



Japan

CAPITAL

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

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CURRENCY

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Disclaimer

This Country Guide reflects information believed to be correct at the time of publication. Regulations, procedures and charges are subject to change. IAM does not accept liability for errors, omissions, inaccuracies or misinterpretations in this guide. The information provided should not be considered as having been provided or sanctioned by the customs authorities of the country or territory concerned.

Overview

Duty-Free Eligibility

Duty-free conditions: Used household goods and personal effects that have been in the owner's use are duty-free, provided: all required documents are completed, the shipment consists of used goods for continued personal use, and clearance occurs within 6 months of entry (as stamped on the C-5360). Persons living in Japan for more than 1 year may import used items duty-free within specified timeframes.

New items: Newly purchased items are duty-free up to JPY 200,000 total market value per person, excluding an 8% consumption tax on the invoice. Items individually valued under JPY 10,000 are excluded from the total calculation. Keep receipts with English translations for all new items.

Documents

For Returning Japanese Citizens (including Diplomats returning from service)

- Original Customs Declaration Form C-5360 (two copies, stamped by customs at airport of entry)
- Descriptive and detailed packing list/inventory in English or Japanese
- Passport copies including: picture/information page, visa of the country where the shipment originates, most recent entry stamp into Japan (date must match the C-5360 stamp and be within 6 months of shipment arrival), departure stamp from Japan to origin country, entry stamp into origin country, departure stamp from origin country
- Ocean bill of lading (OBL) or air waybill (AWB)
- Keys/combinations to any locked baggage

For Foreign Residents (New Residents)

- Original Customs Declaration Form C-5360-B (two copies, stamped at airport)
- Descriptive and detailed packing list/inventory in English or Japanese
- Passport copies including: picture/information page, working visa page (valid for more than 1 year), visa of origin country (if nationality differs from origin), most recent entry stamp into Japan, departure stamp from origin country
- Copy of residence card (front and back)
- OBL or AWB

For Diplomats

- Clear copy of diplomatic passport picture/information page
- Simplified customs clearance request form for diplomats issued by the Foreign Ministry. If unavailable, follows the same procedure as foreign residents.
- Import declaration form

Household Goods — Specific Information

C-5360 form is critical. Two copies must be completed in duplicate and submitted to customs officials at the accompanied baggage inspection area upon arrival in Japan. One copy is stamped and returned to the shipper. This certified duplicate is required for clearance of all unaccompanied shipments. If the form is not completed and certified upon entry, all brand-new items (including food) will be taxable, and a petition letter to customs will be required.

The C-5360 can be obtained on the flight to Japan (request two copies from the flight attendant) or at the airport upon arrival. Japanese citizens use form C-5360; foreign nationals use form C-5360-B.

Air shipments: The packing list requires detailed values of all items.

Physical size constraints: Japanese houses and apartments are generally smaller than Western homes. Oversized furniture (e.g., large sofas, king-size mattresses) may not fit through entrance doors, staircases, or other access areas. This is a frequent operational issue that should be discussed with the customer before packing.

Container access: Due to road conditions and traffic regulations, full-size ocean containers cannot typically be delivered directly to residences. All shipments must be transferred from the container to a smaller van at a bonded warehouse on the day of delivery. This adds cost and handling.

Customs inspections: Customs may inspect all shipments physically.

Advance Filing Rules (since March 2014): Shipping companies or NVOCCs must electronically submit cargo information for maritime container cargoes to Japanese Customs no later than 24 hours before departure of the vessel from the port of loading. Penalties apply for failure to file or filing false information.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Opium, heroin, cocaine, MDMA, cannabis, stimulants, psychotropic substances, narcotic drugs, and related utensils (notably, this includes Vicks Inhalers and Sudafed, which contain pseudoephedrine/methamphetamine precursors)
- Counterfeit or imitated currency, banknotes, or securities
- Obscene or immoral materials, pornography

- Articles infringing patents, trademarks, copyrights, or design rights
- Firearms (pistols, rifles, machine guns) and ammunition/parts thereof
- Weapons: swords, daggers, bows with blades longer than 15 cm (exception: Japanese antique swords may be imported under certain regulations)
- Straw (in packing materials)
- Explosives
- Stuffed animals (prohibited per FIDI guide)

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Traveller Duty-Free Allowances (per person aged 20+)

- 3 bottles of alcohol (approximately 760ml each)
- 400 cigarettes OR 100 cigars OR 500g other tobacco
- 2 ounces of perfume
- Other articles with a total overseas market value under JPY 200,000 (items individually under JPY 10,000 excluded from calculation)

Alcohol Duties (when exceeding allowance)

- Whisky/brandy: JPY 600 per litre
- Gin/liqueur: JPY 400 per litre
- Wine: JPY 200 per litre
- A liquor list must be prepared for smooth customs clearance.

