



The Gaijin Guide

A Survival Guide for American Students Studying Abroad at Chubu University

Alex Baker

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Pre-departure Information</i>	4
<i>What to Bring – The Essentials</i>	5
<i>Hints for Surviving the Long Flight</i>	5
<i>Arrival Information</i>	6
<i>The First Week</i>	5
<i>Classes</i>	6
<i>Activities Are Fun!</i>	7-8
<i>Transportation</i>	9
<i>Travel</i>	10-11
<i>Shopping</i>	12
<i>Dining</i>	13-15
<i>Entertainment Ideas</i>	16
<i>Closing Remarks</i>	17
<i>Appendix A: Campus Map</i>	18
<i>Appendix B: Useful Links</i>	19

Introduction

I have been studying the culture and the language of Japanese since fall of 1999. I started by taking elementary Japanese at Ohio University out of pure interest. The nature of the language compelled me to stay with it. From its pictographic writing style to its syllabic sounds, the language is truly different from English. I enjoy all that I have learned from my Japanese studies, and it has forever impacted the way I see things in life.

My first opportunity to go to Japan was through a study abroad program at Chubu University in the fall of 2002. Having already become good friends with several of the students from Chubu, I was immediately greeted at the airport and already knew quite a few people on campus. I strongly encourage anyone to make friends with the large group of Chubu students that come to Ohio in the spring quarter.

It is rather difficult for anyone to really learn all the important aspects of the culture in that time, and there are many things that are not discussed. Quite simply, there are things that students should be made aware of before they go to Japan, many of which can be found in this guide. This guide will serve as a survival guide that students can use both before and during their study abroad experience.

Good luck with your studies and have a wonderful trip!

Pre-departure Information

Before you leave for your trip, you will need to make sure that you have proper housing and financial arrangements. If you are going through the Ohio University school program then you will be expected to live in a school dorm on campus. These arrangements are addressed during orientation and are handled by Dr. Thompson.

Housing Arrangements

You will need to talk with your R.A. or another member of housing if you plan to live in Ohio University dorms once you get back. Talk to them before housing scheduling begins late spring quarter. Doing so can help ensure that you will have a good chance in getting a desirable room when you return. If you plan on living off-campus, it's a good idea to find a sub-leaser for your room to help cover for rent expenses.

Financial Arrangements

It is recommended that you bring at least \$1500 for travel expenses when you go to Japan. The average cost of living in Japan is higher than that of the United States, so watch out how much money you are spending.

- **Traveler's checks are the most preferred money exchanging** method by students when going abroad. This is because they get high exchanger rates than other forms of currency. Traveler's checks can be purchased at any AAA store and at most banks as well.
- **Paper and coin currency** is the most widely used form of payment in Japan. Credit Cards can be used in most department stores. However, most of the older, independently owned stores found around historical places do not.
- Money transfers can be done at only certain banks in the area. **Banks usually only can do exchanges on weekdays until 3 pm**, so keep this in mind. Talk with anyone on campus at the student affairs to find out which banks do transfers.

What to Bring: The Essentials!

Other than stuff like toiletries, clothes, and your camera, here a list of essential items that will help you throughout your trip. Don't take too many things because you'll have lots of souvenirs when you come back!

- Good, easily removable shoes, also good for walking
- Layered clothing, good shorts, sweaters, and a waterproof jacket
- Socks, preferably not worn out! People will see you in these quite often
- Layered clothing, good shorts, sweaters, and a waterproof jacket
- Comfortable slippers
- Compact stereo, CD player, or walkman
- Your favorite music
- Pictures of friends, family, your home, university, and anyone else special to you would want to share about
- Vitamins, allergy medicine, any other special medicine for the weather changes
- American snacks
- Non-perishable food, if you're on a budget. Food prices can be two to three times that of home in Japan.
- Rain clothes. Be prepared for a typhoon at anytime.
- A formal-dress outfit for banquets and receptions
- LOTS of small gifts, for example, something about your city, your favorite sports teams, stickers, pencils, t-shirts, coins, little American flags

Hints for Surviving the Long Flight

There are a few things you will need to keep in mind during your flights to and from Japan. First is to make sure you have transportation to the airport at least two hours prior to your flight. Checking into the baggage claim may take longer than expected, so be prepared for such delays.

