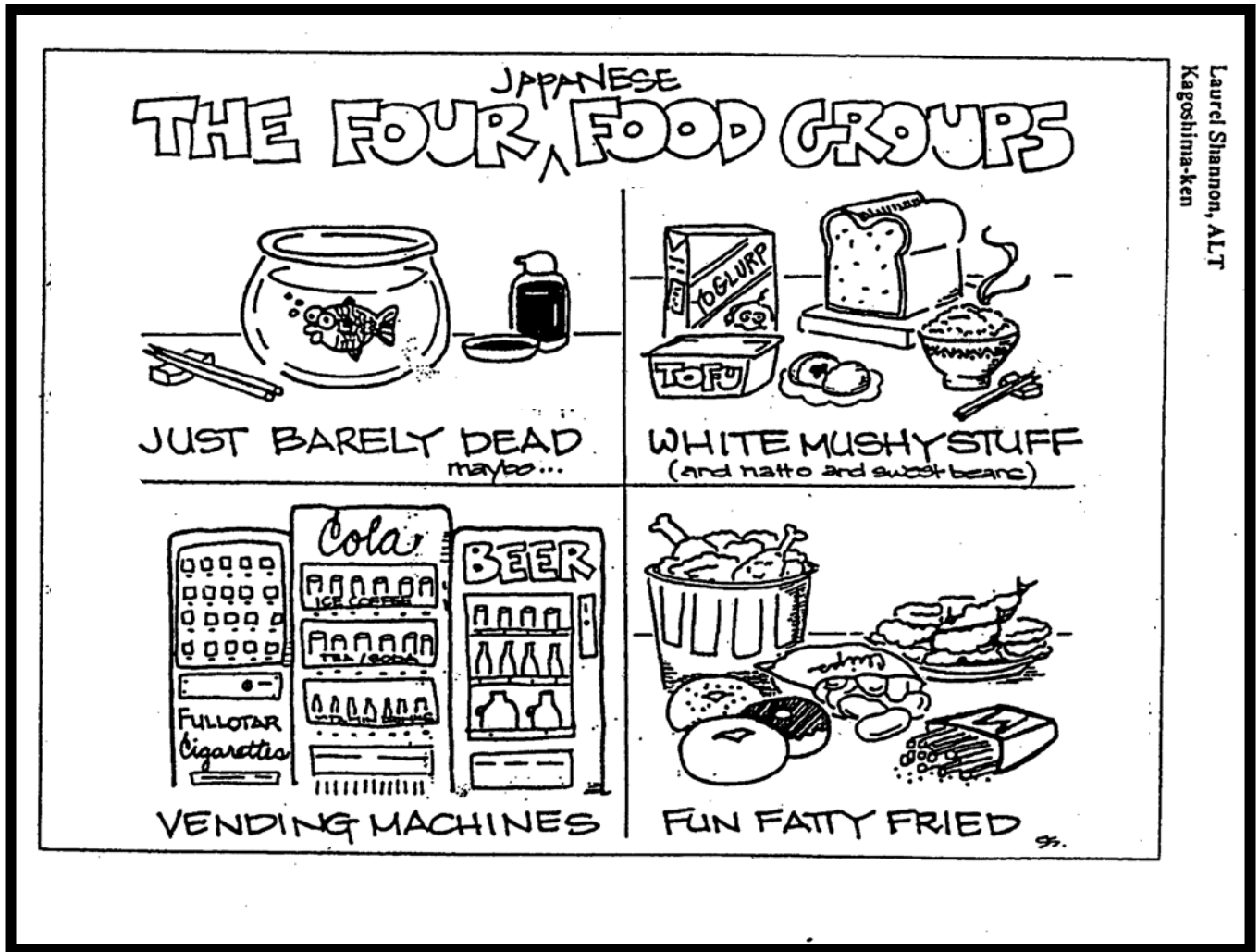


The Unofficial JET Survival Handbook for 2006

(As compiled and reported by the Southeast Chapter of the JET Alumni Association)



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Alphabet Soup

AJET Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching Program participants. Joining is highly advisable, but optional. www.ajet.net

ALT Assistant Language Teacher. An umbrella name that includes AETs (Assistant English Teachers), AFTs (Assistant French Teachers), AGTs (Assistant German Teachers), etc.

CIR Coordinator for International Relations. Those JETs engaged in international activities. These participants are placed in offices of local governments or related organizations such as international associations, universities, convention bureaus and so on. CIRs rarely work in schools, but occasionally they may be called to teach or present in schools.

CLAIR Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. CLAIR is the governing body that oversees the JET Program. CLAIR is also a sponsor of the JET Alumni Association.

ESID Each Situation is Different. JETs are placed throughout Japan in a variety of settings (rural, urban, junior high school teacher, high school teacher, etc.) so that while it is possible to provide some sense of what life is like for an individual JET, these experiences may not be transferable.

JET Japan Exchange and Teaching (Program). May also be used to refer to a participant of the JET Program.

JETAA Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association. We hope you'll be a member post-JET. The International website is <http://jetalumni.org> and our chapter is www.jetaase.org

SEA Sports Exchange Advisor. These JETs promote international exchange through assistance in sports training and the planning sports related projects.

SIG Special Interest Group. A smaller organization within AJET targeted to a specific group. For example: are geared towards women, gays and lesbians, JETs of Asian-/ African-/ Latin-American decent, and religious groups.

Departure Sequence: What to Expect When You First Arrive in Japan

Arrival in Tokyo: July 31

When you arrive at Narita International Airport, you will be greeted in the arrival lobby by CLAIR staff, Tokyo Orientation Assistants (current JET participants) and travel agent representatives. All arrival staff will be wearing JET t-shirts of the same color, and should be very easy to spot. You will be directed to a shipping area where luggage can be forwarded to your Contracting Organization. You may take one large piece of luggage (suitcase or rucksack) and one hand-held carry-on with you to the hotel for Tokyo Orientation. Any other luggage must be forwarded to the Contracting Organization.

If you have more than one piece of luggage, and the belongings you need for orientation are divided among your bags, you will be required to repack on the spot. Please keep this in mind when packing for departure. After the baggage is shipped, you will travel by chartered bus to the arranged hotels in Tokyo. All participants must travel on the arranged buses as names are recorded and essential information is provided by Tokyo Orientation assistants during the bus ride. Participants are NOT permitted to arrange alternate transportation. If you have people you would like to meet while in Tokyo, ask them to meet you at your hotel, NOT at the airport.

Post Arrival Orientation in Tokyo: July 31-August 2

The Post-Arrival Orientation will be held in Tokyo. ***Attendance at the orientation is mandatory.*** The purpose of the Post-Arrival Orientation in Tokyo is to provide a basic introduction to life on the JET Program. The Orientation includes:

1. An introduction to the significance of the JET Program, presented by Japanese government officials.
2. An introduction to the positions and duties of JETs, presented by officials from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts, Telecommunications, and CLAIR.

3. Workshops including the job skills needed by JETs to fulfill their positions, conducted by Tokyo Orientation Assistants, CLAIR, and selected professionals.
4. Workshops and speeches introducing skills useful for daily life of JETs in Japan, conducted by Orientation Assistants, CLAIR Program Coordinators, and selected professionals.
5. A forum to meet other JETs, supervisors, and Tokyo Orientation Assistants representing their host prefectures where JETs can have specific questions about their locations, positions, and responsibilities answered.
6. An opportunity for JETs to make physical (jet lag), mental and cultural adjustments before setting out for their assigned host prefectures and contracting organizations.

Suggested Pre-Departure Preparations

In the weeks ahead you'll have lots to do to prepare for your upcoming year(s) in Japan on the JET program. This section has a list of things to prepare for. While we have tried to think of everything, we cannot certify this list as complete.

Packing for One Year in Two Suitcases

While packing, please remember that you are limited to ONE carry-on and two suitcases. Remember that one suitcase will be sent directly to your host institution upon arrival at Narita Airport in Tokyo. It is suggested that you pack necessary items in your carry-on should your bags become lost.

- ◆ Protect clothes from leaks by placing toiletries in a plastic bag
- ◆ Stuff socks and rolled-up belts into shoes to save space
- ◆ Most clothes can be rolled to save space. Start with items like jeans & put them in at the sides of the suitcase and then fill the inside with smaller clothes such as T-shirts. Use space-saver bags (found at Linens and Things, Target, The Container Store, etc.) for ultimate results!
- ◆ Pack a box of winter clothes and ship them by the cheapest way possible just before you leave in July/August. It may take a few months, but will allow for more room in your suitcase for warm-weather clothes, gifts, your CDs, your pictures, and other items you might need more immediately in Japan. For the sake of comparison, a 20 pound box shipped by the U.S. Postal Service to Japan using Economy (Surface) Post costs \$40.
- ◆ In some prefectures, AJET plans a hiking trip to Mt. Fuji for newly arrived JETs in their 'ken'. If you want to participate in this hike, remember that the peak of Mt. Fuji is very cold, necessitating thermal wear. I've attempted the hike twice, and though we emphasize bringing thermal hiking wear, some people show up with shorts and t-shirt. (I wore thermal leggings, ski pants, and many layers on top. Bring a thermal hat, hiking socks and shoes. These items can be purchased in Japan if you are of average size by Japanese standards. If not, bring your own!) Without adequate clothing, people suffer the risk of hypothermia when they reach the peak. Please pack appropriately if you plan to hike Mt. Fuji.

Find someone to REALLY send you the things you need.

Everyone of course offered lots and lots of help, offering to send me anything I wanted or needed, at the drop of a hat. Well, it sure was a nice thought, BUT... it didn't happen. Find one person—not necessarily a family member—to really help you out. I gave a friend my credit card to send me stuff every month, and I treated him to dinner every time via my card.

Buy blank VHS tapes/DVDs and ask a few well-chosen people to record your favorite TV shows.

Prepare pre-addressed bubble envelopes (it's quite the tease to get a damaged tape in the mail!) and give a friend or family member money for postage. The easier it is for those sending you stuff the more likely it is that you will receive it. I found that 10 tapes worked well.

Make business cards with your contact information in Japan before you go; pass them out.

You can find a number of on-line companies that provide cards for free if you can tolerate their advertising printed on the reverse. This will make it easier for your friends to keep in touch.

Popular sites like *vistaprint.com* and *clubflyers.com* make business cards offer cards for about \$40/500 cards.

