

A Beginner's Guide to Visiting Japan
With Special Emphasis for Martial Artists

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Shodan Essay

Orlando Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate Do



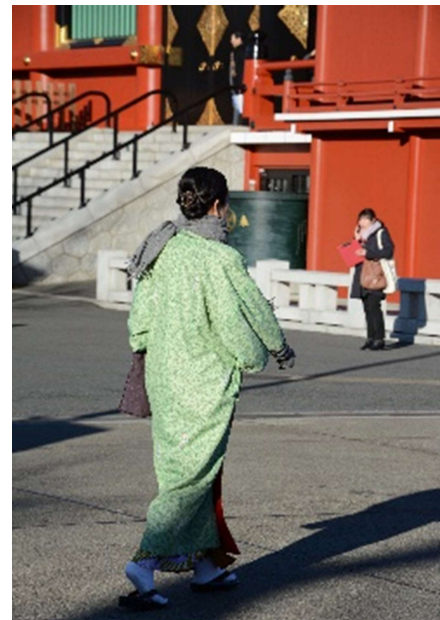
1 Sensō-ji Temple, Tokyo (金龍山浅草寺), Photo by Jeremy West

Introduction

Konnichiwa and welcome to Nippon (or Japan)! Japan is an archipelago of 6,852 islands. It is one of the first places in the northern hemisphere to see the new day, hence its name is the “Land of the Rising Sun.”

Depending on where you stop counting, Tokyo's metropolitan area is the largest in the world, encompassing more than 35 million people (Tokyo proper is the 6th largest city in the world). Japan has the world's highest life expectancy, which for women is 87, and men is 80 (compared to the USA, where the female life expectancy is 81, male is 76). There might be something to all of the rice and raw fish after all! Japan is also very safe. It is said that there have been tourists who have dropped hundreds of dollars' worth of cash, which was later turned into the police, who saved it until claimed by the tourist.

I have now visited more than 60 foreign countries. Many times, large cities just blend together. For instance, if you go to the main shopping street in Copenhagen, it will have mostly the same businesses and restaurants as the main shopping street in Barcelona. This is not true in Japan. Even in the largest metropolitan area in the world, there is still tradition!



The Japanese culture is not just one of resilience, but also of tradition meets progression. We are speaking of course, of the troubled 20th century. Japan has fared very well in its recovery. Something quite charming is their adherence to tradition. As a westerner, I really love watching businessmen say goodbye and bowing and raising in their pecking order. Naturally, the most senior will always be the first to come up, just as we do in the dojo, and if he decides to bow again, they begin the entire ritual again. Sometimes, it can take 3, 4, or 5 bows for them to all say goodbye!

As a martial artist, I found that my time spent in Karate and my previous martial arts to really help me in my experience in Japan. For one, the bowing comes very naturally. It may seem like a very small thing to us in the USA, but in Japan, to not bow in return is the equivalent of not shaking someone's hand. I also enjoyed watching shopkeepers and restaurant staff bow when they entered the main room from the kitchen, and bow when they left, just as we do on deck in the dojo. Of course we learn Onegaishimasu (or please), which we say multiple times in every class, as well as Arigato (thankyou). The numbers that we learn are also beneficial in everyday business such as ordering food or shopping and handling money.

Take time to really understand, and don't be in too much of a rush. Sometimes it's the simple things, such as noticing the hotel maids turn my shoes around every single day. Remember when traveling to a new place that their culture may not have developed in the same way as your own. You will notice instantly that the Japanese culture is much quieter than the American culture. Tokyo is very quiet as compared to New York. Especially on the metro (subway). When in doubt, always hang back a little and observe. You are on vacation, after all. You are their guest observing their culture. You can rest assured that the smallest of customs practiced in the dojo will translate to how things work in every business and every family in Japan. This definitely

made me thankful that I have had the dojo experience before setting foot into Japan, and made the cultural adaptation just a little bit easier.