Other Restricted Items

- Plants with or without soil, fresh fruits, and vegetables: quarantine certificate required before customs examination
- Fresh meat, sausage, ham, bacon, and all meat products: animal health certificate from origin country required. Meat products including beef jerky are prohibited.
- Animal products (bones, eggs, fat, blood, skins, hides, pelts, fur, hair, feathers, horns, antlers, hooves): subject to animal quarantine inspection
- Medicines and cosmetics: limited quantities (pharmaceutical products for 2 months of use; quasi-drugs for 2 months; cosmetics 24 applications)
- Firearms: permit required
- Two-way radios and communications equipment: restricted

Food in Shipments

Customs is strict with food imports, particularly in air shipments. If food is included in a shipment, it triggers inspection and extra handling fees. Strongly discouraged.

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Original passport**
- **Original Customs Declaration Form C-5360**
- **Original vehicle registration certificate proving use by the shipper**
- **Bill of sale, receipt, or purchase invoice**
- **Application for duty exemption on automobiles (Customs Form T No.1280)**
- **Proof of ownership for more than 1 year**
- **Original bill of lading**
- **Insurance certificate**
- **KANGI form (obtained from the Foreign Ministry in Japan)**
- **Letter of assurance not to resell the vehicle within 2 years**
- **Alien registration card (for foreign residents)**

Specific Information

Ownership duration: Vehicles must have been owned and used by the importer for more than 1 year prior to import.

Duty-free conditions: Vehicles may be imported temporarily free of duty and tax provided they will be re-exported.

Japanese standards compliance (SHAKEN): All automobiles must comply with Japanese exhaust emission control and safety regulations. A test (SHAKEN) will be administered. Modifications to meet Japanese standards can be extremely expensive. Contact the FIDI affiliate or destination agent before shipping any vehicle.

Resale restriction: Vehicles cannot be resold within 2 years of import (letter of assurance required).

Left-hand drive: Japan drives on the left. Right-hand drive vehicles are standard. Left-hand drive vehicles can be imported but are unusual and may face additional scrutiny at inspection.

Diplomats: Should arrive in Japan at least 40 days prior to vehicle import to obtain the necessary documents.

Strong recommendation: Contact the destination agent before shipping any vehicle, motorcycle, camping car, or motor boat to Japan.

Pets

Requirements

- **ISO 11784/11785 compliant microchip documentation**
- **Rabies vaccination certificates (two vaccinations required from Category 2 countries; none from Category 1)**
- **Rabies titer test (RNATT/FAVN) results from a Japanese government-approved laboratory (Category 2 countries only)**
- **Advanced Notification Form filed with the Animal Quarantine Service (AQS) at least 40 days before arrival**
- **Approval of Notification from AQS**
- **Veterinary health certificate issued within 2 days of entry, endorsed by the government veterinary authority**
- **Parasite treatment records (ticks, tapeworm, nematodes, cestodes)**
- **Transport cage must be sealed**

Specific Information

Pets cannot be imported as part of household goods shipments. They must travel separately.

Country classification: Japan classifies countries into two categories.

Category 1 (rabies-free): Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii, and Guam. Pets born in or continuously residing in these regions for at least 6 months require no rabies vaccination or titer test. The IAM guide (2016) also lists Taiwan, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, and the United Kingdom, but the current PetTravel listing (2026) shows only the 6 regions above. The destination agent should confirm the current Category 1 list, as Japan periodically updates it.

Category 2 (all other countries): Includes the United States (mainland), Canada, the UK (per PetTravel 2026), and all other countries not in Category 1.

Quarantine: Pets meeting all requirements are held at the AQS facility for up to 12 hours before release. Pets NOT meeting requirements face mandatory quarantine at AQS facilities for up to 180 days. Quarantine cannot be served at a private residence; it must be at AQS premises, even for long quarantine periods. This is one of the longest potential quarantine periods in the world.

To achieve the 12-hour release (from Category 2 countries), ALL of the following must be satisfied: (1) microchip implanted, (2) two rabies vaccinations with an inactivated or recombinant vaccine (second given 30+ days after the first and before the previous vaccination expires), (3) rabies titer test (RNATT/FAVN) showing antibody level of at least 0.5 IU/ml processed at a Japanese government-approved laboratory, (4) at least 180 days have passed since the blood was drawn for the titer test, (5) not more than 2 years since the blood was drawn, (6) continuous booster vaccinations maintained.

The 180-day wait is the critical timeline. If 180 days have not passed at time of arrival, the pet will be detained to make up the remaining days. Planning must start at least 7-8 months before the move.

Titer test validity: Valid for up to 2 years from the blood draw date, provided rabies vaccinations are kept continuously current. If the second vaccination expires before a booster is given, the process resets and a new titer test plus 180-day wait is required.

