

Annual Manual

**MAINLAND
JAPAN**



**Destinations and Culture
Cuisine and Customs**

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STARS AND STRIPES

MIND YOUR MANNERS

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When you are invited for dinner at a friend's house or a restaurant, a basic knowledge of Japanese table manners will make you feel more comfortable.

In Japan, a meal starts with the word "*Itadaki masu*" and ends with "*Gochiso sama deshita.*" These words are equivalent to saying grace and expressing thanks for the food and for the cook.

Because proper usage of chopsticks is fundamental to Japanese table manners, you may want to practice it. But if you are not comfortable with the utensil, do not hesitate to ask for a fork or a spoon. It is not a breach of manners.

You can pick up rice and soup bowls and small plates, but flat plates or big bowls should not be moved off the table.

A traditional Japanese meal has rice, soup, a main dish and smaller dishes. Now which dish to start? There is no order. You may start with whichever dish you wish, but many people start with soup and move onto other dishes. Do not keep on eating the same dish until it is gone. It's best to eat in rotating circle so that you finish all the dishes almost at the same time.

Rice is the principal food of Japan and, traditionally, people have held great gratitude and respect for food. It is therefore, considered inappropriate to taint rice with condiments or sauces. For example, when eating sushi, only the fish portion should be dipped into soy sauce. The rice should not touch it. Soy sauce should never be poured over rice.

When chopsticks are not in use, they should be placed on a chopstick rest or on a plate parallel to the edge of the table. You do not stick your chopsticks into the rice. That is considered bad luck because it is a ritual for a funeral service. Chopsticks are stuck into a heap of rice in a rice bowl over the head of the deceased so that he or she will not starve in the other world.

The rest of the table etiquette is much the same as Western manners. There is one big exception, however: the way noodles are eaten. Strange it may sound, it is OK to slurp, and making noise is even encouraged. Please remember, though, that this only applies to noodles.

Always and anytime, however, the best manners are sitting at a table with good appetite and enjoying the meal. Complete your meal by saying "*Gochiso sama deshita.*"



SURVIVAL JAPANESE

Information gathered at www.ncis.navy.mil

One of the first things people new to Japan discover is that not all Japanese speak English. Chances are good that you and your family may end up renting a home or apartment next door to a Japanese family.

The following words and phrases will help you get to know these neighbors and assist you while you are eating out at local restaurants or shopping in local stores.

Good Morning oh-hi-yo go-zai-ee-mas

Good Afternoon, Konnichiwa
kone-nee-chee-wah

Good Evening, Konbanwa
kone-bawn-wah

Good Night oh-yah-sue-mee na-sigh-ee

Good Bye, Sayonara sah-yoh-na-rah

See You Later mah-tah ah-toh day

Please (invite) doh-zoh

Please (request) koo-dah-sigh

Thank you doh-moh ah-ree-gah-toe

You're welcome doe-ee-fash-ee mash-tah

Excuse me sue-me-mah-sehn

I'm sorry go-men na-sigh

Oh, I see ah-so

I wah-tah-she

You ah-nah-tah

He kah-rah

She kah-noh-joh

Yes high (say quickly)

No ee-yeh (say quickly)

Maybe ta-boon

Sometimes toe-key-doe-key

Please give me coffee Koh-hee o-koo-da-sigh

Please give me water Mee-zoo o Kudasai

Please give me beer Bee-ro o Kudasai

Where is it? Doh-ko des-kah

What is it? Nan-ni-des-kah

How much is it? Ee-koo-rah-des-kah

Where is the toilet Toire wa doko desu ka?

Do you understand? Wah-kah-ree-mas ka

Numbers

One ee-chee

Two ni / nee

Three sahn

Four she

Five goh

Six roh-koo

Seven na-na

Eight hah-chee

Nine koo

Ten joo



JAPAN TRAVEL RESOURCES

Matsumoto Castle, Matsumoto, Nagano File Photo

Japan National Tourist Organization

Although not organized in the most efficient way, JNTO'S official website offers a virtual plethora of information on destinations throughout Japan. www.jnto.go.jp

Japan Travel Phone

One of the more difficult aspects of traveling in Japan is the language barrier. While this is less of a problem in a large city like Tokyo, visitors often have trouble getting help with directions, ordering in restaurants and making hotel reservations. Recognizing this, the Japan National Tourist Organization provides a toll-free telephone service from 9 am to 5 pm to assist English-speaking visitors with most of their travel needs. If you're already in Tokyo, dial 3201-3331; dial 0088-22-4800 if you're in another part of Japan.

Tourist Information Center

Strolling through Tokyo's neighborhoods is a great way to learn about the city's people and culture. The Tourist Information Center, with locations at Narita Airport and the Tokyo International Forum, offers a plethora of information for travelers. One of their most popular booklets is Walking Courses in Tokyo. In it, you'll find suggested walking itineraries, maps and descriptions of all the larger sights and attractions on route. Whether you plan on doing much walking on your holiday or not, the TIC is a good place to get touring information – most of which is in English and absolutely free.

TIC is open Monday through Friday, from 9am to 5pm; Saturdays from 9am to noon. The offices are closed on Sundays and Japanese holidays. To reach the Forum location, take the Hibiya line (see #2 above) to Hibiya station and follow the signs to Exit A4b. To find the TIC once inside the Forum, simply follow the English-language signs. The Narita Airport office is located at the Information Center.

Kids Web Japan

Information about Japanese history, customs and culture abound at the Kids Web Japan website. Check out jin.jcic.or.jp/kidsweb.

Tokyo Food Page

Whether you're looking for smoke-free restaurants in Tokyo, a guide to Japanese foods and culinary customs, recipes and more, be sure to point your browser to www.bento.com.

Outdoor Japan

If you're looking for the best places for hiking and camping, cycling, surfing, windsurfing, rock climbing, white water sports, and onsen adventures, be sure to look at www.outdoorjapan.com