You will want to have a bag with stuff do on the plane. Bring plenty of magazines, books, handheld games, snacks, and gum to keep you occupied for the 12-hour flight. You should also bring a sweater or sweatshirt for the flight, as the cabin can get chilly at times.

Arrival Information

At the Airport

Once you arrive at the airport you will want to stay with your group. The director will lead you to the baggage claim. There are luggage carts near the baggage claim you can use to put your suitcases and bags on top of. Once everyone has everything gathered, you will have the chance to go the money exchange area. You can exchange traveler's checks and cash there for a good return rate.

After everyone has had the chance to exchange their money, you will be taken to the school's dorm via a taxi service. Make sure that all of your baggage makes it on board, and off again when you arrive at the school.

Moving In

When you check into the dorm you will be issued a pair of slippers and a nametag that will be used on the check-in/out board. You may also have to sign some light paperwork regarding your stay at the dorm. Other residents of the dorm will be there to assist you while moving your luggage in.

The *genkan* is the name of the area at the front of the building. The check-in/out board there is used so that the resident assistants can determine if you are around or not.

The First Week

Put Your Skills to the Test

You will have a lot of free time to explore the local area during the first week you are in the country. You will be encouraged to take this time to prepare for classes. Use this time to make new friends, contact friends you met before, and try having some Japanese conversations. The director will be around so if you have any questions, ask him or her for assistance.

Placement Test

Before classes start, you will need to take a placement test to determine what level of Japanese courses you will take. **Placement tests are given on the Friday of the first week.** There are three main sections on the test: kanji, grammar, and writing. You will want to go over the Japanese you learned back at home before you take these tests. Test results will be given later on the day of the test. GANBATTE!

Classes

Classes at Chubu University all have the same policies regarding attendance, homework, in-class behavior, etc. After the placement tests are over, one of your instructors will go over these policies in further detail.

Chubu University forces a strict attendance policy – you lose points if you don't go to class. No excuses will be accepted, however, you can usually meet with an instructor to go over what you missed.

Most instructors can be reached outside of class, and you can always leave a note in the teacher's office if he or she is not there. E-mail can also be used to set up appointments.

The grading policy at Chubu University is rather different in comparison to Ohio University: 85% and above is an A, 75% - 84% is a B, 65% to 74% is a C. There are no D's in Japan, so anything lower than a C is considered failing. Attendance and homework make up a good amount of the total amount of class points, so as long as you go to class and do your homework, you will do fine.

Activities Are Fun!

There are three main categories of activities that you will be doing while you are at Chubu University: field trips, school related, and extra-curricular. These are designed to help bring you closer to the culture and have fun in doing so.

Field Trips

Every other Thursday, you and the others in your group will be taking field trips to various areas around Nagoya. These include places such as the Toyota factory, a pottery museum, castles, shrines, and many other exciting places. The school will cover lunch expenses wherever you go, anything else you want you will need to buy yourself. Note that if you are a vegetarian you need to make an arrangement with the field trip tour guide. These trips usually last from 8:30 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon, so make sure to rest up before the trip. And above all, make sure to always have your camera with you!

School Activities

There are a few different activities such as flower arranging and the tea ceremony that you are required to do as part of your cultural experience. All of these events are scheduled by the school and your participation counts towards your final grade. Teachers will tell you in advance when and what you are doing. The activities usually last about an hour and half, and you will be doing them with other members of your class. You should always go into these activities with an open mind in order to get the most out of them!

Extra-Curricular Activities

A meeting will be held during your first few weeks that will discuss conversation partners and activities outside of school. Chubu University has many different club activities that exchange students are encouraged to participate in. You will be given a handbook that outlines all of the different school clubs. You should note that you might be able to get into certain clubs because they may be already filled or are for full-time students only. Examples include basketball, karate, exploration, racing, and cooking clubs.



