

EHIME
2022
JET

GUIDEBOOK

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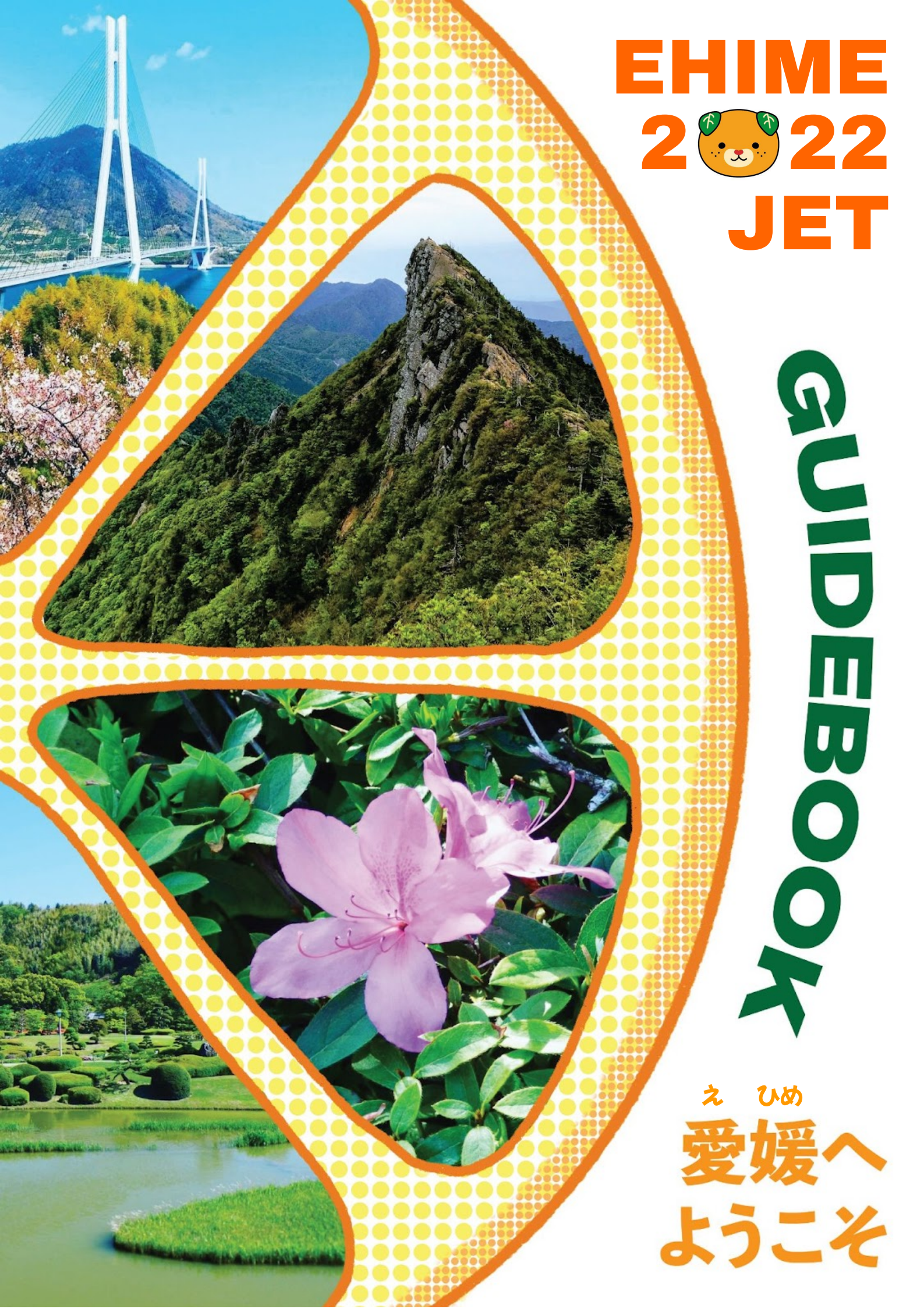


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EDITORS' NOTE

WELCOME TO EHIME!

This guidebook has been created to give you a rough idea of what to expect (and not to expect) as you start your new life in Ehime. It has been updated and revised for 2022. Hopefully, it will answer some of the questions you may have — but if not, please feel free to get in touch with one of us current JETs! More information beyond the guidebook can be found at the [Ehime Association for JET \(Ehime AJET\) website!](#)

A big thanks to past and present JETs for contributing ideas, materials, and suggestions for this guidebook — **you helped to make it what it is!**

WELCOME TO EHIME

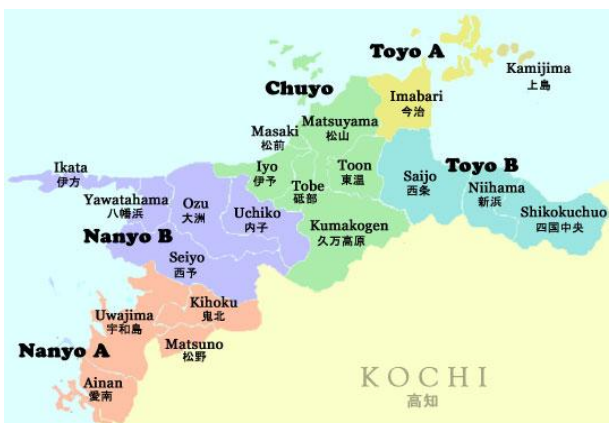
After months of anxious waiting, you finally have your location placement: **Ehime Prefecture**! What is it like to live there? How is the weather? All of these questions that you have and more can be answered right here in this **guidebook**!

ABOUT EHIME

Ehime (pronounced eh-hee-meh, written 愛媛) is on the northwestern side of **Shikoku**, the smallest of Japan's four main islands. While Ehime is largely a rural prefecture, it boasts the largest city on Shikoku — Matsuyama (over 500,000 people) — and is home to some of Japan's cultural treasures, including Matsuyama Castle, Dogo Onsen (hot springs), and Oyamazumi Shrine. The “Love Princess” (literal translation of “Ehime”) is truly a hidden treasure — a place where culture and natural beauty intertwine.

Ehime is home to a wide variety of cities and towns and this inevitably leads to very different living situations. JETs are spread far and wide — from the industrial cities of the east to the coastal communities of the southwest, and everything in between — like the mountainous villages of the central regions and the tiny island communities in the North!

If you want to learn more about your new home, read further in this guidebook!



Regions of Ehime

Did You Know?

- ★ About 70% of Ehime is forested
- ★ Ehime has the highest peak in western Japan: **Mount Ishizuchi** 1,982m
- ★ Ehime was originally called “**The Land of Iyo**” (*Iyo-no-Kuni*)
- ★ Japanese **haiku** originated in Ehime
- ★ The population of Ehime is about **1,500,000** (1.18% of the nation's population)
- ★ Ehime is famous for **mandarin oranges** (a.k.a. *mikan*)
- ★ Ehime's Imabari City is famous nationwide for **making towels**
- ★ **Matsuyama Castle** is one of the only three remaining large-scale, multi-wing castles in Japan
- ★ Ehime is home to one of Japan's oldest hot spring — **Dogo Onsen**
- ★ Dogo Onsen was the inspiration for the bath house in the **Studio Ghibli** film *Spirited Away*
- ★ Kenzaburo Oe, who hails from Uchiko Town, is one of only two Japanese writers to win the **Nobel Prize in literature**

CLIMATE

Summer is hot, humid, and sticky. Air conditioning is not often found in classrooms, but it's in offices and (hopefully!) your apartment. At times, Ehime has been recorded as the hottest place in Japan. Temperatures can get up to the mid-thirties (C)/nineties (F). Always carry water to prevent dehydration.

Autumn is beautiful. The air is crisp, but not too cool. The maple leaves change color and the fall festivals are plentiful. Autumn also brings a typhoon season, which means it rains a lot. When the rain stops, the cool weather begins to settle in.

Winter is mild and in general, there is only light snow that melts upon touching the

ground...except in the mountains, where some areas may receive up to a meter of snow! Be warned: heating is hard to find in Ehime! (This means winter can feel very cold!) Schools may not have heaters in the classrooms and your apartment may have a space heater, but not central heating.

Spring is full of flowers, cherry blossoms and (again) rain. The weather mercifully begins to warm up, and the rains come down. Days alternate between beautiful sunshine and downpours.

Rainy Season, or 梅雨 *tsuyu*, is late spring, early summer (your Japanese friends and colleagues will tell you they have five seasons). It rains — a lot! All day, for days on end! For those of you from dry regions, expect to get wet.

Japan is a very weather-oriented country; fashion, food, and festivals are greatly influenced by the coming and going of the seasons. In Ehime, temperatures can vary greatly depending on what region you live in.

YURU-KYARA

Yuru-kyara or *yuru chara* (ゆるキャラ), literally translated as “easygoing” or “laid-back” characters, are mascot characters that are simple in design and meant for promoting a local region or company. These have taken over Japan, and you may have already seen a few on your way here (does the mascot for Narita Airport, the eel-airplane hybrid “Unari-kun” ring a bell?)!

Ehime is certainly no stranger to this concept — almost every city and town here has one! Perhaps the most famous is **Barysan**, Imabari City's lovable chick-like mascot with somewhat cannibalistic tendencies (their favorite food is Imabari-style *yakitori*...). Ehime itself has a mascot — the cute mandarin orange dog-like character, **Mican** (pictured on the right)!

Get to know and love your local *yuru-kyara* — they'll most likely show up *everywhere*, from festival posters to souvenir packaging to even disaster preparedness guidebooks!

I'm Mican!

I love Ehime Prefecture!
Nice to Meet you!

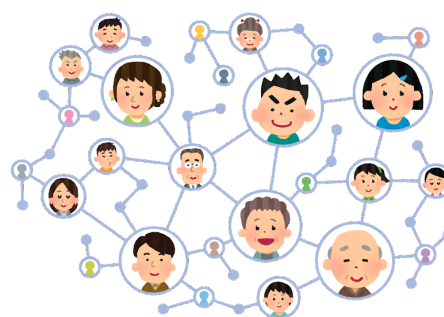


Mican, the lovable mandarin orange dog-like mascot of Ehime Prefecture

EHIME JET SUPPORT NETWORK

Moving to a different country is a daunting task, but you won't be alone! Not only will you have your fellow new JETs arriving with you, you will also have access to your JET support network. This network is built into the JET Programme, so if at any time you need some help, you are always able to reach out!

The support network is made up of two different sectors. Read below to find out more about them!

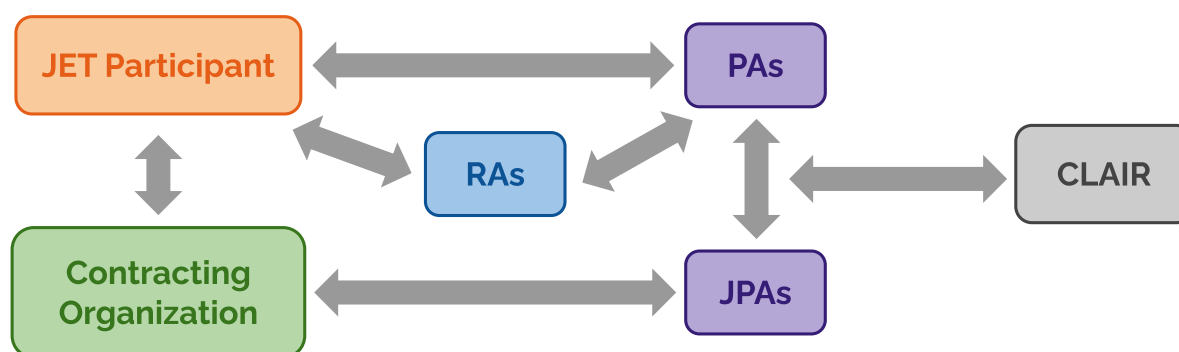


PREFECTURAL ADVISORS (PAs)

Prefectural Advisors (PAs) are appointed by the prefecture and are trained by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) on the workings of the JET Programme. Ehime has both **JET PAs**, PAs who are current JETs themselves, and **Japanese PAs (JPAs)**, representatives at a local contracting organization (CO) that has been designated by CLAIR to handle things from the CO side of things.

The PAs work with the Ehime Prefectural Government Office (also known as the *kencho*) which is in charge of JETs. Together, the JET PAs and JPAs plan seminars for JETs and their supervisors, as well as disseminate important information and announcements throughout the year. PAs are here to provide support for the JET community. From taxes to mental health referrals to medical bills, PAs can help you with the nitty gritty parts of living abroad.

See this flowchart below detailing the support system:



To see a more detailed flowchart, you can also refer to [page 83 in the General Information Handbook \(GIH\)](#) provided by CLAIR.

For 2022-23, Ehime has three JET PAs and three JPAs. Your JET PAs for the 2022-23 term are **Jordan Rocke**, **Kyra Samuda**, and **Le Lin**, and they can all be reached at ehimepa@gmail.com. You can also reach them at their personal contact listed below in their introductions. The JPAs are **Shun Karimoto** and **Yoshiko Matsuura** from the Ehime Prefecture Tourism and International Affairs Division, and **Masano Nakamura** from the Ehime Prefecture Board of Education (BoE). If you need to reach out to them, please contact the JET PAs.

Now, onto the introductions of our JET PAs!

PREFECTURAL ADVISORS (PA)



G'day! I'm **Jordan Rocke** (he/him), a SHS ALT in Hojo and Matsuyama. I'm about to start my 5th year on JET, and am currently in my 3rd year as PA. I run the [Mikan Blog](#) for Ehime AJET so please please please write things so I have content. I love walking, video games, and weekends where I do so little I forget I exist. I am originally a history teacher from Canberra, and still love all things history!

Email: rocke@computer4u.com
LINE: @jordanjr1994



Hello, my name is **Kyra Samuda** (she/her). I'm a first year JET from Maryland, USA. I'm placed out on the tip of Ehime in Ikata. I like reading, anime/manga, baking, and Genshin Impact. There's still plenty of places that I haven't explored in Ehime or Shikoku yet, but I'd like to at least visit all the pilgrimage temples in the prefecture before I leave.

Email: kyra.samuda@gmail.com
LINE: @kyrajs



Full name: **Le Lin**
Preferred Pronouns: he/they 🏳️‍🌈
From: Montreal, Canada 🍁
In: Ozu, Ehime (Nanyo B)

Bio: My name is Le (pronounced LEbron James). I am one of the 3 Prefectural Advisors this year. My hobbies include art, design, food, rock climbing, and skateboarding. I am a highschool ALT in Ozu. Don't hesitate to ask me anything, or if you just want to chat.

Email: ledotin@gmail.com
SNS: @spicybabycrab



REGIONAL ADVISORS (RAs)

In Ehime, we also have a support network called the “Regional Advisor System.” The JETs in Ehime have been divided into 5 groups by region: **Nanyo A**, **Nanyo B**, **Chuyo**, **Toyo A**, and **Toyo B**. Each region has at least one **Regional Advisor (RA)** — an experienced, volunteer JET who is designated to help other JETs in their area.

The RAs can help you with many region/job related questions, information about your area, ideas for teaching, traveling in/out of your region, services available, etc. The RAs have lived in their region for at least a year and know what it's like to be a 1st-year JET there! Feel free to contact the RAs in other areas to find out about their region.

Here are your RAs for the 2022-23 term!

NANYO A



Aloha! I am **James O'Connor** (he/him), please call me Pono but James is also fine too. I'm a second year JET from Hilo, Hawaii. I am in Uwajima city, the last stop on the train and the first stop to some wonderful places that I have been lucky to see. I love history, music, and video games and I am always willing to try something new! Hope to meet you all someday! Mahalo!

Add me on LINE!



NANYO B

Hello, my name is **Shou Yuan** (he/him). This will be my second year as the Regional Advisor for Nanyo B, and I am starting my extra 6th year on JET. I'm from San Francisco, CA originally and I currently live in Nomura town in Seiyō. In my free time, I enjoy reading, cooking, and drawing/painting. I have done lots of camping, sea kayaking, and cycling in Seiyō and other areas of Ehime. I also practice karate at the public hall in my town. The thing I'm looking forward to most as an RA is hosting more cooking events for ALTs in my area. Lastly, I have done a lot of road trips throughout Japan, so if you have any questions about driving in Japan, please ask me!



Email: shouseidaiyuan@gmail.com
Phone: 080-6288-0245





Hello and welcome everyone! WAZ DE SCENE!!! My name is **Christian Jalim** (he/him) but please feel free to call me Chris. I'm just a small village guy from the land of sun, sea, sand, Carnival and bacchanal, Trinidad and Tobago. I'm about to start my 4th year of JET and one of your friendly neighborhood RAs for the Chuyo area. I live in Dōgo, Matsuyama and love playing tourist in my own neighborhood so if you're ever in the area, reach out to me and we go lime! (Lime = Trini slang meaning to hang out or congregate leisurely). Depending on my mood, I either want to explore around or I just want to be cooped up in my apartment playing video games. Some of my other hobbies include learning foreign languages, origami, cosplay (my stressful hobby), and watching anime, documentaries and Netflix. I especially have a fascination with documentaries about ancient civilizations, space and black holes. Ehime is absolutely beautiful and has a lot to offer so take advantage of your time here. I'm looking forward to meeting you all soon!

Email: christianjalim@gmail.com



Hi everyone! Welcome to Ehime! I'm **Miya Jia** (she/her), a 2nd year JET and one of the Chuyo RAs. Originally from Chicago, USA, I currently work at the Ehime Prefectural Government Office (or just *kencho* for short) as a CIR. My hobbies include digital illustration/graphic design, watching anime/reading manga, writing, and gaming! Although I just moved here last October, I have been learning a lot about Ehime and especially the Chuyo area, so feel free to reach out to me whenever about places to go, things to do, etc!



Email: mija.ehime@gmail.com



TOYO A



Hi, my name is **Andrew Pappas**. I am from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I teach at two schools, one middle and one elementary. I have my BA in Studio Arts and my MFA in illustration and a certificate for teaching English as a second language. I love mythology, *yokai*, and storytelling. My hobbies include illustration, weight lifting, video games, and studying Japanese. I also like to cook and travel. It's very nice to meet you all!

Add me on LINE!



TOYO B

Hi there everyone! My name is **Jack Matull** (he/him) and I'm the RA for the Toyo B region. I'm from San Francisco, California and currently an ES/JHS ALT in Niihama. I arrived in Ehime in October 2021 and this is my first time being an RA. I'm super excited to connect with more JETs and learn more about the prefecture along the way. My hobbies are playing basketball, watching sports on TV, and traveling. Although I'm relatively new, I'm always happy to lend a helping hand so if you have any questions or curiosities, I'm all ears!

Email: jmatull99@gmail.com
LINE: @jackmatull123



That's all for introductions!

If you're ever unsure who to contact, please refer to the list below:

JET PAs Jordan R. Kyra S. Le L.	ehimepa@gmail.com rocke@computer4u.com kyra.samuda@gmail.com ledotlin@gmail.com	Nanyo A RA James O. ra.nanyo.a@gmail.com Add on LINE!	Nanyo B RA Shou Y. ra.nanyo.b@gmail.com shouseidaiyuan@gmail.com
Chuyo RAs Christian J. Miya J.	chuyo.ra@gmail.com christianjalim@gmail.com mjia.ehime@gmail.com	Toyo A RA Andrew P. toyo.a.ra@gmail.com Add on LINE!	Toyo B RA Jack M. toyobehime@gmail.com jmatull99@gmail.com

ONLINE GROUPS

The JET support network reaches far across the Internet, mostly on platforms such as Facebook. The main way Ehime JETs stay in contact with each other is over the [Ehime AJET Facebook group](#). It's a place for JETs to ask questions, let people know about festivals and to give/receive JET Programme info (and much more!). Feel free to join this and other such communities online!

Note: Some of these groups will only add you if it is clear on your Facebook page that you are a JET, or from a JET from a specific area. If you are a JET it might be useful to join the regional AJET groups of your neighboring prefectures. Each of these groups is run independently and has their own rules and expectations of its members, remember that you are a guest in their group so please follow the rules.

GENERAL

- ★ [National AJET Website](#)
- ★ [Ehime AJET Website](#)
- ★ [JET Programme Reddit](#)
- ★ [ALTopedia Forums](#)
- ★ [CIR Homepage Forums](#)

FACEBOOK

EHIME

- ★ [AJET Block 8: Ehime, Kagawa, Kochi, Tokushima](#)
- ★ [Ehime AJET Facebook Group](#)
- ★ [Ehime International Community](#)
- ★ [Matsuyama Social Group](#)

HELP & SUPPORT

- ★ [JET: Help Me!](#)
- ★ [JTR: Japan Teaching Resources](#)
- ★ [JET Programme CIRs](#)
- ★ [JET Program JLPT Preparation Page](#)
- ★ [JET Programme couples and families](#)
- ★ [AJET & JETAA-I Job Listings](#)
- ★ [Professional Development for JETs](#)
- ★ [Outgoing JETs](#)

COMMUNITY

- ★ [Asian Pacific Islander AJET \(API AJET\)](#)
- ★ [JET Christian Fellowship](#)
- ★ [Stonewall Japan](#)

SPECIAL INTERESTS

- ★ [JET Artists in Japan](#)
- ★ [Cycling JETs](#)
- ★ [JET - FEST](#)
- ★ [JETfood](#)
- ★ [JET Gaming Enjoy!](#)
- ★ [K-Pop Fans in Japan](#)
- ★ [JET Nerds](#)
- ★ [JET Photography Club](#)

TRAVEL

- ★ [AJET Tatami Timeshare](#)
- ★ [JET Couchsurfing Network](#)
- ★ [JET-setters](#)

FOR SALE

- ★ [Sayonara Sale](#)
- ★ [Mottainai Japan](#)

DISCORD

- ★ [Ehime JETs Discord](#)
(If you need an invite link and the above has expired, please ask your PA or RA!)
- ★ JETPREP Discord
(If you need an invite link, please ask your PA/RA!)
- ★ [Go JETAA \(Gamers of JETAA\)](#)
(If you need an invite link and the above has expired, please ask your PA or RA!)

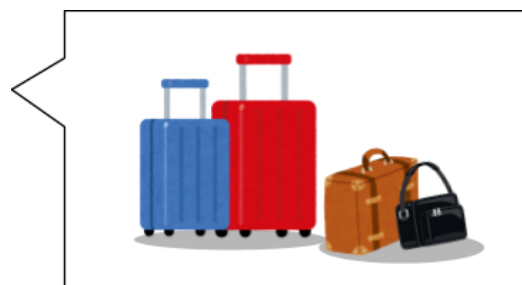
For a comprehensive list of all JET online groups, including community groups that you may be interested in but are currently inactive, you can check out [this document](#)!

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

You may be wondering what you'll need to prepare to start your new life in Japan. Many things are quite accessible in Japan, and you may not need to bring everything right away. If you are worried at all about what you can buy in Japan vs. what you should bring, a quick search on [Amazon Japan](#) or [Rakuten](#) (a popular online shopping website in Japan) is a good way to help reduce your packing list. Remember to also try searching for things with their Japanese names too! You can also check out the guide below or the [Buying Things You Need](#) section to get more tips.

WHAT TO BRING

Depending on your flight to Japan, your baggage allowances will change. **Generally, you will be allowed two checked bags, a carry-on bag, and a personal item such as a handbag or small rucksack.** However, it is possible you may be only allowed one checked bag. Make sure you know your baggage allowance before packing, and keep some suitcase scales on hand. You don't want to be the one stuck repacking things at the airport last minute!



CLOTHING

Clothing can be quite expensive and options for certain body types may be limited in Japan. It's a good idea to stock up a bit on those necessary everyday items, like undergarments, jeans, T-shirts, and shoes before you leave home. However, there are cheaper retail stores such as [UNIQLO](#) and [GU](#) that offer lower prices on clothing necessities. You may also find a good deal at your local secondhand store such as [2nd Street \(セカンドストリート\)](#) and [Hard-Off \(ハードオフ\)](#) (or any of the other "Off" brand stores). To find out what options you may have nearby, check out the [Buying Things You Need](#) section of the guidebook, and reach out to JETs that live in the area you will be going to.

In summer, think cotton! For men, cotton slacks with short sleeve dress shirts are fine, but you may need to wear a T-shirt underneath. For women, tops with sleeves, slacks, knee-length skirts are okay (cover your shoulders!). Revealing clothing (sleeveless or low-cut tops, short skirts, etc.) is not acceptable as clothing in general is more reserved in Japan. If you wear revealing clothes (i.e. show a lot of skin), you will draw attention to yourself.

In winter, think layers! Long underwear, turtlenecks, wool socks, and big cardigan sweaters all help. In the rainy season, a good raincoat can be a godsend (can be easily purchased after you get here), especially if you have to commute to work by bike. Ehime is located in southwest Japan, but that doesn't mean winters don't get cold here! Most places here will get snow at some point, with some even covering a few centimeters of ground.

As for shoes, bring a pair of indoor shoes — most schools will require you to remove your footwear at the door and put on indoor shoes (rubber sole shoes or slippers). Also, bring one set of sports clothes; these come in handy for your school's sports days, club activities, and P.E. classes. Shoes are measured in centimeters. People with larger feet will have trouble finding decent shoes that fit. This applies to women larger than 24.5cm and men larger than 29cm. It's also a good idea to bring shoes that are easy to take on/off — you'll be doing it a lot!



For work, you probably won't have to wear a suit every day, but be sure to dress professionally. A black suit will be a must for the more official occasions, events and ceremonies. It's important to bring at least one set of formal wear in case you need it. Purchasing a suit here is also an option, but please bear in mind that sizes could be very limited. Elementary school is often less strict about formality. If your elementary school says it's acceptable, comfortable clothes or tracksuits are the way to go (as long as you're covered up)! It is best to over-dress during the early stages of your contract, and slowly feel out what suits you and the school best. Every school is different and emulating what you see is the best way to fit in. Wearing a full suit while standing next to a teacher wearing a hoodie and sweatpants is not going to help you blend in. Likewise, some

schools tend to dress more colorfully, and others tend towards a more muted style. You'll find a nice balance after a few months here. If unsure, always know your co-workers are happy to help!

MODESTY TIP

Do the bend over/stretch test to see how much skin you show – you might consider buying longer shirts or wearing singlets, etc., that cover your middle no matter what you do.

PLUS SIZE CLOTHING

If you are larger than the average Japanese person is, chances are you will have difficulty shopping in Japan. However, the bigger the city, the more options you will have. For example, in Matsuyama, there is [Big M One](#) and [4L \(フォーエル\)](#) (they also have online shopping). Most people have also found that shopping at online retailers is convenient and simple, with shipping available to even parts of rural Ehime.

PERSONAL CARE

Most toiletries are readily available at your local drugstore/pharmacy or department stores, so you might not need to pack everything. Some stores here in Ehime that carry a wide variety of products include [Kusuri no Lady \(くすりのレディ\)](#), [Matsumoto Kiyoshi \(マツモトキヨシ\)](#), and [Don Quijote \(ドン・キホーテ\)](#).

However, you may find that there are slight differences between the brands you're used to and the ones offered here. It is possible to order some overseas brands on the popular online retailer [iHerb](#) and have them shipped to you directly, but if the product you're looking for is not there, or if you're just wondering what you should be looking out for in general, take a look at this non-exhaustive list below:

Deodorant	It's a good idea to bring your own, as good deodorant is hard to come by in Japan.
Toothpaste	Most Japanese toothpastes now contain fluoride, but at lower concentrations than are likely found in your home country. You may wish to bring your own simply for taste!
Sunscreen	The sun in Japan is quite strong so a good sunscreen is a must. Sunscreen is widely available as a spray, lotion, or makeup base, and are high quality, but may be expensive and sold in small quantities. Be aware that some sunscreen may also include skin-whitening agents (look out for: 美白 <i>bihaku</i>)! Consider bringing your own, especially if you have sensitive skin.

Cold Medicine	There are many cold, allergy and headache medicines available over the counter here. Most of them are supposed to be very good, but in general, the ingredients are different from Western medicines, and dosages are usually smaller. If you bring your own medicine, be careful that it does not contain any medicine that is illegal in Japan (see page 27 of the GIH for more details).
Contraceptives	Although various contraceptives can be easily found, consider bringing your own for the sake of privacy. Visits to the doctor or drugstore could be difficult and frustrating since small communities tend to know where you went and what you bought. Check page 27 of the GIH about sending medication to Japan. Also, Japanese condoms run slightly smaller, so if you require a “magnum” size in your home country, it may be worth bringing your own supply.
Hair Care	Widely available, reasonably priced and generally good. As with most things, the products here are slightly different from back home, so if you are particular, you should bring your own. Dandruff shampoo in Japan will say フケ on the bottle and might be necessary during the very dry winters. Gels, sprays, foams, and mousses are different, but can be fun to experiment with. Hair color products are designed for dark hair and may affect blonde hair differently. If you have curly hair, it's a good idea to bring moisturizer and defrizzer/curling products. Lastly, methods of cutting hair may be different. There are many sad stories and many good stories about a person's first haircut in Japan. Consider bringing a picture of your hair after it's just been cut (or find something in a magazine you like) and asking friends or other JETs for recommendations on where to go. Some salons may also give discounts to first-timers!
Skin Care	You can easily find general moisturizers (hands & body, facial) over the counter. However, if you have certain skin care needs or allergies, bring your own. Lotions can be expensive and Japan may not have the type you want. Also, Japanese brands are designed for Asian skin, so they may take moisture out instead of putting it in. Some may also include skin-whitening agents! If you use a major cosmetic brand for skin care, you can find counters in Matsuyama at either Mitsukoshi or Takashimaya (department stores). Other skin care stores like LUSH can be found in the shopping mall, Emifull (エミフル) , near Matsuyama.
Vitamins	Vitamins are available in Japan. However, if you don't read kanji, buying them may pose a problem. Again, quantity tend to be small and prices high.
Contact Solution	Contact solution (such as Clear Care and Re-Nu) is available here. The ingredients may not be the same, but they work effectively. If you are concerned, the recommendation is to bring your own supply, or have it sent (especially if you live outside of Matsuyama).
Menstrual Products	Tampons and pads are widely available and well priced. Some familiar Western brands are also available. However, menstrual cups and wash may be more challenging to find.
Facial Wash	Available and good. Like back home, prices vary depending on the brand. For acne, benzoyl peroxide is not generally sold in Japan. Products generally use salicylic acid and other gentle compounds.
Shaving Cream	Available and good, however most have strong scents. Razors are also available. If you use shaving cream and are particular about the brand, consider bringing your own.
Make-Up	Although you can generally find all major brands and lots of good Japanese brands of make-up here, it is very expensive. It is also meant for Japanese skin tones, so shades are limited. If you decide to bring your own cosmetics, please also make sure the amount you bring is within the limit of importation laws .

MEDICATION

Bringing medication into Japan is a straightforward, but potentially time-consuming process. It is important for you to review the [official Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare \(MHLW\) website](#) well in advance so you can prepare the necessary documents to bring your medicine.

Some common medications (including over-the-counter medicines such as inhalers, allergy and sinus medications) may be **illegal** in Japan. Heroin, cocaine, MDMA, opium, cannabis (marijuana), and stimulant drugs including some prescription medications such as Adderall are prohibited in Japan. There are no exceptions in bringing these prohibited medications into Japan, even if the medication is legally obtained outside of Japan. Japanese customs officials or police can detain travelers importing prohibited items.

TRAVEL SMART – TRAVEL SAFE

Drugs that are prohibited in Japan may surprise you!



