



Destination Guide for Japan



Overview

Destination Guide Content


Destination Risk Levels

-  Low Medical Risk for Japan
-  Low Travel Risk for Japan

Standing Travel Advice

- Travel to Japan can continue with standard security precautions.
- People should comply with restrictions imposed by the government and local authorities in areas affected by natural disasters.
- Crime rates are low; take sensible basic precautions against petty and street crime.
- As a high-profile commercial centre and prominent ally of the US, Japan has the potential to be target for terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists. Domestic leftist, nationalist and other extremists have used violence in the past and further attacks are possible. Although the risk posed to business travellers is low, report suspicious behaviour or packages to the authorities.

Active Alerts (2)

 Notice
28 October 2024 at 09:26

Monitor developments in coming weeks linked to heightened regional tensions
(Revised)

Location: Asia & the Pacific

Category: Conflict

Situation:

Monitor developments in the Korean peninsula **over the coming months**. On 17 October, North Korea confirmed it has amended its constitution to redefine South Korea as a 'hostile state'. This follows the 15 October development of the North blowing up roads and rail roads in Kaesong and Kangwon linking the country with the South. The South Korean and US authorities have raised concerns about an increase in North Korean provocations before or after the US election on **5 November**. Other ways of military posturing by North Korea, including weapons' testing/launches, along with the release of trash-filled balloons (*see related alert*), are likely to continue. This would lead to persistent related regional tensions **over the coming weeks**.

Advice:

- Closely monitor all developments for potential escalation in tensions.
- Consult reliable media sources for the latest developments, taking care to distinguish between fact and rumour. South Korean media outlets are a dependable source of information regarding domestic military activity, such as air raid exercises.
- Avoid contact with fallen waste balloons and report them to the authorities.
- Monitor our alerts for updates.

More Detail:

Recent developments

The change to the constitution reportedly follows North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's order to change South Korea's status from a 'partner for reconciliation and unification'. On 16 October, the vice foreign ministers of Japan, South Korea and the US met in South Korea's capital Seoul. Following their meeting, they announced the creation of a new multinational team called Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, who will be responsible for monitoring the enforcement of sanctions against North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes. This development follows the dissolution of the UN Panel of Experts as Russia vetoed its annual renewal in March.

North Korea has been placing landmines and constructing anti-tank barriers along its borders with South Korea since the start of the year. Donghae and Gyeongui railway lines were closed by the North in August. These have been replaced with frontline defence structures to fortify the borders with the South. In response to the 15 October explosions along the stretches of border roads and railway lines, the South Korean military fired warning shots. Rail and road routes in the bordering areas have not been in operation for some time due to heightened regional tensions.

The North also recently accused the South of sending drones over North Korea's capital Pyongyang on 11 October and scattering anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets.

Meanwhile, North Korea on 12 September launched multiple short-range ballistic missiles that fell in the Sea of Japan (East Sea). On 13 September, the North revealed details of its uranium enrichment facility, which was reportedly visited by Kim Jong-un. This marked the first time North Korea publicly revealed details about it. During his visit, Kim called for the building up of a nuclear arsenal for self-defence purposes. The South Korean and US authorities said that North Korea could conduct a nuclear test or an intercontinental ballistic missile launch during the US election period.

Earlier, on 5 September, the North had criticised the recent 'Ulchi Freedom Shield' and 'Ssang Yong' military exercises between South Korea and the US.

Suspension of Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA) and aftermath

Tensions along the Korean peninsula have increased since the suspension of the 2018 inter-Korean CMA and South Korea's resumption of live fire drills in Baengnyeongdo and Daechongdo islands. The suspension allows both countries to heighten surveillance, strengthen their military positions and resume drills in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and near the Northern Limit Line (NLL). Kim Jong-un has closed agencies focused on outreach and reunification with South Korea.

South Korean activists resumed a leaflet and loudspeaker campaign across the DMZ. In response, North Korea has started launching trash-carrying balloons into the South, which can cause temporary flight disruption at airports.

Recent military activities

Bilateral military exercises between the US and South Korea have been routinely criticised by the North, which sees such drills as invasion rehearsals. One such activity, the annual three-week 'Hoguk' military exercises, began on 20 October. One element of the drills will be joint US-South Korean amphibious landings of the type that Pyongyang views as invasion rehearsals. In 2022, North Korea fired hundreds of artillery shells in response to that year's Hoguk exercises. In 2023, a reconnaissance satellite was launched into orbit following the drills. On 27 August, North Korea tested a multiple rocket launch system, following similar missile tests on 26 June and 1 July. The June and July tests coincided with the 'Freedom Edge' trilateral exercises between US, South Korea and Japan.

North Korea typically carries out military tests or drills around key dates and events, such as military exercises or important visits. Over the recent months, North Korea has conducted ballistic and cruise missile tests, satellite launches, underwater drones, and tests involving hypersonic missiles and solid-fuel engine capabilities. South Korean officials in May reported GPS radio jamming attacks by North Korea, which disrupted commercial shipping and fishing operations in the north-western islands.

Separately, missile tests and satellite launches can trigger Japan's J-ALERT (Japanese National Early Warning System) or civil defence drills in South Korea, asking people to seek shelter.

Assessment:

Despite the recent developments, we assess that the likelihood of North Korea launching a full-scale, conventional conflict against South Korea and the US is low. This is due to the severe consequences for all involved. However, North Korea may resort to limited provocations along the land and maritime borders with the South, such as sending balloons.

Overall, we expect further provocative, though largely symbolic, North Korean military actions. The country typically launches missiles immediately before or after military exercises involving South Korea, around key dates, sensitive summits and following key statements by the South about regional tensions. Such launches are liable to prompt deterrent actions, such as further military exercises and imposition of sanctions by the US, South Korea and, potentially, Japan.

