

Japan Travel Checklist 2026

Timeline-Based Preparation Checklist | As of April 2026 | japan-travel-concierge.net

3 Months Before Departure

- Check passport validity (6+ months beyond stay recommended)
- Confirm visa requirement on the MOFA official list (visa-exempt countries still need e-arrival registration)
- Open a Wise multi-currency account for JPY transfers and card use
- Book round-trip flights (shoulder seasons tend to be cheaper)
- Research and sketch a rough itinerary (cities, nights per city)

1 Month Before Departure

- Book hotels / ryokan (Booking.com, Agoda, Rakuten Travel)
- Buy an eSIM (Airalo Japan) or arrange pocket Wi-Fi
- Purchase travel insurance (SafetyWing for nomads; regular policy for fixed trips)
- Reserve the JR Pass on Klook if long-distance rail travel is planned (fare revision scheduled for around October 2026; confirm current rates)
- Reserve popular restaurants via TableCheck or Pocket Concierge
- Download key apps: Google Maps, Google Translate, Japan Transit Planner, Suica (Apple Wallet)

1 Week Before Departure

- Load Suica on Apple Wallet (iPhone) or plan to buy a physical IC card on arrival
- Exchange a small amount of JPY cash (around JPY 10,000-20,000) for initial expenses
- Print or screenshot: hotel confirmations, JR Pass voucher, insurance policy
- Notify your bank of international travel to avoid card blocks
- Check weather forecast and pack accordingly (layered clothing works year-round)

Day of Departure & On Arrival

- Complete Visit Japan Web pre-arrival (immigration + customs QR)
- Clear security screening and immigration (usual international procedure)
- Collect luggage, go through customs, use the QR code from Visit Japan Web
- Activate eSIM or pick up pocket Wi-Fi at the airport counter
- Buy / top up an IC card (Suica / Pasma / ICOCA) if you don't have a digital one
- Take the airport express (Narita Express / Haruka / Airport Limousine) to your first hotel

Japan Travel Cost Guide (2026 Estimates)

Category	Budget	Mid-range	Premium
Hotels / Ryokan	USD 50-80 / night	USD 100-180 / night	USD 250+ / night
Transport (JR Pass etc.)	USD 30-50 / day	USD 60-90 / day	USD 100+ / day
Food (per person)	USD 25-40 / day	USD 50-80 / day	USD 120+ / day
Activities / Entry	USD 10-30 / day	USD 40-80 / day	USD 100+ / day
eSIM / Connectivity	USD 10-20 / trip	USD 20-30 / trip	USD 40+ / trip
Insurance	USD 30-50 / trip	USD 50-80 / trip	USD 100+ / trip

Figures are rough estimates as of April 2026 and vary by season and location. All fares and prices are subject to change.

Essential Apps & Services

- [] Google Maps — routing, station exits, opening hours
- [] Google Translate — camera mode for menus and signs
- [] Japan Transit Planner / Jorudan — train routes and fares
- [] Suica (Apple Wallet) — contactless IC card for trains and convenience stores
- [] TableCheck or Pocket Concierge — restaurant reservations in English
- [] Visit Japan Web — pre-arrival immigration and customs QR
- [] XE Currency — exchange rates on the go (the JPY rate is weak as of April 2026, which benefits foreign visitors)

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- [] Assuming every country is visa-free — always confirm on the MOFA official list of visa-exempt nationalities
- [] Bringing large amounts of foreign cash instead of using a Wise account or foreign-card ATMs
- [] Relying on credit cards only — small shops, shrines and some transport still prefer cash
- [] Over-tipping — tipping is not customary in Japan and can cause awkwardness
- [] Buying a JR Pass without checking — it tends to pay off mainly for long-distance, multi-day rail trips
- [] Forgetting to register Visit Japan Web — paper forms still exist but the QR lane is much faster

Emergency & Useful Numbers

Situation	Number / Contact
Police (crime, lost property)	110
Fire / Ambulance	119
Japan Visitor Hotline (24/7, multilingual)	050-3816-2787
JNTO Tourist Information	Visit any i-info center
Your Embassy / Consulate	Save the number before you travel

Packing Essentials

- [] Passport & copies (kept separately)
- [] Travel insurance certificate
- [] International debit / credit cards (Visa / Mastercard widely accepted)
- [] Wise card for JPY payments at mid-market rates
- [] Universal power adapter (Japan uses type A, 100V / 50 or 60 Hz)
- [] Comfortable walking shoes (cities are very walkable)
- [] Light umbrella or rain jacket (showers are common outside winter)
- [] Refillable water bottle (tap water is safe)