

Welcome to Japan

Handbook for New Faculty



A guide to help you settle in to your new home in Osaka

Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin



*Informed, Caring
Creative Individuals
Contributing to
a Global Community*

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Welcome

Welcome to Osaka, Japan, and to Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin. The following information is designed to assist you and your family in preparing for relocation to Japan. We have included what we think is the most important information you will need, but we may have not covered everything. On the other hand, some of the points we mention may be seen as redundant, and can be skipped when you already know about them. Several decisions will have to be based on your own judgment as well.

Feel free to contact us anytime if you have any questions or concerns. We are always happy to answer any questions you may have, and it is better to find things out sooner than to risk confusion or disappointment later on.

Katsuoji Temple is in Minoh, a short distance from the school



Dotonburi is one of the shopping, restaurant and nightlife centres of Osaka, about 30 minutes away by train

Osaka Castle is about 30 minutes away by train



About 45 minutes by train is Universal Studios Japan, and the famous Osaka Aquarium

Documentation

Passports

The first and foremost requirement for your relocation is a valid passport for each family member. It can be time consuming and more costly renewing from within Japan, so if you are nearing renewal dates, it may be worthwhile renewing before coming.

Work Visas

Each family member will need a Japanese visa to remain in Japan over 90 days. There are essentially two kinds of visas: work visas and dependent visas. It is relatively simple to obtain appropriate visas if you carefully follow our instructions. We stress, however, that you must follow our instructions explicitly. Please make sure you always return documents or information to the School Head's office as soon as possible. Once your visa application(s) is/are processed in Japan, you will receive further information about actually getting the visa stamped into your passport in your home country.

You will receive a *visa application process* document with your contract.

Driver's License

A Japanese driver's license can be difficult and time consuming to obtain for some foreign nationalities. We highly recommend that drivers bring an *international driving license* to Japan. They are available through driving associations in most countries. **You can only use international driver licenses for one year in Japan**, so you will need to get a Japanese drivers license before your second year starts.

Obtaining a Japan driver's license can be a time consuming process. You must bring a valid license and proof that you have actually driven on this license or a previous license in the country where it was issued for more than three months. This can be difficult for an American citizen who has been living abroad as US Immigration does not always stamp passports upon leaving or entering the U.S.

For citizens of most countries that drive on the left hand side like Japan, obtaining a Japan driver's license means about a half-day at the license authority to convert your own country license to a Japanese one. For Americans and other nationalities that drive on the right, it means having to taking a driving test, which is more complicated and we ask that you plan ahead so as to fit that in one of your holidays so that it does not affect school. Please note that, to prepare for the test, drivers are able to rent the driving course which is located near the testing centre. This is the same course that will be used during the real test. Most people will fail the test at least once, and it is common to fail two or three times.

A safety hint for US drivers; most rules are the same except for driving on the RHS, however please note there are NO free turns on red lights, as there are in the US.

Photos

You will need a few passport size photos for various cards and licences. To save time, you can bring a few passport size and a few 4cm x 3cm sized-photos with you, or you can get some made here outside the Kansai Supermarket near the school, or at any Family Mart or most convenience stores in town.

Important Documents to have

You will need to bring your important documents like:

- birth certificates
- wedding certificates
- adoption papers
- your old driver's license
- vaccination records for your children and extra copies
- medical records pertaining to your children if needed

It would be best to hand-carry these to Japan. We should already have your transcripts and degree at the school; these will be returned to you when you arrive.

Exchange Rates

Since OIS opened in 1991, the US\$ JPY exchange rate has been as high as ¥147 and as low as ¥85. Some prices in Japan may seem high to you initially, but once you start to evaluate costs in yen instead of your own currency (your salary is paid in yen), the prices will appear very reasonable. The current exchange rate in Japan from July 2019 is US\$1 = JPY108.

Salary Payments

Salaries are paid from August 1 to July 31 in 12 monthly payments, on the 25th of each month. Soon after your arrival, the business office assists you in opening a yen bank account with Shinsei Bank. Your salary and other reimbursements are automatically deposited in this account each month.

Banking

Many of your regular monthly bills (e.g. utilities) can be paid automatically via your bank account. Cash withdrawals from your Japanese bank account can be made from ATM's throughout the country. Cash withdrawals from your foreign bank account can be made at many convenience stores, including the ubiquitous 7-11.

Please note Japan is a "check-less" society so you won't be writing checks here unless they are for sending to your home country to pay for domestic credit card bills, etc. More information on banking and other financial matters will be provided following your arrival.

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If you feel comfortable bringing a little bit of cash you are more than welcome to, however you may need to travel a little distance from school to find an exchange bureau. You can bring your overseas credit cards to use in Japan, and it is common for teachers to apply for Japanese credit cards issued by Amazon or Rakuten when they are here too.

If you have a bank account in your home country, it is a good idea to keep it to make wire transfers back to your bank. US account holders can also choose to have their health insurance claim reimbursements transferred to their US bank accounts. Alternatively, the reimbursements can be transferred to your Japanese bank account.