Working out at the local dojo

Public Transportation

Transportation comes in all different varieties in Japan – from taxis to the bullet train, you will have many different options you can use to get around. Some are more expensive than others, so you will want to remember to pay attention to which form is best to use.

Trains and Subways

Japan is well known for its network of trains across the country. Japan Railways (JR) has *densha* (electric train) tracks in every prefecture in Japan and its tickets are reasonably priced. All the big cities (including Nagoya) also have subways in the metropolitan areas. You can also take the *Shinkansen* (bullet train) that stops only in large cities. **See Appendix A for maps of the trains and subways in the Nagoya area.**

Buying Tickets

You can buy train and subway tickets at the ticket machines near the ticket barrier. First put your money into the machine, and then press the button with the corresponding price for your destination. Long-distance tickets not sold at the ticket machines can be purchased at the station's ticket office. If you can't figure out the price of your ticket, buy the cheapest one available and you can always adjust at a fare adjustment machine when you get off the train. Finally, hang on to your ticket because you'll need it when you arrive!

Buses

Buses are also widely used form of transportation in Japan. There are two kinds: those that have regular stops within the city, and long-distance buses that usually travel in the night and connect with major cities. Paying for bus fares varies from place to place. In some places, you pay a flat rate when you get on the bus, and in other places you pay as you get off the bus. In the latter case, take a ticket when you board and check the number on the fare chart to find your ticket price.

Taxis

Taxis are another popular way to get around, but be careful because they can get expensive fast. Taxis can be hailed from almost every major street and every major hotel and train station. The basic fare varies from place to place; the rate in Nagoya is around 600 Yen for the first two kilometers and 70 Yen for every half kilometer after that. Taxis have automatic doors in Japan, so watch out!

Travel

While you are in Japan, you will have lots of opportunities to travel around the country. When doing so, you will need to make lodging arrangements prior to your trip to make sure you have a place to stay. The international exchange office will take care of your arrangements for school related trips. A travel information office is located on the second floor of the student lounge and can help you plan any trip you are thinking of taking.

Homestay

During your time studying abroad, the school will arrange for you to do a homestay with a Japanese family. This will give you a chance to see what a typical Japanese house looks like. During your stay, you are expected to treat the family with respect. **Make sure to bring a small present to give to the family** for letting you stay at their house. While you are on your homestay, try to be as observant as possible and act as though the Japanese do. Although you will be expected to pay for all of your meals while you are there, the host family will most likely cover these expenses.

Places to Go

There are many different places for you can go to – it's up to you to decide where you want to go. *Onsen* (hot springs) are a popular place to go and are located across Japan, particularly in mountainous regions. The prices are usually less than 1,000 Yen that you pay when you arrive. You will need to wash yourself thoroughly before entering into the hot spring itself. Most hot springs will provide you with soap, shampoo, and towels to use in the cleaning area outside the bath. Other places of interest include castles, shrines, mountains, traditional villages, and museums. Informational travel magazines can be found on the second floor of the student lounge outside of the travel agency. You also might want to ask Japanese students what they recommend.

Depending on where you are going, you may want to have a native Japanese speaker accompanying you to help translate and guide you around. This will also give you a chance to practice your Japanese, so ask around!

Types of Accommodations in Japan

Hotels

There are three types of hotels found throughout Japan that you can stay at:

- **International class hotels** are the most luxurious and most expensive hotels in Japan. They are well-equipped facilities and excellent services comparable to first-class hotels found in the United States. Twin rooms range from 20,000 – 30,000 Yen for one night's stay.

- **Business hotels** are used by Japanese businessmen. These places are cheaper than international hotels and usually found near train stations. Single rooms range from 5,500 – 10,000 Yen.
- **Love hotels** are found in most large cities and are an alternative place to stay the night. They require no reservations and are paid for upon entering. Rooms can be purchased for a couple of hours or for the night after a certain time. Overnight prices range from 7,500 – 15,000 Yen.