North Korea's military actions and capabilities

Satellite launches by North Korea are prohibited by the UN as they are considered a cover for testing long-range missile technology. However, the North has largely ignored UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Missile launches underline North Korea's pursuit of more powerful and harder-to-detect weapons systems, indicating an increase in its technological capabilities. Cruise missiles can fly low and manoeuvre, making them better at evading missile defences. North Korea has described its missiles as 'strategic', implying a possible intent to arm them with nuclear weapons.

North Korea's testing of cruise missile and nuclear-capable underwater attack drones highlights its attempts to reinforce its deterrence capability in the maritime sphere.

Hypersonic missiles, which travel more than five times the speed of sound, theoretically make it harder for adversaries to detect and pre-empt a launch. Solid-fuel engine capabilities make it easier to move and conceal missiles, providing greater responsiveness during a crisis.

North Korea-Russia collaboration

North Korea's increased military activity can be viewed through the lens of its growing collaboration with Russia, especially amid Russia's ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

Reports have recently indicated the presence of North Korean troops in Russian occupied areas of Ukraine. Since 2023, there has been a marked increase in high-level diplomatic exchanges between the two countries. This culminated in Russian president Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea on 18-19 June. The visit resulted in the two countries signing a 'comprehensive strategic partnership' that promises immediate military assistance to each other in the event of war.

Furthermore, according to South Korea's National Intelligence Service, North Korea's successful launch of its first military satellite in November 2023 can be attributed to significant design and data assistance from Russia. This followed two previous failed attempts.

Foreign intelligence agencies have accused North Korea of supplying Russia with arms and ammunition in exchange for military technology and other supplies, including fuel. As per a South Korean military assessment, the North's expansion of winter training drills in January is indicative of an increase in fuel supplies from Russia. This took place in violation of UNSC sanctions.

Separately, US imagery evidence indicates Russia's use of North Korea's Hwasong-11 class short-range ballistic missiles in Ukraine. This provides North Korea with a rare opportunity to test its weapons in real-world combat scenarios, and thus work to improve their performance.

Escalation triggers

Recent developments indicate an escalation of tensions in the Korean peninsula, especially along the DMZ and NLL. The CMA prevented accidental clashes in the border regions and installed channels of communication between the two governments. With the agreement's suspension, there is an increased risk of tensions reaching previous levels.

In 2010, North Korean artillery fire on Yeonpyeong Island killed two civilians and two South Korean security personnel, injured 18 people and damaged more than 100 buildings. In 2015, when South Korea resumed loudspeaker broadcasts after a 11-year hiatus, North Korea fired artillery rounds across the border. In 2017, North Korea held a series of ballistic missile tests and issued nuclear threats to South Korea and Australia. This was compounded by a US-South Korea military exercise.

North Korea's growing relations with Russia and its close relations with China are likely to provide it with requisite international support. China and Russia have previously shielded North Korea from punitive action by the UN.

The high-impact nature of any military confrontation requires that managers maintain robust plans to identify signs of a genuine escalation. Managers should also continue to closely monitor a series of triggers that could precipitate escalated tensions on the Korean peninsula and in the wider region. These may require a deferral of inbound travel and the maintenance of an appropriately heightened level of preparedness.

The triggers are as follows:

- A move by South Korea to increase its military preparedness from the current DEFCON 4 (second lowest on a five-tier scale) to DEFCON 3 (middle tier), which last occurred in 1983.
- An increase in the level of warnings and advice regarding tensions in the Korean peninsula issued by various governments, such as those of Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, the UK and the US.
- A missile test in the vicinity of US military assets in the region.

Advisory

28 October 2024 at 03:14

Exercise caution, monitor developments during passage of Severe Tropical Storm Kong-rey

Location: Asia & the Pacific

Category: Storm, Flood, Landslide, Transport disruption

Situation:

Exercise caution and monitor developments **over the coming days** during the passage of Severe Tropical Storm Kong-rey, locally known as Severe Tropical Storm Leon. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) forecast Kong-rey to pass close to the Philippines without making landfall but bringing heavy rain to northern parts of Luzon island. Kong-rey is forecast to potentially intensify into a typhoon (fourth-highest on a five-tier scale) and then turn north-west towards Taiwan's (China) east coast, with landfall possible between **31 October and 1 November**. In addition, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) has warned of the possibility of heavy rains and high tides impacting the Okinawa region from **30 October to 1 November** as Kong-rey will move north from Taiwan. Short-notice disruption to transport, including flights, is possible in affected areas.

Advice:

- Monitor the PAGASA [website](#) for up-to-date information on prevailing weather conditions and location-specific forecasts. Be prepared to adjust itineraries accordingly. Follow all official directives and guidelines.
- **We do not hold information on specific flights or other modes of transport.** Reconfirm flight, ferry, and other transport bookings with the relevant service provider. In the event of any cancellations, your travel agent will be able to assist with alternative arrangements.
- Storm surges and flash floods are likely in low-lying and coastal areas during and after the passage of storms. Reconfirm the feasibility of journeys before setting out and avoid surge-prone or flooded areas.
- Essential services such as electricity may be disrupted due to any infrastructural damage caused by the storm's passage. Charge all communications devices and, where feasible, keep extra batteries for backup.
- Monitor our alerts for further updates.

