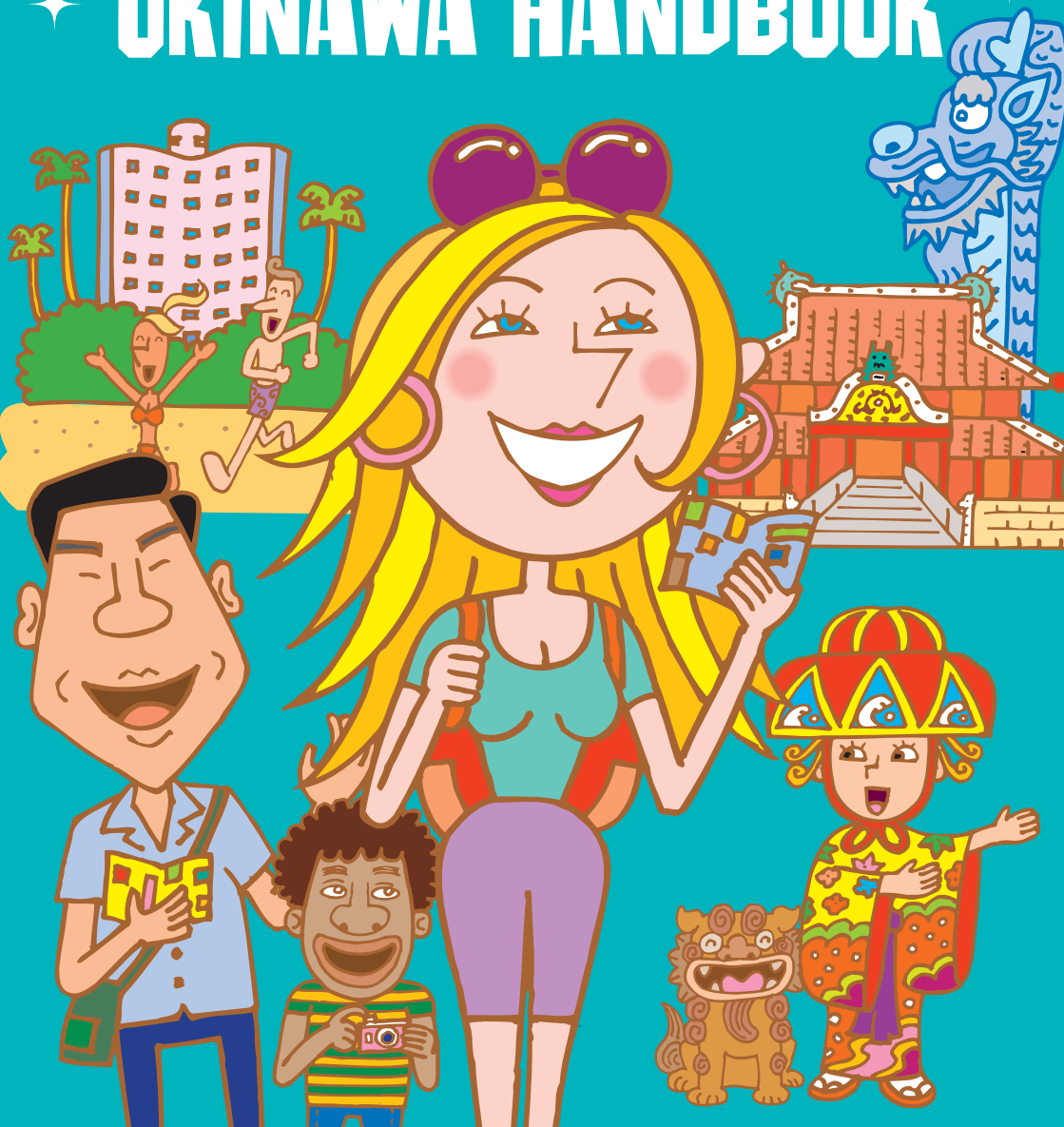


Explore and Enjoy Okinawa!

OKINAWA HANDBOOK



Okinawan Culture & Customs

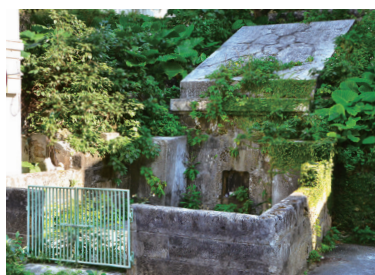


Okinawans (Uchinānchu) are open and friendly.

