Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Credits

The JET Programme

Overview

Relevant Organisations

Prefectural Advisors

AJET (Association for Japan Exchange & Teaching)

Our Job Status

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

Work Expenses

Holidays

Overview

Considerations

Office Housekeeping

Around the Office

Other Considerations

Transportation

Bicycles

Buses

Trains

Cars

Motorcycles and Scooters

Law Violations and License Points

Highways and Electronic Toll Collection (ETC)
Communications
Mobile Phones
The Internet
Pay Phones

Health and Sickness
Overview
Insurance
Hospitals
Visiting the Doctor
JET Supervisor/Participant's Agreement Form

Natural Disasters and Emergencies
Overview
Embassy Registration
Earthquakes
Tsunami
Typhoons
Tornadoes
Nuclear Accidents
The “Getaway Kit”

Daily Living
Residency
Your House / Apartment
Garbage Collection
Feeding Yourself
Paying Bills
Money
Post Offices
Taxes in Brief

Japanese Language Study
Overview
Language Courses
Japanese Language Tests
Online Resources

Leisure Time
Overview
Religious Services
Museums
Amusement parks
Outdoors and Onsens
Festivals

Appendix
The Upcoming JET Year at a Glance (2015-2016)
Getting to the Prefectural Office (県庁, Kencho)
Other Useful Information Sources
Useful Japanese Vocabulary and Expressions
Japanese Lessons
In Your Down Time
**Credits**

The Ibaraki Orientation Handbook has been created from knowledge passed down over the years by each generation of JETs. We hope that the information contained within is accurate and useful for your lives in Ibaraki.

This version has been edited by:

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- Albert David Valderrama (ALT/PA, 2011-2015)

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**On the cover: Art Tower Mito**

Located in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, it is the landmark symbol for the surrounding art gallery and theater. It was opened in 1990 and stands at 100 meters (328 feet) tall.
The JET Programme

Overview

The first thing to bear in mind is that all JET jobs are not the same: situations, contracts, and work duties vary.

The JET Programme is not your employer. We are brought here by JET, but we work for our Contracting Organisation (CO). The JET Programme is like a recruiting agency that matches employers with employees. CLAIR, the Japanese government institution that runs the JET Programme, provides guidelines to contracting organisations for employing JET participants, but contracting organisations have considerable leeway to alter these guidelines to suit local conditions.

That being said, a firm system has been established to ensure that basic guidelines are followed, that JETs participate in common meetings and seminars, and that information, counselling, and problem-solving avenues are available.

Many organisations are involved in the JET Programme. At the national level, MOFA (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), MIC (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications), MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), and CLAIR (the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations) play respective roles in the JET Programme.

In Ibaraki, the groups that most directly affect your JET life are the Senior High School Education Division (for SHS ALTs*), your local Board of Education (for JHS and ES ALTs), the International Affairs Division, the Ibaraki AJET Council, and of course, your workplaces.

*Private schools are not under the administration of the Senior High School Education Division. Private school ALTs will mostly be affected by their contracting organisation, which is their school.

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Relevant Organisations

Kokusaika (International Affairs Division, 国際課)

- Administers the JET Programme in Ibaraki
- Advises on contract matters
- Distributes information from CLAIR and from the Prefectural Government
- Coordinates contract renewal for all Ibaraki JETs
- Hosts the Ibaraki Prefectural Orientation
- Holds the annual ALT supervisors’ meeting
- Advises SHS ALT host institutions, government offices with CIRs, private schools, and local (city, town, village) Boards of Education
- Employs three CIRs who coordinate various events to advance internationalisation in Ibaraki
- Trains 4 Prefectural Advisors (2 CIRs, 1 ALT, and the Japanese head of the JET Programme in Ibaraki) who offer advice, daily life counselling, and JET Programme information for Ibaraki JETs
Keiyaku Dantai (Contracting Organisations, 契約団体)

Contracting Organisations (COs), the people with whom we sign our contracts, are our effective employers. For some ALTs, the base school or place of work may play a bigger role in their daily life; however, all contract, apartment, and salary matters are handled by the Contracting Organisation. There are three types of contracting organisations:

1. The Senior High School Education Division for Prefectural SHS ALTs
2. A local Board of Education for JHS/ES ALTs
3. A private school for private school ALTs
4. A local government office for some CIRs

Because SHS ALTs have the same Contracting Organisation, contracts, working, and apartment conditions are relatively standard. Situations for CIRs and ES, JHS, and Private ALTs, however, can vary considerably because private schools, local Boards of Education, and local government offices are autonomous from the prefectural government.

Kōkō Kyōikuka (Senior High School Education Division, 高校教育課)

This division is part of the Prefectural Board of Education, which is the Contracting Organisation for all public SHS ALTs. Its roles are to:

- Coordinate placement for high school ALTs
- Advise Ibaraki ALTs on education matters
- Advise prefectural senior high schools on ALT matters
- Host the Mito ALT meetings for all Ibaraki JETs (3 times per year)
- Host the Skills Development Conference (SDC) for all Ibaraki ALTs and JTEs
- Trains a PA (ALT) to offer advice, daily life counselling, and JET Programme information for Ibaraki JETs

Kyōiku Iinkai (Local Boards of Education, 教育委員会)

The BOE is a department within the local municipal government office. Many JHS and ES ALTs are in the BOE office only once a week, if that. Local BOEs:

- Coordinate placement of JHS and ES ALTs at schools in their municipality
- Advise ALTs in their municipality on teaching-related matters
- Advise schools in their municipality on ALT matters

Prefectural Advisors

Overview

The Prefectural Advisor system is an important part of the JET Programme. PAs are able to lend an understanding ear to the JET when he or she is in need of one, and may be able to help the JET find a solution to problems that might arise while he or she is in Japan. Prefectural Advisors are bound by strict codes of ethics and confidentiality. You can feel free to talk with the PAs, in confidence, about whatever might be on your mind. Note that due to recent changes to the PA system, PAs no longer offer counselling services. However, they can help refer you to a professional counsellor if you would like to speak with one.

Please understand that the Prefectural Advisors are in no way “in charge” of the JET Programme in Ibaraki, and have no power to tell individual supervisors or Contracting Organisations to do anything. PAs, therefore, are not magical problem solvers. You should always try to speak with your CO or base school directly first before speaking with a PA. However, if necessary, PAs are able to assist conflicting parties in breaking down the barriers to communication that often lead to problems in the workplace.
PAs are available during and outside of work hours. Please feel free to contact them if you have any questions, concerns, or just need to chat!

**Who Are They, Exactly?**

- **Anthony Shima**
  Coordinator for International Relations / Prefectural Advisor (CIR PA)

- **Eriko Iimura**
  Japanese Prefectural Advisor/JET Programme Supervisor (JPA)

- **Janalan Tomita**
  Assistant Language Teacher / Prefectural Advisor (ALT PA)

**Additional Support**

In addition to the PA system, there are three other support systems available for JETs.

**AJET Peer Support Group**

The AJET Peer Support Group is a volunteer-based telephone counselling support and referral service run by current JET participants that operates 365 days a year from 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.!

When you dial the toll-free number a recording will play with the phone number of the volunteer that is on duty for that evening. This service is strictly CONFIDENTIAL; you do not have to give your name, and all of the volunteers adhere to strict professional guidelines in protecting the privacy of callers.

Phone: 050-5534-5566

Skype: AJETPSG

Hours: Daily 8:00 p.m.–7:00 a.m.

If you have any questions about the AJET Peer Support Group, please contact the PSG Coordinator at: psg@ajet.net. Check out the homepage here: [http://www.ajet.net/psg/](http://www.ajet.net/psg/).

**Tokyo English Life Line (TELL)**

TELL is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing world-class, effective support and counselling services to Japan’s international community and helping to address the country’s growing mental health care needs.

Phone: 03-5774-0992

Hours: Daily 9:00 a.m.–11:00 p.m.

Homepage: [http://telljp.com/](http://telljp.com/)

**Online Counselling Service**

This service, which is provided by [www.kokoro-soudan.net](http://www.kokoro-soudan.net), offers both webmail and skype counselling and is free to all current JET participants. In order to log in to the counselling system, you will need a password, which you can get from your base school. (Please note that all counselling sessions are confidential and the password exists only to ensure that the service is restricted to current JET participants; it will not be used to identify you.) Check with your supervisor about this service and ask for the password. Even if you don’t think you will use the counselling system, it’s a good idea to ask about it in your first few weeks in case you want to use it in the future.

As a JET participant, you can use this service to receive up to five free counseling sessions per year. Since this system is covered by CLAIR and is free to JET participants, you are asked NOT to share
the password with those who are not JET participants. Abuse of the system will result in it having to be restricted.

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AJET (Association for Japan Exchange & Teaching)

National AJET Council

The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) is a volunteer organisation of JET Programme participants. AJET serves the JET community by building support networks, organising useful information, and offering resources to enhance the lives of the Programme participants in Japan and abroad. It maintains a counselling service and an online magazine, and voices the opinions and concerns of JETs to CLAIR and the Japanese government ministries that manage the JET Programme. AJET has existed since the inception of the JET Programme; at the national level, it is headed by the AJET National Council, a body of elected and appointed current JETs from across Japan. Membership to National AJET is free of charge for all JET participants.

For more information about AJET, please visit the National AJET website at: http://ajet.net or contact your Ibaraki AJET Prefectural Representative.

Ibaraki AJET Council

The Ibaraki AJET Council is a self-supporting organisation made up of JET Programme participants in Ibaraki Prefecture. The Ibaraki AJET Council carries out its work on a prefectural level. The National AJET organisation remains in contact with the Ibaraki AJET Council via the elected Ibaraki Prefectural Representative.

Elections for all council positions are held at the January Mito ALT meeting except for the 1st Year Representative, who is elected at the September ALT meeting.

Listed below are descriptions of each council position and the services that they provide to Ibaraki AJET members. If you would like more information about Ibaraki AJET, please contact a representative at ibaraki@ajet.net.

Prefectural Representative (PR)/Ibaraki AJET Council President

- Works with the CIRs to coordinate communication between the Ibaraki JET community and the International Affairs Division
- Works with the National AJET Representative (Block 3) to coordinate communication between the National AJET organisation and the Ibaraki AJET members
- Plans and chairs regular meetings with council assistance
- Assists with planning the Prefectural Orientation for 1st year JETs
- Acts as a contact person for JETs in Ibaraki
- Maintains an accurate list of AJET members

Treasurer

- Controls the finances of the Ibaraki AJET Council

Social Chairs

- Plan, organize, and implement various social and cultural events for the Ibaraki JET community
- Inform the Ibaraki JET Community of upcoming events and act as a contact person for events
- Listen to and act upon ideas from Ibaraki JETs for future social/cultural events
- Act as a resource for Ibaraki JETs who are putting together social events
Media Chairs
- Maintaining the various IAJET social media outlets
- Acting as a resource in providing web and technological support to the Ibaraki JET community
- Keeps the IAJET community informed through electronic media
- Maintains the members’ email list
- Assists social coordinators in the spread of information.

First-Year Representative
- Ensures that the needs of the 1st year JETs in Ibaraki are brought to the attention of the IAJET Council
- Acts as a liaison between 1st year JETs in Ibaraki and the IAJET Council
- Assists the Social Coordinators in planning events
Our Job Status

The Contract

Overview

Contracts vary with each contracting organisation. Be sure to read your contract and clear up any questions you may have promptly. The contract is there for your benefit, as well as that of your employer.

In Japan it is said that contracts are considered less important than the personal relationship between the parties involved. However, JET Programme participants sign a contract and should feel free to use the contract language to define and enforce their working conditions.

Working hours and dates, holidays, salary etc., are clearly laid out in the contract. If either the JET participant or the employer disagrees on a certain matter, they should refer to the contract to clear up the situation.

Whatever the character of individual job descriptions, all JETs work to promote internationalisation in their communities. Internationalisation takes many forms: teaching or taking a class, walking the streets, shopping, etc. All of it is a part of having members of the community acknowledge and adjust to your presence as a foreigner. In this sense, you are always on the job. How you comport yourself, especially in public, has a bearing on how you and all foreigners will be perceived; the impressions that each of us makes in predominantly mono-ethnic Japanese society are deep and long-lasting.

We are paid well by people who believe both in the goals of English education in Ibaraki and in the benefits of cross-cultural exchange. Please act in a manner that reflects both the high degree of visibility of your position and the opportunity that you have to leave a long-lasting impression with students and members of your community. Please be patient during the times in which you find yourself under-employed or participating in activities that may not accord with your understanding of your job.

Living in a foreign culture includes experiences both bizarre and wondrous. Adjusting to and finding a way to take advantage of these opportunities is part of the challenge that awaits you.

Contract Renewal

Do you want to commit to teaching in Ibaraki for another year? With some variation from year to year, the job renewal process unfolds according to the following timeline:

In November, notices are sent to all contracting organisations informing the JET of the procedures for renewal. Around the end of January, the JET is asked to sign an intention to renew or a notice of non-renewal. If you have not received the information by these dates, ask your supervisor.

A "Yes" answer means that the JET intends to renew. A "No" means that the JET will not renew and cannot rejoin the Programme. Be advised that it is not possible to change your mind at a later date.

At this stage you could also apply to change contracting organisations. When making such an application you can give notice that you will either resign or continue your current position if your application is not accepted. Please carefully consider your situation before applying to change contracting organisations.
Although CLAIR and, in Ibaraki, the International Affairs Division, try to meet the needs of JET participants and will address serious applications, there is no guarantee that an application can or will be granted. In addition, a transfer may or may not be the real answer to the problems or hopes that you have. Requests for transfer after the appropriate time are almost impossible to grant and can cause extra difficulties at your contracting organisation. If a transfer is the answer, you should make a clear decision and apply by the appropriate deadline. Note that transfers are only granted for specific, outlined reasons.

Although the decision to re-contract is a major one, and is compounded by the fact that you may be unsure of how you will feel about staying by the time the next year rolls around, bear in mind that if you decide to stay, you likely will do what you need to do to make the experience meaningful. If you decide to leave and later change your mind, there may be ways other than that of the JET Programme for you to remain in Japan. If you indicate that you are going to stay and then change your mind after the February deadline, your school area may not receive a replacement JET during the year to come, and may give up on JET permanently.

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**Above and Beyond the Call of Duty**

As part of our jobs, we are expected to participate in international exchange. This involves learning about Japan and providing local residents with the experience of meeting and working with foreigners. Outside of your basic teaching duties, you may be expected to get involved in any number of activities. As they say, the more you put into the job, the more you get out of it. However, there may be times when you feel the need to draw the line. Get involved, but don’t burn yourself out. Some things you may be asked to do:

- Taking part in and/or judging a speech contest
- Running an adult English conversation class
- Participating in the school’s English Club or sports clubs
- Giving speeches to various groups (in English or Japanese)
- Participating in various cultural activities
- Doing seminar work. This can be anything from one time workshops, to regular meetings with teachers at your school, to a group of teachers from various schools in your area.
- Joining in a local festival
- Going on a school trip
- Going on a Board of Education trip
- Writing an article for a local newspaper
- Joining drinking parties with co-workers
- Assisting the town council. Since your status may be that of an employee of the local Board of Education, your skills also may be sought out by the town council on occasion.
- Weekend classes and events
- Helping teachers clean the school

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**Work Expenses**

In Japanese offices or schools, the staff members often contribute to a common piggy bank to pay for various things. Here are some things to which you may be expected to contribute.
**Kyūshoku (School Lunch, 給食)**

Most Junior High and Elementary School ALTs are provided with school lunches when they visit a particular school. There is usually a standard monthly fee for this service, which is usually paid on payday.

Schools are not able to provide vegetarian meals. Vegetarians should state at the outset of their contract that they do not want school lunches. Since many schools want ALTs to eat with students, not ordering and eating the same food may be met with some confusion.

**Enkai (Parties, 宴会)**

Some offices just collect the money at each party. Others do it differently. For example, the situation could be that everyone pays a sum (around 3,000 yen) every month. The first party you go to in a night is usually paid for by your school’s staff piggy bank. From then on, second parties (nijikai), etc., are paid for by each individual.

One person may take care of the bill and be paid back the next day. Be prepared to pony up when asked. The same fee is paid by each person, regardless of the amount of food and drink consumed.

If you feel that alcohol is being forced upon you by colleagues who eagerly re-fill your glass, feel free to pretend to drink and thereafter to let your full glass reveal that you do not wish more to drink. Feel free to set your limits.

**Department Fees**

At larger schools, the members of each department may pay some money each month to cover various expenses. As a member of the English (or whichever) department, you may be expected to contribute.

**Coffee and Tea**

There are offices in which everyone pays for these beverages each month, regardless of whether they drink coffee or not. Other offices ask people to pay by the cup by dropping some yen into a tin can. Find out what your situation is as soon as you get to your office or schools.
Holidays

Overview

Japan has fifteen (15) national holidays in one calendar year, which usually fall on a Monday or are lumped together such as Golden Week in April/May, Silver Week in September, and year-end holidays around New Year’s Day. On top of national holidays, most JET contracts include 10-20 days of paid annual leave and twenty (20) days of sick leave.

Unlike teachers and other school employees in the western world, JETs do not officially have summer, winter, and spring vacations. In general, we must be at our base schools or boards of education during these times. For ALTs, though, there is usually a school foundation day (創立記念日, souritsu kinenbi) that may or may not be a school holiday. Consult with your supervisor to receive more information about these other situation-specific holidays.