More Detail:

The storm entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) late on 26 October. PAGASA have warned the weather system may intensify into a super typhoon (highest on a five-tier scale) as it passes near [Batanes](#) early on 31 October. Additionally, while PAGASA does not expect the storm to make landfall in the Philippines, they cannot rule out a scenario where the system shifts west, potentially making landfall with Batanes. The outer rainbands of the storm will bring heavy rains and strong winds and mostly affect parts of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao (all Philippines). PAGASA forecast in the coming days is listed below:

29 October

- Heavy to intense rain up to 7.9 inches (20cm) in Antique province
- Moderate to heavy rain up to four inches (10cm) in Cagayan, Negros Occidental, Occidental Mindoro and Palawan provinces

30 October

- Intense to torrential rain of more than 7.9 inches (20cm) in Antique province
- Heavy to intense rain in the Batanes and Occidental Mindoro provinces and the Cagayan and the Babuyan Islands
- Moderate to heavy rains in the Aklan, Apayao, Cavite, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Negros Occidental and Palawan provinces

31 October

- Heavy to intense rain in Batanes, Cavite and Occidental Mindoro province and the Babuyan Islands
- Moderate to heavy rain in the Antique, Bataan, Batangas and Zambales provinces and the Ilocos region

In addition, rough sea conditions are forecast over the coming days, while flash flooding and landslides are also possible, particularly in mountainous and low-lying areas. Additionally, expect heavy rainfall in Taiwan from **31 October to 1 November**.

Destination Guide for Japan



Before You Travel

Destination Guide Content

Visa Requirements

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

British

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No/1
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Australian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No/2
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Canadian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No/2
- Return Ticket Required Yes

USA

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No/2
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Visas

Not required by all foreign nationals referred to in the chart above for the following durations:

1. Nationals of Austria, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Switzerland and the UK who, though initially granted a 90-day stay, may apply while in Japan to the local immigration department for an extension of up to a further 90 days, making the visa-free stay up to six months.
2. Nationals of Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the US for stays of up to 90 days

Foreign nationals require a temporary visitor's visa to enter Japan, which is normally valid for stays of up to 90 days. Documents stating the purpose of visit are required to be submitted at the time of visa application for both tourism and business purposes. However, a business visa is required for executives intending to work or engage in fee-based activities. The processing of visas usually takes five days. Visit the [website](#) of Japan's immigration services agency for further visa requirements.

Procedures

Everyone will be subject to health screening measures at the airports. Customs officers often question incoming foreign nationals regarding their purpose of stay. All business travellers, including permanent residents, will have their fingerprints scanned and will also be photographed upon arrival; non-adherence to these procedures can result in denial of entry into the country. The usual green (nothing to declare) and red (goods to declare) channels are in operation. Immigration delays are most common at Narita. Business travellers, who are issued a resident card on arrival, are required to register with the local municipal office and the Ministry of Justice within 14 days of arrival.

Entry/Exit Requirements

Entry/Exit requirements

Business travellers who do not possess a visible means of support for their stay, onward or return tickets, or other documents for their next destination, may be refused entry. The passport should be valid for the intended duration of the stay. There is no restriction on the import and export of any currency; however, business travellers carrying more than 1,000,000 yen are required to fill out a customs declaration. Business travellers must also complete a customs declaration form upon arrival.

Foreign nationals should carry their passports at all times. This is a legal requirement and, while spot-checks are infrequent, offenders are subject to lengthy bureaucracy. Those intending to stay for more than three months will be issued a resident card, instead of the alien registration certificate, up to a maximum of five years on arrival. This card will provide foreign nationals with the status of residency for long-term stays in the country. In addition, those who require to re-enter Japan within a year of their departure can do so on a special re-entry permit, provided they hold a valid resident card. Overstaying the visa duration can be subject to fines, imprisonment and even deportation.

Cultural Tips

CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

General Tips

- When entering a Japanese home, it is customary to remove shoes and position them facing the door. Follow your host's example. Shoes may also be removed at traditional restaurants.
- There are some legal restrictions relevant to LGBTQ individuals, but these are not enforced or adhered to in the legal system. Societal attitudes towards the LGBTQ community are highly varied; violence is rare but may be more likely in rural areas than in urban settings.
- In business meetings, the most junior member of staff should be positioned closest to the door.

Getting There

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

The country's main international airports include: Narita International Airport ([NRT](#)) and Haneda Airport ([HND](#), also known as Tokyo International Airport), which serve the capital Tokyo; Chubu Centrair International Airport ([NGO](#), Aichi prefecture), and Kansai International Airport ([KIX](#), Osaka prefecture). Other airports that provide short-haul international flights are the New Chitose Airport ([CTS](#), Hokkaido Island), Fukuoka Airport ([FUK](#), Fukuoka prefecture) and Kagoshima Airport ([KOJ](#), Kagoshima prefecture). Signs are mainly in English and Japanese, as well as some in Chinese and Korean. Flight delays and cancellations may periodically occur due to typhoons and tropical storms between May and October, as well as heavy snowfall during the winter season (December-March). Narita is one of the world's most secure airports. Business travellers may see armed security force personnel patrolling at airports. Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

Procedures

Everyone will be subject to health screening measures at the airports. Customs officers often question incoming foreign nationals regarding their purpose of stay. All business travellers, including permanent residents, will have their fingerprints scanned and will also be photographed upon arrival; non-adherence to these procedures can result in denial of entry into the country. The usual green (nothing to declare) and red (goods to declare) channels are in operation. Immigration delays are most common at Narita. Business travellers, who are issued a resident card on arrival, are required to register with the local municipal office and the Ministry of Justice within 14 days of arrival.

Getting Around

BY AIR

An extensive air service links main cities and provincial towns. Flights between the major cities are frequent, though it may be faster and more convenient to travel by train. It is advisable to book in advance. Safety on internal flights is generally good. Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways are the major national carriers. Other domestic carriers include Skymark, AirDo, Solaseed Air, Peach Aviation and Star Flyer.

