

THE JAPANESE GUEST

1. Japanese Travellers

Most Japanese travellers are pensioners, as they are the ones with the time and financial means to travel. Women make up the biggest market segment.

When it comes to travel expenditure, the Japanese easily measure up to the Americans and Chinese.

Japanese guests mostly travel in groups, which are looked after by a guide the entire time to ensure their wellbeing. As the individual has little say in the choice of hotel, it is important to impress each guest, so as to win the approval and satisfaction of the travel agent. They are the ones deciding where the next group will be staying. Intensive communication with the tour guide is therefore of the utmost importance.

The business traveller, in contrast, mostly travels alone and is a return guest who is familiar with the local culture. Unlike the holiday travellers, he decides himself which hotel is to be booked. 95% of business travellers are male, whereas the majority of holiday travellers are female.

2. Motives for Travel

Fulfilling a lifelong dream

Generally, holiday travel outweighs business travel as a percentage of total travel, with individual holiday travel making up only a very small percentage of total overseas travel. Most Japanese still prefer the classical organised round trip.

3. Trip structure and duration

The average trip duration is nine days, as longer trips are seldom offered by agents. This is because despite having the time and money to travel for longer periods, Japanese pensioners feel embarrassed about being away from home for longer than a week.

Japanese employees, despite having 21 leave days per annum, seldom make use of these and do not insist on doing so. It is seen as a matter of honour to 'gift' a portion of one's leave to the employer. Spare time is therefore limited and valuable to the Japanese.

4. Travel Mentality

The Japanese place very high expectations on the countries they travel to. Service in Japan is very courteous and discreet, which is why the Japanese view excellent service as a given. To avoid disappointment, the tour guide often advises guests at the start of a trip about differences in this respect.

Punctuality is very important to the Japanese traveller and long waiting periods can lead to discontent. They must be able to fully rely on their timetable, and the quality of a hotel is often measured on the speed of service received.

Harmony is another important aspect for the Japanese. Harmony means that everything is well organised and peaceful. This is especially true for the hierarchy within groups, which is to be strictly adhered to amongst business travellers.

5. Information and Booking Behaviour

Business travel segments, e.g. flights and hotels, are usually booked independently or directly through travel agents or the relevant providers. Overseas holidays however are mostly booked as 'all-inclusive' packages.

To obtain information on overseas travel 40% use the internet, although only 9% actually book via the internet.

6. Trip Content

As time is strictly limited during trips, as much as possible is scheduled in the shortest amount of time. Consequently, agents try to outbid one another with what they can fit into a trip, resulting in sights being crossed off the list at unreasonable speeds.

7. Communication

During individual check-ins short conversations are likely to take place, whereas with group check-ins this is highly unlikely. The natural demureness and lack of English knowledge of older Japanese guests make personal conversations between guests and hotel staff very difficult. Even during short conversations however, the important rules of verbal communication and body language are not to be underestimated if one does not want to unknowingly offend the guest or the tour guide.

It is therefore important to speak slowly and clearly, using basic English, especially when speaking to older Japanese guests. Important points can be repeated and very important information can be explained in writing.

Any requests, even if they genuinely cannot be fulfilled, should never be declined with a direct 'no'. This is considered to be undiplomatic and highly impolite. Rather use a phrase such as 'I will see what can be done', and offer an alternative so as to at least show effort and to involve the guest.

When personally addressing a Japanese person one starts with the surname followed by the first name. This sequence is also often found on business cards. Politely asking which is the first and surname is not a faux pas. However, there are rules to be adhered to when it comes to addressing guests. As a show of politeness staff should use the suffix '*sama*'. For example, Mr/Mrs Yamaguchi would be addressed as Mr/Mrs Yamaguchisama. The term '*san*' is used for persons of the same social standing, whereas '*sensei*' is reserved for high-ranking politicians, well-known personalities, teachers or professors.