Types of Leave

Nenkyū (Paid Annual Leave, 年休)

Most contracts include 10-20 days of nenkyū that can be used for one full calendar year beginning at the start of appointment. You may take the entire day off, a half day, or a certain number of hours (in one day). Some contracts will allow for a certain number of nenkyū days to roll over to the following contract year (usually up to twelve days). In this case, you can have more than twenty days of nenkyū.

You must always receive permission to take nenkyū. Inform your supervisor (and vice principal) as early as possible. For long vacations of more than one day, tell your supervisor at least a month ahead of time, and keep reminding her/him as the date approaches. If you are taking only a few hours off, you can tell your supervisor the day before in most cases. The sooner you inform the appropriate people about your nenkyū plans, the more likely it will be approved.

In the case of ALTs, your supervisor should be the person to inform the vice principal of your nenkyū first. It is advisable, however, to talk to your vice principal directly as well, provided that they are approachable and you can understand each other. Until your vice principal places their personal seal (判子, hanko) on your nenkyū card (年休カード), you should not expect your nenkyū to be approved. It is possible that they will stamp their hanko only after you have returned from vacation just to be sure that they can call you back in the middle of your trip if need be.

To officially apply for nenkyū, complete your nenkyū card with the date(s) and time(s) you plan to take off. Your nenkyū card is a piece of paper usually inside a book with everyone else’s nenkyū cards in order of your staff number. Place your own personal seal on your nenkyū card, mark the page with a bookmark or sticky note, and hand the book back to your supervisor or vice principal. You can get help on filling out your nenkyū card from your supervisor.

If you are taking an extended leave of more than a day, your supervisor may ask you for an itinerary on paper, especially if you are traveling overseas. For emergency purposes, it is important for your school to have information about your whereabouts during vacation, such as flight details, addresses of where you will stay, what days you will be there, and contact numbers and emails.
among other things. Note that this requirement applies to all employees, not just JETs, so your workplace may already have a template available for creating a detailed vacation itinerary. If you are travelling overseas, you can use the Overseas Travel Notification available online at the Ibaraki JET Space (https://ijetpa.wordpress.com/2015/02/17/overseas-travel-notification/). This form is required of all Prefectural ALTs, but available for non-prefectural ALTs to use if they wish.

Be flexible with your nenkyū, though. Even if you have already planned your trip, bought your train/plane tickets, booked your accommodations, and done all the paperwork, your application for nenkyū can still be rejected if the vice principal says no. In most cases, your work may prefer that you schedule your vacation when classes are not in session (such as during testing or on holidays), so you may have to compromise with your supervisors and administrators. Consider completing an agreement form (see Appendix) with your supervisor to save you the hassle later on.

That said, Japanese workers rarely ever use all of their allotted nenkyū and seldom ever take many days off in a row for an extended holiday. Although you may feel pressure to conform to this custom, you do not have to nor should you, but please also be considerate of your work duties and work environment.

Byōkyū・Ryōkyū (Sick/Medical Leave, 病休・療休)

Japanese workers also rarely ever use sick leave. When they become sick, our colleagues will usually take paid leave instead. Teachers still come to school with broken bones and coughing up blood, so your coworkers may expect you to do the same. Because of cultural differences, misunderstandings often arise, and taking sick leave can be seen as a serious matter.

You have every right to use your sick leave, but be prepared for some confusion. Also be prepared for a request for an official doctor’s note (診断書, shindansho), a visit to your home by someone at your office (usually bearing food and flowers), and even an escort to the hospital.

In order to take sick leave, your board of education may require a receipt or note from the doctor. Clarify what they need before you get sick. It is also advisable to confirm that your supervisors and superiors are aware of the fact that you have byōkyū to begin with.

If you are not in the hospital or bedridden, treat your sick days as nenkyū. Do not expect to take byōkyū if you simply have a headache or are feigning sickness like you do back home. You will be dinged for nenkyū instead even if you stamped byōkyū in the attendance book. If you are seriously sick or hurt, prepare to take nenkyū to go to the hospital first; afterwards, you may be allowed to take sick leave provided that it really is a serious illness or injury. For more information, refer to the Health section of this handbook.

Daikyū (Time in Lieu, 代休)

During your JET career, it is almost certain that you will, at some point, be required to work on a weekend or even a national holiday. When this is at the request of your school or contracting organisation, you should receive daikyū, which is essentially a day off to replace the one that you missed.

If, as in the case of school festivals or sports days, the entire staff receives daikyū, then the date will be the same for all staff members. If the weekend/holiday work is yours alone, then it may be possible to negotiate a specific date. You will most likely be asked by your school or contracting organisation to take the daikyū within two weeks or one month of your extra day of work.
Tokkyū (Special Leave, 特休)

You may also receive tokkyū in special cases, such as to renew your visa, take a driver’s license exam for JETs who need to drive for work, or for a loss in the family. Tokkyū is situational, so consult with your supervisor about when this may apply to you.

Considerations

Giving Notice of Holiday Plans

It may come as a shock when your supervisor asks for your exact itinerary and the telephone numbers of all the places you will be staying during your extended vacation. However, this is the rule for Japanese workers and for you, for safety. A detailed itinerary was crucial after the December 26, 2004, earthquake in Southeast Asia in allowing Contracting Organisations to verify the safety of their JETs. In your itinerary, you MUST provide your flight info, hotel info, and contact info at a minimum to be submitted to your vice principal and supervisor before you leave.

Omiyage

Giving omiyage after a vacation is part of Japanese culture, but it is up to you to decide whether you want to buy omiyage for your teachers (and students). Teachers will love you for it (students will REALLY love you for it), and it may win you some brownie points, however you are NOT obligated to do so. If you do buy omiyage, be aware of what you buy, how much things cost, and how you’re going to carry these things back with you. Typical omiyage would be rice crackers, cookies, and light snacks that are typically famous in the region you have visited.

Other Misc. Tidbits

Misunderstandings (due to differences in culture or generation) may arise when the JET is seen to be always running off here and there. Explaining your adventures in a positive light—for instance, displaying an interest in cultural sites—might prevent or smooth out bad feelings. You can use the agreement form found later in this handbook to set out rules with your supervisor in advance for use of each type of holiday.

You must remember to use the correct stamp in your attendance book for your holidays. You’ll know more about this when you are familiar with the attendance system at your school.
Office Housekeeping

Around the Office

Attendance Book

In some schools and in some Board of Education offices, the ALT must stamp the attendance book with their name stamp (hanko). The transportation money you receive is based on that stamp, so don’t forget to do it.

Pension Book

You may receive your pension book shortly after arriving. The booklet’s color varies from year to year. If you don’t receive the pension booklet, don’t worry; many host institutions keep these for the JET participant until the conclusion of their contract. If you don’t get your medical insurance card, then make a point of asking for it. The one time when you will need to have your pension book is when you leave the country for good. At that point you become a non-resident and qualify for a partial reimbursement of the pension contributions made during your stay in Japan.

Hanko/Inkan (Name Stamp)

Your hanko is what is used in place of a signature in Japan. Each one is individual and needed for official documents. Your hanko may be necessary for receiving your salary and travel expenses. It is used for official documents, for buying or selling a car, a house, or land. In these latter instances, the hanko must be officially registered with the City Hall. The registration process is quick and easy (if you bring a Japanese co-worker with you), and can be completed in an hour or less. The document that proves that your hanko is registered is called an inkan shōmei tōrokushō (印鑑証明登録証).

Shucchō (Business Trips)

When you go on a business trip, you might have to fill out a transportation allowance form. This form is required for you to be reimbursed for the money you spent going to the meeting. Ask your supervisor (or anyone who speaks English) to fill out a sample form for you. You will need to fill out forms for the Mito ALT meetings, the Skills Development Conference, and any other business-related absences from work. If you can’t write the kanji, then a co-worker may be able to do it for you. Don’t forget to stamp it with your hanko.

Other Considerations

Board of Education Days/Down Time

Some ALTs will find they spend a lot of time in their local Board of Education or unoccupied at school. Although at first this might seem fun (getting paid to do nothing), the novelty soon wears off. Please see the list of suggested activities at the end of this handbook to fill your time during your slow periods and BOE days.
Japanese Fiscal Year

In Japan, the fiscal year (nendo) and school year end in March; the new one begins in April. At this time many teachers and staff may be transferred to new divisions, your supervisors may change, and ALT schools may also get shuffled around.

Communication and Schedule Changes

Staying informed of upcoming schedule changes may be especially difficult if you attend multiple schools. Try to find a JTE or supervisor who will inform you of class changes, exam schedules, school events, etc. Inquire about any notice that is placed in your in-box or on your desk. It is your responsibility to stay informed, even if that means pestering someone to translate for you.
Transportation

**Bicycles**

Japan is renowned for its millions and millions of bicycles. It is probably the easiest, fastest, and least frustrating mode of transportation in big cities.

You can buy bicycles at many different places. The most useful is the “recycle shop.” Here you can get a second hand “mama chari” for around ¥3000.

Bike theft is not uncommon in Japan. You should take the necessary precautions to prevent it by making sure you have a good lock. The ones from the 100 yen shop and the small locks on the back wheel of the bike are not good enough and can be easily forced. The best option is to lock the bike to something solid.

You can also register your bicycle through the place you buy your bike or the police station so that in case it is stolen and recovered you can be contacted. This also helps as a proof of ownership if your bicycle has been collected from a place it was not supposed to be parked, in which case it will cost approximately ¥3000 to get the bike out of impound.

No matter what you see other people doing, the road rules for bicycles are basically the same as those for cars: no speeding, no drinking, no using your mobile phone (or umbrella), no riding with earphones on, etc.

Bicycles are supposed to be ridden on the road and not on the footpath. You may only ride on the footpath if there is a specific sign that says bicycles are allowed. Even still, you must not be a disturbance for pedestrians.

Bike repairs are a big expense if you take them to a bicycle shop. Some places will charge up to ¥3000 for a puncture repair. In some cases that is more expensive than the bike itself. It is possible to fix a tire yourself for less than ¥500. Buy a tube and learn to change it yourself or buy a puncture repair kit from the 100 yen shop. It takes a bit of fiddling, but it’s not that bad.

If you enjoy bicycle riding, there are also a number of cycling clubs in Ibaraki that often do 70–100 km rides on the weekends. Ask your supervisor or one of your teachers; they may be able to help you find a local club.

**Buses**

**Local Buses**

In general, buses have two doors, the front and the back. When boarding you enter through the back and take a ticket bearing a number. The number is used to determine how much you will pay when you get off.

At the front of the bus is an electronic chart with numbers from 1 and up. As the bus travels along its route the prices will appear beside the numbers and increase as the bus travels further. Just before your stop check the amount next to the number that you carry. Throw that amount along with the ticket into the bin next to the driver before exiting the bus at the front. If you don’t have exact change, a coin and bill changer sits next to the driver. Notes larger than 1000 yen are usually not accepted by the bill changer. If you forget to grab a ticket, the first box marked “なし” is
the amount you pay if you don’t have a ticket. This amount can be the entire bus route sometimes exceeding 1,000 yen! So don’t forget.

Learn the kanji for your destination and a few before it. Listen if you can for the destination as it is announced by the recording. Press the button above your seat when you want the bus to stop at the next stop.

Bus passes and discount multi-use tickets can be purchased at the bus office near major stations. Some city offices will have bus maps available or you can ask at your train station. Local bus fares can sometimes be paid with SUICA or PASMO cards (see below).

### Highway Buses

Buses travel between Tokyo (Shinjuku, Ueno, and Tokyo station) and various parts of Ibaraki. Traveling to and from Tokyo by bus can be cheap and convenient. Depending on the time and day of travel, getting caught in rush hour is a hazard, so plan accordingly.

There are often discount tickets available if you use the bus often. You can buy them from the bus driver. There are buses available to Tokyo/Ueno/Shinjuku from the following towns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mito</th>
<th>Ishioka</th>
<th>Hitachiota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naka</td>
<td>Daigo</td>
<td>Karasuyama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasama</td>
<td>Tomobe</td>
<td>Iwama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokai</td>
<td>Katsuta</td>
<td>Oarai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moriya</td>
<td>Mitsukaido</td>
<td>Ami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miho</td>
<td>Edosaki</td>
<td>Tsukuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitachi</td>
<td>Takahagi</td>
<td>Hokota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashima</td>
<td>Itako</td>
<td>Kamisu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasaki</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- JR publishes information about its routes here: [http://www.jrbuskanto.co.jp/](http://www.jrbuskanto.co.jp/)
- Ibaraki Kankō (only in Japanese): [http://www.ibako.co.jp/](http://www.ibako.co.jp/)

### Airport Buses

There are many ways to get to Narita Airport, but this is probably the most convenient and cheapest way to go.

At the moment, the best of these Airport buses is the Rose Liner. Call to inquire about the schedule and to make a reservation. It operates on a route from Hitachi, stopping at Mito, Hokota, and Itako. It costs around ¥2,000 to ¥3,300, depending on where you get on. For the schedule and fare, go to: [http://goo.gl/2XlUr](http://goo.gl/2XlUr)

There is also the Narita-Tsukuba bus line, which stops at Hitachi-no-ushiku, Tsukuba Center, and Tsuchiura, for between ¥2,000 to ¥2,600. For the schedule, go to: [http://kantetsu.co.jp/img/bus/highway/tsuchiura_narita/timetable_.pdf](http://kantetsu.co.jp/img/bus/highway/tsuchiura_narita/timetable_.pdf)
Driving to and Parking at the Airport

Driving to the airport is a feasible option as there are now many reasonably priced companies that allow you to park your car. Coming from the east or south of Ibaraki is ideal as the Higashi-Kantō Expressway starting in Itako City gets you to the parking areas within 20 minutes. A reliable place to park your car that is used to dealing with foreigners is USA Parking at 047-632-9511. See the website for parking rates: http://www.usa-parking.com/english/

Haneda Airport can be reached by bus from Mito, Tsukuba, Tsuchiura and Kashima. Ask at your train station for details. http://www.tokyo-airport-bldg.co.jp/en/

Ibaraki Airport can be reached by bus from Mito, Hitachinaka, Hitachi, Hitachiota, Tsukuba and Ishioka. Ishioka station is the closest JR train station to the airport. There is free parking for airport customers. http://www.ibaraki-airport.net/en/index.html

Overnight Buses

If you're tight on money, and are not in a hurry, you can easily travel all over Japan by taking overnight buses or yakou bus (夜行バス). Depending on your ability to sleep on moving vehicles, you can get to, say, Hiroshima, early the next morning (after a "good" night's sleep). This way, you will not lose a day traveling to and from cities. The buses usually have fully reclining seats, blankets, and pillows for the benefit of their customers, so it’s not like riding on a regular bus.

There are many buses that leave every night from Tokyo Station, Shinjuku Station, and Ikebukuro Station to various destinations throughout Japan. The ticket can be purchased a month in advance, or on the same day at JR Green Windows for a reasonable price (usually a round-trip costs less than a one-way by bullet train).

- This website (only in Japanese) has a large range of discount tickets available for overnight buses: http://www.kakuyasubus.jp/
- This site has a list of all companies offering overnight bus services (only in Japanese): http://www.matchan-net.jp/cgi-bin/buslink/buslink.cgi
- A popular choice for overnight buses is Willer Express. They have an English website and offer ticket reservations online: http://willerexpress.com/bus/pc/3/top/?mid=264

From Ibaraki, there are fewer choices of destinations, namely Kyōto and Ōsaka. The bus is called the “Yokappe Kansai” (よかっぺ関西号). The same bus passes through both of these destinations and can be boarded at Mito, Ishioka, Tsuchiura, and Tsukuba. If you take the bus from Mito all the way to Ōsaka, it will take about 11 hours, leaving at 9:10 p.m. and arriving at 7:39 a.m.

For example, this trip would cost ¥10,800 for an adult one-way or ¥19,400 for a round trip. Children are half price. Compare this to ¥17,080 one-way if you went by the Limited Express and Shinkansen; however, this would take you less than 5 hours each way. Departures from Ishioka, Tsukuba, etc., are slightly cheaper.

- More information can be found in Japanese on the Kantō Railway website: http://www.kantetsu.co.jp/bus/highway/osaka/osaka.html
- When you’re planning your next trip in Japan, you can call the English JR East Info Line at 050-2016-1603 to find out the best way to travel for you.
Trains

Overview

The train lines in Ibaraki run by JR are:

- The main train line running south to north from Tokyo to Iwaki (Fukushima) through Ibaraki, called the Jōban Line
- The east-west line called the Mito Line, starting in Mito and heading to Oyama (Tochigi)
- The Suigun Line starting from Mito and heading northwest to Koriyama (Fukushima) or Daigo/Ota area
- The Kashima Line connecting Kashima and Sawara (Chiba)

Note for people in western Ibaraki: using the Utsunomiya (Tōhoku) Line to reach Tokyo is more convenient than the Jōban line. It is faster, cheaper, and has more frequent service. People on the Mito Line can transfer to the Utsunomiya Line at Oyama (in neighboring Tochigi prefecture). Apart from JR there are a number of private companies running smaller lines.

- The line connecting Mito, Ōarai and Kashima called the Ōarai-Kashima line
- The Jōsō Line connecting Toride and Chikusei
- The Ryūgasaki Line connecting Sanuki and Ryūgasaki
- The Tsukuba Express connecting Tsukuba and Akihabara (Tokyo)
- The Minato Line connecting Katsuta and Ajigaura
- The Mōka Line connecting Shimodate and Motegi (Tochigi)

JR has an English-language website: www.jreast.co.jp/e/.

