

TRANSPORT

Tokyo's world-class, public-transport system will get you anywhere you need to go. Most places worth visiting are conveniently close to a subway or Japan Railways (JR) station. Where the rail network lets you down (though it really shouldn't), there are usually bus services – although using these can be challenging if you can't read kanji.

Most residents and visitors use the railway system far more than any other means of transport. It is reasonably priced and frequent (generally five minutes at most between trains on major lines in central Tokyo), and stations have conveniences such as left-luggage lockers for baggage storage. The only drawback is that the system shuts down at midnight or 1am and doesn't start up again until 5am or 6am.

Subway trains have a tendency to stop halfway along their route when closing time arrives. People who are stranded face an expensive taxi ride home or have to wait for the first morning train. Check schedules posted on platforms for the last train on the line if you plan to be out late.

Avoiding Tokyo's rush hour is a good idea, but might be impossible if you're on a tight schedule. Commuter congestion tends to ease between 10am and 4pm, when travelling around Tokyo – especially on the JR Yamanote Line – can actually be quite pleasant. Before 9.30am and from about 4.30pm onward there'll be cheek-to-jowl crowds on all major train and bus lines.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

AIR

International flights from all over the world land in Japan, most of them arriving in Tokyo. Tokyo is also the hub of air travel within Japan, which is extensive, reliable and safe. In many cases, flying can be faster – and not significantly more expensive – than riding the *shinkansen* (bullet train). Flying can also help you get from Japan's main hubs, such as Tokyo and Osaka, to some of the country's most far-flung destinations, such as Okinawa and Hokkaido.

Customs and immigration procedures are usually straightforward, although they're more time-consuming for *gaijin* (foreigners) than for Japanese. Note that as of 20 November 2007, non-Japanese have been fingerprinted and photographed on arrival, and are subject to intense questioning. A neat appearance will speed your passage through passport control and customs, though you can expect delays if you've entered Japan multiple times as a tourist.

Everything at Narita Airport is clearly signposted in English and you can change money in the customs halls of either terminal or in the arrival halls. The rates will be the same as those offered in town.

Airports

Tokyo has two airports: Narita, which handles most international traffic, and Haneda, which is used primarily for domestic flights.

Narita Airport (✈ flight information 0476-34-5000, general information 0476-32-2802) is 66km east of

WARNING – THINGS CHANGE

The information contained in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change: prices for international travel are volatile, routes are introduced and cancelled, schedules change, special deals come and go, and rules and visa requirements are amended. Airlines and governments seem to take pleasure in making price structures and regulations as complicated as possible. You should check directly with the airline or your travel agency to make sure you understand how the ticket you buy works. In addition, the travel industry is highly competitive, and there are many lurks and perks.

The upshot of this is that you should get opinions, quotes and advice from as many airlines and travel agencies as possible before parting with your hard-earned cash. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

For the most up-to-date travel information, check out the Lonely Planet Thorn Tree Forum at www.thorntree.lonelyplanet.com.

Tokyo, but aside from its inconvenient location, it's an excellent, modern airport with a plethora of services. It is divided into two terminals, which are connected by a free shuttle-bus service. From Terminal 1 board this bus at stop 0, and from Terminal 2 board at stops 8 and 18. Note that some of the airport's services are available only in the newer Terminal 2.

At both terminals there are post offices, currency-exchange counters and lots of restaurants and duty-free shops. Both terminals also offer left-luggage services and efficient baggage-courier services (see [right](#)).

In both Terminals 1 and 2, the travel-weary (and -dirty) will find showers and day-rooms for napping, and free children's playrooms available to departing passengers who have completed emigration formalities. Both playrooms include computer games and well-designed play areas.

There are several information counters in both terminals, and the staff speak English; the main counter for foreign visitors is the Terminal 2 **information counter** (☎ 0476-34-6251; ☎ 9am-8pm), on the 1st floor.

The airport **Tourist Information Center** (TIC; ☎ 0476-34-6251; ☎ 9am-8pm) is a key stop if you haven't yet booked any accommodation. While you're there, pick up a subway map and the *Tourist Map of Tokyo*. There's a TIC on the 1st floor in each terminal. Narita airport also has a JR office where you can make bookings and exchange your Japan Rail Pass voucher for a pass, if you're planning to start travelling straight away.

Check-in procedures are usually very efficient at Narita, but you should arrive at the airport at least two hours before your departure time. Passport control and security procedures are similarly efficient (bring your embarkation card, which you should have received upon arrival; if you don't have one, you can get a blank form before going through passport control).

Haneda Airport (☎ information 5757-8111) is the airport seasoned Tokyo expats wish was still Tokyo's main air hub. Unfortunately, all international traffic now goes via Narita airport, and only domestic flyers and charter flights can make use of this conveniently located airport.

Haneda doesn't have Narita's services in infrastructure, but there are post offices, banks, left-luggage services and baggage-shipping companies. Nor does Haneda have a dedicated English-language information counter,

although there is usually someone who can answer your questions in English.

Courier Services

Baggage couriers provide next-day delivery of your large luggage from Narita and Haneda Airports to any address in Tokyo (costs around ¥2000 per large bag). They can also deliver luggage to points beyond Tokyo so you don't have to haul it through trains and stations all over the countryside. Couriers can also pick up luggage for delivery to the airport, but be sure to call two days before your flight to arrange a pick-up. The companies listed here have some operators who speak English:

ABC (☎ 01-2091-9120)

NPS Skyporter (☎ 3590-1919)

Yamato (☎ 0476-32-4755)

Getting To/From the Airports

NARITA AIRPORT

Getting into town from Narita can take anything from 50 minutes to two hours, depending on your mode of transport. Because the two terminals at Narita are fairly distant from one another, be sure to get off at the correct terminal – all airport transport prominently displays lists of airlines and the terminal they use.

Both the private Keisei Line and Japan Railways (JR East) offer services to get from Narita to Tokyo. Conveniently, trains depart from stations under the airport terminals.

On the private **Keisei Line** (☎ 0476-32-8501; www.keisei.co.jp/keisei/tetudou/keisei_us/top.html), two services run between Narita airport and Tokyo: the comfortable, fast Skyliner service (¥1920, 56 minutes), which runs nonstop to Nippori and Ueno Stations ([Map p72](#)); and the *tokkyū* (premium train) service (limited express; ¥1000, 75 minutes). The Keisei Stations in Terminals 1 and 2 are clearly signposted in English. From Nippori or Ueno (the final stop), you can change to the JR Yamanote Line. Ueno Station is on both the JR Yamanote Line and the Hibiya and Ginza subway lines. If you're travelling to Ikebukuro or Shinjuku, it's more convenient to get off one stop before Ueno at Nippori Station, also on the JR Yamanote Line.

Going to the airport from Ueno, the Keisei Ueno Station is right next to the JR Ueno Station. You can buy advance tickets here

for the Skyliner service, or purchase tickets for the Keisei *tokkyū* service from the ticket machines. JR Nippori Station has a clearly signposted walkway to the Keisei Nippori Station.

Japan Railways (JR East; ☎ 3423-0111; www.jreast.co.jp/e/nex/index.html) runs Narita Express (N'EX; ¥2940, 53 minutes) and JR *kaisoku* (rapid express; ¥1280, 85 minutes) services into Tokyo Station ([Map pp52-3](#)), from where you can change for almost anywhere. N'EX is swift, smooth and comfortable, but it doesn't run as frequently as the private Keisei Line. N'EX trains leave Narita approximately every half-hour between 7am and 10pm for Tokyo Station, and they also run less frequently into Shinjuku ([Map p116](#); ¥3110) and Ikebukuro ([Map p122](#); ¥3110), or to Japan's second-largest city, Yokohama (¥4180). All seats are reserved, but tickets can usually be bought just before departure; if the train is already full, you can buy a standing ticket for the same price.

The JR *kaisoku* service is part of the local transit network and so stops at many local stations. This service is the slowest and cheapest into Tokyo Station, leaving about once an hour.

Friendly Airport Limousine buses (☎ 3665-7220; www.limousinebus.co.jp/e) can be found in both wings of the arrival building of Narita airport. Don't get too excited about the name – they're ordinary buses. They take 1½ to two hours (depending on traffic) to travel between

Narita airport and a number of major hotels around Tokyo. Check departure times before buying your ticket; buses depart every 15 to 30 minutes.

The fare to hotels in Ikebukuro, Akasaka, Ginza, Shibuya or Shinjuku is ¥3000. You can also go straight to Tokyo Station (one hour 20 minutes) or to Shinjuku Station ([Map p116](#); one hour 25 minutes) for ¥3000. Those transferring to domestic flights departing from Haneda Airport can take a limousine bus direct (¥3000, 75 minutes) from Narita. Allow plenty of extra time as traffic conditions in Tokyo are seldom ideal. Limousine buses also offer services between Narita and **Yokohama City Air Terminal** (YCAT; ☎ 045-459-4800) at Yokohama Station. Buses from YCAT, departing every 20 minutes or so, take around 90 minutes and cost ¥3500.

In case you're wondering, a taxi to Narita Airport from Tokyo will cost more than ¥30,000 and, battling traffic all the way, will usually take longer than the train.

HANEDA AIRPORT

The simplest, cheapest way to get from Haneda into Tokyo is to hop on the JR monorail to Hamamatsuchō Station on the JR Yamanote Line. Trains (¥470, 20 minutes) leave every 10 minutes. Limousine buses (direct; ¥900, 30 minutes) also connect Haneda with **Tokyo City Air Terminal** (TCAT; [Map p126](#)) and hotels around central Tokyo; buses to

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Ikebukuro and Shinjuku, for example, cost ¥1200 and take about one hour. Of course you could shell out around ¥7000 for a taxi if you prefer.

Tickets

If you're planning on booking domestic flights in Japan, you'll find a number of travel agencies in Tokyo where English is spoken. Note that prices fluctuate wildly depending on season, availability and fuel prices.

Across Traveller's Bureau (www.across-travel.com); Ikebukuro (Map p122; ☎ 5391-3227; 3rd fl, 1-11-1 Higashi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku); Shibuya (Map p106; ☎ 5467-0077; 3rd fl, 1-14-14 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku); Shinjuku (Map p116; ☎ 3340-6745; 2nd fl, 1-19-6 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku)

No 1 Travel (www.no1-travel.com); Ikebukuro (Map p122; ☎ 3986-4690; 4th fl, 1-16-10 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku); Shibuya (Map p106; ☎ 3770-1381; 7th fl, 1-11-1 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku); Shinjuku (Map p116; ☎ 3200-8871; 7th fl, 1-16-5 Kabukichō, Shinjuku-ku)

STA Travel (Map p122; ☎ 5391-2922; www.statravel.co.jp/english/index.html; 7th fl, 1-16-20 Minami-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku)

BICYCLE

Despite the tangled traffic and often narrow roads, bicycles are still one of the most common forms of transport in Tokyo. Theft does happen, especially of cheap bicycles, so go ahead and lock up your bike. Ride with your bag or pack on your person, as opportunists on motorbikes do swipe stuff from those front-mounted baskets.

Some ryokan (traditional Japanese inns) and inns rent bicycles to their guests, but if your lodgings don't, you can rent a bicycle in Asakusa for ¥200 per day. There's a bicycle-rental lot on the Sumida-gawa bank near Azumabashi (the bridge just outside Asakusa Station). Also see p195 for location-specific leisure-ride bike rentals.

BOAT

Water taxis are one of the most dramatic ways to take in the city. For more information on cruises down the Sumida-gawa, see p87.

BUS

The vast majority of Tokyoites and resident expats never set foot on a bus as the rail and subway system is convenient and incredibly

comprehensive. However, on rare occasions, it can sometimes be quicker to get between two destinations on a bus.

Bus fares are ¥200 for Tokyo Metropolitan (Toei) buses; you can pick up a copy of the *Toei Bus Route Guide*, including a route map and timetable, at any Toei subway station. Children's rates are half those of adult fares. Deposit your fare into the box next to the driver as you enter the bus; you can get change for ¥1000 notes and coins. A tape recording announces the name of each stop as it is reached, so listen carefully and press the button next to your seat when yours is announced.

The one-day Tokyo Combination Ticket (see p242) can be used on Toei buses as well as the subway and JR railway lines.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving

Driving yourself around Tokyo is by no means impossible, but the entire experience is somewhat akin to stabbing yourself in the eye with a chopstick. Parking space is limited and expensive, traffic moves in slow-mo, traffic lights are posted virtually every 50m, and unless you've lived here for awhile and can read Japanese, expect to get lost.

With that said, you're much better off taking advantage of Tokyo's excellent public transport. However, if you do intend to drive in Japan, pick up a copy of the eminently useful *Rules of the Road*, available from the **Japan Automobile Federation** (www.jaf.or.jp/e/index.htm).

A large number of Tokyoites and resident expats have motorbikes. It's a good way to get around town, especially after the trains have stopped running. The best place to take a look at what's available and get some information in English is the area of motorbike shops on Korinchō-dōri, near Ueno Station (Map p72) – some of the shops there have foreign staff.

If you do decide to buy a motorbike, you will need a motorbike licence (for motorbikes up to 400cc, your foreign licence is transferable) and your bike will need to be registered. Bikes up to 125cc are registered at your local ward office, while bikes of more than 125cc are registered with the Transport Branch Office. Further information can be obtained through the service offered to foreign residents living in Tokyo by the **Tokyo Metropolitan Government** (☎ 5320-7744).

