

# **DOS AND DON'TS WHEN VISITING JAPAN**

## **A CULTURAL OVERVIEW**

**Presented by**  
**Marc Silver**



# WHAT I WILL COVER

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- Japanese culture
- What Not to Do
- What to avoid
- What you should do
- What To Do
- Final Dos and Don'ts
- Useful Apps
- IC Cards
- Learn Some Japanese
- Some Japanese Vocabulary
- Summary





# JAPANESE CULTURE

- Japan is a country with buckets of charm and ancient history, but its customs can be tricky to navigate.



# JAPANESE CULTURE

- There's a lot to love about Japan. Its quirky streets, delicious cuisine, and centuries-old castles attract millions of visitors each year, but while its culture intrigues, it also confuses.



# JAPANESE CULTURE

- Manners and strict etiquette practices are deeply entrenched in the lives of Japanese people and can be intimidating to first-time travelers.



# JAPANESE CULTURE

- Japanese people put importance on maintaining good harmony with others.
- It's important to remember this!



# JAPANESE CULTURE

- Etiquette in Japan has been considered wisdom for living comfortably with each other for a long time. If you learn their customs and etiquette in advance, you will be able to connect with local people, making your trip more enjoyable and exciting.

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- Japan is not like the West!
- Many of the things we as Westerners do daily are seen as RUDE or INAPPROPRIATE in Japan.
- I intend to make you aware of some of these differences to make your visit to Japan much smoother and more enjoyable.



# WHAT NOT TO DO

## **Do Not Break ANY Laws**

Kenhaizaiho – Japan's Minor Crime Laws

- Penalties include Fines of \$100 and 30 days in jail.



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Examples:

- Cutting in line is against the law.
- Fighting – 6 months to 5 years in prison.
- Injuring someone - \$5000- and 15-years prison.
- Dumpster diving is considered stealing.
- Spitting on the street is considered littering.

*Many Asian countries forbid this disgusting practice.*



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- Japan has a 99% conviction rate, so you will be convicted.
- Legal fees start at 400,000 yen plus interpreter fees.



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- Remember, you are in a different culture, and tipping is included already. Just say **Arigatō**.





# WHAT TO AVOID

- Don't walk around eating.

A photograph of a young woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a light-colored, patterned top and a light blue bag. She is holding a large, rectangular piece of food, possibly a sandwich or a wrap, up to her mouth. In the background, a traditional Japanese torii gate is visible, and other people are walking on a street lined with buildings.

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- Most people who buy food on the go, go to a convenience store and will eat at the store itself, find a bench, or sit in a park and finish their meal there.
- You'll also soon notice that finding a garbage can in Japan is nearly impossible, yet the streets are generally very clean - be prepared to have a small trash bag with you.

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- May I take your picture?  
Shashin o totte mo īdesuka?



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- Many foreigners who visit Japan for the first time don't realize that taxis in Japan have back doors that open automatically by the driver.
- If you take a taxi, do not open or close the taxi door. Most taxis have automatic doors. If you close the door the driver will be confused and cause them problems. So don't do it.



# WHAT TO AVOID

## Don't Talk too loudly

- If you take a bus or train, you will be surprised at how quiet it is. Trains are public spaces, and a variety of people are traveling with friends, family or tour groups so socializing and talking seems like a good way to pass the time. However, in Japan, especially in big cities like Tokyo, many people commute long distances for work and have very little quiet time to sleep or decompress.



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- Train rides are a popular place for Japanese people to take a nap, catch up on their reading, or quietly play their favorite smartphone game. So, when someone on the train is talking and laughing loudly it disturbs the peaceful journey. In general, Japanese people don't talk very loudly in public, and trains, stations, malls, and streets will be comparatively quieter than in other countries.



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## Backpack Protocol

- One more thing to remember on public transport is if you have a backpack, move it to your chest.



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- One more thing to remember on public transport is if you have a backpack, move it to your chest.
- You will need to carry the backpack in front of you, especially when on a packed train. Having a backpack on your back will prevent people from coming in. Due to this unspoken rule in Japanese society, you would have to take off your backpack, put it on the floor between your legs, or carry it in front of you.



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- Talking on the phone, even with a Bluetooth headset, is not allowed. If you need to use your phone in an emergency and it can't wait until the next stop, stand near the door and talk quietly while holding your hand over your mouth area to reduce sound from carrying over.



# WHAT TO AVOID

## Don't Blow your nose in public

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- However, blowing your nose in public, specifically on the train or in close quarters to people like at a meeting or at a restaurant table is considered rude.
- For this reason, most people excuse themselves and go to the bathroom to blow their nose or more commonly keep sniffing until they are alone and can blow their nose in private. If you have a runny nose though, dabbing your nose with a tissue is quite acceptable.