<p>Any form of marijuana, including CBD oil that may contain THC, even for medical use is ILLEGAL</p>	<p>Any medication that contains amphetamines (like Adderall and Vyvanse) is ILLEGAL</p>
<p>Many over-the-counter and prescription medications common in the United States, including ones for pain, depression, ADHD, and many kinds of decongestants and allergy medications are ILLEGAL</p>	<p>YOU RISK ARREST in Japan for bringing in banned substances, even with a valid U.S. prescription!</p>
<p>CHECK BEFORE YOU GO, IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!</p> <p>Some medications are legal but only in limited quantities or with advance permission from the Japanese Government. Contact Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare yakkan@mhlw.go.jp or visit https://is.gd/gUXdin.</p>	



Information from the U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Japan regarding
[Bringing Over-the-Counter Medicine and Prescriptions into Japan](#)

In addition, the amount of medication you may bring at one time is limited. According to Japanese laws, **up to a two-months' supply of over-the-counter medication or vitamins and up to one month's supply of prescription medicine** can be brought into Japan. You should bring a copy of your doctor's prescription as well as a letter stating the purpose of the drug.

SEXUAL/REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

You may find that contraceptives, such as the **birth control pill**, are harder or more expensive to get here. Others, such as condoms, may not have the size suited to you.

Please check out our section on **Sexual/Reproductive Health** in the Life in Ehime chapter of the guidebook to find out more.

If you want to bring more than the allowed supply, or are planning to bring syringes (pumps) or a CPAP machine, there are a couple steps you'll need to take. A full step-by-step guide is written in the [Q&A for those who are importing medicines into Japan](#), but a quick outline will be put here:

1. Apply for a **Yunyu Kakunin-sho** (formerly called "Yakkan Shoumei-sho").
You can do this via the Q&A [Word](#) or [PDF](#) file.
2. Send your documents either by post or email (yakkan@mhlw.go.jp).
3. Wait for confirmation from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (MHLW).
4. Bring a printed copy of the Yunyu Kakunin-sho with your medication.
5. Present your Yunyu Kakunin-sho at Customs after you have arrived in Tokyo.

It is important to do this as soon as you can, especially if you hope to bring any [narcotics or psychotropics](#) (which requires a separate process) into Japan. Approval by the government could take up to several weeks to process. If your application is urgent, indicate "URGENT" in the email subject line and mention it in your email. If you plan to **send any medication**, you can also use the same [Q&A document](#) for instructions on how to do so.

CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES

If you have questions about the process, please check the [MHLW website](#), including the FAQ, or contact the following:

Contact for Drugs, Quasi Drugs, Cosmetics and Medical devices	Contact for Narcotics and Psychotropics
For arrival in Tokyo (Narita/Haneda): Phone Number: +81-48-740-0800 Email: yakkan@mhlw.go.jp	General Inquiries: Fax: +81-3-3501-0034 Tokyo: Phone Number: (0011) 81-3-3512-8691 Fax: (0011) 81-3-3512-8689 Email: tokyoncd@mhlw.go.jp Osaka: Phone Number: (0011) 81-6-6949-6336 Fax: (0011) 81-6-6949-6339 Email: osakancd@mhlw.go.jp
For arrival in Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka, or Naha: Phone Number: +81-6-6942-4096 Email: kiyakuji@mhlw.go.jp	

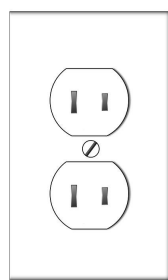
If you need to email for any inquiries, **please make sure to include the following information:**

- ★ The drug's active ingredients
- ★ The name of the medicine
- ★ The dosage and quantity
- ★ Your email address

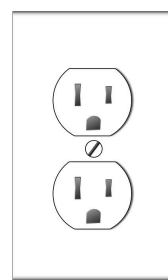
For more details, please see [page 27 of the GIH](#) or the [MHLW website](#). Also, get in contact with your supervisor about any questions you may have.

ELECTRONICS

Depending on where you're coming from, it is worth checking to see if you will need **adapters** (for changing plug types) and/or **transformers** (for converting voltage) for your devices. The voltage in Japan is 100 Volt, which is different from North America (120V), Central Europe (230V) and most other regions of the world. In addition, Japan uses only **Type A** (two flat prongs) or **Type B** (two flat prongs with grounding prong) plugs, with the former being more common.



Type A



Type B

Most electronics, such as smartphones, laptops, and cameras, come with chargers that have a wide voltage range (100V-240V), so only an adapter would be needed for those devices. Adapters can also be purchased in Japan at stores such as Daiso, but it doesn't hurt to be ready so you can charge without worry as soon as you land.

Another thing to note is that the **frequency** of the electric current is 50 Hertz in Western Japan (which is where Ehime is located). However, most equipment is not affected by this frequency difference. A possible exception are timing devices such as clocks.

Finally, **do not bring a hair dryer** or other equipment involving heating as they could get damaged or even start a fire due to voltage differences.

Region Lock

While most games systems these days are region free, DVDs and computers tend not to be. Japan is **region 2** and **NTSC video format**, so region 1 (eg. North American) DVDs probably will not work on Japanese devices. If you plan on using a Japanese device to watch your movies, one option is to rip them into a different format and put them on portable media like an external hard drive or USB. Software is available online, but you should make sure whatever you do is legal for your locale.

Alternatively, subscription services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney Plus and Hulu are available in Japan. If you have a VPN, you can also access subscription service content from other countries.

Electronics to Consider Bringing

1. **Laptop computer:** If you travel between schools and want to be able to work on materials or have all your materials in one place, a laptop or tablet are excellent tools for keeping your productivity hassle-free.
2. **Smartphone:** Even if you intend to get a new one here, for those first few days/weeks, a pocketable digital dictionary can be of great help.
3. **Pocket Translator:** This can help in a clutch if you do not have a smartphone with you.

MONEY

When you're deciding how much money you should bring with you to Japan, it's a good idea to contact your predecessor for advice. You may need [key money](#) (which could be up to three months' rent worth), the first month's rent, cash to buy furniture or appliances, money to pay for your predecessor's things, and money to live on. If you plan to buy a mobile phone before your first paycheck, you should also take that into consideration. Most carriers will discount and allow you to pay installments on your phone as part of your monthly bill, but the majority of contracts are for two years. If you only plan to stay for one year or would prefer to pay for your phone outright, budget anywhere from 20,000 yen (basic phone) to 90,000 yen (high-end smartphone) for the purchase.



You may be able to access money from your home country's bank by using an international ATM at a convenience store or JP Post Office ATM. However, not all places have this, so it's essential you prepare in case this is not an available option to you.

DEBIT/CREDIT CARDS

Before you decide to either bring a card from home or apply for one once you get here, it is important to note that Japan is still very much a **cash-based society**, meaning most monetary transactions are handled in cash, and that there is a possibility for stores and other retailers to not take card or other cashless forms of payment.

If you are considering getting a Japanese debit/credit card, the following is a list of popular "foreigner-friendly" options:

- ★ [Rakuten Card](#)
- ★ [EPOS Card](#)
- ★ [Visa LINE Pay](#)
- ★ [Amazon Prime Card](#)
- ★ [American Express Delta Card](#)
- ★ [Sumitomo Mitsui Card](#)
- ★ [JCB Card W](#)
- ★ [Nexus Card](#)
- ★ [AC Mastercard](#)



The differences between these depend on what you will be using them for. As a general rule of thumb, these cards will usually come with benefits related to their respective companies, so if you have a preference for one, it is best to get their card. For example, the Amazon Prime Card gives you bonus points for shopping on Amazon.

An important thing to keep in mind is that even these "foreigner-friendly" card options **may reject your application** because you have not stayed in Japan for long enough, so it is possible you may NOT be able to get a card within the first year that you are here.

ELECTRONIC PAYMENT

An alternative to physical cards are electronic payment services such as [PayPay](#) and [LINE Pay](#). These generally require only a Japanese phone number to sign up, and you can even pay your balance at convenience stores.

GIFTS

Gift giving is huge in Japanese culture, and often comes in the form of what's called an *omiyage* (お土産). The most common reason why people give *omiyage* is to give something small to people back home when you return from a trip. As a foreigner coming from abroad, it is not expected of you to bring something, but if you decide you'd like to, **something small and not too expensive** from your home country/town is best. When trying to get gifts for people at your workplace, you may opt to get a group gift, and save your "special" gifts for your supervisor, principal, etc. Ask your predecessor for details of who best to buy specific gifts for. Don't go overboard and use up all your luggage space on presents!



Individually wrapped snacks like these *momiji manju* (sweet cakes shaped like maple leaves) make great, inexpensive group gifts!

If you need recommendations, small gifts such as biscuits, sweets (toffee etc.), alcohol, calendars, photo books, coasters, food from your country (Vegemite, maple syrup, etc.), key rings, magnets, macadamia nuts, dried fruit, tea, etc. work great!

If possible, using gift-wrap that reflects the area you are from (koala printed wrapping paper; hula girl gift bags, etc.) is a nice touch. However, you may wish to wrap your gifts after arriving rather than risk having them opened by airport security!

MISCELLANEOUS

INTERNATIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

Before you leave, if you intend to drive at all in Japan, you should try to apply for an International Driver's License. **You will NOT be able to apply for one once you land in Japan**, so make sure to plan ahead if you need one! The International Driver's License lasts for **one year** (you can decide when the start date is, and it's recommended you choose something as close to the date you will land in Japan as possible).



The International Driver's License can come in a printed booklet, card, or even digital.

If you choose not to apply for an International Driver's License and find out you'll need to drive in Japan, be warned that **it could take months to get a Japanese license** as the process is tedious and difficult, even for Japanese people.

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

You will be asked to make [self-introductions](#) very often during your time in Japan. Since many of those will be directed towards young students, you may find you'd like to keep things interesting with some trinkets from home! Photographs (family, home, friends, food, country, school-life, holidays, etc.), maps, currency, flags, famous items, postcards, etc. are all good ideas of things you could bring. If space is an issue, you may consider scanning these items and printing copies once you arrive.

PRIZES FOR STUDENTS

Postage stamps, pencils, flags, postcards, key rings, stickers, erasers, pins, seals, coins, etc. Stickers from your home country themed around famous things are popular with most kids in all grades. Self-inking stamps themed for your home country would be a good prize too.

WHAT TO SEND

Some people find shipping some things separately, rather than taking all of their luggage on the airplane, to be a more convenient option. If you need help figuring out how to send things to Japan, contact your local post office or package delivery service to ask them about international parcel shipping. **Also, make sure to let your CO know that you are shipping things if you wish to have them shipped directly to them.**

SHIPPING METHODS

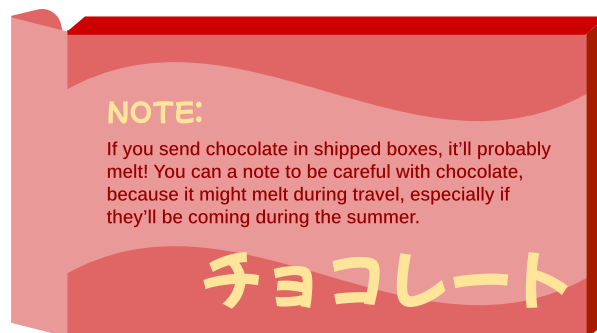
***Due to COVID-19, some shipping methods may be unavailable from certain countries. Double check with your post office to make sure. For sending packages from Japan, check the [Japan Post website](#).**

Surface mail, or *funabin* 船便, is the best option if you are conscious about money and don't mind how long it takes for your package to arrive at its destination (it usually takes between 1 to 3 months).

Economy air (SAL) is faster than surface mail since it uses vacant space on aircrafts to send packages (surface mail is sent over the sea). It's cheaper than airmail and takes between 6 to 13 days for items to arrive.

Airmail, or *kōkūbin* 航空便, also utilizes air delivery, but is much faster (3 to 6 days). The fees are higher, but this is a good option if you need something delivered quickly and don't want to pay for EMS.

EMS, or *kokusaisupi-doyūbin* 国際スピード郵便, is the fastest option for international mail, but also the most expensive. Parcels are delivered between 2 to 4 days.



WRITING A JAPANESE ADDRESS

If you're unsure how to write out a Japanese address, here's a [How to Write the Address and Name guide](#) from the Japan Post (you can also look at the picture to the right):

1st Row	Full name
2nd Row	Name of the building, like an apartment, and room number (if applicable)
3rd Row	House number, Street, Town/village
4th Row	City, Prefecture/State/Province
5th Row	Postal Code, Country

There may also be forms you will need to fill out before you can [send a parcel](#) or [EMS package](#). Although you do not have to fill these in advance, it is good to check on the website for details on how to fill them out before heading to the post office!



Example of how to address letters and packages to Japan
(Courtesy of the Japan Post website)

CUSTOMS

To be extra sure your belongings make it to you safely, declare all of your items through [customs](#) so that you can avoid an import tax. If you declare these items and they arrive in Japan within 6 months of your arrival, you can avoid being taxed on goods **totaling up to 200,000 yen**. If you do not make any declarations, you are liable to be taxed on anything shipped to you from overseas with a value exceeding 10,000 yen, even within your initial 6-month period.

You may get a customs declaration form like this before you land at the airport.

After landing at the airport (or sometimes before on the aircraft), you will be required to fill out a “[Declaration of Personal Effects and Unaccompanied Articles](#)” form (scroll down for other languages) and submit it to customs. It is on this form that you are able to declare the goods that you sent separately and exempt them from import tax.

You will only have this one chance to fill out the form before going through customs. So, please ensure you fill out this form correctly. Look to [this guide](#) if you need some help.

If you need help on the day, a flight attendant may be able to assist you.

SENDING PACKAGES HOME

Once you arrive in Japan, whether it's to send souvenirs back home to loved ones, or the big move back, you may be wondering how you will ultimately need to prepare to send things home. To start, [this is a good step-by-step guide](#) on sending international post from Japan. You can also refer to [this guide](#), which has information on how to send packages domestically as well.

Also, from 2021, if you send packages internationally by Japan Post, you are required to [print out a label](#). Handwritten labels will not be accepted. You may need to [login to use their services](#) to print out a label. Please double check before heading to the post office!

***Please note that due to COVID-19, some mailing services may be unavailable at this time.** Check the [Japan Post website](#) (or your respective post office) for more details.

As always, your fellow JETs are also a great resource if you ever need help. It is likely someone in your area has already tried sending something back to their home country, so feel free to ask them to show you the ropes!



YOUR NEW HOME

Housing arrangements vary greatly from among individual JETs (rent, furnishings, location, utilities, amenities, and so forth). Some people may live in housing sponsored by their CO, while others may even rent a whole house to themselves. Here are some common points of concern that people have regarding their housing arrangement that you should check with your supervisor before you land in Japan.

INITIAL FEES

You may be required to pay [key money](#), which is essentially a deposit that will (probably) not be refunded. Not everyone has to pay key money, so find out if you do and how much it will be. In some cases, key money could be up to 3 months' worth of rent (which could be around 200,000 yen depending on your living situation).

You may also be asked to enroll in [property insurance](#), or *kasai hoken* 火災保険. This is usually around 10,000 yen per year. Make sure to ask your supervisor about this, as you may be interested in enrolling yourself if you are not already scheduled to do so. There have been several cases where JETs were forced to pay for the damages to not only their own, but also their neighbors' housing when there were water leaks or other problems. Whether or not to purchase property insurance is your choice. However, if you are liable for damages, the costs can be very high.

Other fees may include a [deposit](#) (first month's rent), [a fee to change locks](#) (~12,000 yen), and [a property maintenance fee](#) (~3,000 yen). These all depend on your housing arrangements, so make sure to confirm with your supervisor in advance.



FURNISHING

If your new place is unfurnished, the thing you may be most concerned about is furnishing! One common way people get furnishing is through their predecessor. This can make things especially handy if you are moving directly into their place, but always make sure to check the conditions of the things you are buying before agreeing to do so. You are not under any obligation to buy anything/everything from your predecessor!

Other ways people can get furniture is from other local JETs or at secondhand stores, local recycle shops, and volunteer organizations dedicated to providing cheap or free furniture to students and foreign residents. For more details about these, check out the Furniture section in [Buying Things You Need](#).

If you are a [Matsuyama BoE ALT](#), note that you will most likely be coming to an unfurnished place due to policies implemented by the BoE.

SETTING UP WI-FI

Some places may already come with Wi-Fi installed. However, please check ahead of time and plan accordingly as it could take [up to a month](#) for Wi-Fi to get installed into your home. A good option in the meantime is getting a pocket Wi-Fi that you can usually get along with your phone service if you are going with a foreigner-friendly company. You can learn more about some common Wi-Fi options in the [Getting Your Phone](#) section.

SAYING GOODBYE

Whether you plan to stay in Japan for one year or five, saying goodbye to your loved ones can be tough. You will likely experience **homesickness**, and go through various stages of **culture shock**. To prepare for this, don't hesitate to bring personal items that remind you of home, family, and friends. On those inevitable days when your carefully prepared lesson is met with bored yawns, or you misread (or can't read) the *kanji* and get on the wrong bus, you'll appreciate having some comforts waiting for you at home.

On top of it, keeping your loved ones close while you are away can be a challenge, but is definitely one that is possible. If you know your Japanese address before leaving your home country, be sure to share it with your family and friends (or send out emails or postcards after you've arrived). Tell people to write to you, especially after the first month or two. Once you're settled in and the newness has begun to wear off, you may begin to feel a little homesick and finding a postcard or letter from home in your mailbox is always a nice pick-me-up. You may even consider setting up an exchange with friends/family back home — they send you some familiar goodies (magazines, favorite foods, etc.) and you send them a box of novelties from Japan (Pocky, dried squid, plastic Gundam, etc.).

Every relationship is different so take some time to figure out expectations for how often to communicate and how. Remember that because most of your communication will likely be done on the phone or over text, there is a lot of room for misinterpretation. It helps to be aware of that and adjust accordingly! You can still do things together, such as watch a movie at the same time on Skype. Remember to be creative and have fun, as a weekly phone call may not be enough for many relationships to thrive. Needless to say, having a computer with Internet is highly useful and advised.



AFTER YOU ARRIVE

You're finally here! Whether your flight was 2 hours or 14 hours, you are sure to be nervous once you land and step foot into Japan after months of waiting. Take a deep breath and try to calm any nerves. Your journey in Japan is just about to start!

TOKYO ORIENTATION

Before you make your way to Ehime, you'll be undertaking a two-day [Post-Arrival Orientation](#) during your brief time in Japan's capital. This will be your first work obligation as a JET! If you haven't already, you should be getting materials about it via CLAIR, so this guidebook will not go into detail about it. However, here's a quick look into what to expect.



The purpose of the orientation is to provide a basic introduction to the fundamentals of life on the JET Programme. It is comprised of the following:

- ★ An introduction to life on the JET Programme, presented by Japanese government officials.
- ★ An introduction to perspectives and working requirements of JET Programme participants.
- ★ Workshops introducing job skills necessary for JET Programme participants to fulfill their roles, conducted by reappointed ALTs, CIRs and SEAs, as well as CLAIR and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

During this orientation, you have the opportunity to meet with current JET Programme participants, and to hear first-hand about working in Japanese schools or local government offices. Furthermore, you will be able to hear from other speakers and Japanese supervisors about expectations and duties from their respective organizations.

SCHEDULE

***Note: COVID-19 measures may affect scheduling.**

After you clear customs and immigration, you will be whisked away to coach buses which will shuttle you to the center of the city. The trip from Narita to the hotel is quite lengthy (roughly 1-2 hours), so take this time to really take in the fact that you have finally landed in Japan!

Once you reach the hotel, you will need to send some of your luggage ahead of you. It's important that you arrange your baggage so that you won't exceed the domestic weight limit for Japanese airlines. As a general rule, you will only be allowed **one piece of luggage and one personal item**, so plan carefully! Consider packing necessities (professional clothes, toiletries) in a smaller bag or someplace they are easily accessible so you can shift them to a smaller bag. If you have any fragile items or *omiyage*, make sure you take those into account (you can carry them with you or tell the shipping company employees that your bag is fragile).

DAY 1

The first morning of orientation will begin with about an hour of welcome addresses and introductions by various dignitaries. After this, ALTs and CIRs will attend separate meetings with general information about life and work in Japan (speeches, videos, etc.). You will also receive a lot of booklets, pamphlets, and fliers during various workshops.

The first day concludes with a welcome reception between 6:30 and 8pm, which includes free drinks and a buffet dinner. It is a great time to mingle! There are more than 1,000 people at each of the A and B orientation sessions, so it can be a little overwhelming, but it is a good opportunity to make new friends who you can visit or who can visit you. The reception tables are organized by region, so you will have a chance to meet some neighboring JETs.

DAY 2

The second morning will generally consist of a panel discussion and a number of team-teaching workshops. A large number of workshops will take place in the afternoon. These seminars/workshops can be useful, but it is understood that you could be jet lagged and so they are not too strenuous.

The topics include things like: community involvement and making friends in Japan, driving in Japan, working at multiple schools, independent Japanese study, Japanese etiquette for beginners, thriving as a rural JET, and so on. Topics vary from year to year.



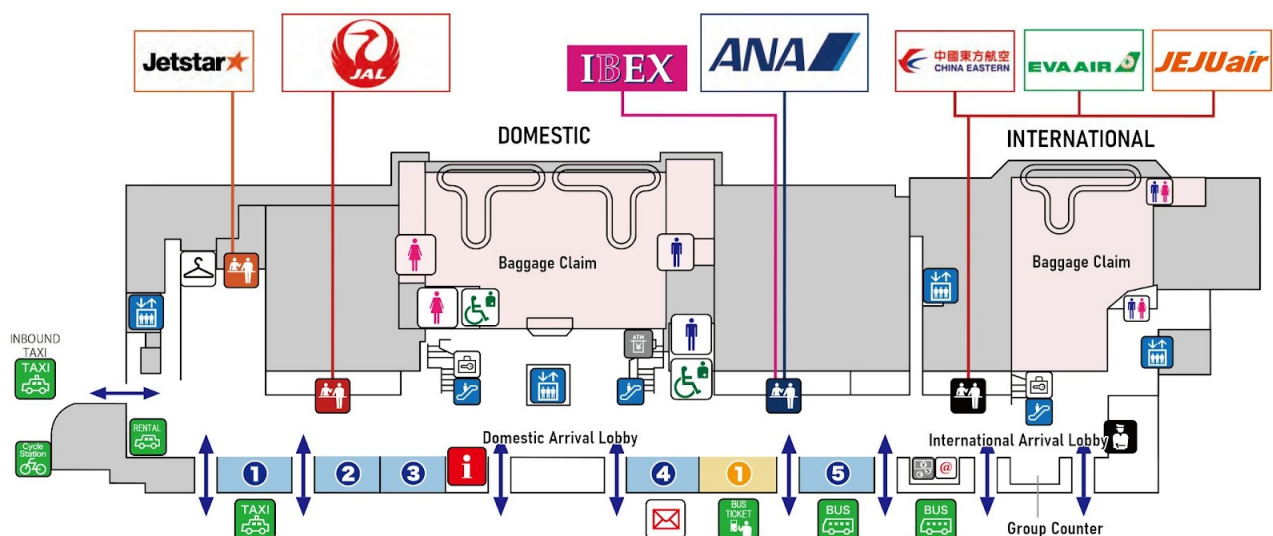
You will be gathered with many JETs arriving at the same time as you!

In the afternoon, you will attend a prefectural meeting, with your Prefectural Advisors (PAs). They will introduce themselves, explain the JET support system and review the upcoming official events, and complete the meeting with important information about departing for Ehime the following day.

Most countries (excluding the U.S. due to capacity constraints) will also invite their JETs to attend a welcome reception at their embassies on the second night. This is often a highlight for many people, and although it may involve a taxi/subway journey, you'll no doubt be rewarded with free beer, food and entertainment when you arrive.

DAY 3

On the final day, you will wake up early in the morning to board a plane to Matsuyama Airport. Once you arrive, your supervisor or other representative from your CO will be there waiting to pick you up. Matsuyama Airport has only one [arrival lobby](#), making it easy to navigate!



Floor Map of Matsuyama Airport

PROGRAMS

Here are some of the different programs on JET that you may be introduced to during Tokyo Orientation.

JET INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The [JET Internship Program](#) seeks to meet the needs of JET Program participants who want the opportunity to advance their post-JET career opportunities in Japan and Japanese companies looking for global personnel. It is our hope that JET Program participants can utilize their internship to develop a greater awareness of the working world, attain a better understanding of the kinds of global personnel Japanese companies are seeking and actively use this for the benefit of their job-searching activities after finishing the JET Program.

JAPANESE LANGUAGE COURSES

Each year, JET Program participants have the option of taking one of [three online Japanese language courses](#). These courses are free to participate in and are separated into Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, which correspond to levels N5, N4, and N3 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). The teaching materials used in these courses encompass a variety of situations that JET participants will likely experience at some point during their time in Japan.

GRANTS FOR JETs

JET Program participants can apply for [two kinds of grants](#): a partial-cost TEFL certification grant and a JLPT grant. Both of these are aimed at helping participants improve on their professional skills and achieve a higher level of performance within their workplaces.

AFTER JET CONFERENCE

The [After JET Conference \(AJC\)](#) is held in the Greater Tokyo area each year in February or March. CLAIR aims to enrich the lives of JET participants after they leave the JET Program by drawing on influential alumni and internationally-minded Japanese businesses to provide insight into the many exciting paths you can take after completing your time on JET. In addition to information about job-hunting in JET participants' home countries and in Japan, seminar topics also cover pursuing further education, how to deal with reverse culture shock, and other aspects of life after JET.

CAREER FAIRS FOR JETs

CLAIR hosts [career fairs](#) for JET participants in Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka. Additionally, career fairs may be held outside of these three cities depending on available resources. CLAIR developed these career fairs with the cooperation of local and foreign chambers of commerce to respond to both the interests of JET Programme participants seeking employment in Japan and Japanese companies/organizations seeking multilingual, global personnel.



FIRST WEEK IN EHIME

You have finally landed in Matsuyama Airport, and you may be overwhelmed by all the things you'll have to do to begin your new life here. Don't fret — here's a quick rundown of the most important things you'll have to do the first day (or week, depending on how your CO does things) that you're here in Ehime.

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

When you arrive in Matsuyama, you'll be meeting your supervisor(s), so **dress appropriately**. Don't worry about having a big speech prepared — if you're not confident with Japanese, the following tidbits will get you through that first meeting!

Japanese	Romaji	English
はじめまして	<i>hajime mashite</i>	How do you do? / Nice to meet you.
私の名前は～	<i>watashi no namae wa...</i>	My name is...
～から来ました	<i>...kara kimashita</i>	I'm from...
よろしくお願いします	<i>yoroshiku onegaishimasu</i>	Essentially means "Please regard me favorably."

So, a full example would be:

はじめまして。私の名前はジョンです。アメリカから来ました。よろしくお願いします。
Hi, nice to meet you. My name is John. I'm from the U.S. Please regard me favorably.

That's it! Once you get more confident with this, you can add your own pizzazz by talking about your hobbies (私の趣味は～ *watashi no shumi wa...*) or anything else you may find interesting.

As a newly arrived foreign teacher, the students and teachers will be anxious to know all about you. At this stage, most of you will have to make self-introduction speeches to your classes. The important thing here is to make your introductions as dynamic as possible. Most classrooms have televisions (many even have smart boards now!) and you may be able to create a Powerpoint or digital photo album to show in class. Before you commit to the high-tech approach, make sure it will be available to you and that your computer of choice will link properly to the TV. Or just play it safe and go analog.

Don't be shocked if your supervisor doesn't speak English — think of it as a great way to practice intercultural communication! They'll try their best too!

Use lots of photos of family, friends, pets, and vacations, and try to involve the Japanese teacher and the students as much as possible. Pass the photos around, but be aware that some classes may tear and rip things in their excitement. With this in mind, it might be a good idea to get some materials laminated or make large color copies and glue them onto sturdy cardboard. Also, try to vary the content of your materials. For example, you might play some of your favorite music and then ask the students what music or popular singers they like. Also, while most schools won't let you give students food to try due to allergy issues, it may be a good idea to bring a food item famous in your region as seeing and smelling it makes your home country a lot more tangible.

MORE TIPS

Whatever you talk about remember to do it **SLOWLY** and **CLEARLY** while using **SIMPLE WORDS**. Avoid jargon, slang, and idioms, as even very experienced non-native English speakers may not know their meaning. If your audience can't understand you then they'll lose interest. Just remember how much interest you pay to what is said every morning at the staff meeting and you'll get the idea.

Try to stick to topics that you have props for. Where you live, your family, their jobs, the family pet, etc. General facts about your country, some brief notes on its history, geography, weather, culture, holidays, etc., is usually enough. The rest you can tap dance your way through.

Relate facts back to Japan. To say that Australia is 7,682,300 km² with a population of 18,173,600 is not as meaningful to a thirteen-year-old Japanese student as saying; Australia is twenty times larger than Japan, but has only one-sixth the population (and even that statement might need a blackboard demonstration).

Think of **VERY SIMPLE** questions that you can throw back to the students or teacher. The trap to avoid is you talking about yourself for fifty minutes.



One easy technique is to make the class work for the answers to their questions. Opening with, "Hello everyone. Guess which country I'm from!" generates more interest and activity from the students than them passively sitting there while you state "Hello everyone. I'm from New Zealand". You can easily waste a few minutes by choosing someone, making them stand (actually, they'll do that themselves) and then letting them whisper in consultation with their friends before coming to the (hopefully wrong, so you can do this again) consensus on your country of origin. Don't overuse questions, and try to keep things moving as prolonged silences can also get pretty tedious. Involving the students in your talk from the start is more fun for them (they get to try English) and it provides a little variety for you.

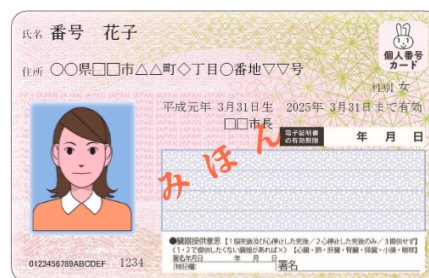
Finally, expect questions. From the obvious "What food do you like?" to the unexpected. You could be asked, "Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend" or what your "size" is. Humor is usually the best defense for some of these questions. Answers such as "one hundred and eighty centimeters" or "bigger than a sumo wrestler's" will generally get a laugh and move the conversation along. Many LGBTQIA2S+ JETs can find the endless questions about partners particularly off putting. But please remember these questions come from a kind place of honest curiosity. Prepare for likely uncomfortable questions as much as you can.

RESIDENT REGISTRATION

One of the first administrative tasks you'll be doing on the first day is going to your local municipal office (city/town hall or other similar government agency) and registering your information so that you'll officially be recognized as a resident. Your supervisor will likely accompany you during this, so all you will have to do is fill out forms based on their instructions. You will likely need to prepare your **Residence Card (zairyuu card 在留カード)** that you received when you arrived at the airport in Tokyo. After all of the paperwork, you should receive a **resident registration and resident certificate (juumin tōrokujuuminhyo 住民登録・住民票)** for about 300 yen or so. If you ever lose this, you can request a new copy at the same office.

At this point, you may also be asked about what's called a **"My Number Card" (マイナンバーカード)** also known as your **"Individual Number" (kojin bangō 個人番号)**. According to the [official website](#), the My Number Card serves the following purposes:

- ★ As identification for online applications for various administrative procedures
- ★ As a seal registration card, a library card, a health insurance card, and as a multi-purpose card for a wide range of public services
- ★ For various private on-line transactions
- ★ Obtaining various government documents at convenience stores, so that you don't have to go to the city or ward office



Example of a My Number Card.