Start your fun Okinawan trip with local greetings: "Haisai!" (for men) / "Haitai!" (for women).



If you see food, drinks, or incense placed somewhere, these are offerings. Do not touch or remove them.



● Cemeteries

Okinawa has sacred sites, war ruins, and customs that differ from those on mainland Japan. Please refrain from entering such places without permission.



● Prayer sites (Uganjū / Utaki)



● Air-raid shelter ruins

Everyday Manners

Local people try to speak quietly on the street and on buses/monorail.

Please be mindful not to spit out gum or saliva onto the road.



Trash is not thrown on the street. Please separate it (cans, bottles, burnable, non-burnable, etc.) and dispose of it properly.



Whether at shops, restaurants, toilets, or when using buses and monorails, queuing is customary. Please form a line, avoid cutting in, and be considerate so that everyone can use the facilities comfortably.



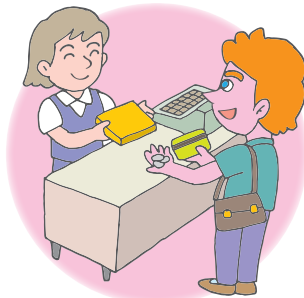
There is no tipping culture at shops, restaurants, hotels, or in taxis. A simple "thank you" is appreciated.



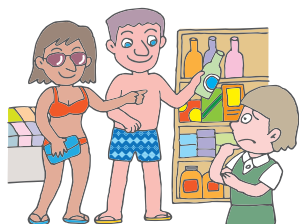
Please don't open or unseal products before you pay for them. If you want to try on clothes, please talk to a staff member first.



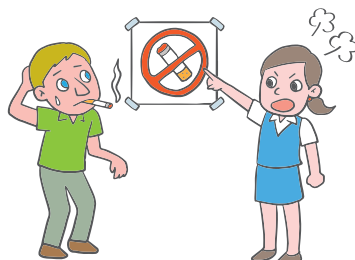
Many stores do not accept split payments (combining cash and credit). It's helpful to carry small change.



Shirtless walking is uncommon in Okinawa. Off the beach, don't wear only swimwear, and brush off sand and wear a T-shirt and shorts before entering shops.



In many places, smoking is not allowed. To follow the rules and respect others, please use only designated smoking areas.



How to Use Toilets in Japan

There are two main types of toilets in Japan. Please learn how to use them properly, keeping the next person in mind.



Western-style

- ❶ Lift the lid and lower the U-shaped seat.
- ❷ Sit facing the tank/back.
- ❸ After use, wipe with toilet paper and throw it into the bowl.
- ❹ Flush with the lever or button.



Japanese-style (squat)

- ❶ Face the rounded raised side and squat over it.
- ❷ After use, wipe with toilet paper and throw it into the bowl.
- ❸ Flush with the lever or button.



Hotel Etiquette

Please take off your shoes indoors and use the provided slippers, including toilet slippers.



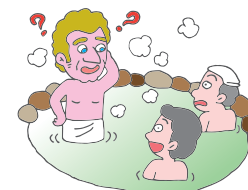
Room rates are often set per person; confirm in advance.



Do not take hotel items, such as furniture, vases, or electronic devices, out of the hotel.



At busy buffets, group guests and individual guests may be guided separately.



In public baths, please do not wear swimwear or enter the tub with a towel. Some places may refuse entry to guests with tattoos, so it's best to check beforehand.

Staying at Minpaku (Private Lodging)

Many minpaku use part or all of a private home. Avoid loud noise or disruptive behavior. Follow the house rules and be considerate of local residents.

Example: Ask your host about trash separation and dispose of garbage in the designated area.



Dining Etiquette

At buffets, take only what you can finish. You may be charged for leftovers. Do not take drinks or other items home.



Many establishments provide free water and oshibori (wet hand towels). If you need more, please ask the staff. Oshibori are not for taking home.

Please enjoy only food and drinks from the shop. Don't throw peels or bones on the ground—leave them on your plate for staff to clear.



"How much is the otoshi?"



At many izakaya (pubs), a small appetizer may be served even if you didn't order it. This otoshi functions as a table charge—usually 200–500 yen per person—and generally cannot be declined. Charges vary; ask staff if you're unsure.



