

1-2 Preparations to make while you are still in your home country

In order to make the transition from your home country to Japan as stress-free as possible, make sure to prepare the following things while you are still at home.

Make sure you have all necessary documents.

If you are under the age of 20 and plan on getting a mobile phone contract, download the parental consent forms and let your legal guardians fill them out. You will also need copies of your guardian's identification documents. (For more details please refer to chapter 2-7 "Telephone Service".)

If you are planning on living alone, try to find a guarantor for your apartment before you arrive to Japan and make sure to get all the necessary information and documents from them (For more details please refer to chapter 2-2 "Renting an Apartment").



Visit your doctor



Plan on visiting your doctor and getting a physical examination before you leave to ensure you are in good health. We recommend that you bring along a copy of your medical records in English in case of an emergency or if you are suffering from a chronic illness (please also refer to chapter 5 "Medical Care").

Travel insurance

Foreign nationals living in Japan for more than three months are required to join a Japanese health insurance system. But before subscribing to one of the insurance systems, you need coverage from a travel health insurance for the first days after your arrival. Check with your current health insurance provider to learn if your policy will apply while in Japan for the first days, or whether you have to purchase a supplemental foreign or travel health insurance separately (for more details please refer to chapter 5 "Medical Care").



Inform yourself about Japan



Take some time to better familiarize yourself with Japan. By knowing your soon-to-be home's culture, history, geography, economy, government, etc., even slightly, your experience in Japan will be enriched and your time spent in the country will be more meaningful. Talk to others who have been to Japan and seek opportunities to watch movies and read more about the country and its culture. Also make sure to familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook.

Money



Most international travelers use their ATM/Debit or credit cards to obtain cash in the local currency. You will need to notify your current bank and credit card company about your plans to study in Japan. Otherwise you may be stranded abroad with an unusable card.

The official currency of Japan is the Yen (JPY or ¥). When you arrive in Japan, be sure to have adequate funds to cover your first month's rent, key money and deposit, pay for transportation expenses, purchase furnishings and other necessities for your room, and any other expenses that may arise. Please make sure of how much money you will need to bring with you and read the chapter “How to find your accommodation or housing” very carefully.

Pack smart

While most things are readily available in Japan, some items may be more expensive, difficult to be mailed internationally, or simply inconvenient to purchase here, so you may wish to bring particular items with you from home. Recommendations include:

Clothes: Temperatures in the Kanto region can range from about 10 degrees Fahrenheit (around 12°C) in the winter to 100 (around 37°C) and humid in the summer. For this reason, a wide range of clothing sufficient for the entire year is necessary. Also, do not forget to pack semi-formal clothes like khakis with a white shirt for men and at least one dress or skirt for women.



Personal Items: You might want to pack deodorant (it is difficult to purchase western-style antiperspirant in Japan.), sheets/pillow (If your dorm does not provide them or you are planning on living in your own apartment.) and any over-the-counter medicines you think you may need. While it is possible to get Japanese brands of over-the-counter medicines, if there is something you are accustomed to using often (pain relievers, cold medication, etc.) you may wish to bring it with you. Also, pack copies of important documents, such as plane tickets, passports and credit cards for reference in case of an emergency.

Prescription Medications: A one-month supply of prescription medication is allowed. Medications must be in their original container with the prescription label. Most prescription drugs are permitted, including drugs that may not be available in Japan, such as birth control pills. Drugs that are hallucinogenic, narcotic, and/or psychotropic in nature will be confiscated, except in extenuating circumstances where prior approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare. If more than one month's supply is required, prior permission from the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare in Japan is required:

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html>

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/dl/qa1.pdf>

Be sure to have a copy of the prescription and/or letter from your prescribing physician explaining the nature of the medication, the purpose of taking it, recommended dosage, and frequency of ingestion.