Income Taxes

Your salary and most benefits are subject to Japanese income taxes, national and local, which are withheld from your monthly salary. Dependents' tuition remission is treated just like salary, and is taxed as such; the amount will vary according to salary and the tuition fees, however the business office will be able to provide a more specific estimation if required. In addition, tax is paid on insurance premiums paid by the school and on home allowance used for destinations other than your home of record. We estimate these taxes to be from 15-20% depending on your salary, number of dependents, etc. The business office automatically files your tax information with the National Tax Office each December so you don't have to file a personal tax return. As you are only working for five months in your first fiscal year, you may anticipate a sizable national tax refund (in January) of a portion of your first year taxes paid. Local taxes are paid a year in arrears, so when you leave the country you will be responsible for one year of local taxes. The good side of this is, you will not need to pay any the first year here!

You may be required to file an income tax return in your own country and should inquire about local, state and national tax requirements before you get to Japan. Foreign embassies and consulates in Japan do provide some tax information, but it is often limited.

Initial Costs

Your relocation allowance is given to you soon after arrival to help pay for your initial expenses (i.e. phone deposit, appliances, etc.). This allowance should last you until your first salary payment is deposited on August 25th. It would still be wise to bring the equivalent of at least US\$300 per family member for unexpected expenses, or ensure you have enough money to draw on from ATMs.

Shipping Household & Personal Goods

Bring vs Buy

Packing Hints

Each person/family is different in their needs and lifestyle, however please keep in mind that Japanese homes (apartments and houses) may be smaller than those you are accustomed to.

- Make a list of essential items your family needs to set up a basic household, and have each family member make a personal list.
- You can get most things in Japan that you get in most home countries, so consider purchasing items such as towels, sheets, kitchen basics etc. in Japan while you wait for your big shipment. Just make sure you have all the things you need for your first couple of weeks (shipments may take up to two months to arrive, depending on shipping country). There is an *IKEA*, *Nitori* and many other places to purchase these homegoods.
- Second hand appliances, furniture, dishes, bicycles, etc. and are available at second hand stores (*ZERO*, *Second Street*, *Hard Off*). There are also used furniture stores in the area.
- We recommend you be cautious when buying household goods unseen from departing faculty. In addition, storage can be a problem since departing faculty leave in early July, and there is limited storage at school. That being said, some of the larger items may be available for reasonable discounts.
- Please bring personal hygiene items in your air luggage to help you while you're waiting for your shipment. Remember to carry all your important personal papers with you on the plane such as the invitation from the school on cardstock paper that allows you to get your visa at the airport

Voltages

The household voltage in Japan is 100v/60 cycles, so if you are coming from a 100v-120v country, your appliances (coffee maker, blender, toaster oven, vacuum cleaner, crockpot, standing lamps, etc) should work properly, although their speed or heat output may vary slightly. Appliances with DC motors will also work satisfactorily.



Please note the plug type in Japan is Type A, in common with the US, Canada and Mexico. European or Australian plugs need adapters, and if you are coming from the US, it would be wise to bring a supply of 3-to-2 prong plug adapters if you have appliances that require a ground.

Anything that runs on 220-volts will need a transformer, and they often cost more than the appliance you intend to run. Most appliances in Japan are reasonably priced, so consider buying new here.

Light Fittings

Keep in mind when moving into your apartment or house you might have to buy all of the light fixtures and bulbs to plug into the ceiling.

Appliances

Japan has some of the best appliances in the world with an incredible range of new line products, but prices can be high for new models – or cheaper for older models! You should also consider the fact that larger appliances made outside Japan may be too large for Japanese homes (i.e., refrigerators, dryers, etc.), not to mention too expensive to ship to Japan. Discount stores do offer some good buys on used appliances, as do foreigners leaving Japan. Most houses do not come with an oven so you would have to purchase a microwave/oven for your house.



Televisions

Do not bring a television as the frequencies for channels are different here. FM radios also have a different range of frequencies. VCRs are very inexpensive here, although it can be hard to find worldwide compatible (NTSC/PAL/SECAM) VCRs here.

DVDs

To be able to play DVDs on players bought in Japan, discs need to be Region 2 *and* NTSC. If you have a DVD collection, you will need to bring along a multisystem, region-free player, as it is quite rare to find these systems in stores in Japan. DVDs from video stores are generally in the original language with Japanese sub-titles.

Mobile phones

While most mobile phone models can be used in Japan today, some older phones may not work due to different technologies. Most teachers start a mobile phone contract once they arrive (the business office can offer more information and assistance with this on arrival). Monthly fees range from around ¥3,000 to ¥10,000.

Entertainment Items

If you are planning to bring any gaming consoles and /or hand held game devices, please be aware that most games are also tied to regions, and the games sold in Japan may not work in your consoles (and vice versa). Amazon.com may ship some games to Japan, but due to customs and region regulations, some games will not be available.

Larger bookstores like *Kinokuniya* and *Junkado* stock English-language titles, but the selection is limited and tends to be more expensive. Once school starts, the school library has a good collection of books for young children, students and adults, and *Amazon.co.jp* has many English books without the overseas shipping charges of *Amazon.com*. If you are coming from the U.S. you may want to mail some of your books via the cheaper “library rate” available through the post office.