Reservations & Cancellations

If you'll be late or need to cancel a booking for a restaurant or attraction, be sure to contact them. Check the cancellation policy.



Public Transportation Riding the Bus in Okinawa

Here are some helpful tips and manners to make your bus ride in Okinawa more comfortable and enjoyable.

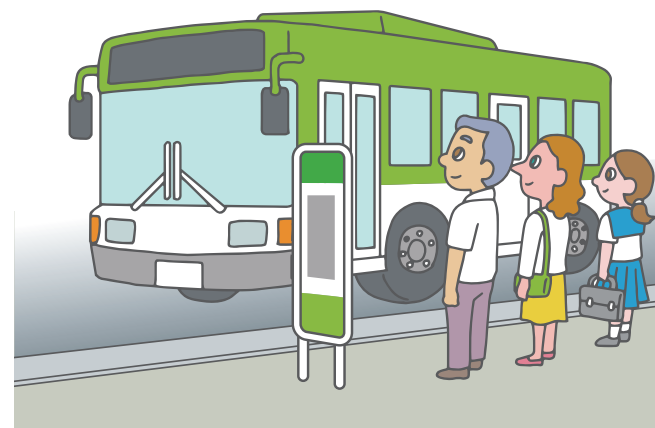
- ※Announcements are usually in Japanese. Please inform the driver of your intended stop when boarding.
- ※Bus stops in Okinawa typically display only the timetable and the next stop, not a complete list of stops.
- ※Keep your voice down and refrain from making phone calls.
- ※Eating, drinking, and smoking are not allowed on the bus.
- ※Each passenger may bring one large piece of luggage.
- ※Keep your luggage in front of you or on your lap so as not to inconvenience others.
- ※Do not place wheeled suitcases upright on the floor; lay them flat on their side to prevent them from rolling.
- ※Do not change seats while the bus is in motion. Stand only after the bus has come to a complete stop and the doors have opened.
- ※If standing, make sure to hold on firmly to the hand straps or handrails.
- ※¥5,000 and ¥10,000 bills are not accepted. Please prepare ¥1,000 bills and coins in advance.
- ※Change is not provided on the bus. Use the onboard change machine, but only when the bus is stopped.
- ※Offer your seat to elderly passengers, people with disabilities, pregnant women, passengers with small children, or those displaying a Help Mark.
- ※Do not leave trash on the bus; take it with you. Also, do not spit (gum or saliva) inside the bus.
- ※Do not kick or push the seat in front of you.
- ※When crowded, move toward the back and avoid blocking the doors.



At the Bus Stop

- ※Stand next to the bus stop so the driver can easily see you. Avoid standing on tactile paving blocks.
- ※Line up in an orderly fashion and do not cut in line.
- ※Allow passengers to get off before boarding.
- ※Take your trash with you and do not leave it at the bus stop.

Help Mark



How to Ride and Pay on Okinawa's Buses

Bus systems in Okinawa may vary depending on the route. This page explains how to board and pay correctly so you can travel smoothly and with confidence.

Routes under 20 (except 10 & 12)



① Board through the front door.



② Pay when boarding.



③ Press the stop button before your stop.



④ Exit from the rear door after the bus has stopped.



Routes 10, 12, and 20 or higher



① Board from the front (rear for 10/12).



④ Check the fare display against your ticket number.



② Take a boarding ticket.



⑤ After the bus stops, pay and hand in your ticket at the front.



③ Press the stop button before your stop.



⑥ Exit from the front.



ACCESS

Timetables & Route Maps

How to Ride the Monorail (Yui Rail)

Yui Rail connects Naha Airport to Urasoe, offering a convenient way to travel while enjoying views of the city. With easy access to sightseeing spots and shopping areas, it's the perfect companion for your Okinawa journey.

Buying Tickets

Check the fare to your destination station and purchase a ticket accordingly.



Gates

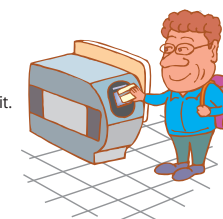
Hold the QR code on your ticket over the scanner at the gate. You may also use OKICA, Suica, and other IC cards compatible with Suica, as well as contactless credit cards. (Please check the official website for supported card brands.)

