



## Japan Kimono Tour 2026

### Destination Guide and FAQs



#### First time in Japan?

Whether you're marvelling at a geisha's fluid grace, pausing to inhale a perfectly brewed cup of sencha, or thrumming to the pulsating rhythm of Ginza, Japan has the power to captivate the most jaded traveller. On this 13-day tour timed to take in the autumn splendour, we will explore the legacy of the Kimono on Japanese arts, textiles, culture, and tradition.

*I came away from this trip to Japan with a greater knowledge of Japanese culture, history, and beauty. I am grateful for the vision to achieve such a comprehensive trip, and particularly to you who made all the arrangements. Thank you! – Mary P., Calif.*

If you have been lucky enough to visit Japan, you're already in love. But do read on because a few things might have changed.

From navigating dietary restrictions and food allergies, to money matters, what to pack, tipping, manners and customs, staying in touch with (envious) folks back home, we're covering everything.



## First off, is Japan safe for travellers?

Your perception of safety is important, and we urge you to visit your country's travel advisory consular site. These days, only a few countries do not carry an advisory. Happily, Japan is one of them. It is one of the safest countries in the world for both men and women. Petty theft and violent crime are extremely rare. Stories of people leaving wallets, passports and bags on trains and being reunited with them are the norm. However, you should still be sensible and follow the usual travel precautions.

A bonus of group travel is you can always be with a travel companion. Additionally, our local office in Canada is on hand to address any concerns.

## Do I need a visa for Japan?

Visa requirements for Japan are straightforward for U.S. and Canadian nationals. Visa-free and can stay for 90 days.

U.S. nationals please visit [https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/travel\\_and\\_visa.html](https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/travel_and_visa.html)

Canadian nationals, please visit [https://www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/visa.html](https://www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/visa.html)

Other nationals, please search for "Embassy of Japan in xyz (your country)" and click on Visa services.

Please bear in mind that processing can take 3-4 weeks. Please understand that it is your sole responsibility to possess a valid passport and visa prior to embarking on this tour.

## What is the Time Zone in Japan?

Japan observes [Japan Standard Time](#) all year.

There are no Daylight-Saving changes. Japan Standard Time is 13 hrs ahead of Eastern time zone.

## What is the weather like in October?

October in Tokyo is a pleasant month with warm to cool temperatures. Days are clear and crisp. Nights are cool, ideal for sleeping.

October in the Tohoku region is characterized by cool, crisp, and refreshing autumn weather, making it an ideal time for viewing the turning leaves (koyo). The region experiences a significant drop in temperature from the summer, offering a comfortable climate for outdoor activities, though it is considerably cooler than Tokyo or southern Japan.

## Weather Averages for October in Tohoku

- **Temperature:** Average daytime highs in Tohoku cities like Aomori range between 10°C and 18°C (50°F–64°F), with temperatures dropping below 10°C (50°F) at night. Mountainous areas can be significantly colder.
- **Rainfall:** October is generally more stable than September, but light to moderate rain can still occur, particularly in the first half of the month.
- **Conditions:** Crisp, clear, and sunny days are common, providing excellent





conditions for autumn sightseeing.

**BONUS\*\*** Mid Oct onwards is peak Autumn foliage season in Tohoku. While this natural phenomenon cannot be guaranteed, our tour is well-timed to experience *koyo*.

#### How strenuous is this tour?

You must be able to walk comfortably and without assistance at a moderate pace for one-hour stretches. Moderate pace is defined as around 100 steps per minute.

We will travel in Tohoku mostly in private coaches. In Tokyo, we will use public transit. Essential:

- Ability to navigate stairs
- comfortably handle your overnight case/bag on short walks and through train stations. Your large suitcase will be transferred.

#### Note:

- while a major accessibility effort has been made in Japanese cities, this cannot be guaranteed
- Hikes and strenuous activities are optional
- When we stay in traditional ryokan, futons are on the ground. Additional mattresses can be requested to raise the height, but please ensure you are able to raise yourself up, perhaps with the help of a nearby piece of furniture.

