge will come to open the valve.</li><li>• LP gas: Contact the retailer and apply for using the gas.</li></ul>	
In case of a gas leak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signs of a gas leak:</li></ul>	There is a smell of gas. When you use the gas cooker, tall orange flames emerge. There is a strange, unpleasant smell when you use gas equipment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Steps:</li></ul>	1 Shut off the gas valve and open the window; 2 Switch off all gas and electric appliances; 3 Contact the gas company.
Upon cancellation (moving out)	Notify the gas company in advance and let them know the day you will stop using the service.	



### 3 Basic services in daily life

#### 3-3 Water services

You need to register and pay fees for using water and sewage services. Some regions have sewage lines fully developed, while others do not. Payment procedures also vary by region. So please confirm the matter first at a municipal administrative office outlet.

##### (1) Starting and canceling water services

When you start using water services, or stop using services for moving out or some other reason, notify the waterworks department of the region or the department in charge of waterworks at the municipal administrative office. After clarifying your name, address, and day of moving, you will be given instructions to follow including how to pay the fees.

In most cases water fees are paid based on meter checks done every two months, but in some regions meters are checked every month. After the meter check, the bill will be sent with the statement. As in the case of electricity and gas, water fees can be paid either through account transfer or directly at banks, convenience stores, etc.

##### (2) Waterworks troubles

In the case of waterworks troubles such as a pipe explosion, wind the outlet with a piece of cloth or something to keep the water from spattering, and turn the stop cock right (clockwise). After taking a tentative step to stop water, apply for repair by contacting waterworks department of the municipal administrative office.

##### (3) Sewage works and waste removal

Sewage service is provided when you start using water service. Sewage fees are billed together with water fees, which are paid based on the amount of waste removed or by capitation.

If your house is not connected to a sewer line, you need to have toilet wastes removed, usually by contacting a licensed waste removal company in the neighborhood directly and have them come to your home. Fees are paid based on the amount of waste removed or by capitation. Since the fee structures vary by the municipality, please contact the municipal administrative office for details.

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

### ●Procedures outline

Starting and canceling water services	Notify the waterworks department of the region or the department in charge of waterworks at the municipal administrative office. After clarifying your name, address, and day of moving, you will be given instructions to follow including how to pay the fees.
Waterworks troubles	In the case of a pipe explosion, wind the outlet with a piece of cloth or something to keep the water from spattering and turn the stop cock right (clockwise) to stop water; then apply for repair.
Sewage works and waste removal	<Sewage service> Started at the same time as water service. <If your house is not connected to a sewer line> Need to have toilet wastes removed. Consult the municipal administrative office for information on a waste removal company, application, fees, etc.



### 3 Basic services in daily life

#### 3-4 Postal services

In Japan post offices and mailboxes are identified by a "〒" mark. The post office does not only handle mail services such as letter, parcel and express mail delivery, it also handles savings services (Japan Post Bank) and insurance services (JP Insurance).

Mail services are available from 9:00 to 17:00 on weekdays (except holidays). Some post offices are open for counter services at nights and on weekends.

Deposit and insurance services are available from 9:00 to 16:00 on weekdays (except holidays).

Post office website     <http://www.post.japanpost.jp/> (Japanese site)  
                                 <http://www.post.japanpost.jp/english/> (English site)

##### (1) Domestic mail

Domestic mail includes a postcard, letter, parcel post and booklet parcel post. Post office-printed postcards and postal stamps are sold in post offices. Privately issued postcards require a 62 yen stamp. Express mails, which are delivered in preference to other mails, require extra fees.

Parcel post (nicknamed "You-Pack") is a parcel delivery service done in the same way as a home delivery service collectively called *takuhaibin*.\* The parcel will arrive at destination within the day following reception (except in some regions).

The parcel will arrive at destination within the day following reception (except in some regions).