Exiting

When you arrive, scan your QR code, IC card, or contactless credit card again at the gate to exit.

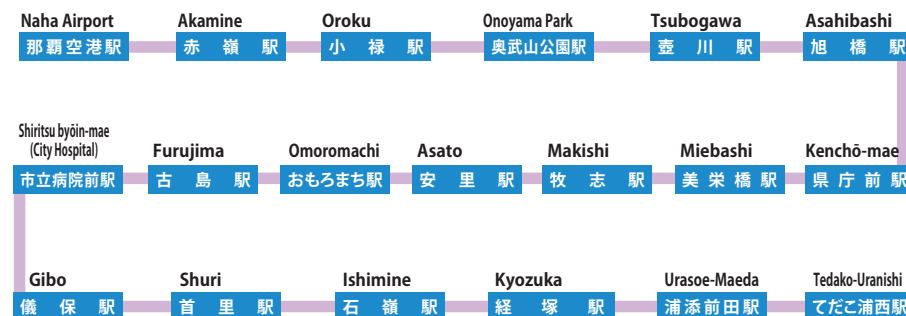
Manners

- Please line up in an orderly fashion when waiting on the platform.
- After boarding, avoid standing near the doors—move further into the car.
- Please carry backpacks in front of your body or place them on the overhead rack.








ACCESS

Line Map (Stations)



Bus & Monorail Free Passes

(children 6–12 noted)

Ticket	Validity Period	Free Ride Area	Details
Yui Rail Free Pass	1-day (24h) or 2-day (48h)	Area: all Yui Rail lines.	 ACCESS
Yui Rail + Naha Bus "Bus Monopass"	1 day	Area: all Yui Rail + Naha Bus city flat-fare zone (some suburban sections if operated by Naha Bus).	 ACCESS
Naha Bus & Ryukyu Bus Weekend/Holiday 1-Day Pass	Weekends/holidays, plus Dec 31 and Jan 1–3;	All routes of Ryukyu Bus and Naha Bus (excluding some sections) On jointly operated routes, Okinawa Bus services can also be used	 ACCESS
Naha Bus City 1-Day Unlimited Pass	1 day	Area: Naha city lines.	 ACCESS
Yui Rail • Bus Okinawa Bus Pass (Tourists Only)	1 day or 3-day	Area: all routes of Ryukyu Bus, Okinawa Bus, Naha Bus, Toyo Bus (some exceptions like express buses).	 ACCESS

Taxis

Drivers operate the doors automatically. For your safety, please let the driver handle opening and closing the doors when boarding or alighting. Fares are metered, and the number of passengers allowed is regulated. You can hail taxis on the street by raising your hand or call one using apps like GO, DiDi, or Uber Taxi.



GO
ACCESS



DiDi
ACCESS



Uber Taxi
ACCESS

Fares (Okinawa Main Island):

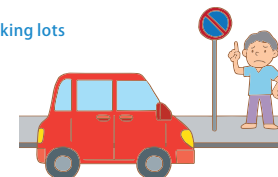
The standard initial fare for regular cars starts at ¥600. Please contact the taxi company for detailed information.

Renting a Car

To drive in Japan, you must have one of the following licenses:

- 1, A Japanese driver's license (for residents in Japan)
 - 2, Passport + International Driving Permit (based on the Geneva Convention) + your home country's driver's license
 - 3, For holders of driver's licenses issued in Switzerland, Slovenia, Germany, France, Belgium, Monaco, and Taiwan: Passport + home country's license + an official Japanese translation of your license (issued by the respective country's embassy or consulate in Japan, JAF (Japan Automobile Federation), or the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association).
- Prepare the necessary documents in your home country in advance. Eligible countries may change.

Illegal street parking is common. In areas marked with ●, please use nearby parking lots or coin-operated parking. Parking at or near bus stops is also prohibited.



Safety Driving Awareness Video for Rental car Users Visiting Japan

Japanese



ACCESS

English



ACCESS

Traditional Chinese



ACCESS

Korean



ACCESS

Expressway Etiquette

The speed limit on expressways is 80 km/h. Even minor carelessness or traffic violations by drivers can lead to serious accidents. Please follow traffic rules and cooperate to ensure safe travel on expressways.



This sign indicates a toll road for motor vehicles.

Name of the interchange

Direction of the interchange

The green sign is a sign for an expressway.