Practicalities: Getting to Japan

Tokyo has two major airports serving a very large volume of passengers. Tokyo Narita handles approximately 42.6 million passengers on over 250,000 flights annually, compared to Haneda, which handles approximately 87 million passengers. However, Narita is the primary international airport. At the time of this writing, an average fare from Orlando (MCO) to Narita (NRT) is between \$750 and \$1200, round trip. The shortest travel time is about 17 hours Westbound. I would strongly encourage the reader to try one of the Asian carriers, as the level of luxury can be significantly higher on Japan Airlines, ANA, or one of the other national carriers based in Asia. Upon arrival into Narita airport, you will find Japan is very well-connected, including an express train to downtown Tokyo for 3000 Yen (approximately \$27.50). For the upcoming 2021 Olympics, Haneda will also be receiving a new, high-speed train that will take passengers to downtown in only 18 minutes.

Upon arrival into Japan, be sure to take out all of the cash you think you may need at the airport ATM's, as this can be an issue later (see "Money and ATM" section below). I would recommend booking a "Western" style hotel for the first day or two, in order to ease the culture shock. This would include major international brands, such as Marriott or Hilton. These hotels will have familiar options at the breakfast buffet, which will help you to adjust slowly to the culture and customs.

Money and ATM

Money is a tricky subject in Japan. At the time of this writing, \$1 USD is equal to 110 Japanese Yen. For simplicity's sake, when converting Yen to USD, simply move the decimal two places to the left for an approximate conversion. The smallest banknote is ¥1000, which is approximately \$10. All smaller denominations are coins.



Figure 2 - Japanese Yen, Courtesy of japan.stripes.com

The ¥100 is the most commonly needed coin, as you will need it for many public transportation vending machines. So, if you are handed these in change, you will want to try to keep some on hand. ATM's in Japan are not connected with all American banks. Upon arrival in Japan, you will want to take out as much cash as your bank allows at the airport ATM's, as these are the only ones that are guaranteed to work with your card. My first day in Tokyo was spent trying nearly every ATM in town to find one that would accept my cards. As a frequent traveler, I carry debit cards from 4 different mainstream American banks. To ease your pain, try to use credit card whenever possible, so that you can save the cash for places that will not accept your credit card. If you get into a situation where you need more cash, visit a Post Office, which should have an ATM that may work with your card (this was my solution!). Check with your credit cards before departing to be sure of the overseas transaction fees. Most charge 3%. In any normal situation, this is a small price to pay for the simplicity of using your favorite card. Most places will take Visa or MasterCard. American Express is a bit more difficult to use.

Public Transportation in Tokyo

Nothing says free-market like Tokyo's Metro system. Since its inception, the metro system in Tokyo has been a huge combination of separate companies. This has caused many a frustrated tourist over the years, including myself. Beginning a journey on the metro, I did what any unaware tourist would do, and looked at the metro map and connected the dots from where I was to where I wanted to be. This is relatively simple, as one can always trust the metro tracks to lead to the same place every time. Buses are a good bit more complicated in a place where one does not speak the language, as the routes may not always make sense, or be diverted due to road construction, etc. What is not self-evident is that the system is still a combination of different



Figure 3 - Japanese IC Cars, courtesy of japanvisitor.com

companies that all have a separate ticket and fare code. It's a bit maddening, because you may be at a station changing metro lines, exit a turnstile, and have to buy a new ticket. But relax, grasshopper, there is a solution. Tokyo Metro systems have incorporated to create a touch debit card and a day pass, which can be purchased and used on all lines. If you intend

to make a single journey or two in a day, my recommendation would be to take single lines and walk the extra distance. However, if you will be making more than 3 trips in a day, this pass can save you much frustration. At only ¥1600, it is a steal, and includes the metros, street cars, and Japan Rail within the Tokyo metropolitan area. Visit tokyometro.jp for more details. The touch debit card is another option, but could be slightly more costly. You can purchase a Suica (contactless touch) card from machines at Metro Stations. There is a small deposit to get the card, but that can be recuperated when you take your final journey and "cash in" your card. You will need internet access to download the app and activate your card (as well as link your credit

card number for payment). However, if you may only be taking a few metro rides a day, this may save some money. See <https://www.japanvisitor.com/japan-travel/prepaidcard> for more details. One final suggestion to make your life a bit easier, consider bringing a cell phone with an international plan, and use Google Maps to plan each journey.