Hire

Car-rental agencies in Tokyo will hire you one of their vehicles upon presentation of an international driving licence. Small cars average ¥8000 per day. Some rental agencies that usually have English-speaking staff on hand:

Dollar Rent-a-Car (☎ 3567-2818)

Nippon Rent-a-Car (☎ 3485-7196)

Toyota Rent-a-Car (☎ 5954-8008)

TAXI

Generally speaking, taxis are very expensive, and you should only use them when you have no alternative, such as returning to your hotel or apartment late at night. Rates start at ¥710, which buys you 2km (after 11pm it's 1.5km), then the meter rises by ¥80 every 275m (every 220m or so after 11pm). You also click up about ¥80 every two minutes while you relax in a typical Tokyo traffic jam. Taxi vacancy is indicated by a red light in the corner of the front window; a green light means there's a night-time surcharge; and a yellow light means that the cab is on call.

If you have to get a taxi late on a Friday or Saturday night, be prepared for delays and higher prices. The same applies any day of the week for the first hour or so after the last trains run. At these times, most stranded commuters stand in long queues in order to get a taxi home.

Tokyo taxi drivers rarely speak any English – if you don't speak Japanese, it's a good idea to have your destination written down in Japanese. Even if your destination has an English name, it is unlikely the driver will understand your pronunciation.

Oh, and by the way, don't slam the door shut when you get in or leave. In Japan, taxi doors magically open and close themselves.

TRAIN

The Tokyo train system can be a bit daunting at first, but you'll get the hang of it soon enough. Much initial confusion arises from the fact that Tokyo is serviced by a combination of train lines, private and municipal inner-city subway lines and private suburban lines. This sometimes means switching between different train and subway systems, though it's not as bad as it sounds since the lines are well integrated.

When determining where to get off the train, look for station names clearly marked

in both Japanese and English on platform signs and/or posts. These may sometimes be difficult to see, but inside the trains there are electronic signs indicating the next station in Japanese and English. Additionally, automated announcements are made both inside the trains, as well as at the station when the doors open.

Always watch out for express services. As a general rule, the longer the route, the more likely you are to find faster train services. The fastest 'regular' trains (ie slower than the bullet trains) are the *tokkyū* (特急; limited express services) and the *kyūkō* (急行; ordinary express), which usually stop at only a limited number of stations. The slowest trains, which stop at all stations, are called *futsū* (普通).

Since the faster trains do not stop at all stations, you must determine whether your destination is serviced by an express train before boarding it. However, there is usually a board on the platform indicating exactly which trains stop where, in both English and Japanese.

Most of Tokyo's train lines now reserve women-only carriages at weekday rush hours and on weekend nights. The carriages are marked with signs (usually pink) in both Japanese and English, or in some cases by illustrations showing the silhouette of a man standing outside of a women-only carriage. Boys older than 12 are not allowed on women-only carriages.

Japan Railways (JR) Lines YAMANOTE LINE

Making a 35km loop around central Tokyo, the Japan Railways (JR) Yamanote Line (Map p110) is a mostly above-ground circuit that makes a great introduction to the city. Buy the cheapest fare (¥130), disembarking at the same station where you start, and you'll get a solid, one-hour overview of Tokyo's main areas of interest. Most fares within the Yamanote loop are either ¥160 or ¥190. JR Yamanote Line trains are silver with a green stripe.

CHŪŌ & SŌBU LINES

The JR Chūō Line (Map p116) cuts its way through the centre of the JR Yamanote Line between Shinjuku and Tokyo Stations. Trains on this line are coloured orange. This line is continuous with the JR Sōbu Line until Ochanomizu Station where the lines split – the Chūō heading down to Tokyo Station and the Sōbu heading out to the eastern suburbs.

Trains on the JR Sōbu Line are yellow, so telling them apart is easy. The JR Chūō Line is about the fastest route between Shinjuku and Tokyo Stations (only rivalled by the Marunouchi subway line).

OTHER LINES

The JR Yokosuka Line runs south to Kamakura (see p233) from Tokyo Station via Shimbashi and Shinagawa Stations. The JR Tōkaidō Line also travels in the same direction from Tokyo Station, providing access to Izu-hantō (p234).

Private Lines

YURIKAMOME LINE

The privately owned Yurikamome Line, which services Odaiba (Map p131), is a driverless, elevated train that departs from Shimbashi, just south of Ginza, crosses the Rainbow Bridge, and terminates in Ariake, on an artificial island in Tokyo Bay. The Shimbashi terminal is above ground and on the eastern side of JR Shimbashi Station.

OTHER LINES

Most of the private lines service suburban areas outside Tokyo, but some of them also connect with popular sightseeing areas. The private lines almost always represent better value for money than the JR lines. The ones you are most likely to use are Shibuya's Tōkyū Tōyoko Line, which runs south to Yokohama; Shinjuku's Odakyū Line, which runs southwest out to Hakone (p225); and Asakusa's Tōbu Nikkō Line, which goes north to Nikkō (p221).

Subway Lines

Tokyo is also home to no less than 13 subway lines, of which eight are Tokyo Metro Company lines and four are Toei lines. It is not particularly important to remember this distinction as the services are essentially the same and have good connections from one to the other, although they do operate under separate ticketing systems.

The colour-coding and regular English signposting make the system easy to use. For instance, you'll quickly learn that the Ginza Line is orange and that the Marunouchi Line is red. Perhaps the most confusing part is figuring out where to surface when you have reached your destination – there is almost always a large number of subway exits. Fortunately, the exits are numbered and maps are posted, usually close to the ticket turnstiles.

Generally, the subway system is indispensable for getting to areas that lie inside the loop traced by the JR Yamanote Line. The central Tokyo area is served by a large number of lines that intersect at Nihombashi, Ōtemachi and Ginza, making it possible to get to this part of town from almost anywhere.

Tickets & Passes

VENDING MACHINES/PURCHASING

For all local journeys, tickets are sold by vending machines called *kippu jidō hanbaiki*. Above the vending machines are rail maps with fares indicated next to the station names. Unfortunately for visitors, the names on the map are often in kanji only. The best way around this problem is to put your money in the machine and push the lowest fare button (¥130 on JR, ¥160 to ¥170 on subway lines). When you get to your destination, you can correct the fare at an attended ticket gate or at a fare-adjustment machine (see below).

All vending machines for all lines accept ¥1000 notes and most accept ¥10,000 (there are pictures of the bills accepted on the machines). Don't forget to pick up the bills you get in change.

Two buttons on the machine could come in handy if you completely bungle the operation. First is the *tori-keshi* (取り消し; cancel) button, which is usually marked in English. The second is the *yobidashi* (呼び出し; call) button, which will alert a staff member that you need assistance (staff sometimes pop out from a hidden door between the machines – it can be surprising).

Of course, many travellers and even long-term residents never bother to figure out the appropriate fare when buying tickets, particularly for short inner-city hops. They just grab the cheapest ticket and are on their way. If you choose to do this, you have two choices upon arrival at your destination: an attended ticket gate or the fare-adjustment machine.

At an attended gate, simply hand over your ticket and the attendant will inform you of the additional fare. A fare-adjustment machine is just as simple and saves time if the gate is congested. Look for fare-adjustment machines, usually lit up with yellow signs, near the exit turnstiles. Insert your ticket into the slot near the top of the machine. The screen will tell you how much to pay, then spit out your change (if any) and a new ticket. Insert this ticket into the exit turnstiles, and off you go. Fare-adjustment machines usually have English instruc-

tions, and they are sited slightly apart from the ticket machines to avoid congestion.

You'll need different tickets for the two subway systems, but the automated ticket machines sell transfer tickets (¥70), which allow you to transfer from one system to another for without buying another full-price ticket. The button for this ticket is usually marked only in Japanese (乗り換え; *norikae*). To save yourself time and hassle, don't bother with transfer tickets – buy a Pasma card or Tokyo Combination Ticket instead (see right).

In the case of JR stations, there will be signs (sometimes but not always in both English and Japanese) indicating the *Midori-no-Madoguchi* (緑の窓口; Green Window) ticket counter, which is usually posted with a green sign. Here you can buy bullet train tickets, make reservations and buy special passes; in smaller stations this is where you ask for information as well.

PREPAID TICKETS

If plan to travel on JR lines for more than a few days, consider buying a prepaid JR IO card, which can be found in most JR subway stations. IO cards come in denominations of ¥1000, ¥3000 and ¥5000 and can be purchased from some JR ticket machines. Insert the card into the automated turnstiles as you would a normal ticket, but don't forget to grab it as you exit the turnstile! The turnstiles will automatically deduct the minimum fare as you enter the train system, and then any amount above that figure, if necessary, as you transfer and/or exit. If you have less than ¥160 left on the card, you will not be able to enter the subway system. Take the card to a ticket machine, then insert the card and whatever amount is necessary to bring the total on the card to ¥160. The machine will then spit out a new ticket and the now worthless JR IO card.

Much like the JR IO card, the Passnet card is a boon for anyone travelling the Tokyo subways. Passnet cards are sold by Tokyo Metro (SF Metro Card) or the Toei subway system (T-Card). These prepaid cards are valid for all the different subway lines and eliminate the need to buy several tickets for one journey. Purchase Passnet cards from ordinary automated ticket machines with a 'Passnet' logo (look for an orange-and-white running figure – presumably zipping through turnstiles). Cards are sold in denominations of ¥1000, ¥3000 and ¥5000. Insert the amount, push the Passnet button, then the cash amount button.

A Tokyo Combination Ticket (¥1580) is a day pass that can be used on all JR, subway and bus lines within the Tokyo metropolitan area. It is available at most Green Window ticket counters.

If you're planning on hopping on and off the Yurikamome, a day pass (¥800) is a good deal. These should be purchased from the ticket machines in Shimbashi prior to departing for Odaiba.

Those planning to spend an extended period of time in Tokyo should strongly consider getting either a Suica or a Pasma smart card. In the past, the Suica card was solely reserved for JR lines, and the Pasma card for the Tokyo Metro and Toei Metro subway lines. However, following the 2007 collaboration between all of the Tokyo transportation systems including the private lines, either card now works on any line. This is an incredible convenience as you can effortlessly move between systems with a swipe of a card.

The Suica Card (¥2000, including a ¥500 deposit) is the one that most commuters used to use for daily rides on the JR system, while the Pasma Card (¥2000, including a ¥500 deposit) is the one that most commuter used to use for daily rides on the subway. These days however, both cards are essentially one and the same, so it doesn't matter which one you choose. Fares are automatically deducted at the end of a journey and you can replenish the value of the card as needed.

Purchase Suica cards at vending machines or at ticket counters in JR stations and Pasco cards at vending machine or at ticket counters in Tokyo Metro and Toei Metro stations. Conveniently, the Suica and Pasma cards can be swiped over the wicket without being removed from a wallet or bag. You can even use it to pay for items in stores, vending machines and baggage lockers in stations. When you return your Suica or Pasma card at a station office, you'll be refunded the ¥500 deposit that was included with the initial ¥2000 purchase.

Another pass offered by JR is the *Japan Rail Pass* (www.japanrailpass.net), allowing for unrestricted travel on JR trains throughout Japan. A seven-day pass costs ¥28,300 and must be purchased *before* arriving in Japan; 14-day and 21-day passes are also available, though if you're planning on spending most of your time in Tokyo, this pass will not be of benefit to you. On the other hand, if you are planning on visiting other cities or on making some short day trips (see p218), the seven-day pass could save you a little money.

Stations

Navigating your way around train stations in Tokyo can be confusing, particularly at some of the more gigantic and complex stations such as Shinjuku Station. The key is to know where you're going before you get to the station. Most stations have adequate English signposting, with large yellow signs on the platforms posting exit numbers and often including local destinations, such as large hotels, department stores and embassies. When possible, find out which exit to use when you get directions to a destination. Street maps of the area are usually posted near each exit.

Many stations simply have four main exits: north, south, east and west. Since one station will usually have several different exits, you should get your bearings and decide where to exit while still on the platform. If you have your destination written down, you can go to an attended gate and ask the station attendant to direct you to the correct exit. To help you along we've included in this guidebook exit details for each listing where possible.

Modern Japanese spend a good part of their lives on trains, a fact that is reflected in the wide range of services available at most stations. Most stations have left-luggage lockers, which can hold medium-sized bags (back-

packs won't usually fit). These lockers often come in several sizes and cost from ¥200 to ¥600. Storage is good for 24 hours, after which your bags will be removed and taken to the station office.

All train stations have toilets, almost all of which are free of charge. Bring toilet paper though as it is not always provided (this is why advertising in the form of tissue packets handed out on street corners is big business). It's also a good idea to pick up a handkerchief at the ¥100 shops as paper towels and hand driers are also not always available.

At the vast majority of stations, you can also find several options for food. The smallest of these are kiosks, which sell snacks, drinks, magazines, newspapers etc. Next up are stores selling *ekiben* (train-station boxed lunches), which are obligatory if you truly want to experience the sophistication of Japanese long-distance rail travel, and *tachi-kui*, which are stand-and-eat noodle restaurants. Most of these places require that you purchase a food ticket from a vending machine, which you hand to an attendant upon entry (most machines have pictures on the buttons to help you order). Finally, large stations might also have a choice of several sit-down places, most of which will have plastic food models displayed in the front window.