# WHAT TO AVOID

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## Squat Toilets

- Japanese squat toilets might be a complete mystery. For those not accustomed to this type of toilet, I highly recommend using a Western-style toilet if one is available. But many older areas of Japan and train stations might still only have these older types of toilets available. If you do have to use these toilets, avoid using it the wrong direction. You would assume you should face outwards facing the stall door like you do when sitting on a Western-style toilet. However, you face inwards facing the raised part (the hood) of the toilet.



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- Another piece of advice, if your body is not used to squatting you will probably have trouble bending in the right position so if there are handlebars like you would find in a wheelchair-accessible toilet, you might want to hold on to those.



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- Another piece of advice, if your body is not used to squatting you will probably have trouble bending in the right position so if there are handlebars like you would find in a wheelchair-accessible toilet, you might want to hold on to those.
- *Some public toilets may not have toilet paper either, so you should always carry some packages of tissues, just in case.*



# WHAT TO AVOID

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Public restrooms are easy to locate in Japan because of the clear signage and expected availability. Nearly every public building and area has restrooms.

However, some restrooms in Japan are not always clearly marked. Don't make the mistake of finding yourself in the wrong restroom.

**Memorize these two symbols:**

- 男 Men
- 女 Women



# WHAT TO AVOID

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- Like much of Asia, chopsticks are the cutlery of choice in Japan, but in addition to the challenge of mastering their technique, travelers must also watch the way they use them. There are enough chopstick taboos to make your head spin, but the biggest faux-pas related to chopsticks are known as *tatebashi* and *utsushi bashi*.



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- Tate bashi is the act of sticking your chopsticks into the middle of a bowl of rice, while utsushi bashi is the passing of food from one set of chopsticks to another. Both techniques are demonstrated in Japanese funerals and are therefore disrespectful in any other setting.



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- Also, Do not point your Chopsticks at someone.



# WHAT TO AVOID

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Watch your chopstick technique.

- When in doubt

Ask for a Fōku to naifu  
Japanese for fork and knife

Fōku to naifu o kudasai



# NO KISSING!

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# NO KISSING!

## WHAT TO AVOID

- PDA is highly frowned upon.
- Long hugs, sitting on laps, cuddling, or kissing in public could make people around you incredibly uncomfortable.



# WHAT TO AVOID

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- If they get dirty it is difficult to replace them.
- It is best to wear or bring socks to show respect to the owner.



# WHAT TO AVOID

- Don't say Huh!
- English "huh" just sounds like teeth in Japanese.
- If you say *Huh*, they feel the speaker is rude.
- NO, I don't know why.
- Instead, say *Hai* which means yes.
- Or *Nandemo* which means whatever.



# WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

## Bowing

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- When you meet someone, greet them with a bow.
- Westerners traveling to Japan, need to remember this etiquette, considering that Japanese do not commonly use handshaking as a greeting.





**Japan.**  
Tax-free  
Shop

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## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

### Tax-Free Shopping in Japan

- Generally, drinks and meals consumed at a restaurant or food court, as well as hotel room service, are subject to the 10% consumption tax.



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- For tax-free shopping, look for the duty-free shop symbol (below) posted on the storefront.
- You can claim a tax refund at a designated counter or service center. You will have to show your purchase, receipt, and passport. After signing any required document, the tax will be returned to you in cash. If you pay by credit card, the tax can also be refunded to the credit card.

# WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Take a small towel or handy wipes with you.

- Many public toilets do not have soap, hand towels, or dryers as most Japanese prefer to carry their own towel or handkerchief. You may like to bring your own or pick one up in Japan for a few hundred yen in a convenience store.



# WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

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- Many public toilets do not have soap, hand towels, or dryers as most Japanese prefer to carry their own towel or handkerchief. You may like to bring your own or pick one up in Japan for a few hundred yen in a convenience store.
- Also, Flushing baby wipes down the toilet could cost you \$10,000 in plumbing repairs, even if the packaging says 'flushable'. So don't do it!



# WHAT TO DO

## Wet Towel

- The practice of cleaning one's hands with a wet towel before a meal is a distinctly Japanese mannerism.





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- In many corners of the world, noodle soup causes anxiety. People shy away from ordering the dish to avoid the inevitable struggle of eating it in a socially acceptable manner.
- In Japan, there's no such problem. Slurping is considered a sign of enjoyment and is even said to enhance the flavor of your meal! You have permission to order a steaming bowl of ramen and slurp with abandon.



