

## Tokaido Trail

► TOKYO ► KAMAKURA ► HAKONE ► KYOTO ► EXCURSION DAY ► TOKYO

### Japan Facts

**Population:** 127 million  
**Capital City:** Tokyo, pop. 8.23 million (23 wards)  
**Language:** Japanese  
**Religion:** Shinto & Buddhist, 1.5% Christian  
**Currency:** Japanese Yen  
**Time:** GMT + 9 hours  
**Electricity:** 100V  
**International Dialling Code:** 81



### Tour Overview

The Tokaido Trail begins and ends in Japan's vibrant capital Tokyo where you can enjoy the many contrasts of this exciting city; the first couple of nights are spent in Asakusa, an area of the city which is dominated by the atmospheric Senso-ji temple whilst at the end of the tour we will be based in the exciting Shinjuku district where a heady mix of neon lights, restaurants, bars and shopping awaits.

#### A fantastic mix of ancient and modern

From Tokyo the tour will move on along the route of the old Tokaido Highway (now traversed by the 'Bullet' Train) taking in the old capitals of Kamakura and Kyoto and the mountainous hot-spring resort of Hakone where, if we are lucky with the weather, then a glimpse of the often elusive Mt Fuji may be on the itinerary too! In Kyoto you'll find an alluring array of temples, shrines and gardens to discover and our unique tour of the Gion district will also give you the chance to catch a glimpse of a Geisha in her traditional home.

#### Excursion day

On your third day in Kyoto you have the option of spending more time in this fascinating city or of taking an excursion using the included 7 day JR rail pass. This will give you the chance to visit Hiroshima, Himeji Castle, the gardens of Kanazawa or anywhere within day-tripping distance of the old capital! Your Tour Leader will assist you in planning your special day.

A ride back to Tokyo on the super-fast 'Bullet' Train completes what will be a truly unforgettable experience of Japan ancient and modern.

### Day-by-Day

#### Day 1 - Tokyo (D)

The tour group convenes in Tokyo. Your Tour Leader will come to the airport to meet you and escort you back into Tokyo and on to our hotel in Asakusa, the 'down-town' area of the old Edo. Many of our customers choose to arrive a day early (your leader will be available to meet you at the airport) in order to get over jet-lag and get the most out of the tour.

The first night's dinner is on us at a restaurant a short subway ride from the hotel. Please note that depending on arrival times we may hold tonight's dinner on the evening of day 2. Your Leader will let you know all the plans when you arrive.

#### Day 2 Tokyo (B)

After breakfast your tour leader will be leading a tour of the city. We'll be checking out the amazing Meiji Shrine and the fashionable district of Harajuku, and the stunning new development at Shiodome before relaxing in the beautiful Hamarikyu Gardens. You might like to take a cup of freshly made green tea served in the tea house which is the focal point of the garden.

The day will end with a 45 minute boat trip on the Sumida River which runs through the centre of Tokyo taking us back to Asakusa from where we began our day's exploring.

#### Day 3 - Kamakura (B&D)

Today we'll be making an early start... about 4.30am in actual fact if you'd like to join us at the city's morning fish market! This is a great experience and a chance to eat some of Japan's best and freshest *sushi*!

Breakfast is still available at the hotel if you would prefer. After returning to the hotel we will be departing for Kamakura. The journey takes about 1h45 from door to door. You'll be able to drop off your bags before heading off to look around some of Kamakura's many beautiful temples and shrines. The town is small enough to see all the major sights on foot and there are some really nice walking routes you might like to take. Be sure not to miss the big Buddha at Kotokuin temple.

In the evening you will be treated to an exquisite '*kaiseki*' meal at a local restaurant. The chef will specially prepare a full course meal containing no meat or fish for the vegetarians in the group.

#### Day 4 Hakone (B)

After enjoying breakfast at our hotel we will move on to Hakone. Total journey time is around 2h30. The tour includes a Hakone Free-Pass which allows you unlimited travel on all of the many forms of transport in the Hakone region; buses, funicular railway, cable car, rope-way, and even the sightseeing 'pirate' boat which crosses Lake Ashi. From here, if you're lucky and the skies are clear, you will get a stunning view of Mt. Fuji. There are lots of things to see and do in Hakone and we'll make sure you have all the necessary maps and information.