DIRECTORY

BUSINESS HOURS

Most businesses are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, with some also open on Saturday. Banks are normally open Monday to Friday from 9am to noon, and between 2pm and 5pm (some ATMs, however, may be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but this can be rare). Shops and supermarkets are usually open from 10am to 8pm daily. Restaurants are generally open for lunch from 11.30am or noon to 2.30pm or 3pm and for dinner from 6pm or 6.30pm to 9pm or 10pm, with last orders taken about half an hour before closing. Variations on the above opening hours are listed in reviews.

CHILDREN

Tokyo, like the rest of Japan, is unreservedly child-friendly. In addition to loads of kid-centred activities (see the boxed text, p71), the city also offers numerous playgrounds and parks where children, and parents, can unwind. If you're travelling with small children, common items such as nappies (diapers) can be found at any pharmacy. Baby formula and other special dietary needs will, of course, be labelled in Japanese, so bringing such items from home could save time and frustration.

Baby-sitting

Listed are a few recommended services providing English-speaking sitters. Although some of these organisations require an annual membership fee, they may waive it if you ask for introductory or trial rates. Prices vary considerably depending on the number of children, time required and your location in Tokyo.

Japan Baby-Sitter Service (☎ 3423-1251; www.jbs-mom.co.jp, in Japanese) One of Japan's oldest – and considered one of its most reliable – services.

Poppins Service (☎ 3447-2100; www.poppins.co.jp/english/index.html) Nannies versed in early childhood development and first aid can also speak English, French, German or Italian.

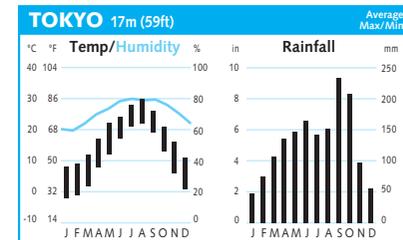
Tokyo Domestic Service Center (☎ 3584-4769) All sitters required to have at least 10 years experience with children. Call a day ahead to arrange an English-speaking sitter.

Tom Sawyer Agency (☎ 3770-9530) Sitters for newborns to 12-year-olds are available 24 hours a day; arrange services by 8pm the day before.

Alternatively, if you're staying at a hotel, staff there might be able to refer you to a reliable baby-sitter.

CLIMATE

Tokyo kicks off its year with cold winter days and the odd snowfall. Although temperatures occasionally drop below freezing, winter (December to February) is usually reasonable if you have the right kind of clothes. Spring (March to May) brings pleasant, warm days, and, of course, cherry blossoms (see the boxed text, p20) – early April is probably the best time to view the blooms. Summer (June to August) is hot and muggy, a time when overcrowded trains and long walks can feel irritating. Late June can see torrential rains that pound the city during monsoon seasons. The temperature and humidity are at their worst in August. Apart from spring, autumn (September to November) is the most pleasant season as temperatures cool down to a cosy level and days are often clear and fine. Autumn also means the return of the dramatic foliage season, when the parks and green areas of the city mellow into varying hues of orange and red. For more information see p16.



CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Customs allowances include the usual tobacco products plus three 750mL bottles of alcohol, 57g of perfume, and gifts and souvenirs up to a value of ¥200,000 or its equivalent. You must be older than 20 years to qualify for these allowances. The penalties for importing illegal drugs are very severe.

Although the Japanese are no longer censoring pubic hair in domestically produced pornography, customs officers will still confiscate any pornographic materials in which pubic hair is visible.

There are no limits on the importation of foreign or Japanese currency. The exportation of foreign currency is also unlimited, but there is a ¥5 million export limit for Japanese currency. Visit the website of **Japan Customs** (www.customs.go.jp/english/) for more information on Japan's customs regulations.

ELECTRICITY

Japanese plugs are the type with two flat pins, which are identical to two-pin North American plugs. The Japanese electric current is 100V AC, an odd voltage found almost nowhere else in the world (appliances with a two-pin plug made for use in North America will work without an adaptor, but may be a bit sluggish). Tokyo and eastern Japan are on 50Hz, western Japan is on 60Hz. Transformers are easy to find at one of Japan's plentiful electronics shops.

Check www.kropla.com for detailed information on matters of voltage and plugs.

EMBASSIES

Australia (Map pp96–7; ☎ 5232-4111; www.australia.or.jp/english/; 2-1-14 Mita, Minato-ku)

Belgium (Map p56; ☎ 3262-0191; www.diplomatie.be/tokyo; 5 Nibanchō, Chiyoda-ku)

Canada (Map p92; ☎ 5412-6200; www.canadanet.or.jp; 7-3-38 Akasaka, Minato-ku)

France (Map pp96–7; ☎ 5420-8800; www.ambafrance-jp.org; 4-11-44 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku)

Germany (Map pp96–7; ☎ 5791-7700; www.tokyo.diplo.de; 4-5-10 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku)

Ireland (Map p56; ☎ 3263-0695; www.irishembassy.jp; 2-10-7 Kōjimachi, Chiyoda-ku)

Italy (Map pp96–7; ☎ 3453-5291; www.embitaly.jp; 2-5-4 Mita, Minato-ku)

Malaysia (Map p106; ☎ 3476-3840; www.kln.gov.my/perwakilan/tokyo/; 20-16 Nanpeidaichō, Shibuya-ku)

Netherlands (Map pp96–7; ☎ 5401-0411; www.oranda.or.jp; 3-6-3 Shiba-kōen, Minato-ku)

New Zealand (Map p106; ☎ 3467-2271; www.nzembassy.com; 20-40 Kamiyama-chō, Shibuya-ku)

South Korea (Map pp96–7; ☎ 3452-7611; www.mofat.go.kr; 1-2-5 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku)

UK (Map p56; ☎ 5211-1100; www.uknow.or.jp/be_e; 1 Ichiban-chō, Chiyoda-ku)

USA (Map p92; ☎ 3224-5000; <http://tokyo.usembassy.gov>; 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku)

EMERGENCY

Although most emergency operators you'll reach in Tokyo don't speak English, the operators will immediately refer you to someone who does. Japan Helpline is a service that provides assistance to foreigners living in Japan.

Ambulance (☎ 119)

Fire (☎ 119)

Japan Helpline (☎ 0120-46-1997)

Police (☎ 110)

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

With the possible exception of Thailand, Japan is Asia's most enlightened nation with regard to the sexual orientation of foreigners. Tokyo in particular is a tolerant city where the bars and clubs host folks of all predilections. Tokyo has an active gay scene and a small, but very lively, gay quarter (Shinjuku-nichōme). Check *Tokyo Classified* or *Tokyo Journal* for listings of gay and lesbian clubs. Outside Tokyo, you'll find it difficult to break into the local scene unless you spend considerable time in a place or have local contacts who can show you around.

Same-sex couples probably won't encounter too many problems travelling in Japan. Some travellers have reported being turned away or grossly overcharged when checking into love hotels with a partner of the same sex. Apart from this, it's unlikely that you'll run into difficulties. There are no legal restraints on same-sex sexual activities in Japan apart from the usual age restrictions, although it does pay to be discreet with public displays of affection.

Cineastes visiting in summer should check the local listings for screenings of the annual **Tokyo International Lesbian & Gay Film & Video Festival** (☎ 6475-0388; www.tokyo-igff.org).

The following are some websites well worth perusing when planning your travels:

Fridae (www.fridae.com/cityguides/tokyo/tk-intro.php)

Gay Scene Japan (www.members.tripod.co.jp/GSJ)

Utopia Asia (www.utopia-asia.com)

See also the boxed text, p180.

HEALTH *Dr Trish Batchelor*

As a developed city, Tokyo enjoys an excellent standard of medical care. Air pollution is one health issue, but this is unlikely to affect most travellers, apart from those with chronic lung conditions. Travellers have a low risk of contracting infectious diseases but should ensure that their basic vaccinations are up to date and that they carry a basic medical kit to deal with simple problems such as respiratory infections, minor injuries and stomach upsets.

At the time this book went to press, human cases of Avian influenza (bird flu) in Japan were extremely limited, and the risk to travellers was low. The strain in question is known as 'Influenza A H5N1' or simply 'the H5N1 virus', a highly contagious form of Avian influenza. Travellers to the region should avoid contact with any birds and should ensure that any poultry is thoroughly cooked before consumption. See the World Health Organization website (www.who.int/en/) for the latest information.

It's also a good idea to consult your government's travel-health website before departure.

Australia (www.smartraveller.gov.au)

Canada (www.travelhealth.gc.ca)

New Zealand (www.safetravel.govt.nz)

UK (www.nathac.org)

USA (wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/)

Medical Services

A national health-insurance plan covers Japanese who wish to visit a doctor, as well as foreign residents who are legally employed. When seeking medical care, be sure to bring proof of your travel or health insurance that clearly indicates that you're covered for any treatment you receive. If you arrive without insurance, it's possible to see a doctor at either a hospital or a clinic, but you will be expected to pay in full at the time of service.

If your health insurance doesn't cover you for all medical expenses incurred abroad, you should consider purchasing supplemental travel insurance before leaving home. Evacuations in an emergency can cost well over US\$100,000.

Travellers should be aware that medical services in Japan might not be on par with those of other developed nations. For simple complaints, you should be fine; for

emergencies, you might have no choice. For elective procedures and anything else that can wait until you get home, we suggest you do just that.

Most hospitals and clinics do not have doctors and nurses who speak English, but we've listed a few good ones that do.

CLINICS

International Medical Center of Japan (Map p122; ☎ 3202-7181; www.imcj.org.jp, in Japanese; 1-21-1 Toyama, Shinjuku-ku; ㊤ Toei Ōedo Line to Wakamatsukawada, main exit) Though the website's in Japanese, operators on the phone speak English.

National Medical Clinic (Map pp96–7; ☎ 3473-2057; www.nmclinic.net; 2nd fl, 5-16-11 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku; ㊤ Hibiya Line to Hiro-o, exits 1 & 2) English-speaking physicians practise general medicine here, and there are also a few specialised services.

Tokyo British Clinic (Map p102; ☎ 5458-6099; www.tokyobritishclinic.com; Daikanyama Y Bldg, 2nd fl, 2-13-7 Ebisu-Nishi, Shibuya-ku; ㊤ emergency service 24hr; ㊤ Hibiya or JR Yamanote Line to Ebisu, west exit) Founded and run by a British physician, this clinic also offers paediatric, obstetric/gynaecological and referral services.

Tokyo Medical & Surgical Clinic (Map pp96–7; ☎ 3436-3028, emergency 3432-6134; www.tmsc.jp; 2nd fl, Mori Bldg, 32, 3-4-30 Shiba-kōen, Minato-ku; ㊤ emergency service 24hr; ㊤ Hibiya Line to Kamiyachō, main exit) This well-equipped clinic is staffed with English-speaking Japanese and foreign physicians.

EMERGENCY ROOMS

Japanese Red Cross Medical Centre (Map pp96–7; ☎ 3400-1311; www.med.jrc.or.jp, in Japanese; 4-1-22 Hiro-o, Shibuya-ku; ㊤ 24hr; ㊤ Hibiya Line to Hiro-o, exits 1 & 2)

Seibo International Catholic Hospital (Map pp48–9; ☎ 3951-1111; www.seibokai.or.jp, in Japanese; 2-5-1 Nakaochiai, Shinjuku-ku; ㊤ JR Yamanote Line to Mejiro, main exit)

St Luke's International Hospital (Map p65; ☎ 3541-5151; www.luke.or.jp; 9-1 Akashichō, Chūō-ku; ㊤ 24hr; ㊤ Hibiya Line to Tsukiji, exits 3 & 4)

PHARMACIES

Pharmacies are located throughout Tokyo, although a bit of Japanese helps in getting the medication or item you need, as most pharmacists only speak basic (if any at all) English. Although Japanese law prohibits pharmacists from selling medications from

other countries, they will generally be able to help you find a Japanese medication that is either identical or similar to the one you take at home. The pharmacies listed below cater to English-speaking customers.

American Pharmacy (Map pp52–3; ☎ 5220-7716; www.tomods.jp, in Japanese; basement 1st fl, Marunouchi Bldg, 2-4-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; ☎ 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, 10am–9pm Sat, 10am–8pm Sun & holidays; 📍 JR Yamanote or Marunouchi Line to Tokyo, Marunouchi exits) The American Pharmacy is staffed by English-speaking pharmacists, and credit cards are accepted. There's another branch inside Ueno Station (Map p72) on the JR Yamanote Line.

National Azabu Supermarket Pharmacy (Map pp96–7; ☎ 3442-3495; 4-5-2 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku; ☎ 9.30am–7pm; 📍 Hibiya Line to Hiro-o, exit 2) Inside the National Azabu supermarket (p166).

Recommended Vaccinations

No vaccinations are required for Japan. Your routine vaccinations should be up to date, though travellers at special risk should additionally consider the following:

Japanese B encephalitis There is no risk in Tokyo, but there is risk in rural areas of all islands. The risk is highest in the western part of the country from July to October.

Tick-borne encephalitis This is present only in the wooded areas of Hokkaidō and is transmitted between April and October. The vaccine is readily available in Europe but can be difficult to find elsewhere.

Diseases

AIDS & STDS

AIDS and other STDs can, of course, be contracted anywhere in the world. People carrying STDs often show no signs of infection. Always wear a condom with a new partner; however, some diseases such as herpes and warts cannot be prevented even by using condoms. If, after a sexual encounter, you develop any rash, lumps, discharge, or pain when passing urine, seek medical attention immediately. If you have been sexually active during your travels, have a check-up on your return home.