Jōban Line (常磐線)

Seeing as the Jōban line is the most important connection between Ibaraki and Tokyo for most of the JETs here, we will explain a bit more about its services.

While most trains on this line stop at all stations, the Jōban line also has “rapid” (kaisoku, 快速) trains that skip some stops between Ueno and Toride, as well as two types of “limited express” (tokkyuu, 特急) trains: the fast Tokiwa (ときわ) and faster Hitachi (ひたち).

Traveling to Tokyo on the Jōban Line, though expensive, is convenient on the Tokiwa or Hitachi trains. A surcharge applies on both. All seats are reserved, and you will need to either book a seat before boarding or sit in an empty seat. Empty seats are (confusingly) marked with a red light - booked seats are marked with a green light. The orange light indicates the seat has been booked but from a later station. Regular and special holiday passes can be purchased at most train stations. It costs ¥3,820 to take the Hitachi or Tokiwa from Mito to Ueno or Shinagawa, taking from 70 to 85 minutes. A local train ticket costs ¥2,270 for the same distance but takes around 2 hours.

If you plan to travel to Tokyo twice in one month, it would be worthwhile asking about a “kaisūken” (回数券) multiple-trip ticket allowing you up to 4 one-way journeys on this train in a 28-day period. You can also get cheaper tickets if you book in advance. Local buses also often offer multi-trip tickets. If you regularly take the train and bus to commute to work, you can ask at your local train station if multi-trip tickets are available for buses connecting to that station.

There is also a special ticket that bundles a “Tokyo Weekend Free Pass” in with a return ticket. It is valid for 2 days over a weekend. This ticket is cheaper if you plan to use many JR lines during your weekend stay in Tokyo. Price and area information is available on the following website: http://www.jreast.co.jp/tickets/info.aspx?mode=top&GoodsCd=1030
Tsukuba Express (つくばエクスプレス)

Those in western Ibaraki might find it easier to get to Tokyo by using the Tsukuba Express. It runs a rapid, semi-rapid, and local train service and has its final stop in Akihabara. You can use PASMO and SUICA cards to pay for tickets and there are several stations that have transfers to other train lines in the Greater Tokyo area. A ticket from Tsukuba to Akihabara will run you ¥1,190 and takes around 45-50 minutes on the rapid service train.

Train Tickets

To buy a ticket for the train, go to the ticket machines at the station. There will be an English button which will help you. However, you still need to figure out where you want to go and how much it will cost by looking at the route map above the machines. For example from Mito, it costs ¥2,270 to get to Ueno.

Put the ¥2,270 into the machine and a small ticket will come out. Take this ticket and place it through the slot in the gates to enter the station. Don’t forget to take it out of the other side when you pass through the gate. You will need this to exit at the other end.

If you can’t figure out how much your ticket should be, buy the cheapest ticket and use the “fare adjustment machine” at your destination to pay the difference.

To ride on the express trains you actually need 2 tickets: the normal fare and the express surcharge; both can be bought at the same time from the ticket machines at the station. Push the English button on the machine for assistance. At most stations, you just use the normal ticket to enter the fare gates.

SUICA/PASMO cards

If you use JR trains regularly, you may want to get a SUICA, a rechargeable card which doesn’t need to be put through the gates to enter the station. All you need to do is put it in your wallet and then touch the whole wallet on the green spot on top of the gates.

A SUICA can also be used to pay for bus fares on some buses in addition to train fares on the same premise. On certain buses, you board the bus and state your destination and the driver will charge your card the necessary fee. On others, you touch your SUICA on a green spot near the bus door when you get on and off the bus, the same way you do for the train.

Using these cards doesn’t entitle you to any discounts, but it is much more convenient. You can charge the card up at a ticket machine or convenience store in amounts ranging from ¥1,000 to ¥10,000. You then just use it until the money runs out. Then recharge again! You can also your SUICA like a debit card at shops inside the train station, as well as at certain convenience and department stores.

The best part about them is that you don’t have to think about how much your ticket will cost before you get on the train. Normally you are supposed to buy a ticket of the amount corresponding to the destination. With these cards, you can just go through the gate and it will automatically take off the correct amount when you leave. If the amount on the card is insufficient, you can use the fare adjustment machine inside the station to top it up.

SUICA is used mainly in the Kanto Region of Japan but there are other IC cards (manaca, TOICA, Kitaca, PASMO, PiTaPa, ICOCA, Hayakaken, nimoca, and SUGOCA) available across the nation. If you have any of these IC cards you can easily travel to other parts of Japan. You can also use your SUICA or other IC cards at convenience stores, car/bike parking, restaurants, and cafes.
Note that there are still train stations and buses in Ibaraki Prefecture that don’t use SUICA. Check in advance if you are going to a smaller station. It may become a hassle if you tap into the train system with your SUICA but cannot tap out.

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**Cars**

**Driving Laws**

As of November, 2004, it is illegal to operate a mobile phone while driving. Pull off the road to make or take a call.

The blood alcohol level limit for legal driving in Japan is virtually ZERO. If you get caught driving with alcohol in your system (which may still be detectable the morning after a night of drinking), you, as a public employee, will automatically lose your job. As a foreigner on a work visa, this may also mean you will lose your legal right to reside in Japan. Also, if you are the passenger in a car driven by a drunk driver, or knowingly let a drunk person drive, you can be held jointly responsible. So under no circumstances should you accept such a ride. The taxi fare may be costly, but it could also save your job/life. There is also a service called Daikō (代行): very easy to use and sometimes cheaper than a taxi, this service drives your own car for you back to your home. You can ask the izakaya or bar to call one for you and then hand them your address card.

Drugs are also illegal. Marijuana is in the same category as crack cocaine. Japan has a draconian policy against illegal drugs and will enforce it. Possession alone is a serious offence. JETs wishing to know more should read the relevant sections in the General Information Handbook.
Types of Cars

There are two main types of cars in Japan: cars with white license plates and those with yellow plates (also known as kei 軽 cars). A white plate car is any car with an engine displacement larger than 660ccs, or what you would normally see in your own country. A kei car is a small car with an engine up to 660ccs. They are not very powerful, but they are cheaper in terms of not only purchase cost but taxes, tolls, inspection fees, and registration costs. However in an accident, they are less safe than a white plate car.

Road Maps and Signs

Not everyone is lucky enough to have a GPS system in our cars to tell us how to get around. However, most mobile phones these days have a GPS function.

“Google Maps” and the stock “Maps” app on iPhones should do the job. Many JETs have recommended buying a dash mount to make your life easier. It is illegal to use your phone while driving. Please pull over to a safe area if you need to use your phone.

Many road signs are written in English as well as Japanese. Sometimes the translations are not perfect, but if you can follow the route numbers you should be fine.

One thing to take care of with route numbers is that there are 2 shapes to the route signs—hexagonal and upside-down triangular. Hexagonal ones are “prefectural roads” and triangular ones are “national roads.” Sometimes there will be the same number but on a different sign shape. These are not the same road so take care.

Highways & Toll Roads

All the highways in Japan are toll roads. You can either pay in cash or use a card called ETC (Electronic Toll Collection). If you don’t have an ETC card or decide to pay in cash, you need to drive through the “ippan (一般) ” lane. The highway system in Japan is similar to the train and bus systems. A ticket dispenser in the ippan lane will provide you with a ticket. You will then hand the ticket to a highway staff or insert it into a ticket machine. The staff will tell you the amount you owe and the amount will also show up in the screen so you don’t have to worry. The ticket machine will also display the amount on the screen. Some places will take credit cards but bring cash to be on the safe side. Make sure to check the highways signs. Some highway exits are only for ETC users.

ETC card lets you drive through the ETC lane so you don’t have to stop to pay the toll. You can use the ETC card if your car has an ETC Card Reader. If not, you can purchase the ETC reader at most electronic stores. However, only specific stores will hook up the reader. After your reader is hooked up to your car, all you have to do is insert the ETC card into the ETC reader. This card is either connected to your bank account or your credit card. When you pass a toll booth, the card will withdraw the amount displayed from your account.

Getting a Japanese Driver’s License

To drive in Japan, you may use either an International Driving Permit or a Japanese driver’s license. You can only obtain an IDP in your home country. They may be used only during your first year in Japan. After your first year, you must possess a Japanese license. If you plan on staying for more than one year, it’s in your best interest to obtain a Japanese license sooner rather than later, especially if you are not from one of the “blessed countries.”

International Driving Permits are only accepted from countries that have both signed and ratified the Geneva Convention. Recent law changes mean that you can no longer renew an International Permit once the one-year period has expired. The one-year period starts from your entry into Japan.
Japan or from the date noted in your International Drivers License, whichever is sooner. You may not drive a scooter on an International Driving Permit unless you have the necessary stamp!

In addition, if you drive a manual transmission in Japan, you must have a license that allows you to do so. Driving a stick shift without the license is treated as driving without a license at all, so make sure your Japanese license reflects the car you drive. To find information about obtaining a Japanese drivers license, find the complete guide on the Ibaraki JET PA Space website (http://ijetpa.wordpress.com/guides) or look through the AJET Driving Book at this website: http://www.supermelf.com/japan/ajetdrivingbook/index.htm.

Compulsory Accident Insurance

Japan has a two-tiered accident insurance system. It is mandatory to get the first type of insurance, Car Accident Mutual Aid (Kenmin Kōtsū Saigai Kyōsai 県民交通災害共済), which is typically included in the Shaken (see below); however, the coverage is minimal. This will cover limited damage in the event of death or severe injury to the other party due to a traffic accident. It does not cover damage to either vehicle or to injury or death of the insurance holder. A second optional, private system exists in which premiums are higher but coverage is more extensive. It is STRONGLY recommended that you obtain optional insurance.

Shaken

In Japan, cars must be inspected regularly. This inspection is called shaken and costs a considerable amount of money. New cars are inspected in their third year and every two years thereafter. The price of a used car can vary considerably depending on whether shaken has been undertaken recently. The cost of shaken is usually cheaper for yellow plate cars. You should talk to other JETs in your area to find out where is the best and cheapest place to get your shaken done. Japanese people often just go back to their own car dealers and don’t shop around for the best deal, so take advice from the JTEs with a grain of salt.

Road Assistance

It is a good idea to join JAF (Japan Automobile Federation) for quick assistance in the event of a breakdown on the road. Membership costs ¥2,000 plus a yearly fee of ¥4,000. For more information, please call the J.A.F. Numbers listed below (Japanese only).

Main telephone: 029-244-7211
Mito Branch: 029-244-0110
Tsuchiura Branch: 0298-22-6782
Hitachi Branch: 0294-21-2002

Accidents

In the event of an accident, inform the police and your supervisor promptly. Your supervisor is accordingly required to contact the International Affairs Division. You may need to ask your supervisor or a Japanese friend to interpret for you.

If a car hits a cyclist or a pedestrian, then the driver of the car is by definition at fault for the accident, regardless of the actual circumstances. In a collision between vehicles, no party is ever 100% at fault in an accident, and the insurance companies will assign costs based on the allocation of blame.

The Cost of Having a Car in Japan

While buying a car in Japan may not be that expensive, owning one can be. The following website outlines what costs to expect when buying and maintaining a car in Japan:
Here are typical costs when buying a car:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>White Plate</th>
<th>Yellow Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car (Used)</td>
<td>¥240,000 - ¥300,000</td>
<td>¥160,000 - ¥220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car (New)</td>
<td>¥1,000,000 and up</td>
<td>under ¥1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition Tax*</td>
<td>5% of the price of the car</td>
<td>5% of the price of the car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonnage (Weight) Tax</td>
<td>¥50,000 - ¥75,000</td>
<td>under ¥50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Change</td>
<td>¥10,000 - ¥25,000</td>
<td>¥3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are typical costs when owning a car:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>White Plate</th>
<th>Yellow Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shaken（車検）</td>
<td>¥100,000 and up</td>
<td>¥70,000 - ¥100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Shaken (for much older cars)</td>
<td>¥10,000 up to half the cost of normal shaken</td>
<td>¥10,000 up to half the cost of normal shaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Third-Party Insurance</td>
<td>included with shaken</td>
<td>included with shaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Liability Insurance</td>
<td>¥30,000</td>
<td>¥20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Insurance</td>
<td>¥40,000 - ¥70,000 per year</td>
<td>¥40,000 - ¥70,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Tax (depends on size)</td>
<td>¥30,000 - ¥50,000 per year</td>
<td>¥5,000 - ¥20,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline</td>
<td>¥150 per liter up to ¥8,000 per tank</td>
<td>¥150 per liter up to ¥4,000 per tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Parking</td>
<td>¥0 - ¥20,000 per month</td>
<td>¥0 - ¥20,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term Parking</td>
<td>¥100 - ¥500 per hour</td>
<td>¥100 - ¥500 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Maintenance (tires, oil changes, repairs)</td>
<td>¥0 - ¥50,000 per year</td>
<td>¥0 - ¥50,000 per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motorcycles and Scooters

Overview

Using a motorcycle in Japan has many benefits to offer such as lower cost, shaken, and weight tax as opposed to a car. However, Japan has far more rules and laws regarding two wheeled transportation than many Western countries.

Motorcycle engine displacement plays a major role in determining the cost of any motorcycle, but in Japan the rules are more defined. Motorcycle and scooters that are 250ccs and...
under are highly sought after since they are not subject to biannual shaken inspection. Also many of these motorcycles are highly sought after race replicas. A race replica Honda NSR250 will more often than not be more expensive than a bigger motorcycle. 50cc scooters are also very common and chances are your students will sometimes ride them to school depending on the distance of their home from the school. These are referred to as “gentsuki” (原付)

250-400cc motorcycles are referred to as “chuugata” (中型) in Japanese and form the larger market of motorcycles in Japan. Motorcycles of these type are also sometimes more expensive than larger sized motorcycles due to the larger market. The Honda CB400 Super Four is among the most popular motorcycles in this category.

400cc and above motorcycles are known as “oogata” (大型) in Japanese and while having more power, have a relatively smaller market and sometimes lower prices. To ride an oogata motorcycle in Japan comes with a certain amount of respect since obtaining the license to do so is quite a trial in money and frustration.

Scooters bigger than 50ccs are aptly named “big scooters” (ビッグスクーター). These range from 250ccs up to 650ccs, but their rules are basically the same as normal motorcycles.

**Motorcycle Licensing**

You can ride any motorcycle or scooter in Japan on your International Driving Permit provided you have the necessary qualifications and stamp for the year it is valid. After that time, you will have to get a Japanese driver’s license. In the past, people would automatically get a chuugata license if they originally had a motorcycle endorsement on their home country’s license when they did a conversion for a car but that is no longer the case.

If you choose to stay in Japan for longer than a year and ride a motorcycle you will need to go through the process for conversion at the licensing center in Mito. If you are fortunate to have a license from the “blessed countries” such as the U.K., Canada, and the like, this will be a painless procedure. Everybody else including Americans have to do the practical test which involves riding a Honda CB400 for the chuugata exam or a Honda CB750 for the oogata exam around a course. For more information about this procedure talk to your supervisor or if you can speak/read Japanese, pick up a prep book for the exam.

**Riding Rules in Japan**

Road rules are the same for cars but motorcycles have a couple extra rules of their own.

White lining is quite popular in Japan though potentially dangerous. It should not be done unless traffic is at a standstill or very close to it and by an experienced rider. The space at the left of the lane is primarily for scooters but motorcycles do use it. White lining is however, one of the best ways to beat the traffic!

Riding without a helmet is illegal in Japan so if you’re used to riding without one, you’ll have to get one. And you shouldn’t be riding without one anyway!

Riding tandem is not allowed unless you’ve held a motorcycle license for a year. Riding tandem on the highway is forbidden unless you’ve had your motorcycle license for three years. This MAY be exempt while riding on your IDP.

If you have a bike bigger than 250ccs, you will have to have a valid shaken certificate and your bike inspected every two years. Everybody must pay the annual road weight tax. This may sound expensive but you have it far better than your friends with cars. Motorcycles are 4,000 yen while cars are frequently around 30,000 yen and up.

Lastly, as tempting as it is, don’t speed. Too far over the speed limit and you could find yourself in a lot of trouble (covered on the next page).
**Purchasing/Selling a Motorcycle in Japan**

Buying a motorcycle in the country that makes some of the world’s best can be more difficult than one would think. Japan loves paperwork and buying a vehicle is full of it. Buying a motorcycle through an internet auction site is possible but unless you’re well-versed in motorcycle repair, you’d be better off going with a dealer. Red Baron is one of the biggest and best motorcycle store chains in Japan. They are usually more expensive than “the other guy” but they provide the best service around. Bike prices are largely dependent on the type of bike and year. Re-imported models (full power Japanese bikes made for export) and imported models (Ducati, Buell etc.) will be more expensive than a domestic model or “kokunai” (国内).

In regards to selling your motorcycle, if you bought it from Red Baron, they will buy it back from you with no questions asked, especially if they are the ones that have done all the work/repair on your bike. If you made a private purchase you will most likely have to make a private sale. A motorcycle dealership may be willing to buy your machine but possibly at a rather discount price. As always searching around for the best price is your best bet.