Legal/Financial Obligations to Take Care of Before you Leave

- ◆ Power of Attorney
- ◆ Payment of bills
- ◆ W2 forms
- ◆ Creation of a will
- ◆ Magazine subscriptions canceled or diverted
- ◆ Mail order catalogs canceled or diverted
- ◆ Set-up Online payment for student loans

Important documents and \$\$\$

- ◆ \$2500 - \$3000 (ATM transactions provide the best exchange rate, but traveler's checks also work well). ATMs are typically only found in major Japanese cities like Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Nagoya. If you are traveling to the countryside, take advantage of your Tokyo hotel's exchange service. Typically, the service representative speaks English, it's convenient, and it's trustworthy. I brought traveler's checks and changed them at my hotel during the Post-Arrival orientation.
- ◆ A passport (preferably your own)
- ◆ A photo copy of passport (one for home too)
- ◆ Your plane ticket, it will arrive before your departure date
- ◆ Contract from host institution, if received
- ◆ State Driver's License
- ◆ International Driver's License (AAA is the only recommended place to obtain your international driver's license. It is only valid for one year in Japan, even if you can renew the International License, the Japanese

government will not recognize it as valid if your visa states you've been in Japan for more than 1 year. After your first year, you will need to get a Japanese Driver's License.)

- ◆ International Youth Hostel Card (available at most travel agencies or online at <http://www.hihostels.com/>)
- ◆ List of emergency phone numbers

Hygiene

While a full complement of cosmetics and hygiene products are generally available in Japan, you may not be able to get your favorite brand. If you have a strong connection to your deodorant or have special needs, pack extra or plan to have someone send you care packages.

- ◆ Cosmetics – Large department stores will carry favorite brands such as Clinique, MAC, etc.
- ◆ Deodorant – Japanese deodorant only comes in spray. Bring enough deodorant to last you a while, and then have someone send you more in a care package.
- ◆ Condoms – especially if you need XLs, they're also available online at *condomania.com*; bring contraceptives with you because you may not know how to get them easily in Japan... or you can translate your needs into Japanese and practice a lot before you leave for Japan.
- ◆ Products for African-American hair
- ◆ Tampons or sanitary napkins – You can find a wide selection of feminine hygiene products, although you will not be able to find reusable pads (for those of us who are enviro-friendly.) They are relatively cheap, but bring some to tide you over until you get used to brands in Japan.
- ◆ Toothpaste& toothbrush – The Japanese are scrupulous when it comes to dental hygiene (because their dentists do not use numbing agents when drilling...) You can find great toothpastes and brushes, but bring your own if you don't want to venture into new territory.

Clothing

What to wear to work varies as widely as types of sushi in Japan! The best advice is to dress conservatively and more formally for the first week of work. During this time, observe what your peers (in age, gender, and position) are wearing, and adopt what you wear accordingly.

Another concern is that the Japanese are a relatively petite people with small feet, so it may not be easy to shop locally. Check out the Links section for recommended on-line catalogs

that ship to Japan.

- ◆ men: jacket, slacks, shirts, polo shirts, tie, black tie; white tie (For special occasions such as graduation or funerals, you will need a dark suit (preferably black). The black tie and white tie is a must, though you can purchase these ties in Japan.)
- ◆ women: dresses, skirts (no mini skirts), suits, blouses, sweater sets, scarves, hosiery – stay away from tank tops as they are not appropriate, or anything that may show your mid-rift if you raise your arms. (For special occasions, be sure you have a dark colored suit (preferably black). This you can wear to graduations, weddings, or funerals.)
- ◆ sportswear and casual school clothes – like jogging pantsuit sets. Sweats are commonly not appropriate for school but you can bring some to wear in your personal time.
- ◆ dress shoes, polish and laces – ladies, stay away from heels that are too high.
- ◆ school shoes (slip-on indoor school shoes + indoor/outdoor sports shoes) They can be any style, just may have never touched the ground outside.
- ◆ walking/hiking shoes, thick socks for hiking
- ◆ underwear, bras (your size and style may not be available in stores or boutiques)
- ◆ a rain jacket, poncho, galoshes – they have umbrellas in Japan
- ◆ union suit or long johns for winter months. Japan gets mighty chilly in the winter due to a combination of the wintry climate and lack of insulation in homes.

Medication

- ◆ Birth control pills
- ◆ Prescriptions (must have YOUR name on label and you must bring a notice from your doctor verifying your prescription – see JET Handbook)
- ◆ Vitamins or herbal supplements
- ◆ Doctor’s explanation for long term drugs (more than month)

Teaching Materials

- ◆ Contact your local/state chamber of commerce or tourism bureau for videos and other materials about your

hometown.

- ◆ Self introduction materials (maps, brochures, pictures of family & home)
- ◆ Holiday items e.g.; ornaments, cards
- ◆ Video of family/house/town if available
- ◆ Current American music
- ◆ Prizes for students (stickers, erasers, stamps, coins, flag pins – best ordered in US as shipping overseas can be tremendously high, picture postcards, etc.)
- ◆ Learn about your own junior/senior high schools

Other

- ◆ English/Japanese dictionary
- ◆ English/English dictionary
- ◆ English grammar books (like Harbrace)
- ◆ Beginner's Japanese Study Book
- ◆ Japanese guide books
- ◆ Camera
- ◆ Laptop with English OS (you can buy laptops in Japan but they usually come with a Japanese OS. Schools do not have computers for your personal use, but each teacher's desk has a LAN connection to the Internet. Bring your own laptop=having connectivity to the Internet at home and work!)

Prescription Medication Info from the JET Office

The Japanese Customs department places strict restrictions on the amounts and types of medications and toiletries that can be brought into or sent to Japan. If you are planning to bring a supply of such products with you when you come, or are considering having them sent to you while you are in Japan, please read the following very carefully.

Over-the Counter Medications: (Customs Limit: 2 month's supply only)

- ◆ Most things are available (certainly in the larger cities), though often at a higher price than at home. You only need to bring brand items to which you are especially attached.
- ◆ Please be aware of Japanese customs restrictions. Medicines that are sold over the counter in your home country are illegal in Japan if they contain stimulants (i.e. medicines containing **Pseudophedrine** such as **Actifed**, **Sudafed** and **Vicks** inhaler). **Codeine** is also illegal. Check the contents of cold, allergy, sinus, and pain medications extra carefully.
- ◆ Medications/antiperspirants, sanitary products, dental products such as fluoride toothpaste and dental floss, etc. are restricted to 24 pieces per product.

Prescription Medications: (Customs Limit: 1 month supply only)

- ◆ Bring unopened in original packaging.
- ◆ Bring a copy of the prescription.
- ◆ Bring a letter from your doctor stating the purpose of the drugs.
- ◆ In principle, you can bring up to a month's supply. If you bring more, the medicine may be seized and you could be charged with intent to sell illegal substances. Once your supply has run out, take the prescription to a doctor in Japan. Comparable medication is available.
- ◆ Some associations such as the Epileptic Association of America have listings of comparable medications in Japan and medications that are legal for import.
- ◆ Bring extra copies of your prescription along with the medications' generic names. Even though foreign prescriptions cannot be filled, you will need to show them to your new doctor, so that he may help you find a comparable medication.
- ◆ Some prescription medications that are legal in your country may be illegal for import to Japan. In this case, "importing" means to receive the medication while in

Japan. Therefore, you can bring your own one-month supply with you, but cannot have more sent over later. If found, the medication will be confiscated and destroyed. Please check with Japanese customs to find out whether your medication is legal for import.

Vitamins (Customs Limit: 4 months' supply only)	Japanese brands tend to be expensive, and often only basic vitamins/multivitamins are available. If there is a brand or particular vitamin/mineral supplement that you insist on taking, you should bring a 4 month supply with you and then have another 4 month supply sent when required.
Medical Devices (Customs Limit: 1 set only)	Items such as electric massagers, etc. that are needed for a particular condition and are for home use only.
Cosmetics (Customs Limit: 24 pieces per product only)	Japanese cosmetics tend to be expensive and often suited to Asian skin and hair. If you have a particular brand or product to which you are attached, you may wish to bring a small amount to tide you over until you can find a suitable replacement.
Sending Medications	The same rules apply to medications that are sent to JETs residing in Japan. You may have medications sent, if it is within the limited amount (and a prescription is included with prescription medication). If you want to import more than the customs amount, you must apply for a certificate, providing documents 1-3 listed below, as well as an invoice/receipt, plus an Air Way Bill or notice from Japanese customs. If the certificate is granted, it should be sent with the medication to Japan. Please remember that some medications are prohibited from import, and will be destroyed by customs. Likewise, if you import more than the allowed limit, the remaining amount will be confiscated and destroyed.

NOTE: SHOULD YOU NEED TO BRING ANY MEDICATION IN EXCESS OF THE AMOUNTS STATED ABOVE, YOU WILL NEED TO APPLY DIRECTLY TO THE JAPANESE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LABOR, AND WELFARE.

- ◆ Before bringing extra quantities of medications, you must first receive permission from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in the form of a "Yakkan Shomei" certificate.
- ◆ In order to apply, you will need the following documents (available from the Consulate)
 1. 2 signed copies of the Application form (Import of Medication)
 2. 1 signed copy of the Declaration
 3. Explanation of products

4. Prescription for your medicine

- ◆ In addition to the above, JETs wishing to bring the medication to Japan with them will need some kind of document indicating the date of arrival in Japan. If this is necessary, please contact the Consulate and we will provide you with a letter stating the date you will arrive in Japan.
- ◆ If there is any inconsistency in the application form, there is the possibility that the application will be rejected. Therefore, please submit the application forms as clearly as possible.
- ◆ Please bear in mind that there is a chance that your application may be denied. Be sure to have all your application paperwork in order, and be prepared to make alternative arrangements (such as finding a comparable medicine in Japan), should your application be denied.
- ◆ Please submit your application as soon as possible directly to the Kantou-Shinetsu Regional Bureau of Health and Welfare:

Section of Medicinal Inspection and Guidance
Kantou-Shinetsu Regional Bureau of Health and Welfare
Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
Saitama-shintoshin-Godochosa 1, 7th Floor, 1-1 shintoshin
Chuo-ku, Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture, JAPAN 330-9713
Tel: +81-48-740-0800 Fax: +81-48-601-1336

So, you're going to Japan...Nihongo ga wakarimasuka?!

Vowel sounds in Japanese:

"A" sound as in father, Austria, coffee

"I" sound as in peace, cheese, Tahiti

"U" sound as food, blue, Yahoo!

"E" sound as in pet, mental or polenta

"O" sound as in ocean, Arizona

Greetings:

Hajimemashite. It is nice to meet you.

Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu. Please treat me well.

Ohayo Gozaimasu. Good Morning. (this can be shortened to "Ohayo!" or, for young male teachers, something like "oh'ss!" but be careful not to get too casual too quickly. Make sure to say this greeting every morning at your school or contracting organization.)

Konnichiwa. Hello. (not used with the same frequency that hello is used in English)

Konbanwa. Good Evening. (wait until it is well on its way to darkness before you use this one)

Sayonara. Good-bye. (not used as often as in English--has a connotation of "until we meet again", i.e., a significant parting)

Ja, ne. or Mata ne. Bye-bye!! See you later./ Bye. (very casual and used a lot among friends)

Moshi, moshi. Hello. (for use on the telephone ONLY)

Oyasumi nasai. Good night. (used just like in English either as good-bye at the end of the evening or as just plain old good night)

Introducing yourself:

Master this self-introduction and you'll make a very favorable impression. Begin by bowing deeply, with your eyes downcast. Do not make too much eye contact.

Minasan, hajimemashite. It is nice to meet all of you.

Watashi wa (name) desu. I am (name).

Amerika no (state) kara kimashita. I am from (state) in the USA.

Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu." Please treat me well.

And if you are feeling adventurous, add the following to your self-intro right before the “dozo”:
“Kono ichi nenkan o tanoshimi ni shite imasu.” I am looking forward to the coming year.

Useful set phrases in Japanese: (you'll use and hear them countless times a day!)

(Dozo yoroshiku) onegaishimasu. Literally, "I am humbling myself to seek your/ a favor".

Many feel that no one set phrase in Japanese used more than this one. It conveys the underlying cultural ideals of Japan more than any other. Often when we ask someone to help us in English, we finish with “Thanks for taking care of this for me.” In Japanese, "thanks!" will be replaced with an “onegaishimasu” phrased in varying levels of politeness and respect. You'll always be seeking the favor of someone, from submitting your holiday request to asking for help at the photocopier.

Daijobu desu. Literally, "it's alright." This is a great one. It can be used to describe how you relate to anything from raw fish to Japanese squat toilets! It is used in the same multitude of ways that it is used in English.

Domo arigato gozaimasu./ Domo arigato./ Domo. Domo, domo. "Thank you." Like English, gratitude can be expressed in varying degrees-you'll just have to pay attention to the usages of these words. Arigato gozaimasu is usually sufficient.

Ganbatte kudasai! It is translated into English as "good luck" but I think the literal translation conveys its meaning much more clearly-"please persevere, keep you chin up, try your best". There is definitely more pressure on you when you are asked to ganbatte kudasai. You will be asked or told to ganbatte especially when you first get to Japan and to your new school. The appropriate response is not “thank you” (as it would be in response to good luck) but...

Hai, ganbarimasu! More casually, **ganbaro!** "Yes, I will do my best!" That's all they can ask of you, right? If you want to really impress your coworkers, the principal, your supervisor, etc., you can say the following: “Isshokenmei ganbaritaito omoimasu.” (I want to do my absolute best).

Gochisosama deshita. Literally, "it was a wonderful feast." Always use this after you finish a meal (even if you aren't a big fan of raw sea cucumber!)

Iie, kekko desu. Just in case you are not **daijobu** with the raw fish and pickled plums, wave your hand gracefully in front of your face and say a very polite “no thank you”, "iie, kekko desu." For the sake of adventures in international living, use this only after you have given everything and everyone a fair shake, the old "college try." That is the key to success, is it not?

Itadakimasu. Literally, "I humbly accept this." Most often used like "Bon Appetit" before you begin eating (but can also be used instead of/in addition to thank you when someone gives you a present,

Itte irrashai! Literally, "please go and come back" Shopkeepers most frequently use this phrase.

Itte kimasu! Literally, "I am going and coming back." It is used when you leave the house or go to run an errand to a place like the post office from the school. Again, you don't use sayonara in this case-it's too final. Put everyone at ease and say "itte kimasu!" instead.

Ki o tsukete kudasai. Basically, "take care of yourself/be careful." It is used when parting, much in the same way it is used in English but has the connotation that you need to pay attention and avoid danger/trouble.

Odaiji ni. "Get well/ please take care of yourself." It is used when someone is sick.

Ojama shimasu. Literally, "I am intruding". Used when entering someone's home as you take off your shoes and step up into the home, acknowledging that you may have interrupted the family/ hostess in some way by visiting- a formality.

Okaeri nasai! Basically, "welcome home". You can figure out when to say this one, can't you?

The following two are very important...

Osaki ni shitsurei shimasu. *Basically, "I am leaving before you, forgive me for being rude." You will use this on your way out the door at the end of the day, most likely in conjunction with the phrase above, otsukaresama deshita because more than likely, you will leave school before your fellow teachers. "Osaki ni shitsurei shimasu. Otsukaresama deshita. (reversible)" I am sorry for being rude and leaving before you. Thanks for all of your hard work today." Osaki ni by itself can be used anytime you start to do something before someone else, such as begin to eat, go to bed, basically, or for when you think you might be inconveniencing someone else. Also, shitsurei shimasu is often used as the final thing you say as you get off of the telephone with someone, i.e., a very polite good-bye.*

Otsukaresama deshita. *Thank you for your hard work. This is often used instead of good-bye. When you leave your school at the end of the day, you will want to make sure that you say this to your coworkers as a way to acknowledge that you have all completed a long day at work. Another usage is similar to hello. When you pass a fellow teacher in the hall you may very well use otsukaresama (by itself) instead of konnichiwa as a greeting to acknowledge the presence of the person you are passing.*

Sumimasen. It can be used in three different ways: excuse me, thank you, and I am sorry. You may be familiar with the "excuse me" version of this word but you may not know the apologetic or gratitude forms of the word. Many are surprised when to find it used instead of "thank you" during those times when someone would bring me something like a cup of tea.

Tadaima! Basically, "I'm home!" Used in family situations, perhaps for home stays.

Some Useful Expressions for Vegetarians:

Watashi wa niku o tabemasen – I do not eat meat.

Watashi wa sakana igai ni niku o tabemasen – Except for fish, I do not eat meat.

Watashi wa igakuteki na riyuu ni yori niku o taberaremasen – I cannot eat meat for medical reasons.

Watashi wa shukyoujyou no riyuu ni yori niku o taberaremasen – I cannot eat meat for religious reasons.

Watashi wa niku (sakana) ni arerugi ga arimasu – I am allergic to meat (fish).

Kore ni ** haitte imasu ka** – Does this contain ****

****** nashi de tsukuremasu ka** – Can you make it without ****

Gift Giving in Japan: Arming yourself with Omiyage

“Omiyage” is the Japanese word for souvenirs or gifts. Gifts are often given to recognize the importance of a relationship and to facilitate introductions. This gesture is not considered to be a form of bribery. Souvenirs are a much-appreciated recognition that, while you were away having a good time overseas or elsewhere in Japan, others worked hard to “hold down the fort”. You will find your desk at times overflowing with sweet bean paste buns or crackers.

Take presents for key people who will be helping you: your principal and vice-principal, other office staff, and of course the English teachers you will be working with. The value of the gift should correspond to the rank of the recipient or the importance of the role they will play in your daily or working life. This calculation is an art and not a science. Your thoughtfulness is what matters most. Gifts that bear an emblem of your home state or a local sports team are particularly good. Some of us have brought candied pecans, chocolates, hot sauce, preserves, or other non-perishable foodstuffs as Omiyage. You will want to bring something with individually wrapped pieces, like Ferrero Rocher or Almond Rocca, to give to the entire group of teachers or your contracting organization. Everyone can have at least 1 item. This is in addition to whatever you bring for your supervisor, principals, etc.

Finally, you may want to take small, extra gifts for neighbors and others who may become important in your daily life. A traditional gift for neighbors is a **tea towel** or **hand-cloth**. Some JETs have taken souvenirs of their hometown (**pins, postcards, refrigerator magnets and key chains**), **pens** and **liquor**. How about **calendars, magazines, and dry goods** (like the nuts I mentioned earlier?) The possibilities are endless. **Pencils, stickers** and other small items are useful as rewards for classroom games.

This is always an area of concerns for JETs, so if you’re worried you’re just like the rest of us. My advice: don’t worry! The Japanese are a very understanding people. They will never look down on a gift that you’ve brought. Pick something that you think they could appreciate, something that says something about the US or your hometown, but don’t fret. Whatever you choose will be appreciated.

Living in Japan

The JET's Budget

Of course, ESID (Every Situation Is Different), so every budget will be different. The following is an anecdotal account of some JETs' budgets just to give you an idea. This information was compiled by Trey Hoffman in June 2005.

Item	Expense (\$USD)	Balance (\$USD)	Comment
Salary		260,000	2,600 After taxes and health insurance
Rent, Utilities			
Rent	70,000	700	190,000 1,900 Varies depending on location
Gas	7000	70	183,000 1,830 Used for hot water and cooking
Electric	12,000	120	171,000 1,710 Used for heating/cooling and electronics
Phone	6,000	60	165,000 1,650 This is for a land line only, some may prefer getting a cell phone instead
Regular Monthly Expenses			
Groceries	20,000	200	140,000 1,400 \$50/week should be plenty for basics
Weekly Allowance	20,000	200	120,000 1,200 Includes lunches and transportation
Weekend Allowance	60,000	600	60,000 600 Weekends are expensive; eating out, trains, etc. add up quickly
Cell Phone	8000	80	52,000 520 Plans may be cheaper depending on usage/data package
Possible Other Expenses			
Student Loan	20,000	200	32,000 320
Savings	20,000	200	12,000 120
Remaining Balance		12,000	120 Best to save it, but also may be for unexpected expenses like doctor/dentist visits

Notes from a Suburban JET:

The first thing I do on payday is head to the post office and send a money order home. I find that if I don't do this I end up spending what I should be saving. I usually send a lot of money home at the beginning of the month so by the end of the month, I don't have much left, but it is not a problem. I can do without many things here because my priority is getting my money back home. I find that I can get by on very little if I need to—a skill developed in my university days! I also save any "bonus" money I receive—so if I get a refund for school lunch, travel expenses, etc. I don't spend it, even if it is only a couple hundred yen. I use this money to fund things like

vacations. It makes a big difference. I also find that if I keep track of how much each bill was each month, it makes me more conscious of ways I can cut corners. So if the phone bill was a little higher than it should be, I try to be a little bit more conservative with my phone time and online time.