Rates of HIV infection in Japan have increased significantly in the last couple of years. It is predicted that this trend will continue, due in part to unsuccessful government awareness programmes. The majority of cases in Japan are contracted via sexual contact, and more than 60% of newly infected people are under 25 years of age.

Condoms are widely available in Tokyo, but generally only locally produced varieties, which tend to be on the small side. If you think you're going to need them, it's a good idea to bring your own, since foreign-made condoms can be difficult to find.

DIARRHOEA

Tokyo is a low-risk destination, and the tap water is safe to drink. You could still be unlucky, however, so carrying some antidiarrhoea medication in your medical kit is a good idea.

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is a virus spread via bodily fluids, eg through sexual contact, shared needles or unclean medical facilities. It is also the only sexually transmitted disease that can be prevented by vaccination. In the short term, hepatitis B can cause the typical symptoms of hepatitis – jaundice, tiredness, nausea – but long-term consequences can include liver cancer and cirrhosis. Long-term travellers or those who might be exposed to bodily fluids should be vaccinated.

INFLUENZA

Influenza (the flu) is primarily transmitted from November to April. The flu is caused by a virus and gives you a high fever, general body aches and generalised respiratory symptoms such as cough, a sore throat and runny nose. If you do happen to get the flu you should rest up and take symptomatic treatment such as pain killers – antibiotics won't help. All high-risk individuals should ensure that they have been vaccinated before travelling, and all travellers should consider the vaccine if visiting in the winter months. Under some circumstances your doctor might recommend taking antiviral drugs to treat the flu.

JAPANESE B ENCEPHALITIS

Japanese B encephalitis (JBE) is not present in Tokyo, but is found in the rural areas of all of the islands, particularly in the west. It is a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes and is present during the months of July to October. If you are intending to spend more than a month in an affected rural area, you should consider getting vaccinated. JBE is a serious disease without any specific treatment – 30% of those infected will die and a third will suffer permanent brain damage.

Environmental Hazards

AIR POLLUTION

Air pollution is a problem in Tokyo, although the government is taking steps to improve the situation. If you have a lung condition such as asthma or chronic airways disease, speak to your doctor before you travel, and ensure that you have enough of your regular medication with you.

FUGU (PUFFER FISH)

This famous delicacy (also known as blowfish or globefish) is strictly controlled, and there have been no deaths related to its ingestion for more than 30 years.

Medications

Some medications cannot be taken into Japan. If you take any regular medication, you should check with your local Japanese embassy whether there is any restriction on taking it into the country.

Traditional Medicine

If you decide to have any traditional medical treatments, make sure you tell your practitioner if you are taking any Western medicines. The two best-known forms of traditional Japanese medicine are *reiki* and *shiatsu*.

REIKI

Reiki claims to heal by charging the life force (*ki*) with positive energy, thus allowing it to flow in a natural, healthy manner. In a standard treatment *reiki* energy flows from the practitioner's hands into the client. The practitioner places their hands on or near the client's body in a series of positions that are each held for between three and 10 minutes. People become practitioners after receiving an 'attunement' from a *reiki* master.

SHIATSU

Shiatsu is a form of manual therapy incorporating gentle manipulations and stretches derived from physiotherapy and chiropractic, combined with pressure techniques exerted through the fingers or thumbs. The philosophy underlying *shiatsu* is similar to many traditional Asian medical systems and involves the body's vital energy (*ki*) flowing through the body in a series of channels known as meridians. If the *ki* is blocked from flowing freely, illness can occur; hence

shiatsu is used to improve the flow of *ki*. *Shiatsu* was officially recognised by the Japanese government in 1955 as a therapy in its own right.

HOLIDAYS

Japan has 15 national public holidays. When a public holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is taken as a holiday. You can expect travel and lodgings to be fully booked during *Shōgatsu* (New Year; 29 December to 6 January), Golden Week (29 April to 5 May) and the O-Bon festival in mid-August; see p16 for more information on festivals. During this time, about the only places open are convenience stores and fast-food joints; if you don't want to survive on potato chips and fries, make appropriate preparations.

Japan's national public holidays are as follows:

Ganjitsu (New Year's Day) 1 January

Seijin-no-hi (Coming-of-Age Day) Second Monday in January

Kenkoku Kinem-bi (National Foundation Day) 11 February

Shūmūn-no-hi (Spring Equinox) 20 or 21 March

Midori-no-hi (Green Day) 29 April

Kempō Kinem-bi (Constitution Day) 3 May

Kokumin-no-Saijitsu (Adjoining Holiday Between Two Holidays) 4 May

Kodomo-no-hi (Children's Day) 5 May

Umi-no-hi (Marine Day) Third Monday in July

Keirō-no-hi (Respect-for-the-Aged Day) Third Monday in September

Shūbun-no-hi (Autumn Equinox) 23 or 24 September

Taiiku-no-hi (Health and Sports Day) Second Monday in October

Bunka-no-hi (Culture Day) 3 November

Kinrō Kansha-no-hi (Labour Thanksgiving Day) 23 November

Tennō-no-Tanjōbi (Emperor's Birthday) 23 December

INTERNET ACCESS

For a city as efficiency-obsessed as technology-loving Tokyo, wi-fi access is less than widespread. But for the millions emailing away via the *keitai* (mobile phones) attached to their thumbs, wi-fi is probably irrelevant anyway.

Still, you needn't search too hard for wi-fi hotspots. NTT Communications sells 24-hour

passes (¥500) to its wireless network, with hotspots throughout Tokyo. Prepaid cards can be purchased at some branches of Bic Camera and Prince Hotels; check NTT Communication's website (www.ntt.com) for hotspot locations and purchasing information. Some hotels offer wi-fi, but usually for a fee: from ¥1000 to ¥2000.

Free wi-fi is scattered around Tokyo in cafés, public buildings and JR stations – check the [Freespot access map](#) (www.freespot.com/users/map_e.html) for locations offering fee-free wi-fi.

If you haven't brought your own laptop, you'll find an abundance of internet cafés in every major neighbourhood in Tokyo. Rates vary, usually ranging from ¥200 to ¥500 per hour, and most connections are fast DSL or ADSL.

Most hotels have in-room LAN ports and can rent or sell you a LAN cable; electronics shops also carry them for about ¥500.

LEGAL MATTERS

Japanese police have extraordinary powers compared with their Western counterparts. For starters, Japanese police have the right to detain a suspect without charging them for up to three days, after which a prosecutor can decide to extend this period for another 20 days. Police also have the authority to choose whether to allow a suspect to phone their embassy or lawyer or not, although, if you do find yourself in police custody, you should insist that you will not cooperate in any way until allowed to make such a call. Your embassy is the first place you should call if given the chance.

Police will speak almost no English; insist that a *tsuyakusha* (interpreter) be summoned; police are legally bound to provide one before proceeding with any questioning. Even if you are able to speak Japanese, it is best to deny it and stay with your native language.

For legal counselling in English and some other languages, seek out these resources:

Human Rights Counseling Center for Foreigners (☎ 5689-0518; 📧 1-4.30pm Tue & Thu) Free consultation and English-Japanese translation on problems regarding human rights.

Tokyo English Life Line (TELL; ☎ 5774-0992; 📧 9am-11pm)

Tokyo Foreign Residents Advisory Center (☎ 5320-7744; 📧 9.30am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri)

MAPS

Stop by the Tourist Information Center of the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO; [p255](#)) to pick up a free copy of its superb *Tourist Map of Tokyo*. To successfully interpret and navigate Tokyo's challenging address system, longer-term visitors might consider looking up Kodansha's *Tokyo City Atlas*, a bilingual guide stocked by larger bookshops. Both Kodansha and Shobunsha (Japanese publishers) publish bilingual atlases and fold-out maps (prices start at ¥700) that are available at most of Tokyo's bookshops (see [p143](#) for listings).

The Tokyo Metro Company puts out the free *Tokyo Metro Guide*, with English-language explanations on buying tickets and special deals. Find these near the ticket machines and turnstiles in most subway stations.

MONEY

Be warned that cold hard cash is the way to pay in Tokyo. Although credit cards are becoming more common, cash is still the payment of choice, and travellers cheques are rarely accepted outside of large hotels and department stores. Do not assume that you can pay with a credit card, and always carry sufficient cash.

The currency in Japan is the yen (¥), and banknotes and coins are easily distinguishable. There are ¥1, ¥5, ¥10, ¥50, ¥100 and ¥500 coins; and ¥1000, ¥2000, ¥5000 and ¥10,000 banknotes (the ¥2000 note is very rarely seen). The ¥1 coin is an aluminium lightweight coin; the bronze-coloured ¥5 and silver-coloured ¥50 coins both have a hole punched in the middle. Note that some vending machines do not accept older ¥500 coins. Prices may be listed using the kanji for yen (円).

ATMs

ATMs are almost as common as vending machines in Tokyo. Unfortunately, most of these do not accept foreign-issued cards. Even if they display Visa and MasterCard logos, most accept only Japan-issued versions of these cards. Also, 24-hour ATMs are exceedingly rare.

Fortunately, Citibank operates 24-hour international ATMs in major areas including Roppongi, Harajuku, Omote-sandō and Shinjuku. Better still, the Japanese postal system has recently linked all of its ATMs to the international Cirrus and Plus cash networks (and some credit-card networks), making life a breeze for travellers to Tokyo. Most larger **post offices** (📧 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-

noon Sat) have postal ATMs. Press the handy button marked 'English Guidance' for English instructions.

Changing Money

In theory, banks and post offices will change all major currencies. In practice, some banks refuse to exchange anything but US-dollar cash and travellers cheques. Note also that the currencies of neighbouring Taiwan (New Taiwan dollar) and Korea (*won*) are not easy to change, so you should change these into yen or US dollars before arriving in Japan.

With a passport, you can change cash or travellers cheques at any Authorised Foreign Exchange Bank (signs are displayed in English), major post offices, some large hotels and most big department stores. Note that you receive a better exchange rate when withdrawing cash from ATMs than when exchanging cash or travellers cheques in Tokyo. Be aware that many banks place a limit on the amount of cash you can withdraw in one day (often around US\$400).

Exchange rates are listed on the inside front cover of this guide.

Credit Cards

As Japan is very much a cash-based economy, never assume you can pay using a credit card. For businesses which do take credit card, Visa is most widely accepted, followed by MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club. Getting a cash advance using your foreign-issued credit card is nearly impossible, but Sumitomo Mitsui banks (SMBC) give cash advances if you bring your passport with you. The main credit-card companies all have offices in Tokyo.

American Express (☎ 0120-02-0120; 🕒 24hr)

MasterCard (☎ 5728-5200)

Visa (☎ 00531-44-0022; 🕒 24hr)

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

The three English dailies listed below serve the city's international community and are sold at most of the big train-station kiosks. Two English magazines, the weekly *Metropolis* and the quarterly *Tokyo Journal*, round out coverage of local news, dining and entertainment.

Asahi Shimbun/International Herald Tribune (www.asahi.com/english/)

Daily Yomiuri (www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/)

Japan Times (www.japantimes.co.jp/)

ORGANISED TOURS

Though exploring Tokyo on your own offers distinct pleasures, it can be daunting at first. Listed are several touring companies that can help introduce you to the metropolis by land, sea, air or even on foot. Most have websites in English, as well as English-speaking staff. All prices quoted in this section are per person.

Boat

If you've come with a gang and want a very Japanese experience, **Komatsuya** (☎ 3851-2780; www.komatuya.net, in Japanese; tours per person ¥10,000-20,000) arranges for groups of 15 and up to cruise the city's waterways while enjoying Japanese cuisine in a tatami-room setting on a Japanese-style boat. Even the website is in Japanese.

Sumida-Gawa Water Buses (☎ 3841-9178; www.suijobus.co.jp/english/; tours ¥200-800; 📍 Ginza Line to Asakusa, exit 5, or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa, exit A5 for Azuma-bashi Pier) offers extremely reasonably priced ferry rides under the 12 bridges up and down Sumida-gawa (see [p87](#)). A unique new boat, *Himiko*, was designed especially for Suijō Bus by the cartoonist Matsumoto Reiji and looks like a bug from the future.

Symphony (☎ 3798-8101; www.symphony-cruise.co.jp; tours adult ¥1500-3800, child ¥750-1900; 📍 JR Yamanote Line to JR Hamamatsu-cho, south exit, for Hinode Pier) offers two-hour day and evening cruises around the bay, departing from Hinode Pier. If you lunch or dine on board, you'll pay ¥5000 to ¥21,000 (including passage) depending on the type of meal you choose.

The restaurant boat **Vingt-et-un** (☎ 3436-2121; cruises from ¥2040, dinner cruises from ¥7000; 📍 Yurikamome Line to Takshiba for Takeshiba Pier) offers evening dinner excursions as well as afternoon cruises on weekends. The evening dinner cruises usually include excellent French meals. Reservations are essential. Passengers may be able to board without purchasing a meal, but there are no special seats and, no, you can't bring your own food.

Bus

The well-established, commercial tour operators recommended here all have an extensive line-up of tours, including many in English. While buses are their stock in trade, some also offer boat and walking tours.