The word '*hai*' means 'yes' and is often used when answering questions, but does not necessarily imply agreement. It should rather be interpreted as 'I have heard/understood'. When asked, for example, 'Do you not like your room?' a Japanese would answer '*hai*', in agreement with the negative statement, i.e. 'Yes, I do not like my room.' To avoid misunderstandings it is therefore important to carefully re-question to get to the bottom of statements.

The Japanese use the words 'thank you' (*arigato gozaimasu*) and 'please' (*dozo*) much more frequently in conversations than we do, which is why the Japanese tend to find our conversations impolite.

Provided as part of the benefits of membership of Cape Town Tourism. For more information visit www.capetown.travel/industry, call +27 (0)21 487 6800 or email membership@capetown.travel

Direct statements are seen as abrupt and inappropriate, so sentences are sometimes very elaborate. E.g. 'Tidy up your desk' would become: 'As we are expecting an important visitor and would like to show the company at its best, it would maybe be a good idea to tidy up the place a bit.'

Each language has its own rhythm and the Japanese like to take their time thinking before replying to anything. Because of this there are many breaks in conversations and one therefore needs to be patient. In contrast, our quick speaking rhythm is perceived as brash.

Another important issue to be remembered is that the content of conversations should not be disclosed to third parties unless it has been authorised. Should a repeat become necessary however, one should first consult with the person to find out whether the conversation may be recounted to the third party. This is to avoid inaccurate recounts that could lead to embarrassing situations.

Also, we tend to speak much louder than the Japanese, which creates the impression that we are fighting. It is therefore advisable to speak in a softer tone of voice when conversing with Japanese guests.

7.1 Topics of Conversation

Negative subjects are to be avoided as these can impact on the mood of the entire group. The subject of war should never be brought up and when discussing politics one should be careful not to affront the Japanese with one's own opinion. Apart from that, politics, religion and sex are less awkward topics than in many Western countries. Please note that it is not felt to be impolite to ask personal questions pertaining to age, income and marital status. The weather is also a favourite topic, whether good or bad.

Although the Japanese have a good sense of humour, language barriers can lead to misunderstandings, especially when ironic comments are made. Generally the Japanese take what is said literally, which is why irony should be avoided. It is therefore advisable to refrain from telling jokes, unless they are at the expense of the host.

7.2 Non-verbal Communication

Smiling is an integral part of showing respect. Not to smile disturbs the harmony and is interpreted as being extremely rude. One must smile, otherwise the Japanese feel ill-treated.

To show emotion through facial expressions is seen as childish and primitive. Adults are expected to hide their irritation behind a smile. One does not want to burden others with personal issues, which is why smiling is the only expression that is not seen as unfriendly.

Physical contact is not part of Japanese custom. Their body language is controlled, elegant and sophisticated, thereby conveying respect. A lack of disciplined physical control signifies disrespect and should therefore be avoided, e.g. waving of arms, unnecessary touching and shoulder hugging. Not even close friends hug each other.

On greeting one bows instead of shaking hands. European body language often conveys the feeling that guests are being bothersome. Careful studying of Japanese body language

and the adjusting of one's own body language accordingly is the best way of showing true hospitality.

As the Japanese often bow during conversations, enough space should be left to accommodate this. Sufficient personal space should also be left as the Japanese try to avoid any type of physical contact.

Maintaining eye contact is also unusual for the Japanese and should therefore not be forced as it could be interpreted as impolite or an intrusion into their personal space. A neutral, lowered gaze is not seen as a sign of weakness or falseness. Some Japanese may even keep their eyes closed during an entire conversation! This should not be interpreted as lack of interest, but rather an expression of listening attentively.

To point at something directly must be avoided at all costs, as this is considered to be far too direct. Instead, using your entire hand, palm facing upwards, point in the general direction of the object, place or person. To call someone closer, the Japanese use their outstretched hand, fingers pointing downwards with a waving motion. This is the opposite to the gesture Europeans use to shoo something/someone away and should therefore not be misinterpreted.