I have been able to travel, despite my savings priority. On the months I do travel, I don't send as much money home. I have traveled a lot in a year and a half. I went back to Canada twice (and will go back home this summer, too), and I went to the Philippines and Thailand. I have also been on a few spending sprees in Tokyo. I bought a car recently (¥160,000), too.

So, depending on your lifestyle, in combination with where you live, it is possible for some to save a lot and still have fun too. I recommend that if you are really serious about saving, start sending money home after your first paycheck and then do it every month on payday. Make it a habit. Get used to living without that ¥100,000 or however much you want to save per month. Once you are used to it, living within what you have left over becomes very easy. Conversely, if you get used to spending all that money, it will be hard to live without it. I know people in similar situations to mine (as far as bills and rent are concerned) who have not saved a dime. It really does depend on your priorities and your lifestyle choices, but developing responsible savings and financial habits will pay off in the end.

Notes from a Rural and, then, Urban JET:

I'm in the unique position as having had probably the cushiest country ALT positions in the nation, and then moving to a fairly expensive city as a CIR. In my opinion, the biggest difference between savings and non-savings is where you live.

I had it great in the inaka—better than most anyone should expect. I was also in probably one of the most remote areas in the country. Moving to Sapporo has made a whole lot of great stuff a lot closer. But it really does make a difference. Plus, Sapporo is a lot cheaper than most large Japanese cities as far as most stuff is concerned, especially when it comes to rent. I also didn't have to pay key money.

In my opinion, you can save money in Japan, regardless of where you live. Live frugally-buy recycled furniture from recycle shops, don't travel during your vacations, eat at home whenever possible, and pack lunches for schools (or eat school lunch). Plenty of foreign exchange students get by on a lot less than ¥26,000 a month while supporting families here. My two financial drains are the car and the travel-neither one is absolutely necessary, but nice to have. Doing without these would let pocket more savings.

Besides, these days in Japan, being cheap and frugal (setsuyaku) is considered a virtue, and there is an increasing trend among Japanese to forgo the expensive and to look at value. Discount stores, flea markets, all-you-can-eat buffets—cheap is in. You just have to know where to look. Don't forget “gomi hunting” or trawling the streets for discarded items still in great condition. Don't worry, your neighbors will be doing the same thing after dark too.

Dealing with Culture Shock*

Culture Shock by Adam Murphy

Here it is. All you ever wanted to know about culture shock and living conditions. I'll start by putting the same disclaimer as everyone else: culture shock and living conditions depend on the person and place in which he/she is placed. Except for the extreme cases, there are almost always more positives than negatives. Japan is obviously a different country than the States. Try to find the similarities and appreciate the differences, and you will have a great time. First, let me start off with ways to avoid culture shock.

Stay as busy as possible, both inside and outside of your work environment. I can't stress this enough. Try new things. Join clubs. Join sports teams. Register for classes. Volunteer. Go out with anyone who asks (as long as they're sane. Due to the language barrier, this may take a little time to recognize). You have two lives: your work life and your non-work life. Making a concerted effort to learn Japanese will make both these lives more enjoyable. You will meet more people, and you will open more doors. It was my experience that those who took the time to learn the language had a much richer experience.

* JETAA-SC

Keeping a balance in everything you do is key. You are going to Japan to communicate your culture and beliefs to those around you. While conversely, you are going to Japan to absorb the culture and beliefs of the Japanese and of people from other countries (and other areas of the States) who reside in Japan. It is perfectly OK to revert back to what is familiar, but be open to the new things around you. There are some JETs who basically only hung out with non-Japanese, who only ate Western food, and who were obstinate in their teaching ways. Do not be so rigid. This will only increase the culture shock. Keep a balance. There will be times when you want to speak English with a Westerner, and watching an English-language movie will not cut it. There will be times when you want a pizza (and not one with corn and seaweed on it). If you have been cooped up in a small town for a while, you will want to venture into the city for a change of pace. Trust these instincts. Following your instincts in situations like the aforementioned will allow you to assuage some of your frustrations. You may endure many challenges.

Prepare to be treated differently, both positively and negatively. Occasionally, you may feel like a second-class citizen. Other times, you may feel like a celebrity with no privacy. Feeling like an outsider may prove frustrating. On the other hand, you may feel like the most popular person in the world sometimes. You may have people leaning on your every word. You may have people put you on a pedestal for absolutely no good reason. How you deal with both the good and bad may dictate how comfortable you become in your new home.

Adjusting your way of doing things to the Japanese way of doing things may be the most difficult. Being flexible yet firm with your beliefs is another key to minimizing culture shock. Coming with guns slinging and imposing the American way of doing things is not a good approach, although it happens more than you would think. On the other hand, just because the Japanese generally are not as demonstrative with their feelings does not mean you have to be. If you feel someone has crossed the line, and you will know when that is, make sure that person knows it. Sexual harassment is one such example. And it happens to both sexes.

The living conditions vary from one person to the next. However, there are a couple of points that apply to almost everyone. If you are unhappy with an aspect of your living situation, tell your office. Also, make sure you get to know your neighbors. It is customary, and who knows, you may make a great friend. Wherever you are, know that you will be the object of attention and your actions will probably be common knowledge. If you are a private person, make sure you are discreet about what you do. In general, just be responsible and courteous, and it should work out fine.

Wherever you are placed, **keep in mind that this should be fun.** Try not to dwell on the negatives and what you don't have. You are going to Japan to get away from the States for one reason or another. It is a totally new experience, where what you get out of it is what you put into it. Most importantly, as the British say, have a laugh.

Some Survival Strategies by David Aldwinkle, a naturalized Japanese citizen

Taken from a speech to HAJET (Hokkaido Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching) at one of their semi-annual get-togethers.

a) Learn Japanese. There is no way around this. Watch TV, crunch kanji with an electronic dictionary, read signs, be curious about the media around you. Converse, travel, don't be friendly to a fault but don't be averse to partying, either. Don't settle for English-bubble isolation no matter what the supposed advantages are. Learning the Japanese language and availing yourself of its knock-on effects is the key to everything. Everything.

b) Expect "Off-Days". Hangovers? Biorhythms? Sunspots? Whatever the cause, you will be tongue-tied and twisted some days no matter what you do. Solution? Don't be hard on yourself. It's not fossilization. Just tedium. Let it go and go to bed early. Tomorrow will be better.

c) Cultivate Relationships with the Trustworthy. You need confidantes to survive, and only the trustworthy will do. So distance yourself from Japanese flakes (those who say one thing and do another constantly), culture vultures (those who latch on to you as a means to study culture),

or groupies (those who latch for reasons you can guess). Rule of thumb: If ever they don't do as they say, stay away. Japanese generally follow the same rules themselves.

d) Avoid "Gaijin Negativity Pools". Group gripes may serve as temporary stress relief, but inevitably they will crystallize your abstract feelings into indelible points of view, tainting your tenure. Don't stay away from your friends entirely, but try to get them to tone it down, or steer conversations into more constructive waters.

e) Respect Your Inchoate Need for Personal Space. Even the most public of figures needs solo time. Every so often, shut the door to your bedroom, watch a Hollywood video, eat a big pizza, or even go for a hike. The bottom line is that every now and then you must escape Japanese people. That's not a shame--that's a fact of life. Don't equate immersion with self-sacrifice or anti-culturation. Forsaking your culture is not what it's all about anyway.

f) Learn What Others Are Thinking. "Telegraphing", a boxing term for anticipating where the next punch is going to land, is where you do your best to think like the other side in an interaction. Invaluable for predicting pitfalls, this will serve to explain away even the most confounding situation, particularly bureaucratic. When the timing is right, ask people to explain why things are the way they are. You won't always get satisfactory answers, but it's far better than the alternative of wallowing in ignorance. And, as your language skills improve, elaborate explanations will come to make more sense and help you make more sense of Japan.

g) Don't Take Culture Shock on the Chin. This is going to be hardest for JETs with "guest-ism" mentalities to accept. I say: Be vocally angry at the impolite shopkeeper, demand the waitress speak to you if she turns to your Japanese friend, get answers in Japanese in the face of English answers if that's what you want, ask Japanese friends to stand back while you deal with an annoying situation, disagree with the pedant who requires race for cultural understanding, don't allow cultural overgeneralizations to stand without even a polite snipe. Actually, letting people know your feelings might be just what they wanted; Japanese are not always willfully shutting you out or trying to sound racist. Often they just don't understand your side, and often

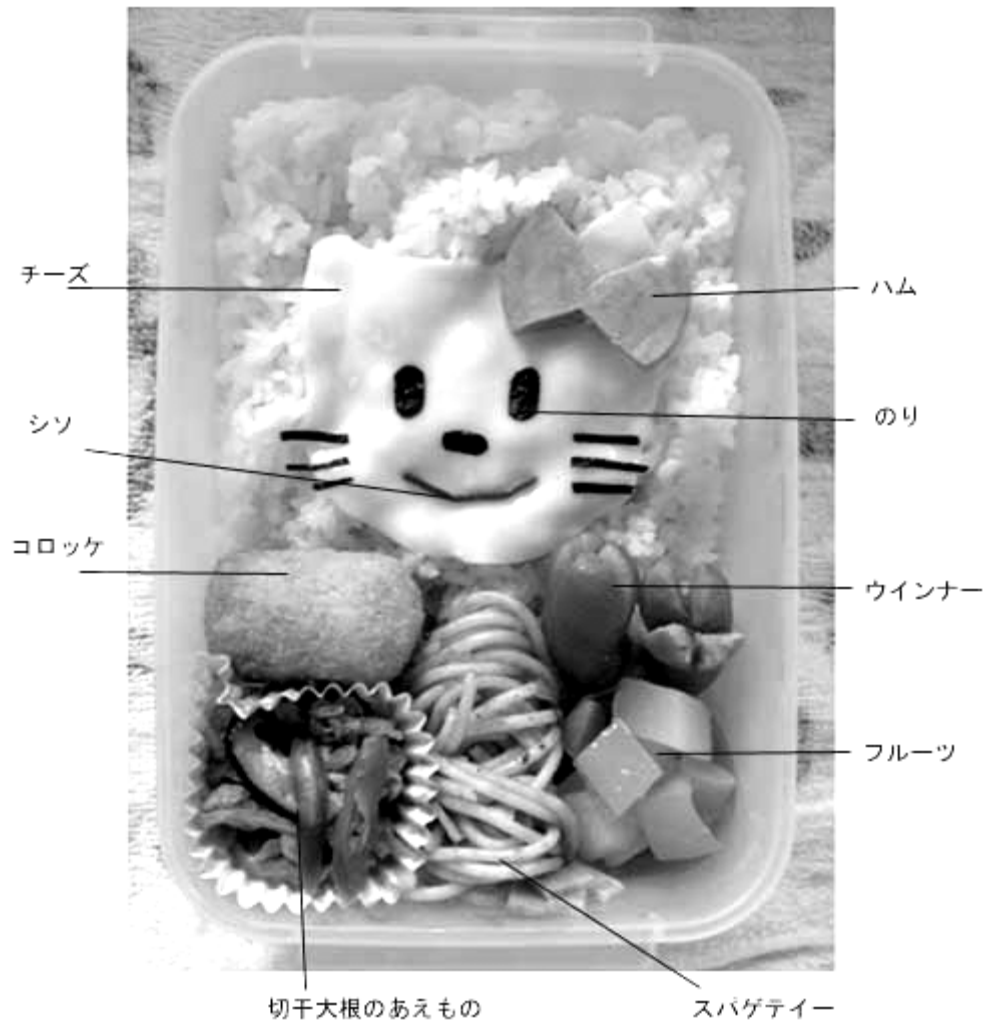
do appreciate criticism phrased properly. Describe your discomfort constructively. But above all, don't allow the residue of resentment build up inside layer after layer and drive you out of Japan.