Satellite TV (Sky) is available, as is cable TV in many areas, both offering many English language channels such as CNN, Star channel etc. Many families opt for Apple TV or similar devices, although please note that they will connect to the Japanese version of the services you subscribe to (for example: Netflix will connect to Japan Netflix.)

Computers

If you have a new computer, you should probably bring it with you. If you are using an older machine you might want to purchase a newer model and bring it, or buy one here. At school, teachers either have their own or a school computer in their office/room, and OIS/SIS has several computer labs and mobile laptop carts. The school has campus-wide WiFi, and our school computers mostly run Windows 7, with MS Office and a dedicated GAFE domain. If you have programs that you wish to use, it would be most convenient to buy them before you arrive, however, you must get pre-authorization before buying software if you want to be reimbursed for it. Licensed software can be installed on our servers subject to tech support approval. Software is generally not in English, and not always available in stores in Japan, however, it is easy to order from the Internet, and there are a number of companies that cater for ‘Gaijin’ (foreigners) in Japan.

Please be advised that printer cartridges available in Japan may not be the correct fit for printers brought from overseas. Also be aware that the paper size in Japan is A4/A3 size (or B4/B5) rather than Letter size.

Cooking facilities in Japanese homes

Japanese apartments and houses usually come with built-in gas ranges, with 2-4 gas hobs and a small broiler/grill. You may want to bring an electric frying pan if you have one, or buy one here. Used gas ranges are usually available for approximately ¥20,000-¥50,000 if you want something bigger. Locally made ranges rarely have ovens; most households rely on a separate microwave/oven, which are readily available to suit a range of budgets. Please note that apartments are often wired to handle a maximum load of 2000 watts, so simultaneous use of several large appliances can occasionally be a problem.

Beds/bedding

Whilst futons are synonymous with Japan, regular beds are common, so it is not necessary to bring your own (unless you have a special affinity to it!) You may want to try “futons” or floor mattresses though, as they are often credited with a range of health benefits.

All of the bedding for futons is available in a broad price range (¥15,000 to ¥40,000 per person). For bedding sizes, you might want to check out this handy [Wikipedia guide to bedding standards](#) around the world.

Places to buy furniture include *IKEA* (further away) and *Nitori* (close to school). You can take public transport to *IKEA* and take a shuttle that leaves from Namba Station in downtown Osaka. Large items can be delivered to your house for a fee.

Drapes/Curtains

You may live in a house with “shoji” paper doors in front of glass doors and windows, which can take the place of draperies. However, floor length drapes do insulate and are recommended for use in Japanese homes in the winter. A good idea is to bring a mail order catalog (or use a good internet site) for these items and order them once you know your home and sizes. Of course, they are also available here, and on occasion, you might be lucky enough to rent housing that includes some curtains or drapes. Drapes and curtains can be purchased at *Nitori* or *IKEA*.

Kitchen

You can purchase almost anything here at a variety of prices depending on the quality you want. (Please note that everything is metric.) U.S. model microwave and convection ovens are larger than most Japanese models and can be used in Osaka without problems (although they will operate slightly slower). Japanese microwaves are worth trying though; the latest models come with 420 cooking pre-set options, WiFi and an applications for your iPhone!

Utensils, cutlery and crockery

100 yen shops are very popular amongst expats and locals. They have an amazing selection of goods, including cutlery and plates for only 100 yen, and the quality is surprisingly very good. *DAISO* is a popular 100 Yen shop in Kita Senri which is close to the school. *Nitori* and *IKEA* will also provide a wide variety of kitchen items.



The Daiso ¥100 shop in Kita Senri

Furniture

Size is the most important factor. If you decide to bring any furniture at all, be sure it is conservative in space requirements, as it will have to fit into small rooms. Good wooden furniture here is expensive and the selection somewhat limited. *Nitori* and *IKEA* have furniture options. Chests, footlockers, studio chairs, small bookcases, living room pillows, small carpets, a full-length mirror, table lamps, etc., anything that makes your home your own, are good things to bring along. Because your initial shipment is designed for mainly non-furniture items, however, you must consider carefully what to include.

Clothing

Families may want to buy sets of clothing and shoes prior to coming because of the size differences and the fact that medium to larger sizes are harder to find. Reasonably good quality but cheap clothing is available (such as at *Uniqlo* stores, one of which is near school at Senri Chuo). *H&M* also stocks larger sizes.

The Osaka area has four distinct seasons, thus, you will need clothing ranging from loose-fitting cotton shirts and shorts in the summer to a good jacket, sweaters and “booties” for the winter.

Month	Avg. Temp (C)	Precipitation (mm)	Humidity	Notes
Jan	5.5	45.8	61	cold
Feb	5.8	60.4	60	▼
Mar	8.6	102.0	59	
Apr	14.6	133.8	60	moderate
May	19.2	139.4	62	▼
Jun	23.0	206.4	69	rainy season
Jul	27.0	156.9	70	▼
Aug	28.2	94.8	67	hot, humid
Sept	24.2	171.5	68	▼
Oct	18.3	107.5	66	cool, clear
Nov	12.9	65.1	64	▼
Dec	7.9	34.4	62	

Temperature and precipitation averages courtesy of the Meteorological Agency



The nearby Minoo Falls in winter

Shoes

Given the custom of taking off your shoes whenever you go in a home, it can be convenient to wear slip-on shoes. Larger shoe sizes (size 8 American women and size 10 American men and above) are slightly more difficult to find here, so bring your own, especially dress shoes.