7.3 Guest Complaints

The Japanese are generally seen as pleasant guests, perfectly organised and always satisfied because they are always smiling and only complain in extreme situations. However, one should not be fooled by their behaviour. The Japanese have very high standards, even if they don't express them. Guests of other nationalities express their wishes and concerns; the Japanese do not.

Saving face – one's own and that of the other person – is one of the reasons for the modest complaint behaviour. Another important reason, especially for older Japanese, is the language barrier. If they are unable to explain or express their dissatisfaction, they will refrain from saying anything at all. However, back in Japan, problems will be thoroughly discussed, which can have a very negative effect on a hotel's reputation.

Maintaining the harmony in the group is of the utmost importance. It is utterly incomprehensible that one member of the group would upset the harmony with his personal wishes. Group harmony is more important than the individual. Neither Japanese individual travellers nor group travellers will directly or openly express their critique. Individual travellers will just refrain from returning and groups will complain to the tour guide, who might or might not forward the complaint to the hotel, depending on his personality. The guide, instead of informing the hotel about problems, will more often than not inform the travel agent instead. Hence, the group will leave the hotel smiling, but a complaint letter will follow later, or the hotel will simply be avoided during the next tour series.

The only way to avoid this is to pay special attention to the guide and build a close relationship from the start. Every opportunity should be taken to enquire about guest satisfaction to show that one is interested in dealing with any issues.

Should there be the slightest hint of dissatisfaction, a proactive approach should be adopted and an apology made. Apologies should be repeated several times during a conversation, as they will otherwise not be acknowledged. It is also important to ensure that apologies are made with a friendly expression, without the customary smile however,

Provided as part of the benefits of membership of Cape Town Tourism. For more information visit www.capetown.travel/industry, call +27 (0)21 487 6800 or email membership@capetown.travel

as it will otherwise not be taken seriously. If one is not personally responsible for a problem, one should still apologise on behalf of the hotel. The Japanese often find it frustrating that apologies are not readily forthcoming.

Although the Japanese would never directly request compensation, it is nonetheless expected. In Japan, waiting periods or other shortcomings are usually made up for with gifts such as flowers or a coffee voucher. To object would be impolite and would cause the other person to lose face.

It is very important to avoid embarrassing discussions; instead the hotel should apologise profusely and repeatedly.

Some Japanese, especially the older generations, have a problem with bringing forward complaints to female managers. They would rather speak to male representatives, as they feel on the same level. In Japan one generally finds more men than women in managerial positions.

8. The Hotel

8.1 Choice of Hotel

Hotels are usually chosen by travel agents who buy allotments a year in advance and then advertise these in their catalogues. The deciding factors are the standard of the hotel and where it is situated. Non-negotiable pre-requisites are:

- ❖ Twin beds
- ❖ Bathrooms with bathtubs
- ❖ Airconditioning
- ❖ Smoking rooms
- ❖ Cleanliness of the hotel and rooms

8.2 Welcome and check-in

Group tours are organised to the last detail. The checking in and out is exclusively done by the guide, whilst the members of the group wait in a disciplined fashion in the lobby until their keys are handed out. The greeting of Japanese guests usually runs smoothly and with little communication as everything is perfectly organised. However, because the Japanese hold greeting in high regard, guests should be made to feel welcome through special attentiveness. To set oneself apart from other hotels, there are many small things that can be done to make the guests feel well treated. This is why it is important to know about cultural behaviours and needs.

Using some Japanese words to greet guests gives a sincere impression of welcome, and it is the gesture that is important rather than perfect pronunciation. Once again smiling has to be emphasised, as it cannot be said often enough that the serious facial expressions of Europeans often make guests feel unwelcome.

