



G-MEO STUDY & INTERN ABROAD

STUDENT PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE

Tokyo, Japan



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I. KEY CONTACTS



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II. PASSPORT & VISA

Please make sure you have a valid passport with **at least 6 months validity** remaining from the date of your departure. It can take up to 6 weeks for a passport application to be processed, so make sure you obtain a new or renewed passport as soon as possible to avoid extra fees for expedited processing. If you do not have a passport or if it is expired, you can obtain a passport application through your post office.

For first time applicants, you must apply in person. Please be sure to bring a completed passport application (Form DS-11), an accepted form of photo ID plus a photocopy of the ID, proof of your US citizenship (your original birth certificate is fine), two 2x2" passport photos, and a check or money order. No cash or credit cards will be accepted.

Check the US Department of State website for more information on passports:
http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html

For Visa, US citizen students do not need one due to the **Short-Term Visa Waiver (up to 90 days)** policy, which is available to citizens of many countries, see full list at:
http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html#notice08.

III. FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Please ensure that you arrive in Japan before the orientation date and that your departure date is after the program ends.

You can either seek the assistance of a travel agency to book a flight or use search engines such as Kayak, skyscanner.com, or Studentuniverse.com, etc. Just be sure that your final destination is **Tokyo Haneda Airport (HND) or Tokyo Narita International Airport (NRT)**.

Once you have booked your flight, please be sure to fill in **all legs of your flight** on the Travel Arrangements on the pre-departure portal of your G-MEO application (<http://sapms.gmeochina.com>). The Travel Arrangements must be completed at the latest no later than two weeks before the program start date.

In the event that your flight is delayed or you miss a connecting flight, it is imperative that you contact the emergency number to inform us of your delay.



IV. SAFETY, HEALTH, AND HEALTH INSURANCE

G-MEO's top priority is the health and safety of all our students. It is extremely important for all students to keep lines of communication open with both your family, and our staff. Highly qualified local staff who speaks fluent English are available for students. Our New York City Office also has an emergency number which students or families can call.

Program students are automatically enrolled in the medical insurance plan, Coverage period is from 3 days before the program starts until 2 days after it ends. It includes standard overseas travel insurance such as medical expenses, accident coverage, liability, and more. These clinics cater to foreigners and are within central Tokyo. If you need help booking or finding a clinic, contact on-site support staff.



All US citizen students should enroll with the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP allows the Department of State to better assist travelers in the event of an emergency. Enroll here: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

In order for G-MEO to ensure your safety, you will need to provide our staff with all your contact information at all times. G-MEO will require that you provide the contact person in Japan with your cell phone number. In addition, if you ever plan on sleeping outside of the dorm overnight, you will be required to report to the staff as well.

IMPORTANT: Remember, contact us / the on site staff immediately for any emergency situations that arise either with you or a friend. We are always here to help!

HEALTH

All students are required to make an appointment with their physician before leaving for abroad. You are not required to have any vaccinations for entry to Japan but for your own safety, your routine vaccinations must be up to date. Doctors must check your immunization record and health history to make sure your vaccinations are up to date. You will have to upload both the “Immunization Record” and “Health History Form” to the pre-departure section of your application. Your doctor will also need to complete the “Health Clearance Form” downloadable in the pre-departure portal on the Student Information System (<http://sapms.gmeochina.com/user.php>).

If you take medication, bring enough for your stay along with a doctor’s note. There are restrictions on how much you can bring into Japan. For longer stays, check whether your medication (or an equivalent) is available locally and consult your doctor in advance.

Licensing varies between countries. Medicine that requires a prescription at home may not in Japan—and vice versa. Always confirm before traveling. Some medications legal abroad may be restricted or require special approval in Japan.

If you are unsure whether your medicine is permitted, contact the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare before you travel.

More details:

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html>





V. FINANCES

How much money you will spend depends on your eating habits and lifestyle. Please see the estimated budget below for your time in Japan. Keep in mind that exchange rates change daily.