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- All-You-Can-Drink Alcohol for as little as 1,500 to 2,000 Yen? Japan's Alcohol Is Cheap!
- The menu at an izakaya is made up of a wide variety of Japanese and sometimes international dishes. Common menu items include sashimi, yakitori, grilled meat and seafood, salads, pickles, fried foods, regional delicacies, hot pot dishes, rice and noodle dishes.

*Avoid men on the street hawking you to enter their club with claims of free drinks!*

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# WHAT TO DO

## **Otoshi (appetizer).**

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- An otoshi is a quick nibble that is served first at Japanese restaurants or Japanese-style pubs called izakaya. Because it can be served immediately.



# WHAT TO DO

## Respect religious sites

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- Some of Japan's biggest attractions are its ancient Buddhist and Shinto shrines, and as with most sacred sights around the world, they come with their own set of customs.
- When exploring religious temples and shrines, be sure to observe the etiquette exhibited by Japanese people displayed on signage. Common etiquette is to keep your voice down and purify yourself at the *chozuya* (shinto water ablution pavilion) before entering the main shrine.



# WHAT TO DO

## Respect religious sites

- When entering Shrines in Japan
  1. Bow before entering.
  2. Wash your hands
  3. Walk on the side, the middle is reserved for the Gods.
  4. At the Shrine toss 5 Yen into the donation box, Bow twice, clap twice, Pray, Bow once more before leaving.





# WHAT TO DO

## What about shoes?

- Many people know that many Asian countries have a no-shoe policy inside the home, but you might not know that a lot of restaurants, and even many hotels require everyone to remove their shoes and wear slippers or indoor shoes.



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- If you are just visiting Japan, most likely you won't be entering a school or workplace but there is a good chance you will eat at a Japanese-style restaurant. Many restaurants have a shoe locker at the entrance to place shoes before entering the dining area—especially if the restaurant has tatami mat flooring.

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- My recommendation is to ALWAYS have money on you. It is not unusual for Japanese people to always have several thousand Yen on them. You are in Japan, so you are much safer than in the States.
- Avoid being caught without money or access to money on your trip, so plan before getting off the ship.



# WHAT TO DO

## More about Money?

- In Japan, money is rarely passed directly from hand to hand.
- This means that when you purchase an item or service, you won't hand money directly to the cashier. Instead, you'll place your payment (whether cash or credit) on the small tray provided.
- If change is due, your change will be placed here for you as well.
- Another recommendation is to **ALWAYS** have money on you.



# WHAT TO DO

## Public Baths – Sento and Onsen

- A public bath in Japan is called a Sento. The *Sento* is the bathing facility offered to the community to get clean, relax, and socialize. There are two types of Sentos a “general” Sento which is for the public to use as a bath and an “amusement” Sento (sometimes called Super-Sento) which is more of a day out.



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- Some Sentos and Onsens prohibit people with tattoos. If you have tattoos look for a bath that says permitted.
- You shouldn’t enter the bathing pools before thoroughly washing yourself.
- Shampoo, soap, and towels — are usually provided.



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- People drive on the left side of the road.
- Be polite and don't block passageways with yourself or your luggage.
- Pedestrians walk on the left - often unconsciously. So, when walking through the busy streets of Japan, you are likely to bump into fewer people if you keep to the left.





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- Within the largest cities of Japan, assuming you aren't going on day trips, you typically don't spend more than 1000 to 1500 Yen daily on transport. If you travel more than that as a visitor to the city, you are likely trying to hit too many places in one day. Keep in mind that you will need to bring extra cash for your guide's transportation fee as well, which makes using public transportation even more interesting.

# Final Dos and Don't

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When on shore remember to carry:

YOUR

1. Passport
2. Driver's License
3. Cruise Card
4. Proof of vaccination
5. Pasmo or Suica card if you buy one.

*You probably won't be asked, but if you are and you don't have your passport you may be issued a 200k yen fine.*