As there are different degrees of bowing – 15, 30 and 45 degrees, depending on the respect to be shown – and variations in the duration of a bow Europeans should refrain from doing so. Being unfamiliar with the correct form and custom of bowing, and doing it incorrectly, might come across as belittling. A friendly nod is seen as just as respectful enough.

The Japanese are very disciplined and perfectly organised and therefore expect a quick check-in and check-out. All the relevant information is forwarded in advance to ensure a smooth process. The rooms and keys should therefore be ready on arrival and the entire check-in is exclusively handled by the guide. The check-out should run just as smoothly.

It is a big mistake to think that one can keep Japanese guests waiting, as they do not complain. Although a complaint will never be brought forward directly, keeping them waiting is deeply frustrating, as their tours are tightly organised. Every minute spent waiting could mean the cancellation of a sightseeing visit. To avoid lengthy check-in procedures many Japanese groups are offered separate check-ins.

Japanese business cards are to be treated with the highest respect as they are an extension of the person. They are handed over and accepted using both hands and should never be written on or put into pants pockets. The general rule is to hand over and accept items using both hands. Similarly, documents should always be handed over in an envelope.

Although city information packs in Japanese are not readily available, the bigger tourist information offices should be able to provide maps and other information material.

8.3 Room Allocation

When allocating rooms it must be kept in mind that the number '4' is an unlucky number. When pronounced, it sounds like the word death. Therefore, rooms with the number '444' or rooms on the 4th floor should not be allocated. Although not all Japanese subscribe to this belief, it would be better to avoid any possible conflicts in this regard.

It should also be remembered that the counting of floors is done differently in Japan. The ground floor as we know it is considered to be the 1st floor in Japan. This could lead to a Japanese guest looking for the restaurant situated on the first floor on the ground floor. For groups, however, the guide usually points out this difference. A quick reminder to the guide and especially individual travellers on check-in can be very helpful. As the Japanese also use Arabic numbering, misunderstandings in this regard should not occur.

Because the Japanese are unaccustomed to criminal behaviour in public, security advice should be given on check-in to avoid any careless behaviour such as leaving handbags unattended. During buffets, ladies should be advised to take their bags with them.

8.4 Rooms

When allocating rooms it should be borne in mind that hierarchical thinking is highly ingrained in the Japanese culture. This means that the highest-ranked person in a delegation must always be given the biggest room and should also be allocated a room on a higher floor than his less important staff.

When it comes to groups, however, the rooms should be as similar as possible in size and furnishings, and should also all be on the same floor. Guests might otherwise feel demoted in their position within the group.

Hierarchical relations must be clarified before a group's arrival.

Another must is that all rooms should have separate (twin) beds, as it is common for people who have never met before to share a room. Even couples and friends sleep in separate beds.

As the percentage of smokers in groups is usually very high, it should be ensured that enough smoking rooms are available.

To make up for the usually impersonal greeting at check-in, a friendly welcome letter in Japanese can be left in the room. Because the Japanese are so busy, a letter can also be sent to the tour leader, which can then be read out loud to the group en route to the next sightseeing event.

Should there be a budget for a small welcome gift, the following should be kept in mind. The Japanese will appreciate chocolate, fruit and flowers, but do not normally eat sweets. It is also important that the gift be wrapped, as cleanliness and hygiene are very important to the Japanese. Fruit should therefore be left whole and wrapped in cling wrap. The same goes for chocolates, as non-wrapped chocolates will not be accepted.

It should be noted that the packaging is often more important than the content itself, as gifts are often passed on without being opened. Avoid the colours black and white, as these are colours of mourning. White flowers, especially chrysanthemums, are also used as graveyard flowers and should be avoided.

Tea is the favourite beverage in Japan and consumed in copious amounts, which is why kettles and tea bags should be provided in the rooms. Thermos flasks of hot water are a bad alternative, as the water is not hot enough. Should this facility not be available, the hotel should be prepared for an increase in requests for hot water from room service.

The minibar must be stocked with still water, as the Japanese very seldom drink sparkling water.