It is not necessary for you to get one, and it's mostly useful for permanent residents as a way to save up points. However, it may be required for **online bank transfers**, such as services provided by [Wise](#), or exchanging the money in your Japanese bank into **foreign currency**. You can also use it as a form of identification or health insurance, to get a **Residence Certificate** and other official documents directly from a convenience store rather than a municipal office, or even apply for income tax online.

If you decide to apply for one, you will first need to wait to get a **Notification Letter (kojin bangō tsuuchi-sho 個人番号通知書)** in the mail. This will typically arrive 2-3 weeks after you register at your municipal office. Once you receive the letter, you can apply for the card online via the QR code on the letter, by mail by filling the form which is enclosed together with the notification, or in-person at your municipal office. Please note that after you apply, it takes **about a month** for the card to be completed, and you will likely need to pick it up at a designated location (it will not be mailed to you). Make sure to bring your **Notification Letter** and **form of identification** with you when you go pick up.



Example of a Notification Letter.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

Your supervisor should also take you to open up a bank account within your first week. This account will be **where your monthly salary will be deposited**, so it's very important to follow all instructions. On the day you go to the bank, you'll need to bring the following:

- ☐ Form of identification (Residence Card and/or passport)
- ☐ Proof of address (Residence Card and/or Residence Certificate)
- ☐ Personal stamp (also called *hanko* 判子 or *inkan* 印鑑)
- ☐ Phone number (your supervisor will use a work phone if you do not have a Japanese phone number yet)

PRO TIP

Ask your supervisor if it's possible for you to **open a bank with a larger bank** such as Japan Post Bank, Mitsubishi UFJ, Mizuho, or Sumitomo Mitsui because these will give you much more freedom outside of Ehime and also will be much more foreigner-friendly than local banks.



Example of a bankbook (left) and cash card (right).

Opening a new bank account could take 2-3 hours, so your supervisor may choose to do this on a separate day from everything else. Once the process is done, you should receive a **passbook or bank book** (*tsuuchou* 通帳). Do NOT lose this, as you will need it anything you need to do something at the bank. The bank book functions much like the registry of your checkbook — it will keep track of all of your transactions.

They will also ask if you would like to get a **Cash Card** (キャッシュカード), which will allow you to use an ATM without bringing your bankbook. It is not a credit/debit card (unless you apply for debit card services separately), so it cannot be used for transactions directly. Cash Cards typically take about a week to deliver to your home.

GETTING YOUR PHONE

Another thing you may be taken to do is get a mobile phone. There are three major carriers in Japan — **Docomo**, **Softbank**, and **AU**. To learn more about your options, scroll down to the Choosing a Cellular Company section. Overall, however, it won't matter much which company you go with; it all depends on what you prioritize. If you are in a rural location you may wish to ask around to make sure your chosen company has good reception in your area. This likely will not be too much of an issue, as most JETs have not had problems with cellular service, even in more rural areas. One thing to note is that you might be required to pay for the entire phone up front (if you choose to buy one), so be prepared with cash or a credit card.

PRO TIP

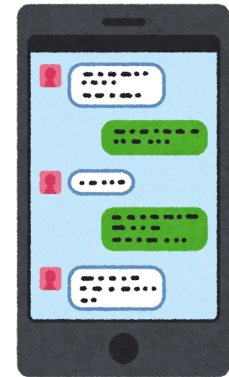
LINE is the most popular messaging service in Japan.
Get LINE!

CHOOSING A PHONE

The type of phone you get is ultimately up to you, though smartphones are highly recommended. With a smartphone, you are able to keep many survival tools on the same device, including a Japanese/English dictionary, voice translator, access to the Internet, train schedules, GPS, and interactive maps of Japan. As a newcomer to Japan, you will almost certainly find yourself searching for information and it's infinitely more convenient to have it all in your pocket.






Smartphone plans average between **5,500-7,800 yen a month** and allow for between 2-7 GB of data. Some phones and plans also include tethering (the ability to use your phone as a computer modem) as part of the price — very useful if you plan on bringing a laptop to work.

If you would like to use your own phone, be prepared for some extra time as while most phone providers will allow this, many might be unsure if they can provide service for a foreign phone. You can use a site like [Will My Phone Work](#) to check if your phone is compatible. Also, make sure your phone is not **SIM locked**, or else you will not be able to use a new SIM card at all. Ask your predecessor for advice as previous JETs have had an incredibly difficult time getting a SIM or contracting without a phone bought in-store.



CHOOSING A CELLULAR COMPANY

There are many options for you in regards to a cellular company. Traditional Japanese companies include [au](#), [Softbank](#), and [Docomo](#), while ones that are more foreigner-friendly include MVNOs like [Sakura Mobile](#), [Mobal](#), [GTN Mobile](#), and [ijjMIO](#). There are also [low-cost plans](#) offered by traditional companies that many people opt to use. In general, all of these options are good, but it all depends on what your priorities are. Do you value having access to English customer support? Or lower monthly costs?

Provider	Data + voice plans (tax incl.)	Network	Min. contract	Cancellation	Free contract suspension	English support	Link
MVNO providers							
	5GB: ¥2,980 10GB: ¥3,280 30GB: ¥4,380	SoftBank	No contract	¥0	✓	✓	Pricing info
	4GB: ¥3,278 25GB: ¥4,378	Docomo	No contract	¥0	✓	✓	Pricing info
	4GB: ¥1,078 15GB: ¥1,848 20GB: ¥2,068 (all 5G)	Docomo/AU	1-2 mths	¥0	✗	✗	Pricing info
	7GB: ¥2,530 13GB: ¥3,850 30GB: ¥4,730	Docomo	None	¥0	✗	✗	Pricing info
Major cellular service providers							
	Unlimited: ¥3,278	-	None	¥0	✗	✗	Pricing info
AU	Unlimited Max 4G/5G data: ¥7,238	-	1 year	¥1,100	✗	Limited	-
Docomo	5G Giga Premier Unlimited: ¥7,315	-	2 years	¥1,100	✗	✗	-
SoftBank	Unlimited 5G/4G data: ¥7,238	-	None	¥0	✗	✗	-

Useful comparison chart taken from [Tokyo Cheapo](#). View full size at the link.

Make sure to take the time to do your own research. While asking others may be useful if you are curious how the service is on a day-to-day basis, likely people will have different priorities than you, and it's important to remember that when asking for any recommendations.

CHOOSING A HOME INTERNET SERVICE

As mentioned in the [Before You Leave](#) section, home internet services are usually bundled with phone service plans and are a popular option, so you may decide to stick with the same company for both. It is important you talk with your supervisor about this because your building management may have specific policies about installing your own home internet.

GIFT GIVING

If you did decide to get [gifts](#) for people, you will most likely want to try to give it sometime within the first week or two of coming. However, don't stress if you don't get to it. It's not necessary to give presents on day one, or even week one. Your co-workers know that you have just arrived and have lots of things to get used to! It's okay to give your gifts once you have settled in and you know whom you work with.

A word of warning, though: people living in rural areas may be taken to **meet the mayor** (or other town dignitaries) on their first day, thus you may want to have something small with you that you can give to them. Check with your predecessor to see if this is the case. Again, **something small and not too expensive** is best for individual gifts.



If you really want to impress the people you give gifts to, try using the following phrases:

Honno kimochi desu ga...
ほんの気持ちですが...
"This is just a small token of my gratitude."

Taishita mono de wa arimasen ga...
大したものではありませんが...
"This is not much, but..."

You may also have heard of the expression, "*Tsumaranai mono desu ga...* (つまらないものですが...)," which literally means, "This is a trifling thing, but please accept it." While it is still very acceptable to say this, it is now commonly seen as a rather outdated phrase, and only older Japanese folks use it. Whatever you decide to use, the most important thing to know is that Japanese people value humbleness, and it shows greatly in the language they use. They will likely be overjoyed that you know the proper etiquette to giving gifts!

EHIME ORIENTATION

Every year, Ehime AJET holds an orientation to supplement the information you received during the Tokyo one. This year, the Ehime Orientation will be on **Tuesday, August 30th at 1:30-2:30pm**. The plan is to hold an online meeting with all of the new incoming JETs to present briefly on some important matters of business regarding living and thriving in Ehime, while also taking questions from everyone.

Here is the general schedule for the orientation:

2022 Newlu-Contacted Ehime JET Orientation Schedule
2022年愛媛県新規JETオリエンテーションスケジュール(案)

Time 時間		Details 内容	Person In Charge 担当者
開始	終了		
13:30	13:35	Opening Ceremony 開会	愛媛県 Ehime Prefectural Government
13:35	13:40	Ehime Support Network JET参加者のサポートについて	PA & RA
13:40	13:45	Welcome to Ehime 愛媛県について	JETPA Le Lin
13:45	13:50	About ALTs and CIRs 外国人指導助手(ALT)及び国際交流員(CIR)について	JETPA Kyra Samuda
13:50	14:00	Introductin to EPIC 愛媛県国際交流協会の紹介	Ehime Prefecture International Center CIR Chuyo RA Miya Jia

Breakout Groups Discussion 地域別分科会

14:00	14:10	Culture Shock & Homesickness カルチャーショックとホームシックについて	PA・各地域担当RA Regional Representatives
14:10	14:15	Drinking Culture & Professionalism 日本の飲酒文化とビジネスマナーについて	PA・各地域担当RA Regional Representatives
14:15	14:25	Region Specific Topics 地域ごとの話題	PA・各地域担当RA Regional Representatives
14:25	14:30	Q&A 質疑応答	全員 Everyone
14:30		Closing Ceremony 閉会	

※スケジュールは現段階の案です。当日は変更になる場合があります。

Much of the information for orientation will be provided on the [Ehime AJET website](#) (and this very guidebook!). If you need to reference it again in the future, take a look there!

ON THE JOB

In this section, you will read about some important tips and tricks for your new job as a JET! This section covers both ALTs and CIRs, so please take a look!

PROFESSIONALISM

PUNCTUALITY

Japanese people are typically very strict on punctuality. Try to always be **at least five minutes early** to work functions. If it seems like you may be late even by just a few minutes, try to call at least 30 minutes beforehand. While being late won't reflect positively on you, showing that you have the mindset of giving an ample warning beforehand will put you in a much better light than if you show up late without warning.



DRESS CODE

On your first day at work, there is nothing wrong showing up in office attire as you are introduced. Generally, you should have the opportunity to speak with your supervisor who can tell you the dress code beforehand, but this will not always happen for everyone. If nobody tells you the dress code, **try overdressing** at first until you have an idea of what is appropriate to wear at your school(s). Different schools may have different dress codes. If you have multiple schools be sure to dress in a way that fulfills the dress code of all the schools you will have that day.

On certain days, there will be **special events** such as entrance/graduation ceremonies, school assemblies, conferences, etc. Be sure to confirm ahead of time with your supervisor what the dress code for those days are, as it may differ from the usual rules.

It is also important to keep in mind the current season. During the winter months, Japan promotes what is called **“Warm Biz”** wear, which encourages people to wear thicker clothes and layer up, while during the summer months, **“Cool Biz”** is in effect, which encourages shorter sleeves and lighter clothing. This was started in an effort to reduce the use of air conditioners and heaters during times of peak use.



Cool Biz



Warm Biz

WHEN IN ROME...

Sometimes you might observe other teachers doing something that is **against general policy**. This does NOT mean that you can do it too. While leading by example is generally the ideal, you should look at school policy as a form of “Do as I say, not as I do.” If you want to do something that may not be according to school policy ask your supervisor if it is okay, and still be careful after receiving permission. Ideally, just don’t do it.

INTERNET PRIVACY

If you work with students, you need to make sure to keep a level of professionalism with them. For one, **do not post any identifiable photos** of your students on social media. Please make sure to blur out their faces and do not post their names, addresses, or any other private information. At most schools, there is also **a rule against adding students on social media platforms**, even after they graduate. Please be respectful to students and abide by this rule, as it is implemented mostly to protect the students’ privacy.



Also, in general, be careful if you decide to post on social media or forum boards. Once on the internet, it will stay, and anyone is likely to see it, even your coworkers. While it is anyone’s right to air grievances as they see fit, **do not post your name or, especially, your location in Japan** while doing so. If you are identified, someone may report you to your CO.

GAIJIN SMASHING

Originally coined by “Azrael”, a guy who wrote a blog/website originally called *Gaijin* Smash about his JET experiences, the term (based on the derogatory Japanese word **gaijin** (外人), literally meaning “outside person,” but usually translated as “foreigner”) was used to explain the innate ability of non-Asian-looking foreigners to intentionally or accidentally break through Japanese customs/rules with little-to-no repercussions. The only time this is acceptable is if you are in dire need of help and *gaijin* smashing is the only way you can get assistance. Please keep in mind that as members of the JET program you are not only teachers, but also ambassadors of your countries. Showing a blatant disregard for Japanese customs while on or off your job will not only reflect badly upon yourself, but also on the JET program as a whole. Some regions of Japan have chosen to set up very strict rules or stop using the JET program entirely because of particularly problematic JETs.

That said, most COs should be understanding that you may not be familiar with all Japanese customs, and you are also here to teach Japanese people about your own differing customs. As such, don’t be too worried that you might be breaking some customs unbeknownst to you and just be respectful to those around you in the same way you would back home. When in doubt, just use the manners you’re familiar with, and show an ability to learn what is specifically appropriate in Japan as time goes on.

The expectation of maintaining professionalism can extend to areas like your social media. Unless your school says otherwise, please do not put pictures of students or work in which the student is identifiable on your social media. This is not acceptable in Japan in much the same way it would be unacceptable for a teaching assistant in most other countries.

WORK PARTIES

Work parties, called both **enkai** 宴会 and **nomikai** 飲み会, are a very important part of the Japanese work culture — this is one of the few occasions that your co-workers can let their hair down and relax with one another. Because so much alcohol is involved, you will see a different side of your co-workers. You may find yourself having conversations with teachers you’ve barely shared two words with, or may discover

that beer causes your principal to magically speak nearly-fluent English. This is the quintessential Japanese bonding experience and a great chance to build a relationship with the other teachers and school staff.

AT THE ENKAI

The official *enkai* (which everyone will go to) lasts for **about 2 hours**. You will get a set meal and a steady flow of alcohol. If you don't drink, let your colleagues know and ask for tea or soft drinks. People rarely eat all of the food they are given as they are busy socializing with coworkers. It is commonplace at these parties to go around and pour drinks for other people (don't pour your own!) and have a chat with them. You will notice that the *enkai* will begin with a few speeches and typical office deference, but quickly become more relaxed as the evening proceeds. Everyone will say "*Kanpai* (Cheers)!" together before taking their first drink. At first people might be too shy to speak to you, but after about half an hour, you might find that shyness quickly vanishing, and if you are lucky they might try out their English with you. Don't be afraid to try out your Japanese either! If you are finding the conversation isn't flowing, try asking them to teach you the regional dialect, which is called [Iyo-ben](#).



Work parties usually will take place in an izakaya, or casual Japanese bar. Be ready for delicious food and, if you drink, lots and lots of alcohol!

PAYING

In most cases, you will simply pay for the event in full (**2,000 yen and up**), either ahead of time or at the venue. However, your school or office may instead take a monthly collection of around 2,000 or more yen per month to be applied to the next *enkai*. This is something that your Japanese co-workers pay without hesitation, so they may be a little shocked if you choose not to contribute. Keep in mind that the money you contribute is for more than parties — it also goes towards staff room coffee, snacks, and gifts for things like births, deaths, marriages and retirements.



Yakitori, or chicken skewers, are a popular choice for *enkais*.

Also, keep in mind that since the meal will usually be set, **vegetarian/vegan options may be limited**. Ask your supervisor or the organizer of the party ahead of time to ask about what is available for you. There usually is not an option to bring outside food or pay for a subsidized price due to the limits in options you have. Some choose to pay for the full price anyway, and just enjoy drinks and the good company, but you are not obligated to do so.

ATTIRE

Wear clothes that you are comfortable sitting down in (business attire is usually worn) as *enkais* are often on *tatami* mats (you'll also have to take off your shoes, so make sure to check your socks for holes!). The big end- and start-of-year *enkai* will usually have a more formal dress code.

NON-DRINKERS

Japan has a big [drinking culture](#) and your colleagues may be surprised to find out you don't drink. Generally, you will be fine just participating in the drinking with some tea or juice, but be prepared for questions as to why at each *enkai*. This also depends heavily on the work culture of your CO. If you do not feel



comfortable going to work parties due to the possibility of being urged to drink, please do not force yourself to go.

If you drink but don't wish to get drunk, just take small sips and never let your glass look empty — this is usually an invitation for someone to fill it up. It is very unlikely that you will be the only person at an *enkai* who isn't drinking, so don't worry about it.

SAFETY

With the amount of alcohol that flows during *enkaïs*, it is no wonder people start acting very differently. People may comment on your appearance and ask you personal questions. Answer the ones you feel comfortable answering. Try to keep your wits about you and if you find yourself in a situation you don't like, try and remove yourself from it as diplomatically as you can. One idea might be to carry a bottle of beer with you as an excuse to leave a situation (so you can go and pour for someone else).

THE *NIJIKAI* — “SECOND PARTY”

Once the *enkai* is over, many people often wish to continue partying. This is called *nijikai* or the “2nd party” (there might even be a “*sanjika*” or “*yonjika*”...!). There is **no obligation** to go to this, but it's a good chance to socialize with your co-workers and hopefully build some friendships. Popular places for after-*enkai*-parties include karaoke, drinking bars, darts, dessert, etc. Your *enkai* fund does not cover this — you will have to pay!

BUSINESS AS USUAL

The day after the *enkai* is just like any other. Don't be surprised if the person you were best buddies with the night before barely acknowledges you. At the same time, you may also find that you get a lot more people saying “*Ohayou gozaimasu*” to you. Either way, you will have shown yourself to care about your co-workers and to be part of the group, which is appreciated by everyone involved!

AT YOUR SCHOOL

Before you begin your job at a Japanese school, it's recommended that you study up a bit on the [education system](#). That way, you understand better what point in life students are at when you show up to class one day. Again, there is a lot of variation across schools. There is even a lot of variation from teacher to teacher, too. You may have to plan games for all your lessons OR your teachers could plan everything and then just tell you what to say OR you may get to plan with your teacher. Try and make the most of yours! Talk to your JTEs and find out what they want from you. Communicate with your students; study their textbooks so you know exactly what words and grammar they know.

If you need some teaching resources, here are a few good ones:

English Teaching Resources	
Cross Currents	Bilingual Japan & USA info
Dave's ESL Café	Lesson ideas, tips, and job listings
Altopedia	replacement website for old Englipedia, with lots more newer activities. Great source of quizzes and worksheets.
ESL Galaxy	Powerpoint templates for games
ESL Kids	Flashcards and worksheets

GenkiEnglish	Elementary School Activities
JTR: Japanese Teaching Resources	Facebook page started by a Shikoku ALT
The English Resource	Online bookstore
Ultimate Camp Resource	Good listing of games and ideas for the classroom
ALTInsider	A lot of advice about how to make the best of your time as an ALT
"Hi Friends!"	Vocabulary flashcards suitable for elementary and lower level classes
Aomori JET Homepage	Materials from previous JET orientations and Skills Development Conferences (SDCs) in Aomori Prefecture

You may also want to ask other ALTs in Ehime for resources. Oftentimes, people have past examples of presentations or worksheets that they are willing to share as a resource. Others may have also compiled helpful resource guides. Also, take a look below at your specific school type; former and current JETs have linked their own resources in these sections!

TEACHING DURING COVID

Although many of your fellow JETs have tried lobbying unsuccessfully for work at home measures to be implemented. Now to be fair, numbers in Ehime do not surge to the likes of Tokyo or Osaka numbers. Furthermore, clusters tend to be much smaller than the metropolitan areas. That hasn't stopped the appearance of one or two cases in even the smallest of rural towns. Regardless, we still need to take precautions as we conduct classes.

One of the biggest pieces of advice we'll recommend is using a **face shield**, **mouth guard** or both. As you probably already know, they are made of clear plastic and allow for students to see how you pronounce things which makes it easier for them to understand and learn proper pronunciation. If you haven't been provided one by your schools and you wish to implement the use of such tools, be sure to check if it's alright to use with the teachers you work with before going to purchase one at your local home store where things like face shields, mouth guards, and boxes upon boxes of standard face masks would be sold.



Keeping a room well ventilated and allowing air circulation is always helpful in reducing spreading viruses. Even before COVID-19, teachers will always open the windows between classes to allow air to circulate. In the wake of COVID-19, teachers try to keep the windows open and ensure that the room is well ventilated and that there is air circulation. And yes, that is even during summer and winter. If you ever feel uncomfortable, you can always notify your teacher and ask if you can stand closer to the windows. In a smaller school where the classrooms are more spacious often than not, please feel free to walk around as you please to wherever you feel the most comfortable.

Of course, be sure to wash your hands often and/or sanitize, especially if you are at an elementary school (those adorable vectors are always trying to get high fives). If you are uncomfortable, you can kindly say "social distance yo" and gesture to them politely to detract them from getting too close or intruding on your personal space. You can also indicate to your teachers that you prefer students to respect your personal space and ask them to social distance from you. In rural areas where it's a little easier to

become familiar with all your students, it can get tempting to engage with them how we normally would. As much as we'd like to do that, we must remain diligent and refrain from skinship where we can and even encourage our students to sanitize their own hands after engaging with us if and when it happens. Getting a high five when all you intended was a wave hello is bound to happen from time to time. It's important to catch our slips to set a good example for our students.

Under normal circumstances, having school lunch with the students is a great way of building a rapport, but as would be expected, we will advise against it at this time. Furthermore, if you are someone who is potentially immunocompromised or you feel more comfortable having lunch by yourself, feel free to speak to your supervisor and request that they organize a room for you to have school lunch by yourself.

Now, should there be an occurrence of an infection in your school or someone's family member, the school will be closed for a few days. You will be informed by your supervisor on what to do. Some ALTs were told to work at their visiting schools while others were told to stay at their base school. Additionally, there have been ALTs who spent those days at their BoE. Always be sure to keep your ears close to the ground to find out how operations are proceeding should there be a COVID-19 infected student, teacher, or their family member.

Furthermore, as a teacher, you also have to be very cautious about contracting the virus as well. For the safety of not only yourself but those around you, we implore you to avoid extremely crowded closed spaces as well as traveling to highly infected areas. Most schools may either give you a temperature check sheet or check your temperature when you report to that school. Definitely inform the school nurse and your supervisor if you feel ill or have symptoms like a sore throat and/or cough.

With all that being said, don't be daunted by any possible challenges the pandemic may impose on the JET experience. Just always be aware of the precautions and follow the lead of the teachers and supervisors, however, never shy away from highlighting your concerns or informing them that you are uncomfortable with something. We also cannot stress enough that Every Situation Is Different, so you may encounter scenarios we haven't touched on or may never experience a scenario we highlighted, but always remember to take precautions. Nevertheless, it is still going to be a great journey and experience and never forget to make the best of it. If you have any questions, always feel free to reach out to your fellow JETs, especially your RAs.

ELEMENTARY HIGH SCHOOL (ES)

NOTES ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Starting in the academic year of 2020 (Reiwa 2, or R2), the elementary school curriculum previously referred to as *Gaikokugo Katsudou* (English Activities) has been changed to *Gaikokugo* (English). This means that English is now an official subject with certain criteria to be met as well as required periodic testing but only for 5th and 6th grade. 3rd and 4th grade are still considered *Gaikokugo Katsudou* (English Activities). In addition, in response to COVID-19, many changes to teaching methods have been made and some restrictions on activities have been put in place.

THE BASICS

Elementary school in Japan consists of grades 1 through 6. English is taught from grades 3 to 6. As an ES ALT, you will mainly help teach grades three through six. You may be asked to teach first and second grades as well. The ALT often chooses the class content for these younger kids, though your school may suggest topics for you to use. Different textbooks are used throughout the prefecture. The amount of classes you teach depends on the size of your school. Elementary school days are often full teaching days with 5-6 lessons that require lots of energy. The dress code at elementary school is more flexible than in junior high school. Casual clothes are often acceptable. Something easy to run around in is recommended, as you might have opportunities to play with the students and participate in activities. As a

rule, gauge what is acceptable by looking at the teachers around you. It is recommended to bring a change of clothes and shoes to make sure you're prepared for any situation that may arise.

A typical class starts with greetings. The students all stand and greet the teachers and the teacher replies with a greeting and "How are you?" Usually, basic questions about the weather, the day of the week, the month, etc. are asked as a small review. You may be asked to supply a short game or activity to get the students warmed up, especially if the teacher is running late. Teachers have a variety of administrative duties and sometimes have to finish something before classes.

It's a great idea to make a stockpile of no or low prep activities or some worksheets in a digital folder or a physical binder in case you need to quickly make something to use 5-10 minutes at the start of class. In any case, after the warm-up, the lesson starts in earnest. The lesson will cover some portion of the unit in the textbook. Some schools have a strict schedule of what content to cover for each lesson, others are more freeform depending on the students. When the class ends, the students will stand and say thank you and goodbye. The review questions and warm-up game can be more difficult for older kids (4th/5th/6th grade) the younger students may start and end the class in the standard Japanese way, at least until you teach them the English version.



YOUR ROLE

Depending on the school, you may have a dedicated Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) to work with. If so, you will be the secondary teacher (T2) for this teacher through all the classes of the day together. If not, you will either be more of a primary teacher (T1) or T2, usually depending on the English level of the Home Room Teacher (HRT). In all situations, there may be other assistants present in the classroom to assist special needs students. If the HRT has decided on something, your job is to follow through. This decision is often made in tandem with the other teachers in the same grade via the lead teacher.

The HRTs are going to have their individual teaching styles and comfort levels with English for communicating with you both inside and outside of the classroom. Before classes start, it is worthwhile to go around the teacher's room and check in with the HRTs to see if there's anything you can prepare for class and/or prepare yourself for the day in general. Because of the potential for miscommunication, I find that elementary school teachers appreciate this kind of initiative and it helps to build relationships with them as your coworkers. As a general rule, if you have questions about the day's schedule, just ask!



If it is possible to make time in your classes for phonics practice (5-10 minutes depending on the homeroom teacher and/or lesson length), it can be beneficial for students. Each short lesson should not take more than 10 minutes. It is beneficial for students to learn to differentiate between Japanese and English letter sounds early on. You are encouraged to request time to do phonics at the beginning of class as a short warm-up activity. Please feel free to create and share other phonics learning materials, they could be useful to other ALTs!

As T1:

You are the main teacher. The class will follow your instruction and leadership. This will probably be the most fulfilling opportunity you can get at any school. The HRT will be there to support you in other ways. This includes managing the classroom, encouraging students to participate, picking individual students for questions, participating through demonstrations and activities, etc.

As T2, with a JTE:

Your role is to support the JTE. Often, you will be relegated to vocabulary practice, pronunciation, grammar points, and so forth. This is sometimes called being a human tape recorder. This can be a challenge in many ways. But keep in mind that it can be helpful for students to hear English from a natural speaker. Having to fulfill this type of role is very dependent on your individual situation. A positive attitude and expressing/demonstrating your interest in having a more active role in creating/leading activities can go a long way. If you have an open mind, you will experience great team-teaching and satisfaction in your role as T2.

As T2, without a JTE:

Your role is to support the HRT. Essentially, you are T2 with the HRT who will be T1. Being ES, their English teaching skills vary. Communication is key in these situations. The good news is this situation seems to be improving and seems less likely to occur. Take heart in being part of progress, albeit slow. They may rely on you beyond simply being the human tape recorder, which is a good thing.

Other roles:

You may be asked at times to formulate teaching materials which may include: flashcards, worksheets, verbal activities and games, and sample lesson plans. You should also expect to have quick meetings with your JTE (if you have one) about each English lesson, and it can be helpful to quickly meet with the HRT to explain your plan if you are taking a T1 role. You may also create and give presentations on various topics, including holidays, what school is like in your home country, or other information about your home country.

NOTE ON TEACHING GRADE 1-2

Teaching Grade 1 and 2 can be wonderful, but it can also be draining. They seemingly never run out of energy and are usually very enthusiastic learners. Since grade 1 and 2 have yet to have an official English curriculum, you may be able to do your own activities for these lessons. [Here is a link to some possible topics to cover and some sample lesson plans](#). They like hands-on learning, and it can be good to do things that are also challenging their developing hand-eye coordination as well. Making vocab cards, connecting the dots worksheets, making animals out of colored shapes... Get crafty.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Please note this is a sample schedule and will vary slightly from school to school. Each morning, make sure to check the section of the board (could be a chalkboard or a whiteboard) in the teacher's office that details the daily schedule. There are many school events, meetings, or research lessons that occur throughout the school year that necessitate special daily schedules. Sometimes lessons are shortened or extended by 5 minutes, for instance. Also, your lessons may be delayed or canceled on these days, or you may have surprise visitors from the BOE or prefectural government come to watch you teach! It's good to know things ahead of time.

Description	Start	End
Morning staff meeting	8:00am	8:10am
Morning class meeting	8:15am	8:25am
Period 1	8:30am	9:15am
Period 2	9:25am	10:10am
Mid Morning break	10:10am	10:30am
Period 3	10:30am	11:15am

Period 4	11:25am	12:10pm
Lunch	12:10pm	1:00pm
Lunch Break	1:00pm	1:20pm
Cleaning Time	1:20pm	1:45pm
Afternoon class meeting	1:45pm	1:55pm
Period 5	2:00pm	2:45pm
Period 6	2:55pm	3:40pm
Students return home	3:55pm	

Generally, the points made above are similar to what you will experience. Here are some of the differences working at elementary schools only:

You probably do not have a JTE

This doesn't mean you automatically become T1. You will be working as T2 with the HRT with the same points that were given above. Depending on your level of Japanese, information about the content of the class will be done primarily in Japanese. The HRTs understand that ALTs come in with different levels of Japanese so they can adjust to different forms of communication such as writing and gesturing. So, please be patient as they are also at varying levels of English. Always ask questions if you are unclear on the instructions or content of that class.

Teaching 1st and 2nd grade as T1

Depending on your school, teaching the lower grades can occur as often as once a month or as little as teaching only when it's a holiday such as Halloween or Easter Day. Oftentimes, you are given full reign of what you want to teach. Make sure to connect with your predecessor if possible so you can be prepared.

Teaching 3rd-6th grade

Most schools aim to have one class a week for grades 3-4 and two classes a week for grades 5-6. This is due to the curriculum changing from *Gaikokugo Katsudou* (English Activities) to *Gaikokugo* (English).

English Board

If your base school has space, you may be designated a bulletin board somewhere along the halls of your school for you to decorate. Ask about it if you are unsure, it can be a great way to connect with your students. You can follow the monthly US holidays as your theme or switch it up with other topics like the planets/stars, animals, sports, etc. The school usually prefers for you to change it monthly but depending on the content, you can leave it longer if you'd like. Get crafty and feel free to reuse whatever materials your predecessor may have left for you.

English Club

It is a bit rare for club activities to be held in elementary school, but some schools have started English clubs (ESID of course). It is very rare for this to be something an ALT is directly in charge of, usually, it will be a very genki JTE who wants to have it. In case it is, here is what you can expect from a *Gaikokugo* (English) Club. You can consider it the same as when you are teaching 1st-2nd grade. You are T1 for these sessions and will have control over the flow of the club. At the start of the year (April) along with the students, you can create a general outline of the topics to be covered. Since there is a possibility that your predecessor did these club activities, please make sure to confirm with them what any predetermined monthly topics are. Depending on the school(s) you are working at, there might be

English-specific events such as English Day. These types of events are typically more common in Matsuyama but they may pop up in your town or school.