Eye glasses/Contact lenses

Eyewear is quite affordable in Japan. There are many options and stores around the school and town. You can also get your glasses at *Costco*. They come in a variety of prices, but are quite reasonable. This will also depend if you choose designer brands or not. Many teachers are extremely happy with their glasses and the high quality service here in Japan.

Personal hygiene products

If you want to bring along a 2-3 month supply of brand items that your family likes (i.e. shampoo, toothpaste, contact lens solution, perfumes or other personal hygiene items) this will give yourself time to orient yourself to Japan and shopping. In the beginning it will be hard to recognize brands so by having your things it will give you time to adapt. Brands here may be different but there is generally a good range.

Professional materials

Contact your principal to help you determine which professional materials you should bring with you. Teachers have access to teaching materials at affordable prices through Amazon.co.jp.

Miscellaneous

Don't forget the things that might be special to you and which you can justify in your weight allotment, such as:

- Christmas ornaments (you can get cheap artificial trees and lights at *Costco* etc.)
- You may want to bring some specialist tools if you are a DIY person, although DIY shops like *KONAN* carry a massive range, and common tools can also be bought at the 100 yen shop.
- If you have a special brand of cosmetics you like, chances are you will find them here, but there are no guarantees. If you can't live without them, bring a supply. It might be hard to find your skin tone as well.



What *Not* to Bring

Air Conditioners/Heaters

Although the changes in temperature between seasons is significant, Japanese houses are usually not centrally heated or air-conditioned. The renter is expected to provide these. While comparatively expensive, it is recommended that these items be purchased here with our recommendation and help.

Firearms

The laws here are very strict. Handguns are illegal and swords and hunting rifles require a complex licensing process. If you have any questions, ask for information at a Japanese Embassy or Consulate.

TVs/VCRs/DVDs *(more notes about...)*

Again, we do not recommend that you bring a foreign TV, VCR, or DVD unless you need them to play non-NTSC videos, or non-region 2 DVDs. It goes without saying that Japanese TVs, VCRs and DVDs are excellent quality, and with good advice and some outlay of money, you will be able to receive English language broadcasts.

What's Available in Japan

Food

Foreign foods are now commonly available in Japan, with prices ranging from cheap (*Costco*) to expensive at specialty stores. There are several outlets for foreign products in Osaka and Kobe, and most big supermarkets have a supply of some foreign goods.

- *iherb.com* has a large selection of natural food and body products. The shipping is often free or at a very minimal rate.
- *The Foreign Buyer's Club* in Kobe offers literally hundreds of non-Japanese food and household products (and books!) at prices somewhere between those in Japan and North America. FBC items can be bought by the case as well as individually. See here for more info: www.fbcusa.com
- *Q's Mall* is a large mall about 10 minutes' drive from school.
- *Costco* (a Seattle based discount warehouse) is about 50 minutes' drive from school.
- *Amazon.co.jp* has a huge selection of products and shipping is often free even if you buy only one small item.
- *Theflyingpig.com* sells products from *Costco*.
- *Profoods* and *Grandmarche* are grocery stores near the school that have foreign and unique products.
- *Takenoko* (a.k.a. *Gyomu Supa*) and *Kansai Supa* are the two most frequently visited supermarkets near the school. They both have plenty of variety in their selections, although it's worth noting that prices for fresh foods are significantly different when the fruit or vegetable is in season.

For children who have specific likes/dislikes (as well as parents!), bringing a reasonable supply of your favorite product may be a good idea, although more and more specialist foods are becoming available each year (such as Vegemite for the people from Down Under).

On Arrival

Magazines & Newspapers

Some OIS expatriates subscribe to one of Japan's English language newspapers, but many rely on the internet now. Foreign newspapers and magazines are available in several stores, but subscribing to magazines is cheaper and more convenient than purchasing them here. The school library also has a good selection of magazines and newspapers. You may want to have your favorites mailed to the school (see address on back page) until you have a home address.

Internet Access

There are several global Internet providers in Osaka. Most of the faculty and families are fully wired and wireless at home, most being on cable (although this depends on your area and apartment). Asahi.net is a popular Internet provider. They have an English line which is so helpful for non-Japanese speakers (03-6631-0861 or toll free call 0120-577-135). Some people choose to purchase WIMAX, which allows you to avoid contracts and gives you immediate internet access at your home. If you do choose another provider it can take up to 3 weeks to set you up. WIMAX can be tricky if you are living in an apartment as opposed to a house.

Customs Declaration *(needed for unaccompanied baggage)*

You should receive two copies of this form on the airplane coming to Japan. If you don't, please ask for them. They are also available in the baggage claim area. **These forms are very important.** They are necessary for customs clearance of items you ship or mail to Japan. Without these forms you will have to pay duty on these items.