*If you have any drugs leave them on the ship.*





# Useful Apps

**Google Translate and Papago**  
are convenient language  
translators.



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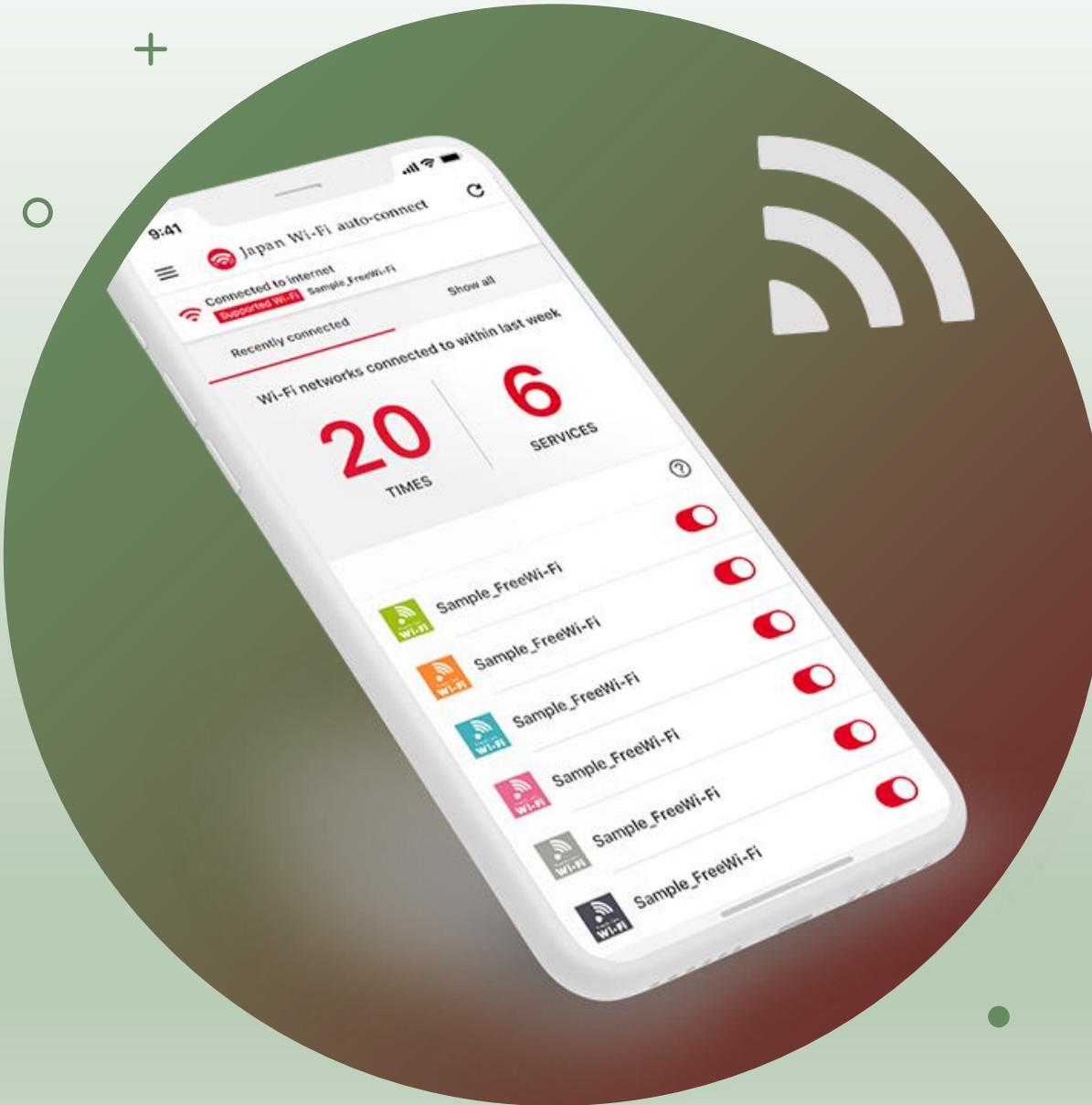
- Both are multilingual machine translation service, offered free of charge, instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and over 100 other languages including English, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Thai.



