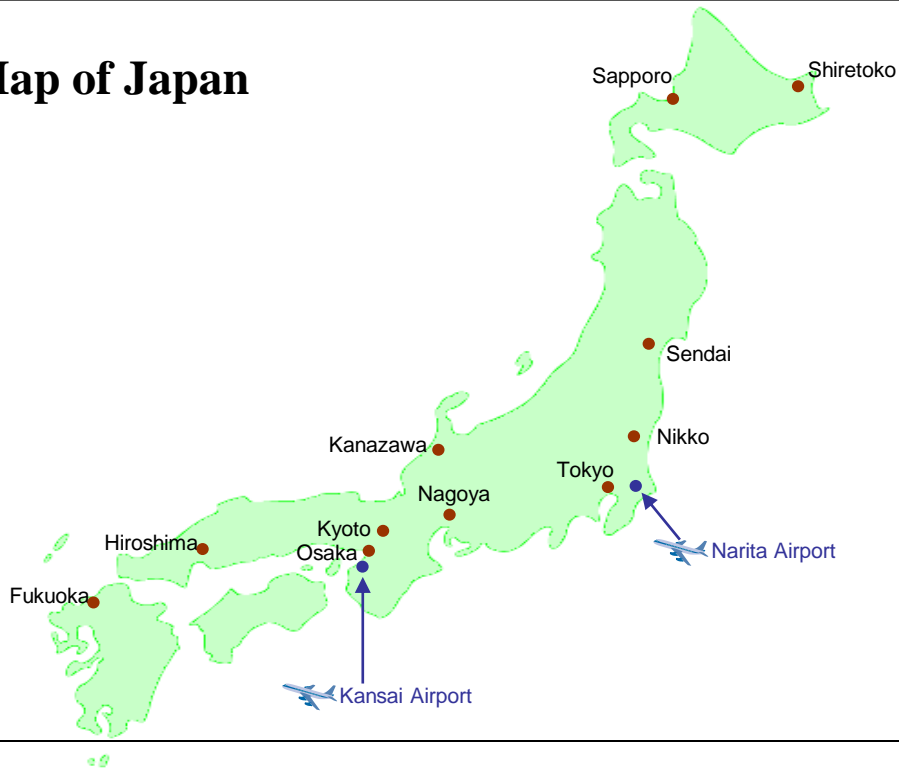


GENERAL INFORMATION

Geography/ Weather

Map of Japan



GEOGRAPHY

Japan is situated in northeastern Asia between the North Pacific and the Sea of Japan.

The area of Japan is 377,873 square kilometers, nearly equivalent to Germany and Switzerland combined or slightly smaller than California.

Japan consists of four major islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu) surrounded by more than 4,000 smaller islands. Japan's topographical features include coastlines with varied scenery, towering mountains, which are very often volcanic and twisted valleys that invite visitors into the mysterious world of nature.

WEATHER

The best seasons for visiting Tokyo are spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November). Cherry blossoms are in full bloom from the end of March to the beginning of April.

Everything is bursting with green in May. Trees in Tokyo's gardens and parks turn a variety of autumn colors in middle and late November. The rainy season lasts from early June to the middle of July.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Visas /Language/Time Zone/Holidays/Electricity/Tipping

VISAS

Japan has visa-exemption agreement with 57 countries. A citizen of any of these countries who intends to stay in Japan no longer than that period specified in the relevant agreement requires no visa. For more information, contact your nearest Japanese embassy or consulate. The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan included a list of Japanese embassies and consulates.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Japan is Japanese. Many Japanese can understand English.

TIME ZONE

All of the Japan is the same time zone. Tokyo time is 9 hours ahead of GMT. Tokyo is 14 hours from EMT and 17 hours ahead from PST. Japan does not go on daylight saving time.

HOLIDAYS

Japan has three peak vacation seasons when many people in Tokyo travel to the countryside or go abroad. These are the New Year Holiday period (Dec 29-Jan 3; banks and shops stay open through Dec31), Golden Week (April 29-May 5 and adjacent weekends), and O-bon (a week around Aug 15). During these periods Tokyo tends to be quieter, and city trains and roads are emptier. Note that most museums are closed from Around Dec 29-Jan 3, and that most shops and restaurants are closed on Jan 1. From Jan 1 to 3, major temples and shrines are packed with visitors who come to pray for a happy and prosperous year. If you don't mind crowds, Jan 1 is a great opportunity to see women in kimono. The various national holidays In Golden Week are marked by associated events whose venues and adjacent areas get very crowded.

Public Holidays :

Jan 1	New Year's Day	3rd Mon in Jul	Sea Day
2nd Mon in Jan	Coming-of-Age Day	3rd Mon in Sep	Respect for the Aged Day
Feb 11	National Foundation Day	Sep 23	Autumnal Equinox Day
Mar 20 or 21	Vernal Equinox Day	2nd Mon in Oct	Health-Sports Day
Apr 29	Greenery Day	Nov 3	Cultural Day
May 3	Constitution Memorial Day	Nov 23	Labor Thanksgiving Day
May 4	National Holiday	Dec 23	Emperor's Birthday
May 5	Children's Day		

ELECTRICITY

100 volts AC. 50 Hz in Tokyo and eastern Japan, 60 Hz in Osaka and western Japan. Sockets take a two-prong plug with flat-sided prongs.