BY ROAD

Driving is on the left. Unfamiliarity with local traffic customs can make driving awkward and even dangerous for foreign nationals. Roads can be narrow and traffic is often severely congested. Turning on red lights without authorisation is prohibited. Strict penalties, including prison sentences, are imposed for drunk driving; the national blood-alcohol limit is 0%. In urban areas, road signs are posted in English and Japanese, while in remote areas signage is mostly in Japanese.

All major car-rental companies such as [Avis](#), [Hertz](#), [Budget](#) and [Europcar](#) have offices at airports and in city centres. Foreign nationals require an international driving licence, in addition to their national driver's licence, for driving in the country up to one year; after a year, foreign nationals require a Japanese driving licence. Drivers are obliged to pay tolls on many highways. Luxury cars are a favoured target for criminals and should be parked in secure locations and kept locked at all times when unoccupied. Snowfall is common in the northern, central and western regions during the winter season (December-February), often causing road closures. Road travel in coastal areas may periodically be affected by heavy rainfall between May and October, as flash floods and landslides can block roads, resulting in delays and lengthy diversions. The Japan Automobile Federation offers roadside assistance.

BY TAXI

As a mode of transport, taxis are convenient but generally expensive. Taxis signal their availability with a red light in the lower-left corner of the windshield; these can be easily flagged down in the street. Foreign nationals should be aware that the left rear door of the vehicle is opened and closed automatically from within by the driver. Furthermore, most taxi drivers do not speak English. Business travellers should have the name and address of their destination written down in Japanese, together with the name of some nearby landmark; a map may also help. Hotels can provide this service. Tipping taxi drivers is not customary.

BY TRAIN

The railway service is fast, efficient and safe. The [Japan Railway](#) system is split into regional companies and there are several private rail networks run by operators such as Tokyu Corporation, Seibu Railway and Kinki Nippon Railways. The railway network caters to all corners of the country. There are also extensive suburban rail networks serving major cities. Rail services in the country may be disrupted during and after an earthquake. Heavy rainfall, particularly during the tropical storm season from May to October, may also cause periodic disruption to rail travel. Major urban areas also offer underground railway services.

BY OTHER MEANS

Japan has an efficient bus network connecting all major cities.

Business Women

BUSINESSWOMEN

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and generally provides women the same rights as men. There are no specific risks for female foreign travellers or businesswomen.

Incidents of sexual assault are rare, however do occur, especially public molestation called 'Chikan' of female passengers. These usually occur on crowded trains. Victims are advised to report to the train staff or the police. Whenever possible, females should avoid crowded trains and take women-only cars, which are usually available in the morning.

All women are advised to follow sensible security precautions such as politely saying no to invitations that would take you beyond your personal comfort levels, even if faced by amicable pressure to behave otherwise.

Working Week

WORKING WEEK

- Working week: Monday to Friday.
- Banking hours: 09.00-15.00.
- Office hours: 09.00-17.00.
- The formal lunch hour is 12.00-13.00; many offices do not take calls during this period.

Language & Money

LANGUAGE

Japanese is the official language. English is spoken in major hotels and in shops catering for tourists but only minimally elsewhere. Many Japanese business people who deal with foreign nationals speak good English, but business negotiations are often conducted through an interpreter. It is unwise to try speaking Japanese in business meetings, even with a relatively high degree of fluency. However, in social contexts, some familiarity with the Japanese language or Japanese customs will be greatly appreciated.

MONEY

The currency is the yen (¥). Japan is a cash-based country, though international credit cards such as American Express, Visa, Diners Club and MasterCard are widely accepted at most hotels, shops and restaurants in major cities. ATMs at airports, foreign bank branches, some convenience stores and post offices generally accept international cards. Outside major cities, cash transactions are generally the norm. Not all ATMs accept cards issued outside Japan. Although many ATMs at banks do not operate 24 hours a day, there are 24-hour ATMs in convenience stores. Traveller's cheques can be exchanged at major banks and larger hotels. It is often better to use hotel facilities rather than banks to exchange money; banking processes and linguistic difficulties can present problems and queues for services can be very long.

Tipping

TIPPING

Tipping is not customary. It is not expected in any situation and attempting to tip may cause embarrassment or be considered insulting. A service charge of 10-15% may be added to the bill at hotels and restaurants.

Geography & Weather

GEOGRAPHY

An archipelago in the Pacific, Japan lies to the east of China, Korea and Russia, stretching from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea in the south. Japan has four main islands, running from north to south; Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest island, where the capital Tokyo and most major cities are located), Shikoku and Kyushu. There are also about 3,000 smaller islands stretched in an arc between the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

Approximately 75% of the country is forested and mountainous. Due to the generally steep elevations, climate and risk of landslides, this mountainous land is rendered unsuitable for agricultural, industrial or residential use. This has resulted in an extremely high population density in the habitable zones that are mainly located in the coastal areas. The country is divided into eight regions and 47 prefectures. Major cities include Fukuoka, Kyoto, Nagoya, Osaka, Sapporo and Yokohama.

CLIMATE

Climate overview

- Japan has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons.
- Spring in March-May is warm with some rainfall. June to August are summer months with extreme humidity and temperatures as high as 40°C (104°F). The country receives heavy rainfall in June-July. Autumn is between September to November, and the winter months are between December and February which are very cold.
- The average minimum temperature is -1°C (30°F) and the average maximum temperature is 31°C (88°F).
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) for weather-related updates.

Earthquakes

- Earthquakes are very common in Japan as it lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire, a zone of high seismic activity.
- Large earthquakes and minor tremors, along with aftershocks frequently occur in the country.
- Japan has well-established disaster preparedness measures including early warning systems, public education campaigns, and strict building codes. However, major earthquakes can result in significant infrastructural damage, including damage to nuclear power plants, road and communications disruption, and casualties.