Figure 4 - Shinkansen - Courtesy of asia.nikkei.com

Taking High Speed Trains

Once you have mastered the public transportation in Tokyo, you may want to avail yourself of the amazing network of High Speed Trains in a country that leads the world in speed and accessibility. These trains sail past the scenery at 200 miles per hour, and connect the major cities on the island of Honshu, the largest island of Japan. A couple of stops on this route you may want to consider would be sobering Hiroshima, or magical Kyoto. Individual tickets can be quite expensive, but are completely worth it for the seamless experience. Foreign visitors are eligible to buy a rail pass from Japan Rail directly, which will allow travel on the network for 7, 14, or 21 days. However, it is important to note that this must be purchased before you depart for Japan, then collected at one of the main train stations upon arrival into Japan. This is likely to change in the near future, as the system continues to evolve. As with things being so typically Japanese, you can count on the rail system to be clean and on time. There is even the option to check your large luggage from one hotel to the next, to avoid dealing with it on the train (luggage storage is quite limited in the compartments).

Japanese Restrooms



Figure 6 - Japanese Toilet Sign - Courtesy of flickr.com

If you already felt that your trip to Japan was an adventure, it has only started when you hit that first restroom after disembarking your aircraft. A picture speaks a thousand words, so let's take a look at some airport restrooms. When you enter, you may see what looks quite similar to any "Western" public restroom. However, you come around the bend and see these signs on the stall doors. If they are unoccupied, feel free to take a peek inside. The icon that looks like any other restroom will be what you are familiar with. The other icon denotes an "Eastern" toilet. These are found in most countries, starting with rural restrooms in Spain and France, and becoming more common when reaching Turkey and the Middle East. For what it's worth, they are considered more sanitary, as no part of your skin comes into contact with the toilet, but feel free to bypass that attraction and opt for the "Western" style. However, if you venture outside of the major cities, you may not be given a choice. I recommend you learn how to use them before your trip to avoid any embarrassment.



Figure 5 Japanese Toilet - Courtesy of matcha-jp.com

The hotel restrooms are where the adventure gets to be really exciting. People have posted



Figure 7- Japanese Hotel - courtesy of eldiario24.com

YouTube videos of their Japanese bathrooms. Everything from self-cleaning, to heated seats, to automatically opening, closing, back-lit bathroom disco parties are at your fingertips. All you have to do is learn how to use this remote that has mysterious icons that seemingly have no visible relation to the desired function. May the odds be ever in your favor.

Visiting the historic Dojos

One of my personal goals when visiting Japan is to visit Okinawa, the birthplace of Karate. As with visiting any other dojo in the world, including at home, it is important to know and follow the protocol for visiting another dojo. Many dojos in the United States break with tradition, for instance, belt colors and lettering on black belts, different



Figure 8 Nagamine Honbu Dojo - The Essence of Okinawan Karate-Do, Nagamine

Gi colors, etc. Luckily, since those training under the United States Matsubayashi-Ryu Federation have been trained in traditional karate, most of these items will be second nature. The first step is to seek permission and advice from your instructor, in Orlando this would be from Kyoshi. As a karateka who has spent time in Okinawa, he will be able to give guidance on this matter. You will find that in some schools, black belts will all receive gold lettering, or maybe even phonetic letters rather than the traditional Kanji. If you are female, you will be expected to have red lettering, male, gold lettering, and written in Kanji. After being sure your Gi and permissions are in order from your home dojo, you, or Kyoshi will want to contact Okinawa. Many of the historical dojos have websites that have information for international visitors. In this modern world, though karate is from an earlier time and earlier traditions, you can expect that this process is also evolving, but will ultimately be an agreement among the senseis. A great resource that I have discovered researching this topic is the Okinawa Traditional Karate Liaison Bureau. On their website, you can find information about, as well as contacts that can help you connect with a dojo of your preferred style in Okinawa.