Desk warming

Compared to how ALTs who have a junior high school (JHS) as their base school will experience elementary school, ES-only ALTs will generally teach 3-4 classes a day. Some days, it can be as little as 1 class. The reason is that for JHS-based ALTs, the one day they visit an elementary school during a week may be the only time during that week (or longer) that that elementary school has the ALT. Since the main purpose of an ES-only ALT is to teach at elementary schools, ES-only ALTs may visit each ES more frequently. Thus, they might not be given the 5-6 lesson load per day that JHS-based ALTs commonly experience when working at an elementary school.

YOUR OBJECTIVES

A key objective is to be a cultural ambassador, as you may have heard a thousand times already. Keep it to heart, since it's part of what the job entails. You have the opportunity to introduce your cultural background to a group of kids (and adults) who may not be familiar with your culture at all, and help the kids (and adults) become more used to foreigners. And of course, your main goal is to teach English in the best possible way you can manage.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ★ Be professional, always.
- ★ Be kind, it goes a long way.
- ★ Be friendly, most kids genuinely do want to get to know you. Adults too!
- ★ Be open-minded, everyone is different and that's okay.
- ★ Be cooperative, try not to fight the system (too much). Unless something egregious happens, use discretion.
- ★ Be flexible, things will suddenly be put on your plate that you had no preparation for. Literally.
- ★ Be prepared, look ahead at the lesson plan, and watch and listen to the book materials. You may suddenly turn T2 → T1 one day.
- ★ Be yourself. You're interesting to the students and you should embrace that.
- ★ Be careful about giving prizes (stickers and such) to the winners of any games or activities. Some of them are very sensitive about losing and will take it very personally. Splitting classes into teams and/or having consolation prizes for everyone is a good idea. Of course, you can ask the teacher beforehand if this is a possible issue.
- ★ If it's alright with the main classroom teacher and depending on current COVID-19 rules, using the kids' energy by singing songs to warm up/conclude lessons can be very effective. There are many great TEFL music channels on YouTube, such as The Singing Walrus, Super Simple English, and Fun Kids English.

THE IMPACT OF COVID AND HOW TO HANDLE IT

Now that the job itself has been covered, let's talk about some of the restrictions.

- ★ As a general rule, always wear a mask when at work.
- ★ Wash your hands with soap and try your best to avoid hand-to-hand contact with others.
- ★ Many activities that ALTs participated in before the pandemic might no longer be allowed at your schools, such as eating with the kids or playing sports with the kids during break times (depending on the activity or time).
- ★ Certain class activities are restricted or reduced to prevent physical contact
- ★ Games requiring hands touching items
- ★ Games requiring students to face each other
- ★ Activities requiring students to move around

- ★ Singing or oral activities (repeating after the teacher)
- ★ Regarding most games and activities, restrictions have relaxed to the point where they are no longer being enforced. This, however, is still due to the discretion of the principal. ESID applies here.
- ★ Flu season in Japan usually starts in late Fall and lasts until early Spring. The habits listed above are useful during this time. The flu tends to spread quickly within school communities. Please take extra precautions to protect your health throughout the year.

A NOTE ON DESKWARMING

Desk warming time at elementary school is rare. Should you find yourself with a free period or two, you can use that time to prepare for other classes or other schools. You're often allowed to print and laminate materials for work. It is a good idea to keep some study materials with you in case you don't have anything else to prepare for. It is possible that your elementary school will not have an extra laptop for you to use. Bringing your laptop or tablet is generally not an issue although schools typically do not have free Wifi for using personal devices. Sometimes, you just need a break from the high-energy ES vibe and that's okay too, many ALTs bring books to read.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Staff

You won't get to know everyone well as you won't be working with them all. That said, it is up to you to develop friendships with the staff. That is to say, your ability to bond with your coworkers may be related to your Japanese skills. This is not your fault, but simply that many Japanese people are afraid of being outside their comfort zone – in this case, speaking English. Also, the principal and vice-principal are people you want on your side. Treat them well and they will likely do the same for you. Regarding omiyage gifts after returning from travel, they are not exactly necessary, but they go a long way if you want to build friendly relations with the staff members.

Students

Kids are kids no matter where you are in the world. Try to meet them halfway, in terms of their energy level and attitude. It is important to note, that it is simply not your responsibility to discipline the kids. Leave that to the main school teachers who are trained and certified to handle situations. Some students will simply have no interest in you or English or both. Some are very shy, and some are very friendly. Also, keeping boundaries with the students can sometimes be a challenge, since they may see you as the fun foreign teacher, but the JTE and HRT are to assist you in managing this. Learning the names of the students will help you, but it may not simply be possible unless you work at a school for more than a year and actively practice remembering their names. You could have students make English name tags to wear during the English lessons to make this more feasible.

MORE RESOURCES

Reading a bit about the background of English education in Japan may be worthwhile. Finding outside sources to make sense of why English is taught the way it is here will go a long way to minimize frustration and can ease some challenges. [Here are a few articles that you can read.](#)

A newly made website which could be very useful to you at any teaching level is [ALTopedia](#). Created to fill the gap after the closure of the old Englipedia website, this new site has a lot of activities specifically made by ALTs for ALTs, many of which have been newly updated. There is also an active Discord community attached to the site if you are interested in becoming more involved.

And finally here are some of Tofugu's JET Program Teaching Resources. [This website](#) is full of great information for ALTs.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (JHS)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Junior High School, as a Municipal ALT. Your base school may be a junior high school or you will most likely go to a junior high school. Junior High School can be a fun and rewarding experience but like everything with this job, its experience will be something uniquely yours. Here's what we know and what we think can help you survive and thrive in the middle school environment. Luckily, many of these can also apply to teaching Elementary School so if you work both at a junior high and elementary school, please feel free to refer to these guidelines accordingly.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Unless you have specific dietary restrictions or dietary lifestyle, school lunch is a great opportunity to experience various types of food eaten in Japan. Pre-COVID-19, ALTs also had the chance to have school lunch with the students and it was also an opportune time to get to know the students, encourage them to speak English and build a rapport with them. Sadly, many schools are just limiting school lunches to teachers only with students. However, when you arrive at your school, you can still consult your supervisor if you can have lunch with the students or in the staff room.



Example of some school lunches.

CLOTHING

What you wear at school can change depending on your school. Some schools are more strict and require staff members to dress in a more formal manner while others are more lenient on the dress code. It is better to arrive dressed formal-ish as you will be arriving in summer, so summer business, and observe how teachers are dressed. From there you can ascertain how your school requires you to dress and adapt to suit (pun intended).

Speaking of suit, definitely have a suit prepared for formal occasions such as Entrance Ceremony, Graduation Ceremony and also picture day (you do not want to be immortalized in a picture wearing a casual hoodie, not saying this is coming from someone speaking from experience but trust me). However, no matter what you do, if you choose to wear a tie, do not wear a black tie as it is only worn at funerals. Instead, opt for a silver or gold tie (teachers tend to really like shiny ties).

A general note about dress code for school is to remember that it is very conservative here so not so much exposure of skin, especially when thinking about gym clothes for events like Sports Day. However, with that in mind, please do not feel pressured into conforming to the stoic color palette of clothes worn by teachers. If you are someone who prefers bright colors, by all means, let your personality show. The only exceptions to this are for Entrance and Graduation Ceremony.

DESKWARMING

As an ALT, you can always expect that there will be some deskwarming. As a municipal ALT, the amount of deskwarming varies on your school. You may have a small junior high school in the countryside and find yourself with as much time as a high schooler. You may work at one of the biggest junior high schools in your region and never find time to sit down. Try to look at it as an opportunity to relax, reset,

and prepare. You can use this time to participate in the club activities(if the teachers give you permission). You can study Japanese, create an English board, work on hobbies, and prepare for next week/month/semester lessons. Your time is what you make of it so do what you think is in your best interest.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STRUCTURE

There are three grades in middle school called 一年生 (*ichinensei*), 二年生 (*ninensei*), and 三年生 (*sannensei*) respectively. The age range is roughly the equivalent of grades 7-9 in the US.

First year students' curriculum revolve around review of the English they were taught in elementary school, pronouns, past tense, past and present progressive tenses, and third person singular "s" and infinitives as a direct object.

For the second year students, the curriculum will be: infinitives, passive tense, superlatives and comparatives, commands (have/must), and subjunctive clauses that use the conjunctions: when, if, because.

For the third year curriculum: perfect tense, perfect progressive tense, subjunctive mood, relative pronouns (which/that).

This is a general trend for how junior high school works (trends may vary wildly). First year students are starting off in their first year of formal schooling i.e. wearing uniforms, decorum, and ceremonies are extremely important. Everything is very new to them and so they tend to be interested in English and if at the least not heavily discouraged because a lot of it is a review of what they know. Second year students are in the middle of the rut. They may not be worrying about high school entrance exams as much yet so they tend to let things slip from time to time. The curriculum will also gradually get more difficult so they may start feeling discouraged about English. Third year students have a lot of pressure on them. They will take their entrance exams around February and March. So expect to see less of them around December as they fully prepare to take their exams. From the onset of the third year, these students have a tendency to mature and calm down as well in comparison to how they have been the years prior. The most important thing to know is that these students are in junior high school. Junior high school is compulsory education for them so they have no choice in coming to school. They're starting to go through puberty and it's fair to say puberty was not a great experience for any of us. Showing empathy is a good way for students to connect but also maintaining the balance of them respecting you as a teacher is essential as well. You should aim to be a person that they can trust and rely on to help them succeed and to do that, it is of utmost importance to have a good relationship. The two go hand in hand so make sure both are pulling their weight.

On a regular day of school, students will have 6 periods of classes with each class lasting about 50 minutes. On special days, classes may only be for 45 minutes, so if possible confirm with your supervisor about the length of the classes for that day. You can even check the daily schedule on the board for “短縮授業/tanshukujugyou” which means shortened class(es). Additionally, depending on your school, if classes are shortened, the bell jingle will be different than the regular one. Lunch comes after the fourth period. After lunch is finished, students will partake in recess. After their post-lunch recess, some schools may have cleaning while others may continue to the afternoon classes, after which, cleaning time will take place. Cleaning time lasts for about 10 minutes and during



that time, the students will clean the school. After school is finished for the day, students will do their club activities. Club activities are a great way to learn more about your students. You'll get to see another side of the students and it's a great way to build rapport with them.

In the case of your school having special events, it will be the 6th period that will be cut to accommodate the event e.g.(class presentations, guest lectures, and so on). In the event of opening ceremony, closing ceremony, and graduation, these events are held in the morning around 2nd period.

JTEs

As a junior high school English teacher, it is required for them to be fluent. Fluency doesn't necessarily mean communication will be a cinch. Make the effort to communicate and plan with your JTEs. Your JTE will see it and slowly but surely it may reward you with opportunities in the classroom. Everyone is different so expect that no one JTE will ever teach the exact same way. Some JTEs will only ask you to repeat vocabulary words, phrases and sentences (yes you might be a tape recorder). Some JTEs will ask you for games 5 minutes before class. Some JTEs will plan with you a week in advance. Just keep in mind, JTEs are busy. Alongside being the English teacher, they also might be a homeroom teacher. If that's the case, a lot of their time inside and outside of school will be devoted to their job. They also will be a coach for one of the school's clubs. Your JTEs will work long hours every day of the week so find a way to establish a routine for planning the lessons and working in the classroom that works for both of you.

You will also have the opportunity to teach special needs classes, these are great opportunities to try out games as they need to be clear and simple to understand

MUNICIPAL BOE

Probably the biggest difference between the prefectural ALTs and Municipal ALTs is your Board of Education (BoE for short) has a lot of power over what you say and do while on your time in the JET Programme. They will make your schedule of the schools you will visit. Expect to have a monthly meeting with them. It is strongly recommended to have at least a working relationship with them. You'd be surprised how fast word can travel. You may not see them often but when you do, make it count.

OTHER JETs

As a municipal JET, you will have a lot more JETs in close proximity to interact with. These can be a great community of people who all share the experience of being a JET. Even more so, these are all people who work at a junior high and elementary school so you can learn from each other what works and what doesn't work in the classroom. Having a good relationship with the local ALT community can be a great way to make friends which can, in turn, help immensely with homesickness.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (SHS)

Congratulations on getting a prefectural placement at one of Ehime's Senior High Schools (SHS)! Being a SHS or Prefectural ALT has a lot of perks compared to city JETs, with a few downsides that we'll talk about. Overall, being based in an SHS gives you a lot of opportunities, both in and out of the classroom.

SCHOOL TYPES & VISIT SCHOOLS

About 3/4 Prefectural Ehime ALTs have at least one visit school. If you don't either work in Chuyo or at a



Secondary School, it's a guaranteed part of the job. Visit schools vary incredibly wildly. You may be in a mid-sized school and visit a handful of small schools a few days each month. You may be in a large school and spend a few days a month at their single branch school. You may be based at a small school and split your time 50/50 with a larger school that doesn't have an English-focused school type.

However, there are some things that are useful to know that are generally true about all visit schools. The first thing is that you need to set up a way to communicate with your visit school supervisor early on and ask for their expectations. Although most visit schools will default to faxing schedules to your base school, if you have more than one visit school, this can end up being logistically difficult. Try to get your visit supervisor to use LINE, text or email to keep you in the loop about any changes to your schedule or preparation you might need to make.

Secondly, your role at your visit school(s) may be wildly different to your base school. Maybe you lead most classes at your base, but your visit wants you to really put the Assistant in ALT. Maybe it's the opposite. Maybe you teach grammar and high level English at your base. Your visit may just want you to play games. It can take some adjustment, but be aware visit schools may have very different expectations for you.

SHS in Japan are fascinating largely because of how extremely specific their purpose is. Let's go through some types of schools:

Academic: A standard, common school. A significant amount of the students will go to university, but it's not guaranteed.

High Academic: A more disciplined version of the academic school, where going to university is almost guaranteed.

Tech: Tech schools teach students a specific job focused skill, and then guarantee all graduates a job unless they choose to go to university.

Agricultural: Agricultural school students graduate to work in farming, forestry, and agricultural research. Most of them don't go to university, but there are occasionally students who do end up going.

Fishery: Only in Uwajima, fishery schools specialize in fishing. Similar to Agricultural and Tech schools.

Branch: Branch schools are schools in remote areas where students have a hard time accessing the base school, so they go to the branch school, which are normally schools that have shrunk to such a small student base that they share administration with their base. Often they are very small in size, with occasions that many students attending these schools are flown in from other prefectures (Osaka, Tokyo, etc.). They have smaller class sizes, and the teachers spend more time with them individually, so some of these schools actually have very high level English.

Secondary: Secondary schools are combined Junior High and SHS schools, which normally are a little higher than standard academic schools.

Special Needs Schools: There are some schools in Ehime that are for deaf, blind, and special needs kids. These are often small in size, and have different methods and tools in teaching. Mostly, allowing students to have fun and engage with English rather than learning English for academic exams. Visits there are very rare, only a few times a year.

TRANSPORTATION

You will most likely be placed near your base high school, within walking or bus distance. For visit schools, you may have to travel to a different city far away (by bus, tram, ferry and/or train). Make sure you know your bus/train/ferry schedules in advance and coordinate with your visit school supervisor when you are expected to arrive and when you can leave to catch transport back. You will be expected to pay for transportation, and it will be reimbursed to your bank account.

Some JETs decide to buy cars. In the contract, SHS ALTs are not allowed to drive to their school unless you gain permission from your base school principal.

CLOTHING EXPECTATIONS

Work attire in SHS is a bit more formal than in Elementary or Junior High. The expectations vary from school to school. Some high academic schools expect you to wear a black suit, white dress shirt everyday. Some agricultural/tech schools you can just show up in a tracksuit. In the summer, you can wear Cool Biz. For special ceremonies (opening ceremony, graduation ceremony), you are expected to wear a black suit, white dress shirt, and sometimes corsage/tie. Ask your schools in advance what you should be expected to wear. For the most part, semi-formal business attire is acceptable, and make sure you bring your own indoor shoes if your school requires indoor footwear.

COMMUNICATION WITH JTEs

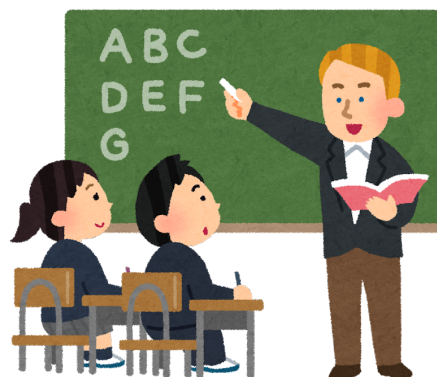
One of the perks of SHS is that English teachers are expected to be fully fluent in English, so communication has one less hurdle than in places like Elementary Schools. Some teachers may make you wonder how fluent they really are, but the overall level is pretty high. However, compared to other school levels, the role the ALT has in the classroom is a lot less defined at SHS, making communication with your teachers even more important.

Some JTEs will be punctual, make their expectations for team teaching clear, and allow you the freedom to experiment with new ideas in the classroom. Others will not. Walking a line between being respectful, being flexible, and also advocating for yourself can be very difficult. The best advice I can give to try to find that balance is to never be afraid to ask, but always respect that no is no. And, in Japan, basically anything other than a yes should probably be read as a no.

JTEs have a lot to juggle, and a thing to keep in mind is that they have to adapt to school levels and sizes, and how they treat ALTs reflects this. If you're at a low level or difficult school, you may have less chances to teach more difficult lessons that you find interesting, while being an ALT at a high level school may mean that you have to teach very strictly to the curriculum without any time to do fun, low level activities. It can suck sometimes, but the important thing is to never take it as a reflection on your ability.

CLASS PLANNING

Your supervisor will create your schedule, and will ideally give it to you with enough time to discuss your classes. They can vary from weekly to monthly schedules. You should be clear with your JTEs your method of communication when you first start planning with them (LINE, email, set aside time to talk, Post-It notes). Approach them in advance (a week or two) to coordinate your class, if possible. If you are based at only one or two schools, you may possibly have a standing schedule, visiting the same classes every week or fortnight. If you have multiple visit schools, this is less likely.



Here are [a collection of games and activities](#) to help you out as you start at your schools. They are designed for a smaller than usual class, but ideally many will convert well to larger groups.

DESKWARMING LIFE

There is a lot of downtime for most SHS ALTs. This is something that can vary school to school, but most SHS try to give 3 classes or less to an ALT every day. This can be busy when you're making activities for each class, but when exams hit, or holidays, or you end up in a more passive assistant role for a stretch of classes, it can be pretty dull.

Trying to find hobbies or projects you can do at your desk is essential. Possibly you'll be asked to do things relevant to your classes, or you'll have an English board or something similar, but more often you'll be left to your own devices. Studying Japanese, or learning other skills is certainly possible, and definitely is a good use of time, but after 7 hours of studying, during 3 weeks of no classes during the holiday, it's strongly recommended to have a more fun thing you like to do. Writing for fun, listening to music or podcasts, art, etc. are all good. If you want to do anything that is more obviously not job relevant, maybe just check it's OK with your supervisor first so it won't be an issue.

You aren't tied to your desk either. Walk around the school, go out for lunch, chat with any teachers who don't seem too busy, say hey to your kids. You can definitely try to get involved with clubs if they seem keen, but as always, respect boundaries, and try not to disturb anyone. Everyone is generally aware there's not really anything for ALTs to do during the holidays, so don't focus too much on trying to look busy. Just try to find something quiet that keeps your brain busy.

TAKING DAYS OFF (*NENKYUU*)

Most prefectural highschool teachers have 20 days paid vacation within the year (*nenkyuu*), they often give you 10 per half year. If you plan on taking *nenkyuu*, please ask your supervisor a few weeks in advance, and try to avoid taking days off if you have visit schools scheduled (since it's difficult to reschedule visit days). In highschool, ALTs have to go into school to deskwarm even if you have no classes to teach, and stay at school for the whole day, so you can strategically plan your *nenkyuu* around these times. There are also leaves you can take for extreme circumstances: *tokyuu* (if you are taking care of a seriously ill family member), but these are very rare.

CLUBS

Club culture is an essential part of life for most SHS students. Clubs, particularly sport clubs, will dominate kids' lives after school, during the weekends, and over the holidays. Some schools have clubs as mandatory for all students, others allow students to join the "going home" club, and skip out. Learning what clubs your school(s) specialize in is really fun, and you genuinely never know what your students may be involved in!



Please do not come in expecting that you will definitely be able to be involved with clubs. Yes, it's definitely possible, especially if you don't have a particular club you want to be involved with, or are interested in a culture club like flower arrangement or tea ceremony. However, especially for sports clubs, please know that many schools take these extremely seriously. Some schools even have separate coaches, particularly for baseball. Being involved in some of these more high-level clubs can be very difficult considering how intense the culture is. As with talking with JTEs, you're always welcome to ask, but please respect that a no means no.

SCHOOL EVENTS

There are many school organized events such as Cultural Festivals, Sports Day, Parent Teacher events, Inter-school exchange days, Open Campus, English Proficiency Exam Preparation, etc. These are wonderful opportunities to get to know your teachers and have fun with the students. Ask your teachers when these days are and let them know if you want to participate.

ALT EVENTS

As Prefectural JETs, we are the playthings of the Prefectural Office, which is a mixed bag, but mostly means that if a prefecture-level event needs ALTs, we will be the ones handling it. The big one is the debate competition held around late October. The Prefectural BoE has expanded significantly since the last debate contest, so it's possible that not everyone will be expected to attend, but Prefectural ALTs are normally expected to judge SHS teams from all across Ehime competing for a position at the national competition.

There are smaller events around that you may be voluntold to attend. For Toyo ALTs, you may end up at the Tech/Agricultural school English competition in Shikokuchuo, Chuyo ALTs may end up recording audio for JHS English exams, and we all are the volunteer base for English camps and English Days across Ehime High Schools. Now that events are slowly moving back to in-person, there may be more and more new events cropping up.

THE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES

You may have ALT in other schools, even in the same prefecture, who seem to be able to do things that you really want to try: teaching engaging classes, doing club activities, being very close friends with their JTEs, etc. It doesn't necessarily mean those ALTs are doing anything different, or that you're doing things wrong. Different schools will treat ALTs differently for a wide range of reasons, and it sometimes sucks, but as always, comparing situations isn't particularly healthy.

The opposite is also true. If you have a placement you really enjoy and allows you to do a range of things, someone in another school who doesn't have those opportunities, they aren't a "worse" ALT, or doing something wrong. Similar tension can also arise between city JETs and prefectural JETs. City JETs may have a more restrictive workplace due to the number of ALTs working in a single BoE, managed by a single administration. A lot of the freedoms SHS JETs may have are because our schools largely get to judge us on an individual level, and decide what we are individually suited for. Try to be empathetic about what challenges each JET may face before jumping to the idea that anyone is doing anything wrong.

CIRs IN EHIME

The CIR position, if not already repeated dozens of times, is extremely varied. Ehime currently has 6 CIRs. They are placed in various regions, and may work in a prefectural office/city hall, or even at a BoE.

WORK

As Coordinators for International Relations (国際交流員), CIRs are tasked with **translation**, **interpretation**, and **cultural exchange**. Although how much of whichever category you'll be tasked to do really depends on your CO, [Wikipedia](#) summarizes the role of CIRs well:

“The majority of a CIR's time is spent organizing and assisting various projects related to adjusting Japanese society to an increasingly multilingual, multicultural, and international world.”

Therefore, no matter what you'll be doing as a CIR, it's important to keep in mind what the main goal of having CIRs is!

WORKPLACE

As a CIR, most of your time will be spent in an office, rather than a classroom. At many workplaces, the office is set up as an “**open office**.” Instead of cubicles, staff members will be grouped into “islands,” usually based on the division or section you work for. These islands may have plexiglass dividers to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but overall encourages collaboration and open communication between employees.



Example of an open office workplace

However, you'll see that even in an open office setup, there will be a **level of hierarchy** within each department. For example, the higher the position you are, the closer you will be placed to the window or back wall of a room. CIRs will most likely be placed closest to the doors.

TRANSLATION

Translation work is all about research. The more time you put into researching for your translation, the better the translation will get. One thing that you'll have to learn to be okay with early on is that no matter how much time you put into it, a translation will *never* be perfect. As a general rule of thumb, you should be given **at least 2 weeks** to work on a translation, although this may differ depending on the length of the translation request. If you feel you're given too many last minute translation requests, please consult with your supervisor about managing your workload.

PRO TIP

If you have a predecessor, ask them for old translations to reference off of!

Also, don't be afraid to use the resources available to you! There is a possibility you'll be the only native speaker in your office, so it's always good to double-check with an outside source, even if you feel confident in your translation. There will also most definitely be times when, suddenly, the right word or phrase doesn't want to come to you, even though you're sure you almost have it. Here is a list of some websites that could be helpful for translations:

Website	URL	Pros
Google Translate	https://translate.google.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for getting a gist of the topic at hand • Good for learning pronunciation
DeepL AI Translation	https://www.deepl.com/en/translator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often produces natural sounding sentences
ALC	https://www.alc.co.jp/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains many technical and medical terms
Jisho	https://jisho.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User friendly, has example sentences, kanji explanations, etc. • Good for looking up words
Weblio	https://ejje.weblio.jp/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has example sentences • Good for looking up words
EOW	https://eow.alc.co.jp/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for looking up words
Goo	https://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for looking up words
Reverso	https://context.reverso.net/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for looking up translations in context with their materials

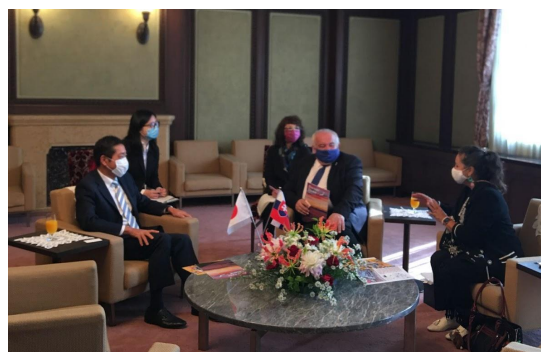
**A Note About
Translation Checks**
(also called
“Native Checks”)

At times, instead of a translation from scratch, you'll be asked to do a **translation check** or “**native check**” (ネイティブチェック). It is not uncommon for these to have been simply put through Google Translate or similar translation software and sent directly to you. In these cases, it might be best to just start from scratch. Other times, you may get a translation from an outside company (業者), which can be very hit or miss. Even when the work is done by a supposed “native” speaker at that company, you may find yourself in the awkward position where

clearly the translation is off in some way, yet because your office has paid for the translation work, it feels rude to point it out. In many cases, you can show your supervisor or the person requesting the translation check where you'd like to suggest edits, and they might be able to get the revision approved by the translation company (hopefully free-of-charge...), but there may also be times when, due to the pride the company takes in their work, they may refuse to acknowledge your suggestion. In those cases, it is very unlikely your edits will be acknowledged. Don't beat yourself over it — you at least tried to fix it.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation can seem daunting at first (well, to be honest, it can be daunting no matter how much experience you get), but know that **preparation** is key. You can't possibly improve your Japanese significantly in the one or two weeks you get to prepare for it, but you can research as much as possible about the topic at hand. Hopefully, you'll receive information on the attendee names, job positions, seating arrangement, etc, or some other document that outlines what you'll be interpreting for. This should serve as a guide for when you're researching for the big day.



CIR interpreting during a courtesy call on the Governor by the Ambassador of Slovakia

Along with your documents, you should also bring the following:



Notepad



Clipboard



Smartphone
(if allowed)



Pens
(bring multiple!)

You may also want to make “cheat sheets” for yourself. For example, [a list of shorthand symbols](#) or a numbers guide (for days when converting Japanese numericals to English is just one step too much). Note that shorthand symbols should be **personalized**. There is no standardized list of symbols for interpretation, which means you should make your own symbols that make sense to *you*. It takes years for a professional interpreter to perfect their symbols, so don’t expect to get it right away.



Examples of shorthand symbols you can use for notetaking.

Also, if you’re given the chance to, it’s highly recommended that you take the in-person [Translation and Interpretation Course](#). You are taught by a professional interpreter, who can give you tips on how to better train to become comfortable with interpretation. There will also be practice sessions (along with a final test), which will all be useful for getting more experience with interpretation.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Ultimately, as a JET, one of your main purposes is cultural exchange. This can take the form of school visits, English teaching classes, international exchange events, cooking classes, and more! While your CO may already have ideas for what you should do, if you find yourself wanting to start something new, you can always submit a proposal (企画書) to them.



CIRs leading a number of cultural exchange events.

LUNCH

It is common for people to eat while sitting at their desks, so many people will opt to bring a *bento* from home to heat up. There may also be an option to buy a lunch by signing up to join a **group order**. You should ask your supervisor if this is an option. Typically, these lunches are very cheap (300-600 yen) and nutritious. It may come in a plastic container, which you should return once you are finished eating.

After lunch, you may see your coworkers sneak a quick nap; this is also acceptable in many offices!



BUSINESS TRIPS

There may be times when you will be asked to go on a **business trip** (出張 *shucchou*). This could vary from a day trip to a local spot in Ehime to take photographs for social media, to a weekend trip to Tokyo for a conference, to overseas trips to interpret for business meetings (the latter has been, as you can imagine, very rare due to COVID).

NEED MORE WORK?

If you find yourself deskwarming a lot and want to find more work, you may be able to find some ideas from other CIRs. Some COs will have a page for you like [this one](#) that will showcase your abilities as a CIR and promote your services to others in your local area. You could start your own YouTube channel! CIRs in Toyo created [their own channel](#), and there's also the [Matsue CIR Waku Waku channel](#).

SUPPORT

Unless you're working for the *kencho*, you will most likely be the only CIR in your municipality, or even in your entire region. If possible, reach out to the other CIRs in Ehime, or new CIRs coming in your arrival year to establish a good support network in case you have any questions! It is likely there will be a LINE group or Discord server that fulfills this purpose. There is also a general [JETプログラム国際交流員・JET Programme CIRs Facebook Group](#) that you are welcome to join. You may find helpful resources that CIRs have made themselves, such as this helpful [document](#). The same CIR also created a helpful [summary](#) for the Translation and Interpretation Course that CLAIR provides.



Another helpful resource is the [CIR Homepage](#), which is a free forum where CIRs can post questions, ask for advice, and even arrange meetups in the local area!

STUDYING JAPANESE

One of the main reasons people choose JET is to immerse themselves in Japanese culture and, of course, learn the language. As a JET participant you have access to several different courses through CLAIR. As a resident in Ehime, you can find local lessons and tutors in most cities. There are also opportunities to become TEFL certified.

While you're deskwarming, or maybe even outside of work, you might want to try studying some Japanese. After all, what better time to learn than when you are living in Japan? If you're just starting out and don't know where to start, here is Tofugu's [guide to learning Hiragana](#) and [guide to learning Katakana](#).