Expense	Amount All estimates are in US dollars (USD).
Living Expenses	\$400–\$600 per month (food, daily needs)
Airfare	\$900–\$1,600 round trip
New Passport	\$110 to \$190
Local Transportation	About \$1.50–\$2.00 per trip by metro or bus
Wi-Fi Internet	Free in most dormitories and available in many public places; pocket Wi-Fi rental \$40–\$80 per month
Cell Phone	\$60–\$200 for device; \$20–\$40 per month for service

ACCESSING MONEY WHILE ABROAD

*Once you have booked your airplane ticket, please call your banking institutions (for checking and credit accounts) to inform them that you will be traveling abroad. They will need your dates of departure and return to the U.S. Also inform them if you'll be traveling to other countries prior to your return to the U.S.

It is extremely important to set a budget and stick to it throughout your stay—you do not want to find yourself short of funds before your program ends. Take time to familiarize yourself with the local currency, the Japanese Yen (JPY), symbolized as ¥. Exchange rates fluctuate regularly; please check the U.S. Federal Reserve website for the latest rates:

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h10/current/>.

- **Credit cards:** Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted; American Express in some places. Maestro rarely works. Many smaller shops are cash-only, so always keep some cash.
- **ATMs:** International cards (Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, Plus) are accepted at many ATMs. 7-Eleven ATMs are the most reliable. Some cards need overseas use enabled in advance, so check with your bank before travel.
- **Cash:** We recommend carrying at least ¥10,000 (~USD 70) at all times.
- **Currency exchange:** Available at Sakura Currency Service, TOUREX, and World Currency Shop near the school, though withdrawing from an ATM often gives the best rate.



VI. CELL PHONES & INTERNET

Students may bring their iPhones or other smartphones to Japan. If your phone is unlocked, you can purchase a Japanese SIM card upon arrival, which will allow you to make local calls, send text messages, and access mobile data. Prepaid SIM cards are widely available at airports, convenience stores, and electronics shops. Many providers now offer eSIM options, which can be activated digitally without a physical card.

If your phone is locked, you will only be able to use Wi-Fi for apps such as email or messaging, so please confirm your phone's status with your provider before departure.

An alternative option is to rent a portable Wi-Fi device ("pocket Wi-Fi"), which can be rented at airports, online, or through local providers.

Japan offers excellent internet connectivity, with free Wi-Fi commonly found in airports, train stations, and many cafes, but connections can be limited and unreliable.

Keeping in touch with family is critical for you and for them. In Japan, LINE is the most widely used app for communication. We recommend downloading it before you arrive, as it may not be possible to install with a rental SIM.

***Once you arrive, remember to call home and let your family know you're safe. They'll be worried about you!**



VII. PACKING LIST

Please remember to only pack what you can carry and monitor the weight of your luggage to avoid extra airline fees. Check your airline's website for specific baggage requirements, and be sure to leave room for souvenirs on your return trip. You are advised to research the weather for the period you will be spending in Japan, as temperatures can vary significantly. Summers are hot and humid, while winters are generally mild but can be cold.

What to Bring:

- Passport with valid visa
- Credit card and ATM card (notify your bank and set a travel flag)
- Medication (with doctor's note if necessary)
- Plug adapters (100V, 60Hz, 2-pin; US-type 2-prong plugs usually work)
- Dictionary or translation app
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Laptop or tablet
- Camera or smartphone for photos
- Contact lenses/glasses (if you need)
- Towel & slippers (Japanese accommodations may not provide these)
- International Student ID card (useful for discounts at museums, transport, etc.)
- Formal outfit for professional or cultural occasions
- Small gifts from home for local hosts or friends
- Seasonal clothing (Larger shoe and clothing sizes may be difficult to find in Japan, so plan accordingly)

Prohibited items: Make sure to check Japan Customs (prohibited/restricted items):
<http://www.customs.go.jp/english/summary/passenger.htm>



VIII. IN TOKYO

ARRIVAL

Here's what to expect at the immigration:

- Queue in the correct lane: Follow signs for Foreigners (separate from the Japanese citizens' lane).
- You will receive an Arrival/Disembarkation Card on the plane so make sure it's filled out before you reach the counter.
- Be prepared: Keep your passport, completed form, and any supporting documents easily accessible.
- Once cleared, you'll collect your baggage and head to Customs, where you may need to declare items if requested.

At the customs check, immigration officers may ask you:

- Where will you stay? → Be ready with your accommodation address.
- What will you do in Japan? → Answer: "unpaid internship" or "study".
- What are your internship dates? → Provide start and end dates.