Without getting fancy, **Gray Line buses** (☎ 3595-5948; www.jgl.co.jp/inbound/index.htm; tours

¥4000-9600) chug along to places such as the Imperial Palace, Asakusa, Sensō-ji and the National Diet buildings. Tours run for either a half- or full day and sometimes include meals, usually at traditional Japanese restaurants. Pick-up and drop-off are available at dozens of hotels.

One of the longest-standing tour operators is **Hato Bus Tours** (☎ 3435-6081; www.hatobus.com; tours ¥3500-12,000), which offers both half- and full-day tours around the city. It hits big spots such as Sensō-ji and Tsukiji Central Fish Market, or offers tourists the chance to head out on the bay. If you're feeling daunted by the subway, check out the subway tour that alights at sites that recount the importance and beauty of the Edo era. Some tours also include meals.

If your time is limited, Hato also operates one-hour tours aboard the **Hello Kitty Bus** (adult/child ¥1300/760) departing from Tokyo Station (check for departure times with Hato Bus Tours). One route covers basics such as Nihombashi, Akihabara and Asakusa, and the other goes west of the Imperial Palace. Unlike with other tours, you stay on the bus the whole time and guides narrate in Japanese only; English narration is available via headphones. Apart from that, it's a pretty typical tour bus, although it is decorated with the cat with no mouth.

Within the city, the offerings of **Sunrise Tours** (☎ 5796-5454; www.jtbgmt.com/sunrisetour; tours ¥3500-9800) are not much different from those of the other tour companies, but as a subsidiary of Japan Travel Bureau (JTB), the country's largest travel company, it boasts an extensive roster of day trips and tours in other parts of Japan. Some are return trips from Tokyo, while others originate in other big Japanese cities. If you have got time to kill at the airport, it even offers a worthwhile tour of Narita city.

Helicopter

Excel Air (☎ 047-380-5555; www.excel-air.com; Urayasu Heliport; flights adult/child from ¥8000/4000; ✈ 2pm-dusk; 🚗 JR Keiyo Line to Urayasu then 15min by taxi) offers five- to 20-minute flights, which are a dramatic way to take in the skyline of Ginza, the Imperial Palace or Akihabara during the day, at sunset or after dark. Helicopters fly up to eight people. Saturday and Sunday flights cost about 25% more. Flights depart from Urayasu city, east of Tokyo in Chiba Prefecture. Reserve a seat in advance.

Walking

Operated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, **volunteer guide tours** (www.tourism.metro.tokyo.jp; for the first person free-¥2860, may be less for additional people) facilitate face-to-face contact with real Tokyoites. Some volunteers speak better English than others, but you can't beat the price. Since the guides work on a volunteer basis, visitors pay only admission and transport fees for themselves and the two guides. Itineraries that involve no transport or admissions cost nothing. The 10 routes include the highly touristic (eg Asakusa) and the less touristic (eg department-store food floor). Tour sizes are limited to a handful of people per tour; apply at least a few days in advance.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Digital photographers will find all manner of memory media, batteries and digital cameras widely available. Japan's photo shops also offer a wide range of services for digital photographers, including high-quality prints from digital files.

Most photo-processing shops, as well as department stores and even 7-Eleven convenience stores, can also transfer digital shots onto CD for you; there's usually a two-day turnaround period.

Tokyo is one of the best places in the world to buy camera equipment, although be aware that most products have Japanese operating menus. However, some of the larger electronics stores in Akihabara (p67) stock export models with English-language systems.

You'll have no problem finding print film in Tokyo, and high-quality slide film is widely available at camera shops throughout town (see p146). Film processing is fast and economical and standards are usually high.

Serious photographers might want to pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography*.

POST

The Japanese postal system is reliable and efficient and, for regular postcards and airmail letters, has rates similar to those of other developed countries. The symbol for post offices is a red T with a bar across the top on a white background (〒). For information on courier services see p238.

Opening Hours

District post offices (the main post office in a ward) are open 9am to 7pm weekdays and 9am to 3pm Saturday, and are closed Sunday and public holidays. Local post offices are open 9am to 5pm weekdays and are closed Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. Main post offices in Tokyo, Shibuya, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro have an after-hours window open 24 hours.

Postal Rates

The airmail rate for postcards is ¥70 to any destination abroad; aerograms cost ¥90. Letters less than 25g are ¥90 to other countries within Asia, ¥110 to North America, Europe or Oceania (including Australia and New Zealand) and ¥130 to Africa and South America. One peculiarity of the Japanese postal system is that you will be charged extra if your writing runs over onto the address side (the right side) of a postcard.

Receiving & Sending Mail

Although any post office will hold mail for collection, the poste restante concept is not well known and can cause confusion in smaller neighbourhoods. The **Tokyo Central Post Office** (Map pp52-3; ☎ 3560-1139) can give you more information about large post offices that can receive and handle your mail. Letters are usually held for only 30 days before being returned to sender. When inquiring about mail for collection ask for 'kyoku dome yūbin'.

Mail can be sent to, from or within Japan when addressed in Roman script (romaji), but it should, of course, be written as clearly as possible.

TELEPHONE

The country code for Japan is ☎ 81. Japanese telephone numbers consist of an area code (Tokyo's is ☎ 03) plus a local number; Tokyo numbers usually consist of eight digits. The area code is not used if dialling a Tokyo number from within Tokyo. You do not dial an area code's first zero if dialling from abroad. For example, when dialling Tokyo from abroad, dial the international access code of the country from which you are calling, then ☎ 81-3. If you're calling from anywhere but Tokyo within Japan, dial ☎ 03 and then the number. Toll-free numbers begin with ☎ 0120. Also see the Quick Reference (inside front cover) for a list of area codes for

some main cities and tourist areas covered in this guide.

For local directory assistance, dial ☎ 104. To place a domestic collect call, dial ☎ 106. For international directory assistance in English, dial ☎ 0057. To place an international call through the operator, dial ☎ 0051 (international operators almost always speak English).

Mobile Phones

Before you stash your mobile (cell) phone into your carry-on luggage, consider that your fancy tri-band GSM phone won't work in Japan, unless it supports the nonubiquitous CDMA standard. The good news is that several companies now offer short-term mobile-phone rentals for travellers and businesspeople. Rates are quite reasonable, from around ¥3000 per week. Many offer free delivery or have rental counters at Narita airport. Check out the following outfits:

DoCoMo (☎ 0120-68-0100; www.docomocentury.co.jp/english/)

GoMobile (www.gomobile.co.jp/index_e.html)

PuPuRu (☎ 0120-91-9226; www.pupuru.com/en/index_en.html)

Rentafone Japan (☎ 090-9621-7318; www.rentafone.jp)

If you're planning on spending any extended amount of time in Japan, we can't stress how important it is to get a mobile phone. The Japanese spend every waking hour of the day mailing their friends from their phones, and it's virtually impossible to stay connected to people if you don't have one. If you have a valid work visa, it's possible to sign a one-year contract and get a phone for as cheap as ¥1 depending on the type of package you choose. If you don't have a visa, you can still get a prepaid phone, though calling rates are significantly higher.

Mobile phone shops dot virtually every street in Tokyo, so you shouldn't have any problem finding what you're looking for. Most mobile phone shops have someone on hand who can speak English, or at least supply you with English-language pamphlets explaining the various contract options available.

Public Phones

The Japanese public telephone system is very well developed; there are a great many public phones and they work almost 100% of the

time. Local calls cost ¥10 for three minutes. Long-distance calls require a handful of coins or a telephone card, which are used up as the call progresses; unused ¥10 coins are returned after the call is completed, but no change is given on ¥100 coins. It's more economical to make domestic calls by dialling outside the standard business hours.

For local calls it's still much easier to buy a *terefon kãdo* (prepaid phone card) than to worry about having enough coins, as most pay phones will accept phone cards. Prepaid cards are available from vending machines and convenience stores in ¥500 and ¥1000 denominations (the latter throws in an extra ¥50 in calls). They can be used in most grey or green pay phones, and the phones will display the remaining value of your card when it is inserted.

With the exception of the IC card, the following cards can be used with any regular pay phone in Japan.

Global Card These cards are only available at discount ticket shops and some guesthouses.

IC Card Sold from machines that accompany IC phones, these cards can only be used with the orange IC phones.

KDDI Superworld Card Find these cards at almost any convenience store in Japan.

International Calls

International calls are best made using a prepaid international phone card. You can also call abroad on grey international ISDN phones, usually found in phone booths marked 'International & Domestic Card/Coin Phone'. Unfortunately, these are rare; look for them in the lobbies of top-end hotels and at airports. Reverse-charge (collect) international calls can be made from any pay phone.

You can save money by dialling late at night. Economy rates, with a discount of 20%, apply 7pm to 11pm weekdays, and 8am to 11pm on weekends and public holidays. Discount rates of 40% off the regular rate apply 11pm to 8am throughout the year.

In some youth hostels and guesthouses, you will also find pink coin-only phones from which you cannot make international calls (although you can receive them).

If you find a public phone that allows international calls, it's more convenient to use a phone card rather than coins. Calls are charged by six-second units, so if you don't have much to say, you can make a quick call home for the minimum charge of ¥100.

Another option for making international calls is to dial ☎ 0039 for home country direct, which takes you straight through to a local operator in the country dialled (your home country direct code can be found in phone books or by calling the international operator on ☎ 0051). You can then make a reverse-charge call or a credit-card call with a phone card valid in that country.

Some dialling codes are given below:

| Country | Home Country Direct Dial |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Australia | ☎ 0039-61 |
| Canada | ☎ 0039-1 |
| China | ☎ 0039-86 |
| France | ☎ 0039-33 |
| New Zealand | ☎ 0039-64 |
| UK | ☎ 0039-44 |
| USA | ☎ 0039-1 |

To make the call yourself, dial ☎ 001 (KDDI), ☎ 0041 (ITT), ☎ 0061 (IDC) or ☎ 0033 (NTT) – there's very little difference in the rates of these providers – then the country code, the local code and the number.

TIME

Tokyo local time is nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). When it's noon in Tokyo, it's 7pm (the day before) in Los Angeles, 10pm in Montreal and New York, 3am (the same day) in London, 4am in Frankfurt, Paris and Rome, 11am in Hong Kong, 3pm in Melbourne and 5pm in Wellington. Japan does not observe daylight-savings-time, so remember to subtract one hour when working out the time difference with a country using daylight-savings-time.

TIPPING & BARGAINING

Despite the high quality of customer service in Japan, it is not customary to tip, even in the most expensive restaurants and bars. Bargaining is not customary either, with the exception of outdoor markets, such as Ameyoko in Ueno (see p70).

TOILETS

In Japan you will come across everything from the automated wash-and-dry Toto toilets to the somewhat more humble Asian squat toilets.

If you've never had the pleasure of having your back end washed and dried by a ma-

chine, the trick is to select exactly the right water temperature and pressure – and don't forget to relax the muscles!

When you need to squat, the correct position is facing the hood, away from the door. Make sure the contents of your pockets don't spill out!

Toilet paper isn't always provided, so always graciously accept those small packets of tissue handed out on the street, a common form of advertising.

In many bathrooms in Japan, separate toilet slippers are often provided just inside the toilet door. These are for use in the toilet only, so remember to shuffle out of them when you leave.

It's quite common to see men urinating in public – the unspoken rule is that it's acceptable at night time if you happen to be drunk. Public toilets are free and can usually be found in or around most train stations. If you're not near a train station, department stores are always a good bet, and convenience stores have clean public toilets that are often available 24 hours a day.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Japan's tourist information services (観光案内所, *kankō annai-sho*) are first rate, and the Tokyo branch of the **Japan National Tourist Organization** (JNTO; www.jnto.go.jp) is the best of the bunch.

JNTO is the main English-language information service for foreign travellers to Japan and produces a great deal of useful literature, which is available from its offices abroad and its Tourist Information Centers (TICs) inside Japan. Most publications are available in English and, in some cases, other European and Asian languages. JNTO's website is very useful for planning your journey.

JNTO operates two main TICs in Tokyo:

Narita (☎ 0476-34-6251; 1st fl, Terminals 1 & 2, Narita Airport, Chiba; ☎ 9am-8pm)

Tokyo (Map p62; ☎ 3216-1901; 10th fl, Kōtsū Kaikan Bldg, 2-10-1 Yūrakuchō, Chiyoda-ku; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat; 🚶 JR Yamanote Line to Yūrakuchō, exit A8)

TIC staff cannot make transport bookings; they can, however, direct you to agencies that can, such as the **Japan Travel Bureau** (JTB; Map pp48-9; ☎ 5321-3077; Main Office Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bldg, 1st fl, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building No 1; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm, closed year-end & New Year period).

In addition to its main offices listed, JNTO operates 111 English-language Tourist Information Centers throughout Japan. The centres are usually found in the main train stations of major Japanese cities. Look for the red question mark with the word 'information' printed beneath it.

Other helpful places about town include the following:

Asakusa Tourist Information Center (Map p86; ☎ 5246-1151; 4-5-6 Higashi-Ueno, Taitō-ku; ☎ 10am-5pm; 🚶 Ginza or Toei Asakusa Line to Asakusa, exit A4) Awaiting you in Asakusa, this excellent place is staffed with friendly local experts who can arrange free neighbourhood tours with English-speaking guides.

Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau (TCVB; Map pp52-3; ☎ 3287-7024; 1st fl, 3-2-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, Sun & holidays; 🚶 Chiyoda, Hibiya or Toei Mita Lines to Hibiya, exit B7)

Tokyo Tourist Information Center Tochō (TIC; Map p116; Tokyo Metropolitan Government Offices, North Tower, 1st fl, 2-8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; 🚶 Toei Ōedo Line to Tochōmae, exit A4)

If you're looking to use a licensed, professional tourist guide you could contact the **Japan Guide Association** (☎ 3213-2706; www.jga21c.or.jp/f_introduction.html).

Tourist Offices Abroad

JNTO has a number of offices abroad including the following:

Australia (☎ 02-9251 3024; www.jnto.go.jp/syd/index.html; Level 18, Australia Square Tower, 264 George St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Canada (☎ 416-366-7140; www.japantravelinfo.com; Suite 306, 481 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5G 2E9 Canada)

France (☎ 01 42 96 20 29; www.tourisme-japon.fr; 4 Rue de Ventadour, 75001 Paris)

Germany (☎ 069-20353; fra@jnto.de; Kaiserstrasse 11, 60311 Frankfurt am Main)

UK (☎ 020-7734 9638; www.seejapan.co.uk; Heathcoat House, 20 Savile Row, London W1S 3PR)

USA (www.japantravelinfo.com); Los Angeles (☎ 213-623-1952; Suite 1470, 515 South Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90071); New York (☎ 212-757-5640; Suite 1250, 1 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020); San Francisco (☎ 415-292 5686; Suite 250C, 1 Daniel Burnham Crt, San Francisco, CA 94109)

BRINGING GUIDE DOGS TO JAPAN

Japanese regulations on the importation of live animals are very strict, and are not waived for guide dogs. Dogs brought from countries in which rabies has been eradicated need not be quarantined, provided their owners can show a *yūshutsu shomeisho* (exportation certificate). Dogs arriving from countries in which rabies occurs will be placed into quarantine for up to six months, unless their owners can supply an exportation certificate, veterinary examination certification and written proof of rabies vaccination.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Many new buildings in Tokyo have access ramps, traffic lights have speakers playing melodies when it is safe to cross, train platforms have raised dots and lines to provide guidance and some ticket machines have Braille. Some attractions also offer free entry to travellers with disabilities and a companion. A fair number of hotels, from the higher end of midrange and above, offer a 'universal' (meaning 'universally accessible') room or two. Still, Tokyo can be rather difficult for travellers with disabilities to negotiate, especially visitors in wheelchairs who are often forced to make a choice between negotiating stairs or rerouting.

For more information check out the following websites:

Accessible Japan (www.wakakoma.org/aj) Details the accessibility of hundreds of sites in Tokyo, including hotels, sights and department stores, as well as general information about getting around Japan.

Japanese Red Cross Language Service Volunteers ([Map pp96-7](http://map.jp96-7); ☎ 3438-1311; <http://accessible.jp.org>; 1-1-3 Shiba Daimon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8521) Has loads of useful information, and it also produces an excellent guide called *Accessible Tokyo*, which can be requested by email, mail or telephone – or found on its website.

VISAS

Generally, visitors who are not planning to engage in income-producing activities while in Japan are exempt from obtaining visas and will be issued a *tanki-taizai* (temporary visitor visa) on arrival.

Stays of up to six months are permitted for citizens of Austria, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, Switzerland and the UK. Citizens of these

countries will almost always be given a 90-day temporary visitor visa upon arrival, which can usually be extended for another 90 days at immigration bureaux inside Japan (see *Visa Extensions*, [below](#)).

Citizens of the USA, Australia and New Zealand are granted 90-day temporary visitor visas, while stays of up to three months are permitted for citizens of Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and a number of other countries.

For additional information on visas and regulations, contact the nearest Japanese embassy or consulate in your country, or visit the website of the **Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (www.mofa.go.jp) where you can check out the Guide to Japanese Visas, read about working-holiday visas and find details on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme, which sponsors native English speakers to teach in the Japanese public-school system. You can also contact the **Immigration Information Center** (Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau; Map pp48-9; ☎ 5796-7112; [www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/5-5-30 Kōnan, Minato-ku](http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/5-5-30_Kōnan_Minato-ku/); ☎ 9am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri; 📍 Tokyo Monorail or Rinkai Line to Tennozu Isle).

Alien Registration Card

Anyone – and this includes tourists – who stays for more than 90 days is required to obtain a *gaikokujin torokushō* (Alien Registration Card). This card can be obtained at the municipal office of the city, town or ward in which you're living. Moving to another area requires that you reregister within 14 days.

You must carry your Alien Registration Card at all times as the police can stop you and ask to see the card. If you don't have it, you could be hauled off to the police station to wait until someone fetches it for you – providing you have one.

Visa Extensions

With the exception of those nationals whose countries have reciprocal visa exemptions and can stay for six months, the limit for most nationalities is 90 days. To extend a temporary visitor visa beyond the standard limit, apply at the Immigration Information Center (Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau; see [above](#)). You must provide two copies of an Application for Extension of Stay (available at the immigration office), a letter stating the reasons for the

extension and supporting documentation as well as your passport. There is a processing fee of ¥4000.

Many long-term visitors to Japan get around the extension problem by briefly leaving the country, usually by going to South Korea. Be warned, however, that immigration officials are starting to wise up to this practice, and many 'tourist visa returnees' are turned back at the entry point.

Work Visas

Ever-increasing demand has prompted much stricter work-visa requirements than previously. Arriving in Japan and looking for a job is quite a tough proposition these days, though people still do it and occasionally succeed in finding sponsorship. With that said, there are legal employment categories for foreigners that specify standards of experience and qualifications.

Once you find an employer in Japan who is willing to sponsor you, it is necessary to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility from your nearest Japanese immigration office. The same office can then issue your work visa, which is valid for either one or three years. This procedure can take two to three months.

Generally speaking, it is recommended that you arrange your job in Japan prior to arrival. In this case, your employer will arrange your visa in advance, which will save you the hassle of having to enter as a tourist and subsequently change your status.

Working-Holiday Visas

Citizens of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Korea, New Zealand and the UK can apply for a working-holiday visa if they're between 18 and 30 (the upper age limit for UK citizens is officially 25, but this is negotiable). This visa allows a six-month stay and two six-month extensions. The visa is designed to enable young people to travel extensively during their stay; thus, employment is supposed to be part-time or temporary. In practice, many people work full-time.

A working-holiday visa is much easier to obtain than a work visa and is popular with Japanese employers. Single applicants must have the equivalent of US\$2000 of funds, a married couple must have US\$3000, and all applicants must have an onward ticket from Japan. For details, inquire at the nearest Japanese embassy or consulate (see [p246](#)).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Japan is one of the safest countries in the world for women travellers. Compared with the West, Japan has a much lower incidence of violent crime, including rape. As a result, women should have no problem walking alone down the streets of Tokyo, even at night. Of course, as with any unfamiliar destination, it's best to use your discretion and keep your guard up at all times.

If you do experience a problem and find the local police unhelpful, call the Human Rights Counseling Center for Foreigners (see [p250](#)).

It's worth mentioning, however, that women who have spent a considerable amount of time in Japan have probably experienced some form of sexual harassment. Jam-packed trains can provide opportunities for the roving hands of *chikan* (groppers). A loud complaint usually shames the perpetrator into retreating. To avoid the possibility altogether, ride in the women-only train carriages during rush hour.

Finally, an excellent resource for any woman setting up in Japan is Caroline Pover's book *Being A Broad in Japan*; find it in bookshops or order from her website (www.being-a-broad.com).

WORK

Finding work in Tokyo is possible, but it's not as easy nor as lucrative as it used to be. Teaching English is still the most common job for Westerners, but bartending, hostessing, modelling and various other jobs are also possible.

Whatever line of work you choose, it is essential to look neat and tidy for interviews – appearances can make or break you in Japan. You'll also need to be determined, and you should have a sizable sum of money to float on while you're looking for work, and possibly to get you out of the country if you don't find any (it happens). Foreigners who have set up in Japan over the last few years maintain that a figure of around US\$5000 or more is necessary to make a go of it. People do it with less, but they run the risk of ending up penniless and homeless before they find a job.

Be advised that business cards (*meishi*) carry much more weight in Japan than they do in the West. Information about a person's status and, perhaps even more importantly, their connections can be obtained from business cards, which are ritually exchanged on first meeting. It's good form to accept cards with both hands and examine them before

tucking them away into your purse or wallet. If attending a meeting, the card should be left on the table until the end of the meeting, and only afterwards be respectfully put away.

Bartending

In the tourist-friendly entertainment district of Roppongi (p94), foreign bartenders are the rule rather than the exception. As little as five years ago, it was not necessary to have a valid work visa to work in Roppongi as the majority of establishments were perfectly willing to pay tourists under the table. Of course, bartenders were expected to work 80+ hours a week for little more than pocket change (there are no tips in Japan), though when you're down and out, a job is a job.

Following a recent crackdown on illegal workers, however, the Roppongi nightlife scene is slowly turning legit. Today, few establishments are willing to take a chance by hiring a tourist, though the upside is that wages have slightly increased. Although you cannot expect a bar to sponsor a work visa, mixing cocktails in the evenings is a great way to supplement the meagre pay of an English teacher.

English Teaching

Teaching English has always been the most popular job for native English speakers in Japan. While it's a fairly common option, competition for the good jobs is very tight since many English schools have failed as a result of Japan's weakened economy.

A university degree is an absolute essential as schools cannot sponsor you for a work visa without one (be sure to bring the actual degree with you to Japan). Teaching qualifications and some teaching experience will be of huge advantage when job hunting.

Consider organising a job before arriving in Japan. Big schools such as [Geos](http://www.geoscareer.com) (www.geoscareer.com) and [Nova](http://www.teachinjapan.com) (www.teachinjapan.com) have recruitment programmes in the USA and the UK. With that said, working conditions at the big 'factory schools' are pretty dire compared with the smaller schools that recruit within Japan.

Travellers without a degree who can take advantage of the Japanese working-holiday visa (p257) are in a much better position than those who cannot. Schools are happier about taking on unqualified teachers if it means that they don't have to bother with sponsoring a teacher for a work visa.

For job listings, start with the following:

[Dave's ESL Café](http://www.eslcafe.com) (www.eslcafe.com)

[ELT News](http://www.eltnews.com) (www.eltnews.com)

[GaijinPot](http://www.gaijinpot.com) (www.gaijinpot.com)

[Japan Times](http://classified.japantimes.com/career) (http://classified.japantimes.com/career)

Hostessing

Hostess clubs, which are a common feature of Japan's entertainment industry, employ female staff to serve men drinks, and engage them in conversation. Unlike strips clubs or brothels, hostesses are not forced to remove their clothes or engage in sex with customers, though they can be encouraged to meet clients (and perform favours) outside of working hours.

Hostessing is a popular employment option among young foreign women in Japan as few places require valid visas, and salaries can sometimes reach hundreds of dollars per hour. Particularly attractive or popular hostesses can also receive gifts from clients, such as jewellery, clothing, trips and even cars.

Of course, there are dangers. In 1992, Carita Ridgeway, an Australian hostess, was drugged and killed after a paid date. In 2000, Lucie Blackman, an English hostess, was abducted, raped and murdered by a customer.

Hostessing has inherent dangers, which is why we cannot recommend that anyone consider the job as a viable and sustainable form of employment in Japan. With that said, if you do decide to accept a hostessing job, be sure that you understand the nature of your employment, and know the extent of your personal boundaries.

Modelling

As one of the world's greatest fashion capitals, Tokyo is a lucrative place to live if you were born with beautiful looks, perfect posture and a healthy dose of poise. Although there's no denying the beauty of Japanese models, foreigners are all the rage these days, and it's not difficult to find the faces of your favourite Hollywood actors selling everything from mobile phones to canned coffee.

Modelling is a legitimate business that can pay extremely well, but you will need to be in possession of a valid work visa. Although there are literally hundreds of agencies in Tokyo, the following list should get you started:

[Agence Presse](http://www.agencepresse.com) (www.agencepresse.com)

[Bravo Models](http://www.bravomodels.net) (www.bravomodels.net)

[Switch](http://www.switchmodels.co.jp) (www.switchmodels.co.jp)

[World Top](http://worldtop.co.jp) (http://worldtop.co.jp)

LANGUAGE

It's true – anyone can speak another language. Don't worry if you haven't studied languages before or that you studied a language at school for years and can't remember any of it. It doesn't even matter if you failed English grammar. After all, that's never affected your ability to speak English! And this is the key to picking up a language in another country. You just need to start speaking.



Learn a few key phrases before you go. Write them on pieces of paper and stick them on the fridge, by the bed or even on the computer – anywhere that you'll see them often.

You'll find that locals appreciate travellers trying their language, no matter how muddled you may think you sound. So don't just stand there, say something! If you want to learn more Japanese than we've included here, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's comprehensive but user-friendly *Japanese Phrasebook*.

PRONUNCIATION

Pronounce double consonants with a slight pause between them, so that each is clearly audible. Vowel length affects meaning, so make sure you distinguish your short and long vowels clearly. Certain vowel sounds (like **u** and **i**) aren't pronounced in some words, but are included as part of the official Romanisation system (which employs a literal system to represent Japanese characters). In the following words and phrases these 'silent' letters are shown in square brackets to indicate that they aren't pronounced.