New Things to Try

This section is seemingly limitless. I will try to cover a few of my favorites, but this is by no means an exhaustive list. I am attempting to cover some of the exciting experiences, with a couple of specific sights. As a firm believer that everyone should have their own experience, my goal is not to write a guide book for TripAdvisor, but to give you the tools to visit the places you would like, prepared with information to enjoy them to the fullest.



Figure 9 - Japanese Arcade – www.justgola.com

1. Visit an arcade. Going into downtown Tokyo, you will see that the arcade culture is alive and well. The Japanese love to game, and these arcades are around every bend. Most do not have any sort of admission or cover charge. You can simply wander inside. Imagine something akin to Vegas slot machines, with

even more movement and visual stimuli. The first visit can be overwhelming.

2. See a robot show. At the very least, look at one on YouTube. The amount of effort put into these is unreal. This can again be the same level of stimulus as the arcade games. Many of these are put on for the tourists, but still draw a local following.



Figure 10 - Robot Restaurant Show - hisgo.com

3. Visit a Temple. Be very careful of the etiquette in these situations. Much of the practices in the dojo transfer to visiting temples, but, when in doubt, observe and duplicate what you see the locals doing. Most will require you to leave your shoes at the door. Stand outside and out of the way for a few moments and observe where and how to place your shoes. Dress conservatively with long pants or skirts. Some places will provide sandals for you to wear throughout the complex. Be mindful of your camera, as you do not want to offend anyone by taking pictures at an inappropriate place. If you do not feel comfortable bowing upon entry to a temple, I would recommend keeping to the rear of the temple, and seiza (as we do at the beginning of every class). From this position, you can observe the room without offending anyone who is there to pay homage to the Buddha.

An interesting way to experience the temple is to visit an omikuji booth, which is somewhat like a fortune telling “chance game.” Pay the recommended donation, then take hold of the shaker, give it a good shake, and pull out one of the pieces of bamboo. It will have a number (most likely in Japanese numbers). Find the corresponding number drawer, and open it. Inside, you will find a small piece of paper with your fortune on it. If it is in English, be sure to read it. If it is a bad fortune, look around for paper tied to poles and strings, and tie it there, to leave it at the site of the temple. It is considered even worse to take it with you! Think of this as the possible origins of the fortune cookie (which, actually began in a Japanese restaurant in San Francisco, not China).



Figure 11 Omikuji Booth - Jeremy West



Figure 12 - Asakusa Market - Jeremy West

4. Visit a market. Actually, visit several markets. Some of the tourist markets are fantastic places to buy unique gifts and souvenirs. The market at Asakusa was a wonderful find in Tokyo. However, visiting a food market is an experience in itself. You may not be planning purchase anything if you

are not preparing your own meals, but it is very educational to look at the extreme variety of foods. One of my personal favorite finds was the Japanese Kit Kat bar. They have more than plain chocolate, with such flavors as Green Tea, Red Pepper, Pumpkin, and Wasabe.