A bathtub is the deciding factor which determines the happiness/unhappiness of a guest – no Japanese guest will be happy without one. This is why the travel agents will insist on rooms with bathtubs, as they will otherwise be inundated with complaints, which end up being very expensive for the agent. For reasons of relaxation, the Japanese bath on a daily basis. Showering is considered to be completely insufficient, as the body is not completely warmed up from within. Fixed shower heads also cause frustration, as the bathtub is usually thoroughly rinsed before bathing. It is also not uncommon for the Japanese to have a shower before having a bath, leaving the entire bathroom under water. A friendly reminder on 'how to use the bathroom' can be conveyed via the tour guide. E.g. 'We bid you welcome and kindly advise that showers are only to be taken within the bathtub. Although the entire bathroom is tiled, water may still seep through the floor into the rooms below. We sincerely appreciate your cooperation in this matter.'

A frequent complaint by Japanese guests is the lack of sufficiently hot water, which should be at least 42 degrees. To avoid complaints there should be enough hot water available, and it should be noted that the majority of guests will bath simultaneously, usually before dinner. The group's itinerary should therefore be studied carefully.

Hotels should also have slippers on offer as these are not usually taken along on trips. As cleanliness and hygiene are of such importance to the Japanese, street shoes are never worn in the home as this is considered to be 'unclean'. In Japan shoes are taken off at the

front door and left in the passage. As the bathroom is considered to be especially clean, separate slippers are worn that are only used in the bathroom.

Japanese TV channels are extremely popular and are a must for hotels that frequently accommodate Japanese guests. Channels such as NHK and JSTV are recommended but can only be had via satellite.

Japanese newspapers such as *Nikkei* and *Asahi Shinbun* are highly recommended. These should always be placed in plastic sleeves and hung on the door handle instead of being placed on the floor in front of the room. Having to pick up the newspaper from the floor could raise hygiene concerns. Hotel information in Japanese can help minimise any uncertainties that Japanese guests might experience and make them feel more at ease.

Although saunas are popular in Japan, group travellers will seldom make use of these on trips as they are usually too exhausted from the daily activities. It is important to note that saunas are not shared by men and women. Separate saunas are therefore advisable.

Nearly every hotel in Japan is equipped with airconditioning and the Japanese are used to having the heat kept at bay. Because Japanese guests will complain about the lack of airconditioning, travel agents will prefer to book hotels with A/C.

In Japan even two-star hotels offer toothbrushes and toothpaste, although most Japanese are familiar with European standards and will pack their own. Nonetheless many guests are surprised when they do not find these on offer, which is why the hotel should offer them just in case.

The light kimono is a standard piece of clothing in Japan and part of Japanese culture. They are unaccustomed to the heavy towel robes used by Europeans and are surprised at finding these in their rooms, as this is not a Japanese service. The Japanese travel very light and often do their washing in their rooms, which is why it is advisable to offer a laundry service.

9. Eating Habits

Should the hotel wish to offer Japanese dishes, they must be prepared using original Japanese ingredients and preparation methods. Trying to imitate Japanese food will not go down well. Although breakfast will be taken at the hotel, lunch and dinner are usually consumed elsewhere.

9.1 Service

The Japanese are used to being greeted and escorted to their table. Cleanliness and hygiene are a top priority, and no meal, no matter how good, will detract from the slightest hint of unhygienic practice.

In Japan the service is very attentive. Guests are flattered and every wish read off their faces. They are given undivided attention. The most common complaint by Japanese guests is therefore 'neglect'. Apart from friendliness, speed is of great importance. The Japanese will seldom wait for more than 10 minutes for their food. As higher staff numbers are available in Japan, quick service is a given.