Whether you're just starting from "Konnichiwa" or if you're already well on your way in your Japanese studies, here are some basic tips for studying Japanese while you're here in Japan:

- ★ **Initiate conversations:** This one may be obvious to some, but if you want to learn how to speak (and listen) in Japanese, you will need to take up the challenge of initiating conversations yourself. While people may come up to you to ask questions, they may not know that you are trying to learn Japanese, so unless you tell them that you would like to converse in Japanese, they may not know!
- ★ **Learn Katakana:** Yes, obviously Hiragana is just as important to learn when studying Japanese, but often, what's more useful for a foreigner living in Japan is Katakana! You'll find that when shopping for certain items, there'll be a Katakana name written for it. For example, コンディショナー *kondishonaa* is often seen on containers of hair conditioner! If you're just starting out and deciding which writing system to learn first, Katakana may be a lifesaver for you!
- ★ **Bring a notepad or keep a digital one on your phone:** Write down words that seem to come up often! Even if you can understand it if it's being said to you, there may come a time when your brain can't come up with it down the line (perks of passive vs. active language learning). Don't fret! Your handy dandy notebook may be able to help in these cases, or it can serve as a helpful study guide!

JAPANESE CLASSES

CLAIR offers free Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced [language courses](#). The courses start in September and April and last six months. The courses are provided online as e-learning courses and there are unit tests at the end of each unit. There will also be regular online exchange events for those attending these courses. These events will offer the chance to meet other course participants, practice

Japanese and ask any questions of each other. More information will be available in due course to those who are registered on the Japanese Course study site. Please contact your supervisor if you are interested in joining these courses. CLAIR also offers a Translation and Interpretation Course, although the fee must be borne by COs.

The Ehime Prefecture International Center (EPIC) in Matsuyama and other international centers around Ehime often offer free or cheap Japanese classes. Please go to the [International Centers](#) section of this guidebook to learn more.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Website	URL	Description
Jisho	https://jisho.org/	Online Japanese-English dictionary
Jim Breen's Online Japanese Dictionary	https://www.edrdg.org/cgi-bin/wwwjdic/wwwjdic?1C	Online Japanese-English dictionary
Space ALC	https://www.alc.co.jp/	Online Japanese-English dictionary
Rikaichan	https://www.polarcloud.com/getrcx/	Browser plug-in that translates Japanese text on mouse-over
NHK News Easy	https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/easy/	Read news articles in simple, informal Japanese
Japanese Drills	http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~ik2r-myr/kanji/kanji1a.htm	Drills to help you memorize Japanese <i>kanji</i>
Quizlet	https://quizlet.com/	Flashcards for all of your vocab needs
Duolingo	https://www.duolingo.com/	App with a wide variety of languages you can learn
HelloTalk	https://www.hellotalk.com/?lang=en	App where you can find language exchange partners

JAPANESE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST (JLPT)

If you are looking for something to motivate you, why not take the [Japanese Language Proficiency Test \(JLPT\)](#)? There are 5 levels of difficulty, from N5 (beginner) to N1 (advanced). Tests for all levels are held every year on the first Sunday in December and July. The application deadline for the December test is in early September and the deadline for the July test is in April. The JLPT fee is 6,500 yen. CLAIR offers a grant to cover the application fee for those taking JLPT N3-N1. You can find more information [here](#).

If you need ideas for how to study for it, there are some [JLPT Study Resources](#) online, as well as a specific [Facebook Group](#) dedicated to JETs who are preparing for the test.

TEFL CERTIFICATION

If you enjoy teaching English, this is also a great time to become Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certified. There are many online programs that you can complete in your free time to improve your teaching skills and gain valuable credentials to help you continue to teach after your time

with JET. The JET Programme now offers 200 partial grants toward TEFL programs of 100 hours or more each May, so keep an eye on your email for more information when spring rolls around!

JAPANESE SIGN LANGUAGE

If you are interested in learning a new language that's not Japanese in Japan, what about [Japanese Sign Language](#) (*shuwa* 手話)? Ask at your local community center and see if they have a *shuwa saakuru* (sign language circle); they will be delighted to know that you want to learn JSL with them!

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Ehime will likely be quite different from what you expected Japan to be like. It could also be the first time that you have lived in a very rural area. Japanese people may also not be like how you imagined them to be. While they may match some of your expectations, others will completely break any stereotypes you may have previously had. Even if you have experience teaching, be aware that the Japanese school system will be different from what you are used to.

TAPE RECORDER

Many of you will have the chance to experience being a human tape recorder. Don't let this get to your head. While it may be boring and unfulfilling, you should recognize that it is extremely beneficial to the students. Please be patient if this is a role you frequently have. You can certainly gently approach your teachers with ideas for how to use you differently, but please do not be pushy about it, and if they don't show any interest, accept that. Teachers can change every April, and your role in the classroom may change with them.

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Most people you meet while here will probably not speak your mother language. While this is something that is scary, it is also a blessing in disguise. Many of you will learn Japanese naturally through your day to day interactions and will realize that you have learned much more than you thought once your time with JET has ended.

BE GENKI!

Be energetic! A large part of being an ALT, especially elementary school ALTs, is being energetic with your students. A lot of the students will be shy at first, but the more excited you appear to interact with them, the faster they will warm up to you.

EXHAUSTION

While it might seem like it at first, you are not in Japan for a vacation. Same as any other job, you will run into cases of exhaustion and boredom from monotony. You may run into some issues with office politics that you aren't sure how to handle. When things like this come up, your RAs are always your first port of call, and there are also an array of mental health resources provided to JET programme participants that they or the PAs can put you in touch with.

COMMUNITY

Try to become a part of your local community and befriend your fellow teachers. Not only will you find them to be a valuable resource in a time of need, you will find that Japan will feel like home much faster. It is also a good way to improve your Japanese. In a country with a different culture where almost nobody speaks your language, the JET community will also be your saving grace. Your fellow JETs can help you get acclimated when you aren't confident enough in your Japanese yet and teach you what to expect

when you start working. Other JETs can also be a great outlet when culture shock hits, so make sure you keep in touch with the community where you can.

With the exception of race, most differences in identity or lifestyle, from religion to LGBTQ+ status to veganism, are neither expressed nor discussed in public life in Japan. While this can feel discouraging, this is your opportunity to initiate conversations about these matters of identity in your community. In recent years, the new textbook curriculum in schools have begun to feature sections about racial discrimination, LGBTQIA2S+ issues, and other topics. However, many lessons lack a meaningful level of historical context, or real case studies from people from other countries. Try to work with your JTEs and other teachers at your school to see if you can make time to contribute activities to these lessons. This is your chance as a JET to make an activity or presentation about these kinds of issues while in a larger international context.

LIFE IN EHIME

Starting life in a new country can be daunting — you are learning new things every day, which can be mentally exhausting. There's also the obvious homesickness and culture shock aspect that you would not have to deal with back home. Be kind to yourself during your time here.

CULTURE SHOCK

Adjusting to life in another country can be quite hard and many JETs experience culture shock to some degree. This usually comes in **four phases** (but differs from person to person):

1. HONEYMOON

Everything is new and exciting! The new culture is romanticized. The novelty and superficial differences are fascinating and exciting. Feelings of enthusiasm towards new experiences and opportunities.

2. SHOCK AND HOSTILITY

How different things really are becomes increasingly apparent and feelings of anxiety and frustration arise. Things are not as expected and don't make logical sense to the foreign mind. Realizations of how difficult it is to manage a life within the new culture. Attempting to maintain previously learned patterns of behavior that contradict the new culture creates shock and hostility.

3. ADJUSTMENT

Beginning to understand and accept the new culture. Ways to cope with and navigate the new culture are established. Thinking becomes more positive and life begins to feel “normal”.

4. ADAPTATION

Acceptance and appreciation for both the new and old cultures. Realistic expectations and understanding of the new culture. Feeling comfortable and at home in the new culture.

It's important to be aware of the signs of culture shock so that you can find ways to counter the effects of the stress it causes. Signs of culture shock include panic attacks, loss of self-confidence, and excessive anger/anxiety. Some coping strategies include eating well and exercising, getting a good night's sleep, meeting with friends, exploring your area, and relaxing (take time out for yourself and don't feel guilty about having a lazy day!). Keep in touch with friends and keep a diary. Check out your [General Information Handbook](#) for more detailed information about culture shock.

LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The word **inaka** (田舎) in Japanese means rural or countryside. And just like everywhere else in the world, country folk tend to be more conservative and provincial, but also warmer and not as formal. For many new JETs arriving from urban areas, the combination of Japanese life and rural life provides a double shock. Living in Ehime *inaka*, however, presents the unique opportunity to see traditional Japan close-up and become part of a community unavailable in an alienating metropolis.

STANDING OUT

The Japanese word for foreigner is **gaikokujin** (外国人), commonly shortened to the derogatory term **gaijin** (外人) and literally meaning “outside person.” You will learn this word quickly. You may hear it whispered as you walk down the street, or shouted when you arrive at school. Since Japan is relatively

homogeneous, any difference really stands out. And while Japanese people are shy about many things, they may not be shy about staring at you. You may also find that people you have never met before will know your name, where you work, what country you are from, and what day you do your washing. This might be surprising at first, but it soon becomes one of things that amuse you about living in Japan. Yes, it can be irritating sometimes, but try to enjoy being a local celebrity. It usually comes from a genuine curiosity and neither malice nor rudeness is intended. You are in a place where people want to get to know you.

Overall, the *inaka* is more conservative and more homogenous than the cities, but there is little need to worry about your dress, customs, or mannerisms triggering an existing prejudice as such actions do not communicate the way they do back home. In Japan, these kinds of indicators will be generalized as personal or “foreign” quirks. The downside is that you may feel a meaningful part of yourself has become invisible, and being in a foreign country can lessen your opportunity to connect with a broader community. Speak with the PAs or friends in your area (or online) and be sure to check the [National AJET website](#) for relevant special interest groups and organizations.

GETTING AWAY

When it all gets a bit claustrophobic, it's a good idea to get out of town for the weekend. To see some new scenery but also be somewhere where everybody doesn't know your name. The transport system in Japan makes this really easy. The ferry routes in particular make it cheap and easy to get out of Ehime to Kyushu, Hiroshima and Osaka for those times when you crave urban life. Getting in touch with other JETs is essential to living happily in Japan. Everyone here understands the ups and downs of rural life and getting to know your fellow JETs provides you with empathy and a place to nip off to for a weekend. The rural towns of Ehime hold a variety of festivals in the summer. These range from the traditional to the outright strange. The festivals in your area offer a good opportunity to invite some JET friends to your town for some fun.

GOING TO THE STORE

In a small town you're bound to run into someone you know at the grocery store once in a while. You may find your *inaka* neighbors inordinately curious about what you are buying. They may ask you, “What are you buying?” or just have a look in your basket. No matter what you are buying, they will be surprised; either to find that *gaikokujin* use soy sauce, or that for breakfast some of us eat cereal.

If you live in the *inaka*, be prepared to go without some things. There may not be a video store in your town. Some places will have restaurants that close around 8pm. This may take some getting used to, so use the opportunity to discover the people and places around you. Also, get an Internet connection and do some online shopping. Foreign food, English books, video games, etc., can all be shipped to your cozy, country home. Getting a Costco membership is highly recommended, lots of rare international goods can be ordered online from them. The Kaldi stores in Emifull Masaki and Matsuyama Fuji Grand are also great for international foods. Overall, things that seem elusive at first can usually be found with some effort. As you get to know your area and other people around you, you will find sources for most of the things you crave.



MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

In rural Ehime, it can seem like every move you make is town news. From whom you had over to your house to what illnesses you have had. It's not necessarily that people are nosy; it's more that having a *gaikokujin* in their midst is exciting. If you are seen with someone of the opposite sex, foreign or Japanese, you will be asked if they are your boyfriend or girlfriend. And despite your answer ("This is my friend/colleague/father") you may not be believed. Don't worry! No one really cares about your social habits; it's just something to make conversation about.

If you get sick, it may be big news in town. Folks will immediately wonder why you weren't at school. And your supervisor, the doctor and nurses will tell them exactly what you had. Don't be surprised if when you return to work, someone asks, "How's your diarrhea?" This isn't just the treatment for foreigners. When it comes to conversations about health in Japan, there is no such thing as too much information and doctor/patient confidentiality is most likely not at the levels you're used to! However, it is at times of ill health and such problems, that the kindness and generosity of *inaka* people is displayed. You will have a whole hoard of office secretaries and school nurses ready to take your temperature, visit you and fluff your pillow.

KEEPING IT TOGETHER

There are many ways to cope with the absence of urban distractions and many ways to take advantage of living in the country. It helps to have something to fill your evening, rather than another night of Japanese TV and ice cream. The first few months you will have less to do, but as you find things of interest and get invited along to clubs and groups, you will be wondering when you will have the time to go to sleep. Take care not to overstretch yourself.

HIKING

Ehime has hundreds of kilometers of beautiful coastline and thousands of acres of mountain forest. It is usually only a short walk or bike ride from your town to some really spectacular scenery.

LOCAL SPORTS

It should be no problem to ask to join your favorite sports club at school. Schools offer a wide range of clubs for the students such as tennis, volleyball, basketball, *aikido*, *kendo* and many other things. Keep in mind joining one of these clubs is a commitment, and you may be asked to help with practice/competitions on weekends. If eight hours with the students is enough for one day, you can join similar sports in the community and meet like-minded Japanese people in the process. Try to find the community center in your school and ask for a monthly schedule. There are all kinds of different activities going on there.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

If sports aren't your thing, take up a Japanese art form. There are many opportunities to learn Japanese culture. For example: woodblock printing, ikebana (flower arranging), sho-do (calligraphy), sa-do (tea ceremony) as well as an array of traditional Japanese music including taiko drumming and koto playing. Taiko drumming is popular in Ehime and many JETs in this area belong to a Taiko group. Most groups are delighted to have a foreigner join their number and people will go out of their way to make you feel part of the group.



Keep an ear out for any opportunity that relates to what you love. We've had Ehime JETs perform in local musicals, join dance troupes, and even lose miserably at video game tournaments in arcades. You might even find a group for the card game you like. Despite being in the *inaka* you might be surprised what amount of clubs and groups are around you.

DRINKING

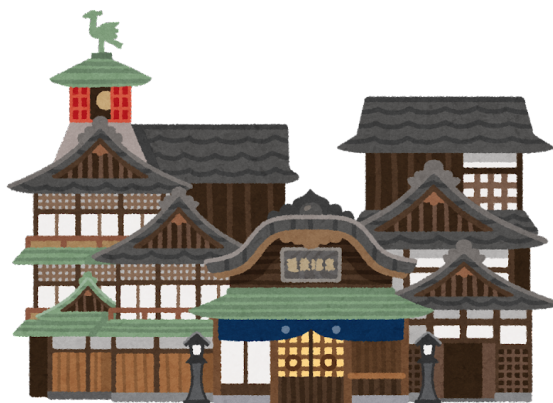
If you like alcohol you are at an advantage in the *inaka*. Drinking in bars and in people's homes is a popular pastime here. Alcohol loosens inhibitions and someone who was too afraid to speak to you in the office will suddenly throw his arm around you and tell you about his wild college days. Going to the same bars on a regular basis is a good idea. You will get to know the staff and they will introduce you to an array of interesting people. It's much easier in Japan to make friends through a third party introduction. So, it is good if you can make your face well known in a few local places. As always, please remember to drink responsibly.

TAKING ADVANTAGE

All in all, living in the *inaka* presents a unique opportunity. You will be surprised each day by the kindness of people and by their genuine interest in the most banal aspects of your life. Living in Ehime is what you make of it and it's a great chance to get an inside view of Japan.

LIVING IN THE CAPITAL

While many of the Ehime JETs will be placed in the countryside, some of you will find your new home in Ehime's biggest city, [Matsuyama](#). Matsuyama City is a city of roughly **500,000 people** – big enough to contain copious entertainment, shopping, nightlife, culture, and city buzz whilst still compact enough to retain its country roots and hospitality. Matsuyama is famous for its **castle**, and a variety of hot springs including **Dogo Onsen** – the oldest one in Japan which also inspired the *onsen* in the Studio Ghibli movie *Spirited Away*. Matsuyama is also the setting of Natsume Soseki's widely read 19th century novel *Botchan*, about a young teacher who arrives from Tokyo and gets up to many shenanigans. Dogo, the main historical tourist area of Matsuyama, is filled with *Botchan* attractions and memorabilia, such as the sweet old-timey Botchan train, hourly-animated Botchan clock, and several delightful shops selling Botchan Dango – three small coloured sweet dumplings on a stick. In Matsuyama, you can also shop, eat and drink to your heart's content, with the city center hosting Japanese, Korean, Indian, French and Italian cuisine as well as a bucket load of bars, karaoke, bowling, cinemas, parks, shrines, and festivals.



There are three groups of ALTs residing in Matsuyama — **Matsuyama City ALTs (JHS ALTs)**, **Ehime BoE ALTs (SHS ALTs)**, and **Private School JETs**. Plus, there are **CIRs** and a **SEA** working at the *kencho*. In total, there are about 50 JETs living in Matsuyama in a normal year. Each group of ALTs is run differently as they are looked after by different COs. Matsuyama City ALTs have monthly meetings with their chief supervisor and occasional *enkai*, whereas the SHS ALTs deal with their school-based supervisor and don't have the opportunity to meet up with other SHS ALTs through work.

There are many things to do in Matsuyama to keep you occupied — something to keep in mind if you are disappointed to not be in a more rural place. You can create your own sense of community while living in the big city — it just takes a bit more time and effort.

A great thing about living in Matsuyama is the support network you have right at your fingertips, as there are many other ALTs nearby.

DAILY LIFE

Day-to-day life can differ greatly depending on where you live. To start off, however, here are some important things you should try to figure out if you want to get settled into your new place:

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- ★ Find a convenience store (7-11, Lawson, Family Mart, Circle K, Sunkus, Yamazaki, etc.)
- ★ Find the nearest ATM (make note of its opening and closing times, which vary by bank)
- ★ Find a grocery or supermarket (Fuji, Shopper's, Jusco, Marunaka, etc.)
- ★ Find the nearest bus and/or train station
- ★ Find the nearest *koban* (police station)

Call **110** in an emergency for police.
Call **119** for an ambulance or fire department.

IN YOUR SPARE TIME

- ★ Explore, explore, explore!
- ★ Study Japanese, including applying for the CLAIR language courses
- ★ Make contact with friends and family back home
- ★ Make contact with the JETs in your region
- ★ Relax, watch English TV, read a book, etc.

In addition, check out other guides for daily life in Japan. This includes, but is not limited to, the [Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals](#) set up by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan and CLAIR's [Multicultural Japan](#) webpage. The [Ehime AJET website](#) also has a helpful section on daily life that can be applied to life specifically in Ehime.

BUYING THINGS YOU NEED

In this section, we will go over a general guide on buying things in Ehime. This section's usefulness varies depending on where you live. Overall, the general rule is to **ask your RA or other JETs near you** about the best places to shop!

FURNITURE

For many of you, furnishing is one of your top priorities when you first land in Japan. While purchasing furniture can be expensive, you don't need to spend a fortune setting up your new home. For **typical retailers** that can help you set up, look to stores like [AEON](#), [Fuji Grand](#), [NITORI](#), and [DAIKI](#) — they often deliver too!

If you are looking for cheaper options, definitely look to **secondhand stores** such as [OFF HOUSE](#) (a subset of the OFF brand stores) and [Second Street](#). Both of these chains carry a variety of options, including couches, fridges, microwaves, bookcases, etc. The options you have will depend on the location, but you will likely not have a hard time finding something valuable at any location.

You can also check out [Shirikiya](#), a **nonprofit volunteer group** dedicated to providing free or cheap furnishing for international students and foreign residents. The person who runs the program, Ozaki, has a small flatbed truck that he uses to deliver to your apartment and even carry up for a flat fee of 1,000 yen. He will also be able to pick you up to bring to his warehouse if you want to go browse for your options yourself.



As always, you can reach out to your **predecessor or other JETs** to ask about their wares. You are under no obligation to purchase anything from anyone, even your pred, but oftentimes, people like to streamline furnishing their place by getting things directly from someone they can contact directly. Many times, around when new JETs begin to come in, JETs getting ready to leave will have things on sale or for free that they are willing to give away. To start looking for this option, check out the Sayonara Sales channel of the [Ehime JET Discord](#).

Finally, check out 100-yen stores such as [Daiso](#) and [Can-Do](#) or department stores such as [Don Quijote](#). They will have the smaller appliances and other things you need to really finish setting it all up, all for around 100 yen each!

CLOTHING

Clothing in Japan at typical brick-and-mortar stores can be limited in size and value. Many people opt to shop for clothes online, especially folks in the *inaka* who may not have a good selection of clothing stores near them. However, if you do want to have the luxury of browsing for clothes at a store, here are some options that you may have available near you:

Clothing Retailers	
UNIQLO	Great for “regular teaching” outfits that are affordable. Has “Heat Tech” for staying warm, and “Airism” for staying cool.
GU	Similar to UNIQLO; great for affordable blouses & dress shirts for formal days
AOKI	Suits and formal wear for all occasions; Some have stand-alone stores and separate sections for larger sizes
Youfuku no Aoyama	Similar to AOKI, good for buying suits and other formal wear.
Nissen	Clothing online shop. Have larger sizes although entirely in Japanese.
ASOS	Clothing and shoes in Western sizes; free delivery to Japan
Victoria's Secret	Women's clothing; bras in additional sizes

While clothing can be expensive in Japan, there are a lot of great **secondhand clothing** options that will not require you to break the bank! Notable options include [Hard OFF](#) (part of the OFF store brand), [Wonder Rex](#), and [Second Street](#). All of these have a variety of gently-used clothing and accessories, often very work appropriate! You may also consider purchasing a work bag here if you did not already bring one with you. If you need a quick guide on how to shop secondhand in Japan, [Tofugu has a great one!](#)

For **plus size clothing**, although options are limited, there are stores you can visit in Matsuyama such as [Big M One](#) and [4L \(フォーエル\)](#). Both of these have online shopping as an option, if you cannot make the trek to Matsuyama. Generally speaking, people have suggested buying online as an easier and more accessible way to get plus size clothes.

ONLINE SHOPPING

For those living deep in the *inaka*, you may find that you'll have to have items shipped to you! Luckily, this isn't too difficult to do. Most online retailers that ship to Japan will be able to ship to your location, although the cost of shipping may be different. Ask around for recommendations, but here are some popular options JETs have used:

Online Retailers	
Amazon Japan	Great for fast shipping, even to rural parts of Ehime
Rakuten	Basically the Amazon of Japan; can also ship to more rural locations
Costco	Online shopping for dry goods from Costco direct
iHerb	Vitamins and health supplements; cheap shipping to Japan
Syurui	Alcohol and liquors; Japanese only
Play Asia	Video games and other digital media

GROCERY SHOPPING

There are entire aisles at Japanese grocery stores devoted to seaweed or just-add-water ramen bowls, as well as the expected fish section and the number of unidentifiable (at first) ingredients that look strange and complicated to use. Things are almost the same once you get used to the labels and realize that slight differences are mostly irrelevant. Check out all the stores over time to find ones that carry most of the things you eat or cook with.

FOREIGN FOODS / GOODS

We know what it feels like when you're just craving that food from home or want to duplicate your favorite dish and need that extra special ingredient. Or maybe you've been tasked with introducing foreign holidays to your students and need those extra sweets and supplies. Here we've gathered a few of the most popular stores around Ehime and websites used by mikans when they need that little bit of home (or maybe you just like a variety of foods, we don't judge). While the list is not exhaustive we hope that you can find what you are looking for.



International Food Shopping	
Gyomu Super	Gyomu Super has locations across Matsuyama and Ehime. It's a restaurant supply store that sells foods and supplies at a nice price. While it's not solely an "international" store, they do sell a nice variety of foreign foods.
Kaldi Coffee Farm	Kaldi is an international store with four branches in Ehime, one located in Fuji Grand, one in Emifull, and the other two are in the AEON malls in Imabari and Saijo. While their main product is coffee, they also have a variety of cheeses, baking goods, sweets, American, Chinese, German, Korean, Mexican, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Thai, and Vietnamese goods.
AEON	AEON's own supermarket has a small international section as well as the branches in Imabari and Saijo having a Kaldi inside. The Matsuyama branch has a shop called Caf��rrant, which is similar to Kaldi as it has a nice trove of foreign ingredients.
Fuji	Apart from Fuji Grand (which also has Kaldi) and is located across from JR Matsuyama Station, even your local Fuji may have a small international section.

Online Groceries	
The Meat Guy	Every kind of meat you can imagine from cow to crocodile to kangaroo! The Meat Guy offers a very eclectic variety of meats and cooking accessories. There are special sections for organic and halal meats , as well a selection of cheeses and frozen veggies.
The Flying Pig	Before Costco Came to Japan, the people from this website helped to send Costco and foreign goods to those in Japan. Now there are several Costco's across Japan, but they are still few and far between. If you can not often make the trip to the closest Costco in Hiroshima or are tired of waiting for "those rumors" that Matsuyama will be getting a Costco to come true. You may say "Yeah, when pigs fly!" but you don't need to because you've got a friend in the flying pig.
Foreign Buyers Club (FBC)	Australian/British focused products. Similar to The Meat Guy, The Foreign Buyer's Club is a website set up by expats in Japan who, while Japanese food is delicious and healthy, sometimes you just want a more international palate, so they set up a website to sell international goods in Japan. The Foreign Buyer's Club, though they do sell meats (though not like the Meat Guy) their main focus is on other supplies ingredients, or maybe you want some deodorant, or western style toothpaste, or lotion that is not milky or full of alcohol.
Asia Superstore	Do you love spice? Does your market not have a variety of fresh herbs. Unlike the above stores, the Asia Superstore sells Asian (mostly Thai) produce and goods across Japan. If you miss Thailand but just can not take the vicious sun's heat, this store is perfect to get those little reminders from the land of smiles.
Pepper Friends	For your spicy food needs!

BEING VEGETARIAN/VEGAN

The best way to approach **vegetarianism** (used here as an umbrella term to include vegans, vegetarians, pescatarians and the like) is to find a balance that you are happy maintaining (not including folks with food allergies, which of course is not optional). Whatever level of strictness you maintain back home is probably going to require a lot more effort, even more depending on how rural you are. A strict, fully vegan diet is possible, but will involve a huge time investment in regards to cooking most of your food from scratch with only a few exceptions, and few if any options for eating out. Some Ehime JETs have done that, and it is perfectly doable, but is very demanding in regards to both time and effort.

Most Ehime JETs who come here with some experience as some form of vegetarian back home tend to change their diets. Some go from vegan or vegetarian to pescatarian, others accept the fact that there will be a chance fish or meat is a small ingredient in the preparation of many foods they eat, but try to avoid foods where meat is a main ingredient. Others have days of vegetarian diets, or try to have vegetarian meals for at least 2 meals a day. In the same way you have to get used to all bread being kinda sweet, and most foods from back home are hard to find, diets often shift when exposed to a new culture. If you decide to be less strict with your diet, don't dwell on "failing" as a vegetarian, but find a balance that makes you comfortable.

For more practical advice, restaurants in Japan have a reputation for not permitting substitutions, and in the sense they won't swap a hamburger patty out for avocado or a fried egg, that's true. However, if you ask for a meal to be served without meat, most places are happy to accommodate (but will not change the price, as a heads up). As mentioned earlier, even seemingly innocuous veggie dishes may contain dashi (a type of fish stock) or meat-based roux, and what Japanese people consider "meat" may not 100% line up with your personal definition. As a general rule, **even if meat is an invisible ingredient and not a feature, Japanese people will probably call it "vegetarian."** If you are trying to maintain a strict vegetarian diet in Japan, just be sure to know exactly what you are ordering if you eat out, and if there are versions of that dish that are not vegetarian, ask clarifying questions.

There are some vegetarian and vegan places around Ehime, particularly in Matsuyama. When in doubt, Indian or Nepalese places normally have something safe, and are a good fallback if vegetarian friends or family are visiting.

For strictly vegetarian restaurant options, most are in Matsuyama, especially central areas like Dogo. The best bet is to look around your local area. Especially during COVID-19 a lot of businesses have changed hands, or rebranded, so there may be vegetarian places around you that are not flagged as such, and asking around is likely to be your best bet.

In a pinch, family restaurants normally have margarita pizza, and although it may not be fancy, it's a vegetarian meal you don't have to cook yourself.

GENERAL TIPS

- ★ Bring your own *dashi* (soup stock/dipping sauce for noodles) to restaurants.
- ★ Local farmer's markets are a great source of organic or low-pesticide produce. And the farmers selling them are a good source of information about how to cook what you've bought.
- ★ *Onigiri* (rice balls) are sold at the local convenience stores and come in vegetarian flavors, such as *ume* (pickled plum).
- ★ *Kanten* is a natural jelly made from seaweed used in sweets. But be careful not to mix it up with gelatin, which is an animal product.
- ★ Rennetless cheeses are mostly only available through [Tengu](#).

SCHOOL LUNCH

School lunch in Japan is a fixed meal prepared in bulk for the entire school for junior high schools and elementary schools. Meat will be a daily, unavoidable staple and the menu cannot be altered to accommodate your diet. Establish as soon as you arrive that you will be bringing a *bento* (outside lunch) to school instead, invest in a lunchbox, and start curating a selection of recipes you can prepare in the mornings or the evening before. Please note that some schools may not allow you to eat with your students if you bring in your own lunch.

RESOURCES

Online Resources	
Japan's Vegan Restaurant Pocketguide	A good guide to eating out as a vegan in the larger cities of Japan. When you are traveling this is well worth the money. It can be used it in Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, Tokyo, and even the one listed in Shikoku for Magnolia (see below). Great recommendations and the maps are actually usable.
VegJet	An AJET Special Interest Group of vegan, vegetarian, and veg-curious JETs. They support one another by sharing helpful resources, advice, recipe ideas, event postings, and more on their Facebook page.
Happy Cow	A good way to search for vegetarian and vegan friendly restaurants, they also have an app for when you are on the go. They include restaurant opening times, contact information, locations and reviews.

Shopping	
In-Store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Greens • Pantry • Kaldi (Locations at Fuji Grand and Emifull)
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iHerb • Yoyo Market • Tengu Natural Foods • Warabe Mura • FBC • The Flying Pig

Restaurants and Cafes	
Matsuyama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fumikaden • Kanjirushi • "Deutches Café Bluhén" German Bakery • Four Seasons Thai Restaurant • Takashimaya Basement • Charlie's Vegetable • Indian / Southeast Asian Restaurants
Ozu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sosaku Italian Restaurant
Imabari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnolia
Yoshida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tandoor Indian Restaurant (Tandoru)

USEFUL PHRASES

“I am a vegetarian. I do not eat pork, beef, or chicken.”

→ *Watashi wa bejitarian desu. Butaniku ya gyuniku ya toriniku o taberaremasen.*

(To add more, “sakana” means fish, “ebi” means shrimp, etc etc...)

“What do you recommend from this menu?”

→ *Kono menyū de o-susume wa nan desu ka?*

“Does this have X meat in it?”

→ *Kore wa X niku ga haite imasu ka?*

“Can you make it without meat?”

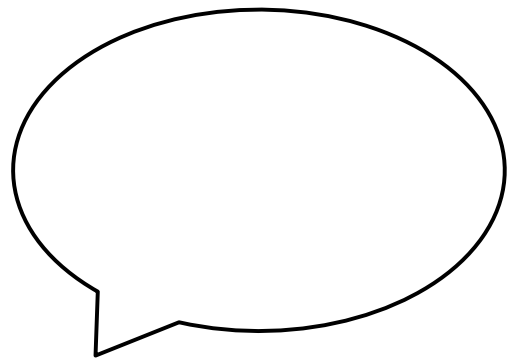
→ *Niku o irenai de tsukuremasu ka?*

“Can I substitute X for Y?”