Ryokan

Ryokan are the traditional Japanese-style inns that can be found in many of the resort and historical areas. They provide you with a chance to experience traditional Japanese meals and enjoy the unique atmosphere of a Japanese-style room. Lodging usually includes a set of meals for dinner and breakfast. Prices range from 10,000 – 40,000 Yen.

Minshuku

Minshuku are small, family-run guest houses found in resort areas and throughout the countryside. Some minshuku provide accommodation without meals, and others often serve local cuisine. In general, minshuku are cheaper than ryokan and range from 6,500 – 9,000 Yen.

Youth Hostels

Youth hostels are the cheapest places to accommodate a night's stay in Japan. Services such as the International Booking Network (IBN) can provide you with the information you will need when making reservations with a hostel. See appendix B for related links.



Picture taken from inside of a ryokan

Shopping

Chances are you will be doing a lot of shopping while you are in Japan. While there are no large differences between shopping in Japan and America, keep the following things in mind:

- *The exchange rate* – currently about 1 dollar is about 120 Yen. You should carefully think about how much something costs in U.S. dollars before buying it.
- *Japanese people love to help you shop.* If you are interested in buying something, a store keeper will gladly show it to you.
- *Imported American goods are expensive.* Unless it otherwise necessary for you to have, try and avoid buying things you can buy for a cheaper price back home.
- *Japanese like to negotiate.* If you feel that price for something is too much, tell the shopkeeper that you could afford it at a lower price. He or she might just lower price for you.
- *Cash is always an acceptable form of payment.* Japanese do not use credit cards nearly as much as you may be used to in America, so be prepared to pay in cash at most places.

Nagoya has entire underground networks of malls for shopping. Check these places out for an interesting experience not found in America!

Dining

Oishii is the Japanese word for “delicious”. Since you are living in the dorm, you already have a meal plan in your dorm’s dining hall. This plan provides you with breakfast and dinner during the weekdays, and breakfast on Saturday. However, you are expected to arrange for your own meals for lunch and on the weekends. The international exchange office will provide you with a weekly stipend (about ¥6,000) for lunch money. There are many different kinds of restaurants near Chubu, so try them out!

Dining Hall Heaven

Chubu University has 4 dining halls on campus that you can use. The main one you will use is located on the second floor of your dorm. This one will provide you with breakfast and dinner. Tea is offered with every meal, but there are a variety of vending machines just around the corner.

Breakfast

The dorm’s dining hall gives you a choice of what kind of breakfast to have: western-style or Japanese-style. Western-style consists of two pieces of thick toast, a salad, a hard-boiled egg, and coffee. The Japanese-style meal contains rice, a raw egg, miso soup.

Lunch

Lunch is served at the other dining halls found on Chubu’s campus. These dining halls offer you good variety of meals, including curry, ramen, donburi (main dish served on top of rice), pork cutlets, spaghetti, and many others. Chubu’s dining halls used an automatic meal ticket machine located at the front of the dining hall that you put money into and get a ticket.

Dinner

Evening meals at the dining hall are set meals; you can’t pick and choose. Sometimes the food is good, sometimes mysterious. All meals include rice, a soup, and some kind of meat portion. A monthly menu (in Japanese) is posted on the wall that divides the dining hall in half. If you’re not into what they’re serving, you can always have rice.

Eating Around Town

You will have plenty of opportunities to go out into the Japanese community and enjoy the local cuisine. Restaurants come in all shapes and sizes in Japan, so you should always be on the lookout for the next place you might want to try.