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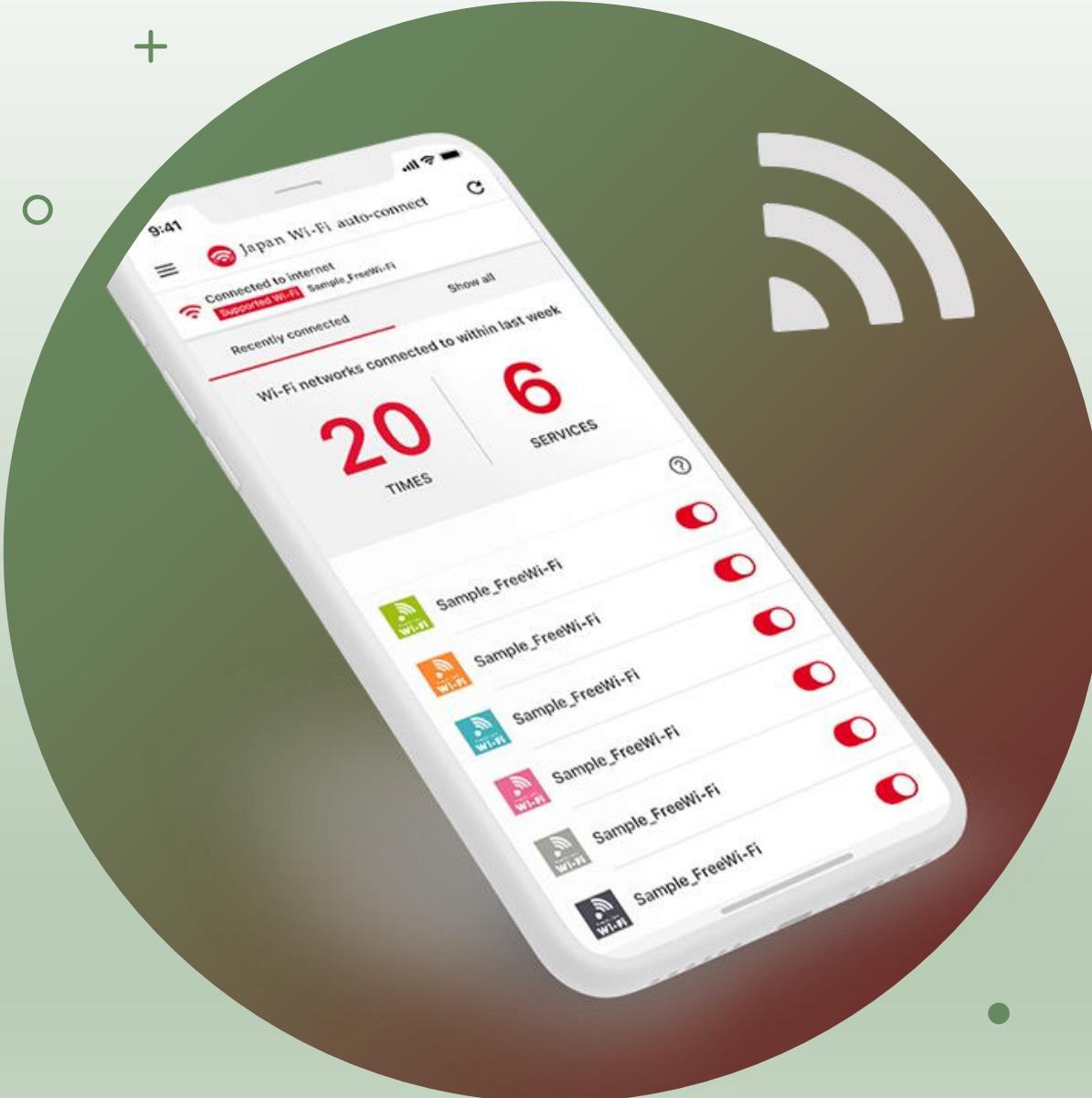
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- Best of all they are free at the App Store.



# Useful Apps

## Japan Wi-Fi Connect

- Automatic Connection App For Free Wi-Fi.