**Japan by Bike**

Japan being one of the most mountainous countries in the world makes for a rider’s paradise. There are lots of great places to ride in Ibaraki and the surrounding areas, particularly Gunma and Tochigi prefectures. Ibaraki also allows for all-year riding meaning winter will not take away your wheels. Golden Week and other holidays offer opportunities to see Japan on two wheels, an experience that not many people, let alone JETs, get to do! One of the most valuable things about owning a motorcycle in Japan is that it offers you the opportunity to meet new people. Japanese or not, people who ride motorcycles get along with each other. Lastly, though somewhat dated, this website has loads of additional information: [http://www.thejapanfaq.com/bikerfaq-toc.html](http://www.thejapanfaq.com/bikerfaq-toc.html)

**Law Violations and License Points**

Japan is not gentle when it comes to dealing with traffic violations. Unless you are lucky and get off with a warning, if you are stopped by a police officer, chances are you will be charged with a fee and license point deduction. While driving on an IDP, you may be in a relatively “safe zone” since there are no real points to be taken from one. However, Japanese licenses come with 15 points. A minor infraction such as forgetting to stop at a stop sign or running a red light will put you back 2 points and usually a penalty fee of ¥7000. You will have to pay for the infraction at a post office or other government office, usually within 2 weeks or so. The points will not reset on your license until 3 months after the incident.

More serious violations yield more exponentially serious penalties. Six or more points off your Japanese license will result in a 30 day suspension in addition to any penalty fees incurred from the infraction. Getting caught speeding 30-50 km/h over the speed limit is a shortcut to instant license suspension and a serious fee. Any higher speeding or causing a serious accident will possibly lead to court appearances and in the worst scenario, jail time. If you commit another traffic offense after getting your license back after the 30 day suspension, the next period will be 90 days and the next will result in losing your license. Simply put...if you do it and get caught, be ready for the consequences of your actions.

For a more detailed breakdown of license point system, penalty fees, etc., this website (all in Japanese unfortunately) has everything listed. If you want it in English, showing it to your supervisor and asking for a breakdown of big ones might be a good idea. Go to this website for more details: [http://www.unten-menkyo.com/2008/03/post_25.html](http://www.unten-menkyo.com/2008/03/post_25.html)
Highways and Electronic Toll Collection (ETC)

Highways in Japan are well maintained and clean, but that comes with a premium price. Almost all Japanese highways cost money to use and the price is rather steep over distance. In addition, the only way to go back in the other direction should you miss your exit is to get off at the next one and drive back on normal roads or get back on the highway and drive back resulting in shelling out more yen for a mistake. Every 50km are service areas with gas stations, food, bathrooms, sometimes other amenities, and sometimes touristic goods from the region. The gas stations also sell their services at a premium price; prices at the pump on the highway will usually be a good 3-5 yen higher than their side-street counterparts.

Paying for highway usage can be done either by cash, credit card, or done through ETC. If you do not have an ETC card and ETC unit in your car, you must use the general (一般, ippan) lane when you get to the highway, and stop to get a ticket stub from the attendant. When you exit the highway, you present the stub to the attendant at the exit gate and pay the corresponding fee. Paying the general price will be more expensive than ETC.

ETC is a service that people with an ETC card and necessary car unit can use to receive highway toll discounts, usage of ETC lanes at toll gates, and if available, ETC-only exit gates at service and parking areas. To give you an example of how much ETC can save you, to drive from Mito to Aomori on cash only, the toll is ¥12,600. If you have ETC and provided you drive on a weekend or holiday (probably the only time you should be driving half of Honshu anyway) and do not get off the highway for the duration of the drive, the toll drops to only ¥8,820!

To get ETC equipped, you need to have an ETC card and the ETC unit. You can get the card if you sign up for a Japanese credit card and opt for an ETC card as well; or you can apply for an ETC Personal Card by mail (connected to your bank account). Tolls are deducted along with your credit card spending at a specified day of the month usually of your choosing. You can use your ETC card with any ETC unit, which is especially useful when renting cars in Japan since they typically come equipped with the unit but you must provide the card.

There are two types of ETC units: the all-in-one (一体型) unit and the antenna (分離型) unit. The antenna unit has the transmitter and card socket in different locations installed in your car and is harder to steal. The all-in-one unit is just that, everything is in one unit and it is stuck on to your dashboard – sometimes powered through the cigarette lighter for convenience. Both work identically, but price-wise the antenna unit is more expensive. You can procure an ETC unit from most car stores or the internet. But once you have the unit, it MUST be set up for your car only before use and this must be done at a car shop. (ETC charges are based on car types and engine sizes.)

The ETC toll discounts work on a time and distance system based around commuting times and up to only 100km. The only exception to this is on holidays and weekends when regardless of distance, any driving done on national highways (excluding Tokyo/Osaka Metropolitan Highways and Greater Metropolitan Area highways) will not go above a fixed price. Otherwise, the time of day determines how much of a discount off the regular toll will be allotted.

More detailed information including a toll amount search tool can be found on the Nexco website (mostly in Japanese): http://www.driveplaza.com. It may cost a fair amount of yen to get the entire process done and set up, but the savings are enormous and the highways of Japan aren’t nearly as frightening to one’s wallet. Road trip anyone?
Communications

Mobile Phones

In Japan, mobile phones are called “keitai denwa (携帯電話),” or keitai for short. Connection plans will vary wildly in what the providers offer, so you should probably have a good idea of what you want from your phone (cheap talk time, discount mailing service, international access, or data) before investing in any specific contract.

Smartphones are called smartphones in Japan, or “sumaho (スマホ)” for short. If you’re a tech-geek then you’re in luck. Most phone companies will carry the latest model of smartphones so you can keep up with the fast moving tech-world. Make sure that your phone is unlocked if you’re planning to use a phone from your home country. It is also important to ask your carrier which radio system it uses, GSM or CDMA. Japan’s main radio system is CDMA and it may affect the network speed of GSM phones. If you decide to sign a contract with a carrier in Japan you’re going to need a few things.

You’ll need:

- Credit Card (optional)
- Bank Book
- Seal (Hanko)
- Passport
- Residency Card
- ¥3,000 Admin Fee
- Landline Phone Number (Work Number)

*Credit card is optional but they need a valid monthly payment method. If you don’t have a credit card, you can choose to give them your bank account number for a monthly direct withdrawal.

Docomo

NTT Docomo, or Docomo for short, is the largest mobile phone company in Japan.

English information is available at this page: https://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/english/

SoftBank

SoftBank’s coverage area is slightly smaller than Docomo’s network, but this only seems to affect JETs living in remote rural areas. SoftBank scores big points in its efforts to be a bilingual company. Customer support is also available in English.

English information is available at this page: http://mb.softbank.jp/mb/en/.

AU by KDDI

As the branding suggests, AU is the mobile wing of KDDI. AU phones use a system called CDMA X1, and are compatible with a number of networks outside Japan.

English information is available at this page: http://www.au.kddi.com/english/index.html.

and vice versa.
LINE

LINE is a popular texting app used in Japan. Most smartphone users will use this app instead of iMessage or stock Android texting app. This app allows international texting, international phone calls, video calls, and location sharing. You can also download this app onto your computer so you can keep in touch with the ones you love even if you lose your phone. Many will choose to call you using this app instead of calling your number. The only downside about this app is that it uses data. So if you are running low on data you might want to turn off the notification.

Skype

Skype is a free “Global Peer to Peer Telephony Company™” that allows you to make free calls over the internet to anyone else who also has Skype. It is free and easy to download and use, and works with most computers (Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and even handheld devices). It also has free video calling (with a webcam) and text chatting capability.

The company also offers SkypeOut, a low cost way to make calls from Skype to traditional landlines or mobile phones. You can purchase SkypeOut credit with any major credit card.

The Internet

There are many options for getting connected to the Internet at home including cable (CATV), ADSL, fiber optics, and mobile WiFi. Which types of connection are available will depend on the area and building in which you live, so it is necessary to confirm with the party in charge of your residence (landlord, management company, etc.). You may consider asking about the internet plans that the phone companies offer. They may have deal on cellphone/home internet combo plan.

BBapply

If you are unsure about the internet connection in your area, try BBapply. The site will find the best internet plan for your area and sign you up with no extra cost. All you have to do is contact them, sit back, and relax.

https://bbapply.com/

Pay Phones

You may prefer to obtain a mobile phone during your time in Japan, but until you get yourself set up, you’ll be dependent on pay phones. Pay phones in Japan are everywhere, even on the express trains. They generally accept ¥10 and ¥100 coins and phone cards, but on rare occasions you may find some that accept credit cards. Phone cards can be purchased from almost all convenience stores, and you also may find phone card vending machines.

If you're making a local call with a public phone, calls cost ¥10 per minute between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and ¥10 for 80 seconds outside these hours. As with personally owned land lines, the price for the call slowly climbs the further away you’re calling. Use the following tips and tricks to save you money.
- Whenever possible use ¥10 coins for placing calls. Unused ¥10 coins will be returned at the end of your call; however, the machines WILL NOT give change on unused portions of ¥100 yen coins.
- Pay phones will often not give a warning that your time is up, and you'll just be cut off.
- The back of the phone cards have an indicator strip with a hole punched through the card to show how much credit is still remaining.
- Pay phones can be used for free to ring landlines when there is a power outage and all servers are down.
Health and Sickness

Overview

The last thing you need to worry about with a temperature of 40°C (104°F) is filling a hospital registration form and searching for your health insurance card. A little bit of preparation while you are healthy is going to make your life much easier if and when you get sick, leaving you all the more time to lie in bed all day with endless cups of cocoa.

In this section you’ll read all about Health and Sickness in Japan, but here are some important links to get you started. We’ll discuss them more further on:

English Medical Handbook

Search Doctors by Location, Specialty, English Ability
http://www.qq.pref.ibaraki.jp/WP2501/RP250101BL.do

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Insurance

Kenkō Hokenshō (Medical Insurance Card, 健康保険証)

Soon after arriving at our Contracting Organisation we are given our medical insurance cards. Carry this card with you everywhere! This ID is credit card-sized with your name on the front in katakana. It may change color from year to year.

The cost of medical insurance is borne jointly between the JET and the Contracting Organisation, each paying around ¥32,000 a month. Some JETs will have their medical insurance deducted before they receive their pay packets.

IMPORTANT: If your medical insurance payment is not deducted automatically, you must ensure that your contribution is paid by the end of each month, or you may find yourself with a big tab when next you try to see a doctor.

As a holder of a medical insurance card, you are only required to pay 30% of your medical expenses and prescription costs. Your dependents also may be covered. The medical insurance card will cover the following at government approved facilities:

- Dental/medical consultation (although routine dental checks are not covered).
- Supply of medicines and other therapeutic materials (e.g. crutches, bandages etc.)
- Hospitalization
- Nursing
- Ambulance
- Any medical procedure carried out as part of a consultation (e.g. X-rays, MRI)

Non-essential treatment may not be covered by the medical insurance, but many JETs have found that their medical insurance is accepted in many places, including chiropractors and acupuncturists. Prior to getting treatment, show them your card and ask if they accept it. If you find the right places, your medical insurance plan could be your passport to affordable, alternative health care.
Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Supplementary Medical Insurance

The JET Programme also provides us with additional accident insurance through the Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Company. This premium is paid entirely by our contracting organisations. This covers, if necessary, the costs over the ¥5,000 liability not borne by our medical insurance, as well as emergency medical care for illnesses and certain injuries incurred while traveling abroad. Dependents are not included in this policy. To apply for a reimbursement you will need the following:

1. Claim for payment of benefits & overseas travel insurance (Kigari Ryōkō Shōgai Hokenkin Seikyūsho)
2. Doctor's statement and authorization: Shindansho and Dōisho. This form is on the back of the above form.

If your bill is less than ¥50,000, you can substitute all the above with a Document of Medical Treatment. You should also attach the consultation certificate (shinsatsu-ken) and the medicine envelope that you received at the doctor's office.

Send all of these to Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance. More details can be found in a leaflet that accompanies your coverage, which you should receive at Tokyo Orientation.

Travel Insurance

Have a look on this website for information about upgrading Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance for use when traveling overseas:

http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/current/insurance/tokio01.html

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Hospitals

Overview

Once you have arrived at your contracting organisation and received your medical insurance card, you should determine the location of your nearest hospital and register there. Strictly speaking, you don't need to register until you consult a doctor for the first time, but it is easier to do it when you are healthy.

If you don't speak Japanese take your supervisor with you and fill out the registration card with your details (usually name, address, date of birth and your insurance card number). You may be asked for your medical insurance card at this time, too.

Other Hospitals

Although it is advisable to register at your nearest hospital for emergencies and everyday illnesses like colds and flu, you may have a valid reason to seek out another hospital. For example, your hospital in the rice fields may not have the right specialist, you may require greater privacy, or you may simply not like the place itself. Whatever the reason, you are free to search all of Ibaraki, or even the whole of Japan, for medical care that suits you. As a rough guide, the perceived wisdom is that the better hospitals are in the larger towns or cities.

After-Hours Hospitals and Clinics

Most hospitals in Japan do not offer 24-hour medical care, so you should ask your teachers, colleagues, or friends for the location and contact information of the nearest emergency hospital. You also are welcome to call the Emergency Medical Care Information Control Center in Mito. They will be able to give you the location of the hospital nearest to you. The number is 029-241-4199 (Japanese only). An English-language website for locating doctors who speak various languages is available at http://www.qqpref.ibaraki.jp.
However, should you attend a hospital outside of its normal operating hours, or on a holiday, you may not be able to use your medical insurance at the time you receive treatment. You may have to pay up to and beyond 100% of the costs of your treatment since during these times the clerical workers who deal with calculating insurance aren't at work. If you have to pay the full cost of your treatment, you can get a refund by submitting your hospital receipts to the hospital during normal working hours. If the hospital doesn't operate on this system, then you can claim the entire cost from Tokio Marine.

As final preparation: know the phone numbers of your supervisor, schools/office and any other colleagues who live nearby in case you are unable to seek medical treatment yourself. You should also make sure that your schools and supervisor know your phone number. Try to get your supervisor’s mobile phone number for those dire emergencies.

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**Visiting the Doctor**

**Overview**

When visiting the hospital, remember to bring your medical insurance card (and your card for the particular hospital if you have one). Depending on your Japanese language proficiency and how sick you are, going with a Japanese colleague may facilitate the process. However, even if you possess only limited Japanese skills, the whole process can be completed quite painlessly with a modicum of patience and a decent Japanese-English dictionary. Just note a few things:

- Upon entering the hospital, you are usually required to put your medical card or your hospital card in a box on the front desk.
- You might be given a thermometer. The thermometer goes under your armpit, not in your mouth!
- Unlike hospitals and clinics back home, there is no appointment system in Japan. You get there and wait. It is advisable to take a good book.
- Most doctors do speak (or at least understand) basic English, but don’t count on it. Take a Japanese/English dictionary and a bag loaded with patience if you don’t speak Japanese.
- You also may receive a prescription slip for medication. The bill for a hospital visit can average between a few hundred yen to a few thousand and in terms of time they last roughly half a day.
- The prescription may be dispensed either in the hospital or at a nearby pharmacy. You will be charged 30% of the cost of your medicine when you receive it.
- Ask veterans in your area for a referral to area doctors and dentists. Remember, competent medical and dental skill in a doctor is more important than his or her foreign-language capability.
- If you paid more than 5000 yen for your visit, don’t forget to claim back the 30% of fees you paid to the doctor from Tokio Marine.

**English Speaking Doctors**

Please refer to the website in the previous section for a list of English-speaking doctors located in your nearest village, town, or city.

**Medicine**

Your prescription may contain more items than you are used to; a common cold prescription normally contains three or four different medicines, which are of varying usefulness. If you come away from the doctor's understanding just one thing, make sure it's when to take your medicine and how much to take.
For those JETs on long term prescriptions (for example, birth control pills) it is best to have your medicines sent from home. Customs regulations state that a three-month supply of prescription medication may be sent to Japan at any one time. It is also a good idea to have any favorite over-the-counter medicines, such as painkillers, sent from home. This way you'll actually be able to understand the dosage. Japanese law may prohibit you from receiving some medicines by mail because their ingredients are controlled substances under Japanese law. A good example is the decongestant Sudafed, which contains the controlled substance sulphedrine (a stimulant).

Although Japanese over-the-counter medicines are effective, the directions may present some problems for those of us who have yet to conquer kanji. A good rule of thumb is not to take anything until you know (a) what it is and (b) how often and in what quantity to take it.

**Medical Privacy**

In small towns, a lack of privacy may be a problem when visiting a hospital. Neighbors, colleagues, and even your students who meet you in the hospital, or have heard of your visit may ask after your condition. Though the questions themselves may be well-meaning, you are not obliged to discuss your condition with anyone unless you want to. If this lack of privacy becomes a problem, seek a hospital out of town, away from familiar eyes.

**Mandatory Health Checks (定期健康診断, Teiki Kenkō Shindan)**

Once a year in our offices or schools, all civil servants are required to undergo a health check. This normally entails a urine sample, a blood sample, a chest X-ray, blood pressure check, sight and hearing tests, and an electrocardiogram. This will take place at or near your place of work, and privacy during these exams is not of paramount concern. The mandatory check is free and thorough. Benefits such as health insurance won't be withdrawn should you refuse the exam.

At schools, the exams are usually conducted during the summer, and registration begins in June. Make sure to ask your supervisor about how to register for the exam.

**Another Word About Sick Leave**

The number of days you can take as sick leave are set out in the terms and conditions of your contract. You should read this carefully and acquaint yourself with the procedures for taking sick leave. They differ from contract to contract, and are, each year, the subject of wrangles between JETs and their contracting organisation. Being aware of your allocation from the beginning may help to avoid these problems. Most JET participants receive sick leave/medical leave (byōkyū/ryōkyū) separately from paid leave (nenkyū). We are almost unique in this regard, and it has created friction in the past. Check out the “Holidays” section for a more detailed explanation.