- In January 2024, earthquakes of magnitude 5.7 and 7.6 struck near Suzu (Ishikawa prefecture, Chubu region), causing infrastructural damage, communications, and travel disruption as well as several fatalities.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems, including the 'The Earthquake Early Warning' and 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for earthquake-related alerts.

Flooding

- Floods are responsible for 70% of natural and climate-related disasters in the country.
- Heavy rainfall during the rainy season and aftermath of typhoon season result in flooding, landslides and subsequent travel disruptions.
- Japan is host to several major river systems which can result in widespread flooding following heavy rainfall and storms.
- The Kanto Plain, which includes Tokyo and surrounding prefectures, is especially vulnerable due to its dense population and extensive river networks, such as the Arakawa and Tama rivers.
- Cities like Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka, which are located in low-lying coastal plains, are also at risk of flooding.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for latest weather updates.

Landslides

- The country is prone to landslides and mudslides due to its mountainous terrain, high levels of precipitation, and seismic activity.
- The southern island of Kyushu is particularly prone to landslides. Areas such as Kumamoto, Miyazaki, and Oita prefectures have previously experienced major landslide events.
- The Shikoku, Chugoku region and Hokkaido Island are also vulnerable to landslides.
- In 2021, a landslide due to torrential rains, swept through the Izusan neighbourhood of Atami, Shizuoka Prefecture, resulting in significant infrastructural damage, travel disruptions and fatalities.

- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for landslide-related updates.

Tsunamis

- Tsunamis in Japan are most triggered by earthquakes in areas along the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- Low-lying coastal areas are susceptible to storm surges and tsunamis, which can cause tsunami inundation and coastal flooding.
- The 2011 major earthquake and tsunami Tohoku resulted in severe flooding, infrastructural damage and a nuclear accident in Fukushima.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'Tsunami Warning' and 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for tsunami- related updates.

Typhoons

- Most typhoons hit Japan between May and October with August and September being the peak season.
- Typhoons and tropical cyclones that originate in the western Pacific Ocean, can bring torrential rain, strong winds, and storm surges to coastal regions of Japan.
- Such storms result in widespread flooding, landslides, and damage to infrastructure.
- The southern and western parts of Japan, including Okinawa, Kyushu, and Shikoku, are particularly susceptible to typhoon impacts.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for information on typhoons.

Snowfall

- Heavy snowfall, blizzards and high waves occur during the winter season (December to February), which result in travel disruptions, power outages, casualties and closure of businesses and schools.

- Northern prefectures of the country are particularly prone to heavy snowfall, which can make driving dangerous.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for extreme weather-related alerts.

Heatwaves

- Heatwaves can occur during the summer months, with temperatures often exceeding 30°C (86°F) and occasionally reaching above 35°C (95°F) in urban areas.
- Record high temperatures have been reported increasingly in the past years in almost all the 47 prefectures.
- The effect of El Niño and shifts in climatic conditions causes low rainfall and dry conditions, resulting in terrestrial and marine heatwaves.
- Extreme temperatures can result in travel disruptions.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for extreme weather-related alerts.

Volcanic activity

- Japan is home to over 100 active volcanoes.
- The volcanic activity is primarily concentrated along several volcanic arcs, such as the Northeastern Japan Arc, the Southwest Japan Arc, and the Ryukyu Arc.
- In recent times, eruptions of Mount Usu in Hokkaido in 2000 and Mount Ontake in Nagano in 2014 resulted in casualties and widespread disruption.
- Major volcanic eruptions can cause pyroclastic flows, mudflows, ashfall, and volcanic gases to the neighboring regions.
- Business travellers and foreign nationals should familiarise themselves with early warning systems of 'J Alert's.
- Monitor the website of [Japan Meteorological Agency](#) or use an app called 'Safety tips', which is supervised by the Japan Tourism Agency for information on volcanic activity.

International Dialing & Power

DIALLING CODES

Country Code 81

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling) 001 (KDD)0061 (Cable & Wireless IDC)0041

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling) 0

COMMUNICATIONS

The telecommunications system is excellent and mobile network coverage is extensive; satellite phone services are also available. However, the country does not have a GSM network; most networks are 3G or 4G based. Major network providers include KDDI Corporation (which uses 'au' as the brand name for its mobile network), NTT Docomo and SoftBank. SIM cards may be purchased online or from stores. It is often better to fax or email, which is considered sympathetic towards business partners who may have difficulty with spoken English. The number of public telephones has decreased but can be found in train stations, hotels and government buildings. Grey public phones also allow data connection. These public phones accept both coins and cards. During natural disasters, public telephones can be used free-of-charge. Internet and email connections are reliable and major hotels can provide these. The postal service is also quick and reliable.

ELECTRICITY

These are the most common plug types used:

Calendar

Holidays & Security Dates

2024

03 Nov Culture Day

23 Nov Labour Thanksgiving Day

2025

01 Jan New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

13 Jan Coming of the Age Day

11 Feb National Foundation Day

23 Feb Emperor's Birthday

If this day falls on a weekend, it is celebrated on the following Monday.

29 Apr Showa Day Showa No Hi

This holiday celebrates the birthday of former emperor Showa (also known as emperor Hirohito), who died in 1989. If this day falls on a weekend, it is celebrated on the following Monday; the government has declared 30 April as a holiday.

03 May Constitution Memorial Day

This public holiday commemorates the implementation of Japan's post-war constitution.

04 May Greenery Day (Midori no hi)

This public holiday is dedicated to the environment because the former emperor Showa had an affinity for plants and nature.