5. Visit Tokyo Disneyland. I do not say this simply as a former Disney Cast Member, but as a professional tourist and tour guide. If you want to get to know a culture, it is fascinating not only to see how they live, but how they play. Furthermore, Tokyo Disney has many aspects of the other Disney



Figure 13 - Tokyo Disney Sea - Jeremy West

Parks, where they are making an effort to duplicate other nations. Getting to see the Japanese impression of the USA, Italy, and the Middle East will give you a lot of insight into their culture. You will also get to see the Kawaii, or art of “cuteness” up close. This is a two day experience, as you are not allowed to visit both parks in one day on the same ticket. Tokyo Disneyland, as

the first Disney Park outside of the United States, is similar to Disneyland or Magic Kingdom, but with a Japanese flair. You will see familiar rides and attractions, but on steroids. Rides such as Winnie the Pooh, which, are generally lack-luster for adults, have strobe lights, lasers, trackless movement, and more visual stimulation than the average Westerner can follow. The “Main Street, USA” is replaced with something much more Japanese, which is the “World Bazaar”, a glass-covered arcade. You will also see the Japanese customs in earnest, as they will queue up two-by-two in lines that look as if they were professionally organized. When a line extends beyond the queueing area, the line will continue to zig and zag left and right as if there are stanchions, though there are none. You can also try in excess of 16 different flavors of popcorn, themed to each area of the parks. Tokyo Disney Sea is the most impressive theme park I have ever seen. Their Venice section is actually bigger and more impressive than the real Venice. This park has no equivalent in any other Disney Park, and is well worth your day, with rides such as “Journey to the Center of the Earth” and “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.”

6. Try the food. How to eat is covered in the etiquette section, but you will want to get to know the cuisine. You may find your hotel breakfast to be very confusing, as the “Western” notion of breakfast is quite different than the Asian notion. A tip I often give to travelers these days, is to go online to Google Translate and type your dietary needs in very simple English, and have it translated to Japanese. Print multiple copies to carry with you to show your service staff. For example “I have a severe allergy to all shellfish.” This way, anything brought to you should be



Figure 14 - Shibuya - Jeremy West

safe for your consumption, even if it may be unfamiliar.

7. Visit the famous neighborhoods in Tokyo. Though Tokyo is known as a single large city, one must think of Tokyo as many cities that happen to

be close together. Each ward, or district, has its own culture, and can feel like a completely different city. Shibuya is famous for the busy, Times Square atmosphere. Going simply to people watch for a few moments is incredibly exciting. Imagine ordered chaos. Harujuku (within Shibuya) is very well-known as the rebellious teenager place. The term Harujuku girl refers to the Japanese teens who dress almost as dolls, with platinum-bleached hair, and a clothing style to match. These days, the style applies to boys as well as girls. You can experience this “Rebellious Japanese Teen” culture most on Sundays on



Figure 15 - Harujuku Girls - www.wired2theworld.com

Takeshita Street. Shinjuku Gardens is a peaceful escape from the world's largest city. At night, there are a collection of small bars in a ramshackle setting that give one a sense of Tokyo before



Figure 16 - Tsukiji Fish Market - Japan-guide.com

the high-rises. Ginza houses the imperial palace and all of the modern shopping. You will also find the must-visit Tsukiji fish market. Finally, Ueno is the cultural center of Tokyo. You will find the Kaneji Temple (a five story Pagoda), Tokyo Zoological Gardens, Concert Halls, and Ueno park,

boasting over a thousand cherry trees. Asakusa is known as the old port town. This area has great “mom and pop” ramen shops, as well as tourist markets and temples. The “new” Sky Tree overlooks this neighborhood. For a price, you can go up to the top for a great view of Tokyo.

Basic customs and Faux-pas

Take off your shoes!



Figure 17 - Japanese Etiquette - www.tofugu.com

For anyone that has grown up with Asian friends, you would be quite accustomed to having to jump over a mountain of shoes at the door. Particularly in Japan, you will often see that all temples, all homes, and even some hotels and restaurants will have you remove your shoes upon entering. Many of these places will have some sort of slip-on shoes that you will then put on to walk around. In homes,

people will leave their street shoes at the door, and don home shoes. When going to the restroom, you will swap your home shoes for bathroom shoes. As a good rule, black socks are great for Japan, as you will often be walking around without your shoes, even in outdoor environments at temples. If you wear sandals, it's a good idea to have a pair of socks in your day bag. It is considered rude to wear street shoes when they are not appropriate, and tourists are denied entry to temples if they refuse to remove their shoes.