**Doctor’s Certificate (診断書, Shindansho)**

Some contracting organisations will grant byōkyū/ryōkyū only when presented with a doctor’s note or at least proof that you went to the hospital (e.g. a prescription or receipt for the 30% that you paid). Some JETs have taken a day off with a cold, only to return to work and find that the day in question must be taken as a day of paid leave (nenkyū) because they didn’t visit the hospital. Again, clarify the situation before you get sick. An official doctor’s note costs around ¥3,000–¥4,000. Usually these are required only if your illness will keep you from work for any great length of time (usually over three days, but check your contract). Some BOE/supervisors simply require a receipt from the hospital as proof that you have seen someone regarding your illness or injury.

**Japanese Culture and Sickness**

Japanese teachers rarely take days off for sickness. The dilemma for the ALT is to determine under what circumstances it is best to yield to illness or suffer at school. This is a personal decision. You have primary responsibility for your health and well-being. This consideration precedes all else.
JET Supervisor/Participant’s Agreement Form
契約団体担当者と JET 参加者の同意に関する資料

We, _______________________ (supervisor) and _______________________ (JET),
agree on the following terms for using annual leave, sick leave and cultural leave.

(担当者)及び (JET 参加者)は、年休、病休、学習のための特別休暇に関する条件について、下記の内容で同意します。

Annual Paid Leave 年休について

In order to use ______ or more days of annual leave, advance notice of ______ days is required.

______日以上の年休をとる場合、______日前までに事前に届けて下さい。

Annual paid leave will not be granted in the following situations:
次の時期や条件においては、年休を取らないように心がけてください。

1 ____________________________________________________________
2 ____________________________________________________________
3 ____________________________________________________________

Sick Leave 病休・療休について

In order to use sick leave, the following are required:

病休・療休を取るための条件は次のとおりです。

1 ____________________________________________________________
2 ____________________________________________________________
3 ____________________________________________________________

Furthermore, a doctor's certificate will be required for any period of sick leave of ______ or more days.

______以上の場合は医者の診断書を提出してください。

Sick leave can be used without a doctor's certificate in the following circumstances:

次の状況の場合は医者の診断書がなくても病休を取ることが出来ます。

1 ____________________________________________________________
2 ____________________________________________________________
3 ____________________________________________________________
Sick leave will not be given in the following circumstances.
次の状況の場合は、病休・療休扱いとはなりません。
1 ____________________________________________________________________________
2 ____________________________________________________________________________
3 ____________________________________________________________________________

**Contact Number in Case of Sick Leave** 病休・療休の際の連絡先
To take sick leave, please notify ______________________ (phone: _______________) as soon as possible. An alternate contact is ______________________ (phone: _______________).

病休を取得する場合は至急________________________さん(電話: _______________)に連絡をします。そちらに連絡できない場合は、代わりに__________________________さん(電話: _______________)に連絡します。

**Cultural Leave** 学習のための特別休暇
Cultural leave will be granted in the following circumstances:
つきに挙げる条件の場合は、学習のための特別休暇を認めます。
1 ____________________________________________________________________________
2 ____________________________________________________________________________
3 ____________________________________________________________________________

Date: 年 月 日

Signed:_______________________ (supervisor) _______________________(JET)
署名_______________________（担当者）_______________________（JET 参加者）
Natural Disasters and Emergencies

Overview

In Japan the emergency services are divided into two parts: the police on one hand and fire and ambulance services on the other. There is one number for contacting the police and another for calling the fire department and ambulances. If possible, unless you are fluent, try to get a Japanese person to make the call since there will be less delay and the directions are liable to be more precise. Any wasted time may have serious consequences if injured parties are involved. However, if you are the only person available to make the call, then the numbers are listed below.

FIRE AND AMBULANCE: #119  POLICE: #110

When calling the emergency services do your best to convey as much helpful information as possible such as the location, number of injured etc. DO NOT HANG UP WITHOUT GIVING YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.

Disasters

In the event of a large scale disaster, it is important that you get in contact with your supervisor and let them know that you are okay. You should make sure that you have their contact details (phone and email) and that they have yours.

Ibaraki has an emergency contact system that is separated into blocks (North, South, East, West, Central, and Kasama). You will get more information about this at Ibaraki Orientation.

CLAIR also has an Auxiliary Safety Confirmation system in place. If you receive an email from it, be sure to respond as soon as possible.

Embassy Registration

After both the Great Hanshin earthquake of 1995 in Kōbe and the recent earthquake in northeastern Japan, the international phone system was flooded with calls, causing people in other countries to be unable to contact friends and loved ones in Japan and vice versa.

In order to minimize the distress that such an occurrence would bring to your family, it is a good idea to register with your country’s embassy as being a resident in Japan. In the event of an earthquake, the embassy may be able to get information back to your country quicker than you are able to, thereby saving the people back home a great deal of nail-biting.

Depending on your country, you may register over the phone, through an email, or a fax. Online registration is available for the listed countries at the following URLs:

By Mail:

- Jamaica: Send the form to (Embassy of Jamaica, Toranomon Yatsuka Building 2F, 1-11, Atago 1 chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0002 Japan) http://www.jamaicaemb.jp/nationals/index.html#registration

In addition to providing support in the event of a disaster, your embassy may be able to furnish you with other services too, from teaching aids about your country in Japanese to legal advice. Registration is free and worthwhile.

Please don’t forget to update your registry when you move and to deregister when you leave Japan.

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**Earthquakes**

Japan is a country with many earthquakes—the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake being the strongest in recorded Japanese history. This earthquake and the resulting tsunami and nuclear accident have had a major impact on Ibaraki and its inhabitants. In addition to the direct damage caused by the earthquake and tsunami, Ibaraki also experienced disruptions to transportation and infrastructure services, as well as a number of problems brought on by the accident at the nuclear power plant in nearby Fukushima Prefecture. It is impossible to know when the next major earthquake will strike so it is vital to always be prepared.

**Before an Earthquake**

- Determine the location of evacuation centers in your area.
- Prepare a grab bag and survival kit.
- Make sure that heavy furniture is secure and stable, and don’t stack heavy items on the top shelves in your home.

**During an Earthquake**

- Take cover in a doorway or under a desk. Use your hands and arms to protect your head. Do not take shelter in the doorway of a classroom that has glass above it.
- Do not go outside. The exterior walls of a building are the most dangerous place to be in an earthquake. External fittings and windows will break, showering the area with debris.
- If you are driving, pull over and stop but DO NOT get out. It is much safer to stay inside.
- If you are in a department store or supermarket, move away from the display stands. They often fall over, injuring people during earthquakes.

**After an Earthquake**

- Turn off oil and gas heaters and equipment to prevent a fire.
- Open a door and secure it open with something heavy.
- Follow the directions of town officials.
- Do not use your car to evacuate. Traffic on the damaged roads will hinder emergency vehicles.
● Contact your embassy to let them know your condition. In the event of severe communication problems, your friends and family may contact them in an effort to locate you.
● If your home is badly damaged, proceed to your local evacuation center. The center usually will be located in your local Elementary and Junior High Schools.
● Take your “getaway kit” (covered later in this section).

Japan uses the Japanese Meteorological seismic intensity scale (or the 震度, shindo scale). It is different from the Mercalli (or Richter) scale used in other parts of the globe. Refer to the illustration below for a quick visual rundown of the shindo scale.

Niigata Prefecture has put together a useful guide to earthquakes at the following link: http://www.city.tsubame.niigata.jp/content/100204886.pdf

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**Tsunami**

A tsunami, or tidal wave, is a risk after an earthquake in coastal areas. A tsunami also may be caused by undersea landslides. The tsunamis after the recent earthquake reached Ibaraki and caused severe damage and loss of life in many areas. If you hear a tsunami warning:

- Turn on your radio and follow all the instructions.
- Take your getaway kit with you if you are told to evacuate
- Leave the area immediately if you are on a beach or near a river when a strong earthquake occurs.
- Go as far inland and as high above sea level as possible.

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**Typhoons**

Typhoon, or hurricane, season starts in late August and usually lasts for about 8 weeks until the beginning of October. Most typhoons weaken to tropical storms by the time they reach Ibaraki, so although it can be extremely windy and rainy, it is unlikely to do much damage other than blowing a few trees down. The most noticeable effect on your daily routine will be that your school may declare a “typhoon day” and not require the students (and sometimes you) to come in for the day. If you hear about an incoming typhoon:

- Walk around your apartment and secure/bring inside any loose items that may fly around in strong winds.
Close the storm shutters on your apartment if you have them.

Prepare for a day at home. Buy some food and whatever else you need in order to wait out the storm.

If you walk or cycle to school, find out prior to departing if it is safe for you to go to school.

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**Tornadoes**

In previous years, in the southern part of Ibaraki Prefecture (Tsukuba – Shimotsuma – Toride) there were cases of tornadoes. Because of its features, this area (along with Tochigi Prefecture and Saitama Prefecture) is most likely to have tornadoes. In case you’re not familiar with the safety procedures, the following may be helpful.

Tornadoes are usually preceded by a rather large storm. When you need to be on the lookout is when the sky turns a blue/green color. When you see that blue/green, keep an eye out for low hanging clouds. They’ll look like a peninsula of funnel off of a larger cloud formation.

It is recommended at this point you seek shelter. If you see any form of rotation SEEK SHELTER IMMEDIATELY. This indicates that a tornado is forming. The cloud rotation does not need much time to touch down.

- Immediately get to the ground level of any building you are in. If it is available an underground space is best (a basement). We are in Japan and basements are more unlikely, so seek shelter at the ground level of your school or workplace.
- AVOID WINDOWS (even the small ones.)
- Find the most interior/enclosed space possible (avoiding windows), and crouch near the most interior corner (wall is okay, but corners are a brace point for the wall), cover your neck and head to avoid debris. Underneath stairwells is also a good spot.
- Do not seek shelter under an overpass.
- IF YOU ARE IN A VEHICLE, SEEK SHELTER. Do not try to chase the storm and do not try to run from it. While driving away from it may seem a good idea, tornadoes can toss debris quite a distance.

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**Nuclear Accidents**

Ibaraki is home to many nuclear facilities, most of which are located in the northeastern part of the prefecture such as Tokai Mura. There has been one major nuclear accident in Ibaraki history. If you hear about a nuclear emergency:

- Stay inside. Don’t go outside unless directed to do so.
- If residents are being evacuated, follow the directions of local officials to avoid dangerous areas.
- Take your getaway kit and a change of clothes.

Niigata Prefecture has also put together a useful Nuclear Disaster Preparedness Guide: [http://www.pref.niigata.lg.jp/HTML_Article/21/652/nuclear%20disaster%20preparedness%20guide.pdf](http://www.pref.niigata.lg.jp/HTML_Article/21/652/nuclear%20disaster%20preparedness%20guide.pdf)

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**The “Getaway Kit”**

The “getaway kit” is an emergency survival kit that should be prepared for every household. The kit should be kept well stocked and monitored for expired goods. It should include:

- Enough canned/dried food for 3 days
- A can opener or Swiss army knife
● 3L of bottled water per person per day
● A first aid kit and medicines
● Toilet paper and several plastic bags
● Waterproof torches/flashlights and spare alkaline batteries
● A radio and spare batteries
● Spare wind and rainproof clothing
● String shoes/shoes with laces
● Blankets and sleeping bags
● A small gas cooker and matches
● Official documents (passports, insurance documents, etc.)
● Cash (at least ¥30,000)
Daily Living

**Residency**

Starting on 9 July 2012, a new residence registration system will take effect. All people possessing a residency status in Japan must be registered with their Regional Immigration Bureau and receive a Residence Record (住民票, juminhyou). All foreign nationals must also have a Resident Card (在留カード, zairyuu kaado).

When you arrive in Japan, if you do not receive your Resident Card on the spot, the immigration officer will place a stamp in your passport that will allow you to receive a Resident Card at a later date. Carry your passport with you at all times until you receive your Resident Card. Make sure to complete the “moving-in” form (転入届, tennyuu-todoke) at your local municipality within fourteen (14) days of arrival in your host city. You will receive your Resident Card by registered mail after you have completed “moving-in” form. Carry your Resident Card with you at all times.

There is a corresponding “moving-out” form (転出届, tenshutsu-todoke) should you ever change your address or when you leave the country for good. Any “visa” changes to your Status of Residence or Period of Stay must be done at the Regional Immigration Bureau office (in Mito). In the event that you lose your Resident Card, report it immediately to your supervisor and contact the immigration office.

**Your House / Apartment**

Residences differ according to the budget of each contracting organisation and the local housing supply. Stickers may be used to designate items that belong to your contracting organisation.

**Rent**

The amount of rent that JETs pay depends on their contracting organisation and location. The monthly payment can be done by automatic bank transfer (called furikomi), through your school, or you can hand it directly to your landlord. A building maintenance fee of up to ¥5,000 might be included in the rent.

Changing apartments is possible. If you choose to move, contact your landlord or supervisor immediately if you’re unhappy with your apartment and explain your (sensible) reasons. You will probably have to pay key/thank you money/agent fee again. Also, you may have to pay a deposit of several months’ rent.

**Common Words and Expressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yacchin (家賃, rent)</th>
<th>Shikikin (敷金, deposit)</th>
<th>Chūkaikin (仲介金, agent fee)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ōya (大家, landlord)</td>
<td>Reikin (礼金, thank you money)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from paying on time, a present to your landlord (anything that you can eat and/or drink) should help create a good relationship.
Furniture and Appliances

Some ALTs will inherit apartments from their predecessors that are already furnished with the essentials and more. A lot of these things can be quite old (and sometimes you will uncover interesting things in your closet), but it can save you a fair bit of money. Others will move into new apartments or will be required to purchase furniture new or from their predecessors. You can get a lot of things cheaply from recycle shops - ask the sempai JETs in your area or your supervisor for good places to look. Some larger areas also have facebook groups for international residents where people are often selling things.

Shopping

100-yen shops (百円ショップ, hyaku-en shoppu) are stores in which everything in the store costs ¥100. It is not to be confused with the Yen Shop, which is a money-lending business. The 100 yen shop is perfect for dishes, kitchen utensils, office supplies, tableware, stationery, cleaning tools (sponges, steel wool, toilet brushes, etc.), plastic containers in every shape and color imaginable, and gardening supplies. Items change all the time at the 100 yen shop, so visit often to see what is in stock. You may also have a 99 yen shop (Kyūkyū En Shoppu, literally "Ninety-Nine Yen Shop") where you will find fresh fruit, meat, and vegetables, however to be consumed very fast or frozen.

But be careful: not everything at the 100 yen shop (or its buddy the 99 yen shop) is a bargain. Some things can be purchased more cheaply at the bigger home stores. For instance, plastic cleaning gloves often sell for less than 100 yen. Try not to purchase soaps, toilet paper, paper towels, or paper tissue from the 100 yen shop. They tend to be more expensive than what you can buy at other stores. Remember that the idea of the 100 yen shop is to (generally) sell things cheap.

Ibaraki is also home to many home centers called Yamashin (山新) in which you can find lots of products you could not find in 100 yen shops. The quality is of course better. The stores offer a wider range of products, but we suggest you go to 100 yen shop first for the home necessities. Yamashin is a very old store chain that started in Ibaraki more than 130 years ago so you can be sure it is a great place to shop and to furnish, clean and decorate your apartment. There are 22 “Joyful Yamashin” in our prefecture. For people living close to Fukushima and Tochigi Prefectures, the chain has been expanding so you could also shop there. Full list of stores, in Japanese at http://www.yamashin-grp.co.jp/shop/. Other home centers include:

- Joyful Honda (本田) http://www.joyfulhonda.com/english/index.htm
- Keiyo (ケーヨー) http://www.keiyo.co.jp/
- Jason (ジェーソン) http://www.jason.co.jp/
- Cainz (カインズ) http://www.cainz.co.jp/tenpo_folder/Mise_Folder/Ibaraki.html

Apartment Care

Tatami

Some of us will have at least one room with tatami mats (mats made out of woven straw). Tatami is easy to maintain. You just need to vacuum and wipe them with a clean damp cloth once a week. Whatever you do, don't spill liquids on them. If an accident occurs then wipe it dry quickly.

Tatami mats can be home to some nasty creatures. During the warm and humid months you can prevent/control tatami bugs (だに だに in Japanese) by using one of several kinds of pesticides.

The easiest and most effective pesticide is one which comes with a needle to poke into the corners of the tatami mats. Once the needle is in, press the spray button. Use this pesticide every 6
to 8 weeks if you have tatami bugs. You know you have them when you get mysterious little red bumps on your body.

An important thing to remember is not to wear shoes or to drag furniture across your tatami. Replacing them is expensive, even for the cheapest “fake” ones, so take good care of them. You may want to consider putting “coasters” under your furniture to protect the tatami more.

Even if you have carpet rather than tatami, you may want to “bomb” your apartment with a household product designated to kill all dust-mites and any other bugs. The process is as follows: cover everything in your room with bed sheets. Release the chemical spray, leave the room for about two hours, and aerate upon returning. It is very effective, but it releases chemicals into your living area.

Futon

You should put away your futon every day to prevent mold from growing between your tatami and the futon. You also need to beat your futon occasionally outside to air it out. If you’re at home during a sunny day, hang your futon over the outside rail (you might want to wipe the rail clean before putting the futon over it), and hit it with a futon beater.