We recommend carrying printed copies of:

- Accommodation confirmation sheet
- Internship acceptance letter
- Return flight ticket

Prior to departure, students will participate in an online orientation session covering essential travel information, airport-to-residence transportation options, and check-in procedures.

Tokyo has two major international airports: **Narita International Airport (NRT)**, located approximately 60 km (37 mi) east of central Tokyo, with travel to the city taking about 1–1.5 hours by train or bus; and **Haneda Airport (HND)**, located about 20 km (12 mi) south of central Tokyo, with travel into the city typically taking 30–45 minutes.

If you don't want to carry heavy bags from the airport, you can use Kuro-Neko Yamato's luggage delivery service to have your luggage sent directly to your accommodation. See details at: <http://www.kuronekoyamato.co.jp/en/tourist/airport/>

ORIENTATION

When you arrive in Japan, you'll join an on-site orientation to help you get settled.

We'll go over daily life tips—like using trains, paying with apps, and finding shops or clinics. You'll also learn about cultural activities, excursions, and internship details if you're participating. We'll cover safety, housing, and other policies so you feel prepared. By the end, you'll have what you need to start your life in Japan with confidence!



NATURAL DISASTERS

Earthquakes

Major earthquakes occur about once every 10 years, but smaller tremors are common. If a quake occurs:

- Open a door or window to secure an exit.
- Stay away from windows and large furniture.
- Take cover under a desk or table.
- After shaking stops, turn off gas taps and heating devices.
- Be aware of aftershocks — they can be strong.

You'll receive alerts on your phone. TV and radio will also broadcast warnings. Most earthquakes are light to medium and not dangerous — don't panic.

Typhoons

- Common from September–October (up to 5 per year).
- Usually weaker in Tokyo but can bring heavy rain and strong winds.
- Stay indoors until it passes (usually less than a day).
- We will notify you if a typhoon is forecast.

Heat Waves (June–September)

Tokyo summers are hot and humid: often 35–40°C with high humidity, which might cause heat stroke and sunstroke. Safety tips:

- Drink water regularly, even if you're not thirsty.
- Avoid outdoor activities between 12:00– 15:00.
- Use hats or umbrellas for shade.
- Vending machines with drinks are everywhere; water fountains are common in parks.

FRAUD & SCAMS

Street donations

Begging is rare. If approached, politely refuse. Fake monks sometimes sell charms — only buy from official temple/shrine shops. Phrases to say:

“いりません (Irimasen)” = “I don’t need it”

“けっこうです (Kekkou desu)” = “No, thank you”

Bars & nightlife scams

In areas like Roppongi, Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, Shibuya, people may invite you to bars. Never follow strangers — these can lead to overpriced bills (\$100+).

Safe rule: Legitimate bars do not recruit customers directly on the street (except staff calling from in front of their store).

Maid cafés vs. girls bars

Maid cafés are safe and tourist-friendly. “Girls bars” are often scams. If unsure, ask local staff.

Harassment & Personal Security:

Harassment (“chikan”) can happen on crowded trains.

If touched inappropriately: shout “Chikan!”, point at the person, and seek station staff.

Police and staff are trained to help quickly.

Women should stay cautious when walking alone late at night.

General crime is extremely low — no dangerous neighborhoods to avoid. Prostitution exists but is discreet. If approached, simply ignore it.

HOUSING AND MEALS

Participants will stay in a shared house with a private room. Each room is furnished with a bed, desk, closet, and air conditioning. A fully equipped shared kitchen is available for cooking.

Student meals are not included in the program fee, so you will be responsible for your own meals. Many students enjoy eating out at Japan’s wide variety of restaurants and cafés, ranging from casual ramen shops and sushi bars to convenience store meals and international cuisine. Food delivery is also very common.

INTERNSHIP

You will receive detailed guidance directly from your internship supervisor. If anything is unclear, you should first communicate with your supervisor, as this is usually the fastest way to resolve issues. If needed, our office can also speak to your supervisor on your behalf.

Internship Working Hours

For short-term programs, interns are generally expected to work full-time (around 38 hours per week). Working hours depend on the host company and should be confirmed with your supervisor.