- **Two** copies must be filled out. Use the school's address as your address. **One of these you will leave with the customs official who checks your baggage. Keep the other one and do not lose it!**

This is your only official record for clearing later baggage arrivals without incurring customs duties. At the bottom of the first side of the form, you will have to **estimate** the number of boxes in your shipment. Over-estimate this number to be safe. If you don't receive the forms on the airplane, ask for two **before** you leave the customs area.

Airports

There are two airports in Osaka. Kansai International Airport (KIX) is located on a man-made island about 48 miles (70 km) from the school. Itami (or Osaka) Airport is used primarily for domestic flights, and is 20 minutes from the school. Occasionally people will enter the country at Narita Airport in Tokyo, and then fly to Itami.



Finding Accommodation

Where will you live

When you first arrive you will be put up in a hotel at the school's expense in the few days it may take to get you to find an apartment or house. We will discuss your housing needs with you before you arrive, and attempt to give you as much information as possible in order to help you decide on what you want in terms of housing. The school has a realtor who takes you around to see different properties. You need to be decisive on what you want (apartment/house, large/small, inexpensive, sizes, number of rooms etc), There is a non-refundable deposit that is given only one time, so if you did not like your choice, it would be expensive to move again.

Please note that in Japanese homes each room is heated separately. Apartments tend to be warmer in the winter as there are other apartments around you as opposed to houses, which are standalone.



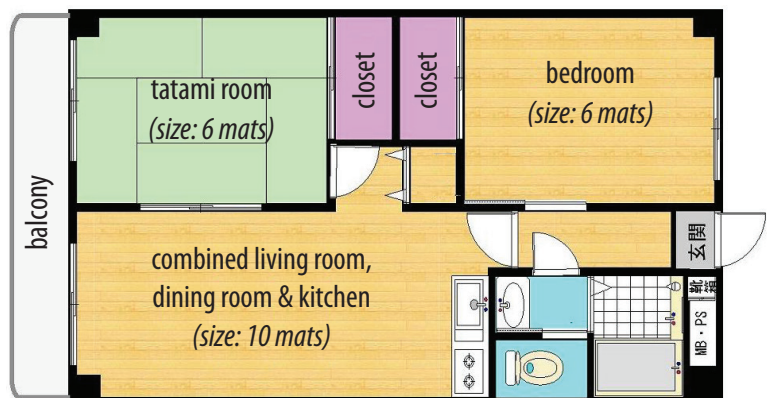
Note: Obon is a 3-4 day holiday in the second week of August that can significantly impair your settling-in period, as many utilities (such as gas, power, cable companies etc.) limit their services whilst staff go on holiday, so be prepared to work around this.

Sizes/Rents

Our faculty and staff rent a variety of houses and apartments in north Osaka, from small apartments with two rooms and just over 300 sq. ft., to large, suburban houses with almost 2,100 sq. ft. Below are some averages and ranges, but remember that in all instances, the rooms will probably be smaller (and colder in the winter), there will usually be one toilet, and you will have less of a lawn or garden, than you may be used to now. Room size is referred to in units called "tatami mats". Common bedroom sizes are:

- 4.5 mats (8.5'x 8.5' or 6.71m²)
- 6 mats (8.5'x 11.5' or 7.52m²)
- 8 mats (11.5' x 11.5' or 12.28m²)

Two mats equal 3.3m² so an 8-mat room is about 150 sq.ft. Living rooms are usually not much more than 300 sq.ft.



Sample floorplan for a typical single occupancy apartment

Faculty	Avg. size (m^2)	Avg. rent (monthly)	Size range (m^2)	Avg. costs (monthly)
Single	80	¥100,000	40-110	¥68,000-¥200,000
Married	110	¥120,000	60-160	¥100,000-¥200,000
Family	140	¥150,000	120-180	¥115,000-¥232,000

(Multiply square meterage by 10 for an approximation in square feet)

In General

The houses tend to be close together, and yards (if you have one) are small. Neighborhoods are safe and relatively crime-free, however, note Osaka actually has the highest crime rate in Japan (albeit low by global standards), so commonsense precautions should be observed. Homes are rarely centrally heated/air conditioned when you rent so generally your first big expense (and which gets paid out of your settling-in allowance) is for heaters/air conditioners. You will have to see which heating devices work best for your family and needs. The humid summers means it is important to by dehumidifying crystals for your closets and drawers. These can be purchased at any supermarket or 100 Yen shop.

Houses or apartments usually have Western plumbing and are completely unfurnished when rented.

Though all houses have wood or linoleum floors in the kitchen/dining area, some of the houses you look at will have one or more rooms which will be covered with thick, closely woven straw mats called *tatami*.



Instead of beds, you may choose to purchase *futon* (stuffed sleeping mats) and futon mattresses (foam rubber mats), which can be folded during the day to provide more living space.

Kitchens are not usually furnished with a range, refrigerator or oven, and the counter and shelf space is usually limited. Size of family, individual needs, taste and location make a difference.

Bicycles, Motorcycles and Automobiles

Parking

Parking spaces are very limited in Japan. It is important to ask the landlord whether parking is available and/or whether or not it is included in the price of a house or apartment. Even to license a car, you have to have a certification form from the police that proves you have a parking spot – and they do visit to check! If you have to find one later, it could cost you ¥8,000-¥20,000/mth or more the closer you are to a train station.