Here are some examples of the kind of restaurants you will encounter on your trip to Japan:

- *Sushiya* – sushi bars that serve traditional sushi. Some are walk-up bars, and others have *kaitenzushi*, sushi that goes around on a conveyor belt.
- *Ramenya* – ramen houses that serve a variety of ramen dishes. Ramen is served in a large bowl there.
- *Curry shop* – restaurants that serve Japanese-style curry rice. Watch out for the spicy dishes.
- *Sobaya* – soba (buckwheat noodle) shops that serve many different soba dishes. *Yakisoba* (fried soba) dishes are especially good.
- *Udon* – udon (wheat noodle) shops are similar to sobayas, only with udon dishes instead.
- *Chinese* – restaurants that serve a variety of traditional Chinese dishes. Different than the “traditional” Chinese restaurants found in America.
- *Traditional* – these restaurants usually have you come in and sit down (shoes off) on a bamboo mat floor. Most of these places offer *tabehoudai* (all-you-can-eat) and *nomihoudai* (all-you-can-drink).
- *Yakiniku* – yakiniku (grilled meat) restaurants let you choose different raw meats. You get to cook the food at your own table and eat right from the grill.
- *Takoyaki* – usually found in busy areas, these places serve golf ball-sized breaded octopus treats.
- *Fast Food* – similar to those found in America, a quick place to go and eat for relatively cheap.

Night on the Town

Going out for drinks and food is very popular way for Japanese to socialize. Since most Japanese keep their home life separate from their social life, you will need to arrange to meet your friends at a bar or restaurant. Restaurants and *Izakaya* (Japanese-style bars) that offer all-you-can-eat/drink services are the most popular among young adults. Most of these places serve good drinks and food until 2 or even later, depending on the location. Although the drinking age in Japan is 20, it is very rare that you will get asked to show an id.

Types of Bars

Izakaya are the traditional Japanese bars found in most places. Izakaya are easily recognizable because of the *tsukidashi* (small snack) you are served immediately after sitting down. Even if you don't want the *tsukidashi*, you are expected to pay for it as a service charge. Since there is no tipping custom in Japan, bars charge usually ¥300 to compensate. The most commonly found *tsukidashi* are *edamame* (salted beans).

Gaijin bars are also commonly found in populated areas. Gaijin means “foreigner”, and these bars often have lots of imported drinks and food. These bars are also popular and often open later than the Japanese-style bars.

Clubs are similar to those found in America. The big difference is that you will usually have to pay an up-front door charge that ranges from ¥1500-3000. Most bars will give you free drink tickets to compensate for this charge.

Places of Interest

Here is a list of just a few of the popular places near Chubu that you can go to. You should also go out and find new places on your own! See the map insert for exact locations.

- *Zakkui* – local Izakaya located 5 minutes in walking distance from the dorms. They offer traditional food in a nice atmosphere.
- *Rokoroko* – nice restaurant about 10 minutes from the dorms, known for its cool, peaceful atmosphere.
- *Sanmaru (OOO)* – Local Izakaya where everything on the menu is ¥300.
- *Bamiyan* – Chinese food right across the street from Zakkui. Good dishes, prompt service, and a cheap all-you-can-drink option during the week.
- *Jerry's Uno* – local gaijin bar that serves excellent tacos and American beer.

Remember that if you go to downtown Nagoya, the last train home leaves around 12:30. If you miss your train, you'll either have to take a taxi home (which is expensive), or hang out until the trains start again around 5:45 a.m. If all else fails, you can always go into an all-night restaurant and take a snooze there!

Entertainment Ideas

Japanese have a high standard of entertainment. You will quickly find that Japanese are just as crazy about having a good time as you are. It's generally a good idea to go out and experience these things in a large group, so grab your friends and go!

Karaoke

Karaoke in Japan is largely different from American karaoke. The main differences are that 1) other people are encouraged to sing along, and 2), everybody sings at least one song. Japan has a lot of karaoke bars with rooms that you can rent with friends for a very affordable price. Other places charge you per tune, so check the prices before you start wailing!

Pachinko

Pachinko, which is a mix between pinball and slot machines, are found all over Japan. Pachinko is a lot of fun, but also a quick way to spend money. The game of pachinko has a high skill level involved, so be observant of pachinko addicts if you want to win. Most pachinko parlors have slot machines as well.