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| a | short, as the 'u' in 'run' |
| ā | long, as the 'a' in 'father' |
| e | short, as in 'red' |
| ē | long, as the 'ei' in 'rein' |
| i | short, as in 'bit' |
| ii | long i , as in 'marine' |
| o | short, as in 'pot' |
| ō | long, as the 'aw' in 'paw' |
| u | short, as in 'put' |
| ū | long, as in 'rude' |

SOCIAL

Meeting People

| | | |
|-----------|--------|-------------|
| Hello/Hi. | こんにちは。 | konnichi wa |
| Goodbye. | さようなら。 | sayōnara |
| Yes. | はい。 | hai |
| No. | いえ。 | ie |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Please. | (when offering something) | どうぞ。 | dōzo |
| (when asking a favour or making a request) | お願いします。 | onegai shimas[u] | |
| Thank you (very much). | (どうも)ありがとう (dōmo) arigatō | (ございます)。 | (gozaimas[u]) |
| You're welcome. | どういたしまして。 | dō itashimash[i]te | |
| Excuse me. | (to get attention or to get past) | すみません。 | sumimasen |
| Sorry. | ごめんなさい。 | gomen nasai | |

Could you please ...?

…くれませんか?
 ... kuremasen ka?
 repeat that
 繰り返して
 kurikaeshite
 speak more slowly
 もっとゆっくり話して
 motto yukkuri hanash[i]te
 write it down
 書いて
 kaite

What's your name?

お名前は何ですか?
 o-namae wa nan des[u] ka?
 My name is ...
 私の名前は…です。
 watashi no namae wa ... des[u]

Do you speak English?
英語が話せますか?
eigo ga hanasemas[u] ka?
Do you understand?
わかりましたか?
wakarimash[i]ta ka?
Yes, I do understand.
はい、わかりました。
hai, wakarimash[i]ta
No, I don't understand.
いいえ、わかりません。
iie, wakarimasen

Going Out

What's on ...?
…は何がありますか?
… wa nani ga arimas[u] ka?
locally
近所に kinjo ni
this weekend
今週の週末 konshū no shūmatsu
today
今日 kyō
tonight
今夜 konya

Where can I find ...?
どこに行けば…がありますか?
doko ni ikeba ... ga arimas[u] ka?
clubs
クラブ kurabu
gay venues
ゲイの場所 gei no basho
Japanese-style pubs
居酒屋 izakaya
places to eat
食事ができる所 shokuji ga dekiru tokoro
pubs
パブ pabu

Is there a local entertainment guide?
地元のエンターテイメントガイドは
ありますか?
jimoto no entāteimento gaido wa
arimas[u] ka?

PRACTICAL

Question Words

Who? (polite)
だれ?/どなた? dare?/donata?
What?/What is this?
何?/なに? nani?/nani?

Which?
どちら? dochira?
When?
いつ? itsu?
Where?
どこ? doko?
How?
どのように? dono yō ni?
How much does it cost?
いくらですか? ikura des[u] ka?

Numbers

| | | |
|------|------|---------------------|
| 0 | ゼロ/零 | zero/rei |
| 1 | 一 | ichi |
| 2 | 二 | ni |
| 3 | 三 | san |
| 4 | 四 | shi/yon |
| 5 | 五 | go |
| 6 | 六 | roku |
| 7 | 七 | shichi/nana |
| 8 | 八 | hachi |
| 9 | 九 | ku/kyū |
| 10 | 十 | jū |
| 11 | 十一 | jūichi |
| 12 | 十二 | jūni |
| 13 | 十三 | jūsan |
| 14 | 十四 | jūshi/jūyon |
| 15 | 十五 | jūgo |
| 16 | 十六 | jūroku |
| 17 | 十七 | jūshichi/ jūnana |
| 18 | 十八 | jūhachi |
| 19 | 十九 | jūku/jūkyū |
| 20 | 二十 | nijū |
| 21 | 二十一 | nijūichi |
| 22 | 二十二 | nijūni |
| 30 | 三十 | sanjū |
| 40 | 四十 | yonjū |
| 50 | 五十 | gojū |
| 60 | 六十 | rokJū |
| 70 | 七十 | nanajū |
| 80 | 八十 | hachijū |
| 90 | 九十 | kyūjū |
| 100 | 百 | hyaku |
| 200 | 二百 | nihyaku |
| 1000 | 千 | sen |

Days

| | | |
|-----------|-----|-----------|
| Monday | 月曜日 | getsuyōbi |
| Tuesday | 火曜日 | kayōbi |
| Wednesday | 水曜日 | suiyōbi |
| Thursday | 木曜日 | mokuyōbi |
| Friday | 金曜日 | kinyōbi |
| Saturday | 土曜日 | doyōbi |
| Sunday | 日曜日 | nichiyōbi |

Banking

I'd like to ...
…をお願いします。
… o onegai shimas[u]
cash a cheque
小切手の現金化
kogitte no genkinka
change a travellers cheque
トラベラーズチェックの現金化
toraberāz[u] chekku no genkinka
change money
両替
ryōgae

Where's ...?
…はどこですか?
… wa doko des[u] ka?
an ATM
ATM
ētiiemu
a foreign exchange office
外国為替セクション
gaikoku kawase sekushon

Post

Where is the post office?
郵便局はどこですか?
yūbin kyoku wa doko des[u] ka?

I want to send a/an ...
…を送りたいのですが。
… o okuritai no des[u] ga
letter
手紙 tegami
parcel
小包 kozutsumi
postcard
はがき hagaki

I want to buy a/an ...
…をください。
… o kudasai
aerogram
エアログラム earoguramu
envelope
封筒 fūtō
stamp
切手 kitte

Phones & Mobiles

I want to ...
…たいのですが。
… tai no des[u] ga
buy a phonecard
テレフォンカードを買い
terefon kādo o kai

call (Singapore)
(シンガポール)に電話し
(shingapōru) ni denwa shi
make a (local) call
(市内)に電話し
(shinai) ni denwa shi
reverse the charges
コレクトコールで電話し
korekuto-kōru de denwa shi

I'd like a ...
…をお願いします。
… o onegai shimas[u]
charger for my phone
携帯電話の充電器
keitaidenwa no jūdenki
mobile/cell phone for hire
携帯電話のレンタル
keitaidenwa no rentaru
prepaid mobile/cell phone
プリペイドの携帯電話
puripeido no keitaidenwa
SIM card for your network
SIMカード
shimukādo

Internet

Where's the local internet café?
インターネットカフェはどこですか?
intānetto-kafe wa doko des[u] ka?

I'd like to ...
…したいのですが。
… shitai no des[u] ga
check my email
Eメールをチェック
iimēru o chekku
get internet access
インターネットにアクセス
intānetto ni akuses[u]

Transport

When's the ... (bus)?
…(バス)は何時ですか?
… (bas[u]) wa nan-ji des[u] ka?
first
始発の shihatsu no
last
最終の saishū no
next
次の tsugi no

What time does it leave?
これは何時に出ますか?
kore wa nan-ji ni demas[u] ka?

What time does it get to ...?
 これは…に何時に着きますか?
 kore wa ... ni nan-ji ni tsukimas[u] ka?
 Is this taxi available?
 このタクシーは空車ですか?
 kono tak[u]shii wa kūsha des[u] ka?
 Please put the meter on.
 メーターを入れてください。
 mētā o irete kudasai
 How much is it to ...?
 …までいくらですか?
 … made ikura des[u] ka?
 Please take me to (this address).
 (この住所)までお願いします。
 (kono jūsho) made onegai shimas[u]

EMERGENCIES

Help!
 たすけて!
 tas[u]kete!
 It's an emergency!
 緊急です!
 kinkyū des[u]!
 Call the police!
 警察を呼んで!
 keisatsu o yonde!
 Call a doctor!
 医者を呼んで!
 isha o yonde!
 Call an ambulance!
 救急車を呼んで!
 kyūkyūsha o yonde!
 Could you please help?
 たすけてください?
 tas[u]kete kudasai?
 Where's the police station?
 警察署はどこですか?
 keisatsusho wa doko des[u] ka?

HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?
 この近くの…はどこですか?
 kono chikaku no ... wa doko des[u] ka?
 (night) chemist
 (24時間営業の) 薬局
 (nijūyōjikan eigyō no) yakkyoku
 doctor
 医者
 isha
 hospital
 病院
 byōin

I need a doctor (who speaks English).
 (英語ができる)お医者さんが必要です。
 (eigo ga dekiru) o-isha-san ga hitsuyō des[u]

I'm allergic to ...
 私は…アレルギーです。
 watashi wa ... arerugii des[u]
 antibiotics
 抗生物質
 kōsei busshitsu
 aspirin
 アスピリン
 as[u]pirin
 bees
 蜂
 hachi
 nuts
 ナッツ類
 nattsurui
 penicillin
 ペニシリン
 penishirin

Symptoms

I have ...
 私は…があります。
 watashi wa ... ga arimas[u]
 diarrhoea
 下痢
 geri
 a headache
 頭痛
 zutsū
 nausea
 吐き気
 hakike
 a pain
 痛み
 itami

FOOD & DRINK

For more detailed information on food and dining out, see p150.

| | | |
|-----------|------|------------|
| breakfast | 朝食 | chōshoku |
| lunch | 昼食 | chūshoku |
| dinner | 夕食 | yūshoku |
| snack | 間食 | kanshoku |
| to eat | 食べます | tabemas[u] |
| to drink | 飲みます | nomimas[u] |

Can you recommend a ...?
 どこかいい…を知っていますか?
 doko ka ii ... o shitte imas[u] ka?
 bar
 バー
 bā
 café
 カフェ
 kafe
 restaurant
 レストラン
 restoran

Is service included in the bill?
 サービス料込みですか?
 sābis[u] ryō komi des[u] ka?
 A table for two/five people, please.
 (二人/五人)お願いします。
 (futari/go-nin) onegai shimas[u]

Do you have an English menu?
 英語のメニューがありますか?
 eigo no menyū ga arimas[u] ka?
 Can you recommend any dishes?
 おすすめの料理がありますか?
 osusume no ryōri ga arimas[u] ka?
 Is this self-service?
 ここはセルフサービスですか?
 koko wa serufu sābis[u] des[u] ka?
 Is service included in the bill?
 サービス料は込みですか?
 sābis[u] ryō wa komi des[u] ka?
 Cheers!
 乾杯!
 kampai!
 Bon appetit!
 いただきます!
 itadakimas[u]!
 Delicious!
 おいしい!
 oishii!
 Thank you. (after a meal)
 ごちそうさまでした。
 gochisō sama deshita

Please bring ...
 …をお願いします。
 ... o onegai shimas[u]
 the bill
 お勘定
 o-kanjō
 chopsticks
 はし
 hashi
 a fork
 フォーク
 fōku
 a glass (of water)
 コップ(一杯の水)
 koppu (ippai no mizu)
 a knife
 ナイフ
 naifu
 a spoon
 スプーン
 supūn

I can't eat meat.
 肉は食べられません。
 niku wa taberaremasen
 I can't eat chicken.
 鶏肉は食べられません。
 toriniku wa taberaremasen
 I can't eat pork.
 豚肉は食べられません。
 butaniku wa taberaremasen
 I can't eat seafood.
 シーフードは食べられません。
 shiifūdo wa taberaremasen
 I'm a vegetarian.
 私はベジタリアンです。
 watashi wa bejitarian des[u]

I'm allergic to (peanuts).
 私は(ピーナッツ)アレルギーです。
 watashi wa (piinattsu) arerugii des[u]

Food Glossary SUSHI & SASHIMI

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| ama-ebi | 甘海老 |
| sweet shrimp | |
| awabi | あわび |
| abalone | |
| ebi | 海老/エビ |
| prawn or shrimp | |
| hamachi | はまち |
| yellowtail | |
| ika | いか |
| squid | |
| ikura | イクラ |
| salmon roe | |
| kani | かに |
| crab | |
| katsuo | かつお |
| bonito | |
| maguro | まぐろ |
| tuna | |
| tai | 鯛 |
| sea bream | |
| tamago | たまご |
| sweetened egg | |
| toro | とろ |
| the choicest cut of fatty tuna belly | |
| unagi | うなぎ |
| eel with a sweet sauce | |
| uni | うに |
| sea urchin roe | |

NOODLES

| | |
|--|----------|
| chānpon-men | ちゃんぽんメン |
| noodles in meat broth with toppings | |
| chāshū-men | チャーシューメン |
| rāmen topped with slices of roast pork | |
| ake | かけ |
| soba/udon in broth | |
| kitsune | きつね |
| soba/udon with fried tofu | |
| miso-rāmen | 味噌ラーメン |
| rāmen with miso-flavoured broth | |
| shio-rāmen | 塩ラーメン |
| rāmen with salt-flavoured broth | |
| shōyu-rāmen | 醤油ラーメン |
| rāmen with soy sauce-flavoured broth | |
| soba | そば |
| buckwheat-based noodles | |
| tempura | 天ぷら |
| soba/udon with tempura shrimp | |
| tsukimi | 月見 |
| soba/udon with egg on top | |

udon うどん
 thick, white wheat noodles
 wantan-men ワンタンメン
rāmen with meat dumplings
 zaru ざる
 cold *soba*/udon served on a bamboo mat, with nori

