

2-9 Internet

There are a number of ways to get Internet in Japan. With the right plan you can use your mobile phone for all types of internet services. Both paid and free wireless (Wi-Fi) hotspots are available in Japan.

Free public Wi-Fi can be found around main train stations, tourist information centers, major shopping streets, several nationwide convenience stores like 7-Eleven and café chains like Starbucks. Registration is required to use most of these services, and in some cases must be done in advance. While some of the networks offer sign up pages in English, others do not. A few networks are also limited to specific devices (e.g., iPhone only) or restrict the content that can be accessed.



If you want to be connected to the Internet at home, you will need some form of connection and an Internet Service Provider (ISP). It is important to know that internet services in Japan are typically unbundled services, which means that one company usually provides the line and the other establishes the internet connection. The main company, which provides the line and hardware, is NTT East (http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/en/?link_eastid=ins_h004).

The two types of ISPs, called ‘プロバイダ’ (*purobaida*) in Japanese, are national providers and local providers. The many ISPs (for example Asahi Net, OCN, etc.) provide the internet connection, but unfortunately most of them only offer Japanese support.

Please inform yourself through the websites below:

<http://asahi-net.jp/en/>

<http://bbapply.com/faq/advice.html>

<https://www.ntt.com/en/index.html>

Contracts for line and internet service providers are often signed for one or two years, but differ among ISPs and the type of service. NTT East usually has a one or two year contract minimum for fiber optic lines. Costs are generally comparable and differ on average anywhere from 4,000 to 6,000 yen a month (often including modem rental). If you need to terminate a contract before the minimum contract period, you will likely have to pay a fee.

Another way of getting Internet at home (and outside) is to use a WiMax/Internet Router. WiMax router can be bought at electronic retailers, such as Bic Camera, or you can get a contract for them for example with UQ Communications or Asahi-Net.

Please inform yourself through the websites below:

<http://www.uqwimax.jp/english/>

<http://asahi-net.jp/en/service/mobile/wimax2plus/>