



Top Mistakes to Avoid When Visiting Japan

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Dreaming of Japan? Read This First.

Japan is one of those destinations that feels straight out of a dream — where neon cities meet quiet temples, and every meal feels like art. It's clean, organized, and endlessly fascinating. However, Japan is also a country with deep traditions and unique etiquette that can surprise even the most seasoned travellers.

To help you make the most of your trip, we've gathered the top **Japan travel mistakes to avoid** so you can blend in like a local, skip the culture shocks, and enjoy your Japan adventure to the fullest.



1. Being too loud in public

In Japan, quiet is golden. Answering your phone on the train or chatting loudly in restaurants is a big no-no. Locals value peaceful shared spaces – so keep your voice low and switch to text instead.

Don't worry though – when it's time to unwind at a pub, festival, or karaoke bar, feel free to turn the volume up again. The golden rule of **Japanese etiquette**? Read the room and match the vibe.

2. Creating Obstacles on Public Transit

Even when trains aren't packed, it's polite to step aside at doors and ticket gates. Keep your backpack in front of you to avoid bumping others, and save snacks for the bullet train, where opening a bento box is practically a travel ritual.

Remember: Japan's trains don't run all night, even in Tokyo. Check your last departure to avoid spending the night under the bright station lights – one of the most common **first-time traveller**

mistakes in Japan.





3. Not Carrying Cash

Japan might be known for robots and high-speed trains, yet it's still a cash-loving country. Many small businesses and restaurants don't accept credit cards. Always carry some yen, and when paying, place it neatly on the small tray by the register – that's the polite Japanese way to pay.

4. Trying to Tip

Leave your tipping habits at home! In Japan, tipping isn't expected – and can even cause confusion. Service is already exceptional, and if you try to leave extra cash, don't be surprised if your server runs after you to return it (politely, of course).

If you really want to show appreciation, a simple "arigatou gozaimasu" and a smile go a long way.





5. Smoking in Public

Smokers, take note – Japan’s smoking laws are strict. Since 2020, smoking has been allowed only in designated areas. That means no puffing while walking down the street or inside restaurants and hotels. Stick to marked smoking zones to avoid fines (and a few disapproving stares).

6. Not Respecting Shrines and Temples

Temples and shrines are sacred spaces, not photo backdrops. Many visitors forget to bow at the entrance, purify their hands at the basin, or remove hats when entering worship areas.

Follow the locals’ lead – bow lightly before entering, avoid loud conversations, and never touch statues or offerings. Respect for **Japanese culture and tradition** is everything here.





7. Trying to Open Taxi Doors

Hereâ??s a fun one: in Japan, taxi doors open and close automatically! Passengers donâ??t need to touch the door â?? in fact, drivers prefer you not to. Just wait for it to open, hop in, and enjoy the smooth, hands-free service.

Itâ??s one of those **unique Japan travel experiences** that always impresses first-time visitors.

8. Getting Gestures Wrong

Non-verbal communication in Japan can be tricky. A few gestures to know:

- Donâ??t point directly at people or objects â?? use your whole hand instead.
- Crossing your arms in an â??Xâ?• means â??noâ?• or â??stop.â?•
- Nodding doesnâ??t always mean agreement; sometimes itâ??s just a polite way of listening.

A smile and a gentle bow go a long way â?? even when words donâ??.t.





9. Looking for Garbage Cans Everywhere

Japan is famously clean, yet trash bins are surprisingly rare. Locals often carry their garbage until they find a bin — usually at train stations or convenience stores.

Pro tip: keep a small bag in your purse or backpack for wrappers and bottles until you find a proper spot. It's one of those little **Japan travel tips** that makes life easier on the go.

10. Skipping Local Experiences

Japan's magic goes far beyond Tokyo's skyscrapers. Don't make the mistake of only sticking to the big cities. Stay in a traditional ryokan, soak in an onsen (hot spring), or explore smaller towns like Takayama or Kanazawa — that's where the true heart of Japan shines.

These authentic experiences offer a glimpse into local life and centuries-old traditions that make Japan so unforgettable.



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