Our tours are group events. The presence of even one person who is not fit enough can spoil the experience for everyone else, in addition to placing stress on group leaders and guides.

Please assess your fitness level as objectively as possible. Should you decide to join the tour and

later develop immobility, please let us know immediately.

#### What types of accommodations will we stay in?

One of the best ways to experience Japan is to stay in atmospheric ryokans (traditional inns) for architecture, cultural relevance, and personalised service. While ryokans are not widely available or conveniently located in urban areas, this tour combines western style 3-4\* hotels with traditional onsen accommodation. Onsen accommodation are a treat! They feature natural hot springs onsen or public hot bath onsen.

All accommodation is clean and well-appointed with private bathrooms and western-style toilets. All include breakfast.



#### What should I pack?

A comprehensive packing list will be supplied. Consider layering clothes. Pack adequate warm clothing for Tohoku, including warm socks, toque, and mitts. Comfortable closed-toed walking shoes with easy on-off are recommended. You will be required to remove your shoes several times a day.

It's best to leave expensive jewelry and valuables at home.



### Will hotel rooms have safety deposit boxes?

Most will but not all. Lock your valuables in suitcase or leave for safekeeping with front office. Depending on your level of concern, you may consider a locking small zippered bag (often used for petty cash or bank deposits) to gather your stuff that you give to the hotel to put in their safe. It is pilfer proof. Around \$18 on Amazon. It has a place for your name or business card.



### What is the voltage in Japan?

Voltage in Japan is 100V. Your items or adaptor will need to fit into this type of outlet.  
(ie: 3 prongs won't fit)



### Where to fly in and out of? What are the best international flight options?

Our tour starts and ends in Tokyo. Shared airport shuttle will be provided for all arrivals if you are arriving either later or earlier, as long as you book the extra nights' accommodation through us. Do give yourself ample time to settle in after your long flight. Please see website tour page for Getting There arrival and departure details.

### How do I stay electronically connected?

First off, we recommend being connected

through wifi or SIM card during your group travel in Japan, particularly in train stations, crowded sightseeing, and markets. Wifi on the go also helps you navigate and translate during your free time.

Although free WiFi is available in all our hotels, we strongly recommend one of the following:

- Your local phone company plan
- [E-sim](#) if your phone supports it
- [Japanese SIM card](#) at around \$50. For plans, see [here](#).
- Buy SIM cards upon arrival at the airport. Do apply in advance through the link above as SIM card shops at airports are likely to be crowded and the airport-shared shuttle leaves within 2 hours of actual arrival time.
- Buy SIM cards at convenience stores such as SEVEN ELEVEN, FAMILY MART, and LAWSONS

Note: applies to data only, no voice.

### Travelling in Japan with dietary restrictions or food allergies

Traveling with dietary restrictions can be challenging, but it's not impossible. Vegetarian and vegan restaurants are becoming increasingly popular in cosmopolitan parts of Japan, but it can still be difficult to navigate menus if you don't read Japanese. Some tips for vegetarians traveling in Japan:

- [Happy Cow](#) is a great website that lists vegetarian/vegan restaurants all around the world!
- Dashi is a fish stock base that is in many dishes, even if they don't contain meat. Be careful when ordering soups or ask waitstaff if the dish contains dashi. Miso soup, however, is typically suitable for vegans.

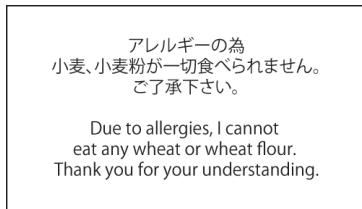
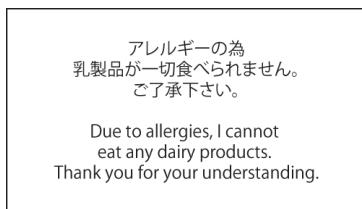


- Conveyor belt sushi restaurants are a good place to find vegetarian food as they often have veggie rolls, avocado rolls and cucumber rolls, as well as a variety of desserts.
- Okonomiyaki is a good dish to try, as it is made to order, and you can customize the ingredients to your liking.