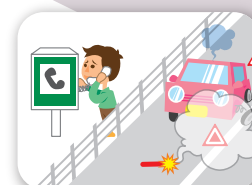
Expressways are one-way roads. Always follow the direction indicated by road signs and markings, and never drive against traffic.



Normally, use the left lane of a two-lane road. Use the right lane only when overtaking, and return to the left lane at a safe speed.



Do not stop or park on the expressway except for emergencies such as stopping for safety or breakdowns.



In case of accidents or breakdowns, call 110 or use the emergency phone installed approximately every 1 km to report.



- Ambulance 119
- Police 110
- Contact your rental car office

Roads & Traffic in Okinawa

Learn about Okinawa's roads and traffic rules to enjoy a safe and fun visit.

Pay attention to signals and signs, watch for pedestrians and other vehicles, and make your trip a memorable one.



Pedestrians first in Japan.

Keep left

If you're unfamiliar, drive carefully.

Slippery roads

Asphalt with limestone can be slick—especially in rain. Avoid speeding.

Parking lots

Be cautious entering/exiting hotels, convenience stores, and facilities.

No street parking for rental cars

You may be towed. Use official lots or coin parking.

Tactile paving

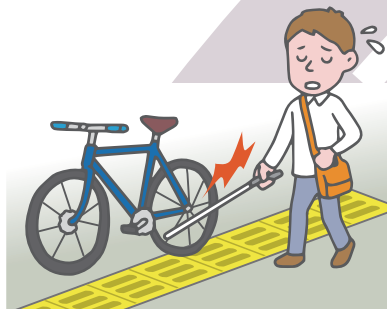
Do not place objects or park on guidance blocks for the visually impaired.

Navigation screens

Watching/operating while driving is illegal. Stop in a safe place first.

No mobile phone use while driving

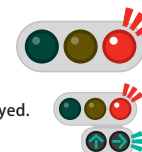
No mobile phone use while driving (calls or looking at screens)—penalties apply.



Red Light – Stop!

No going straight or turning in any direction. Wait for the green light.

Follow the arrow signal if displayed.



STOP sign

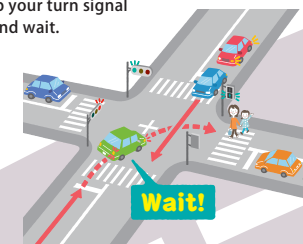
Make a full stop and check left/right for safety.



At intersections:

1. Pedestrians first.
2. When turning right, yield to oncoming straight/left-turning vehicles.

Keep your turn signal on and wait.



Lane change

Check behind carefully. Where the center line is yellow, no passing to the right.



Traffic Signals and Road Signs

ACCESS



Emergency

If an accident occurs, aid the injured and call 119 (ambulance) and 110 (police). Even without injuries, call 110.

If you can't explain in Japanese, show this message:

事故が起きました

There's been an accident.

私の代わりに **110 119** へ電話してもらえませんか?
Could you please call 110 and 119 for me?

HELP

Bus lanes (rush hours)

Parts of Naha, Urasoe, Ginowan, and Haeburu have bus-only lanes at certain times. Violations are penalized.



Animal and Plant Quarantine

Start your journey on the right foot and bring back souvenirs safely and legally!
Follow the rules to ensure a pleasant and memorable trip.



Animal and plant quarantine is carried out at ports and airports to inspect animals, livestock products, plants, and their derivatives that are brought into or taken out of the country. The inspection aims to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases and pests harmful to animals and plants.

In Japan, to prevent the introduction of animal and plant diseases and pests occurring overseas that could seriously harm livestock and agriculture, imports are prohibited or restricted according to specific countries, regions, and items.

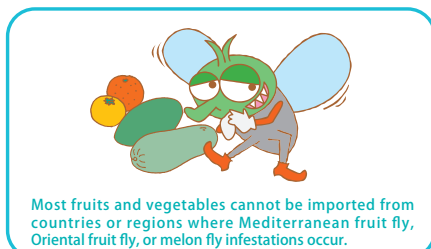
Additionally, to prevent the spread of important agricultural diseases and pests originating in Okinawa Prefecture to other parts of Japan, the transport of plants that might carry them is regulated.

Many countries and regions around the world also carry out animal and plant quarantine similar to Japan. If you plan to bring animals, livestock products, plants, or their derivatives from Japan to your home country, please check that country's quarantine regulations beforehand.