Japanese Food

Japanese food is diverse and complex. While Japanese cuisine has a long and tasty history, modern Japanese cooking incorporates ingredients from other countries. (For additional verification on the infinite creativity of Japanese food, watch the infamous Iron Chef show on the Food Network—a full hour of intense culinary combat.) Soon you will have a list of your favorite dishes, and some of them may be from the following pictorial list:

ねこちゃん弁当

Kitty Cat Lunch Box



MENRUI/NOODLES

There are two kinds of traditional noodles: UDON and SOBA. Udon is made of wheat flour and is popular in Western Japan, including Kyoto and Osaka.

SOBA comes from a plant called buckwheat which is easy to

cultivate even when the weather is cold or where the soil is not so good. It is popular in Eastern Japan. Both dishes are prepared in a hot soup with various ingredients. Also the noodles can be dipped in a cool broth and eaten. A Chinese type of noodle known as RAMEN is very popular too. (280yen-600yen at local restaurant)



DONBURI MONO/Bowl of rice with a topping

Rice is served in a bowl with various kinds of ingredients on top. Typical ingredients include Japanese fried foods such as pork cutlets, boiled eel, chicken and egg, and tuna sashimi. (450yen-1,000yen at local restaurant)



NABE

A soup base and ingredients are put in a clay pot and heated. There are all sorts of ingredients which include fish, shellfish, a variety of vegetables, and meats. The soup stocks are seasoned by soy bean paste, soy sauce. (2,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



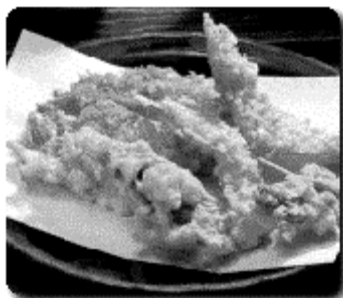
SUKIYAKI

Beef, vegetables and tofu are put into an iron pot, seasoned with soy sauce and sugar. When it is heated, the ingredients are then dipped in a raw, beaten egg and eaten. (3,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



SHABUSHABU

High grade sliced beef is put into the boiling water for a few seconds until the beef cooks and the color changes. The slices of beef are then dipped into a sauce based on soy sauce and eaten. (3,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



TEMPURA/Japanese fried food

This typical Japanese dish was adopted from the Portuguese. Fish, shellfish, vegetables are dipped into the batter of wheat flour dissolved in water, fried in hot cooking oil. The tempura is then dipped in a special broth and eaten. (700yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



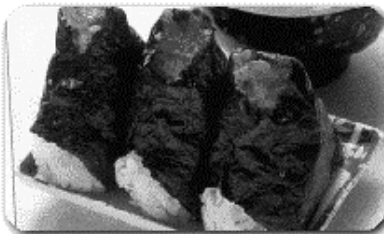
SASHIMI/Slices of raw fish

Sashimi is raw fish, cut in appropriate sizes, which are dipped in soy sauce and eaten. The taste will change depending on the quality and preparation of the ingredients. (1,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



SUSHI

The most popular item of Japanese cuisine is sushi. Sushi is made by laying slices of raw fish on rice and rolling by hand. The varieties of sushi are endless and range from raw fish and vegetables to cooked eel. There is even sushi made with omelets. (1,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



ONIGIRI/Rice balls

Rice balls are made by rolling rice and putting a pickled plum or fish in the middle.

Life as a Vegetarian JET* by Mieko Ueha

If you are a vegetarian, you may have heard that Japan is not the most vegetarian friendly country. This is true, to some extent. Being a vegetarian can be quite an experience. The more restrictive your diet is, the greater your experience gets. If you eat fish, you shouldn't really encounter any problems since seafood is more prominent than meat in the Japanese diet. I personally am lacto/ova vegetarian, meaning I don't eat fish or meat, but I do eat foods made with dairy products and eggs. I won't lie to you and say that I haven't run into a few problems here and there, but nothing is impossible as there are vegans (people who eat a plant-derived diet and consume no animal products) also living in this country.

Although being a vegetarian in Japan won't be as easy a lifestyle as it probably is in your home country, you need not worry. The first thing you should do is to inform your supervisor and

* Oita AJET Life as a JET http://www.geocities.com/oitaajet/Life_as_a_JET.htm

school (if you're an ALT) that you are a vegetarian. I guarantee the Japanese will be in awe about your eating habits and will want to know why you have such a strange diet, so how you explain that is up to you. Religious or health reasons are generally accepted without difficulty. However, if you decide to give personal reasons, ethical or environmental, be prepared to answer many questions, as they will be very intrigued. I originally became a vegetarian in an attempt to lose weight, but now I simply choose not to eat it. This can be very difficult for the Japanese to understand since the Japanese vegetarian population is so few (I have yet to meet one). They may think that I am just being difficult, but I will not compromise my eating habits just to fit in with the rest of the country, and neither should you. No matter what reason you have for being a vegetarian, stick to who you are, after all, we are here to promote internationalization and this is part of the foreigner in us.

One of the most frustrating things about being a vegetarian in Japan is eating out. Back at home, which is Southern California for me, I never have to worry about being able to find something vegetarian on the menu or asking them to make a dish vegetarian. Such is not the case here. First you have to explain that you are a vegetarian, which can be an interesting task when you have very limited Japanese skills. Second, I have found very few places that are actually willing to prepare a dish so that it meets my dietary needs. You will probably find yourself being invited to many dinner parties (*enkai*), so it is always best to tell them ahead of time what you can and can't eat. If a restaurant knows in advance that there is a vegetarian coming they are more likely to prepare meals for you, rather than if you just throw that bit of information at them at the last minute. It may also save you from an otherwise embarrassing and uncomfortable situation, if you let your host know of your dietary needs beforehand. Also beware that some Japanese people tend to think that meat means beef, so you can still eat pork or chicken. Or that just by removing the meat from a dish it will make it okay for you to eat. So just because they tell you it is vegetarian, I would always check to make sure it really is before I dig into it.

With all the negatives aside, let's get to the positives of being a vegetarian in Japan. There are lots of yummy veggies, fruits, and other non-meat foods to eat. At the supermarket, you should be able to stock up with tofu, rice, noodles, vegetable, and fruits. If you can't read kanji, you might ask someone to take you shopping to show you the kanji for meat and fish so you can

check the ingredients on some packed foods. Here is a list of veggies that you might see in your grocery store:

Enokidake (*enoki* or snow puff mushrooms) – clusters of long, thin, white stemmed mushrooms with a delicate crunchy flavor. Keep in the fridge and use quickly. Rinse and trim off the stem before use. Add to soups, simmered dishes and salads.

Gobo (burdock root) – *gobo* is a long, thin fibrous root that that is rich in Vitamin B. It has an earthy flavor and crunchy texture. It can be eaten as a pickle or a vegetable. Rinse and scrape away the brown earthy covering.

Mowashi (bean sprouts) – there are two kinds, the smaller type comes from *mung* beans and the larger type is made from soybeans. They should be eaten within three days of purchase.

Naga-Imo – this baby is long with tan skin and it secretes a starchy liquid in the same way that kora does. Another kind of yam is *yamaimo*.

Negi – large onions that have a mild flavor.

Renkon (lotus root) – this veggie is the tuber of the lotus plant. You should scrub or peel the earthy brown exterior before eating. This veggie is crunchy, tasteless and commonly used in tempura.

Sata-imo – this tuber is small, dark, hairy on the outside and gray on the inside. You can steam it, deep fry it, or eat it candied like sweet potatoes.

Shimeji – small brown button headed mushrooms that grow in a cluster. They have a slightly nutty taste and a slippery texture.

Shiso – green perilla leaves. They have a distinct flavor that is somewhat peppery.

Shiitake - these mushrooms are rich in amino acids and have an earthy flavor. They are available both fresh and dried. The dried ones need to be rehydrated in hot water for at least 30 minutes. Don't forget to trim off the tough ends.

Takenoko – bamboo shoots, available from early March until May. Before you prepare them, their bitterness needs to be removed by boiling them in water. You shouldn't eat them raw because they contain cyanide which is removed in the cooking process. They are crunchy and especially good with rice.

The Foreign Buyers Club and Tengu are great mail-order organizations. Tengu Natural Foods (Tel: 0429-85-8751, Fax: 0429-85-8752) rocks my world. Most of their food is organic and they have a lot of goodies that you won't find in any Japanese supermarket. www.fbcusa.com and www.alishan-organic-center.com

Traveling in Japan

The Welcome Inn Reservation Center <http://www.itcj.or.jp/> is a really good service that has a database of affordable ryokans (Japanese style inn) and hotels throughout Japan. Their daily rates do not exceed ¥8,000/single for two thirds of the year (there may be holiday times where the price is slightly higher). They have information, including pictures of each property. They will also make the reservations for you, which is great if you don't speak, or speak only minimal, Japanese. I have used this service, and the places I stayed at were all clean, convenient, and easy on the pocketbook. Perfect for when your friends/family come visit and want the grand tour of Japan.