For gluten-free diets, Japanese cuisine don't appear to be heavy on wheat, so it might surprise you to learn that gluten is found in lots of Japanese dishes. Many of the staple sauces (including soy sauce and miso) have wheat in them. Read [this](#) for gluten or celiac diets.

In the interests of pre-booking restaurants during a busy travel time, we will collate your dietary restrictions three months prior.

If you have any dietary restrictions, it might be a good idea to print out these cards and carry them with you during your trip in Japan.



### Is it safe to drink tap water in Japan?

The answer is yes, you can drink tap water in Japan. All throughout Japan, tap water is safe to drink and that includes the water found in parks, gardens, and public bathrooms. Bottled water is also available and can be found in convenience stores or vending machines inexpensively. Bring a refillable water bottle to save the planet!

### What about the currency?

In Japan, the currency is yen ( ¥ ). The current exchange rate (Nov 2025): USD: \$1 = ¥150 and CAD: \$1 = ¥110

Major credit cards are accepted at hotel chains, larger restaurants, or shops in large cities. You'll want cash on hand in small restaurants, markets, or in more rural towns.

There's no need to bring yen from home either. ATMs offer the best exchange rate possible. Easy to find in train stations as well as convenience stores. Before heading to a rural town though, be sure to withdraw cash.



### What about tipping?

Tipping is not customary in Japan. In fact, it can be considered offensive in many situations. Most Japanese restaurants require customers to pay for their meals at the front register, rather than leave money with the waiter or waitress. Tipping also isn't required for cab or



bus rides and many hotel services.

There are three exceptions. When staying at a ryokan with personal attendants, it's customary to hand in an envelope with \$10 in equivalent yen at check in. (Our ryokans do not offer personal attendants). If you're lucky enough to arrange a private dinner with a geisha, hand her an envelope (around \$25) with both hands and a slight bow of respect. And lastly, guides in Japan greatly appreciate gratuities. Generally, USD 5 pppd but it's up to you how much to tip them. They also appreciate a snack from your hometown or being bought coffees or small refreshment.

### And shopping . . .?

Japan is a shopper's paradise. Excellent textiles, a plethora of handicrafts, dolls, glassware and cutting-edge youngsters' fashion items and accessories. Not to forgot quirky 100-Yen shops, selling just about everything for the same price.

Given our tour focus on Kimono textiles and arts, some shopping is unavoidable. Since each group is different, it's difficult striking a balance between too much and too little shopping. We will provide information on shopping in your free time, as well keep non-shoppers in mind by scheduling shopping stops at day's end wherever possible.

### Manners and Customs in Japan

- Eating while you walk is considered sloppy. Instead, find an unobtrusive place to sit and enjoy your snack.
- Pointing is considered rude. Instead, use an open hand to make gestures.
- Blowing your nose in public can be considered rude. Japanese people often go into the bathroom to blow a stuffy nose.
- On a crowded subway or train, it is polite to

take off your backpack and hold it in your arms.

- Slurping noodles not only cools them down as you eat, but it indicates that the meal is delicious. So, slurp away, it's the polite thing to do!
- Taking off your shoes is common courtesy before entering many places. If the floor is raised at the doorway, it is an indicator that you should remove your shoes.
- Public baths or onsens do not allow tattooed guests or swimsuits.

### Do I need any vaccinations?

Make sure your routine vaccinations are up to date. Japan does not require any mandatory vaccinations.

### Travel Insurance

Please refer to [Terms and Conditions](#) for travel insurance suggestions.

Please note that E.Y.H.O. Tours is not responsible for covering the cost of any curtailment to the tour, missed transport arrangements, accommodation required, all expenses for testing and treatment or any other costs incurred by the traveller/s. Travellers MUST ensure that their travel insurance covers these costs.

### Great! How do I sign up?

We'd be delighted to welcome you on board! Please [contact](#) us.