# Useful Apps

## Japan Wi-Fi Connect

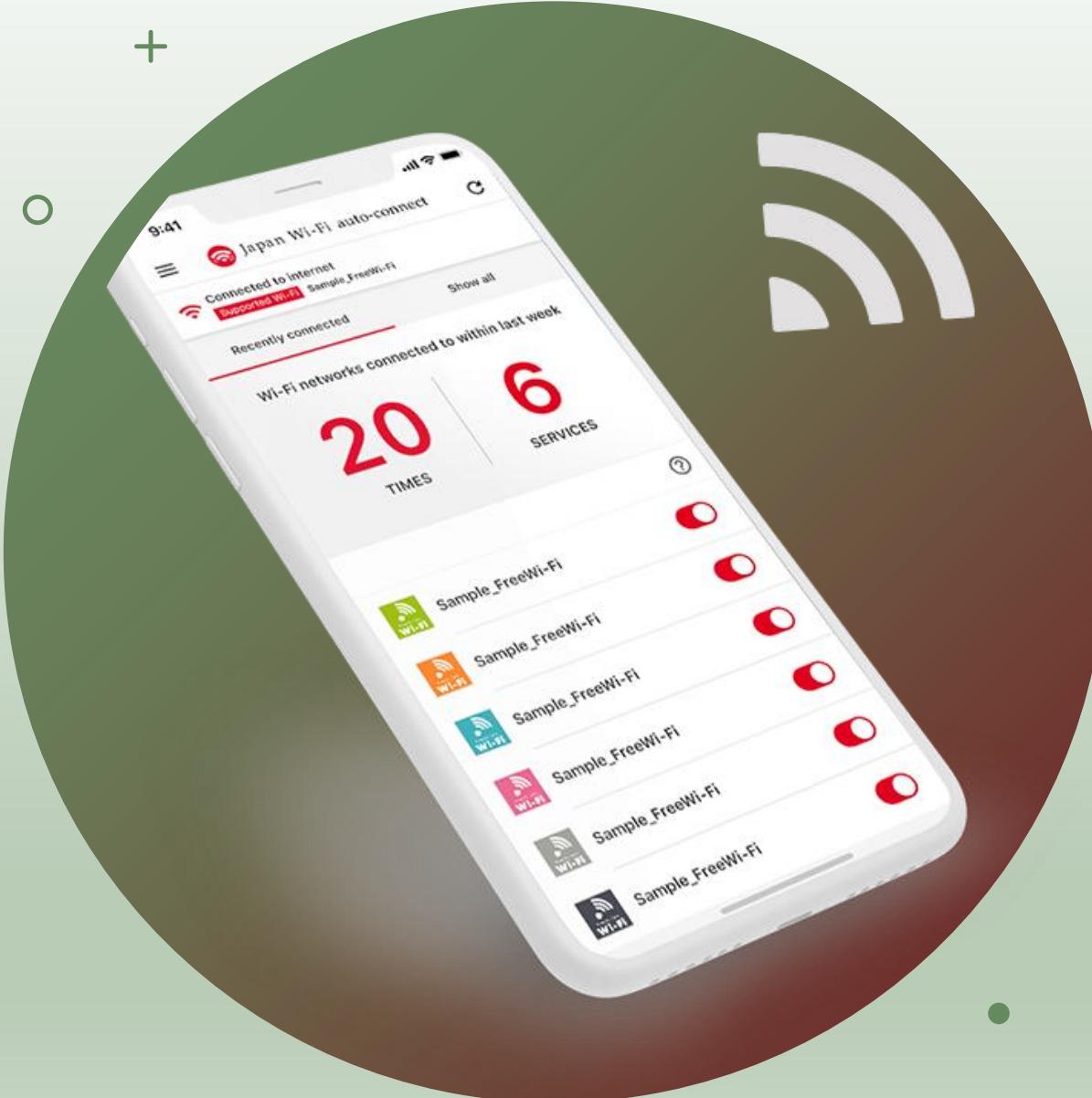
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# Useful Apps

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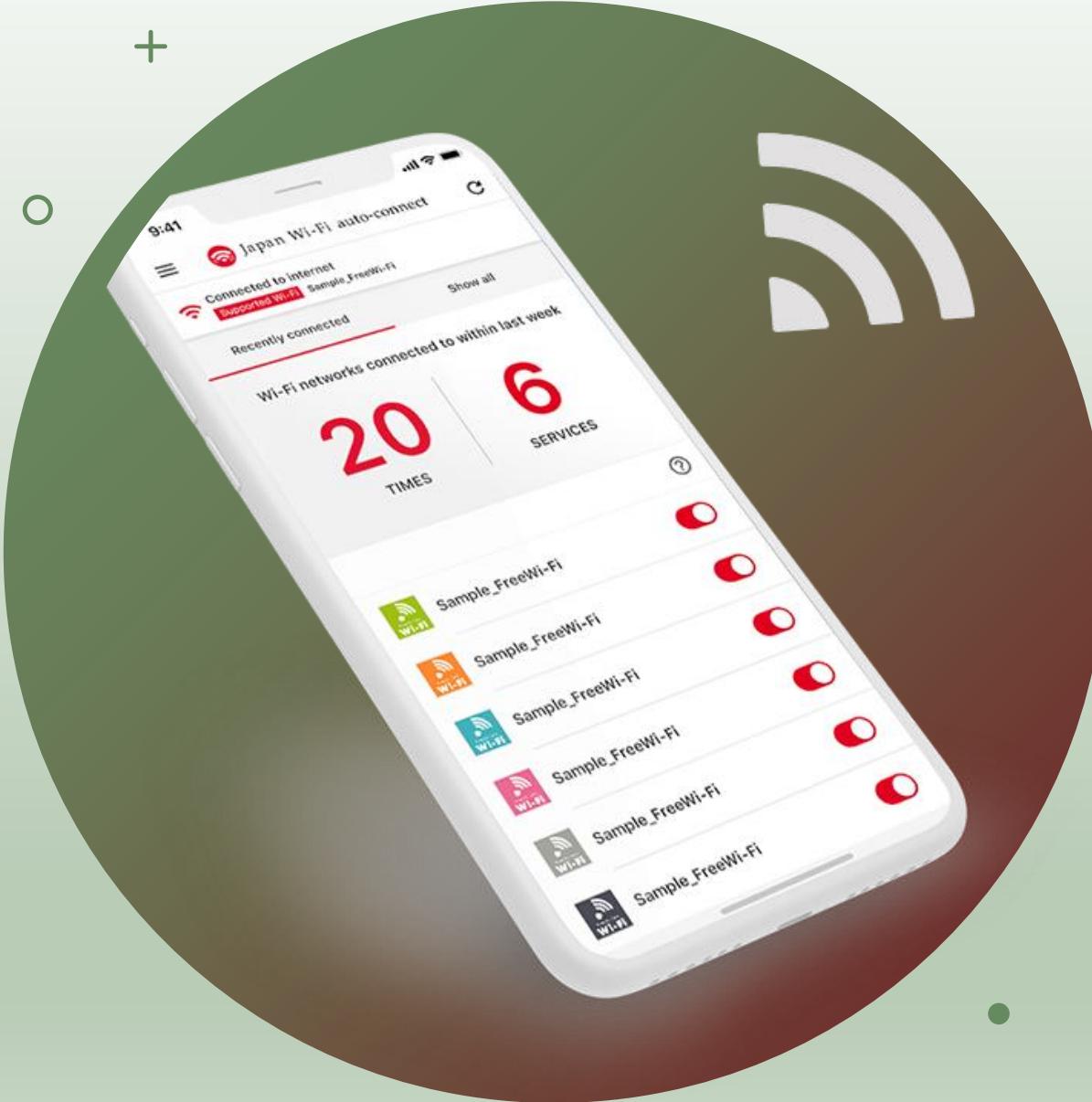
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- Give you access to free Wi-Fi at airports, inside trains, at convenience stores or cafes. Access Points from Reliable Providers.