Trying to plan a trip? Enter in your origin and destination and these sites will give you several possible combinations for getting there by train/bus/plane as well as tell you how long it will take and how much the fare will be. http://www.japanhomesearch.com/TravelExpert/TE_main.asp or <http://www.hyperdia.com/cgi-english/> Good for figuring out exactly how far your new home will be from everything! In English.

Banking

International ATM's in Japan <http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/jsp/SearchPage.jsp>

Your New Home

Save this link for when you get to Japan: <http://www.neverland.to/kanji/>

This site offers translations of the kanji on common household appliances like your TV remote control, oven, etc. A lifesaver if your predecessor left you no instructions whatsoever and you read no Japanese.

What to Expect on the Job

Professionalism and Responsibility by Denise Sakaue*

There is nothing more embarrassing in Japan than a loud foreigner, usually drunk, who thinks he owns the whole country and abuses the hospitality and patience of the Japanese people. When it comes to maintaining a level of professionalism as a JET, the most important thing to remember is to keep a sense of balance. Everyone should have a good time while they spend their time in

* JETAA-SC

Japan, but your own personal need to have fun and "express" yourself should be balanced by your position in Japan and your local community. For some lucky JETs, you can blend into your surroundings inconspicuously, but for most JETs, you represent the JET program and can either help or hinder Japanese perceptions of foreigners.

Since many Japanese people won't have a chance to really interact with many foreigners, your role is vital to internationalization in Japan and breaking the stereotypical images of foreigners. Internationalization is one of the reasons for the JET program, so if you want to earn your keep and send a positive image to the Japanese, you need to be aware of your role both inside and outside of your job.

A helpful piece of advice I received before I left for Japan was to **dress in business attire during the first week of school**. A week should give you enough time to determine what is expected. Another tidbit is to observe what your co-workers are wearing and dress accordingly. In the schools I went to, the teachers dressed business casual every day. However, the JET in the next town wore suits every day since that is what her teachers wore. Also, it is a good habit to be on time for morning meetings.

Other advice I was given for acting within Japanese society's expectations was not to be destructive or too loud and obnoxious in public. Unlike America, your Japanese supervisor could be blamed and held accountable for your actions within and outside the workplace. In essence, your actions not only concern you but also may have other far reaching repercussions.

Overall, I must admit that the best advice was to **have a positive attitude while trying to integrate into the Japanese way of life**. If you make a conscious effort to learn and respect the Japanese culture and people, your actions will show it, which in turn will make life enjoyable for you and will pave a bright future for other JETs.

Another Perspective by KJ Karacsony

I challenge you to arrive at work on time and dress professionally to show respect for your colleagues and supervisors. I challenge you to make an effort to understand your duties and roles in your jobs, that you may seek to be a contributing member of your school or government staff.

I hope that you will be a role model of integrity and decency at work and at home. Being in JET, you see, is a full-time occupation. Unlike a job in the US, your day won't end at 5:00; you will be a foreigner around the clock. You will be watched. And you will be heard. You are the message. What will you say? I hope that you will say that America is a country that believes in the integrity, peak performance and social responsibility of each individual. I hope you will say that by being a positive role model in your community and at your job.

I am not saying these things to be a joy-killer, but rather to encourage you to seek ways to make your life abroad even better. It is my desire that your time in Japan be the best it possibly can. I hope that you will create wonderful memories and leave great impressions with those whom you come in contact with. May you become such a positive influence in your JET that by the time your stint in Japan ends many tears are shed for your leaving.

I look out at you and see adventurous people who are willing to step out into unknown territories. I see individuals who have been selected for accomplishments, pleasant personalities and courage. I see risk-takers who know how to mix fun with professionalism and spontaneity with responsibility. May you grow this year in your pursuit of becoming the best You can be. May you balance business with pleasure and excitement with intelligence. I hope you challenge yourselves to be the best JET participant you can be, by pursuing happiness and a high level of professionalism and personal responsibility.

For Coordinators of International Relations*

Interpreting

As a CIR, your office may ask you to do some interpreting work at courtesy calls, receptions, meetings, or as a group guide-interpreter. Before you accept any interpreting assignments, make sure your office understands that you have not had formal training and that they should not expect a professional-caliber performance. Your lack of experience should not keep you from doing interpreting, however. You can practice and prepare to make your interpreting skills as professional as possible.

Types of Interpreting

- Consecutive
- Simultaneous
- Whispering

Practice and Preparation

- Shadowing
- Reading
- Building vocabulary
- Note-taking
- Research

Tips for Interpreting

- Be calm and don't rush.
- Don't bring a dictionary to an assignment.
- Bring a note pad and pen.
- Be neutral. You are an interpreting machine.
- Do not allow the speakers to address you directly. Again, you are only a machine.
- Ask for clarification when you do not understand.
- Use a consistent level of Japanese.
- If interpreting a speech, see if they have a copy prepared beforehand.
- Look for patterns in speech.
- Know the titles of those you represent.
- Eat beforehand.
- Know your limitations.

* JETAA-SC

Translating

Firstly, written translation requires a lot of research. It's not as simple as substituting one word for another. Many times there are set phrases that you may not be aware of that you must find. Also, you must remember that some Japanese phrases do not translate well into English, and in times like these, you must maintain a translation that is consistent with the author's original intent and written in eloquent English. Translating may be difficult at first, but it is something that improves "on the job," and you'll find it getting easier and easier.

Here are some hints that may help you when translating.

- When you receive an assignment, make sure it is approved by your supervisor. Many CIRs get too many assignments at once from different people, and letting your supervisor know what you're doing can help avoid this situation.
- Try to ask people to give you a sufficient amount of time to complete an assignment. The time will depend on the length and level of difficulty of the task, but many CIRs ask for two weeks as a general rule.
- Look for similar translations done previously.
- Don't be afraid to cut up long Japanese sentences.
- Ask for technical terms in advance, if possible.
- Ask for clarification when necessary.
- Keep the English natural.

Proofreading

Many of the hints for translating apply to proofreading. Additional hints for proofreading include:

- Get a copy of the Japanese original.
- Use a colored pen. (If you are afraid you'll hurt the person's feelings, use a pencil.)
- Make sure the language and flow of the translation is consistent.

Some translations you are asked to proofread, including those done by professional translators, may need rewriting. In this case there are two things you can do, tactfully ask the translator to rewrite it, or do it yourself. This is up to you and your supervisor to decide.

*Some expressions used here were taken from *The CIR Handbook and Japanese for CIRs* both published by CLAIR.*

For Assistant Language Teachers

Junior High Schools in Japan by Cory Crocker

There are three grade levels in Japanese junior high schools, with "1st graders" being 11 or 12 years old (equivalent to 7th grade in the US) and 3rd graders being 14 or 15 (9th grade). Students are divided into classes within their grade and spend the entire day with their class. Larger schools will have seven or eight classes per grade level and smaller schools may only have one or two classes per grade. Class size is typically very large with as many as 35 students in one class. Classes are not grouped by ability, so lesson plans must be designed to reach all levels of learning. Junior high school students are preparing to take the high school entrance exam at the end of the 3rd grade. Many students will study at private schools (*juku*) in the evenings to prepare for this exam.

Japanese Junior High School Students

Japanese students have the same pressures in their lives as American teenagers do. They are trying to succeed in their classes and in after-school activities, and at the same time, they are trying to fit in with their peers. Out of the four schools that I worked in, I would describe the students at two of the school as being very well behaved. The students were generally quiet and paid attention in class, followed the school uniform rules and were very interested in learning as much as possible from me. However, in my other two schools, the students would walk in and out of class, not pay attention, remove their clothing (!), fight, and refuse to study English. Whether well behaved or not, Japanese students will be very interested in you and will want to interact with you.

- Have a friendly relationship with the students, but also make it clear that you are a teacher and are in a position of authority.
- Try to befriend the loud, obnoxious students in the class. It helps to have them on your side.
- Participate in after-school activities. Students will feel more comfortable with you in class if they get to know you outside of class.
- Have patience. Remember, they are only kids.

Junior High School Lesson Plans

English education is usually introduced in the 1st grade of junior high school, but you will find that over half of the students have taken an English class before. While it is important to offer your ideas and opinions to the Japanese teaching staff, remember that you are an assistant and your job is to help the English teachers. Some teachers will want you to take control of the class and plan the lessons, while other teachers will tell you what they want to do, or will unfortunately simply try to use you as a tape recorder. Creating lesson plans with your team-teaching partner can be extremely frustrating, but it is important for you to cooperate with the Japanese teaching staff and to improve the quality of English education at your assigned school.

- If you are bored in class, you can be sure that the kids are very bored.
- Speak slowly in a loud, clear voice in class and when discussing lesson plans with other teachers.
- Use a lot of visual materials to illustrate the lessons. Visuals help to keep the students' attention and can make your lesson easier to understand.
- When you are making lesson plans, remember that people learn in three different ways: Some learn visually, some by simply listening, and others learn best by actually doing something hands-on.

Japanese Teachers

All of the teachers at my schools were extremely friendly and generous. Some JETs worked with teachers that were resentful of their presence, but I believe that the majority of the teachers you will meet will be excited to have you at their school and will go out of their way to help you. Japanese teachers are very busy and have a lot of responsibilities outside of their lessons. An ALT will usually have a lot of free time, so try to help the teaching staff as much as possible. The Japanese teachers can be very intimidated by you, so it may be up to you to break the ice and make them feel comfortable.

- Be aware and abide by the cultural traditions and school rules, such as removing your shoes before entering the school, morning meetings, eating and drinking restrictions, etc.
- Being on time, dressing appropriately, and acting professionally are all important.
- Make all possible efforts to attend after-school events, parties, etc. The teachers' room can be a pretty quiet and awkward place until the teaching staff gets to know you.

School Rules and Discipline

Discipline in Japanese schools is very different than in American schools. There seems to be more rules-everything from wearing school uniforms, to appropriate hair color and style, to eating candy at lunch. However, you will find that there are fewer methods of enforcing these rules. For example, a teacher cannot make a child leave class or give a student detention. The classroom environment is also very different in Japan. Japanese teachers seem to be more tolerant of students talking in class and may permit students to play rough with each other. "Bullying" is a very big problem in a lot of schools. While it is usually not the JET's responsibility to enforce the school rules, you are a teacher and are in a position to help the Japanese teaching staff.

- While some teachers may physically punish students, a JET should never strike a student.
- Don't lose your cool and go into a rage. The students will not understand you and will probably only find it amusing.
- If discipline is a problem in your classes, begin to work out the problems with your English teacher.