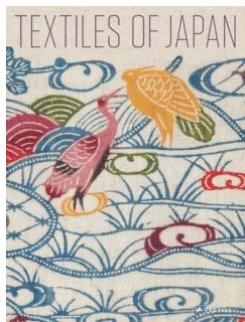
### Reading list follows.



### Suggested Reading List

In addition to [regular titles](#), the following relate generally to our tour focus.

#### A Textiles of Japan (engl.)

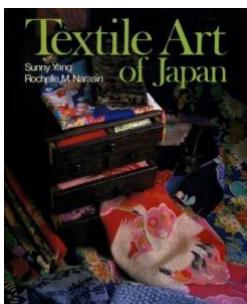


**By Thomas Murray and Virginia Soenkensen**

From rugged Japanese firemen's ceremonial robes and austere rural workwear to colorful, delicately patterned cotton kimonos, this lavishly illustrated volume

explores Japan's rich tradition of textiles.

#### Textile Art of Japan



**By Sunny Yang and Rochelle M. Narasin**

This richly illustrated volume, with over 200 color illustrations, is the perfect introduction to the subject of Japanese textiles. It includes

examples of modern Japanese fabrics made according to or by adapting traditional methods and shows them used in innovative ways: in quilts, screens, cushions, and hats.

#### Specifically to Kimono

A wide range of books and media, including scholarly studies, coffee-table volumes, and historical fiction, explore the history, artistry, and social significance of the Japanese kimono. These resources cover topics ranging from Edo-period traditions to modern fashion, including

the kimono's impact on global style, techniques for wearing and sewing, and its role in Japanese culture.

#### Key Books and Publications

- ***Kimono: A Modern History*** by Terry Satsuki Milhaupt: Explores the evolution of the kimono from an everyday garment in the 17th/18th centuries to its status as a high-fashion art object, highlighting the industry's modernization and its relationship with Western fashion.
- ***Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk (V&A Exhibition Book)*** edited by Anna Jackson: Features over 250 garments from the Victoria and Albert Museum and other collections, showcasing the kimono's influence on fashion designers like Issey Miyake and Alexander McQueen.
- ***The Social Life of Kimono: Japanese Fashion Past and Present*** by Sheila Cliffe: Examines the kimono's role on the street and catwalk, challenging the perception of it as a static, traditional costume by exploring it as a medium for self-expression.
- ***Kimono Style: Edo Traditions to Modern Design*** by Monika Bincsik, Karen Van Godtsenhoven, and Arai Masanao: Based on the John C. Weber collection, this book explores the dialogue between traditional Japanese textiles and Western couture.
- ***Kimono Now*** by Manami Okazaki: A guide to modern kimono culture, covering contemporary designers, street style, and the resurgence of the



- kimono in everyday fashion.
- ***Reading the Kimono in Twentieth-Century Japanese Literature and Film* by Michiko Suzuki:** Analyzes the representation of kimono in literary works and films, such as *The Makioka Sisters*.
- ***Japan Beyond the Kimono* by Jenny Hall:** Focuses on the Kyoto textile industry's innovation and its efforts to reinvent *wafuku* (traditional clothing) for the modern era.
- ***Japanese Kimono Designs* by Shôjirô Nomura and Tsutomu Ema:** A collection of vibrant designs from rare, original portfolios.
- ***The Book of Kimono: The Complete Guide to Style and Wear* by Norio Yamanaka:** Provides instructions on the proper way to wear and style kimono.

- **YouTube/Video Essays:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art and other cultural institutions offer lectures on the history of the kimono, including discussions on specific collections.

We hope you enjoy these titles! Let us know your opinions or your favourites.

## Media, Exhibitions, and Fiction

- ***The Woman in the White Kimono (Novel/Audiobook)*:** A story set in post-WWII Japan that explores the cultural impact of the American occupation on a personal level.
- ***Kimono Refashioned (Exhibition Catalogue)*:** Explores the impact of kimono on international fashion, with highlights from the Kyoto Costume Institute.
- ***Tattered Kimonos in Japan (Book/Memoir)*:** Explores the post-WWII generation's history and memories through the metaphor of the kimono.