05 May Children's Day (Kodomo no hi)

This day typically sees families pray for the health and future success of their sons by hanging up carp streamers and displaying samurai dolls.

Destination Guide for Japan



Medical

Destination Guide Content

Medical Care

Good

Standard of Health Care

Let International SOS assist you.

International SOS will assist you to find suitable inpatient or outpatient care, will provide language assistance and may be able to pay your medical expenses.

Inpatient care

In large cities, hospitals practice medicine of an international standard, have excellent, modern equipment and often have English-speaking physicians. Outside major cities, English-speaking physicians may not always be available and the language barrier may be significant.

Etiquette is very important in Japanese society and the necessity for politeness and respect for doctors can frustrate foreigners. Doctors are generally very knowledgeable however the emphasis on protocol can sometimes cause physicians to fail in taking rapid action, even when it is medically warranted. It can also mean that less information on the patient's condition is released than may occur in other countries. In large teaching hospitals, you will often be cared for by a "team" of doctors. They will confer to discuss care and the treatment plan.

Japanese doctors will be happy to accommodate questions from the patient, immediate family or concerned company staff/medical liaison. However, this can only occur after the patient or relatives have directly approached the treating doctor concerned and requested the release of information.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance 119

Fire service 119

Police 110

Calls to emergency numbers from public telephones do not incur a charge, though callers should press the red button before placing the call.

Hospitals & Clinics

NTT Medical Center Tokyo

Category: Hospital

Address: 5-9-22 Higashi Gotanda, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo-to

Phone: [81 367216239](tel:81367216239)

St. Luke's International Hospital

Category: Hospital

Address: 9-1 Akashicho, Tokyo-to

Phone: [81 355507166](tel:81355507166)

Email: 5931@luke.ac.jp

Tokyo Medical and Surgical Clinic

Category: Clinic

Address: 2 Floor 32 Shiba Koen Building 3-4-30 Shiba Koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo-to

Phone: [81 334363028](tel:81334363028)

Email: receptionist@tmsec.jp

Vaccinations

COVID-19

Vaccination is recommended for all travellers.

Hepatitis A

Recommended for all travellers and international assignees, especially groups at higher risk including:

- long-term and frequent visitors.
- adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.
- gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (see [US CDC](#)).
- people who use illicit drugs.
- those with liver disease.

Hepatitis B

Recommended for most travellers and international assignees, especially:

- For long-term or frequent visitors, and health-care workers.
- For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations.
- If possibility of new sexual partner, needle sharing, acupuncture, dental work, body piercing or tattooing during visit.

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travelers, regardless of destination.

Japanese encephalitis

Vaccine is recommended for people who will participate in 'higher risk' activities while in an area where Japanese encephalitis risk exists.

You are engaging in a 'higher risk' activity if you:

- Travel during the peak Japanese encephalitis season (consult the "Health Threats" section of the International SOS country guides to see specific season details for this country).
- Spend a significant amount of time outdoors, particularly in the evening and night-time, in areas outside of cities. (ex. camping, trekking, biking, fishing, hunting, farming).
- Stay in accommodation that will likely have mosquitoes indoors, ex. lacking air conditioning, window screens, and bed nets.
- Spend a month or more in a risk area during transmission season.

Japanese encephalitis vaccine is not available in many of the risk countries. Have the complete vaccine series before departure.

Tickborne encephalitis

Recommended for:

- people who will spend time in forested or grassy areas during tick season (particularly those who will hike, camp, perform fieldwork, etc.);
- people residing in this country for longer periods (i.e., six months or more).

Routine Vaccinations

Influenza

Influenza occurs in:

- Temperate southern hemisphere: April to September.
- Temperate northern hemisphere: November to March.
- Tropics: year-round.

Annual vaccination is recommended. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease. People who are at higher risk for severe disease include:

- People over the age of 65.
- People with underlying health conditions.
- Pregnant women.

Measles-Mumps-Rubella

Vaccinations against measles, mumps and rubella are routine in childhood, and are usually available as a combined vaccine "MMR". See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#). All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need to be vaccinated.

Polio

Vaccination against polio is routine in childhood in many countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#).

All adults should ensure they are immune to the disease before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or a *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis are routine in childhood.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Varicella

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations are included in the routine childhood immunization schedule of some countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to varicella before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional.

Malaria

None

Yellow Fever

Routine and additional

Health Threats

Dengue fever

Dengue, or "break-bone" fever, is a viral disease of the tropics and sub-tropics. It is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes that bite during the daytime and are found in and around human habitation. Transmission from mother to child is possible during pregnancy or birth. Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. A rash often follows. The acute illness can last up to ten days, but complete recovery can take two to four weeks.

Occasionally, a potentially fatal form of dengue called severe dengue (previously known as dengue hemorrhagic fever or DHF) occurs. Severe dengue is more likely in infants and pregnant people, as well as for people who have been infected in the past and are infected again with a different strain of dengue. When a pregnant person is infected there is a risk of pre-term birth, low birth weight and foetal distress. About 2 to 3 out of 100 severe dengue cases are likely to be fatal.

Prevention is through avoiding mosquito bites. There are two commercially available dengue vaccines approved in a few countries. Dengvaxia is generally only used in people with previous dengue infection while Qdenga can be considered for people without a history of dengue infection.

Risk of dengue is present in the country. The majority of cases each year are imported, usually between the months of July to October, but there have been locally acquired cases reported in Kyoto and Tokyo.

Japanese encephalitis

Japanese encephalitis is serious viral illness, spread by mosquitoes. It occurs in most of Asia as well as some parts of the Western Pacific, mostly in rural agricultural areas. Although many people won't have any symptoms, it can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) with permanent brain damage, or be fatal. Prevention is through preventing mosquito bites. In addition, vaccination is recommended for travellers at higher risk.