Don’t leave your futon unattended outside because it could fly off in a strong wind or get wet in the rain. You can buy futon clamps that look like huge clothesline pins at 100 yen stores.

If a nasty predecessor has neglected to air out the futon, or if you simply don’t have the time to put out the futon (after all, you are at work for most of the day), you might be able to borrow a “futon drier” (futon kansōki) from a friend. These machines are often used during the rainy season when there’s not enough sun to air out your futon. A huge cushion with hot air warms up your futon and the bed cover—the downside is that you have to be in the room to supervise the futon drier—you wouldn’t want your flat to burn down, would you? After two hours, your futon should be free of dust mites.

Note that even if you have a bed, you might still be sleeping on a futon mattress, which needs to be taken care of just like a futon.

Bathroom

The bathroom of your house is a haven for mold. You can keep the mold under control by cleaning your bathroom weekly with regular cleansers. However, every few months, you should use extra powerful cleansers that will get rid of the mold.

Cleaning Chemicals

Japanese supermarkets stock some powerful household cleaning products, so BE CAREFUL. Always use plastic gloves and leave the windows open because the fumes can be overwhelming. Spray the products on and let sit for a while. Use an old toothbrush for spots that need lots of scrubbing. Finally, rinse the entire area with water.

Dehumidifiers (湿気取り, shikke-tori)

During the warm and humid months, buy dehumidifiers for your drawers, closets, and kitchen cupboards. Dehumidifiers come in a variety of shapes and sizes. For your drawers and closets, you can buy pocket-sized ones that can be hung between your clothes. For bigger spaces, you can use those that come in the shape of plastic containers. All of them contain little white rocks or powder that suck up the humidity in the air.

When the pockets are fat and juicy, or when the plastic containers fill up with water, it’s time to change them. Even during winter, you should keep them around to protect your clothes, shoes, and food from mold.

You can buy a "real" dehumidifier machine (denki joshitsu). They’re not too expensive (around the ¥15,000 mark), and they’re worth it. In addition, many newer air conditioners have a
dehumidify setting. Before purchasing a dehumidifier, have a look at your air conditioner first. Clean the air conditioning filter regularly.

Cockroaches (ゴキブリ, gokiburi)
These insects look nasty but are quite harmless. You should know that they can fly, come in various sizes, and make a skittering sound when they crawl across the room. DON'T CRUSH COCKROACHES! If you kill them by squishing them, you will release their eggs.

It is best to capture them or spray them with pesticide made especially for cockroaches. You can also find some "cockroach motels" that have a sticky bottom and a smelly something that attracts them there so, when they crawl in, they are stuck there.

If you don’t have cockroaches and want to keep it that way, then you should keep crumbs off the floor, wash your dirty dishes every day, and keep food sealed.

Kitchen
You probably won’t have an in-sink waste disposal, but you can buy a triangle-shaped sink waste basket from your local grocer or home store. For the best results, purchase mesh-bags that allow the liquid to pass through while retaining the organic waste.

The key to keeping your house smelling good, especially during the summer months, has a lot to do with the drain. You should purchase drain cleaner, which comes in liquid (配水管洗浄液 haisuikan senjō eki, literally "liquid drain cleaner"), powder (配水管洗浄剤, haisuikan senjō zai, literally “drain cleaning agent”) or tablet form. Almost all have a picture of a drain on the packaging. Before bed, put some of the chemical into your drain. Rinse in the morning. This needs to be done more often during summer. Put the cleaner down each of your drains, including your bathroom sinks and shower. If an abiding stench emanates from your sink, call the landlord.

Food storage is key in the hot, humid summers (and in other seasons as well). During the summer, make sure that your refrigerator keeps food sufficiently chilled. If food looks questionable, the safest approach is to throw it out.

Laundry
Clothes can sometimes become knotted in washing machines or driers, so, if you want to save your clothes, buy “washing bags” from the 100 yen shop to put your delicates in.

Also, during the rainy season and winter months, you will most likely have to hang your clothes up to dry inside your apartment. You should buy washing powder which is designed for this purpose as it stops your clothes smelling damp. It’s called “heya boshi” (部屋干し).

Air Conditioner
Try to clean the filter of your air conditioner regularly. This will make it work much better, keep your air cleaner and save you money on electricity. It’s very easy to do, just unclip it from the front and rinse it out under a hose.

Miscellaneous Anti-Bug Gadgets
During the summer, there are quite a lot of mosquitoes. To keep them away, you can buy a special machine that keeps mosquitoes away without the smell that incense coils leave. Refills for the machines last up to 6 months. In Japanese it’s called “denki katori-ki” or 電気蚊取り器.

As for rice, you can buy a device that keeps it free from rice mites. This is sold next to the rice bags. Place the sealed container in with your rice, and it will prevent mites from getting in.
**Garbage Collection**

**Overview**

Although it may seem confusing, the garbage collecting system in Japan is actually quite straightforward. You put out a specific type of garbage on a particular day. Also, in some towns, garbage must be sorted by type and put into different colored bags. If your city doesn’t have a recycling collection system, you may be able to drop the items off at the municipal office on Sundays.

Garbage practices are determined locally, as is the definition of what is burnable and non-burnable. Some towns classify leather as burnable garbage, others don’t. Small appliances are non-burnable garbage in some towns; in others they are classified as “big items.”

Some towns have garbage collection instructions available in English. If you haven’t received any information on your town’s recycling system, ask your JTE or your BOE/supervisor. One of your neighbors might tell you what the specific days are and which bags to use.

You may want to compost your vegetable, paper, plants, etc. Perhaps your municipality has such facilities.

Please dispose of your garbage at the place your landlord told you!

**Recycling**

Glass bottles, aluminum cans, tin cans, newspaper, cardboard, milk cartons, and clothes are collected weekly, biweekly or monthly. Remember to remove the labels and tops of PET bottles before you recycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recycling Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper (紙, kami)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic (プラ, pura)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PET Bottles (PET, ペット)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum (アルミ, arumi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel (スチール, suchiiru)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Big Items**

They are usually collected monthly. You can call the collection office to request that they pick up the item. These include furniture, couches, desks, chairs, refrigerators, etc. Ask at your town hall for more details.

Another option is to ask your school about their trash day (free). Or, you can sell your items to a recycle shop as long as they are in acceptable condition.

**Other Garbage**

Newspaper, cardboard and milk cartons are collected with non-burnable or recyclable garbage and must be properly tied and packaged in order to be picked up. Items not properly bundled or without the appropriate sticker won’t be collected.

You can also take recyclables to the local supermarket. An area may have specific bags for rubbish collection, so it is best to buy bags from stores nearest to you. Bags for use in one town cannot be used in another.

**Garbage Vocabulary**
Special Items

The following cannot be disposed in a weekly collection, and instead, must be disposed of by special means: tires, sand, rocks, concrete, paint cans, gasoline, paint thinner, oil, dead dogs and cats, industrial waste, insecticides, medicines, etc. Batteries are put in a special bag and collected with non-burnable garbage.

Feeding Yourself

Note: most of the links given below are in Japanese. Ask your JTEs and/or PAs for further explanation, should you need it.

Groceries

Besides the regular grocery stores, these are places you can pick up more foreign items at certain shops:

- Keisei Department Store: Located in Mito near the Art Tower. Has a variety of foreign foods, including Thai and Mexican.
- Seibu Department Store: Located in Tsukuba, they offer regular and foreign foods.
- Yamaya Stores: Import stores. Popular site for discount breakfast cereal, TexMex ingredients, and cheap liquor and beer. [https://www.yamaya.jp/pages/stores/tenpo_list.php?SRCH_FLG=2&CDPREF=08](https://www.yamaya.jp/pages/stores/tenpo_list.php?SRCH_FLG=2&CDPREF=08) Click on the name of a city for directions. You can also order your favorite alcoholic beverages. There are 3 stores in Hitachi, 2 in Mito, 1 in Tsukuba, 1 in Toride, 1 in Tsuchiura, and 1 in Hitachinaka. There is 1 in Narita next door in Chiba Prefecture for deep south Ibarakians, 1 in Shirakawa in Fukushima Prefecture, another one in Oyama (Tochigi Prefecture), and 1 in Kashiwa near the border with Chiba Prefecture.
- Minoya: Located in Apita Mall, just off the 51 highway, on the way to Narita on the Ibaraki side of the border with Chiba
- Bonne Sante: Located in “Days Town” shopping center, Tsukuba
- Itoyokado: Located in Hitachi Station
- Kaldi Coffee Farm Located in 54 shops in Kanto area
- Beisia, a supermarket that has been expanding its variety of foreign foods in the past few years. You will them in Ibaraki in Kamisu, Shimodate, Takahagi, Namegata, and Hitachi. Link: [http://www.beisia.co.jp/apl/shop/SearchControl?pf=08](http://www.beisia.co.jp/apl/shop/SearchControl?pf=08).
- Daikokuten is has been recommended by many JETs.
- Niku No Hanamasa: Sells meat, vegetables, and alcohol 24 hours a day in amazing quantities. Link: [http://www.hanamasa.co.jp/shop/index_en.html](http://www.hanamasa.co.jp/shop/index_en.html)
• AEON: Located in many places in Ibaraki. [http://www.aeonretail.jp/shop/aeonlist.html](http://www.aeonretail.jp/shop/aeonlist.html) will give you the list of stores in all Japan.
• Check with people in your local area to find out what day or time of the day supermarkets have sales.
• Check out the Ibaraki Jets forum for heaps more info about not only foreign but also local food.

**Co-op / Delivery**

There are co-op options that also deliver groceries directly to your door on a weekly basis. The two competing options are Pal-System ([http://www.pal-system.co.jp/](http://www.pal-system.co.jp/)) and Co-op Deli ([http://www.coopdeli.jp/](http://www.coopdeli.jp/)). Both offer internet services with catalogs full of pictures to make ordering easier.

### Shopping Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>日本語</th>
<th>英語</th>
<th>意味</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>割引 (waribiki)</td>
<td>5割 (go-wari)</td>
<td>50% discount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>現金 (genkin)</td>
<td>会計 (kaikei)</td>
<td>bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お釣り (otsuri)</td>
<td>半額 (hangaku)</td>
<td>half price</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Water**

Most water is safe to drink in Ibaraki. Ask your BOE/supervisor. If you’re not sure, drinking bottled water is expensive, but the safest way to avoid any dioxins.

**Food Care**

• Take special care during the summer months, because the humidity affects most things.
• Put all foods in the refrigerator, including rice, flour etc. in the summer.
• Placing charcoal or a packet of “bug killer” in your rice will ward off any insects.
• Vegetables and fruits usually go bad quickly, so keep them cool or eat fast!

**Appliances**

• Turn off the gas valve of your stove after each use.
• Though refrigerators are cold, things can still go bad in them, so be careful.
• Appliances such as mixers, juicers, toasters, and woks are cheap at second-hand stores.
• Your microwave often works as both an oven and a microwave. Ask someone to explain how to use it.

**Miscellaneous**

• Vitamins are always highly recommended for keeping healthy here.
• Fruit is expensive, so take advantage of the cheaper seasonal fruits.
• Make sure you know what you’re eating! You don’t want to use floor wax as tempura mix!

**Miscellaneous Advice**

Ibaraki and your hometown probably contains more restaurants and food stores than you think, so experiment a bit, talk to the locals and try new things. There are lots of foods in Japan that are difficult to get hold of in other countries, so take advantage of this fact and enjoy!
Paying Bills

As a first year, you receive about ¥280,000/month. After pension & health insurance, it’s about ¥230,000/month. As required by Japanese law, a contribution to a retirement pension is deducted from our checks every month. At the end of your stay on the JET Programme, you will receive information about getting that money back. Typically it’s about ¥240,000 for every year you’ve stayed in Japan up to three years. Consider it an enforced savings plan. Nice!

How to Pay Bills

Each month, numerous slips of paper will be in your mailbox. Time to pay!

For most bills (those with a barcode at the bottom), you can pay at a “conbini (コンビニ),” or convenience store. You just show up with the bill and the money. The conbini employee stamps your bill and splits it in half. Keep the one you are given back. Other bills may have to be paid at your BOE or municipal office.

Obviously bill expenses vary by person and by location but in general you can expect gas, electricity and water bills to cost somewhere around ¥3,000–¥5,000 yen each per month. Cutting down on utilities will, of course, lower your bills. In the winter it is recommended that you use a kotatsu and/or kerosene heater and wear a minimum of 4 layers of clothing (pro-tip: Wearing several layers of heat-tech shirts and leggings under your work clothes is a solid way to battle the winter cold at work. You can get “heat-tech” inners from Uniqlo or other other cheap clothing stores.).

Note that some of the slips that come in the mail are just oshirase (お知らせ, notice); that is, you are given the amount you have been consuming so far and the price you would have to pay at this point.

Suggestion

Write a monthly budget. It will help you keep track of where your money is going and how much you will have left for yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Monthly Bills and Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Expenses (tea/enkai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Insurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Money

**ATMs**

Japan is basically a cash-based society and you will find that you will need to carry a lot of cash around in your wallet at all times. Japanese bank hours are short (often 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), and ATM hours are also limited; many of them open at 9 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. In addition, some ATMs are closed on Sundays. Check the open hours of the ATMs near you to be sure. Note that
though there are ATMs inside some convenience stores, they also have limited hours of use even though the shop itself is open 24 hours.

Another thing to note is that you cannot use your card from one bank at most other bank’s ATM. If you have a choice where your BOE/supervisor opens your bank account, ask for a bank that is nationwide. Most BOEs/supervisors will go for Jōyō Bank, which is only available in Ibaraki. It’s very hard to get cash when you are on holiday, unless you find a convenience store with an ATM.

Some overseas debit/credit cards cannot be used at normal ATMs. Even if the sign says that it takes VISA, this is limited to Japan-issued VISA cards. Luckily, you can use your overseas cards to withdraw money at the post office or the ATMs at 7 Eleven.

### Useful ATM Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>お引き出し (ohikidashi)</th>
<th>お預け入れ (oazukeire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdraw</td>
<td>deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お振替え (ofurikae)</td>
<td>お振込 (ofurikomi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transfer between accounts</td>
<td>transfer to another bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>通帳記入 (tsuuchou kinyuu)</td>
<td>資証番号 (anshou bangou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print statement book</td>
<td>personal identification number (PIN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>確認 (kakunin)</td>
<td>明細票 (meisaihyou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirm/accept</td>
<td>receipt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>発行する (hakkou suru)</td>
<td>不要 (fuyou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>not needed/necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1万円 (ichi man en)</td>
<td>¥10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sending Money Home

Here are the two main options for sending money home.

**Shinsei Bank – Go Remit**
This overseas remittance service costs ¥2,000 per transfer to an overseas account of your choice. You simply transfer (振込 furikomi) it from any ATM or bank and the money goes through overnight. This is probably the best option if you already send money home this way; otherwise it can take a few days to set up. For further information visit [https://www.goremit.jp/index/en](https://www.goremit.jp/index/en).

This is also an easy way to get any left over money from your account sent to you after you leave the country. Just leave your bank card and transfer information with someone you trust.

**Post Office Remittance Service**
Through this service, the post office sends your money to a designated party in the form of a cheque in a currency other than yen, or directly to your account as a wire transfer. For most countries, delivery varies between 4-14 days.

At your local post office, ask for an International Remittance Application & Declaration Form (国際送金請求申告書 kokusai sōkin seikyū shinkokusho) form. If you plan on using this form of remittance often, fill out the International Remittance Application Form Printing Service (国際送金請求印字サービス申込書 kokusai sōkin seikyū inji sa-bisu moshikomisho)and the post office will print up and send up to 10 copies to your home to use at a later date.
You will have to put the bank name and postal details of the party who is to receive the money.
You will also need to take your Resident Card and your inkan.
You can pay in cash or have the money automatically deducted from your account.
Both methods incur a handling fee.

**Wire Transfer**

You are able to send money from your bank account to another account overseas. You will need to go to your bank with your hanko and residence card. If the bank you are wiring to does not have a SWIFT code, your money will have to go through a bank that does. The cost of wiring may vary depending on how many banks your money goes through.

**Post Offices**

Post offices are useful places and a variety of services can be performed there. You can:

- Take money from an account in your home country.
- Send money to an account in your home country.
- Send a furikomi to a post office account (not all furikomis can be sent via bank)


**Taxes in Brief**

Since every situation is different and we all come from different countries, our tax situations will also be different. It is advisable to speak with other JETs from your home country to make sure you are on the ball with your tax situation.
Japanese Language Study

Overview

If You Have Zero Japanese Ability

Rather than giving you a reassuring introduction, let’s cut to the chase: LEARN HIRAGANA AND KATAKANA. Learning the basic alphabet will enable you to immediately jump into the fray of learning Japanese. Don’t know what that word means? Well, at least you can read it and ask someone or write it down. Once you have these basics down, things will make much more sense. It will become much easier to learn new words and take much of the stress off of you in the “trying to adjust” phase. Of course you will still have a ways to go, but making that effort to dive into the language will provide you with a solid foundation, deeper understanding of things, and a much more enjoyable experience, guaranteed.

A good strategy is the “little bit every day,” which the free CLAIR study guides are effective in doing. Keep a small notebook and write down some phrases you hear or some words/kanji that you always run into. Odds are you will want to know them. But most of all, try not to get overwhelmed by how much there is to Japanese. Take it slow and you will see results.