Address in Japan starts with a postal code, followed by prefecture (*to, do, fu or ken*), city or county (*shi or gun*) and town or village (*machi or mura*), then by street (*tori*), district (*chiku*) or subdivision (*machi or cho*), and then by smaller divisions like (*chome*). Ward (*ku* as in *Chuo-ku*) comes after city (*shi*) like "Sapporo-shi Chuo-ku" or after to (meaning "metropolis") as in the case of the 23 Special Wards, such as "Tokyo-to Chiyoda-ku." Addresses end with a bloc number in the case of a house, or apartment numbers (*banchi*, or *ban* and *go* such as "X ban Y go").

Example:

〒100-0013

Tokyo-to Chiyoda-ku Kasumigaseki 3 chome 3 ban 2

If you send a moving-out notification to the post office, mails sent to the old address will be transferred to the new address for a year after moving out.

\* Home delivery service (*takuhaibin*)

Parcel delivery service provided by a private carriage company. Orders are handled at various outlets such as convenience stores and retail stores. Depending on the company, you can call them to have the parcels

# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

collected at your door. There are various kinds of services including delivery on designated date, delivery at night, and delivery of chilled or frozen items. When traveling abroad, you can use the service to have the luggage delivered to the airport counter. For details, please contact the carriage company.

### **(2) International mail**

When sending a letter or parcel (including luggage) abroad, you have three options: airmail, sea mail or SAL mail. Each charges different fees depending on the weight and destination. SAL mail is an international economy mail which is treated as sea mail inside Japan and a country of destination but uses an air carrier in between the countries. Delivery days are as follows, in order of speed: airmail 3-9 days, SAL mail 2-4 weeks, sea mail about 10-80 days. For details, please contact a nearby post office.





### 3 Basic services in daily life

Railway, bus and taxi are some of the means of transportation available in Japan. Rules for using trains and buses such as buying tickets and getting on and off may vary depending on the region. Please familiarize yourself with the regional rules so you will not be confused when traveling.

#### 3-5 Railways (trains)

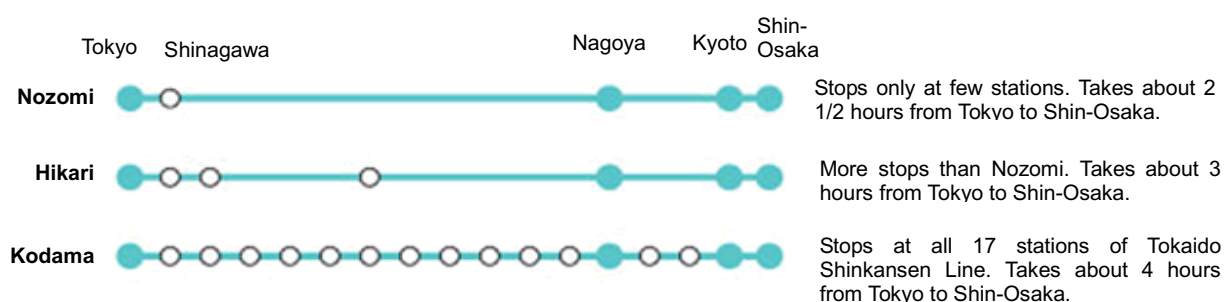
##### (1) Types of railway

Railways in Japan include JR lines operated by Japan Railways Group, railway lines operated by prefecture (or the Metropolitan Government in case of Tokyo), city, town or village, and private railway lines operated by private companies. There is a variety of railways such as subway, monorail and tram.

Trains are classified as follows, in order of speed: *shinkansen* (bullet train), *tokkyu* (limited express), *kyuko* (express), *kaisoku* (speed train) and *futsu* (normal) \*. Trains other than *futsu* do not stop at all stations. So confirm the stops with a route map to get used to the system.

\* Depending on the region and railway line, there are other classifications such as *tsukin-kaisoku* (speed commuter train), *kaisoku-tokkyu* (rapid limited express) and *junkyu* (local express), with different speeds and stops.