The rule 'ladies first' is only slowly making inroads into Japanese culture. It is still customary to favour men, especially when they are higher ranking. Hence, Japanese

Provided as part of the benefits of membership of Cape Town Tourism. For more information visit www.capetown.travel/industry, call +27 (0)21 487 6800 or email membership@capetown.travel

women enjoy the attention received as per European culture. Younger people always give way to older generations, even when the age gap is small.

Supplying menus in Japanese, with accompanying pictures, will entice guests to try local dishes. This is the only way in which a Japanese guest will be able to make sense of a dish such as bobotie. Although menus with pictures seem to us to be similar to those of fast food chains, it is a normal thing in Japan and even expected.

Oshiboris are warm, moist hygienic towels handed out before dinner to clean one's hands. Even though the Japanese know that this is not a custom in other countries, a restaurant can elevate its standing by offering these.

In Japan, perfumes are used much more sparingly than in other countries, which is why fragrant flower arrangements should also be avoided. Their sense of smell is much more sensitive than ours, and can therefore easily influence the sense of taste. It is also very unusual for Japanese men to use fragrances or deodorants.

Most Japanese have a preference for colourful and elaborate decorations. No expense is spared.

9.2 Breakfast

Because of their hectic daily schedules, breakfast is taken early. Times should be discussed with the tour guide to avoid any delays. The breakfast buffet could incorporate the following:

- ❖ Egg dishes:
Boiled eggs, fried eggs and scrambled eggs should definitely be available
- ❖ Cheese:
Although rarely eaten in Japan, this are often tried overseas as the selection is better
- ❖ Cold meats:
Well liked, provide good selection
- ❖ Muesli:
Seldom eaten in Japan, but should be available
- ❖ Bread:
The Japanese like soft rolls but are quite adventurous in trying other types on offer
- ❖ Yoghurt:
Also eaten in Japan
- ❖ Jams:
Part of a continental breakfast
- ❖ Popular beverages:
Tea (usual assortment), milk, juices, still water

Japanese breakfasts should only be offered if a Japanese chef is available and must be a la carte, as chafing dish food is unappetising.

Japanese breakfast:

- ❖ Grilled fish, e.g. mackerel or shellfish
- ❖ Miso soup
- ❖ Small bowl of pickled vegetables (Chinese cabbage, cucumber etc)
- ❖ Tofu, dried seaweed (nori)
- ❖ Rice
- ❖ Soya sauce
- ❖ Green, brown or black tea
- ❖ Chopsticks

9.3 Food and beverages on offer

The Japanese are adventurous and will try local foods, without forgoing Japanese food altogether. Trying local foods once or twice during a trip is enough for them. Spaghetti for example is always welcome and can also be served without rice.

Lunches should be light, e.g. clear soups with noodles. Noodle soup in all variations is a classic in Japan and therefore very popular. Be aware of the spicing of dishes however, as foreign foods are often found to be too sweet, too salty or over-spiced.

The most popular meats are chicken and pork, but care should be taken not to make the meat portions too big, as this is off-putting. One should rather offer a variety of dishes in small portions.

There should always be a salad and clear soup to accompany the main meal, as well as a bowl of rice or bread. Potatoes are no substitute for rice. Vegetables are seldom cooked, rather, they are briefly fried or pickled. Should the vegetables be cooked, then sugar or soya sauce is to be used.

The preferred beverages to accompany meals are beer and still water. Please note that water and tea are always offered free of charge in Japan. The usual assortment of tea is popular and more than sufficient for the Japanese guest. Although drinking wine with meals is not very popular, wine tastings definitely are. Sake (Japanese rice wine) is also popular, although it is not drunk with meals.

9.4 Etiquette during meals

The concept of leisurely meals is unknown in Japan. After settling the bill one gets up and leaves, often moving from one bar to the next. Slurping is not considered to be impolite. Soups and the noodles eaten with chopsticks are slurped.

Blowing one's nose in public is however seen as a grave breach of etiquette. Pulling up one's nose is preferred to blowing it.

It may also occur that little naps are taken at the table, because of jetlag and the strenuous schedule.