Our ryokan has a very nice outdoor hot spring 'rotemburo' bath, so you can relax after a hard day's sightseeing with a soak under the stars.





## Day-by-Day continued

### Day 5 Hakone (B)

More time to explore Hakone. You may like to take a short hike along what remains of the old Tokaido highway which used to be the major road linking Edo (modern day Tokyo) with Kyoto and Osaka. The open air sculpture museum features pieces by many world renowned artists all set against a stunning mountain backdrop. There are also all kinds of museums to visit and this is a great chance to pick up one of Hakone's famous "trick boxes" as a unique souvenir.

### Day 6 Kyoto (B&D)

After breakfast we'll be moving on to Kyoto, taking a two hour ride on the world famous 'Bullet' Train. Kyoto needs no introduction and is without doubt Japan's capital of history and culture. We'll be spending the afternoon doing some leisurely sightseeing and enjoying the hidden delights of this wonderful city. This afternoon you will join our tour of Gion and the Geisha districts with a local Geisha expert, giving you a truly unique insight into this hidden world. The tour will be followed by dinner at a local Japanese restaurant. It's sure to be an exciting day!

### Day 7 Kyoto (B)

A full day to explore some of Kyoto's wealth of sights. Check out some temples and shrines such as the exquisite hilltop Kiyomizu-dera, the Golden Pavilion or one of Kyoto's many Zen gardens.. Whatever it is you want to do, be sure to ask your Tour Leader who will be on hand to help you make the best of this day.

### Day 8 Excursion day / full day in Kyoto (B)

Today is our Excursion day – a free day for you to use your JR Rail Pass (included in the tour price) to visit a destination of your choice. Popular choices will include Hiroshima, Himeji Castle, Nara or even Kanazawa which boasts one of Japan's top 3 gardens, Kenrokuen. You can of course opt to stay in Kyoto if you wish to explore more in the city.

### Day 9 Tokyo (B)

Take the Tokaido Shinkansen back to Tokyo today for our final day in the capital. You'll be able to check out some of the sights you missed first time round or perhaps stock up on souvenirs and gifts for friends and family back home. We'll be staying right in the heart of the bright lights of Shinjuku and we hope that you will join your Tour Leader for a final night of top Japanese food and drink!

### Day 10 Sayonara (B)

It's sayonara as the tour ends and we go our separate ways. If you are leaving Japan today your Leader will make sure you have no problems getting to the airport in good time to check-in for your flight. Remember your airport transfer is included in the price so no need to worry about this. If you are

staying on a bit longer, we wish you all the best for the remainder of your visit!

## Accommodation

The following accommodation is used on the Tokaido Trail Tour.

**Tokyo** Asakusa Komagata Toyoko Inn  
Comfortable business hotel in Asakusa  
Tel. 03 3841 1045

**Kamakura** Classic Hotel Ajisai  
Small, family-run pension with a wonderful biscuit shop on the ground floor.  
Tel. 0467 22 3492

**Hakone** Fuji-Hakone Guest House  
Popular family-run guest house with great *onsen* baths  
Tel. 0460 4 6577

Hatago Ichinoyu (11 July)  
A traditional Edo style inn with indoor and outdoor hot spring baths.  
Tel: 0467 55 331

**Kyoto** Heianbo Ryokan (18 April)  
Charming old inn with classic Japanese style rooms  
Tel. 075 351 0650

Shimizu Ryokan (11 July, 14 Nov.)  
Modern Japanese style ryokan  
075 371 5538

Tomiya Ryokan (20 March)  
Japanese style inn with unique hot spring baths  
075 371 0948

**Tokyo** Star Hotel  
Comfortable business hotel in a superb location on Shinjuku's 'Ogado' crossing.  
Tel. 03-3361-1111

*Please note that accommodation is subject to change. Final details of the accommodation will be included in your Info-Pack which will be sent out approximately 4 weeks prior to the tour start date.*





## More Tour Information

### What's Included

The following elements are all included in the price of your tour:

- ✓ 9 nights accommodation
- ✓ All transport between destinations in Japan including return airport transfers and 7 day Japan Rail Pass
- ✓ Meet and greet upon arrival at Narita Airport
- ✓ Boat Trip down the Sumida River in Tokyo
- ✓ Breakfast everyday either at the hotel or a nearby restaurant
- ✓ 3 evening meals
- ✓ Walking tour of the Gion geisha district in Kyoto
- ✓ Full time services of your Tour Leader
- ✓ InsideJapan Tours' complimentary Info-Pack