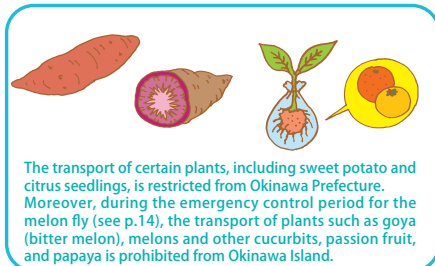
For detailed information, please contact the Animal Quarantine Service or the Plant Protection Station.



Most meat products are prohibited from being brought into Japan as souvenirs. For detailed import rules, please check the Animal Quarantine Service website.



Most fruits and vegetables cannot be imported from countries or regions where Mediterranean fruit fly, Oriental fruit fly, or melon fly infestations occur.



The transport of certain plants, including sweet potato and citrus seedlings, is restricted from Okinawa Prefecture. Moreover, during the emergency control period for the melon fly (see p.14), the transport of plants such as goya (bitter melon), melons and other cucurbits, passion fruit, and papaya is prohibited from Okinawa Island.



To avoid having your souvenirs confiscated at the airport, be sure to check the quarantine regulations of your destination country and Japan's inspection requirements before departure.

Contacts

MAFF Naha Plant Protection Station (Imports): TEL.(098) 868-2850
<https://www.maff.go.jp/pps/>

Exports/Domestic TEL.(098) 868-1679

Animal Quarantine Service Okinawa TEL.(098) 861-4370
<https://www.maff.go.jp/ap/>



ACCESS



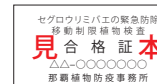
ACCESS

Movement Restrictions on Cucurbit Plants (Vegetables and Fruits)

Emergency measures under the Plant Protection Act have been in effect since April 14, 2025, to prevent the spread of the melon fly (*Bactrocera cucurbitae*) and achieve early eradication.

As part of these emergency measures, the plants listed below, if produced on Okinawa Main Island, cannot be transported to other prefectures or to remote islands within Okinawa Prefecture (excluding islands governed by municipalities on the main island).

If a box bears the official "Movement-Restricted Plant Inspection — Passed" sticker on the outside, it may be transported.



Plants That Cannot Be Taken Out of Okinawa Island



This is only a partial list of restricted plants. The current emergency pest control period is in effect until December 31, 2025 (Reiwa 7).

Please note that from January 1, 2026 (Reiwa 8), the regulations or restricted areas may change. For details, please contact the Plant Protection Station.

Contacts

MAFF

Naha Plant Protection TEL.(098)868-1679 **Naha Airport Office** TEL.(098)857-0054
Miyako (Hirara) TEL.(0980)72-2433 **Ishigaki** TEL.(0980)82-2312

Tax-Free Shopping

To purchase tax-free items, you must follow the required procedures.

Information as of August 2025. Please verify the latest details yourself.

1. Only designated tax-free shops offer tax exemption (not all stores in Japan are eligible).

2. Duty-free procedures must be completed at the store where you purchase. No refunds are given at airports or ports.

Eligible



Non-residents

Documents



Your passport, etc.

Notes before purchase

- Tax exemption is not available without your passport or equivalent ID.
- If you entered Japan through an automated gate and have no entry stamp, you may be ineligible for tax exemption as your entry date and status cannot be confirmed.

Steps

STEP 1

Present your passport when purchasing.

STEP 2

Sign the purchaser's declaration.

STEP 3

Consumable items will be sealed in a designated bag or box—do not open until you leave Japan.

STEP 4

Show your passport or equivalent ID to Customs at departure; the purchase record sheet will be collected.

- When using a credit card, the cardholder's name must match your passport or ID.
- Only items purchased on the same day are eligible for tax exemption.
- Some items are prohibited from importation into certain countries (e.g., meat, fruits, items regulated under CITES).

Categories

General goods

¥5,000 or more (tax excluded)



Consumables

Between ¥5,000 and ¥500,000 (tax excluded)



Consumables cannot be used in Japan.
Show passport at departure for record collection.

Liquor Tax Exemption:

This applies only to licensed brewery or distillery shops selling their own products, not general retail stores. Both consumption tax and liquor tax are exempt.