Sitting

It's a good thing to practice your Seiza! Many times in a dojo, we say this phrase, but many do not know what it actually means. It's not "kneel," but "sit down." The difference is, that most people in Japan do sit this way at meals or in temples. Traditional restaurants, especially outside Tokyo will have low tables, and one must sit on the floor for the meal. One can either take the

“seiza” position used in the dojo, or women may put their legs to the side. Men may sit cross-legged (“criss cross apple sauce”), but you must keep the bottom of your feet towards you, as it is rude to show the bottoms of your feet.

Paying for food and services

Money is discussed in another section of this guide, but it is important to address the customs surrounding it. Even how one pays for items is surrounded by formality. In Japan, credit cards are not often used, but when they are, most shops will have a tray or dish in which you lay your card when given the total. Vendors will then take the card, process the transaction and return the card to the tray. The same is true of cash. If a vendor does not have the tray, it is proper to hand them the credit card upright with both hands, and it will be returned to you the same way.



Shopping

In my years spent guiding, people have often complained that they felt Japanese were paranoid of theft. This is because the practice is to seal shopping bags at the cash register. It is simply a custom, and not meant to insult. It is considered inappropriate to open a shopping bag while still in a store and put on a hat or shirt that you just purchased.

Eating out

Chopsticks should come with a training guide. If you are not practiced before arriving in Japan, you will be very hungry. I would recommend that you get some Asian food and practice in the privacy of your own home. Nicer restaurants will



18Eating Out - Photo by Jeremy West

have nicer chopsticks. This makes the use much easier. Less formal places will often have your typical, disposable chopsticks. One must be very careful when using these, as they may splinter. When you first open your chopsticks, it is considered inappropriate to brush your chopsticks together to remove the splinters (however, sometimes it's necessary... do this under the table and discretely. All the locals do it. Just don't make a scene like a sitcom in a Chinese restaurant by flourishing them above the table as you rub them together!)