→ *X no kawari ni Y o koukan dekimasu ka?*

“Without X”

→ *X nashi de*



VEGETARIAN KANJI

The following is a list of the common *kanji* and *hiragana* for meats and animal products to aid in shopping and reading menus. It is, however, by no means comprehensive (there are hundreds of types of fish, for example), so please be careful and use a dictionary when unsure.

魚: Fish This will rarely be on a menu, but the kanji is used a basic radical for many other fish kanji, such as 鮪 (tuna), 鰹 (mackerel), or 鰯 (sardine). Learn the basic kanji and then double-check anything in which it appears.

子: Child Many times when this appears, it refers to eggs, such as 玉子 (chicken egg), 鱈子 (pollock roe), or 白子 (cod milt). However, it also appears in lovely vegetarian options such as 唐辛子 (red pepper) and 茄子 (aubergine/eggplant). In short, this kanji should be a warning to investigate, but doesn't necessarily mean a non-vegetarian item.

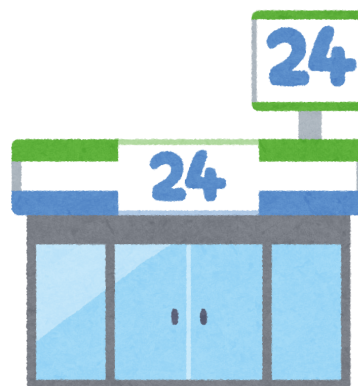
牛	beef
豚	pork
鶏, チキン	chicken
肉, にく	meat
海老, えび	prawn, shrimp
かに	crab
まぐろ	tuna

さけ, サーモン	salmon
だし	fish stock
ルー	roux
卵, 玉子, たまご	egg
チーズ	cheese
牛乳, 乳	milk, dairy
ゼラチン	gelatin

CONVENIENCE STORES

Japanese convenience stores are one handy way to get all of your daily needs in one place. Lovingly called *conbini*, not only can you purchase premade foods, but also do your banking, pay for bills, and even purchase concert tickets!

While most other places in Ehime, even in Matsuyama, close as early as 7pm, most *conbinis* are 24-hours, which means you will never need to worry about not having a place to get some food.



A Word About Vending Machines

自動販売機 *jidou hanbai-ki*

You may have already heard about how Japan has the highest vending machine to people ratio in the world, and that has a great impact on how people live here. Vending machines provide anything from drinks to trinkets.

It's said that the reason for this abundance is to provide people a way to get water in case of an emergency. Whether or not that's true, the fact is that vending machines are *everywhere*. Even in more rural areas, you don't need to walk far to find one!

Always make sure to carry some change around in case you need a drink and a *conbini* can't be found nearby. You'll always have the trusty *jihanki* (shortened form of *jidou hanbai-ki*) to fall back on!

¥100

自販機

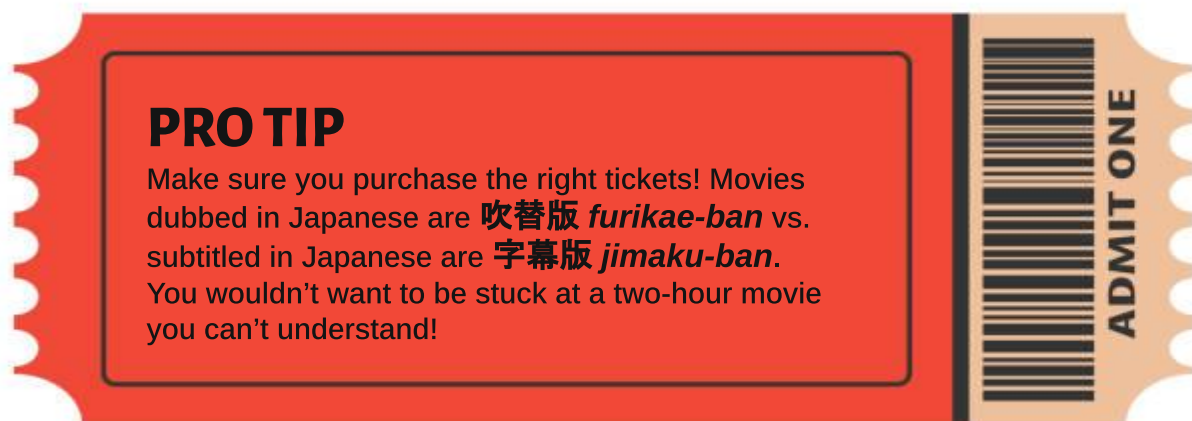
MOVIE THEATERS

There are several movie theaters and cinemas around Ehime. Generally speaking, movie tickets are about 1,900 yen each, but there are discounts on certain days. For example, at Cinema Sunshine, movies are only 1,200 yen on Wednesdays, which are called “Sunshine Days.” Other locations also have discounts on the first day of every month.

Seating at movie theaters is always chosen ahead of time. You can purchase tickets online if you are particular about the seat you get, but if not, buying them at the theater is also an option. Be careful that some popular movies on opening day will be very packed, and purchasing tickets day-of may not be an option!

Tip! If you have a Fuji (the supermarket) card, you can get a slight ticket discount.

List of Local Movie Theaters	
Emifull	Cinema Sunshine
Imabari	Independent Theater
Kinuyama	Cinema Sunshine
Matsuyama	Cinema Sunshine Independent Theater Cinema Lunatic
Ozu	Cinema Sunshine
Shigenobu	Cinema Sunshine
Niihama	Toho Theater



GARBAGE SORTING

One thing that can often be a culture shock for many people coming to live in Japan for the first time is the way that trash is sorted here. Garbage sorting or garbage separation (ゴミ分別 *gomi bunbetsu*) is a complicated system that varies between each municipality and even between each ward/district. It may be confusing at first, but will slowly become a mundane part of your daily life, albeit perhaps an inconvenient one.

Generally speaking, garbage in Japan is sorted into four categories:

1. Combustibles (燃えるごみ *moeru gomi*)
2. Incombustibles (燃えないごみ *moenai gomi*)
3. Recyclables (資源ごみ *shigen gomi*)
4. Oversized trash (粗大ごみ *sodai gomi*)

Combustibles, or burnable trash, are the majority of what you'll be throwing out. It includes paper waste, food packaging, fabrics, food peels, and similar items. Usually it is collected twice a week.

Incombustibles include thicker plastics like buckets, glass items like light bulbs, ceramics, umbrellas, and metallic items, small household appliances, and other personal items like spray cans and razors. This is usually collected once a month.

Recyclables are collected once a week or every two weeks, and you will often see that it will be separated into cans (カン *kan*), glass bottles (びん *bin*), and PET bottles (ペットボトル *petto botoru*). PET bottles are plastic water bottles (think vending machine drinks!), and sometimes you may need to separate the cap, plastic label, and actual bottle from each other and put them in different garbage cans. Paper recyclables such as cardboard (段ボール *danbooru*) and paper cartons (紙パック *kami paku*) may also require you to cut, flatten, and tie everything together with string before throwing out.

Oversized trash is any garbage that is larger than your average, everyday trash. This is separate from the other three types because it requires you to set up an appointment (often by postcard) for pickup. The pickup may or may not be free depending on your municipality.

Oh, and don't forget, depending on the type of garbage, you will need to use either a white translucent (白色半透明 *hakushoku han toumei*) or clear (無色透明 *mushoku toumei*) plastic bag. Yeah...



Examples of some (rare) public garbage cans you may see in Japan



Make sure to buy the right kind of bag!



Example of a garbage calendar from Matsuyama

If that isn't complicated enough, the day in which you can throw out a certain type of trash may be different depending on where you live. When you first move in to your new home, you will be given what's called a "garbage calendar (ゴミカレンダー)," which tells you what garbage type is collected on what day in your specific ward/district. It's important you follow the collection schedule or else you may get a scolding from the building management or neighbor for improper disposal! You also need to make sure you throw it away in the right location; all places have designated spots for residents to throw away their trash, and you have to

make sure you don't accidentally throw yours in some other buildings' collection!

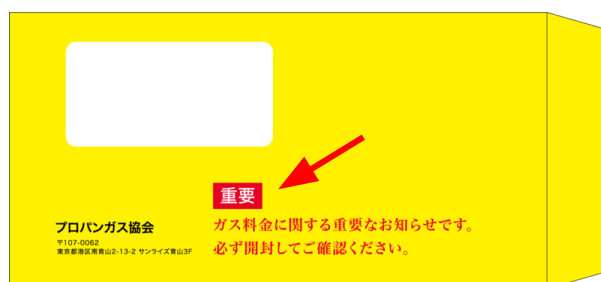
If you're ever unsure of what to do, talk with your supervisor or consult your municipality's website:

- [Matsuyama City](#)
 - [Iyo District \(Masaki Town\)](#)
- [Ikata Town](#)
- [Imabari City](#)
- [Iyo City](#)
- [Kamijima Town](#)
- [Kihoku Town](#)
- [Kumakogen Town](#)
- [Niihama City](#)
- [Ozu City](#)
- [Saijo City](#)
- [Shikokuchuo City](#)
- [Uchiko Town](#)
- [Uwajima City](#)

Matsuyama also has a useful "[Guide to Separating Household Garbage](#)" in English! Feel free to reference this, but please note that this is for Matsuyama *only* and that your own municipality may do things differently.

MAIL SORTING

You come home from a long day at work, and find that your mailbox is full of pizza ads, massage coupons, and other spam mail. But you also know your gas bill should be coming soon in the mail. How do you know what is important vs. junk? Look out for the characters **重要** *juuyou* or **大切** *taisetsu*, both of these words mean **IMPORTANT** and will most likely be marked in red. You may also see **親展** *shinten*, or **CONFIDENTIAL**, which will also be marked in red.



Example of an envelope labeled **IMPORTANT**

If you ever need assistance reading a piece of mail, you can ask your supervisor (if you feel comfortable doing so). EPIC also offers assistance and is strictly confidential.

KEEPING UP WITH The Daily News

You may receive **local newspapers** for free in the mail. These will most likely not have an English version to accompany it, but you can quickly scan through to see if anything catches your eye!

If you're interested in keeping up with current events in English during your time here, the three big newspaper companies in Japan are [the Asahi Shimbun](#), [the Yomiuri Shimbun](#), and [the Mainichi](#). You can read the news online or get a print subscription. Some other notable websites are [the Japan Times](#), [Japan Today](#), and [News on Japan](#). Alternatively, these resources can also be great for studying Japanese. Some articles may be available in both English and Japanese, or you can also practice by reading newspaper articles in Japanese.

FINANCES AND EXPENDITURES

As you should already know, your JET salary depends on how long you have been in the program:

Year 1 (2022)	¥3,360,000
Year 2	¥3,600,000
Year 3	¥3,900,000
Year 4/5	¥3,960,000

JET salaries are very liveable in many parts of Japan, especially in Ehime. In fact, many JETs have been able to not only live comfortably in their new home, but also travel (both in Japan and abroad) and even pay off student loans.

BUDGETING

Here is an example of a potential budgeting spreadsheet you could use to help manage your finances:

Sample Monthly Budget

	Expense (¥)	Balance (¥)	Comment:
Salary		239,000	(Rounded down) After pension and insurance
Rent & Utility Bills			
Rent	-30,000	209,000	Sometimes automatically deducted from paycheck
Cell phone	-8,000	201,000	Typical for smartphones, basic phones are cheaper
Internet	-6,000	195,000	
Electricity & Gas	-6,000	189,000	Tends to go up in summer/winter
Water	-2,000	187,000	
Living Expenses			
Groceries	-20,000	167,000	Budget around ¥5,000 per week for food
School lunch	-5,000	162,000	Less than ¥250 per lunch. If bringing your own lunch, add this amount to grocery budget
Leisure allowance	-30,000	132,000	Eating out, carousing downtown, weekend trips
Miscellaneous	-20,000	112,000	Various household items, new clothes, shoes, etc.
Savings			
Savings	-42,000	70,000	Prioritize saving at least 15% of your paycheck
Vacation fund	-20,000	50,000	You will probably want to go sightseeing or visit home during the holidays
Remainder		¥50,000	For everything else!

Budget sheet courtesy of [Kumamoto JET](#).

COST OF LIVING

Here's a list of some everyday items you can buy in Ehime and a rough idea of what their prices may be. This list is NOT indicative of average costs, but instead will hopefully help serve as a point of reference.

- Eggs ¥180
- Milk (1ℓ) ¥140
- Bread (6 slices) ¥120
- Butter ¥400

BANKING

Chances are, you've found (or soon will find) that banking in Japan is completely different from your home country. Personal checks and debit cards don't really exist, and even credit cards aren't very widespread (expect only big department stores or chain stores to take credit cards). Japan is very much a cash-based society. Banks will usually issue you a "cash card", that looks similar to a debit/credit card, but it can only be used to withdraw from an ATM, not to pay with at stores.

By default many of your CO will try to set you up with a regional/local branch; maybe out of habit or to support a local organization. It is your choice however to choose where you would like to bank with. By far many JETs have found the Japan Post Bank to be the most convenient. They offer online banking (from which you can send money abroad easily and at a reasonable price), locations across Japan with ATMs in most shopping places; so if you expect to travel you can rest assured that you can find a place to withdraw your money and not be charged extra. When you arrive and set out to sign up for bank accounts, talk with your contracting organization about which would be best for you.



To that end, you'll find Japan's banking system is both convenient and inconvenient at the same time. Here we've put together some guides and pointers to make banking less of a headache.

BANKS IN EHIME

First and foremost about Japanese banks: they are regional! That means the bank has branches and dedicated ATMs ONLY in that prefecture/region. So when you travel around Japan, make sure you've pulled out enough money to last the duration of your trip. However, nowadays a lot of convenience store ATMs support Ehime banks.

Japan Post Bank

<http://www.jp-bank.japanpost.jp/> (Japanese)

Japan Post offers savings accounts, otherwise known as postal accounts. These accounts are optional (you'll have to open one by yourself) but are fairly easy to set up. The benefit is postal accounts are NOT region specific. You can also get some other benefits. You can use the nationwide cashpoint/ATM network free of charge. These ATMs all have an English language option for ease of use. You can also withdraw and deposit at any post office nationwide. You may also set up automatic bill payments from these accounts. If you are going to leave the country or prefecture in the future you can keep your post office account. They also offer online banking so you can manage your account from your home country. Very useful and a good way of putting money aside for savings.

Iyo Bank (伊予銀行)

<http://www.iyobank.co.jp/> (Japanese)

Look for the green logo with the yellow sun and pink flower.

Ehime Bank (愛媛銀行)

<http://www.himegin.co.jp/> (Japanese)

Look for the orange and white logo.

There are other options as well, such as [Sumitomo Mitsui](#), and if you want to bank with these, you may need to ask your supervisor about it.

JAPANESE ATMS

ATMs don't often come with any English support (this is also true for convenience store ATMs — don't be fooled by the “English” button, there isn't always English support) so here's a handy translation of the ATM menu.

Japanese Cashpoint / ATM Translation			
お預け入れ	Deposit	確認	Confirm
お引き出し	Withdrawal	訂正	Correct
残高照会	Balance enquiry	手続き取消	Cancel
通帳記入	Passbook update	万	10,000 Yen notes
お振り替え	Direct cash transfer	千	1,000 Yen notes
お振り込み	Transfer from your account	円	Yen

If you need help on any of the other Japanese needed for banking and ATMs, reference [this handy guide](#). There is also [this guide](#) made by Kumamoto JETs.

A word of warning: Japanese ATMs are not open 24-hours! ATMs are typically open from 7:00am to 8:00pm. Some ATMs may close earlier on weekends and holidays. These times are also true for the convenience store ATMs. You will incur a small fee if you withdraw money on weekends/holidays and after 6:00pm on weekdays. There is also an extra fee for withdrawing from convenience store ATMs.

Furikomi is the easiest way to transfer money between bank accounts. If you're struggling, one recommended guide is from the [Surviving In Japan website](#).

SENDING MONEY HOME

You may work in Japan, but there are still many reasons why you need money at home — paying off bills or loans or starting a nest egg for that day when you will (sadly) leave Ehime. Here are some of your options for sending money home:

WIRE TRANSFER

If you plan to send money only occasionally, then you can do a direct international wire transfer from the Post Office. This can only be done at the main central post office (as opposed to the contract offices) or online. There is a 2000 yen charge regardless of the amount, plus whatever fees your receiving bank charges. The transfer takes a few days. You can have the money wired directly from your postal bank account, or pay in cash.

GOREMIT

If you plan to send money on a regular basis (like monthly) then the better option is to use the [GoRemit](#) (formerly GoLloyds) service. There is a 2000 yen charge regardless of the amount, plus whatever your receiving bank charges. You'll first have to set up an account which will take a few days. After your account is set up, you can wire the money using your bank's ATM.

WISE

Another popular option online is [Wise](#) (formerly TransferWise). First register and upload pictures of documents to verify your identity, and then request a transfer and send money to their Japanese account. They will then send you money from their account in your destination country, meaning that

there are no international wire fees. It takes about 3 days to get into your account and you can send to others as well. They charge 1% of all transactions and use that day's exchange rate (which they tell you upfront). Please see the website for more information.

TAXES

Taxes in Japan are paid on income, property and consumption on the national, prefectural and municipal levels. Below is a summary of some of the most relevant types of taxes paid by individuals:

- **Income Tax**

Paid annually by individuals on the national, prefectural and municipal levels. Also known as "resident tax" on the prefectural and municipal level. The amount is calculated based on the net income of the individual person.

- **Enterprise Tax**

Prefectural tax paid annually by self-employed individuals engaged in business activities. The amount is calculated based on the person's net income and the type of business.

- **Property Tax**

Municipal tax paid annually by individuals who own land, housing and other types of depreciable assets.

- **Consumption Tax**

Paid by consumers when they purchase goods and services. The rate is generally 10 percent. For food and drinks (except alcohol and dining out) and newspaper subscriptions the rate is 8 percent.

- **Vehicle-related Taxes**

A prefectural automobile tax is paid annually by individuals who own a car, truck or bus. In the case of passenger cars, the amount is calculated based on the engine displacement. A municipal light vehicle tax is paid annually by individuals who own motorbikes or other motorized light vehicles. A national motor vehicle tonnage tax is paid by vehicle owners at the time of the mandatory inspections (shaken). A prefectural automobile acquisition tax is paid by persons when they acquire a car.

- **Liquor, Tobacco and Gasoline Taxes**

The national liquor tax is paid by consumers when they purchase alcoholic beverages. National, prefectural and municipal tobacco taxes are paid by consumers when they purchase tobacco products. A national gasoline tax is paid by consumers when they purchase gasoline. The liquor, tobacco and gasoline taxes are included in the prices shown by shops.

HOW TO PAY TAXES?

Income tax in Japan is based on a self-assessment system (a person determines the tax amount himself or herself by filing a tax return) in combination with a withholding tax system (taxes are subtracted from salaries and wages and submitted by the employer).

Thanks to the withholding tax system, most employees in Japan do not need to file a tax return. In fact, employees only need to file a tax return if at least one of the following conditions is true:

- if they leave Japan before the end of the tax year
- if their employer does not withhold taxes (e.g. employer outside Japan)

- if they have more than one employer
- if their annual income is more than 20,000,000 yen
- if they have side income of more than 200,000 yen

Employees, who do not need to file a tax return, will have their income taxes withheld from their salaries by their employer, and an eventual adjustment is made with the year's final salary. People, who are required to file a tax return, such as self-employed persons, must do so at the local tax office (*zeimusho*), by mail or online (e-Tax) between February 16 and March 15 of the following year. The tax return for 2021 had to be filed between February 16 and March 15, 2022.

WHEN TO PAY TAXES?

If not withheld by the employer, national income taxes are due in full by March 15 of the following year (mid April if you pay by automatic bank transfer), with two prepayments paid in July and November of the running tax year. Prepayments are calculated based on the previous year's income, i.e. you do not pay them during your first year in Japan.

For example, if you have to pay national income taxes for 2021, they have to be fully paid by March 15, 2022, with the prepayments paid in July and November 2021.

If prefectural and municipal income taxes are not withheld by the employer, they are to be paid in quarterly installments during the following year. For example, the 2021 taxes are paid in four installments in June, August and October 2022 and January 2023.

TAX RATES

The tax rate is determined based on the taxable income. Like in other countries, taxable income is the total earnings minus a basic exemption, exemptions for dependents and various types of deductions, such as deductions for insurance premiums, medical expenses and business expenses of the self-employed.

National Income Tax Rates	
Taxable Income	Tax Rate
less than 1.95 million yen	5% of taxable income
1.95 to 3.3 million yen	10% of taxable income minus 97,500 yen
3.3 to 6.95 million yen	20% of taxable income minus 427,500 yen
6.95 to 9 million yen	23% of taxable income minus 636,000 yen
9 to 18 million yen	33% of taxable income minus 1,536,000 yen
18 to 40 million yen	40% of taxable income minus 2,796,000 yen
more than 40 million yen	45% of taxable income minus 4,796,000 yen

Prefectural Income Tax Rates	
Taxable Income	Tax Rate
all	4% of taxable income

Municipal Income Tax Rates	
Taxable Income	Tax Rate
all	6% of taxable income

*List of tax rates in Japan
(courtesy of Japan Guide)*

U.S. TAXES

For U.S. JETs, the Kumamoto AJET puts together [a very comprehensive guide](#) every year to help you get through tax season. Note that the guide you'll need varies depending on whether you're a first-year JET or a second- to fifth-year JET. Here's a brief summary of the timeline for your first year:

April 15, 2022: Regular Tax Deadline

JETs get an automatic 2-month extension.

April 18, 2022: Payments Due

All payments are due by this date, even though JETs get an automatic extension.

June 15, 2022: Extension Application Due

Submit Form 2550 before this date to get an extension until October 17, 2022.

October 17, 2022: TAXES DUE

Submit Form 1040 as well as any additional documents.

Although it is possible to file online, note that most do not offer international filing for free. Most likely, you will need to mail physical forms to a designated location, so please give yourself lots of time in advance to do so!

Since Ehime AJET are not professional tax preparers, we cannot give you specific advice on how to do your taxes. Please use the [Kumamoto AJET guide](#) and do your own research so as to not get a nasty surprise later.

HEALTHCARE

In Japan, people go to a hospital when they want to see a doctor. On days when you are sick, your school may expect you to go to the hospital to be seen by a doctor and (more often than not) get a **medical certificate** (*shindan-sho* 診断書). Note that this certificate can often cost around **5,000 yen** to obtain! Talk with your supervisor as to what protocols they expect you to follow when you are sick and what steps are needed in order to take **sick leave** (*byoukyuu* 病休).

Misunderstandings over sick leave are often a source of problem between JETs and COs. All JETs are entitled to use sick leave, but read your contract for specific rules (good old ESID!) Ask your supervisor what you need to do if you are sick and if you need to provide a medical certificate. Call your supervisor or workplace if you are sick! If you have any questions or problems related to sick leave, contact a PA.

FINDING MEDICAL CARE

If you are not sure how to seek medical care near you, the [Ehime Medical Information Network \(えひめ医療情報ネット\)](#) is a good place to start. Scroll down to the English section of the webpage, and you can search by area, time, language, and specialty group. Pharmacy and midwifery searches available as well.

You can also try searching on Google Maps or similar app for a specific type of medical care using the following search terms:

Japanese	Romaji	English
内科	<i>naika</i>	internal medicine (general practitioner)
外科	<i>geka</i>	surgical (breaks/sprains etc)
胃腸科	<i>ichouka</i>	stomach/intestinal medicine
眼科	<i>ganka</i>	optometrist
歯科	<i>shika</i>	dentist

If you need help going to get medical care, MIC offers an [otasukeman service](#) for free, so if you have a health issue you would rather not speak to your supervisor or BOE about, they can accompany you to appointments and offer their translation services. This may be especially useful for any sexual health needs. The *otasukeman* service isn't just limited to doctors' visits. You can use it for bank visits, dentists and any occasion when you may need translation services and feel unable to ask anyone else. The following is a testimony from a JET who used this service previously:

I needed to get my IUD birth control checked, but was scared to go to a Japanese doctor due to my lack of language skills. I also didn't feel comfortable having my supervisor going with me and translating a very personal conversation. I found out about the Otasukeman service offered by MIC and thought it was worth a try. So I emailed them (mail@mic.ehime.jp) and expressed that I needed the service and explained what was going on. They suggested the Mariko Ladies' Clinic and matched me with a volunteer who was available on the day I needed who was fluent in English. We communicated through emails and phone calls prior to her meeting me at the clinic, she was a tremendous help. She was very friendly, understanding and I didn't feel at all uncomfortable. It ended up that the doctor spoke quite a bit of English, but it was nice having her there for the first visit. She also gave the great advice of getting there early on a Saturday morning (at latest 8am, when they open at 9), because the wait gets very long (around 4 hours). Overall it was a great experience and I highly recommend it rather than waiting and having a major problem in a new country.

The [Japan Healthcare Info](#) also provides services for non-Japanese patients navigating healthcare in Japan. However, a consultation is 1,500 yen.

After your first visit to a clinic, you should receive a **patient registration card (shinsatsuken 診察券)**. Bring this with you to your following visits. Clinics often only take **cash**, so have money on you. Again, ask for a medical certificate at the doctor's if you want to take a sick day.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All JET participants are covered with [four types of insurance](#), including two types of medical health insurance: National Health Insurance and JET Program Accident Insurance. Here are some useful pointers we've collected about staying healthy here in Ehime.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

All JETs are enrolled in the **National Health Insurance, or Seifu Kansho Kenko Hoken (政府管掌健康保険)**. It is important to carry your National Health Insurance Card with you at all times. 70% of medical expenses are covered for illness and injuries. Medical care benefits include medical examination, provision of medicines or medical care supplies, emergency treatment, surgery and other medical treatment, in-home medical care, hospitalization and nursing. Not covered — preventive medicine, cosmetic surgery, dental check ups, eye exams, eyewear, pregnancy exams.

JET ACCIDENT INSURANCE

In the case that a JET participant is injured or becomes ill during the period of coverage, the **JET Accident Insurance Policy** allows JET participants to claim back medical costs incurred (minus a 5,000 yen deductible and within the limits of the policy). The JET Accident Insurance also provides coverage for death caused by accident or illness, disability, and treatment for injuries and illnesses that occur during travel abroad or temporary visits to the JET participant's home country. Make sure to **keep your receipts** if you want to take advantage of this insurance!

EMERGENCY CARE

If you need to find an emergency care facility near you, check out the [official Ehime website](#) to see the latest news about emergency care providers. For Matsuyama folks, you can also check out the [official Matsuyama City](#) website. Both are in Japanese only, so if you need language support, it is recommended that you use the previously mentioned [Ehime Medical Information Network \(えひめ医療情報ネット\)](#).

Another great resource for finding out emergency hospitals in Matsuyama is the [WGO? Matsuyama webmagazine](#). Every month, they compile information about emergency care providers in their "EMERGENCY HOSPITAL" section of the magazine. Please check this out if you need information about emergency care in English.

COVID-19

***Note: The information in this section is constantly changing.**

As a more rural area, the COVID situation in Ehime is much less severe than in large cities such as Tokyo or Osaka. Even during peak travel season, such as Golden Week or Obon, numbers have remained relatively low. That being said, spikes in cases do happen, and it is important to prepare yourself for when that happens.

The basic infection prevention rule is to “**avoid the three C’s (mittsu no mitsu 3つの密)**”:

- ★ Closed spaces with poor ventilation (*mippei* 密閉)
- ★ Crowded places with many people (*misshuu* 密集)
- ★ Close-contact settings, such as close-range conversations (*missetsu* 密接)

As well as maintaining social distancing, the wearing of masks, and good hand hygiene.

One useful website where you can get general information is the [COVID-19 Information and Resources website](#) created by the Cabinet Secretariat. There is also the [Preventing COVID-19](#) webpage created by the MHLW.

MASKING UP

Japan has always had a culture of wearing masks when you’re sick. Even without enforced measures, people will generally wear masks out of respect for other people’s health and safety. This is especially true in the face of COVID — some people will even wear masks when driving alone in their own car! It’s important to respect this and to also wear a face mask while you’re here in Japan, regardless of what measures were or weren’t in place in your home country.

Masks here are commonly in **white**, although you’ll definitely see people wearing blue, gray, pink, and all sorts of other colors to match their outfit! You can purchase masks — both the simple, white ones and the colorful, fashionable ones — at a local drug or department store.

The latest information about [guidelines for use of masks](#) is available online from the MHLW.

GETTING TESTED

If you suspect you may have COVID-19 for whatever reason, the first thing you should do is to **contact your supervisor**. They may have specific steps they want you to take, and will know what the policy for taking time off to get tested will be.

If you are **asymptomatic** and have not been designated as a “close contact” person, you can get free testing at various locations in [Toyo](#), [Chuyo](#), and [Nanyo](#). If you need support finding a location or getting more information about them, you can contact the Ehime Prefecture Free Inspection Support Project Call Center at 080-0080-7893. They take calls on weekdays 9am-6pm.

If you **have any symptoms** such as fever, please consult your family doctor or nearby medical institution and follow their instructions. In addition, when you consult, please declare that you are a close contact person. If you do not have a family doctor or are unsure of where to go, please call the Consultation Center (089-909-3483). The hotline gets very busy around 6-11am and 3-7pm.

VACCINATION

As of now, although vaccination status varies between people, the **fourth vaccine has been steadily rolled out in Ehime**. Some JETs have even begun getting notified that they are eligible to get their fourth vaccine shot. If you have **already been vaccinated in your home country**, make sure that your vaccine is [recognized in Japan](#). Otherwise, in order to continue to get booster shots, you will need to start from the “first dose” again. Also, you may need to apply to your municipal office to receive your paperwork for the booster shot. Please contact your local municipality for more information.

For more information about vaccines, check out the MHLW website on [COVID-19 vaccines](#).

DENTAL HEALTH


If you need a recommendation for a dental health clinic, many JETs have recommended Sato Dental Clinic in Matsuyama. They speak English well, and you can contact them to schedule an appointment either by phone (089-945-6480) or via [LINE](#) if you prefer.

For a rough idea of the dentistry pricing in Japan, a teeth cleaning with the National Health Insurance costed 3,500 yen for a JET in 2022.

MENTAL HEALTH

PAs and RAs are not trained to provide mental health counseling. However, PAs are able to assist you in finding help with the resources listed here.

CLAIR has a [mental health counseling system](#) for JETs. To login, use the username “jet” and see an email from CLAIR entitled “CLAIR News” for the password. Through this service, you will be able to email or Skype with licensed mental health professionals. This service is not meant to be a long-term solution, and the professionals you speak with might recommend therapy and other treatment. You are able to use up to **7 Skype sessions** between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. Email counseling has no limits.



PAs and RAs are not trained to provide mental health counseling. However, PAs are able to assist you in finding help with the resources listed in this section.

AJET Peer Support Group (PSG) is a [confidential listening and referral service](#) that operates from 8pm to 7am, 7 days a week. You can reach them at 050-5534-5566 or on Skype.

Tokyo English Life Line (TELL) is a free and confidential counseling available for everyone (you don't have to be a part of JET). They are available from 9am to 11pm every day. You can contact them at 03-5774-0992.

In most cases, mental health counseling is **not covered** by your national health insurance in Japan. However, if you are considering counseling, CLAIR offers a [one-time subsidy](#) for counseling of up to 30,000 yen that must be applied for through your CO. It can be claimed for online sessions with mental healthcare professionals from other countries as well. The coverage period is from the 1st of April to March 31st of the following year. The reimbursement application form must arrive at CLAIR by April 7th, after coverage for that year ends on March 31st.