If You Have Some Japanese Ability

If you have some Japanese background and/or have lived in Japan before, that should not stop you from continuing your studies. Odds are you will have some free time here and there, so why not use it to hone your skills? The JET Programme is perfect for gaining more skills in Japanese so try not to put yourself in the same rut, or “comfort zone.” Take some time and explore new places. Talk to new people.

As for actual studying, depending on your level you can buy some of your own textbooks. Good beginner textbooks are the Nakama and Genki series, while the best one for intermediate learners is most likely “An Integrated Approach to Intermediate Japanese” by The Japan Times.

The best pieces of advice are: spend money and take some tests. Spending some money will give you that sense of purpose in actually reading that textbook you just paid 4000 yen for. Taking tests will give you deadlines that will be extremely beneficial in keeping up a pace and not falling into a lethargic comfort zone. For intermediate and up, absolutely wise choices are the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) and the Kanji Kentei. Both are detailed below in Japanese Language Tests.

Language Courses

The JET Language Course

Commonly perceived to be a little useless, they can actually be quite helpful depending on how you use them. CLAIR has been making an effort to revamp the course, and it is now completely online. It has a deadline system that will keep you going based itself on the “do a little bit a day” philosophy. If you have your own study plans you might as well pick it up anyway because it’s free. If you don’t know where to start learning, then this is definitely a place to start.
Japanese Classes

Try to find a local Japanese class in your area. These are often free, or nearly free, and tend to be run by volunteers. Often there is a small surcharge to cover drinks or snacks during the breaks or to pay for textbooks or materials. As many of the teachers are volunteers, the quality will vary. It may also be possible to arrange private one-to-one lessons should you find a good teacher in your area. The following website links to classes available across the region [http://www.ia-ibaraki.or.jp/kokusai/english/japanese/index.html](http://www.ia-ibaraki.or.jp/kokusai/english/japanese/index.html). Attending a local Japanese class weekly will provide you important networking opportunities and help enrich your social life and your overall experience here in Japan!

Self-Study

One of the best ways to get some real practical studying out of everyday life is to branch out into the community. It is very easy to fall back into hanging out with other JETs and doing English things. A good chance for everyday language practice is to make friends with people in the office. Don’t just talk to the English teachers, try and speak to everyone at your school. While some teachers may seem “cold” realistically they just don’t know what to say to you. If you make some effort to branch out to other teachers you will probably find them talking to you and teaching you things you never knew. Plus, it can only help ease you into your work environment.

Another good idea if you live in a big city is to find a language partner. Separate from tutoring this is usually a free activity in which a Japanese person and you split time talking in English and Japanese. This is great if you manage to get someone around your age because odds are you will learn more useful things about the language and your town, and make some new friends. If you take up an activity with local people, particularly a cultural one, you will get plenty of opportunities to speak with native Japanese speakers who know little to no English, giving you a greater opportunity to practice.

Try to take some time and watch television or Japanese movies. あさとましテレビ (mezamashi terebi) on Fuji TV (channel 8) is great in the morning for getting news and cultural information. While completely in Japanese it is easy to follow. Additionally, the evenings are filled with wacky variety shows and dramas that your students will most likely be quoting so if you are up to it go around and try to find something you like.

People often forget this, but your greatest resource is your surrounding co-workers – whether they be JTEs or the young teacher next to you. When they’re not preoccupied (during summer break periods for example), your co-workers would love to help you. Asking questions about Japanese language is an easy instant conversation starter and will most often than not lead to other topics regarding Japanese culture. Maintaining active lines of communication with your coworkers will help you get a better grasp of Japanese discourse as well as improve your image/friendliness in the staffroom. With that said, even if it’s difficult or you’re not feeling in the mood to initiate conversation, try to be proactive and keep a positive attitude towards dialogue!

Japanese Dictionary

You probably don’t need to spend any money on a Japanese dictionary if you have a smartphone since there are applications that work just as well as if not better than most Japanese dictionaries out there. A free application for the iPhone and Android devices is ‘Kotoba’, which provides you solid Japanese→English + English→Japanese translations as well as sample sentences and Kanji recognition software (so you can literally type a foreign Kanji on your touchscreen). Another app worth checking out is the one simply labelled ‘Japanese’. Even normal Japanese flip phones have a dictionary programme available.
Ibaraki-ben

This is the local dialect, and it gets stronger the further away from Tokyo you go, especially in rural areas to the north. Mostly categorized by ending sentences and verbs with \text{だっぺ}(dappe), it can cause some confusion if you aren’t used to it. Younger people tend to speak more standardized Japanese, but if you are in an area where the dialect is common, you might want to familiarize yourself with it.


Japanese Language Tests

**The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)**

The Japanese Language Proficiency Test, also called the “Nihongo Nōryoku Shiken (日本語能力試験),” is probably the most well-known test of its type in Japan. Japan Educational Exchanges and Services (JEES) administers it in Japan. The test is offered twice a year.

There are 5 levels, with level 1 being the highest. The passing score is usually 70% or higher for level 1, and 60% or higher for levels 2 through 5. People taking level 5 of the test will need to have mastered the basic elements of grammar, know around 100 kanji and 800 words, have the ability to engage in simple conversation and be able to read and write short, simple sentences. This level is normally reached after studying Japanese for around 150 hours and after completion of the first half of an elementary course.

You can . The test itself costs ¥5,500. Check out the website for more details. http://www.jlpt.jp/e/.

**Business Japanese Test**

This is administered by The Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation and requires a good understanding of both spoken and written business Japanese. The exam is held twice a year in June and November. Check out the website for more information. http://www.kanken.or.jp/bjt/english/about/index.html.

**Kanji Aptitude Test**

The “Kanji Kentei” is designed to test a native speaker’s understanding of kanji (the Chinese characters that are one of the most important elements in the Japanese writing system). The test requires knowledge of how to read and write kanji, their meanings, and kanji stroke order. While it is intended for native Japanese speakers, foreign applicants are welcome. This is an absolutely great way of learning all of the 1945 Kanji that the Japanese government considers substantial for daily life. The test follows the way Japanese learn the Kanji and there is a wealth of material to help you prepare for the exams. You can most likely take this exam at the school that you teach in, making it a very simple process. Otherwise the test is held three times a year at sites all over the country. www.kanken.or.jp/index.html.

**J-Test**

This test, while not as well-known as the others, offers yet another way to measure your Japanese ability. The test is offered multiple times a year, as opposed to the JLPT which is only offered twice a year. The test is held each year in February, April, June, September and November. Applications
can be sent and paid for through the post office, but you must call or email the test office first to get an application form. There are also forms at the Prefectural Office.

The test is divided into two levels, intermediate/advanced (with possible scores A-D), and beginner (with possible scores E-F). The intermediate/advanced test costs ¥2,800 and the beginner level costs ¥2,300. Check their website for more information http://j-test.jp/

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**Online Resources**

For Firefox users, the programme Rikaichan is a Japanese language interface programme that translated Japanese on screen on the fly to English. While not an effective study technique, installing it will allow you to breeze through Japanese vocabulary on the computer and help you navigate Japanese news articles or websites, for example. For Google Chrome users, the equivalent programme is Rikaikun (found in the add-on store) and comes in really useful for perusing Japanese content.

A fun online dictionary for Japanese slang is http://zokugo-dict.com/, although the website is in Japanese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful Websites for Study and Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.jdic.com">www.jdic.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.alc.co.jp">www.alc.co.jp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.goo.ne.jp">www.goo.ne.jp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kotobank.jp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jisho.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Leisure Time

Overview

As mentioned, it might be a good idea to start socializing from your backyard to complement your time with fellow JETs. During the non-hectic summer dog days, ask your supervisor if they can take you to the town hall/community center where they usually have a list of registered clubs in the city run by local adults. For those who want to stay active, look into registering at the local gym (if there is one) and ask your predecessor if they have made any connections with locals so they can pass the baton to you!

Sometimes you may be asked to oversee your school’s English club, or you can ask to participate in a student club of interest. This will strengthen the relationship between you and your students outside of the classroom. Extracurricular activities are a great way to spend your free time at school.

Try starting a social routine as early as possible while you have the free time, which will allow you to make the most of your time right away!

- Check out the IbaraKey blog as it is your number one source for all things Ibaraki. http://ibarakey.wordpress.com/
- Also check out the Alien Times in for local event and news in Tsukuba. http://www.alientimes.org/
- Also for larger cities try to find the city webpage because sometimes they have English and a calendar of events.

Religious Services

You can find a variety of religious establishments in Tokyo and in larger cities in Ibaraki that offer services in English and sometimes other languages as well. Your best bet to find out where these are is to use google. If you’re having trouble finding something, don’t hesitate to ask a PA or someone who has been here longer to help you look.

Museums

Ibaraki offers many excellent museums and galleries. Free tickets are often available to exhibitions and events. Your schools might have a couple of free tickets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibaraki Museums</th>
<th>Seizansō Hitachiōta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art Tower Mito</td>
<td>Museum of Modern Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kami no Sato Washi</td>
<td>Ibaraki Nature Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Paper Museum)</td>
<td>Chateau Kamiya Wine Museum (Ushiku)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatami Museum</td>
<td>Kasama Nichi Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasumigaura Fureai Land</td>
<td>Ōarai Aquarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tōkai Exhibition Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yūki Silk and Kimono Tour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amusement parks

Ibaraki has its share of amusement parks that can double as picnic sites, as well as a finely-tuned assemblage of video game halls. Of particular interest is Tsukuba You World. This complex features a very tall climbing wall, baseball batting areas, 10-pin bowling, a Japanese bathhouse, an amusement arcade, and a modern cinema complex.

- Hitachi Seaside Park (Hitachinaka)
- Kamine Kōen (Hitachi)
- Tsukuba You World (Tsukuba)
- Sanuma Sun Beach Water Park (Shimotsuma)
- Santa’s World Tsukuba

Outdoors and Onsens

Hiking and camping around Mt. Tsukuba are also popular pastimes among the Japanese. During the frigid winters, many locals visit the Onsen (hot springs) that can be found up in Hitachi, Daigo (Apple onsen!), or in neighboring Tochigi Prefecture’s Oyama city. Ask around your home town for local bath houses. Be warned though, bathing usually entails stripping naked and relaxing in hot water with the same sex of all ages!

Festivals

Japan is renowned for its many festivals or matsuri. The same goes for Ibaraki, although most of the festivals take place in the summertime. Be sure to ask at your school or BOE when your town festival is; it would be a shame to miss it.

Summer Festivals

Below is a list of summer festivals. For specifics, it’s best to ask your JET friends if there are any neat festivals in their towns. Festival hopping also provides a great excuse to go out and explore what the rest of Ibaraki has to offer!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ōmiya Natsu Gion Matsuri</td>
<td>Mito Kōmon Matsuri</td>
<td>Mito Hagi Matsuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yūki Natsu Matsuri</td>
<td>Tsuchiura Kirara Matsuri</td>
<td>Hitachi Yokappe Matsuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toride Hanabi Taikai</td>
<td>Shimotsuma Sen-nin Odori</td>
<td>Ishioka no Omatsuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwai Natsu Matsuri</td>
<td>Tokai Matsuri</td>
<td>Tsukuba Matsuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimodate Gion Matsuri</td>
<td>Shimodate Torō Nagashi</td>
<td>Kashima-Jingū Shinkō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibaraki-machi Anba Matsuri</td>
<td>Daigo Ayu no Tsukamin-dōri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takahagi Natsu Matsuri</td>
<td>Ōarai Hassaku Matsuri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koga Mikoshi Matsuri &amp; Onna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matsuri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naka-machi Naka Matsuri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ibaraki Festivals**

Below is a more detailed list of general festivals in Ibaraki Prefecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Jan</td>
<td>Oume Festival (New Year’s Ritual of the Shrine)</td>
<td>Kashima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Feb - Early Mar</td>
<td>Plum Blossom Festival</td>
<td>Mito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Mar</td>
<td>Saito-sai Festival</td>
<td>Kashima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mar</td>
<td>Koga Peach Blossom Festival</td>
<td>Koga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Apr</td>
<td>Yabusame Festival (Archery Festival of Samurai on Horseback)</td>
<td>Tsuchiura (Niihari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Cherry Blossom Festival</td>
<td>Everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr - May</td>
<td>Hamaguri (Hard Clams) Festival</td>
<td>Hokota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr - May</td>
<td>Ryujin Gorge Koinobori (Carp Streamers Festival)</td>
<td>Hitachiōta (Suifu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Himatsuri (Festival of the Flame)</td>
<td>Kasama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Shimodate Gion Festival</td>
<td>Chikusei (Shimodate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Oshio Festival (Spring Tide Festival)</td>
<td>Kamisu (Hasaki)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Yūki Summer Festival</td>
<td>Yūki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Daigo Fireworks Festival and Release of Memorial Lantern Floats</td>
<td>Daigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Karakasa Mando (Ritual of Umbrella Fireworks)</td>
<td>Tsuchiura (Niihari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Yūki Bon Odori Festival (Ritual to Greet Ancestors)</td>
<td>Yūki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Jyuo Festival</td>
<td>Hitachi (Jyuo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Hitachi Andon (Wood and Paper Lamp Stands) Festival</td>
<td>Hitachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Hitachinaka Festival</td>
<td>Hitachinaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Mito Kōmon Festival</td>
<td>Mito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Kirara Festival</td>
<td>Tsuchiura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Osuke Festival / Sugaya Chochin Festival (Portable Paper Lanterns Festival)</td>
<td>Naka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Minato-Hassaku Festival (Tenmangu Shrine Ritual)</td>
<td>Hitachinaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Kasama Festival</td>
<td>Kasama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Hasaki Kirasse Festival</td>
<td>Kamisu (Hasaki)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Ina no Tsunabi (Rope-Constructed Crafted Fireworks)</td>
<td>Tsukubamirai (Ina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Dosukoi Pear</td>
<td>Chikusei (Sekijo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Koga Fireworks Festival</td>
<td>Koga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Jinko-sai (Kashima Shrine Ritual)</td>
<td>Kashima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Chochin Festival (Paper Lantern Festival)</td>
<td>Kashima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Kiseru Festival (Giant Tobacco Pipe Festival)</td>
<td>Sakuragawa (Makabe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Ishioka Festival</td>
<td>Ishioka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Tsumugi no Furusato Yūki Kimono Festival</td>
<td>Yūki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Takumi Festival (Traditional Crafts and Products Festival)</td>
<td>Kasama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Tsuchiura Fireworks Competition</td>
<td>Tsuchiura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Madara-Kijin-Sai Festival (Folklore of Madara Devil’s Reconstruction of a Burnt-Down Temple Festival)</td>
<td>Sakuragawa (Yamato)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Tokai Imo Festival (Sweet Potato Festival)</td>
<td>Tokai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Ujo no Sato Minato Festival (Music Festival)</td>
<td>Kitaibaraki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Shin-Soba Festival</td>
<td>Hitachiōta (Kanasago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Mito-han Festival</td>
<td>Mito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Masakado Festival (Festival for Taira no Masakado)</td>
<td>Bando (Iwai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Oku-Kuji Daigo Festival</td>
<td>Daigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Koga Chochin Saomomi Festival</td>
<td>Koga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Oguri-Hangan Festival</td>
<td>Chikusei (Kyowa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Akutai Festival (Mud-Slinging Festival)</td>
<td>Kasama (Iwama)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Omeshi Festival</td>
<td>Sakuragawa (Iwase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Hiwatari Festival (Festival of Walking on Wood Coals to Pray for Health)</td>
<td>Sakuragawa (Makabe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix

### The Upcoming JET Year at a Glance (2017-2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>Group A arrives in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24 - 25</td>
<td>Group A Post-Arrival Orientation (Tokyo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>Group A arrives in Ibaraki Letter of Appointment Ceremony (Mito)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>Group B arrives in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31 - Aug 1</td>
<td>Group B Post-Arrival Orientation (Tokyo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2</td>
<td>Group B arrives in Ibaraki Letter of Appointment Ceremony (Mito)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Aug</td>
<td>Ibaraki Prefectural Orientation (Prefectural Office, Mito)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 14</td>
<td>ALT Meeting (Mito Continuing Education Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>ALT Skills Development Conference (Teacher Training Center, Kasama) and CIR Mid Year Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>ALT Meeting (Mito Continuing Education Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>ALT Meeting (TBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 29</td>
<td>End of Contract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting to the Prefectural Office (県庁, Kencho)

To be in time for Ibaraki Orientation, you must be on the 09:15 bus at the latest. Don’t be late! Tickets cost ¥360 each way from Mito Station (水戸駅, Mito-eki). The bus stop at Mito Station is on the South Exit and down the stairs on the left. Take the bus from stop Number 3.

**Bus Timetable: Mito Station to Prefectural Office**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bus Timetable Weekdays</th>
<th>Mito Station south exit</th>
<th>Prefectural Office</th>
<th>Prefectural Office</th>
<th>Mito Station south exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:15</td>
<td>7:32</td>
<td>7:42</td>
<td>8:03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>7:51</td>
<td>7:55</td>
<td>8:16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:40</td>
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<td>22:02</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mito Station Map

Prefectural Office Area Map
Public Transport from Each Town to Mito

Below is a list of the best train connections to get to Mito in time for the 9:15 bus to the Prefectural Office. These are the latest possible times, so you may want to consider leaving earlier just in case.

This list is a guide only, and train times may have changed since this guide was written, so you may want to double check the times before you leave. Some of you may choose to come by car or there may be a closer station to your house other than the main train station in town. Please confirm with your supervisor at your contracting organisation for the best connection.