Advance notification: Required at least 40 days before arrival. AQS may request a change of date or port depending on quarantine facility availability.

Minimum age: Puppies and kittens cannot be vaccinated before 91 days of age. From Category 2 countries, the effective minimum age is approximately 10-11 months (91 days + 30 days between vaccinations + 180-day wait after titer test).

Entry points: Pets may enter only at designated airports and seaports. Dogs requiring quarantine must enter at specific starred ports (Narita, Haneda, Chubu, Kansai, Fukuoka, Kagoshima for air; Yokohama, Osaka for sea).

Leptospirosis: Dogs must also be tested/cleared for leptospirosis (in addition to rabies) immediately before departure.

Banned breeds: Japan does not ban any dog or cat breeds (except hybrids with wild animals such as wolf hybrids).

Species covered: Dogs, cats, foxes, raccoons, and skunks are all subject to rabies quarantine requirements under the Rabies Prevention Law.

Japan is NOT on the CDC high-risk rabies country list (note: CDC results showed 2 matches but these are references to Japan within the context of other country listings, not Japan itself being listed).

Unverified Items

- The current Category 1 (rabies-free) country list could not be independently verified against a current Japanese government source in English. The MAFF AQS page was accessible but the specific country list page was not fetched. PetTravel's 2026 list should be considered current but confirmation with the destination agent is recommended.
- Whether the KANGI form is still required and how to obtain it could not be verified independently. The IAM guide says it's obtained from the Foreign Ministry in Japan.
- Current SHAKEN inspection costs and pass rates for imported vehicles could not be determined. These are widely reported to be very expensive.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air and sea shipments.

C-5360 form: The single most important document. Must be completed and stamped at the airport upon arrival. Without it, duty-free clearance is not possible and all new items become taxable.

Pet advance notification: Must be filed at least 40 days before arrival. AQS may request changes to date or port of entry.

Vehicle coordination: Must be arranged with the destination agent before shipping. SHAKEN compliance testing and modifications can be prohibitively expensive.

Oversized furniture: Discuss Japanese apartment dimensions with the customer before packing. King-size beds, large sofas, and oversized armoires frequently cannot fit through Japanese doorways.

Container transfer: Budget for the mandatory warehouse-to-van transfer at the port. Full-size containers cannot reach most residential addresses.

Advance Filing Rules: Shipping companies/NVOCCs must file cargo information electronically at least 24 hours before vessel departure from the loading port.

ISPM 15: Japan enforces ISPM 15 strictly. Wood packaging without the mark will be inspected. Detection of quarantine pests results in disinfestation, incineration, or re-shipping at the consignee's choice and expense.

Cultural & Other Information

Japan uses the Japanese yen (JPY). Consumption tax is 10% (8% on food and beverages). Driving is on the left. The official language is Japanese; customs documentation should be in English or Japanese. Japanese addresses and building layouts differ significantly from Western conventions. The work week is Monday through Friday.

Japan has one of the most thorough customs inspection regimes in Asia. Document accuracy is paramount; errors or inconsistencies will cause delays. Japanese customs officials are meticulous and professional but inflexible on procedural requirements.

Key government links:

- OpenFactBook -- Japan: <https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/japan/> (verified 200)
- Wikipedia -- Japan: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan> (verified 403 to bots; works in browser)
- Japan Customs: <https://www.customs.go.jp/english/> (verified 200)
- MAFF Animal Quarantine Service: <https://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/animal/dog/import-other.html> (verified 200)
- Ministry of Transport: <https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/> (verified 200)

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers in Japan](#)
<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Japan&lat=36.2048&lng=138.2529&range=50&assoc=800&fvw=c&ctry=Japan>
- [Foreign Embassies in Japan](#)
<https://www.embassypages.com/japan>
- [Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(MOFA\)](#)
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>
- [OpenFactBook \(replaces CIA World Factbook\)](#)
<https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/japan/>
- [Wikipedia](#)
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan>
- [Japan Customs](#)
<https://www.customs.go.jp/english/>
- [Japan Customs Advance Filing Rules](#)
<https://www.customs.go.jp/english/summary/advance5/index.htm>

- [MAFF Animal Quarantine Service \(AQS\) -- Pet Import](https://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/animal/dog/import-other.html)
<https://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/animal/dog/import-other.html>
 - [Japan Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism](https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/)
<https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/>
 - [PetTravel.com -- Japan](https://www.pettravel.com/information/pet-passports/japan-pet-import-requirements/)
<https://www.pettravel.com/information/pet-passports/japan-pet-import-requirements/>
 - [Trade.gov -- Japan Import Requirements](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/japan-import-requirements-and-documentation)
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/japan-import-requirements-and-documentation>
 - [VisaHQ -- Japan Customs](https://www.visahq.com/japan/customs/)
<https://www.visahq.com/japan/customs/>
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