However, if you need to see a psychiatrist, it is likely that insurance will cover your costs, and the JET Accident Insurance can be used as well. Make sure to check before you proceed with your treatment.

SEXUAL/REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

CONTRACEPTIVES

Condoms are the most popular form of birth control. You can buy condoms at any convenience store or pharmacy, and also at online retailers such as Amazon. At the store, they will be beside other intimate items like lubricant. The most popular brands are Okamoto and Sagami.

Birth control pills are not covered by the National Health Insurance but are affordable. The pill brands may differ from brands in your country. The most common forms of BC are pills and IUDS- other forms like patches, arm implants and shots are very rare. The cost of an IUDS depends on the clinic, so

call ahead for estimates! It won't be covered by your National Health insurance and runs at around **3,000 yen per month**. It is usually more difficult to get hold of than back home, so it may be worth looking into having it mailed from home if you have a prescription and fill in the relevant forms or look at alternative methods of contraception.

The **morning-after pill** is available, but it's a good idea to call the specific clinic to make sure they have it before you go. Some Japanese doctors perceive it to be dangerous, so will only give it out in emergencies. The morning-after pill must be taken within 72 hours of having intercourse.

PREGNANCY AND ABORTION

“Clear Blue” pregnancy tests are available in most pharmacies and drug stores, it usually costs around 500 yen. If you decide to have a baby in Japan, you need to register the pregnancy at your municipal office within the first month.

In Japan, the **abortion pill** is illegal therefore unavailable at clinics. Only **surgical abortions** are performed, which are very safe. They are very expensive, and the cost will depend on how far along you are in your pregnancy. Costs range from **100,000-300,000 yen**. It is not covered by insurance and cannot be done after the second trimester. If you are less than 10 weeks pregnant, through the organization Women on the Web, you can receive an abortion pill in the mail anonymously for around 100 USD. More information can be found on their website.

STD/STI TESTING

If you need testing for HIV/AIDs, there is a 24/7, multilingual **AIDS hotline** that you can call at 0120-46-1995, as well as the **Japan HIV Center hotline** at 03-5259-0256.

There are **free anonymous HIV testing** available at Public Health Centers, like the one in [Matsuyama](#)! (also with Syphilis/Hepatitis A & B tests) The test is simple, but you must return one week later to the health center in person to ask for the result. They will not tell you over the phone. You can take the test three months after the time you think you might have been infected.

For other **STD/STI testing**, you can often go to a gynecologist, but it not covered by the National Health Insurance. Usually you have to have symptoms in order to get a specific exam (such as itching to get a chlamydia test) but if you ask for a test, you often can get one.

There are also STD testing at home kits for sale on Amazon (different packages available, ranging from 3000 to 15000 yen).

GYNECOLOGISTS

If you want or need to be seen by a doctor, please visit your local hospital or the women's health center attached to the main hospital in Matsuyama. If you have a rural placement and privacy is essential, you may wish to visit another city for your examination. Privacy levels in medical care are not the same as you may be used to at home, so if you need to talk about a sensitive matter, this may be your best option. It is important to note that hospital doctors — even gynecologists — in Japan do not generally handle basic contraceptive health. If you would like to talk to a doctor about contraceptive options or begin a prescription, you will need to go to a private women's health clinic. Most Ehime JETs use the for regular check-ups and prescriptions - they even have friendly, English-speaking staff!

Some women in Japan tend not to go for check-ups (such as for the pill and gynecological tests), preferring to wait until they are at home. However, for infections or other immediate concerns, please visit your local hospital or the women's health center attached to the main hospital in Matsuyama.

A good one in Matsuyama is [Mariko's Ladies Clinic](#) (the gyno speaks a fair amount of English). You can get an annual pap smear to be subsidized with an application from your BoE if you're over the age of 30.

OTHER SEXUAL/REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH-RELATED TOPICS

Cervical Cancer Screening - Pap smears (*shikyuu saibou-shin* or *sumea testo*) may be done as a part of municipal health checks, for women over thirty. Women over 20 can apply for a subsidized pap smear once a year at a cancer clinic or designated hospital.

Breast Cancer Screening - Women over 30 can receive free breast examinations. It's important to do a [Breast Self Exam \(BSE\)](#) at about the same time in your cycle each month. If you find a lump (*shikori*), see a doctor immediately.

Menstrual Leave - Your contract entitles you to take menstrual leave. It is listed under "Special Leave". This is unpaid. Ask your supervisor if you need to use it, however you will find it is rarely used by your co-workers.

Pads and tampons are widely available at pharmacies and department stores. There is more variety of pads than tampons. Japanese tampons are not very good/weak (okay for light days). Menstrual cups like the Diva Cup are available online.

For infections or other immediate concerns, visit your local hospital or the women's health center attached to the main hospital in Matsuyama. If you have a rural placement and privacy is essential, you may wish to visit another city for your examination.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation options available to you will differ vastly depending on your placement. If you live rural, you will likely be relying on your car for travel. If you live in Matsuyama, there are many options such as city tram, buses, and even JR trains. Most of Matsuyama is also very accessible by bike.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

There are several forms of public transportation in cities around Ehime.

TRAM/TRAIN

If you live in Matsuyama, you will likely be taking the tram or train sometime during your stay. The **IC Card** is usable on Iyotetsu buses, trains, trams and taxis.

The JR line, which serves most of Ehime, only uses paper tickets.

BUSES

In most cities in Ehime, buses are more common than trains or trams.

AUTOMOBILES/CARS

If you are looking to own a car, you have several options, some of which may be limited depending on the current supply. For example, many JETs will either inherit or buy their car from the predecessor,



IC Card used for transportation serviced by Iyotetsu

especially if they live in a more rural area with no other form of transportation available. If your predecessor does not have one for you, but your work commute will require one, your CO will likely try to set you up with one.

If you want to look at cars yourself, you can search for car retailers near you, or check out online stores such as [Car Sensor](#).

CAR TYPES

Kei cars are much more economical than a standard sized car. Fuel economy is much better, and tax and shaken (car inspection fees) are much less. Full size cars (white plates) generally have more space and more power, which may be useful for heavy mountain driving or long trips. If you are interested in a white plate car, try to find one with two or more years left on its *shaken*. An international driver's license is good for one year and usually relatively easy to acquire in your home country, so you might consider bringing one and deciding after a year if you'd like to apply for a Japanese license to keep driving.

	Standard Car	Commercial-Use Car	Kei Car
License Plates			

Example license plate types with corresponding colors

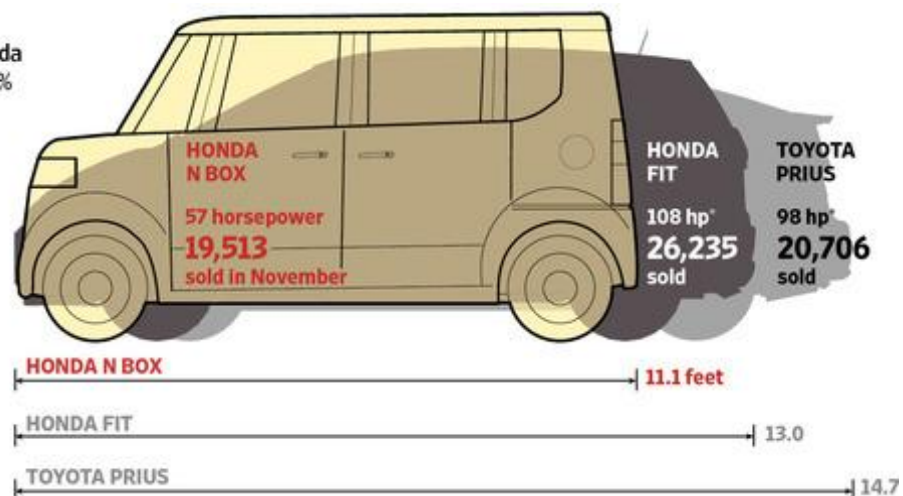
Tiny Cars

Minicars, like the Honda N Box, account for 34% of the Japanese passenger car market.

Hybrid

Sources: the companies; Japan Automobile Dealers Association; Japan Light Vehicle and Motorcycle Association

The Wall Street Journal



OWNING A CAR IN JAPAN

There is a lot when it comes to owning a car in Japan. Please take a look at the [Driving page](#) of the Ehime AJET website to learn more. Including the initial costs of the vehicle, you may also be subject to the following:

★ Parking (*shako*)

Before you can buy a car, you must provide evidence that you have a parking space near your home. If your residence does not have a garage, you must rent a parking space in your neighborhood.

★ **Automobile Inspection (*shaken*)**

Automobiles and motorcycles over 251 cc must be inspected at regular intervals. You must always carry your inspection certificate when driving. Contact the Ehime Office of the Shikoku District Land Transport Bureau (*Shikoku Rikuunkyo Ehime Rikuun Shikyoku*). For questions about *kei* cars contact the Ehime Management Office of the Compact Car Inspection Association (*Keijidousha Kensa Kyokai Ehime Jimusho*).

★ **Insurance (*hoken*)**

- **Compulsory Insurance (*kyosei hoken*)** – You must enroll in the compulsory automobile insurance plan when purchasing a vehicle or when having your vehicle inspected. Enroll where you purchase your vehicle or at a vehicle maintenance shop
- **Optional Insurance (*nin-i hoken*)** – Compulsory insurance has only limited coverage. Optional insurance plans will cover accidents not included in the compulsory insurance plans. Furthermore, since compulsory insurance may not completely cover increasingly expensive damage awards, some level of optional insurance is recommended. Inquire about optional insurance policies when purchasing a compulsory insurance policy.

★ **Vehicle Registration (*sharyo toroku*)**

Cars and motorbikes must be registered in the name of the owner and any change in ownership must be reported. Registration usually will be taken care of by the dealer when you buy a vehicle.

MAINTENANCE

Many gas stations in Japan are full service, meaning you do not need to leave your car and they will pump your gas, clean your windows, collect any trash, and check your fluids and tires for you. You just need to pull up and tell them either “*Mantan onegaishimasu*” (fill up my tank please) or say, “# + *sen en onegaishimasu*” (# thousand yen please).

There are self service stations, which usually offer gas a little cheaper. They will have a sign by the road that says セルフ “*serufu*” (i.e. Self Service). Here you will pump the gas by yourself. Notice that fuel in Japan is color coordinated.

★ **Gas レギュラー (*regyuraa*)**

This will most in likely be what you will use, it's just regular gas.

★ **High Octane Gas ハイオク (*haioku*)**

This is used mostly for luxury/sports cars.

★ **Diesel 軽油 (*keiyu*)**

⚠ WARNING ⚠ Many JETs who buy cars buy a type called Kei cars (light cars) It uses the same character as in diesel. That does not mean that you use keiyu (diesel) to fuel up. If your vehicle requires diesel you will be informed. Several JETs have made this mistake and ruined their engines.

★ **Kerosene 灯油 (*touyu*)**

Usually those living in the countryside will make use of this more. As many buildings in Japan do not have great insulation you may need to use kerosene heaters to warm up your house. Kerosene will be labeled with blue.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

0% TOLERANCE!

Even if you have only one drink, it is ILLEGAL to get behind the wheel of any motorised vehicle. This also includes scooters as well as bicycles.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!

Daiko is a special taxi service that brings you, your friends, and your car back to your residence at the cost of just over a taxi fare.

Ask the local JETs for the Daiko number in your area.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

Obtaining your own set of wheels in Japan is not really a difficult task. Obtaining a Japanese license however, is sometimes a bit of a pain. If you obtain an **international driver's license** before coming to Japan, it will be valid for one year from the date of issue. However, you must not use it more than one year after you entered Japan. The maximum validity is one year from the date of landing. Contact your embassy for further details on obtaining an International Driver's License.

If you need help changing your foreign driver's license or international driver's license into a Japanese one, take a look at [this helpful guide](#) that one of our JETs put together.

JAPAN AUTOMOBILE FEDERATION (JAF)

The [Japan Automobile Federation \(JAF\)](#) is dedicated to providing auto users in Japan with services that enhance their safety and their sense of security while promoting the importance of road safety. If you have roadside assistance membership in your country (such as, AAA) JAF may work in partnership, please check your membership.

BICYCLES/MOTORCYCLES

Many JETs find they will be cycling often, perhaps much more so than they expect, so be prepared for an adjustment period. Additionally, it will be very hot when you arrive. Ask if your school has somewhere to change so you can be in fresh clothes once you arrive.

If you are placed in a city, it's likely that a cheap "mamachari" city bike will suffice. However, if you are placed in a more rural spot or if you enjoy cycling in your free time, it may be worth considering a mountain or sports bike, which would be much lighter and more capable of handling steep inclines. If it's possible, buy your bike with a sempai or supervisor, as they can help negotiate the necessary paperwork. However, although you may need a bike to access work, don't feel rushed into buying one.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Mountain or city bike?
- Gears?
- Basket? (good for shopping)
- Mud guards? Bike fenders?

If you are living in Matsuyama or even just visiting for the day, [EPIC](#) and [MIC](#) both offer a free short-term and mid-term (around 2 months) bicycle rental service. All you need to do is fill in a short form (in English) and bring along your ID.

BICYCLE REGISTRATION

If you are purchasing a new bike, you may need to **register your bike with the police department**. This is to ensure that if you were to ever lose or have your bike stolen from you, they'd be able to identify it more quickly. Talk



with your supervisor about this, if they haven't already informed you about it.

Another registration you may need to consider is **registering your bike with your building management**. This is especially the case if you live in a residential area and your building has its own bike parking space.

NATURAL DISASTERS

While Japan is overall a safe and peaceful country, it does experience a variety of natural disasters, which include earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, landslides, and volcanic eruptions. In this section, we will provide information and resources in the event of an emergency.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Japan is prone to natural disasters, including typhoons, earthquakes and tsunamis, so it is recommended that everyone prepare an emergency kit (you can purchase already prepared ones on Amazon). You may want to consider getting a hand crank charger or solar charger to add to your emergency kit to ensure your phone can be used in the event of an emergency.

CLAIR also requests each JET Programme participant to register for the Safety Confirmation System (Emergency Call) and Contact Information Survey. These are two separate systems. Please register to both using the links below.

Safety Confirmation System:

https://asp2.emc-call.jp/clair/index_en.html

https://asp2.emc-call2nd.jp/clair/index_en.html

Your login ID and password are both the final nine numbers of your JET Number, omitting the first two digits (20).

Contact Information Survey: <https://goo.gl/u1gVT2>

Login ID: JET Number (11 digits beginning with 20)

Password: Date of birth (YYYYMMDD)

*For JET Programme participants who were originally scheduled to arrive in Japan in 2021 please use your pre-arrival JET number that starts with 2021.

In the event of a disaster CLAIR will confirm the safety of JET Programme participants using the Safety Confirmation System (Emergency Call). It only takes a few moments to confirm your safety via the email you receive. Please make sure you respond regarding your safety situation when a safety confirmation email arrives, as it otherwise takes time for Host Prefectures/Designated Cities to confirm the safety of each individual JET Programme participant in the affected area(s).

In any given year in Japan, there will be somewhere which has had an emergency warning issued. The country is also prone to large earthquakes. At the moment Japan is entering a period of increased chance for emergency warnings to be issued as a result of heavy rain and typhoons. Because of this, we are asking JET Programme participants and supervisors at each CO to confirm information registered with the Safety Confirmation System and to check how to respond to a safety confirmation request should an email arrive.

Once again, if you receive a safety confirmation request email, please respond to it right away. Safety Confirmation requests are sent out based on Host Prefecture/Designated City, so participants may receive safety confirmation requests even when they are not physically near the site of a disaster. In this case, a response is still required from each individual to whom the request is sent.

CLAIR has also prepared an [Emergency Pocket Guide](#) for JETs for reference in the event of a natural disaster.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Your municipal usually announces **emergency drills** (避難訓練 *hinan kunren*) happening via the PA system or the newsletter. Talk with your supervisor or JTE about how to participate in these emergency drills. EPIC also holds emergency prep drills and has resources available in English (http://www.epic.or.jp/epic/documents/English_000.pdf).

EARTHQUAKES

地震 *jishin*

Japan is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire and earthquakes frequently happen; however, due to their frequency, Japan is perhaps one of the most technologically advanced in its earthquake prevention, preparation and response.

There are two ways of measuring earthquakes: magnitude and shindo. The first Kumamoto earthquake was a magnitude 6.4 and a shindo 7. A magnitude rates the amount of energy released in an earthquake, while a shindo (as designated by the JMA) measures the amount of shaking on the surface from one point. This earthquake ranked the highest on the shindo system (Shindo 7 which was given to the 1995 Hanshin Kobe Earthquake), but its magnitude was lower. This earthquake's epicenter was shallower, and the shallower an earthquake is means a stronger shindo. In addition, soil, building type, etc. have an influence on how bad the damage is. You can read more about the [JMA Shindo System here](#).

The 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and 2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes are examples of how destructive and deadly earthquakes are. It is important to prepare yourself in case of an earthquake.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

Make sure you have a phone warning system installed on your cell phone. All smart phones bought in Japan should have this warning system. You can check that it is enabled by going to settings > notifications > government alerts/emergency alerts. It sometimes does not warn before the earthquake, but it certainly did with this one! For those who do not have a Japanese cell phone, install the app Yurekuru ([iTunes](#), [Android](#))

Ask your supervisor or JTE about your **evacuation center** (避難所 *hinanjo*) for your residence and workplaces. Walk to the evacuation centers to see how long it will take you. Find the routes that work best for you.

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

- ★ Stay calm! If you're indoors, stay inside. If you're outside, stay outside.
- ★ If you're indoors, the best place to go would be under heavy and sturdy furniture, such as a table or desk. If there is not one available, you should stand against a wall near the center of the building, or stand in a doorway (though whether or not a doorway is a safe place has been subject to debate).
- ★ If you're outdoors, stay in the open away from power lines or anything that might fall. Stay away from buildings (stuff might fall off the building or the building could fall on you).
- ★ Don't use matches, candles, or any flame. Broken gas lines and fire don't mix.
- ★ If you're in a car, stop the car and stay inside the car until the earthquake stops.
- ★ Don't use elevators (they'll probably get stuck anyway).
- ★ DO NOT RUN OUTSIDE while the earthquake is happening.

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

Check your immediate surroundings for fire, gas leaks, broken glass and other hazards.

Be aware that **aftershocks (余震 *yoshin*)** are a possibility, especially after a strong earthquake. Some could be equally as strong as the initial earthquake, and they can even last for a week or more. Some people feel a bit nauseous from it. Open up doors and windows in the event of aftershocks to help out with an escape.

If damage is bad or in the event of an incoming tsunami, report to your designated **evacuation center (避難所 *hinanjo*)** or get to higher ground. Higher is better — if you can go up higher, go higher!

Contact loved ones, confirm to CLAIR, CO, and your PAs of your safety as soon as possible, but conserve your phone's battery. Do not use Facetime, Skype, or LINE video chats excessively.

Check the [Japan Meteorological Agency website](#) or [follow their Twitter](#) for the latest information about the earthquake as well as tsunami warnings. If you have access to a TV or radio, tune in to NHK for further reporting.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR THEM

TSUNAMI

津波 *tsunami*

If you live near the coast or in the low-lying regions near the coast and an earthquake has hit, check your TV (NHK news), listen to the public announcement system, or [check JMA's website](#).

[Here are some tips in relation to tsunamis.](#)

LANDSLIDES

土砂崩れ *doshakuzure*

During the rainy season and typhoons, the risk of a landslide increases. You can check out your area's website for hazard maps. If it is heavily raining and causing flooding and you live in front of a huge hill, it may be best to evacuate to your local emergency shelter. There is also a [real time landslide risk map](#).

TYPHOONS

台風 *taifuu*

Typhoons are easily forecasted compared to earthquakes and tsunamis. As a part of your daily routine, try to find out about the weather forecast for your area as well as Japan in general via website or TV news. You can also [check for information on the JMA website](#).

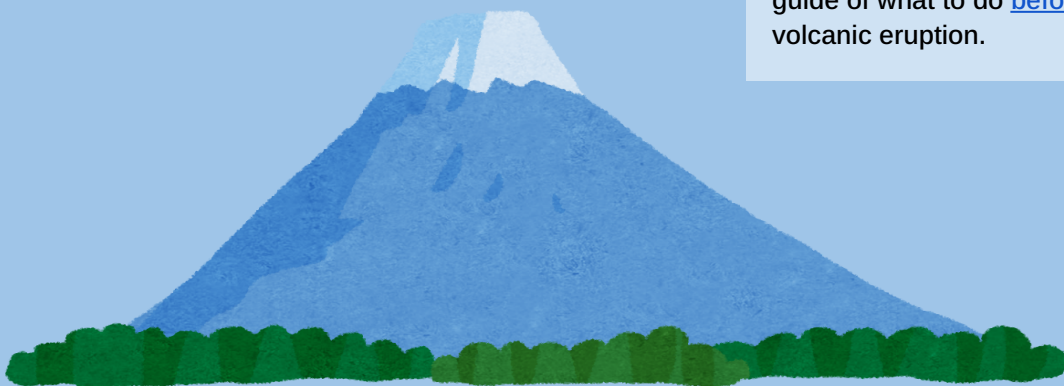
[Here are some tips in relation to typhoons.](#)

VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS

火山噴火 *kazan funka*

While Shikoku does not have any live volcanoes, our neighbors to the West in Kyushu have a number of active volcanoes (i.e. Mt. Aso, Mt. Unzen, Sakurajima). When making travel plans nearby or to these volcanoes, be aware of any issues or warnings. You can check out the JMA website for more information about [volcanoes](#) and [ash fall](#).

If a volcano does erupt and you are in an area that will be affected, here is a general resource guide of what to do [before](#) and [during](#) a volcanic eruption.



LOCAL COMMUNITY

EHIME AJET

[Ehime AJET](#) is a volunteer, non-profit organization that services the local JET community. Our aim is to enrich your experience in Japan by [keeping you informed of important and fun things happening](#) within the prefecture and the JET Programme at large. We are the prefectural branch of National AJET (the Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching) and make up one of the four prefectures in AJET Block 8 (along with Kochi, Tokushima and Kagawa). Through social, sporting, volunteering and cultural events we aim to create a strong JET network, providing opportunities for you to meet other JETs and get involved in your local communities. Ehime AJET also hosts [The Mikan Blog](#) and maintains a great website which contains lots of useful information about living and teaching in Ehime. Find it at [ehimeajet.com](#).

One way Ehime JETs stay in contact with each other is over the [Ehime AJET Facebook page](#). It's a place for JETs to ask questions, let people know about festivals and to give/receive JET Programme info (and much more!). Feel free to join as soon as you'd like!

We also provide a comprehensive map of many of the things around in your area! [Please take a look](#).

We look forward to seeing you at one of our events! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or want to get involved in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us at ehimeajet@gmail.com. We are also on Facebook, you can search [Ehime AJET](#).

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Compared with your home country, religion somehow manages to play both a larger and smaller role within Japan than you might expect. While **Buddhism** and **Shintoism** are the core religions of Japan, the Christian faith is quite hearty and always manages to survive and be present wherever you go in Japan. Even though it might take some looking. Those of other faiths may find it much more challenging to find a place of worship.

In general, be observant and respectful of your surroundings. Throughout Japan you can find numerous temples (Buddhist) and shrines (Shinto). Shikoku is also home to the Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage, with 26 of the temples found in Ehime.

In addition to shrines and temples, you can also find local churches and mosques. There are many churches spread throughout Ehime. You can find one in your area by doing a simple Google search for 教会 (きょうかい *kyoukai*). Most local churches do not have a website or service hours listed, so the best thing to do is call ahead (or have your supervisor help you). To get connected with other Christian JETs in Ehime and Japan, [JET Christian Fellowship \(JCF\)](#) is a great resource. There are two mosques (マスジド *masujido*) located in Ehime, one in Matsuyama and the other in Niihama. To get connected with other Muslim JETs in Ehime and Japan, [Muslims in JET](#) is likewise a great resource.

For further reading on religion in Japan, check out these websites:

- ★ [AJET--Religion in Japan](#)
- ★ [Britannica--Religion of Japan](#)
- ★ [Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education--Japanese Religions](#)

Here is a list of some of the Churches and Mosques in Ehime. While there are only two mosques, there are many churches available. In addition to those listed below, you can ask leaders at these congregations for information on any other churches closer to you.

Chuyo	
<u>Dogo Catholic Church</u>	7-25 Dogokitamachi, Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture 〒 790-0848 Phone:+81 89-924-7522
<u>Catholic Church, Sanbancho</u>	4 Chome-5-5 Sanbancho, Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture 〒 790-0003, Japan Phone:+81 89-921-1849
Praise Fellowship Matsuyama - Protestant Christian Woship Group	Matsuyama Fukuin Center 1-6-6 Heiwadori Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture 〒 790-0807 http://praisefellowship.seesaa.net/ 089-925-1008
Matsuyama Islamic Cultural Centre (MICC)	2 Chome-6-3 Heiwa-dori, Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture 〒 790-0807

Nanyo A	
Tsutako Nakamura (good local contact, hosts a monthly women's group and attends in Uwajima)	tsutakko@hotmail.com
Taga Jinja (Uwajima)	
Uwajima Alliance Church	〒 798-0050 Ehime Prefecture Uwajima Horihata cho 2-27

Nanyo B	
Daiichi Puraza Kyoukai	In Yawatahama seems to be the most alive church and the pastor and his wife know a little bit of English and their daughter is quite fluent.
Catholic Church	In Yawatahama, near the Yawataham City hospital.

Toyo B	
<u>Saint Maria Catholic Church 聖マリアカトリック教会 (Saijo)</u>	〒 793-0030 Ehime-ken, Saijō-shi, Ōmachi, 716-1
<u>Saijo Alliance Christian Church 西条アライアンスキリスト教会</u>	〒 793-0010, Ehime-ken, Saijo-shi, Iioka, 1505-9 http://www.saijyou-alliance.com
<u>United Church of Christ in Japan - Niihama Church 日本キリスト教団新居浜教会</u>	〒 792-0041, Ehime Prefecture, Niihama, Nakamuramatsugi, 1 Chome-13-50, www.uccj-e.org (has many branches all around Toyo B)
Niihama Mosque 新居浜マスジド	Ehime Prefecture, Niihama, Ikkuchō, 2 Chome-2-43, 2f

LGBTQIA2S+ LIFE IN EHIME

Compared to your home country, you may find that sexuality and LGBTQIA2S+ issues are brought up much less in Japan. Because of this, some people who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ may feel as though they do not have much of a support system in Japan. If you want to learn more about being queer in Japan, check out this article: [Life as a Queer JET](#).

Much of the LGBTQIA2S+ scene in Ehime is centered around Matsuyama and tends to be small bars as opposed to the dance clubs you might expect. Generally bars are not mixed, and often will say “members only” where being a member is simply being of that sexuality. Matsuyama, like much of the LGBTQIA2S+ scene in Japan, is male focused.

LGBTQIA2S+-Friendly Bars		
Bar Seek	089-945-5539 松山市二番町2-6-5 2-6-5 Nibanchō, Matsuyama-shi	Men only. Bizarrely enough, the bartender says that most customers there are 27 years old. Bar Seek offers a foreigner discount and the staff have a small amount of English. Karaoke is also available. The door says members only but being a member is simply a case of knowing the bar exists.
Happy Dragon	089-945-7360 松山市三番町1-16-4 1-16-4 Sanbanchō, Matsuyama-shi	Bear Bar, men only. No English. The master is an excellent source of LGBTQIA2S+ info in Ehime. Happy Dragon is a bear bar.
Flock Cafe	089-945-0225 松山市二番町2-6-5 2-6-5 Nibanchō, Matsuyama-shi	Flock Café caters to the younger crowd. It's mixed, although there are rarely any women there. The door says members only, but knowing about the place is the membership. You will probably be asked how you know about it, as the bartender might think you don't know it's a gay bar/cafe.

As of 2022, we have an **official LINE group chat for LGBTQIA2S+ JETs in Ehime!** Please get in touch with your RA about it.

HEALTHCARE

[Hokoishi Clinic](#) in Matsuyama provides hormone therapy in conjunction with the Okayama University Hospital's Gender Center.

AJET STONEWALL

AJET Stonewall a community of LGBTQIA2S+ and ally JETs. They have discussion forums and information on LGBTQIA2S+ communities in cities around the country.

Japan: <http://stonewalljapan.org/>

Ehime: <http://stonewalljapan.org/shikoku/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stonewalljapan/>

Ehime Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/shikokustonewall/>

For transgender folks, Stonewall Japan has some very useful information here.

<https://stonewalljapan.org/resources/transgender-life/>

RAINBOW PRIDE

An active and well-regarded LGBTQIA2S+ organization in Ehime. They have outreach programs to schools across Ehime and lots of useful links on their website. However, the website is in Japanese: <http://rainbowpride-ehime.org/Site/TOP.html>

They also have a LGBTQIA2S+ Center called Nijikara Space in Matsuyama: <http://rainbowpride-ehime.org/Site/nizikaraspace.html>

Kagoshima (Kyushu) also has a great website on being LGBTQIA2S+ in Japan: <http://kagoshimajet.com/living/social-inner-life/lgbtq/>

INTERNATIONAL CENTERS

In some cities, you will have a facility dedicated to promoting international exchange and supporting foreign residents living in Japan. These are called **international centers**, or 国際交流センター *kokusai kouryuu sentaa*. There are currently 9 in Ehime. If you have one nearby, try to get to know them! They often provide services like Japanese classes, language assistance, travel information, event newsletters, consultations, cultural seminars, and more!

LIST OF INTERNATIONAL CENTERS

Ehime Prefectural International Center (EPIC) 愛媛県国際交流センター <i>Ehime-ken kokusai kouryuu sentaa</i>	Matsuyama International Center (MIC) 松山市国際交流センター <i>Matsuyama-shi kokusai kouryuu sentaa</i>
Address: 1-1 Dogoichiman, Matsuyama Phone: 089-917-5678 (Japanese, English) Email: sodan@epic.or.jp (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean) Consultation Direct Line: 080-4783-5253 Languages available: Japanese, English, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Indonesia, etc.	Address: 6-4-20 Sanbancho, Matsuyama Phone: 089-943-2025 Email: mail@mic.ehime.jp
Niihama International Center (NIC) 新居浜市国際交流協会 <i>Niihama-shi kokusai kouryuu kyokai</i>	Imabari City International Exchange Association (ICIEA) 今治市国際交流協会 <i>Imabari-shi kokusai kouryuu kyokai</i>
Address: Niihama-shi Civic Cultural Center Annex 1F 8-65 Shigehoncho, Niihama Phone: 0897-65-1579	Imabari City Hall 1F, 3rd Annex 2-5-1 Minamidaimoncho, Imabari Phone: 0898-34-5763 Email: info@iciea.jp
Saijo International Exchange Association 西条市国際交流協会 <i>Saijo-shi kokusai kouryuu kyokai</i>	Shikokuchuo International Friendship Association (SIFA) 四国中央市国際交流協会 <i>Shikokuchuo-shi kokusai kouryuu kyokai</i>
Address: 131-2 Akeyashiki, Saijo Phone: 0897-66-9990	Address: Shikokuchuo City Hall, 3rd floor 4-6-55 Mishima Miyagawa, Shikokuchuo Phone: 0896-28-6014 Email: sifa@city.shikokuchuo.ehime.jp

Yawatahama City International Association 八幡浜市国際交流協会 Yawatahama-shi kokusai kouryuu kyokai	Uchiko Town International Association (UTIA) 内子町国際交流協会 Uchiko-cho kokusai kouryuu kyokai
Address: 1-1-1 Kitahama, Yawatahama Phone: 0894-22-5987 Email: shinsuke.kono@facebook.com Facebook: https://ja-jp.facebook.com/yawatahama.ia/	Address: 1515 Uchiko, Uchiko, Kita-gun Phone: 0893-44-2114 Email: kokusai@town.uchiko.ehime.jp

JAPANESE CLASSES

Many JETs take advantage of the free or (very) cheap Japanese class offered at their local international center. EPIC maintains a list of organizations offering Japanese lessons and tutoring across Ehime Prefecture [here](#).