TIPPING

Hotels and some restaurants include a service charge in their bills. It is not necessary to tip for service in Japan.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Currency/Health/Useful Telephone Numbers

CURRENCY



The currency is the yen.
US\$0.84= ¥100
(as of April, 2003)



(Photo Courtesy JNTO)

◆ Currency Exchange

At least twenty major currencies can be exchanged for yen at Narita Airport's currency exchange centers, open from 6:00AM until the last flight arrives. US dollars and some other major currencies can be changed at city banks any large post offices in Tokyo. Bank exchange rates vary slightly. Banks are open 9:00-15:00 on weekdays. Post offices can change money from 9:00-16:00. You can also change money in the evening at some money dealers, as well as at authorized hotels and department stores. Changing traveler's check should be no problem at banks and major hotels. Some larger stores may also be able to change them.

◆ Cash and Credit Cards

Cash can be carried in Japan without anxiety. You will need cash for train/bus/taxi fares, admission to museums, and smaller dining spots and stores. Major credit cards are widely accepted.

◆ Consumption Tax

Consumption tax (VAT) is 5%, and usually added at the cash register.
Some large department stores may able to offer a refund.

HEALTH

◆ Drinking Water

Tap water is safe to drink anywhere in Japan. Mineral water including major imported brands can be easily obtained from super markets, Convenience stores and other similar places.

◆ Inoculations

No inoculations required for entering Japan from anywhere around the world.

◆ Hospitals

Medical systems and facilities in Japan are well established so that you can expect to receive a high standard medical treatment, should you have a problem with your health during your stay.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Useful Telephone Numbers

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

◆Emergency

Police Phone: 110

Fire and Ambulance Phone: 119

Police in English phone : 03-3501-0110

◆Flight information

Narita Phone: 0476-34-5000

Haneda Phone: 03-5757-8111

Kansai Phone: 0724-55-2500

CLIMATE / AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

Winter (December - February)

The temperature rarely drops below 0° C in the plains along the Pacific coast during wintertime. It is also quite dry and very often sunny. Central Japan and Northern Japan are highly reputed regions for winter sports. Southern Japan is comparatively mild and pleasant in winter. Clothing: overcoats, sweaters, etc.

Spring (March - May)

The plum blossom is a good sign that the cold winter will soon end and spring is just around the corner, followed by the cherry blossom at its best in the Tokyo area between the end of March and the beginning of April to bring this beautiful season to a climax. Splendid views of mountains, fields and gardens all blanketed in gentle pink abound in this season. Clothing: light jackets, light sweaters and other similar kinds of tops.

Summer (June - August)

The Japanese summer begins in June with a three to four week rainy season. This is an important time for farmers to plant rice. It becomes seriously hot and humid from July onward and many Japanese enjoy bathing in the sea and relaxing at cool resorts in mountainous areas. Summer is when many interesting festivals and other events are held all over the country. Clothing: light clothes (cardigans and other similar kinds are handy, since indoors are mostly air-conditioned.)

Autumn (September - November)

Autumn always brings such freshness with a light breeze and cool temperature after the hot and humid summer. All forests are dyed in glorious autumn colors. Chrysanthemums create beautiful displays with their abundance of flowers to enchant visitors to parks and gardens. Autumn is also the season for many exhibitions, music concerts and sports tournaments in Japan. Clothing: light jackets, light sweaters and other similar kinds of tops.

Temperature by Month

Tokyo	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temp (F)	41	45	50	61	69	71	78	81	76	68	57	48
Temp (°C)	5	7	10	16	21	22	26	27	24	20	14	9

GENERAL INFORMATION

Access

ACCESS TO VENUE- Sophia University, Yotsuya Campus

◆From Narita Airport

Airport Limousine Bus

90 min by Airport Limousine Bus to Hotel New Otani (JPY3,000)

- 3min walk to the venue

JR Narita Express

90 min by JR Narita Express to Shinjuku Station (JPY3,110)

- 4 min by JR Chuo-Line (Destination:Tokyo Station) to Yotsuya station (JPY150)

- 3 min walk to the venue

◆From Haneda Airport

Airport Limousine Bus

55 min by Airport Limousine Bus to Hotel New Otani (JPY1,100)

- 3min walk to the venue

Monorail + JR + Metro

15 min by Tokyo Monorail to Hamamatsucho Station (JPY470)

- 7 min by JR Yamanote-Line to Tokyo station (JPY150)

- 12 min by Metro Marunouchi-Line (Destination:Shinjuku) to Yotsuya Station (JPY160)

- 3 min walk to the venue