Movie Theaters

Japanese movie theaters commonly show both Japanese and imported movies. Prices are a bit more than American theaters (about ¥1200 a ticket, or \$10.50), and are generally not open as late as in America.

Theme Parks

Theme parks can be found all across Japan and most are open all-year round. Nagashima Spaland, located about 15 kilometers west of Nagoya, is home to the world's tallest and fastest roller coaster (as of 2001).

Arcades

Arcade video games are still very popular in Japan (in comparison to the U.S.). Most arcades charge a ¥100 a game, although places are cheaper. The two arcades located near Chubu on Highway 155 only charge ¥20 a game, so take advantage!

Others

Of course, there are many other ways to go and have fun in Japan – just look around and you will find things to keep you busy. Talk to friends to learn more about current events, and above all, be willing to try anything!

Closing Remarks and Advice

The following advice was compiled from faculty members of both Ohio University and Chubu University. Hopefully this will give a clear insight on what you need to keep in mind while studying abroad!

Sunil P. Sherchan (Chubu Student Services & OPIE Program Counselor.)

Remember that true internationalization is the acceptance of people who are not like yourself. It is easy to accept people who you are like. To accept and appreciate people that are not like yourself, you need to change inside as a person. I think that's what you must strive for in a study abroad experience – to change inside and grow as a person to learn how to learn from and like people you are not used to being with.

Gerry Krzic (Former Chubu Program Director and OPIE Professor.)

Be prompt, patient and polite. In general, Asian people, and Japanese in particular, expect class to start on time and end on schedule. They expect students to be patient with each other and with their teachers. They also expect politeness. This means no slouching in your seat and feet up on chairs. This means not getting upset easily (at least not showing it), and being kind and considerate toward those around you. I think of these three qualities, politeness is the most important.

Kaoru Sakurai (Japanese TA at OU)

Make as many friends as you can. The only way to improve what you learn in the classroom is to experience it in real life. There is no way to experience real life unless you have real friends. Go with friends to sushi bars, karaoke, and shopping. Only when you've done these things will you really know Japan.

Ryota Deguchi (Japanese Instructor at OU)

Go to Japan with specific goals and try as hard as you can to achieve them. The worst thing to do is to go to Japan without any goals in mind. Whether your goal is to improve your Japanese or understand Japanese culture better, going to Japan with a specific goal in mind will help you make the most of your experience.

Hiroyuki Oshita (Director, Japanese Program at OU)

Be prepared to change. Don't come back to Athens the same person as when you left. Study Abroad should be a growth experience that changes the way you see the world and yourself. In Japan, don't remain an outsider looking in. Become an insider. Learn to speak, act, and see the world like a Japanese. See how the other shoe fits. To change means to grow as a person and as a student of Japan and Japanese.

APPENDIX A: CAMPUS MAP



- A. Miura Kohei Memorial Hall
- B. Campus Plaza (Book Store, Post Office, Bank ATM, Hamburger Shop, Convenience Store, Travel Agency, Notice Board, Student Lounge, etc.)
- C. Administration
- D. College of Engineering
- E. College of International Studies
- F. College of Bioscience and Biotechnology
- G. College of Humanities
- H. Auditorium and Indoor Sports Gym
- I. Miura Memorial Library
- J. High Technology Research Center
- K. Information Systems Center
- L. College of Business Administration and Information Science
- M. Student Dormitories

APPENDIX B: USEFUL LINKS

Chubu University Homepage (English)	http://www.chubu.ac.jp/en/
City of Kasugai Homepage (English)	http://www.city.kasugai.aichi.jp/world/english/
Densha Tracks for Chubu Region (Japanese)	http://www.rosenzu.com/rr/rrj11.html
Japan Youth Hostel Site (English):	http://www.jyh.or.jp/english/
Japan National Tourist Organization:	http://www.jnto.go.jp/
International Booking Network:	http://www.hostelbooking.com/
Nagashima Spaland (Theme Park):	http://www.nagashima-onsen.co.jp/