Deposits

The landlord usually requires certain deposits. These take various forms, but typically they include a payment of 3-4 months of non-refundable rent (key money) and up to six months of a refundable deposit. The school will cover the *non-refundable* costs up to three times the monthly rent of the unit you choose and will loan you money for refundable deposits, if necessary, at a very reasonable rate over 1 or 2 years. You will get most of your refundable when you leave if you don't trash your house/apartment

Utilities

We hesitate to give you utility costs because they vary tremendously from home to home depending on how often you bathe, your comfort threshold for hot and cold weather, the amount of insulation your home has, etc. Please look at the appendix for a sample budget including some household utility costs.

Bicycles

Bicycles are popular and useful in Japan. Bring your bicycles if they are in good condition and you can fit them in. Reasonably priced new and used bicycles can be purchased for ¥10,000-¥20,000. The most common style in Japan is a 'city bike', with 3-5 gears and a large basket on the front for shopping.



Electric bikes are also popular here. Top of the line mountain and racing bikes are also available, but are more expensive.

Motorcycles

Motorcycles are also popular. You only need a normal driver's license to drive a moped (49cc and below). For larger motorcycles, you will require a motorcycle license (*see driver's license section*).

Pets

Automobiles

Public transportation all over Japan and Osaka is excellent. However, since our school is located in a suburban area, and for convenience, many faculty members have cars. Decent used cars are readily available and can be purchased from approximately ¥200,000 to ¥800,000. New cars and vans will start at around ¥1 million. Expenses for vehicle inspection every two years, compulsory insurance, taxes, additional insurance and parking are not included in the prices above, and can be considerable. The vehicle inspection fees (*shakken*) tend to start at ¥70,000, and that's before anything has been fixed or replaced. Keep in mind that a car cannot be purchased unless a parking space is secured in advance; you will usually need to show documents to prove you are renting a space when you purchase the car.

Public Transportation

Using a prepaid travel card instead of buying tickets each time you ride is the most convenient. If you have young children you must take their passports and head down town to JR Osaka station in Umeda and sign up your children to get their cards. Adults can buy them without having to register. They sell these at one of the ticket vending machines that has the sign ICOCA. These work on any bus or train except the *Shinakansen* (the intercity bullet trains). All you need to do is recharge your card with more money when your cards runs out. The other option is to buy individual tickets for each ride but that can become a hassle especially with larger families, or if you are rushing to catch a train. There are numerous great websites to help you with information about routes, train or bus times, platform numbers, and ticket prices for all public transportation around the country, such as jorudan.co.jp. There are also several great applications for your phone, such as *Osaka Rail*. Needless to say, Japan's public transportation systems are modern, clean, and highly punctual.

If you plan to bring a pet to Japan, consult the Japanese Embassy or Consulate for information about inoculations and quarantine regulations. Experience has shown that you must follow Consulate/Embassy instructions to the letter to avoid a long quarantine. If you come from the US, you will also have to deal with American agencies to fulfill the Japanese requirements. Pets are generally best brought as baggage on your flight, which limits what you can bring with you. At the discretion of the Japanese Veterinary Quarantine Office, pets may be subject to quarantine for a two-week period or longer, depending on where they come from, and you need an import certificate. Costs of transportation, quarantine and veterinary fees can be very high. Budget for up to ¥50,000 plus the cost of moving the pet from Kansai International Airport (88 km) as a guide.

Veterinary care is excellent. Don't plan a stopover in Hawaii en route if you have a pet, due to the local four-month quarantine.

Medical Services



Please be advised that many landlords prohibit tenants from having pets, so bringing a pet eliminates many good choices for housing. Some faculty members have had an easy time importing and living with pets in a rented home, others have had disasters. Either way, it is expensive to have your pet in quarantine and then shipped to your new home.

General Medical Information

Good medical and dental services are readily available throughout Japan, though the styles and practices of physicians and caregivers may be very different from what you are used to. Three hospitals in the Kansai area specialize in service to foreigners, and Japanese hospitals have specialists in all fields of medicine. Though medications are readily available, it may be easier and cheaper to bring a supply of any patent medicines, vitamins, etc., that you like to keep on hand. Liquid aspirin for children is not locally available. Also, medicine for chronic conditions is best brought with you with enough for a full year.

If you have any specific medical questions, please ask. There are doctors and dentists that can speak English and often provide faculty members and their families with introductions to other medical specialists as needs arise. (Dr. Fuji is an English-speaking dentist near the school that many families use.) The Minoh City Hospital is very close to the school and has a wide range of doctors with different specialties. Some families prefer to go there but ultimately it is up to you and what you prefer for your health care. You need to pay for your services upfront and then receive reimbursement from your health insurance. Your forms must be submitted to your health insurance company.

Inoculations

No inoculations are required if you are coming to Japan from the U.S. and many other countries. If you are coming from or traveling through other countries than the U.S., be sure to check regulations with the nearest Japanese Embassy or Consulate. If you have children, be sure their inoculations are up to date.

Emergency Phone Numbers

In Japan, calling 110 will put you in contact with the police and calling 119 will put you in contact with the emergency office where you can request an ambulance for medical emergencies. These numbers can be called from most pay phones without having to deposit any money.