Cases are rare and there is a local vaccination programme in place with a high uptake. People who live and work in rural areas, such as rice fields, are at higher risk. Peak transmission season runs from May to October on most islands. On Ryuku Islands (Okinawa) transmission occurs from April through December. No cases have been reported in northern Japan, namely in Tohoku and Hokkaido.

Vaccination is generally not recommended for travel confined to Tokyo and other major cities.

Lyme disease

Lyme disease occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. It is transmitted to humans by the bite of a particular species of tick. Lyme disease can cause an expanding rash at the site of the bite, fever, arthritis and nerve problems such as facial palsy.

To prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick habitats
- Use insect repellents
- Check daily for ticks

Lyme disease vaccination is no longer available.

If you develop a rash at the site of a tick bite or other symptoms of Lyme disease, seek medical attention. A course of antibiotics can cure Lyme disease.

Scrub typhus

The bacterial disease scrub typhus is also known as tropical typhus or "chigger fever". Humans become infected when bitten by disease-carrying mites. A lump develops at the bite site. It ulcerates and forms an eschar (like a cigarette burn). Glands near the bite swell. Sudden onset symptoms progress, including high fever, headaches and sore muscles. About a third of those infected develop a rash.

Complications, such as pneumonia and nervous system impairment, can occur. Treatment with timely appropriate antibiotics will cure the disease. Untreated, mortality can be as high as 30 percent. No vaccine is available. Prevent infection by avoiding mite habitats (such as rodent infested areas, recently cleared forests clearings and rice paddies) and by preventing mite bites.

Endemic in all prefectures except Hokkaido. Hundreds of cases are reported each year, with elderly people affected more. Peak transmission occurs from November to December, with small secondary peaks during May to June.

Tickborne encephalitis

Tickborne encephalitis (TBE) is a viral infection which is mostly transmitted to people through tick bites. Ticks live in or near forests and are usually active during warmer months. TBE infection can also be acquired by consuming unpasteurized dairy products from infected cows, goats or sheep.

Most people will not have any symptoms. For those who do, initial symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea, and fatigue. These may resolve in a week or so, but if the infection spreads to the brain, the symptoms may become more severe (decreased mental state, severe headaches, convulsions, weakness and/or coma). TBE can be fatal. Prevention is through avoiding tick bites and vaccination.

Tickborne encephalitis is endemic in Hokkaido. Risk may be present in other forested and grassy areas in Japan. Transmission occurs when ticks are most active, from early spring to late autumn.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is predominantly a respiratory illness, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Transmission is from person to person via contaminated respiratory droplets. People are infected when these droplets are inhaled or land directly on the mouth/nose/eyes, or indirectly when transferred by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the mouth/nose/eyes.

Most people will develop a mild to moderate illness only which lasts up to two weeks, or have no symptoms. Symptoms vary greatly. Common symptoms include fever, cough and sore throat. Sometimes there is a loss of or change in the sense of smell or taste. The illness can progress to being severe and can be fatal. Older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of severe disease and death. Antiviral treatment is available and is particularly important for people at higher risk of severe illness.

Some people may continue to have symptoms that last for weeks or months after the initial infection has gone.

Prevention is through vaccination, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. Wearing a mask, and ensuring adequate ventilation in enclosed spaces can reduce the risk of infection.

The first case was confirmed in January 2020.

Altitude

Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can affect people who normally live at a low altitude and travel to higher altitudes. It can occur from elevations of 1,500 meters onwards but is more common at elevations above 2,500 meters (8,000 feet).

People most at risk are those who have experienced altitude illness before, people who have heart or lung problems and people under the age of 50. There are three different types of altitude illness: Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). AMS is the most common and mild form of altitude illness. HACE and HAPE are more severe. HACE is a medical emergency and if not treated and managed quickly, can result in coma and death. Management of altitude illnesses involves immediate descent and oxygen treatment. Most people who are affected, even those who develop HACE or HAPE, recover completely if moved to a lower elevation. There are medicines that can be administered by trained medical professionals.

Anyone travelling to high altitudes, especially higher than 2,500 meters, should be aware of and recognise the symptoms of altitude illness. See your travel health professional before departure, for individual advice on preventive measures, especially if you have ever suffered altitude sickness in the past, or if you have an underlying medical condition.

Although most of Japan is low-lying, the country is extensively mountainous with more than 170 peaks higher than 2,500m (8,202ft) above sea level, mostly concentrated in the Kansai and Chubu regions. Mount Fuji in Honshu is the highest point reaching 3,776m (12,388ft).

Radiation

Radiation exposure may lead to various effects on health. These effects will depend on the type, intensity and duration of exposure.

Shorten the time of your exposure to radiation and stay as far away from the radioactive source as reasonably possible. Where exposure to potentially harmful doses cannot be avoided, provide additional barriers between you and the source. Follow the instructions of the local governments on when and how to cover or evacuate.

There is a potential risk of radiation exposure in Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power plants and neighbouring exclusion zones. To know more on exclusion zones, [see here](#).

Volcano

There are several types of volcanic eruptions and some pose a major threat to health. One such eruption is volcanic ash fall. Ash is made of fine particles of rock and minerals and is gritty and abrasive. It can carry for many kilometres through the air. Approaching ash clouds resemble ordinary weather clouds, and are sometimes accompanied by lightning or thunder. They bring a sulfur smell into the air.

When the ash finally falls, it settles in a dust-like covering. The "dust", however, is hard and abrasive. It does not dissolve in water, and it conducts electricity. It becomes more conductive when wet. Heavy ash falls can cause roofs to collapse and can lead to high levels of respirable ash in the air people breathe.