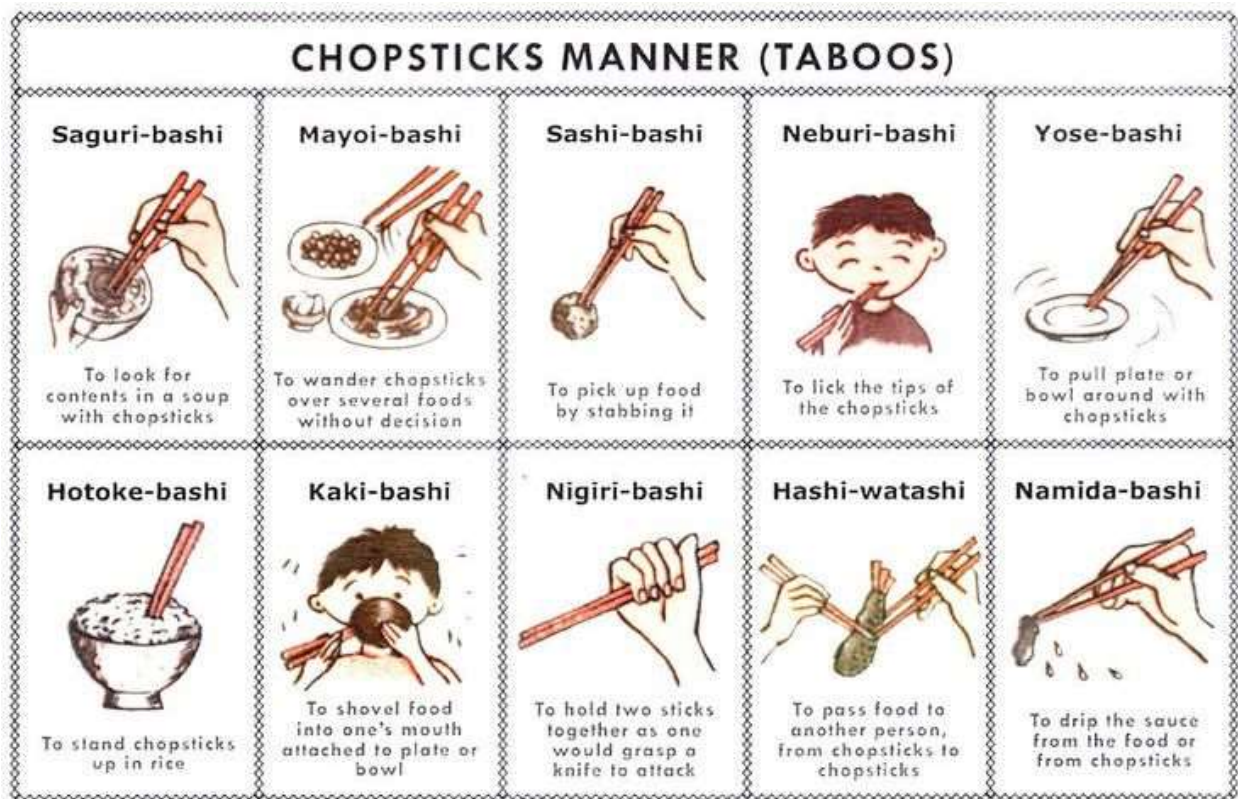
A couple more notes on chopsticks: Using them to pass food across from chopstick to chopstick is a big faux-pas. Any time you pass food, you should set an item on a plate with your chopsticks for the other person to then pick up. Do not stab them into your rice and leave them sticking out. Nice restaurants will have a place for you to lay your chopsticks, or you may lay them across your bowl. If using the disposable ones, the proper etiquette is to fold the paper wrapper into a triangle on which to rest your chopsticks.

Do not waste food. This is a difficult challenge for a tourist, because there are many items that are unique and unidentifiable to a Westerner. The Japanese hate to waste, and leaving food on your plate is considered an insult, not only to the host of your meal, but also the farmers who cultivated the food and the animals who gave their lives for your entrée.

On another note, Japanese will not walk and eat, as we so often do in the USA. They will generally carry their food to the place they plan to eat, and eat in one place. Food is not allowed on public transportation.

Do not fill your own glass. Historically, men would not fill glasses at all, as it was left to the women to do. However, in modern Japan, men may be seen pouring tea or Saké for one another. Protocol dictates that you should fill the glasses for the others at the table. They will then return the favor and fill your glass.

For more Chopsticks Taboos, see below:



Public Places and Public Transportation

Americans will find Japan shockingly quiet. The Japanese do not tend to speak loudly or yell. It is nearly silent on subway trains. It is best to do as the Japanese do. When taking public transportation, you should observe the behavior of those around you, and mimic. The first time I took a subway in Japan, I was doing my normal, everyday American thing and pacing along the platform. After a few moments, I noticed that the Japanese were in two single file rows at specific points on the platform (there are lines painted on the ground). When the train arrived, they waited for the people to exit the train, then boarded in the order they arrived. No pushing, no shoving, no free-for-all. Compare the way the locals wait for the train in Tokyo (left) vs. New York (right).



Once on the train, always give up your seat for someone older than you, as well as disabled or pregnant women. Many women do not show very much when they are pregnant, so they will wear a pink tag that indicates their right to sit on the trains. When disembarking, say “sumimasen” to break through the crowd.