### NOT included

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Local transport (buses, subways, taxis) at any destination except for that covered by the transport 'Free-Pass' in Hakone.
- ✗ Any entrance fees including those for shrines, temples and museums
- ✗ Lunches, 6 evening meals, drinks

### Bathroom arrangements

During the tour we will stay in a variety of different accommodation, some Western-style, others Japanese-style. At most night stops your room will have full en-suite facilities (attached bath, shower and toilet). However, at some Japanese-style night stops bathroom and toilet facilities may be shared. Usually bathroom facilities are available to use privately but not always! Japan has a long history of communal bathing and therefore these kind of facilities are not unusual. However, men and women always bathe separately so no need to worry about that!!

The traditional Japanese Inn in **Hakone** has private-use communal facilities. All other accommodation has full ensuite.

### Policy on single rooms

InsideJapan Tours do not charge a single supplement for most of our tours. In the Western-style hotels all single travellers will be provided with a single room. However, in Japanese-style accommodation it is traditional for people to share a room. Therefore, we will ask single travellers to share a room (same sex share) at Japanese-style night stops.

### Your Tour Leader

Our tours are led on the ground by a Tour Leader, a Japanese speaking Brit, Aussie or American who is there to ensure that you get the most out of your trip and that the whole adventure goes smoothly. The Leader travels with the group and stays at the same hotels and *ryokan* so please feel free to ask for help or advice at any time. Your Tour Leader is not a guide so may not know every historical detail of every shrine, temple or palace; equally however, s/he is available pretty much all day everyday and will even accompany (willing) tour members to karaoke...

### Flexibility

Our tours aim to be as flexible as possible, so there is no set-in-stone itinerary for each day. Each morning the Tour Leader will outline what s/he is going to do that day and will be available if you need advice about doing any other activities.

### Meals

There are a number of meals included on all our tours. **Please let us know if you have any special dietary requirements.**

### Transport on tour

Please note that all transfers are by public transport making use of Japan's first-rate transport network. All the hotels and *ryokan* have been chosen for their location close to the nearest station. However, you will have to carry your bags for short distances and some stations do not have escalators. Please see the 'Luggage' section for more information on what luggage to bring and a handy packing check-list.

### Early check-in

Upon arrival you may well be tired after a long international flight. Hotels in Japan operate strict check-in policies. If you have an early flight arrival please ask us about early check-in options.

### Visas

Entry visas not required by UK, USA, CAN, AUS & NZ citizens. For other countries please check with the Japanese embassy or consulate in your home country.

### Power and Plugs

Japan uses 100v with two pin flat blade plugs. Travellers from the USA will find that their plugs will fit into some Japanese sockets but not all. Plug adaptors are readily available in electronic stores in Japan and are not expensive. US appliances will work in Japan even though the voltage is slightly lower than North America. Travellers from the UK should purchase a plug adaptor before arrival in Japan as three pin adaptors are somewhat hard to find once you arrive.

Please note that due to the much lower voltage UK electrical appliances will not work unless they have a variable voltage power-pack (such as a lap-top computer). If you are bringing a digital camera make sure it has a power-pack or it will NOT recharge!

### Mobile Phones

Until recently overseas mobile phones have not worked at all in Japan. However, with the advent of 3G if you have a 3G enabled handset you will be able to use your mobile across most of Japan. If you do not have a 3G handset you may wish to hire a mobile for the duration of your stay. For this service InsideJapan Tours recommends **Go Mobile** as offering the best service and the best rates. You can book a mobile phone to be delivered to your first hotel in Japan and at the end of your trip you simply pop it in the post back to Go Mobile. All phones have a 3 mega-pixel camera and can send and receive email.

7 days rental costs from 2995yen which includes 15 minutes of local calls. Further information about the service can be found at [www.gomobile.co.jp](http://www.gomobile.co.jp) and an on-line booking form can be found here:

[https://www.gomobile.co.jp/order\\_form\\_in.e.php](https://www.gomobile.co.jp/order_form_in.e.php)

Please be sure to enter our agent code - **INSIDEJAPAN** - to receive your discounted price.