Details: <https://tax-freeshop.jnto.go.jp/eng/liquor.php>

Carry-On Limits & Prohibited Exports — Before Departure

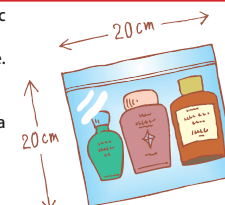
Your souvenirs may not be allowed on board or to take home. Rules vary by airline and by domestic/international flights. Even if it was fine elsewhere or before, follow staff instructions.

Liquids

There are restrictions on the amount of liquids you can bring on board (for domestic flights in Japan).

Liquids in containers larger than 100 mL (or 100 g) are not allowed in carry-on baggage. Please place such items in your checked luggage at the time of check-in.

Liquids in containers of 100 mL (or 100 g) or less may be brought on board if placed in a transparent, resealable plastic bag with a total capacity of no more than 1 liter.



Wait, this counts as a liquid?!

Some unexpected items are considered liquids and may have to be discarded at the security checkpoint. Be sure to check in advance!

Jimami tofu, jelly, retort pouch foods, miso, vinegar, rafute (Okinawan braised pork), sea grapes, toothpaste, and some cosmetics.



Even Duty-Free Bags Are Not Exempt!

Items over 100 mL cannot be brought on board, even if they are in duty-free shopping bags. Please place them in your checked baggage at the time of check-in. In some cases, you may be asked to present them at customs.

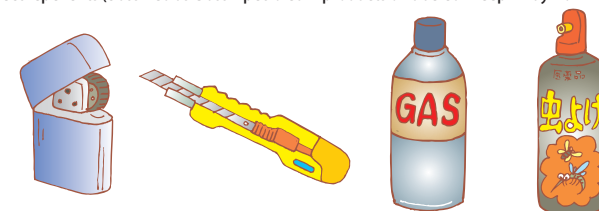


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Dangerous Goods (Prohibited for carriage)

Some items cannot be brought on board or checked in as luggage. These include:

- Toxic substances, items with poisonous or explosive properties
- Blades, lighters (e.g., Zippo), aerosol sprays, batteries
- Certain insect repellents (classified as Class 2 petroleum products or labeled "Keep Away from Fire")



ACCESS

Due to animal, plant, and food quarantine rules, certain items such as meat products, fruits, and other animal or plant-derived goods may be restricted or prohibited from being brought into or out of Japan. (See p.13 for details.)



Additionally, items covered under the Washington Convention (CITES) are also prohibited from export.

New Rules for Carrying Liquids into the Cabin

Please prepare your baggage before departure by following the rules below:

10 A total height and width of approximately 40 cm or less

1 Liquids must be in individual containers of 100 ml or smaller.

2 Place them in a transparent, resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 liter.

3 Only one bag per passenger. Place it in the inspection tray.

Additional liquids that do not fit...



Put them in your suitcase as checked baggage.
Some fragile items may not be accepted.
Please check with your airline.

Medicines, baby milk, etc. necessary during the flight



Can be carried on board separately from the bag, by declaring them to a screener.

Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Website

Coats, jackets, laptops, and other large electric devices...



Place them separately in the inspection tray.

Contact information

Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
National Police Agency
The Scheduled Airlines Association of Japan

ACCESS



Examples of Dangerous Goods Prohibited or Restricted on the Aircraft

The transport of dangerous goods is prohibited by law. Any items being checked in or carried on the aircraft may be subject to penalties. Passengers carrying dangerous goods are required to notify the airline staff.

Portable Electronic Devices Containing Lithium Batteries in Checked Baggage Carry-On: Checked (with conditions):

Please inform the staff about the type and capacity of the battery. Make sure the device is completely powered off (sleep mode is not acceptable).

Place the device in a strong suitcase and protect it with clothing or cushioning material to prevent movement.

Aerosol Cans (except for toiletries and medical items) Carry-On: Checked:

Heat-Producing Articles Carry-On: Checked:

Explosive Articles Carry-On: Checked:

Batteries Carry-On: Checked:

Cigarette Lighters / Safety Matches Carry-On: Checked:

Weapons Carry-On: Checked:

Gas canisters for portable stoves Gas canisters for camping

Insecticides / Pesticides Oxygen canisters for sports

Cordless hair irons Diving lamps

Bleach Paints

Self-heating lunchboxes Air disinfectants

Fireworks / Firecrackers

Lithium batteries (Ion & Metal)

Knives / Scissors Pointed or blunt instruments

Tools

If the battery is removed or if the heat source is separated from the electrical circuit, the item can be carried on or checked in. (Switching off or locking the device is not sufficient.)