19 Pregnancy Tag - Japan

Japanese Language

Japanese culture is very tied to etiquette and politeness. There is a formality in human interaction that is not superseded in nearly any other country in the world. Though younger Japanese will often know a certain amount of English, they are often afraid to speak it. This is simply because their culture is formal to such an extent, that they would be embarrassed to make mistakes. As a traveler in Japan (as with any foreign country), a few phrases will show a gesture of good-will, and will also assure the person you are interacting with that they know more English than you know Japanese. As a visitor, it is not expected that you know all of the intricacies of human interaction, but we can take a certain amount of solace, knowing that a traditional Martial Arts dojo instills these customs in the students. For instance, in any greeting, please, or thankyou situation, one should always bow their head slightly to the other person. If the other person appears to be older, or in a business situation, higher within the company or higher ranking, try to keep your head bowed slightly longer than that person. Think of bowing at the beginning of a karate class, where the highest ranking sensei is the first to come up from a bow or seiza.

The below phrases are organized first by the most important phrases, then by situation.

Etiquette and politeness

Hello.	Konnichiwa (kon-nee-chee-WAH)
Good morning	Ohayou gozaimasu (o-HAI-yo go-zai-MASS)
Excuse me	Sumimasen (suh-MEE-mah-sen)
Please. (request)	Onegai shimasu

Thank you.	(oh-neh-gigh shee-moss) Arigato. (ah-ree-GAH-toh)
Thank you very much	Dōmo arigatō [gozaimas]. (doh-moh ah-ree-GAH-toh [go-zai-mas])
Yes.	Hai. (HIGH)
No.	lie. (EE-eh)

Greetings

How are you?	O-genki desu ka? (oh-GEN-kee dess-KAH?)
Fine, thank you.	Genki desu. (GEN-kee dess)
What is your name?	O-namae wa nan desu ka? (oh-NAH-mah-eh wah NAHN dess-KAH?)
My name is ____ .	Watashi no namae wa ____ desu. (wah-TAH-shee no nah-mah-eh wa ____ dess)
Nice to meet you.	Hajimemashite (hah-jee-meh-MOSH-teh)
Please. (offer)	Dozo (DOH-zo)
You're welcome.	Dou itashi mashite (doh EE-tah-shee mosh-teh)
Good afternoon	Konnichiwa (kon-nee-chee-WAH)
Good evening	Konbanwa (Kon-ban-WAH)
Good bye	Sayounara (Sai-YO-nah-rah)

Shopping

How much is this?	Kore wa ikura desuka? (Koh-ray WA Ih-koo-rah dess KAH?)
This one, please	Kore o kudasai (Koh-ray o Koo-dah-sai)
Expensive / Cheap	Takai / Yasui (Tak-AY/ yass-WEE)
Beautiful	Utsukushī (OO-tsu-kush-EE)

Restaurant

Can I have the menu?	Menu wa arimasuka? (Menu WA ah-ree-mass-KAH?)
I am hungry	Onaka ga sukimashita (Oh-nah-kah GA soo-KEE-mash-tah).
What is this?	Kore wa nan desu ka? (Ko-ray wa nan dess KAH?)
Delicious	Oishii desu (Oi-SHEE dess)
Bill, please	Okaikei o onegai shimasu (Oh-kai-kay o on-ee-guy-shee-mass)
Where is....(toilet)?	(Toy-ray Wa)Doko desu ka? (Toy-ray WA)... (doh-koh dess KAH?)

Conclusion

I hope that you have found this introduction to Japan helpful and informative. As a guide, I take great pride in helping to bridge the gap between cultures. As much of this introduction is self-generated, I do have to offer the disclaimer that my experiences may not necessarily match everyone else's. Also, the world is a constantly changing place, and many of the experiences I had in Japan 5 years ago will undoubtedly change with the times. Arigato Gozaimasu, thanks for reading!

Consulted Works

The majority of this essay is self-generated. The below works were consulted for clarification and additional information.

The Illustrated Guide to Japan “Culture and Tradition,” © Copyright 2002 JTB Publishing

www.visitjapan.com

www.karatebyjesse.com/train-karate-okinawa-guide/

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