National Holidays

Japan observes several national holidays throughout the year. Our office is closed on these days, and you will usually not be required to work. Please check the holiday calendar for the months of your internship and plan personal activities in advance.

Attendance & Completion Certificate

To receive a completion certificate, your internship attendance must be at least 70%. Please manage your schedule responsibly.

Punctuality

Arrive 5–10 minutes before your official start time. Even one minute late is considered unprofessional.

Dress Code

Unless told otherwise, wear business attire.

- Men: Button-up shirt (tie if required), slacks, and polished shoes.
- Women: Smart blouse with skirt/pants and closed-toe shoes.
- Avoid jeans, casual clothing, flashy accessories, or strong perfumes. Tattoos and piercings are often seen as unprofessional. Cover tattoos if possible, and wear minimal jewelry.

Note: Consult with your supervisor about the dress code as it is different to each company.

Greetings:

Morning: “おはようございます (Ohayou gozaimasu)”

During or end of day: “お疲れ様です (Otsukaresama desu)”

Workspace Etiquette

Keep your desk tidy. Avoid eating meals at your desk unless others do so. Keep your phone on silent and limit personal use.



LAWS AND REGULATIONS

While in Japan, it is important to remember that local laws and customs may be very different from those in the United States. As a visitor, you must abide by Japanese laws at all times. Please be aware that participation in demonstrations or political activities is not permitted for international students. Respect for others, politeness, and following social rules—such as punctuality and proper etiquette in public spaces—are highly valued in Japanese society. During the on-site orientation, you will be introduced in more detail to the laws, regulations, and cultural expectations you must observe.

CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock Japan is one of the most modernized countries in Asia, yet it remains culturally distinct. You may find some things surprising, frustrating, or confusing. The key is to stay open-minded.

- Ask your supervisor or staff if you encounter something you don't understand as it may become an interesting cultural discussion.
- Signs of culture shock: feeling unusually tired, irritable, or struggling with people.
- If this happens, please speak with our office staff. They can suggest practical ways to adjust and support your wellbeing.



TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

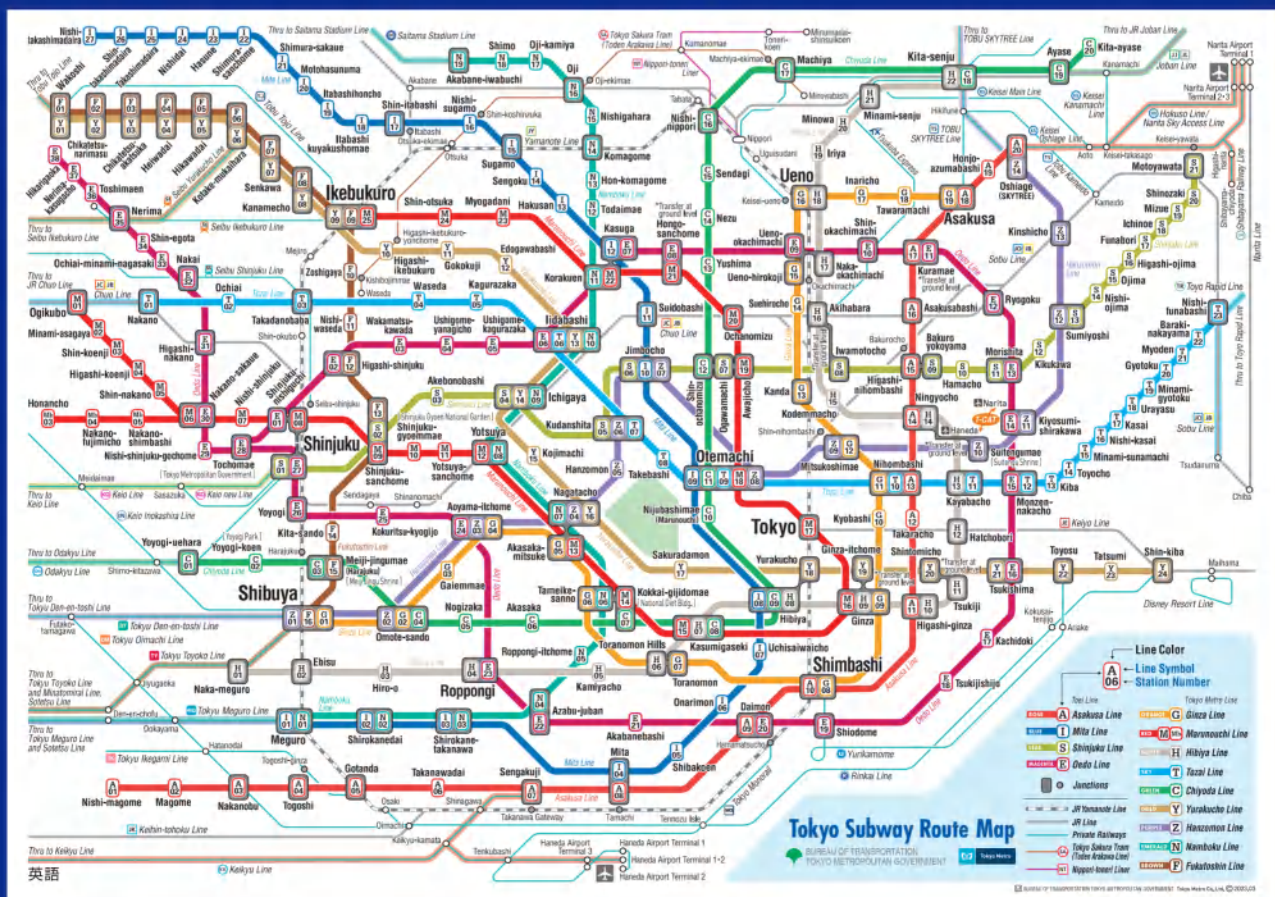
Tokyo has the most extensive rail system in the world, with over 2,000 stations and around 40 million daily passengers. Across Japan, trains are the main mode of transport and account for nearly half of all distance traveled. Japan is also famous for the Shinkansen (bullet train), the world's first high-speed rail, which remains one of the fastest and most efficient ways to travel medium to long distances.