Used in cameras, mobile phones, and similar electronic devices. Please inform the staff about the type and capacity of the battery.

Only one lighter or one pack of safety matches per person. You may not be allowed to carry certain types, so please inform the staff.

Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Website

Inquiries:

Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
National Police Agency
Cooperation with the Domestic
Regular Airline Safety and Security Council

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In Case of Disaster Typhoons

Due to the risk of being struck by flying debris or falling over in strong winds, avoid going outside and stay indoors, such as at your accommodation.

Public transportation—such as buses, monorails, flights, and ferries—may be severely affected. Please check the latest updates.

Even after the storm subsides, do not let your guard down. Always check the latest weather information before going out.

During a typhoon, please refer to the following website for the latest information:

Japan Meteorological Agency <https://www.jma.go.jp/jma/index.html>

Major Earthquake

If You Are Inside a Hotel or Accommodation:

- Move away from furniture and glass windows during the shaking, and protect your head.
- After the shaking stops, follow the instructions of the facility staff and evacuate promptly.

If You Are Outside

- Stay low to the ground during the shaking and protect your head from falling signs, glass, or tiles.
- Stay away from block walls, narrow alleys, cliffs, shorelines, and rivers.

If a Tsunami Warning Is Issued

- Move away from the coast immediately and evacuate to high ground or a tall, sturdy building.
- If you don't know where to evacuate, ask people around you. At hotels and other accommodations, check the evacuation sites and routes in advance.
- Be aware of the elevation of your current location above sea level.
- Urge people swimming or staying on the beach to evacuate and leave the coast quickly.
- Even if the estimated arrival time has passed, do not go near the coast until the tsunami advisory or warning has been officially lifted.

Useful Website for Disasters

「Safety tips」

This is a push-notification app that provides Earthquake Early Warnings and Tsunami Warnings in English within Japan. It includes various helpful functions for foreign tourists and residents in Japan during disasters.

●Download URL:

- Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=jp.co.rcsc.safetyTips.android>
- iPhone <https://itunes.apple.com/jp/app/safety-tips/id858357174?mt=8>

●Android



●iPhone



Need Help in Okinawa?

Management Office / Official Website
Okinawa Multilingual Contact Center Secretariat
info@okinawa-mcc.jp

Okinawa Multilingual Contact Center

To help the increasing number of international visitors enjoy a safe and comfortable stay, Okinawa Prefecture has established a Multilingual Contact Center. We are here to assist you anytime—with travel information, public transportation guidance, and medical support.



ACCESS

Tourism Information & Interpretation Services

To help you make the most of your time in Okinawa, we provide tourism information, transportation guidance, event updates, and interpretation support. Please feel free to contact us anytime.

Services Provided by the Call Center

- Information on tourist spots and transportation
- Information during natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes
- Basic guidance on public transportation and tourist facilities
- Information on hotels, hospitals, and tourist attractions (Reservation services are not available.)

Call Us Here

9:00~19:00 (Japan Standard Time)



ACCESS

Services Not Provided by the Call Center

- Making reservations for hotels, restaurants, etc.
- Making decisions or providing guarantees related to individual actions
- Making emergency calls to police or fire departments on your behalf

Free support available in English, Chinese, Korean, and Thai

Medical Information Service

If you have symptoms such as fever, stomach pain, or injury, please feel free to contact us. We will guide you to nearby medical facilities and advise you on appropriate actions based on your symptoms.

Services Provided by the Call Center

- Information about nearby medical facilities
- Explanation of the medical consultation process

Call Us Here 24 hours, 365 days a year



ACCESS

Services Not Provided by the Call Center

- Making hospital reservations
- Arranging ambulance services

Free support available in 26 languages

If you're unsure, call
the consultation line

#7119

or ☎098-866-7119 (available from all phone lines)

Nurses are available **24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

Consultations available in 12 languages,
including English!

Free consultation
(call charges are the caller's responsibility)

This telephone service provides consultation and advice based on the information you provide.
It is intended for your reference and does not constitute medical treatment.

In an emergency, do not
hesitate to call **119.**