If you would rather take private lessons, a popular option is to get a JASL tutor. EPIC's website should have more information about this, but the fee for a tutoring session is 500 yen/45 minutes, or 1000 yen/90 minutes. What a steal!

TRAVEL

Now that you're finally settled in, you have time to think about things you'd like to do! One popular option is to travel — within the prefecture, across Japan, and all around the world. Yes, it's possible to travel internationally right from here in Ehime!

WITHIN EHIME

Right here in Ehime, there are plenty of places you should go check out! There are plenty of places to visit within the prefecture! For general travel information, check out [Visit Ehime Japan](#) or [Experience Ehime Japan](#). You can also check out the [Ehime AJET website](#) or [Outdoor Japan](#).

PLACES TO GO

- Matsuyama Castle
- Dogo Onsen
- Shimanami Kaido
- Mt. Ishizuchi
- Ohenro

WHAT TO EAT

- Mikan (citrus in general)
- Taimeshi
- Imabari Yakitori
- Jakoten
- Japanese Sake



FUN ACTIVITIES

Go outside! You are among the chosen few with a unique opportunity to enjoy what rural Japan has to offer. You already live in a scenic part of Japan, and with a few tips it is easy to enjoy.

Hiking

Much of Shikoku is planted forest (sadly), but this is a unique opportunity: the loggers need to get the timber in and out so most of Japan's mountains have some sort of road access. It's not trail hiking but it is an easy way to get out and enjoy nature. Be sure to tell someone roughly where you are going or, better yet, invite a friend.

There are also hiking trails throughout the island for more seasoned hikers. Try the Lonely Planet hiking guide for more details or try asking about hiking around town. You can also try saying, "haikingu ni ii basho wa doko desu ka?" (Where is a good hiking place?) to coworkers and friends for recommendations. The mountains are pretty safe, although there are wild boar and monkeys in a few areas. Try not to startle them, as you are on their turf. Be careful during the typhoon season, as the planted cedar forests have made the mountains very prone to landslides. Ishizuchi, the highest peak on the island, is a good hike with cool climbing chains and is right here in Ehime. Public transit from Saijo Station is possible, but finding someone with a car is ideal.

Surfing

Shikoku has some of the better surfing in Japan, though the majority of surf spots are in Kochi. The Outdoor Japan website has maps of all the major breaks in Japan along with information about their levels. The whole site gives an overview of the possibilities in Japan. Surf beaches are a good place to camp as they tend to have public bathrooms and sometimes coin showers. The coastline from Ashizuri Cape to Nakamura (now Shimanto City) is wonderful.

Canyoning

Canyoning (or "canyoneering" in the U.S. and "kloofing" in South Africa) activity to play in a canyon that is upper the river.

During this activity, several people will act as a group with an instructor who is familiar with the topography and characteristics of the river. In the middle of the course, there are plenty of thrilling attractions such as the "natural waterslide" (slides down the rock surface) and the "waterfall dive" that jumps from the rock wall toward the water surface! Everyone from children to adults can enjoy it safely. We can choose a half-day or one-day activity.

Nowadays, many people who want to move into the wilderness join this activity for refreshing their mood! The next activity will be decided by canyoning!

★ Forest Canyon

Season: July-October

Price: 7,000 yen ~

URL: <http://nametoko.net/canyon/>

★ Good River

Season: The end of April~the end of November

Price: 7,000 yen ~

URL: <http://goodriver.jp/plan>



Matsuyama Castle



Shimanami Kaido



Shikoku Ohenro

Camping

Camping is popular throughout Japan, and as such, there are many campsites available. Many also offer free tent pitches and, sometimes, even cabins. Below is a small selection of campsites in Ehime, and further afield on Shikoku.

Ehime Forest Park Camping Ground

Address: Kamimitani, Iyo, Ehime Prefecture
799-3104

Phone: 089-983-3069

Hojo Kashima Camp-jo (北条鹿島キャンプ場)

Address: Kashima Park, Tsuji, Hojo,
Matsuyama-shi, Ehime Pref.

How to get there: 3 min. by boat from Iyo-hojo
Pier, which is a 5-min. walk from Iyo-hojo Sta. on
the Yosan Line.

Kumakogen Furusatoryokomura Camping
Ground

Address: 〒791-1212 Ehime Prefecture,
Kamiukena District, Kumakogen, 下畑野川乙 4 8

Phone: 0892-41-0711

Nagasoike Camping Ground

Address: 〒791-2205 愛媛県伊予郡砥部町総津
Phone: 089-969-2111

Mawariwa Camping Ground

Address: 〒791-3522 愛媛県喜多郡内子町中川国
有林地内

Phone: 0892-52-2384

Shikoku Camping Facilities

Kyuka-mura Sanuki Goshikidai Camp-jo (休暇
村讃岐五色台キャンプ場)

Address: Oyabu-cho, Sakaide-shi, Kagawa Pref.
Phone: (0877)47-0231

How to get there: 30 min. by free bus leaving at
15:30 from Takamatsu Sta., Kotoku Line &
Yosan Line to Kyukamura Bus Stop
Dutch Pancake Camping (ダッチパンケーキ
キャンピング)

Address: 1765-7, Nishimura-otsu,
Shodoshima-cho, Shodo-gun, Kagawa Pref.
Phone: (0879)82-4616

Directions: 30 min. by bus from Tonosho Port or
Ikeda Port of Shodo Island to Olive Koen Mae
Bus Stop (Pick-up service is available from
Tonosho; ¥1,200 & Ikeda Port; ¥700)

Cotton Field Kamiyama (コットンフィールド神
山)

Address: 272, Uetsuno, Jinryo, Kamiyama-cho,
Myozai-gun, Tokushima Pref.

Phone: (0886)76-0803

Directions: 1hr. by bus from Tokushima Sta.,
Tokushima Line & Kotoku Line to Kamiyama
Onsen Bus Stop

Ebisuhama Camp-mura (恵比須浜キャンプ村)

Address: Tai, Aza, Ebisuhama, Minami-cho,
Kaifu-gun, Tokushima Pref.

Tsumajiro campsite

Address: Tsumajiro, Tosa-Shimizu-shi, Kochi
Pref.

Nagasoike Camping Ground

Address: 〒791-2205 愛媛県伊予郡砥部町総津
Phone: 089-969-2111

Skiing and Snowboarding

Ehime is the southernmost prefecture in Japan with a number of ski slopes to choose from. While they won't satisfy true powder hounds, they are great for learning, fine-tuning your skills, and snow sport people who just need to get back on a slope. They are also a way of getting outside and having some fun in the cold, harsh winter.

There are two snowboard-only shops in Matsuyama/Tobe:

Home Grow Materials near Fukuon Elementary School and Fukuonji Station. They can organize multiple trips to various slopes throughout the season.

Voltage next to the Tobe Grand Fuji. Snowboard and skateboard-focused shop. Voltage will set you up with all the gear you need for your first time on the slopes (except for gloves) for free if you call them to set it up. Will organize multiple trips to various slopes throughout the season.

Additionally Murasaki Sports and Xebio Sports in Emiful Masaki sell a limited selection of gear for boarders.

For skiers, gear can be bought at Alpen and Himaraya in Matsuyama near Kinuyama Cinema Sunshine or Xebio Sports in Emiful Masaki

Ishizuchi

Highest field (steep and narrow). Ishizuchi ski slope has the most natural snowfall due to its elevation but the runs are quite short and the access is limited. It's the closest ski resort to Saijo, Niihama, and Shikokuchuo.

All-day lift ticket: 5000 yen

Half-day: 3900 yen

Night ski: 2000 yen

Kuma Ski Land

Convenient access via the Kumakogen Line (久万高原町線) of the JR Shikoku Rosen Bus (JR四国路線バス). Get off at the Rokubudo teiryujou bus stop (六部堂停留場). Once you're off the bus give a call to the staff (0892-21-0100) and they'll send a van down to pick you up. There are three runs (plus a beginners slope that can be used free without buying a lift pass) that are short but wide and vary slightly in the incline of the run. They have a small mogul run and a technical flag course as well. The snow park is small and limited. Kuma is the recommendation for those brand new to snow sports as its cheap, wide, and not too challenging which allows a beginner to progress and build confidence while practicing the basics.

Entry: 1000 yen, 4-hour lift pass: 3300 yen, 6-hour lift pass: 3800 yen, 8-hour lift pass: 4300 yen,

Lift (Per trip) 270 yen

Ski/board set rental: 3500 yen

Sol-Fa Oda

Three slopes: beginner is short, narrow, and next to the trick park, and the intermediate run can be very difficult for beginners. The intermediate run is longer with many jumps and/or moguls along the way on the side of the run. The advanced run is only open if there is enough fresh snowfall covering it. There is a wide variety of different sized kickers and boxes and/or rails for the snow park junkies. Basically Sol Fa Oda is great if you already have the basics down and/or want to progress to bigger and bigger jumps. It's better (and cheaper) to learn at Kuma Ski Land if it's your first time strapping in.

Other places to hit the slopes in Japan: Geihoku and Mizuho (Shimane Prefecture), numerous resorts in Hiroshima Prefecture, Daisen in Tottori, Dynaland/Takasu in Gifu Prefecture, and of course there are the most famous resorts located in Nagano Prefecture (Hakuba, Nozawa Onsen, Shiga Kogen) and Hokkaido (Niseko).

Aoshima

Aoshima is an island off the coast of Ozu. It's famously known as "Cat Island" for having a high ratio of cats to residents. Originally an uninhabited island, its population grew to 900 people back in the day but is now steadily declining. There are currently only 15 residents on the island. There are no cars or bicycles on the island. No lodgings, restaurants, shops, or vending machines. Cats are very friendly and love to get close to people. Please walk slowly and be careful not to step on or trip over the cats! No trash cans, so please bring a bag to pick up any garbage to take back with you.

If the weather is bad, boat services will be suspended, so please be sure to check the weather before you go! Also be careful not to miss the last boat as there are no hotels on the island!

There are important things to note while visiting Aoshima. It is not officially designated as a tourist spot, so please be mindful while you visit. The residents of Aoshima has made requests to visitors:

1. Please do not feed the cats as the island's residents make sure to feed them every day. You are allowed to get close to them, and there are locations specifically designated for playing with the cats (you can give them small bits of food at these locations). *Location is called Community Center. Play with and feed a large number of cats (about 3-min walk from port).
2. The boats coming and going from Aoshima not only bring tourists, but also deliver basic everyday supplies to the island and other necessities. As such, please do not hang around the vicinity of the port.
3. Aoshima is not an official tourist spot, so please refrain from entering old houses and dwellings on the island as those are residents' homes.

ACROSS JAPAN

There are many places within Ehime to check out (see the sections on each town on the AJET website), but if you are planning on touring Japan (or other countries), you first need to get out of Ehime. There are a few different ways to get out of Ehime and they are at different locations.

AIRPLANE

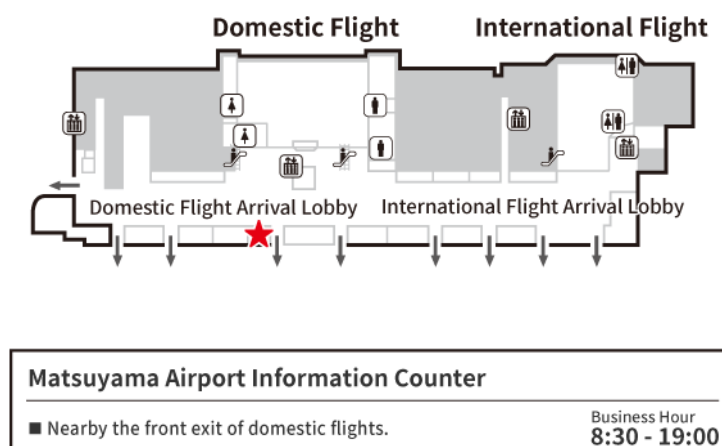
Matsuyama Airport has domestic flights all across Japan. If you plan to travel around Japan during your time here, it is not too hard to get to major travel destinations quickly from Matsuyama. There are several buses that head to the airport, but the most convenient one will probably be bus #52. You can catch it from Okaido, Matsuyama City Station or JR Matsuyama. Or you can take the blue limousine buses; they're quicker and more frequent.



Map of domestic locations you can get to from [Matsuyama Airport](#).

The airport is a smaller airport, so it is not too difficult to navigate. It consists of three floors, with the third being a rooftop view of the airport grounds. The first floor has check-in counters while the second floor

has security checkpoints and departure gates. Both have restaurants and stores that you can browse while waiting for your flight!



First floor of Matsuyama Airport

If you ever need help while you are at Matsuyama Airport, you can go to the Information Center (pictured above).

The airport also offers international flights to **Shanghai**, **Seoul**, and **Taipei**. Please check the next section on [International Travel](#) for more information!

Bus

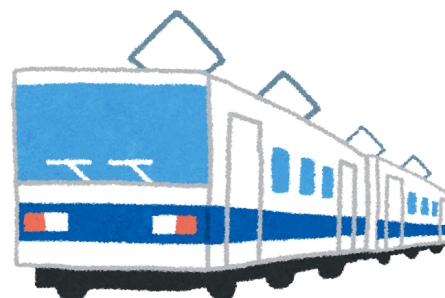
Bus travel is available to all prefectures in Shikoku and to several different destinations on Honshu. If you can sleep sitting up, you might want to consider an overnight bus (Kyoto, Kobe, Osaka, Fukuoka or Tokyo). Not only is it an inexpensive way to cover long distances, but it also lets you start early in the day without having to pay for a hotel the night before. Overnight buses leave from Uwajima, Yawatahama, Saijo, Niihama, and Matsuyama. In general, you have to make reservations for overnight buses, but you can show up at the bus center and hope that someone canceled. One overnight bus to Osaka and Kobe also runs through Ainan, Yoshida, Unomachi and Ozu.



The major bus company for Chuyo is [Iyotetsu](#) (which also services trains and trams), for Toyo is [Setouchi](#), and for Nanyo is [Uwajima Bus](#). All include night buses to major cities.

TRAIN

The train is generally more expensive for trips out of Shikoku. Tokkyuu (express) tickets can be purchased from vending machines or at the ticket window of any large train station. Note that you will need two tickets, a 乗車券 joushaken and a 特急券 tokkyuiken to board express trains. One covers the basic fare, and the other covers the extra charge for riding an “express” train.



There are also two types of tickets, reserved (指定席) and non-reserved (自由席). Each car is labeled with the appropriate kanji, so be sure to check when you get on the train. The Shinkansen works more or less the same way. The train can offer you a smoother ride and save you from having to reserve a ticket. You can get a Shikoku schedule for free by asking at the Matsuyama station ticket window. The word for schedule in Japanese is jikokuhyou (時刻表) and once you learn the kanji for place names they are not hard to use.

To find out train schedules for anywhere in Japan, including some subway systems, go to [Hyperdia](#). You can also get a Hyperdia application for iPhones and Android capable phones. Type in your starting and finishing destinations and Hyperdia will find the best trains for you!

Another helpful resource is [Jorudan](#). There is also [this](#) and [this](#).

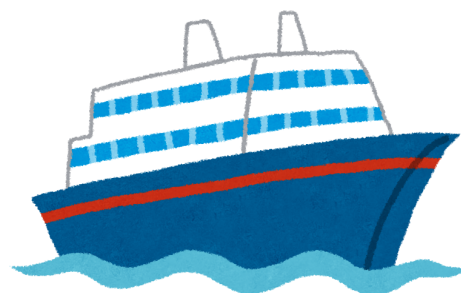
FERRY

From various ports in Ehime, you can take a ferry to Kyushu, Hiroshima or the Kansai area.

A ferry service is offered between Matsuyama and Hiroshima. There is currently a discount offer for tourists if you show your passport when you buy tickets at the ferry terminal:

<http://setonaikaikisen.co.jp/sp/kouro/cruise/>

<http://setonaikaikisen.co.jp/sp/kouro/superjet/>



ACCOMMODATION

An inexpensive option for accommodation is a youth hostel. Prices average around ¥2500-¥3000 per night, plus an additional charge if you are not a youth hostel member. For more information, visit the following websites:

- [Japan Youth Hostels](#)
- [Hostel World](#)
- [K's House](#)
Hostels in Tokyo, Kyoto, Mt. Fuji, Hiroshima, and Nagano
- [J-Hoppers](#)
Hostels in Kyoto, Hiroshima, Osaka, Takayama
- [KHAOSAN](#)
Hostels in Tokyo, Kyoto, Beppu, Fukuoka

An alternative is a ryokan (旅館), or traditional Japanese inn. Prices can be as low as ¥3000-¥4000 per night for a single room and can provide more of a “Japanese-style” experience. Business hotels are also available. “Ladies hotels” catering to women also exist. [This](#) is a good resource, especially for Kansai area ryokan. Remember that tipping is not customary in Japan. If you decide to stay at a ryokan and are not familiar with Japanese etiquette for shoes, bathing, etc., research the customs before you go. Have a look at <http://www.sentoguide.info/etiquette> for more on this subject.

Yet another place you can find reasonably priced accommodation is a capsule hotel. They are cheap and many have great accommodations. This is a good idea if you don't mind using a locker room to store your things and sleeping in a small “capsule” with only a curtain separating you from the rest of your floor. If you are a light sleeper, however, this may not be the best option.

For more information on any of the above, check out the website section or go straight to the Ehime AJET site for additional links.

There are also couchsurfing options between JETs, such as [Tatami Timeshare](#), [JET Couchsurfing Network](#), and [JET-setters](#).

If you are looking to book your flight and accommodation together in a package, there are many travel agencies across Japan that can help you. For starters, you can take a look at [STA Travel](#), which offers special deals for JETs! Another popular option is [Rakuten Travel](#). [Number 1 Travel](#) offers flight search focused packages, while [Willer Travel](#) offers bus focused packages.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Matsuyama Airport is the one place in Ehime that will allow you to travel internationally. You can fly directly to **Shanghai**, **Seoul**, or **Taipei** without needing to transfer flights!

BORDER MEASURES

***Note: The information in this section is constantly changing, so please check the [Measures for Resuming Cross-Border Travel](#) page for updates.**

As of June 2022, Japan has started categorizing countries into three sections: “Red,” “Yellow,” and “Blue.” Depending on what country you are going to/coming from, the policies will be different.

Classification	Vaccination certificates	PCR test (72 hours prior to departure)	PCR test (arrival at airports)	Quarantine period and other measures after entry into Japan
Countries/regions classified as Red	No	Required	Required	3-day quarantine at a specific facility designated by the chief of the quarantine station(+negative test result (PCR test) at the facility)
	Yes			3-day home quarantine+ negative result of a voluntary test/ 5-day home quarantine without a test
Countries/regions classified as Yellow	No	Required	Required	Home quarantine and other measures are not required
	Yes		Not required	
Countries/regions classified as Blue	No	Required	Not required	Home quarantine and other measures are not required
	Yes			

Country status changes frequently, so make sure to [check the website](#) for the updated list of each color.

RETURNING TO JAPAN

Starting September 7, 2022, no pre-departure PCR test is required for triple-vaxxed. One handy website to figure out what you need to prepare for returning to Japan after your trip is the [To Anyone Entering/Returning to Japan](#) website.

Generally, before you land, you will need to fill out a [Questionnaire](#) and Pledge (which will be handed to you at the airport). Then, register for [Fast Track](#), which will allow you to go through the airport procedures more smoothly. If you are having trouble with Fast Track, [check the FAQ](#) in case your question is answered there.

QUARANTINE

If you are required to quarantine upon arrival to Japan, here are some of the hotels currently being used for quarantine:

- APA (Various)
- Toyoko Inn (Various)
- Marroad International Hotel (Narita)
- Hotel Villa Fontaine (Haneda)

- Nikko (Kansai)
- Tax Training Dorms (Saitama)

The hotel is decided by immigration on arrival. You do NOT book the hotel in advance, and won't know which hotel until arrival. Some quarantine accommodation is located in Nagoya, Sendai, Saitama, and Fukuoka as well as local government facilities and ministries' training facilities are being used as temporary additional quarantine rooms. Travelers will be transferred there and back to the airport.

Please note public facilities may have no TV and very limited internet access. Please see post comments of SIM card/portable Wifi options.

Parties (such as family, couples etc...) are usually quarantined together. If it is a larger party such as 5+ people you may be split between rooms. It may not be possible to see each other so please pack accordingly.

After quarantine, you are returned to the airport you arrived at. The schedule varies depending on the hotel and will be advised on check-in. It may vary more depending on how many people they are testing and processing, as well as the distance from the airport and traffic.

Currently the Japanese government covers the designated quarantine cost. If you are new to Japan and not on the National Health Insurance in the unfortunate need any medical assistance you will be required to pay the full cost, it is recommended to have travel insurance that covers you until the end of your 7-day quarantine and until you can visit your local town hall to register. One option is [Nomad Travel Insurance](#) which covers medical and COVID-19.

Positive cases you will remain in quarantine and depending on symptoms be moved to a hospital. Visits to airport facilities such as phone shops, ATMs, lockers etc. are not allowed. You are escorted to the shuttle bus. Meeting family, friends, and coworkers to exchange items is not allowed. Depending on the hotel/facility it may be possible to drop off items. They may be checked. You are NOT allowed to leave the designated hotel, some allow deliveries but check each hotel.

Bentos (cold) are provided three times a day. If you have dietary requirements please come prepared. Not all hotels provide food options for vegetarians or allergies, and/or options provided may not be what you expect. Hotel rooms do NOT have microwaves and no cutlery.

Public Transportation

- People who are quarantining at home may use public transport to get to their place of quarantine within 24 hours of the negative PCR result upon arrival in Japan.
- The movement is limited to the shortest route to your self arranged quarantine location and must be completed within 24 hours from the inspection at the time of entry (at the time of sample collection)
- When using public transportation, you are required to make every effort to prevent infection, including wearing a mask, sanitizing hands, and avoiding the three C's (closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings).
- If you are a close contact you cannot use public transport.

Close contacts & COVID variants of concern

- Travelers who test positive or are close contacts with an infected person 7 days quarantine.
- From Mar 31, for the Omicron variant, the range of close contact on flights has been reduced to accompanying family/party members.

- The self-arranged/self-funded quarantine period remains at 7 days, however, this can be reduced with a negative test from the 4th day. Even after quarantine is completed travellers are still to confirm this physical condition such as temperature for 10 days (from entering Japan.) - Please see below for registered testing sites
- Travelers from country/region with a COVID variant of concern, other than the Omicron, the quarantine period is 14 days at a self-arranged location. *However there are no countries/regions currently on this list currently.
- Travelers testing positive (and close contacts) of a variant of COVID other than Delta or Omicron, the quarantine period is 14 days

USEFUL RESOURCES

If you ever need to refer back to this guidebook for some useful resources, we have compiled some of them here below for easy access!

LINKS

GENERAL

JET Program General Information Handbook (GIH)

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/gih/>

JET Program ALT/CIR/SEA Handbook

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/acs-h/>

JET Program Survival Handbook

https://jet-programme.com/jet_survival_handbook.pdf

JET Program Language Courses

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/languagecourses/>

JET Program Grants

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/grants/>

JET Internship Program

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/jetinternship/>

Career Fairs for JETs

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/careerfair/>

After JET Conference

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/after-con/>

National Association for Japan Exchange & Teaching (National AJET)

<https://ajet.net/>

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) Website

<http://www.clair.or.jp/e/index.html>

CLAIR Multilingual Living Guide

<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengo/>

CLAIR News

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/clairnews/>

Ministry of Justice Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals

<https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/support/portal/index.html>

Immigration Services Agency of Japan (ISA)

<https://www.isa.go.jp/en/index.html>

Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/>

Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)

<https://www.jlpt.jp/index.html>

Kumamoto AJET U.S. Tax Guide

<https://www.kumamotojet.com/reiwa/u-s-tax-guide/>

Tokyo JET Wiki U.S. Tax Guide

[https://tokyojet.fandom.com/wiki/U.S. Taxes](https://tokyojet.fandom.com/wiki/U.S._Taxes)

EHIME

Ehime AJET

<http://www.ehimeajet.com/>

Ehime Prefectural Government Office

<https://www.pref.ehime.jp/index-e.html>

Ehime Prefecture Municipal Websites

https://www.pref.ehime.jp/gen/1172504_524.html

Ehime Prefecture International Center (EPIC)

<http://www.epic.or.jp/index.php>

Matsuyama City

<http://www.city.matsuyama.ehime.jp/>

Matsuyama International Center (MIC)

<https://www.mic.ehime.jp/MIC/top.html>

Niihama City

<https://www.city.niihama.lg.jp/>

Niihama International Center (NIC)

<https://kokusai.city.niihama.ehime.jp/>

Imabari City

<https://www.city.imabari.ehime.jp/>

Imabari City International Exchange Association (ICIEA)

https://iciea.jp/e_index.html

Ikata Town

<https://www.town.ikata.ehime.jp/>

Iyo City

<https://www.city.iyo.lg.jp/index.html>

Kamijima Town

<https://www.town.kamijima.lg.jp/>

Kihoku Town

<https://www.town.kihoku.ehime.jp/>

Kumakogen Town

<https://www.kumakogen.jp/>

Masaki Town

<https://www.town.masaki.ehime.jp/index2.html>

Ozu City

<https://www.city.ozu.ehime.jp/>

Saijo City

<https://www.city.saijo.ehime.jp/>

Saijo International Exchange Association

<https://www.saijo-iea.jp/>

Shikokuchuo City

<https://www.city.shikokuchuo.ehime.jp/>

Shikokuchuo International Friendship Association (SIFA)

<https://www.sifaweb.org/home>

Uchiko Town

<https://www.town.uchiko.ehime.jp/>

Uchiko Town International Association (UTIA)

<http://utia.jp/>

Uwajima City

<https://www.city.uwajima.ehime.jp/index2.html>

Yawatahama International Association

<https://www.facebook.com/yawatahama.ia>

Visit Ehime Japan

<https://www.visitehimejapan.com/en/>

Experience Ehime Japan

<https://www.experience.visitehimejapan.com/>

“What’s Going On? Matsuyama” Web Magazine

<https://wgo-matsuyama.com/>

Ehime Prefecture Mascot “Mican” Profile

https://www.pref.ehime.jp/h12200/mican-kanzume/profile_mican_en.html

COVID-19

COVID-19 Information and Resources

<https://corona.go.jp/en/>

COVID-19 Testing for International Travel

<https://covid-kensa.com/>

Preventing COVID-19

<https://www.c19.mhlw.go.jp/covid-19-en.html>

Measures for Resuming Cross-Border Travel

https://www.mofa.go.jp/ca/cp/page22e_000925.html

GLOSSARY

English	Japanese	Romaji
GENERAL		
JET Programme	JETプログラム	<i>jetto puroguramu</i>
JET Programme Participant (JET)	JETプログラム参加者 JETプログラムさんかしゃ	<i>jetto puroguramu sankasha</i>
Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)	外国語指導助手 がいこくごしどうじょしゅ	<i>gaikokugo shidou joshu</i>
Coordinator for International Relations (CIR)	国際交流員 こくさいこうりゅういん	<i>kokusai kouryuuin</i>
Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA)	スポーツ交流員 スポーツこうりゅういん	<i>supootsu kouryuuin</i>
Contracting Organization (CO)	任用団体 にんようだんたい	<i>ninyou dantai</i>
WORK RELATED		
After school	放課後 ほうかご	<i>houkago</i>
Announcement	放送 ほうそう	<i>housou</i>
Board of Education (BoE)	教育委員会 きょういくいんかい	<i>kyouiku iinkai</i>
Class	授業 じゅぎょう	<i>jugyou</i>
Cleaning (time)	掃除 そうじ	<i>souji</i>
Closing meeting	帰りの会 かえりのかい	<i>kaeri no jikan</i>
Gymnasium	体育館 たいいくかん	<i>taiikukan</i>
Homeroom teacher	担任先生 たんにんせんせい	<i>tannin sensei</i>
Homework	宿題 しゅくだい	<i>shukudai</i>
Interpretation	通訳 つうやく	<i>tsuuyaku</i>
medical certificate	診断書 しんだんしょ	<i>shindan-sho</i>

Meeting	会議 かいぎ	<i>kaigi</i>
Normal schedule	普通時間 ふつうじかん	<i>futsuu jikan</i>
Notice / Notification	お知らせ おしらせ	<i>oshirase</i>
Paid leave / Paid time off (PTO)	年休 ねんきゅう	<i>nenkyuu</i>
Paid compensatory leave	代休 だいきゅう	<i>daikyuu</i>
Principal	校長先生 こうちょうせんせい	<i>kouchou sensei</i>
School lunch	給食 きゅうしょく	<i>kyuushoku</i>
Self-introduction	自己紹介 じこしょうかい	<i>jikoshoukai</i>
Shortened schedule	短縮時間 たんしゅくじかん	<i>tanshuku jikan</i>
Sick leave	病休 びょうきゅう	<i>byoukyuu</i>
Special leave	特別休暇 とくべつきゅうか	<i>tokubetsu kyuuka</i>
Staff room	職員室 しょくいんしつ	<i>shokuinshitsu</i>
Supervisor	担当者 たんとうしゃ	<i>tantousha</i>
Translation	翻訳 ほんやく	<i>honyaku</i>
Vice principal	教頭先生 きょうとうせんせい	<i>kyoutou sensei</i>
OTHER		
Bank	銀行 ぎんこう	<i>ginkou</i>
Bank account	銀行口座 ぎんこうこうざ	<i>ginkou kouza</i>
Bank book / Passbook	通帳 つうちょう	<i>tsuuchou</i>
Bank transfer	銀行振込・銀行振り込み ぎんこうふりこみ	<i>ginkou furikomi</i>
Cash Card	キャッシュカード	<i>kyasshu kaado</i>

Countryside	田舎 いなか	<i>inaka</i>
Foreigner	外国人 がいこくじん	<i>gaikokujin</i> (often shortened to the derogatory “ <i>gaijin</i> ”)
Garbage sorting	ゴミ分別 ゴミぶんべつ	<i>gomi bunbetsu</i>
Garbage calendar	ゴミカレンダー	<i>gomi karendaa</i>
Gifts / Souvenirs	お土産 おみやげ	<i>omiyage</i>
My Number Card	マイナンバーカード	<i>mai nanbaa kaado</i>
Personal seal or stamp	判子・印鑑 はんこ・いんかん	<i>hanko / inkan</i> (used interchangeably)
Residence card	在留カード ざいりゅうカード	<i>zairyuu kaado</i>
Residence record/certificate	住民票 じゅうみんひょう	<i>juuminhyou</i>

THANK You

Congratulations!

You have read through the entire **Ehime JET Guidebook**. Hopefully, you now have an idea of what to prepare for and expect. We recommend you visit the [Ehime AJET website](#) to find out more and if you haven't already, join the [Ehime AJET Facebook group](#).

If you still have any additional questions or suggestions for the guidebook, please feel free to contact your [RA\(s\)](#) or email the [PAs](#) at ehimepa@gmail.com.

 We look forward to seeing you soon! 