Items to Bring to Japan for Your Classes

The following items might be useful in your introduction classes or in your lessons throughout the year.

- Photographs of your family, home, car, friends, etc.
- A videotape/DVD of your life in America.
- American money, stamps, maps, etc.
- Interesting items, picture books, etc. from your hometown or state.
- Video clips from American TV shows, commercials, news, weather, and sports.
- American magazines.
- Children's books.

Types of High Schools by Christine Chuang

Depending on where you are placed, please remember that the school system in Japan is quite different from the US. In Japan there are two "kinds" of high schools. The list is as follows:

1. Academic: The students main concerns are to pass the all-important entrance exams, so the Japanese teacher may ask you to be the "human tape recorders" or to think of activities to stimulate the class (make things more fun).
2. Trade: The high school students in these areas are mostly those who want to focus on a special field, like commerce. Most of the students who attend these schools are not

necessarily interested in learning English because they need to take English classes to pass high school. You want to make your classes fun and interesting for them to want to learn and stay awake in the class. About 10%-15% of the students will go on to college (4 yrs. or 2 yrs.). You will know the difference by the class i.e., A class=college bound; B class=not college bound.

Please also note: School activities and clubs are mandatory and it is year-round. Students only have one month off for summer vacation, so their free time is very limited. All students will not understand the concept of 'free time' as in "What do you like to do in your free time?" You will get a lot of blank stares. For students in sports clubs many of them will be very tired in classes. It is not unusual for the students to fall asleep in the class because they have to train with the team and that may mean morning (5am) and/or after school practices (3pm to 9pm). There are also culture clubs (English, flower arrangement, tea ceremony, etc.), which you are expected to take part in (English).

From a personal perspective you need to find out what type of a high school you'll be assigned to think about what to bring and what to prepare for. I taught at a commercial high school and in general the students there were very polite, but from what I gathered from other JETs in my area some of the students are not so polite (agricultural, fisheries). They can be a bit rowdy in the classrooms. But don't despair if you inspire the class or get to know them outside of the classroom (which I highly suggest) everything will be fine.

How to Make Lessons Interactive by Kent Yocum

1. You forget 9 out of 10 things. So teach everything ten times. Read it, speak it, think it, hear it, feel it, taste it, see it, smell it, and do it over again, and again.
2. Hands-on Activities. Don't just stand there, stupid. Remember that professor who just read lecture notes? It sucked! It will suck for your kids if you do the same. Make their bodies and body parts move, not just their mouths and brains.
3. Entrance Exams. Take one so you know what the "skills" are. The Japanese teachers focus on teaching their students the test skills. If you know what they are, figure out a great fun way to teach and reinforce those skills.
4. Games in the Classroom. There is nothing wrong with playing games as a method of teaching, but if the game is just fun and with no educational value, then it's probably a waste of time and the teacher won't want you in the classroom. Sometimes, you do need to have fun for fun's sake.

Sample Lesson Plan by Julie Dair

From: Japan Foundation and Language Center Pedagogy Workshop 1997

Presentation: students are listening and watching.

1. Give a variety of examples (rather than explanations in Japanese). Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) will usually do this before you come to class.
2. Show meaning through a range of contexts/situations likely to be encountered (realistic).
3. Show students what they will be able to do at the end of the lesson.
4. Use students' ability to guess (this makes it more interactive and fun).

Input: students are mostly listening.

1. Give abundant input.
2. Give contextualized input.

Output: students are speaking and listening.

1. Give contextualized accuracy-oriented practices (choral repetition, drills). JTE and you will correct any mistakes.
2. Give opportunities to let the students express their own meaning (activities). Use peer correction more from this point.
3. Give opportunities to interact among students (games).
4. Make an information gap (interviews, games).

Make sure students are ready for REAL WORLD TASK.

1. Real World Task: students are speaking.
2. Students express their own meaning.
3. Students interact among themselves.
4. Students interact spontaneously.
5. Student role-play within situations/contexts likely to be encountered.
6. An information gap may exist (motivates students to "solve a problem.")
7. There is minimal teacher talk, corrections, or explanations.

General Checkpoints

1. Make sure the purpose of each activity is clear to the students.
2. Check the students' comprehension before proceeding to the next stage.
3. Maximize the use of English in instruction.
4. Correct errors in an appropriate way.

Communication/ Technology in Japan (see www.jetsetjapan.com)

I. Internet Access

A. **Yahoo!BB** (<http://www.bbapply.com/index.html>)

1. Monthly fee (not including phone charges) about 5200 yen
2. VoIP phone use (about 2.5 yen per minute to U.S.)
3. aDSL speed of up to 50MB
4. Must register in Japanese, so ask a bilingual friend!
5. DEALS: “first two months of service charges free” campaign exist

B. JENS SpinNet

(<http://www.jetsetjapan.com/dealzone-jens-spinnet.shtml>)

1. Monthly fee (not including phone charges) about 4000 yen
2. VoIP phone use offered?
3. eaDSL speed of up to 50MB
4. DEALS: sign-up fee (3150 yen) waived for JETs, free 1050 yen phone card (after two months of service)
5. Must pay by credit card each month

Other notes Japan uses a slightly lower standard voltage (100v) than the U.S. (120v), but it is still compatible with U.S. electronic devices.

II. Cell phones

A. Three Primary Carriers in Japan

1. **NTT DoCoMo** (<http://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/english/index.shtml>)

- About 6700 yen/month (225min per month)
- Most expensive of the three, but offers best coverage (even in countryside areas)
- Only offer support/phones in Japanese?

2. **AU** (<http://www.au.kddi.com/english/index.html>)

- Offers very good coverage, but not as good as NTT
-

3. **Vodafone (JPhone)**

http://www.vodafone.jp/english/pricelist/package/index.html?clickcount_0315

- About 5900 yen/month (100 minutes per month)
- Least range of the three (ok if you are a city JET, or are near a city)
- Offers the most support/phone options in English
- Cheapest phone plans? Many discount options available. (See online site)
- Most widely used by JETs in Japan?

B. Agreement details and Things to note

- Be aware that there is often a penalty for canceling your membership earlier than the contract agreement. Also, possible penalties for canceling in a different month than sign-up month.
- Often offer free phones and discounts during the year.
- Only outgoing calls are charged in Japan (incoming free)
- A lot of correspondence and communication is done through text messages. (Text messaging is a good way to learn Japanese)

III. Long Distance Calls

- A. **j-call.jp World Link** (<http://www.jetsetjapan.com/dealzone-worldlink-p.shtml>)
- B. **I-tel Japan** (<http://www.i-tel.com/faq.html>)
 - 1. no monthly service fee
 - 2. monthly charges are taken out of your Japanese bank account
 - 3. Calls to U.S.A from land line is 15 cents/min. (tax included)
- C. Use VoIp offered with Internet bundle packages
- D. Phone cards...

IV. Other Stuff

- How to enable Japanese on Windows OS
(see http://www.declan-software.com/japanese_ime/)
- Care and feeding of laptops in the hot swamps of Japan
-Be careful not to leave your computer running all day, everyday in the hot, humid weather in Japan. This may cause condensation and heat issues.
- DVDs (regional codes are different)
- Videos (no regional codes)
- Initial set-up of your computer with workplace network
-make a system “roll-back” point before your workplace IT guy starts configuring your computer to their network. This can save a lot of headaches in case of a mistake.

Recommended Reading and Viewing*

Japanese Language

- Remembering the Kanji Series
 - o There are three *Remembering the Kanji* books as well as *Remembering the Hiragana* and *Remembering the Katakana*.
- *An Illustrated Dictionary of Japanese Onomatopoeic Expressions* by Gomi Taro
- *Remembering the Kanji: A Complete Course on How Not to Forget the Meaning and Writing of Japanese Characters*

Films

- *After America: After Japan* by filmmaker Reggie Life
- *Last Samurai* with Tom Cruise directed by Edward Zwick
- *My Neighbor Totoro*
- *Spirited Away*
- *Zatoichi* directed by Takeshi Kitano
- *Lost in Translation* by Sophia Coppola
- *Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness* by Robert Kirk and Diane Estelle Vicari

Non-Fiction

- *Japan: A Bi-lingual Atlas* by Kodansha International
- *Bushido: The Warrior's Code* by Inazo Nitobe
- *The Lady and The Monk* by Pico Iyer
- *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Culture* by Osamu Ikeno
- *The Machine that Changed the World* by James P. Womack
- *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* by Hajime Nakamura
- *Thank You and OK!: An American Zen Failure in Japan* by David Chadwick
- *Orientalism* by Edward Said
- *Angry White Pyjamas: A Scrawny Oxford Poet Takes Lessons from The Tokyo Riot Police* by Robert Twigger
- *Behind the mask: On sexual demons, sacred mothers, transvestites, gangsters, drifters and other Japanese cultural heroes* by Ian Buruma
- *Being A Broad in Japan: Everything a Western woman needs to survive and thrive* by Caroline Pover
- *Bushido: Samurai Ethics and the Soul of Japan* by Inazo Nitobe
- *Dave Barry Does Japan* by Dave Barry
- *Dogs and Demons* by Alex Kerr
- *Embracing Defeat* by John Dower
- *Gateway to Japan* by June Kinoshita and Nicholas Palevsky
- *Geisha* by Liz Dalby
- *Hokkaido Highway Blues: Hitchhiking Japan* by Will Ferguson (JET Alum)

* Book list and some films provided by JETAA Northern California website www.jetaanc.org

- *I'm a Stranger Here Myself* by Bill Bryson
- *Japanese Lessons: A Year in a Japanese School through the Eyes of an American Anthropologist and Her Children* by Gail R. Benjamin
- *Japanese Only* by Arudo Debito
- *Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan* by Bruce Feiler (JET Alum)
- *Saving the Sun* by Gillian Tett
- *Speed Tribes: Days and Nights with Japan's Next Generation* by Karl Taro Greenfeld
- *Sun After Dark: Flights Into the Foreign* by Pico Iyer
- *Teaching English in Japan: Japan (Teaching English)* by Jerry O'Sullivan
- *The Global Soul* by Pico Iyer

Fiction and Literature about Japan

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Audrey Hepburn's Neck</i> by Alan Brown - <i>A Fine Balance</i> by Rohinton Mistry - <i>A Map of Paradise</i> by Linda Ching Sledge - <i>Botchan</i> by Natsume Soseki - <i>Confessions of a Mask</i> by Mishima Yukio - <i>Hawaii</i> by James Michener - <i>Immortality (Perennial Classics)</i> by Milan Kundera - <i>Life of Pi</i> by Yann Martel - <i>My Year of Meats</i> by Ruth Ozeki - <i>Memoirs of a Geisha</i> by Arthur Golden | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Kokoro</i> by Natsume Soseki - <i>Black Rain</i> by Masuji Ibuse - <i>Musashi</i> by Eiji Yoshikawa - <i>Namako: Sea cucumber</i> by Linda Watanabe McFerrin - <i>Neuromancer</i> by William Gibson - <i>Of Human Bondage</i> by Somerset Maugham - <i>On the Road</i> by Jack Kerouac - <i>Rising Sun</i> by Michael Crichton - <i>Sayonara</i> by James Michener - <i>Shogun</i> by James Clavell - <i>Shiokari Pass</i> by Ayako Miura - <i>Tokyo Underground (Vol.1-13)</i> by Akinobu Uraku |
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Web Links

Some of these sites may be more out of date than others, but still good for a general idea of what to expect in the given location. Even if you don't find your prefecture, many of these sites have good general information for new JETs no matter where you're going. Many prefectures also have mailing lists on Yahoo Groups even if they don't have a website.