It is customary for women to serve the men at the table, e.g. the pouring of drinks. In this way one demonstrates that men are in charge, at least in public.

Chopsticks are only used for Japanese foods. Everything else is eaten using knives and forks. Chopsticks may never be stuck vertically into rice, as this is the Buddhist ritual used at the home altar to honour ancestors.

The Japanese will call a waiter from across the room, this should therefore not be taken as an insult.

Toothpicks should always be made available after a meal and are used at table behind one's hand.

In Japan payment is made at the counter at the entrance/exit, not at the table. All travel guides will advise what the respective country's culture is in this regard, but the tour guide will also advise his group accordingly. Should a Japanese guest therefore get up before having paid, one should not assume that he is trying to abscond without paying.

In Japan, despite the excellent service, tips are not given. Travel guides do advise the travellers of this custom, but one should not be offended if the amount tipped is wrong.

10. Summary of important tips

Communication

The following points should be discussed with staff:

- Speak clearly to the guest and be discreet when making enquiries.
- Explain the use of the word 'yes'.
- Always find ways to paraphrase negative answers and offer alternatives.
- Use 'please' and 'thank you' frequently.
- Allow for longer intervals between questions & answers.
- Never relay conversations to third parties.
- Speak softer than normal.
- Make time for small talk as frequently as possible.
- Avoid negative subjects.
- Keep body language to an absolute minimum.
- Except for smiling, keep all facial expressions to a minimum.
- Avoid any body contact and do not crowd, i.e. keep ample distance.
- Do not force eye contact.
- Do not point at people or objects.

Complaint Behavior

- Maintain a close relationship with the tour guide.
- Repeat apologies several times during a conversation.

Greeting and Check-in

- Use as much Japanese vocabulary as possible.
- Use the guest's body language as a guideline.
- Smile!
- Avoid waiting periods at all cost.
- Hand over business cards using both hands.
- Take hierarchical structures into account when allocating rooms.
- Advise the guest on how floors are counted in South Africa.
- Advise guests about safety issues.
- Have city guides and information at hand.

Hotel, Room and Bathroom Interiors

Provided as part of the benefits of membership of Cape Town Tourism. For more information visit www.capetown.travel/industry, call +27 (0)21 487 6800 or email membership@capetown.travel

- Double rooms should have separate (twin) beds.
- Offer still water, not sparkling.
- Offer kettles or thermos flasks with boiling water.
- Offer slippers.
- Offer Japanese newspapers and TV channels.
- Ensure that the hygiene is of the highest standard as this is of utmost importance to Japanese guests.
- Rooms must have bathtubs.
- Be prepared for increased usage of hot water, all at the same time.
- Have toothbrushes and toothpaste sets available.

Food and Beverage

- Excellent and fast service is a must.
- Explain the economic value of Japanese guests to staff.
- Menus should include pictures of the dishes on offer.
- Avoid using flowers that are overly fragrant.
- Offer hygienic serviettes (*oshibori*)
- Advise the kitchen to work sparingly with spices and sweeteners.
- Offer small and light foods at lunch time.
- Be aware that slurping is not considered rude.
- Explain frequently used phrases to staff.
- Nose blowing in public is considered ill-mannered.
- Set tables with knives and forks, not chopsticks.

Japanese Phrases

Good morning:	<i>Ohayo gozaimasu</i> (Spoken: ohahyo gosaimasu)
Good day:	<i>Konnichi wa</i>
Good evening:	<i>Konban wa</i>
Goodbye:	<i>Syonara</i> (Spoken: sayohnara)
Good night:	<i>O-yasumi nasai</i>
Thank you very much:	<i>Domo arigato gozaimasu</i> (polite version)
One moment please:	<i>Chotto matte kudasai</i>
Very happy to make your acquaintance:	<i>Hajimemashite</i> (hadshimemashte)
Please excuse:	<i>Sumimasen</i>