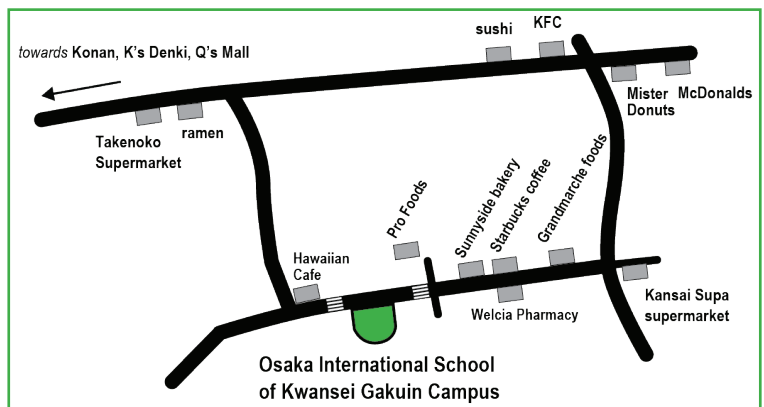
110 Police

119 Ambulance or Fire Service

Shopping

Local shops frequently used by parents and teachers (with approximate distance from school) include:

- **Welcia Pharmacy:** for prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and a range of groceries (250m)
- **Starbucks:** The usual range of coffees and snacks (250m)
- **Sunnyside Bakery:** Wonderful bakery with fresh baked bread daily. It can be difficult to find whole wheat bread (although rye bread is more widely available), as white bread is the most popular by far in Japan (250m)
- **Kansai Supa:** Supermarket with a good variety of fresh produce and groceries. Can be a bit pricier than Takenoko (500m)
- **Takenoko:** Supermarket with a wide variety of products, lots of fresh vegetables and fruits, and relatively good prices. It is very popular amongst teachers and parents (1km)
- **Konan:** Hardware store, gardening, house supplies, pet store and much, much more (1.5km)
- **K's Denki:** A large electrical and household appliances store, located above Konan (1.5km)
- **Labi Yamada Denki:** A huge electronics and household appliances store located in Senri Chuo, the largest nearby shopping centre to the school (3km)
- **Nitori:** Furniture, appliances, lights, housing etc. (3km)



Larger stores that are a little further away include:

- **Yodobashi Camera:** Probably the largest electronics and household appliances store in Japan. This is located in Umeda, approximately 30 minutes by train from Senri Chuo or Kita-Senri. (20km)
- **IKEA:** Furniture, appliances, lights, housing etc. (40km)
- **Costco:** supermarket, home appliances, gardening, etc. (20km)
- **Malls:** Qs Mall (4km), Expo City (6km), AEON Ibaraki (7km), Lalaport next to the Koshien Baseball Stadium (40km)

Suggested Reading

These are some books members of the faculty have recommended:

- *Dave Barry Does Japan*, by Dave Barry
- *The Chrysanthemum & the Sword*, by Ruth Benedict.
- *Guide to Food Buying in Japan*, by Carolyn R. Krouse (Charles E. Tuttle)
- *The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children*, by Merry White (Macmillan Publishers)
- *Japanese in 10 Minutes a Day*, (Sunset Books)
- *Japanese Today: Change & Continuity*, by Edwin O. Reischauer (Harvard University Press)
- *Japan For Kids*, by Diane Wiltshire Kanagawa and Jeanne Huey Erickson (Kodansha International)
- *Japan Money Matters*, by Robert Imre
- *Living and Working in Japan*, by Ron Davidson
- *The Story of a Nation*, Edwin O. Reischauer (McGraw-Hill)
- *Japan: Profile of a Nation*, (Kodansha)



Welcome to OIS!

Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any further questions regarding your move to Japan.