Frequency of stops for *Tokaido shinkansen* trains (Example: Tokyo-Osaka)



# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

JR local line or private railway line trains and number of stops (Example)



### (2) Checking with route maps

When using the train, check the route map posted above the vending machines to figure out the destination and fare. In case of JR, trains going in direction towards Tokyo are called "*nobori* (up)" and those in direction away from Tokyo are called "*kudari* (down)." For loop lines, outbound trains are called "*sotomawari*" and inbound train "*uchimawari*."

### (3) Fares

When using the train, you usually pay normal fare (*futsu-unchin*) which is charged by distance. JR express trains like *shinkansen*, *tokkyu* and *kyuko* require extra fees (*tokkyu-ryokin* or *kyuko-ryokin*) in addition to normal fare. Sleeper trains (*shindai-ressha*) and reserved seats (*shitei-seki*) require further additional fees (*shindai-ryokin* and *shitei-ryokin*, respectively).

Children under 12 years of age can ride at half price. Up to two children under six are free of charge if accompanied by adult; if there are more than two, additional children are charged the same fare as an adult.

### (4) Purchasing tickets

Tickets are bought either by using vending machine or at the station counter by indication the destination. If you are not used to the vending machine, it is safer to purchase ticket at the counter.

Besides normal ticket, there are various kinds of tickets as follows:

Commuter pass ( <i>teiki-ken</i> )	There are two kinds, one for students and other for working people. Pass can be purchased for one month, three months, six months, one year, etc.
Coupon tickets ( <i>kaisu-ken</i> )	You can buy tickets in bulk between certain stations. Usually, you get 11 tickets for the price of ten tickets.
Round-trip ticket ( <i>ofuku-kippu</i> )	You get outbound and return tickets at once, sometimes at discount price.



# Multilingual Living Information



## O Other daily life issues

[▶ Back to the top of O Other daily life issues](#)

One-day ticket (ichinichi joshu-ken)	Value ticket that lets you get on and off as many times as you like during the day, including return trips, within the designated area.
IC card	There are "Suica" (for JR East Japan), "TOICA" (for JR Tokai), "ICOCA" (for JR West Japan), "PASMO" (for major railways and bus routes in Tokyo Metropolitan Area), etc. There are cards you can charge in advance (prepaid type), and cards with which the charges are calculated afterwards (postpaid type).

### (5) Automatic ticket gates

When entering the station through the automatic ticket gate, you insert the ticket into the slot as you pass by and the ticket will appear on the slot at the other side of the gate. Do not forget to take the ticket back. When exiting station, the ticket inserted will not reappear on the other side of the gate, so just pass by.

If there is no automatic gate, you show the ticket to the staff to have it stamped.



### 3 Basic services in daily life

#### 3-6 Buses (route buses)

##### (1) Arrivals and departures

Most buses stop at major railway stations for arrival and departure.

##### (2) Timetables

Timetables are posted at bus stops. In many cases, buses are scheduled around the railway timetables. In cities, buses are scheduled independently of the railway timetables, and there can be delays due to traffic jams and other reasons.

##### (3) Destinations

The destination is shown above the windshield of the bus. If you are not sure, feel free to ask the driver.

##### (4) Riding buses

When the bus arrives, raise your hand if you want to get on. Depending on the bus, you pay the fare in advance as you get on from the front, or you pick up a numbered ticket as you get on from the middle or rear and pay later when you get off. The fare for children under age 12 is half-priced (rounded up to the nearest ten yen). Up to two small children (under age six) are free of charge if accompanied by adult; if there are more than two, additional children are charged half-price.

##### (5) Getting off buses

When your destination is announced as the next stop, press the "get off" button. The usual system is that you look at the display near the front to find out the fare corresponding to the number on the ticket. Put the fare into the collecting box (*unchin-bako*) together with the ticket. If you do not have small change, use the change machine located at the side of the collecting box.

##### (6) Discount systems

Buses also have discount systems such as commuter passes, coupon tickets and prepaid cards