Most commonly, people get a runny nose and sore throat, sometimes with a dry cough. Because the ash is gritty, it can cause skin and eye irritation. People should minimize exposure to ash, those with chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and other respiratory conditions should be especially vigilant since their symptoms can worsen.

There are many volcanoes located throughout Japan and also offshore along tectonic plate boundaries. More than 15 volcanoes have a history of recent eruption (last 20 years). The Japanese Meteorological Agency monitors and reports on [volcanic activity](#) including alert levels.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy.

Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

Outbreaks have been recorded every few years, including in Tokyo.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes are sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

The number of syphilis cases nationwide has increased rapidly in recent years, particularly in Tokyo and the prefectures of Osaka and Hokkaido.

Food & Water

Generally safe

Food Risk

Food is safe in Japan. The practice of eating sashimi (raw fish) or sushi is popular, and, in general, the quality of the fish is extremely good. However, it is recommended that visitors eat at popular and recommended places to avoid the small risk of food poisoning.

Nuclear Incident, Earthquake and Tsunami damage

On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami struck the northeast coast of the main Japanese island of Honshu. The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant was severely damaged and a state of nuclear emergency was declared. The government evacuated all residents within 20km of the Daiichi plant ("restricted zone"), as well as several areas beyond 20km to more than 30km zone from the nuclear plant ("Deliberate Evacuation Area").

Authorities continue to monitor radiation levels in the environment, and food and drinking water. They have also restricted the harvest, distribution and sale of any foods that may be contaminated at a level potentially harmful to health. Some seafood has been contaminated at levels above the regulatory limits. Control measures are in place to prevent its distribution.

For further information, see the Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet [Great East Japan Earthquake Health and Safety website](#) (in English).

Water and Beverages

Tap water is safe to drink.

Use caution in Okinawa during water shortages or typhoons. Use only bottled or boiled water during these times.

Destination Guide for Japan



Security

Destination Guide Content

Personal Security

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel to Japan can continue with standard security precautions.
- People should comply with restrictions imposed by the government and local authorities in areas affected by natural disasters.
- Crime rates are low; take sensible basic precautions against petty and street crime.
- As a high-profile commercial centre and prominent ally of the US, Japan has the potential to be target for terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists. Domestic leftist, nationalist and other extremists have used violence in the past and further attacks are possible. Although the risk posed to business travellers is low, report suspicious behaviour or packages to the authorities.

Crime

Petty crime rare

CRIME

Overall, crime rates in Japan remain low. Streets in the central business areas of major cities are generally safe for foreign nationals, though petty crime such as pickpocketing can occur in crowded areas such as shopping centres, train stations and airports. Business travellers are advised to exercise extra caution and remain alert against touts at bars or clubs who offer lucrative deals to extort large bills and do not accept food or drinks from strangers or leave drinks unattended, as spiked drinks have resulted in assaults and robberies. The activities of organised criminals (the yakuza) should not affect business travellers on legitimate business.

Although Japan has one of the lowest firearms ownership rates in the world and weapons-related violence is very rare, there have been some notable shootings. Former prime minister Shinzo Abe (in office 2006-07, 2012-20) was shot and killed in July 2022 in Nara city (Kansai region). Additionally, an explosive device was thrown on 15 April in Wakayama City (Kansai) targeting Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. Both cases targeted the high-profile politicians during election speeches, used improvised weapons developed from information available on the internet, and were planned and executed by lone offenders. The motives for the two recent incidents appear to be personal grudges rather than any political or ideological orientation.

In Japan, you must always carry your passport or Japanese Residence Card (Zairyu Card) with you. The authorities can take people in for questioning if they fail to present a valid identification card.

Terrorism

Minimal risk to foreigners

TERRORISM

There are no known terrorist organisations in Japan. While Japan has not experienced any incidents related to international terrorism in the last decade, there are smaller factions that require monitoring.

Far left-wing activists and ultra-right nationalists have attempted to carry out small-scale attacks in the past. However, Japan's effective domestic security forces and tight immigration controls render it difficult for militants to infiltrate and operate successfully in the country. Bomb threats to public institutions such as schools and city halls are not uncommon. Usually, these threats are hoax and pass off without incident. They are generally addressed by evacuating and closing the affected areas.

Social Unrest

SOCIAL UNREST

Violent demonstrations and acts of civil unrest are rare in Japan. Most protests pass off peacefully and require a government application and an official permit. Although some politically motivated protests occasionally occur, such activities are closely monitored by the police. Foreign nationals and business travellers should maintain vigilance in the event of social unrest, though this is unlikely.

Conflict

CONFLICT

Japan has territorial disputes with neighbouring countries, though these are unlikely to result in direct conflict in the short to medium term. However, they occasionally escalate,

often because of domestic political considerations in either country.

- **China:** The Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu in Chinese) in the East China Sea are occupied by Japan but also claimed by China and Taiwan. The establishment of an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) by China in November 2013 escalated regional tensions in the East China Sea as the Chinese ADIZ includes the airspace over the abovementioned islets and partly covers Japan's ADIZ as well as those of South Korea and Taiwan.
- **Russia:** The sovereignty dispute over the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, and Shikotan, and the Habomai group, north-east of Hokkaido, known in Japan as the 'Northern Territories' and in Russia as the 'Southern Kuril Islands'. They have been occupied by the Soviet Union since 1945.
- **South Korea:** Japan and South Korea continue to contest claims over the islets of Takeshima (Dokdo or Tokdo in Korean), which are occupied by South Korea.

North Korea occasionally test fires missiles, including towards the Sea of Japan, which can fall within the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone. Some tests have resulted in the issuance of J-Alerts (warning system).