IZAKAYA

agedashi-dōfu 揚げだし豆腐
 deep-fried tofu in a fish-stock soup
 aspara-batā アスパラバター
 buttered asparagus
 chiizu-age チーズ揚げ
 deep-fried cheese
 hiya-yakko 冷奴
 cold block of tofu with soy sauce and spring onions
 jaga-batā ジャガバター
 baked potatoes with butter
 kata yaki-soba 固焼きそば
 hard fried noodles with meat and vegetables
 niku-jaga 肉じゃが
 beef and potato stew
 piiman ピーマン
 small green peppers
 poteto furai ポテトフライ
 French fries
 sashimi mori-awase 刺身盛り合わせ
 selection of sliced sashimi
 shiitake しいたけ
 Japanese mushrooms
 shio-yaki-zakana 塩焼魚
 whole fish grilled with salt
 shishamo ししゃも
 pregnant smelts, grilled and eaten whole
 tebasaki 手羽先
 chicken wings
 tsukune つくね
 chicken meatballs
 tsuna sarada ツナサラダ
 tuna salad over cabbage
 yaki-onigiri 焼きおにぎり
 triangle of grilled rice
 yaki-soba 焼きそば
 fried noodles with meat and vegetables
 yakitori 焼き鳥
 skewers of grilled chicken
 yasai sarada 野菜サラダ
 mixed vegetable salad

TEMPURA

kakiage 掻き揚げ
 tempura cake of shredded vegetables
 kakiage-don 掻き揚げ丼
kakiage served over a large bowl of rice
 shōjin age 精進揚げ
 vegetarian tempura

tempura mori-awase 天ぷら盛り合わせ
 selection of tempura
 ten-don 天丼
 tempura shrimp and vegetables over a large bowl of rice

SUKIYAKI, SHABU-SHABU & YAKINIKU

buta 豚
 pork
 gyūniku 牛肉
 beef
 harami ハラミ
 tender meat from around the diaphragm
 karubi カルビ
 short ribs without the bones
 reba レバ
 beef liver
 rōsu ロース
 beef tenderloin
 tan タン
 beef tongue, served with salt and lemon
 toriniku 鶏肉
 chicken
 yasai 野菜
 vegetables, typically carrots, mushrooms, onions

OKONOMIYAKI

gyū okonomiyaki 牛お好み焼き
 beef *okonomiyaki*
 ika okonomiyaki イカお好み焼き
 squid *okonomiyaki*
 mikkusu ミックス焼き
 mixed fillings of seafood, meat and vegetables
 modan-yaki モダン焼き
okonomiyaki with *yaki-soba* and a fried egg
 negi okonomiyaki ネギお好み焼き
 thin *okonomiyaki* with spring onions

SHOKUDŌ

donburi-mono 丼物
 large bowl of rice topped with egg or meat
 karē-raisu カレーライス
 rice topped with ingredients in curry sauce
 niku-don 肉丼
 rice topped with thin slices of cooked beef
 omu-raisu オムライス
 rice flavoured with ketchup, served inside a thin omelette
 oyako-don 親子丼
 rice topped with egg and chicken

TONKATSU

hire katsu ヒレカツ
tonkatsu (crumbed pork) fillet
 katsu-don カツ丼
tonkatsu and egg on rice
 kushi katsu 串カツ
 deep-fried pork and vegetables on skewers

minchi katsu ミンチカツ
 minced pork cutlet
 rōsu katsu ロースカツ
 fattier cut of pork (which some consider more flavourful)
 tonkatsu teishoku トンカツ定食
 set meal of *tonkatsu*, rice, *miso shiru* and shredded cabbage

UNAGI

kabayaki 蒲焼
 skewers of grilled eel without rice
 unadon うな丼
 grilled eel over a bowl of rice
 unagi teishoku うなぎ定食
 full-set *unagi* meal with rice, grilled eel, eel-liver soup and pickles
 unajū うな重
 grilled eel over a flat tray of rice

FUGU

fugu chiri ふぐちり
 stew made from *fugu* and vegetables
 fugu sashimi ふぐ刺身
 thinly sliced raw *fugu*
 fugu teishoku ふぐ定食
 set course of *fugu* served several ways, plus rice and soup
 yaki fugu 焼きふぐ
fugu grilled on a *hibachi* (small earthenware grill) at your table

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

akai-wain 赤いワイン
 red wine
 biiru ビール
 beer
 chu-hai チューハイ
 rice brandy with fruit juice
 nama biiru 生ビール
 draught beer
 shōchū 焼酎
 distilled grain liquor
 oyu-wari お湯割り
shōchū with hot water
 chūhai チューハイ
shōchū with soda and lemon
 whiskey ウイスキー
 whiskey

mizu-wari 水割り
 whiskey, ice and water
 mugicha 麦茶
 roasted barley tea served in the summer
 onzarokku オンザロック
 whiskey with ice
 rōku-de ロックで
 to serve a liquor on the rocks
 shiroy-wain 白いワイン
 white wine
 sutoraito ストライト
 to serve a liquor straight

NONALCOHOLIC DRINKS

kōhii コーヒー
 regular coffee
 burendo kōhii ブレンドコーヒー
 blended coffee, fairly strong
 american kōhii アメリカンコーヒー
 weak coffee
 kōcha 紅茶
 black, British-style tea
 kafe ōre カフェオレ
café au lait, hot or cold
 orenji jūsu オレンジジュース
 orange juice
 mizu 水
 water
 oyu お湯
 hot water
 uron-cha 烏龍茶
 traditional Chinese tea

JAPANESE TEA

o-cha お茶
 green tea
 sencha 煎茶
 medium-grade green tea
 matcha 抹茶
 powdered green tea used in the tea ceremony
 bancha 番茶
 ordinary-grade green tea, brownish in colour
 mugicha 麦茶
 roasted barley tea

GLOSSARY

agaru – north of
ageya – traditional banquet hall used for entertainment, which flourished during the Edo period
Amida Nyorai – Buddha of the Western Paradise
ANA – All Nippon Airways
bashi – bridge (also *hashi*)
ben – dialect, as in *Kyoto-ben*
bentō – boxed lunch or dinner, usually containing rice, vegetables and fish or meat
bosatsu – a bodhisattva, or Buddha attendant, who assists others to attain enlightenment
bugaku – dance pieces played by court orchestras in ancient Japan
bunraku – classical puppet theatre that uses life-size puppets to enact dramas similar to those of *kabuki*
chadō – tea ceremony, or ‘The Way of Tea’
chanoyu – tea ceremony; see also *chadō*
chō – city area (for large cities) sized between a *ku* and *chōme*
chōme – city area of a few blocks
dai – great; large
Daibutsu – Great Buddha
daimyō – domain lords under the *shōgun*
dera – temple (also *ji* or *tera*)
dōri – street
fugu – poisonous pufferfish, elevated to *haute cuisine*
futon – cushion-like mattress that is rolled up and stored away during the day
gagaku – music of the imperial court
gaijin – foreigner; the contracted form of *gaikokujin* (literally, ‘outside country person’)
gawa – river (also *kawa*)
geiko – Kyoto dialect for *geisha*
geisha – a woman versed in the arts and other cultivated pursuits who entertains guests
gū – shrine
haiden – hall of worship in a shrine
haiku – 17-syllable poem
hakubutsukan – museum
hanami – cherry-blossom viewing
hashi – bridge (also *bashi*); chopsticks
higashi – east
hiragana – phonetic syllabary used to write Japanese words
honden – main building of a shrine
hondō – main building of a temple (also *kondō*)
ikebana – art of flower arrangement
irori – open hearth found in traditional Japanese homes
ITJ – International Telecom Japan
izakaya – Japanese pub/eatery
ji – temple (also *tera* or *dera*)

jingū – shrine (also *jinja* or *gū*)
Jizō – bodhisattva who watches over children
JNTO – Japan National Tourist Organization
jō – castle (also *shiro*)
JR – Japan Railways
kabuki – form of Japanese theatre that draws on popular tales and is characterised by elaborate costumes, stylised acting and the use of male actors for all roles
kaiseki – Buddhist-inspired, Japanese *haute cuisine*; called *cha-kaiseki* when served as part of a tea ceremony
kaisoku – rapid train
kaiten-zushi – automatic, conveyor-belt sushi
kamikaze – literally, ‘wind of the gods’; originally the typhoon that sank Kublai Khan’s 13th-century invasion fleet and the name adopted by Japanese suicide bombers in the waning days of WWII
kampai – cheers, as in a drinking toast
kanji – literally, ‘Chinese writing’; Chinese ideographic script used for writing Japanese
Kannon – Buddhist goddess of mercy
karaoke – a now famous export where revellers sing along to recorded music, minus the vocals
karesansui – dry-landscaped rock garden
kawa – river
kayabuki-yane – traditional Japanese thatched-roof farmhouse
KDD – Kokusai Denshin Denwa
ken – prefecture, eg Shiga-ken
kimono – traditional outer garment that is similar to a robe
kita – north
KIX – Kansai International Airport
Kiyomizu-yaki – a distinctive type of local pottery
ko – lake
kōban – local police box
kōen – park
koma-inu – dog-like guardian stone statues found in pairs at the entrance to *Shintō* shrines
kondō – main building of a temple
koto – 13-stringed zither-like instrument
ku – ward
kudaru – south of (also *sagaru*)
kura – traditional Japanese warehouse
kyōgen – drama performed as comic relief between *nō* plays, or as separate events
kyō-machiya – see *machiya*
kyō-ningyō – Kyoto dolls
kyō-obanzai – see *obanzai*
kyō-ryōri – Kyoto cuisine
Kyoto-ben – distinctive Japanese dialect spoken in Kyoto
LDP – Liberal Democratic Party
live house – a small concert hall where live music is performed

machi – city area (for large cities) sized between a *ku* and *chōme*
machiya – traditional wooden town house, called *kyō-machiya* in Kyoto
maiko – apprentice geisha
maki-e – decorative lacquer technique using silver and gold powders
mama-san – older women who run drinking, dining and entertainment venues
matcha – powdered green tea served in tea ceremonies
matsuri – festival
mikoshi – portable shrine carried during festivals
minami – south
minshuku – Japanese equivalent of a B&B
minyō – traditional Japanese folk music
Miroku – Buddha of the Future
mizu shōbai – the world of bars, entertainment and prostitution (also known as *water trade*)
momiji – Japanese maple trees
momiji-gari – viewing of the changing autumn colours of trees
mon – temple gate
mōningu setto – morning set of toast and coffee served at cafés
mura – village
Nihon – Japanese word for Japan; literally, ‘source of the sun’ (also known as *Nippon*)
ningyō – doll (see also *kyō-ningyō*)
niō – temple guardians
Nippon – see *Nihon*
nishi – west
nō – classical Japanese mask drama performed on a bare stage
noren – door curtain for restaurants, usually labelled with the name of the establishment
NTT – Nippon Telegraph & Telephone Corporation
o- – prefix used as a sign of respect (usually applied to objects)
obanzai – Japanese home-style cooking (the Kyoto variant of this is sometimes called *kyō-obanzai*)
obi – sash or belt worn with *kimono*
Obon – mid-August festivals and ceremonies for deceased ancestors
okiya – old-style *geisha* living quarters
onsen – mineral hot spring with bathing areas and accommodation
o-shibori – hot towels given in restaurants
pachinko – vertical pinball game that is a Japanese craze
Raijin – god of thunder
ryokan – traditional Japanese inn
ryōri – cooking; cuisine (see also *kyō-ryōri*)
ryōtei – traditional-style, high-class restaurant; *kaiseki* is typical fare

sabi – a poetic ideal of finding beauty and pleasure in imperfection; often used in conjunction with *wabi*
sagaru – south of (also *kudaru*)
sakura – cherry trees
salaryman – male employee of a large firm
sama – a suffix even more respectful than *san*
samurai – Japan’s traditional warrior class
san – a respectful suffix applied to personal names, similar to Mr, Mrs or Ms but more widely used
sen – line, usually railway line
sencha – medium-grade green tea
sensu – folding paper fan
sentō – public bath
setto – set meal; see also *teishoku*
Shaka Nyorai – Historical Buddha
shakkei – borrowed scenery; technique where features outside a garden are incorporated into its design
shakuhachi – traditional Japanese bamboo flute
shamisen – three-stringed, banjo-like instrument
shi – city (to distinguish cities with prefectures of the same name)
shidare-zakura – weeping cherry tree
shinkaisoku – special rapid train
shinkansen – bullet train (literally, ‘new trunk line’)
Shintō – indigenous Japanese religion
shiro – castle
shodō – Japanese calligraphy; literally, ‘the way of writing’
shōgun – military ruler of pre-Meiji Japan
shōjin-ryōri – Buddhist vegetarian cuisine
shokudō – Japanese-style cafeteria/cheap restaurant
shukubō – temple lodging
soba – thin brown buckwheat noodles
tatami – tightly woven floor matting on which shoes should not be worn
teishoku – set meal in a restaurant
tera – temple (also *dera* or *ji*)
TIC – Tourist Information Center (usually refers to Kyoto Tourist Information Center)
tokkyū – limited express train
torii – entrance gate to a *Shintō* shrine
tsukemono – Japanese pickles
udon – thick, white, wheat noodles
ukiyo-e – woodblock prints; literally, ‘pictures of the floating world’
wabi – a Zen-inspired aesthetic of rustic simplicity
wagashi – traditional Japanese sweets that are served with tea
wasabi – spicy Japanese horseradish
washi – Japanese paper
water trade – see *mizu shōbai*
yakuza – Japanese mafia
yudōfu – bean curd cooked in an iron pot; common temple fare
Zen – a form of Buddhism



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