When traveling in Japan, you can purchase individual train tickets from vending machines, inserting the ticket both when entering and exiting the gates; the machine keeps the ticket at your destination.

- For convenience, we strongly recommend getting a rechargeable IC card (such as Suica or Pasmo in Tokyo), which can be used nationwide on trains, buses, some taxis, and even at convenience stores or fast food shops.
- Other regional IC cards (Icoca, PiTaPa, Nimoca, Manaca, etc.) are also compatible.
- If you plan to stay in Japan for more than a month or commute frequently, a commuter pass (定期券 / Teiki-ken) may be worthwhile, allowing unlimited rides between two chosen stations for 1, 3, or 6 months. Longer passes often provide greater discounts, and commuter passes can also be used on weekends.

Below is the metro map for Tokyo, you might find more information at:

<https://www.tokyometro.jp/en/index.html>



NOTE

Japanese trains, especially in cities like Tokyo, are famously crowded during rush hours. Many commuters hold a briefcase, book, or phone in front of their chest. This is done to avoid accidental contact in crowded spaces. Keeping your hands visible in front of you helps prevent misunderstandings.

Etiquette on trains is very important in Japan, and as a foreigner you may attract more attention. To avoid causing discomfort to others:

- Wear your backpack on your front in crowded trains.
- Keep conversations quiet, especially during rush hour. Speaking loudly is considered rude.
- Switch your phone to silent mode. Avoid taking calls on commuter trains and shinkansen.
- Always let passengers exit before boarding. During peak hours, some people may step off temporarily to let others out—leave them space to re-enter.
- If you need to push inside, do so gently with your hands, never with your bag.
- Don't rush. Trains are extremely frequent, sometimes arriving every 1–2 minutes in the mornings.



Your internship is not just about work but it's also a chance to experience Japan's rich culture, history, and natural beauty. Use weekends and free days to discover what Japan has to offer!