Aichi <http://www.aichiajet.net/>
Akita <http://www.akita-ajet.com/>
Aomori <http://www.aomoriajet.com/>
Chiba <http://chibaajet.org>
Ehime <http://www.ehimeajet.com/>
Fukui <http://www.fjet.org>

Fukuoka <http://www.geocities.com/fukuokajet/> or
http://www.pref.fukuoka.lg.jp/wbase.nsf/doc/seikatsu_fjetweb_index.htm
Fukushima <http://www.fujet.net>
Gunma <http://www.gunmajet.net/>
Hokkaido <http://www.hajet.org>
Hyogo <http://www.hyogojet.org>

Ibaraki <http://www.ibarakijets.org>
Ishikawa <http://www.ishikawajets.org>
Iwate <http://www.iwatejet.net/> or
<http://www.iwatejet.org/>
Kagawa <http://www.ajetkagawa.net/>
Kagoshima
<http://sumbing.pair.com/kajet/wordpress/>
Kanagawa
http://www.geocities.com/origami_kanagawa/
Kitakyushu City
<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Courtyard/3043/>
Kyoto <http://www.j-talk.com/kyotojets/>
Mie <http://www.miejets.org>
Miyagi <http://www.ajetmiyagi.com/> or
<http://www.pref.miyagi.jp/kokusai/e/jet/>
Miyazaki <http://www.geocities.com/miyazakiajet/>
Nagano <http://naganojet.com>
Nagoya <http://www.nagoyajets.org/>
Niigata <http://www.niigatajet.org/>

Oita <http://www.oitajets.com>
Okayama <http://okayamaajet.org/>
Okinawa <http://www.okinawajet.com/>
Osaka <http://www.osakaajet.net/>
Saga <http://www.sagajet.com/>
Saitama
<http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/A20/BQ00/jet/index.htm>
Sendai City <http://www.geocities.com/sendaialts/>
Shiga <http://www.shigajet.org/>
Shimane <http://shimanejets.org>
Tochigi <http://tochigigaijin.com/>
Tokushima <http://www.tokersajet.com/>
Tottori
<http://free.hostdepartment.com/t/tottori/>
Toyama <http://www.toyamajets.com/>
Wakayama <http://www.wakayama-info.net/wajet/>
Yamaguchi <http://www.ajet.net/yamaguchi/>
Yamanashi <http://www.yetijapan.com/>

Especially for JETs

- AJET (the Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching) is an independent, self-supporting volunteer organization that promotes and supports exchange and teaching in Japan in cooperation with the JET Program <http://www.ajet.net/>
- BigDaikon is the place for past, present and future JETs (members of the Japan Exchange and Teaching program) to meet, chat, discuss issues, share problems and solutions and to relax. <http://www.bigdaikon.com/>
- Jetset Japan is a comprehensive lifestyle and community website, exclusively serving the needs of the members of the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme in Japan., the number one website for JET Programme participants <http://www.jetsetjapan.com/>

Teaching English

- ELT News is the web site for English Teachers in Japan. More commercial than Genki English, but it does have good resources. <http://www.eltnews.com/features/resources/>
- GenkiEnglish. This site is a collection of games, songs and ideas for use by teachers of languages to children. <http://genkienglish.net/>

Living in Japan

- At Home In Japan. An on-line tutorial to help you becoming familiar with Japanese culture, even before you get there. <http://athome.nime.ac.jp/>
- Bob & Angie's Cooking Site http://www.bob-an.com/recipe/English/index_e.html
- Japanese Mom's Home Cooking
http://www.nsknet.or.jp/%7Echrkaji/yasuko/index_e.html
- Japan-Guide.com delivers comprehensive, up to date information on traveling and living in Japan, first-hand from Japan. <http://www.japan-guide.com/>
- Multilingual Guide to Living in Japan (developed by CLAIR)
<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengo/index.html>
- Recognized Local International Exchange Associations (developed by CLAIR)
http://www.clair.or.jp/e/other/map_jpn/index.html
- Tokyo Food Page is a restaurant guide for Tokyo and a Japanese food guide for everyone.
<http://www.bento.com/tokyofood.html>

Japanese Language

- *Irrasshai: The Japanese Language and Culture Distance Learning Course*. Produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting Education Services. Check your local listings for broadcast times! <http://168.28.132.151/peachstar/irasshai/homepg.htm>
- *The Kanji SITE* is aimed primarily at people who are studying for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, but has a great dictionary system for all students of kanji, and it doesn't require a Japanese character download! <http://www.kanjisite.com/>
- *Genki English*. The guys from Genki English offer you suggestions and advice on learning Japanese. Includes very useful key expressions, numbers, katakana & hiragana flash card games & more! Complete with sound bites. <http://www.genkienglish.net/genkijapan/howtospeakjapanese.htm>
- *Quick Japanese*. Quick Japanese shows you 20 easy and convenient Japanese phrases used in daily life. Complete with animation & sound bites.
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/say/quickjapanese/quickjapanese.html>

Contacting JETAA –Southeast

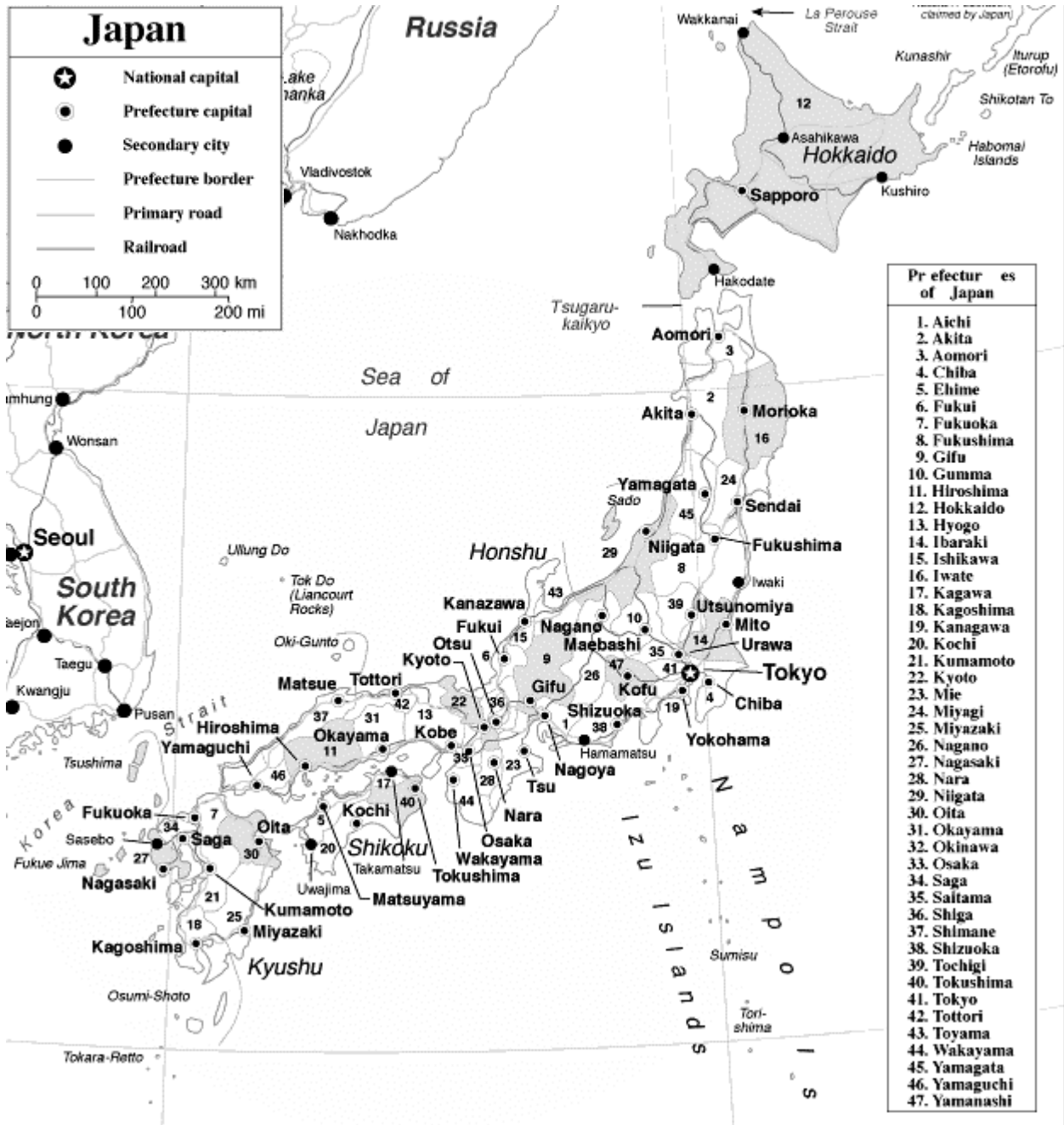
Website: **www.jetaase.org**

*We are always working on improvements and updating information. We welcome your suggestions.

Email contact info. : President: **president@jetaase.org**
 Vice-President: **vp@jetaase.org**
 Secretary: **secretary@jetaase.org**
 Social Coordinator: **social@jetaase.org**
 Treasurer: **treasurer@jetaase.org**
 Educational Coordinator: **education@jetaase.org**

* We try our very best to reply in a timely manner.

MAP of JAPAN



<http://www.cnn.com/TRAVEL/CITY.GUIDES/WORLD/Asia/japan/bigmap.html>