If you have any questions, please email a PA at ibarakijetpa@gmail.com or use Hyperdia [http://www.hyperdia.com/en/] to check train times in English.

- **From Kita-Ibaraki**
  Take the 7:50am JR Joban Line train from Isohara Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:55am. Cost 972 yen
  Take the 7:44am JR Joban Line train from Otsuko Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:55am. Cost 1,144 yen

- **From Daigo**
  Take the 7:22am JR Suigun Line train from Hitachi-Daigo, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:44am. Cost 1,144 yen

- **From Hitachi**
  Take the 8:31am JR Joban Line train from Hitachi Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:01am. Cost 583 yen

- **From Hitachi-Ota**
  Take the 8:20am JR Suigun Line train from Hitachi-Ota Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:44am. Cost 324 yen

- **From Hitachi-Naka**
  Take the 8:55am JR Joban Line train from Katsuta Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:01am. Cost 185 yen

- **From Oarai**
  Take the 8:43am Kashima-rinkai Tetsudo Oarai Line train from Oarai Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:59am. Cost 320 yen

- **From Hokota**
  Take the 8:17am Kashima Tetsudo Oarai Line train from Shin-Hokota Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:59am. Cost 800 yen
  Take a bus from Hokota to JR Ishioka Station. Take the 8:34am JR Joban Line train from Ishioka Station, bound for Katsuta.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:07am. Cost 670 yen + bus fare

- **From Ogawa**
  Take the 8:34am JR Joban Line train from Hatori, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 496 yen

- **From Ishioka**
  Take the 8:29am JR Joban Line train from Ishioka Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 669 yen

- **From Itako**
  Take the 7:25am JR Kashima Line train from Itako Station to Kashima Jingu. Change to the Kashima Tetsudo Oarai Line and take the 7:36am train bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:59am. Cost 1620 yen

- **From Hasaki**
  Make own way to Kashima Jingu Station. Take the 7:36am JR Kashima Tetsudo Oarai Line
from Kashima Jingu Station, bound for Mito.
Arrives Mito @ 8:59am. Cost 1,570 yen

- **From Kamisu**
  Make own way to Kashima Jingu Station. Follow instructions above from there.

- **From Tsuchiura**
  Take the 8:10am JR Joban Line train from Tsuchiura Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 972 yen.

- **From Tsukuba**
  Take the 7:08am Purple Bus from Tsukuba Center (bus stop 5) bound for JR Tsuchiura Station. Change to the JR Joban Line and take the 8:10am train to Mito, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 972 yen + bus fare.
  Or take the 7:05am TM Bus Liner (Bus Stop #8) from Tsukuba Station, bound for Kencho Bus Terminal.
  Arrives Kencho Bus Terminal @ 8:05am. Cost 1,30 yen. (There's a Starbucks nearby.)

- **From Ushiku**
  Take the 7:53am JR Joban Line train from Ushiku Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 1,144 yen.

- **From Fujishiro**
  Take the 7:46am JR Joban Line train from Fujishiro Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 1,317 yen.

- **From Mitsukaido**
  Take the 7:04am Kanto Tetsudo Jōsō Line train from Mitsukaido to Toride Station. Change to the JR Joban Line and take the 7:42am train bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:00am. Cost 1,997 yen

- **From Shimotsuma**
  Take the 7:34am Kanto Tetsudo Jōsō Line train from Shimotsuma Station to Shimodate. Change to the JR Mito Line and take the 7:58am train bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:56am. Cost 1,592 yen

- **From Iwai**
  Make own way to either Mitsukaido or Shimotsuma Station. Follow instruction from there.

- **From Koga**
  Take the 7:10am, JR Utsunomiya Line train from Koga Station to Oyama Station. Change to the JR Mito Line and take the 7:33am train bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:56am. Cost 1,490 yen

- **From Yuki**
  Take the 7:43am JR Mito Line train from Yuki Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:56am. Cost 1,140 yen

- **From Shimodate**
  Take the 7:58am JR Mito Line train from Shimodate Station, bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 8:56am. Cost 972 yen

- **From Takahagi**
  Take the 8:16am JR Joban Line train from Takahagi Station bound for Mito.
  Arrives Mito @ 9:01am. Cost 842 yen.

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**Other Useful Information Sources**

**Websites**

Once you get online, there are several Japan and JET-related websites to check out.

- Ibaraki JET PA Space: [http://ijetpa.wordpress.com/](http://ijetpa.wordpress.com/). This is one of the most important: This is the official site run by the Ibaraki Prefectural Advisors in conjunction with the
Ibaraki Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (iAJET). It contains a lot of useful information.

- **Ibarakey Blog**: [http://ibarakey.wordpress.com](http://ibarakey.wordpress.com). Managed by the CIRs at the International Affairs Division, with a variety of useful info in English about life in Ibaraki and upcoming events, including lots of travel tips.
- **The Japan Times**: [http://www.japantimes.co.jp](http://www.japantimes.co.jp). The online website of the Japan Times. Arguably Japan’s leading English language newspaper.
- **Mainichi Daily News**: [http://mdn.mainichi.jp/](http://mdn.mainichi.jp/). The Daily Mainichi is known for being one of the few tabloid style newspapers that is translated into English on this site. It may never win any journalistic awards for its news reporting, but the WaiWai section is well worth a look. It contains all kinds of crazy stories that made the news in Japan.

**Other**

Some Fun Reads regarding Japanese-East Asian Culture + Activity suggestions in the greater Kanto (Eastern Japan) region:

- [https://tokyocheapo.com/](https://tokyocheapo.com/)
- [https://www.tsunagujapan.com/](https://www.tsunagujapan.com/)

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**Useful Japanese Vocabulary and Expressions**

The following is a list of Japanese words you may like to master to make life easier in Ibaraki.

**Social Vocabulary**

| 外国人・外人 | gaikokujin / gaijin | foreigner |
| 携帯 | keitai | mobile phone |
| 元気 | genki | cheerful / lively |
| 英語 | eigo | English |
| 大丈夫 | daijōbu | no problem / I'm okay |
| 駅 | eki | train station |
| コンビニ | konbini | convenience store |
| 新幹線 | shinkansen | bullet train |
| 食べ放題 | tabehōdai | all-you-can-eat |
| 飲み放題 | nomihōdai | all-you-can-drink |
| 弁当 | bentō | boxed meal |
かわいい | kawaii | cute
漢字 | kanji | Chinese character
祭り | matsuri | festival
本当？ | Hontō? | Really?

### Work Vocabulary

| 立入禁止 | tachiiri kinshi | No entry |
| 男 | otoko | male |
| 女 | onna | female |
| トイレ・お手洗い | toire / otearai | toilet |
| 熱い・冷たい | atsui / tsumetai | hot / cold |
| 入口 | iriguchi | entrance |
| 出口 | deguchi | exit |
| 禁煙 | kin’en | No smoking |
| 営業中・準備中 | eigyō-chū / junbi-chū | Open / Closed |
| 禁止 | kinshi | prohibited |
| 教頭先生 | kyōtō-sensei | Vice-principal / Deputy headmaster |
| 校長先生 | kōchō-sensei | Principal / Headmaster |
| 担当 | Tantō | supervisor |
| 先生 | sensei | teacher |
| 県庁 | kenchō | Prefectural office |
| 年休 | nenkyū | paid leave |
| 病休 | byōkyū | sick leave |
| はんこ・印鑑 | hanko / inkan | personal seal |
| お土産 | omiyage | souvenirs |

### Signs

<p>| 熱い・冷たい | atsui / tsumetai | hot / cold |
| 入口 | iriguchi | entrance |
| 出口 | deguchi | exit |
| 立入禁止 | tachiiri kinshi | No entry |
| 禁煙 | kin’en | No smoking |
| 禁止 | kinshi | prohibited |
| 男 | otoko | male |
| 女 | onna | female |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>危険</td>
<td>kiken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>非常口</td>
<td>hijō-guchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>案内所</td>
<td>annaijo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>駐車禁止</td>
<td>chūsha-kinshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>受付</td>
<td>uketsuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>土足禁止</td>
<td>dosoku-kinshi</td>
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### Other Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>おはようございます</td>
<td>Ohayō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>こんにちは</td>
<td>Konnichiwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>こんばんは</td>
<td>Konbanwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>じゃまた</td>
<td>Ja mata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>さようなら</td>
<td>Sayōnara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>おやすみなさい</td>
<td>Oyasuminasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お先に失礼します</td>
<td>Osakini shitsurei shimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お疲れ様でした</td>
<td>Otsukare sama deshita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ご苦労様でした</td>
<td>Gokurō sama deshita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ありがとうございます</td>
<td>Arigatō gozaimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ください・下さい</td>
<td>kudasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>はい (ええ)</td>
<td>hai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>いえ</td>
<td>iie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ごちそうさまでした</td>
<td>Gochisō sama deshita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>どうぞ</td>
<td>Dōzo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>すみません</td>
<td>Sumimasen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Said to you upon leaving – only for boss to subordinate)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>日本語</th>
<th>和文</th>
<th>英文</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>分かりました</td>
<td>Wakarimashita</td>
<td>I understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>分かりません</td>
<td>Wakarimasen</td>
<td>I don’t understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>どこですか</td>
<td>Doko desuka</td>
<td>Where is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>何ですか</td>
<td>Nan desuka</td>
<td>What is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>いつですか</td>
<td>Itsu desuka</td>
<td>When is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大丈夫</td>
<td>Daijōbu</td>
<td>All right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ちょっと</td>
<td>Chotto</td>
<td>A little/mmm . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ゆっくり話して下さい</td>
<td>Yukkuri hanashite kudasai</td>
<td>Please speak slowly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>もう一度言って下さい</td>
<td>Mōichido itte kudasai</td>
<td>Please say it again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>説明してください</td>
<td>Setsumei shite kudasai</td>
<td>Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ちょっと待って下さい</td>
<td>Chotto matte kudasai</td>
<td>Please wait a moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>頑張って</td>
<td>Ganbatte</td>
<td>Good luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>もちろん</td>
<td>Mochiron</td>
<td>Of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>すごい</td>
<td>Sugoi</td>
<td>Wow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>かわいい</td>
<td>kawaii</td>
<td>cute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>忙しい</td>
<td>isogashii</td>
<td>busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>難しい</td>
<td>muzukashii</td>
<td>difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>面白い</td>
<td>omoshirōi</td>
<td>interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>男子更衣室</td>
<td>Danshi kōishitsu</td>
<td>Boys changing room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>女子更衣室</td>
<td>Jyoushi kōishitsu</td>
<td>Girls changing room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>男子トイレ</td>
<td>Danshi toire</td>
<td>Boys toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>女子トイレ</td>
<td>Joushi toire</td>
<td>Girls toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>保健室</td>
<td>Hokenshitsu</td>
<td>School nurse’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>湯沸室</td>
<td>Yuwakashishitsu</td>
<td>Tea Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>校長室</td>
<td>Köchōshitsu</td>
<td>Principal’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>書庫</td>
<td>Shoko</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>職員室</td>
<td>Shokuinshitsu</td>
<td>Staff Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>日语</td>
<td>英译</td>
<td>例句</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>印刷室</td>
<td>Insatsushitsu</td>
<td>Printing room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>静かにしてください</td>
<td>Shizuka ni shite kudasai</td>
<td>Be quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>座ってください</td>
<td>Suwatte kudasai</td>
<td>Sit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>手をあげてください</td>
<td>Te wo agete kudasai</td>
<td>Raise your hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>助詞</td>
<td>joshi</td>
<td>particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>名詞</td>
<td>meishi</td>
<td>noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>形容詞</td>
<td>keiyōshi</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>主語</td>
<td>shugo</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>疑問</td>
<td>gimon</td>
<td>question/doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>質問</td>
<td>shitsumon</td>
<td>question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>単語、言葉</td>
<td>tango / kotoba</td>
<td>word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>進行形</td>
<td>Shinkōkei</td>
<td>Present continuous (progressive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>過去形</td>
<td>Kakokei</td>
<td>Past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>現在形</td>
<td>Genzaikai</td>
<td>Present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>発音</td>
<td>hatsuon</td>
<td>pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英語で何と言いますか</td>
<td>Eigo de nan to iimasu ka</td>
<td>What is it in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>日本語で何と言いますか</td>
<td>Nihongo de nan to iimasu ka</td>
<td>What is it in Japanese?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>満タンにして下さい</td>
<td>Mantan ni shite kudasai</td>
<td>Fill the tank please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ 円分下さい</td>
<td>~ en bun kudasai</td>
<td>~ yen's worth please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ が壊れています</td>
<td>~ ga kowareteimasu</td>
<td>~ is broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>公衆電話</td>
<td>Kōshūdenwa</td>
<td>Public phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(これ)はいくらですか</td>
<td>(Kore) wa ikura desu ka</td>
<td>How much does (this) cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>袋は要りません</td>
<td>Fukuro wa irimasen</td>
<td>I don’t need a bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お勘定お願いします</td>
<td>Okanjō onegaishimasu</td>
<td>Can I have the bill please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>会計お願いします</td>
<td>Kaikei onegaishimasu</td>
<td>Can I have the bill please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(駅)はどこですか</td>
<td>(Eki) wa doko desu ka</td>
<td>Where is (the station)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### For Vegetarians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>肉 (Niku)</th>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>牛肉エキス (Gyūniku ekisu)</th>
<th>Beef Extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>牛 (Ushi)</td>
<td>Cow</td>
<td>食肉エキス (Shokuniku ekisu)</td>
<td>Meat Extract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>牛肉 (Gyū-niku)</td>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>エキステンダー (Ekisutendā)</td>
<td>Extender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>豚 (Buta)</td>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>魚 (Sakana)</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>豚肉 (Buta-niku)</td>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>蟹 (Kani)</td>
<td>Crab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鶏 (Tori)</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>海老 (Ebi)</td>
<td>Shrimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鶏肉 (Tori-niku)</td>
<td>Chicken meat</td>
<td>貝 (Kai)</td>
<td>Shell fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鴨 (Kamo)</td>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>イカ (Ika)</td>
<td>Squid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>肝エキス (Kimo ekisu)</td>
<td>Liver Extract</td>
<td>蟹 (Tako)</td>
<td>Octopus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>乳製品 (Nyū-seihan)</td>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>貝類エキス (Kairui ekisu)</td>
<td>Shellfish Extract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>卵 or 玉子 (Tamago)</td>
<td>Egg</td>
<td>魚のエキス (Sakana no ekisu)</td>
<td>Fish Extract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>野菜 (Yasai)</td>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>牛乳 (Gyūnyū)</td>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大豆 (Daizu)</td>
<td>Soy Bean</td>
<td>豆乳 (Tōnyū)</td>
<td>Soy Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>豆腐 (Tōfu)</td>
<td>Tofu</td>
<td>乳製品</td>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

肉は食べません。  
(Niku wa tabemasen) I don't eat meat

私はベジタリアンです。  
(Watashi wa bejitarian desu) I'm a vegetarian

肉と魚とハムと鶏肉は食べません。  
(Niku to sakana to hamu to toriniku wa tabemasen)  
I don't eat meat or fish or ham or chicken

ベジタリアンの料理がありますか。  
(Bejitarian no ryōri ga arimasu ka)  
Do you have any vegetarian dishes?

この料理に肉が入っていますか。  
(Kono ryōri ni niku ga haitte imasu ka)  
Does this dish contain meat?

~にアレルギーです。  
(~ ni arerugii desu) I'm allergic to ~

~に敏感です。  
(~ ni binkan desu) I'm sensitive to ~
In Your Down Time

Here are some things to keep you busy at your school or BOE during the potential quiet month of August.

- Organize your desk. Ask for bookcases, binders, stationery and anything you may need.
- Get to know the school schedule. Find out important dates, especially ones where you are required to wear business attire. (School Festival, Town Festival, Sports Day)
- Give out any omiyage you have brought from your home country to the principal, your supervisor, and (if you have brought enough) the people you will be teaching with.
- Get your bank account, residence registration, and hanko set up. Chances are someone will walk you through all of this. You can’t do much without these.
- Make photocopies of your passport, Resident Card, hanko, bank book, bank card, credit cards, any important documents in triplicate. Keep a set at home, a set at school and mail a set to your home country. Better safe than sorry.
- READ! You have so many things to read. Make it a priority to read a little bit each day.
- Study Japanese. Whether you are pera pera or starting from scratch, you have a ton of time and resources at your disposal, so take advantage of this downtime and get a little study in before you are busy with school. (This is sure to make a good impression on your coworkers.)
- Enquire about your own interests. Does your town have a karate dojo, a community centre with cooking classes, a pool, and Japanese lessons? Probably! Ask NOW! A lot of these things will start up in September.
- Prepare for teaching. You may have to make an introduction speech in front of the school (Sept. 1) and your self-introduction (自己紹介, jiko shōkai) for each new class. After that there are loads of teaching websites to browse.
- Write an article for IbaraKey (http://ibarakey.wordpress.com/) or the Ibaraki JETspace. Some suggestions for topics: first impressions of Japan, Ibaraki, anything unusual that has happened to you.
- Do a presentation for the World Culture Seminar at the Ibaraki International Association! They are always looking for presenters. Transportation fee is 100% covered. It’s a great opportunity to talk about your country in English.
Fancy a chat?

We'll listen.


050 5534 5566

You'll hear a short message in Japanese first

ajetpsg

Connecting may take a moment

20:00 - 07:00. Every night of the year.