Weekend Day Trips (from Tokyo)

- Nikkō – Ornate shrines (Toshogu), waterfalls, and mountain scenery. Perfect for history and nature lovers. (~2 hours by train)
- Kamakura – Famous for the Great Buddha, temples, and a relaxed beachside atmosphere. (~1 hour by train)
- Hakone – Known for hot springs, Mount Fuji views, and traditional ryokan inns. (~1.5 hours by train/bus)

Longer Trips (by Shinkansen or Domestic Flight)

- Kyoto – Traditional Japan with temples, shrines, tea ceremonies, and geisha districts. (~2.5 hrs by bullet train)
- Osaka – Lively nightlife, friendly locals, and delicious street food. (~3 hrs by bullet train)
- Hiroshima – Visit the Peace Memorial Park, historical sites, and nearby Miyajima Island with its floating torii gate. (~4 hrs by bullet train)

For safety, all participants must inform local staff, internship supervisor as well as their family members of their travel plans before departure.



IX. RETURNING HOME

Some students experience reverse culture shock when returning home after their time abroad in Tokyo. This is completely normal and can feel similar to the culture shock you experienced while adjusting to life in Japan. You may find that your perspective has shifted, and everyday routines or social interactions at home may feel different or even challenging at first.



To ease this transition, it is important to stay connected with the friends and contacts you made in Japan. Maintaining these relationships can help you continue to feel connected to your international experience. Additionally, we encourage you to get involved with your campus's international office or study abroad community. Sharing your experiences, stories, and insights about Japanese culture can inspire other students to explore study abroad opportunities and help you process and reflect on your own journey.



Take the time to reflect on your growth, the skills you've developed, and the unique experiences you've had. Studying abroad is a life-changing opportunity, and your time in Tokyo is something to celebrate and carry forward into your academic, personal, and professional life. We hope you have an unforgettable and transformative experience!

Are you interested in more program opportunity? If so, please contact the G-MEO New York Office for information.

X. USEFUL LINKS & APPS

Visa & Immigration

- MOFA – Visa Waiver Countries (≤ 90 days):
https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html#notice08
- MOFA – Working Holiday Programmes:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/w_holiday/index.html

Preparation & Arrival

- Japan Customs (prohibited/restricted items):
<http://www.customs.go.jp/english/summary/passenger.htm>
- Kuro-Neko Yamato – Airport Luggage Delivery:
<http://www.kuronekoyamato.co.jp/en/tourist/airport/>

Health & Medical

- Hiroo International Clinic: <http://www.hiroo-ic.com/>
- SAKURA Clinic (Orthopedics): <https://www.sakuraclinic.info/en/>
- Trust Dental: <http://www.trustedental.jp/english/index.htm>
- Nori's Medical Clinic: <http://estdoc.jp/english/doctor/0164575.html>
- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare – Medication Rules:
http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health_medical/pharmaceuticals/01.html

SIM & Payment

- Mobal SIM (Intern discount – 30% off):
<https://www.mobal.com/japan-sim-card-1/?source=3023>
- MobalPay – Prepaid Card (50% off setup fee):
<https://www.mobalpay.com/?src=3472>



Learning Japanese

- AnkiMobile Flashcards (iOS) / AnkiDroid (Android) – Spaced-repetition flashcards for learning vocab
- imiwa (iOS) / IMI (Android) – Japanese dictionary & translation app
- Weblio (iOS & Android) – Japanese-English dictionary

Transport & Travel

- Japan Travel by NAVITIME (iOS & Android) – Excellent for train/bus routes, timetables, and tourist navigation
- JR East Train Info (iOS & Android) – Real-time updates on JR train lines, delays, and service changes

Everyday Life

- Yahoo! Japan Weather (iOS & Android) – Accurate local weather forecasts and rain radar
- PayPay (iOS & Android) – Widely used mobile payment app in Japan
- Google Translate (iOS & Android) – Translate menus, signs, or conversations (camera mode is very useful)

Food & Shopping

- Tabelog (iOS & Android) – Japan's biggest restaurant review/rating platform (like Yelp)
- Uber Eats Japan (iOS & Android) – Food delivery service in major cities
- Rakuten (iOS & Android) – Online shopping & deals, popular alternative to Amazon

Culture & Learning

- HelloTalk (iOS & Android) – Language exchange app to practice Japanese with locals
- NHK World (iOS & Android) – English-language Japanese news, culture, and learning resources

Safety & Essentials

- Japan Official Quake App (Yurekuru Call, iOS & Android) – Earthquake early warning system
- Google Maps Street View (iOS & Android) – Very useful for finding exact entrances/exits in big Japanese cities



Have a great time!