Appendix: Sample Budget

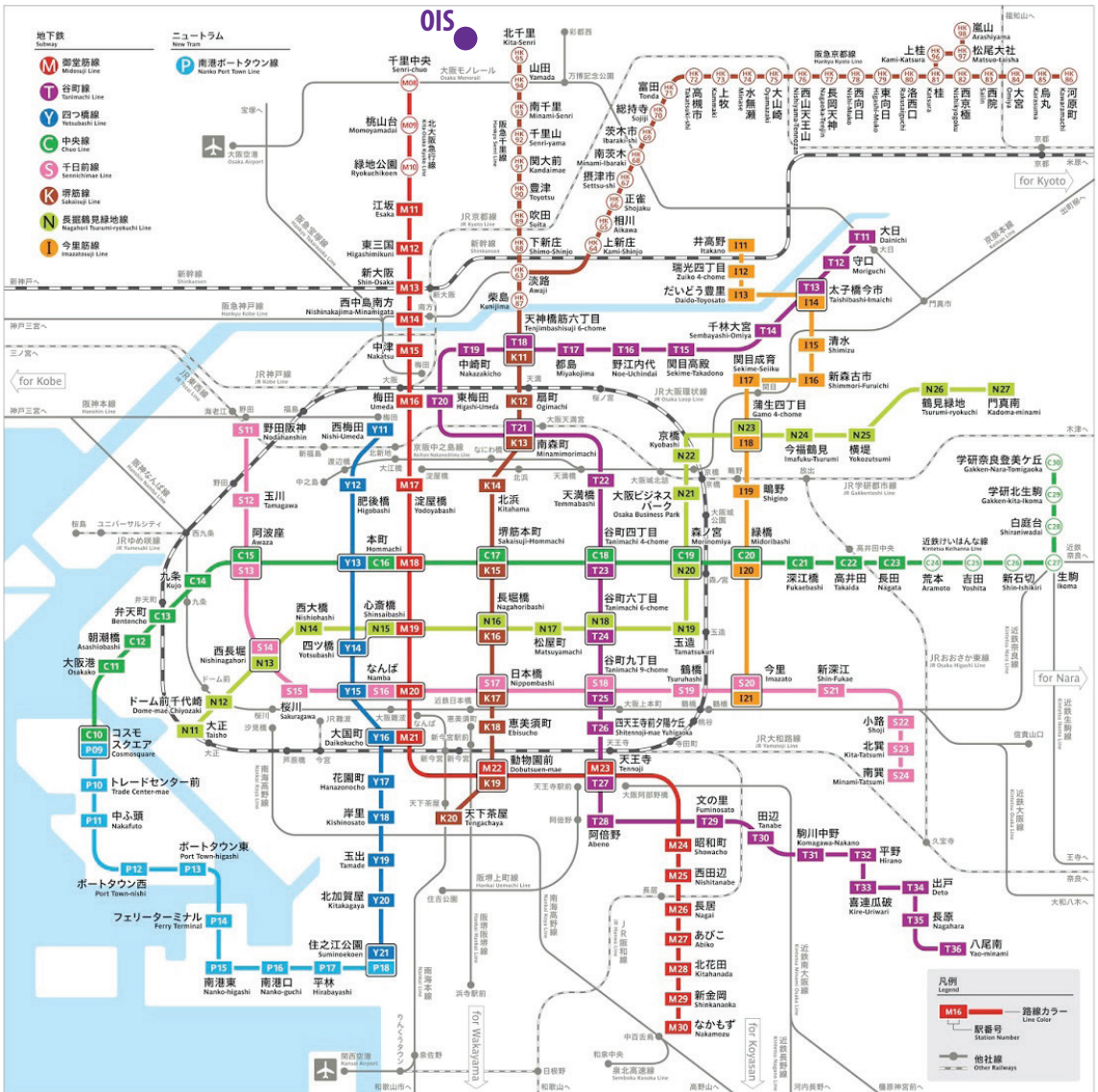
This is a sample budget for a single person. Please note that this is a guide for the purposes of giving you a rough estimate of costs associated with living in Osaka. Actual costs will differ due to the high number of variables listed above, and according to your particular lifestyle preferences:

Expense	Monthly (¥)	Notes
Rent	(see pg. 16)	dependant on size and location
Gas	3,000	dependant on hot water and cooking use, etc.
Power	4,000	dependant on air conditioner, oven use, etc.
Water	4,000	dependant on bath, shower, washing machine use, etc.
Phone	4,000	not including overseas calls
Food/household	~40,000	including toiletries, etc.
Pension fund		your 5% contribution to the school pension plan
Income tax PAYE		approximately 7% of salary, although it depends on number of dependents
Inhabitants (city) tax		approximately ¥10,000 per month for 6 months (Jun-Dec) in your 2nd year. Also varies according to salary and number of dependents.

Optional Extras	Monthly (¥)	Notes
Cable TV w/Internet	4,000	depends on location and service provider
Newspapers	3,000	internet versions are free
Mobile phone	4,000	consider adding on the global roaming package
Car insurance	2,000	plus ¥80,000 per year for registration/safety check on the car every 2nd year; plus ¥30,000-¥40,000 car tax per year, depending on car size
Petrol	5,000	
Eating out	10,000	¥650-¥5,000+ per meal; family restaurant set meals are ¥1,000-¥1,500 per person



The Expocity shopping and entertainment complex, with over 400 shops, restaurants, and an IMAX movie theatre, is about 10 minutes by train from nearby Senri Chuo



- Kita Senri and Senri Chuo stations are used by students and faculty to access the school everyday; Kita Senri is about a 15-minute walk, and both stations are served by local buses several times per hour.
- The central shopping districts of Umeda, Shinsaibashi and Namba are 30 minutes away from Senri Chuo on the red Midosuji Line.
- Kawaramachi (top right) is in central Kyoto, about 40 minutes from Awaji, which is just eight stops from Kita Senri on the brown Hankyu Line.
- The ExpoCity shopping complex, Gamba Osaka's soccer stadium and the large Banpakukoen park are just one stop to the right of Yamada station on the Osaka monorail. Yamada is one stop from Kita Senri.
- Shin-Osaka, five stops down on the red Midosuji Line, is Osaka's shinkansen hub where you can catch the bullet train to destinations throughout Japan; it is 20 minutes to Kyoto and Kobe, 45 minutes to Nagoya, 85 minutes to Hiroshima, and 150 minutes to Tokyo.
- Itami Airport (20 minutes away) offers domestic flights to destinations throughout Japan, whilst Kansai International Airport (bottom right) is your hub to Asia and the rest of the world.



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