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- This app connects you to free Wi-Fi all over Japan.
- Give you access to free Wi-Fi at airports, inside trains, at convenience stores or cafes. Access Points from Reliable Providers.
- Only Connects to Wi-Fi Spots that are secure and trustworthy

# PASMO, SUICA, & ICOCA CARDS



- The PASMO, Suica, and ICOCA Cards are e-money IC cards that can be used for travel and shopping across Japan.
- Cashless fare payment
- Use it for shopping
- No waiting for change
- Get special privileges
- Apple phone users can also link with all three cards.
- PASMO refunds - If you no longer need your PASMO, it can be refunded. Suica and ICOA cards do not offer refunds.

# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

- Don't expect locals can speak English.



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

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- When in Japan if you need help ask a teenager. They probably can speak some English.



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- Japanese are very friendly toward foreigners.
- It is fun to learn a new language.
- Travelling to Japan is one of the things that makes learning Japanese the most exciting.
- English speakers aren't so common in Japan, especially outside the larger cities. So, if you want to discover Japan and its secrets off the beaten path, knowledge of the language will get you much further than if you only stick to your own language.





Japanese?

LEARN SOME  
JAPANESE

Yes

Hai



Yes

No

Hai

le

LEARN SOME  
JAPANESE



Yes

No

Excuse me

Hai

Ie

Sumimasen

LEARN SOME  
JAPANESE



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes

No

Excuse me

Thank You

Hai

Ie

Sumimasen

Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes

No

Excuse me

Thank You

Please

Hai

Ie

Sumimasen

Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu

Onegaishimasu



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes

No

Excuse me

Thank You

Please

Nice to meet you

Hai

Ie

Sumimasen

Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu

Onegaishimasu

Hajimemashite



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes

No

Excuse me

Thank You

Please

Nice to meet you

No, I'm Good

Hai

Ie

Sumimasen

Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu

Onegaishimasu

Hajimemashite

Ie Kekkodesu



## LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite

# LEARN SOME JAPANESE



Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome  
Good morning

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite  
Ohayō



## LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes	Hai
No	Ie
Excuse me	Sumimasen
Thank You	Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu
Please	Onegaishimasu
Nice to meet you	Hajimemashite
No, I'm Good	Ie Kekkodesu
You're Welcome	Dōitashimashite
Good morning	Ohayō
Good afternoon / Hello	Kon'nichiwa



## LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes	Hai
No	Ie
Excuse me	Sumimasen
Thank You	Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu
Please	Onegaishimasu
Nice to meet you	Hajimemashite
No, I'm Good	Ie Kekkodesu
You're Welcome	Dōitashimashite
Good morning	Ohayō
Good afternoon / Hello	Kon'nichiwa
Good evening	Konbanwa



## LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome  
Good morning  
Good afternoon / Hello  
Good evening  
Goodbye

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite  
Ohayō  
Kon'nichiwa  
Konbanwa  
Sayōnara



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes	Hai
No	Ie
Excuse me	Sumimasen
Thank You	Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu
Please	Onegaishimasu
Nice to meet you	Hajimemashite
No, I'm Good	Ie Kekkodesu
You're Welcome	Dōitashimashite
Good morning	Ohayō
Good afternoon / Hello	Kon'nichiwa
Good evening	Konbanwa
Goodbye	Sayōnara
Where is _____	_____ Dokodesuka?



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes	Hai
No	Ie
Excuse me	Sumimasen
Thank You	Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu
Please	Onegaishimasu
Nice to meet you	Hajimemashite
No, I'm Good	Ie Kekkodesu
You're Welcome	Dōitashimashite
Good morning	Ohayō
Good afternoon / Hello	Kon'nichiwa
Good evening	Konbanwa
Goodbye	Sayōnara
Where is _____	_____ Dokedesuka?
Where is the toilet?	Toire wa dokedesuka?



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome  
Good morning  
Good afternoon / Hello  
Good evening  
Goodbye  
Where is \_\_\_\_\_  
Where is the toilet?  
Help! I am lost?

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite  
Ohayō  
Kon'nichiwa  
Konbanwa  
Sayōnara  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dokodesuka?  
Toire wa dokodesuka?  
Herupu! Mayotte imasu?



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes	Hai
No	Ie
Excuse me	Sumimasen
Thank You	Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu
Please	Onegaishimasu
Nice to meet you	Hajimemashite
No, I'm Good	Ie Kekkodesu
You're Welcome	Dōitashimashite
Good morning	Ohayō
Good afternoon / Hello	Kon'nichiwa
Good evening	Konbanwa
Goodbye	Sayōnara
Where is _____	_____ Dokodesuka?
Where is the toilet?	Toire wa dokodesuka?
Help! I am lost?	Herupu! Mayotte imasu?
I need Doctor	Ishaga hitsuyōdesu?
Do you speak English?	Anata wa eigo hanashimasu ka?



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome  
Good morning  
Good afternoon / Hello  
Good evening  
Goodbye  
Where is \_\_\_\_\_  
Where is the toilet?  
Help! I am lost?  
I need Doctor  
Do you speak English?  
How much does this cost?

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite  
Ohayō  
Kon'nichiwa  
Konbanwa  
Sayōnara  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dokodesuka?  
Taire wa dokodesuka?  
Herupu! Mayotte imasu?  
Ishaga hitsuyōdesu?  
Anata wa eigo hanashimasu ka?  
Kore wa ikuradesuka?



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome  
Good morning  
Good afternoon / Hello  
Good evening  
Goodbye  
Where is \_\_\_\_\_  
Where is the toilet?  
Help! I am lost?  
I need Doctor  
Do you speak English?  
How much does this cost?  
Can I use the internet?

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite  
Ohayō  
Kon'nichiwa  
Konbanwa  
Sayōnara  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dokodesuka?  
Taire wa dokodesuka?  
Herupu! Mayotte imasu?  
Ishaga hitsuyōdesu?  
Anata wa eigo hanashimasu ka?  
Kore wa ikuradesuka?  
Intanetto wa dokodesuka



# LEARN SOME JAPANESE

Yes  
No  
Excuse me  
Thank You  
Please  
Nice to meet you  
No, I'm Good  
You're Welcome  
Good morning  
Good afternoon / Hello  
Good evening  
Goodbye  
Where is \_\_\_\_\_  
Where is the toilet?  
Help! I am lost?  
I need Doctor  
Do you speak English?  
How much does this cost?  
Can I use the internet?  
Is there an English menu?

Hai  
Ie  
Sumimasen  
Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu  
Onegaishimasu  
Hajimemashite  
Ie Kekkodesu  
Dōitashimashite  
Ohayō  
Kon'nichiwa  
Konbanwa  
Sayōnara  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dokodesuka?  
Taire wa dokodesuka?  
Herupu! Mayotte imasu?  
Ishaga hitsuyōdesu?  
Anata wa eigo hanashimasu ka?  
Kore wa ikuradesuka?  
Intanetto wa dokodesuka  
Eigo no menu wa arimaska?

# Summary

I hope I've educated  
and entertained you today.

I can be contacted by e-mail at [marc@soundscapeav.com](mailto:marc@soundscapeav.com)