Even if you have a 3G handset you may wish to consider this service as the call charges will be a LOT lower and you do not have to pay to receive calls. The push-email facility (as available on Blackberry handsets in the West) is also very useful and can make keeping in touch very easy!

### Crime and personal safety

Japan is perhaps the World's safest country and personal crime is almost unheard of. You are extremely unlikely to have anything stolen whilst you are in Japan and the likelihood of being threatened in any way is almost nonexistent. It is not uncommon to leave your wallet, phone, camera or lap-top in a bar or restaurant and return hours later to find your lost property waiting for you.

However, you should still take the usual precautions: Keep large amounts of money out of sight and consider using a money belt; in your hotel room keep your valuables packed away and when out and about keep an eye on your bag and other personal effects.

Japan is also a very safe country for women to travel in and there is a very low risk of being assaulted in any way.





## Luggage

20Kgs  
(44lbs) max /  
12kgs (26lb)  
recommended  
1 main bag + 1 day  
bag + overnight  
bag



You will have to carry your own bags for most of the trip. Large cases **WILL** be an inconvenience to you and will slow down the whole group. A compact case WITH WHEELS or a good quality rucksack is appropriate for this tour. **DO NOT** bring holdalls or sports bags for your main luggage.

If you are travelling for a long time (such as a round the World ticket), then make sure you have a smaller bag as well as your large bag. Japan has a superb system of luggage forwarding (*takyubin*) meaning there is no need to carry around all the items you have with you for a year long trip! Instead you can forward them to your final hotel and they will be kept safely until you check-in. The cost of this service is between 1200 yen (for a medium sized bag) up to 1830 yen for a very large suitcase. There are no weight limits so you don't need to worry about this.

We highly recommend making use of the luggage forwarding service during your stay in Japan. For this reason we suggest you bring an overnight bag with you. This can be a smallish rucksack, a sports bag or any piece of luggage so long as it is not too big!

## Packing check-list

On this page you will find our packing check-list. This is not fully comprehensive but you should find nearly everything you could possibly need to bring on a trip to Japan! There are also a few things to keep in mind when packing.

### Clothing and footwear

Comfortable casual clothing is all that is required. Outside of business situations the Japanese are very relaxed about dress so formal attire is unnecessary. It is always possible that some of the nights outside of Kyoto and Tokyo might be cool or even cold so a jumper or fleece jacket and a light waterproof jacket are advisable. There is a certain amount of walking involved so a pair of good quality, comfortable walking shoes is also recommended.

### The obvious things!

- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Socks
- ✓ T-shirts / Polo Shirts / Casual shirts
- ✓ 2 pairs of long trousers (Jeans, Cords, Chinos etc.)
- ✓ A pair of shorts
- ✓ Sun hat
- ✓ Warm hat (Spring, Autumn and Winter)
- ✓ Light waterproof
- ✓ Light sweater (the air conditioning can be cold!)
- ✓ Night wear
- ✓ Fleece jacket, warm jumper or sweater (Spring and Autumn)
- ✓ Warm coat (winter only)
- ✓ Comfortable shoes or trainers
- ✓ Walking shoes / boots
- ✓ Open-toed sandals
- ✓ Small hand towel (to dry your hands in public restrooms)
- ✓ Swimwear (if you want to go to a public pool). Western ladies find it very hard to find swimwear to fit in

- Japan so it is best to bring your own
- ✓ Day sack / small back pack
- ✓ Overnight bag

### Documents

- ✓ Your passport!!
- ✓ A copy of your passport
- ✓ Credit cards
- ✓ Your travel insurance / health insurance documentation

### Toiletries / Health products

Nearly all toiletries are widely available in Japan. However, many people prefer to use their own brands so you will need to bring these with you.

- ✓ Tooth brush, Tooth paste
- ✓ Contact lens equipment or Glasses
- ✓ Deodorant (most people do not like Japanese brands so be sure to bring your own!)
- ✓ Shower gel / Shampoo (these are provided at every night stop but you may prefer your own)
- ✓ Tampons and Pads
- ✓ Mosquito repellent
- ✓ Sunscreen and After-sun cream
- ✓ Comb or Brush
- ✓ Condoms or Contraceptive Pills
- ✓ Hair products (gel, spray etc.)
- ✓ Lip balm
- ✓ Razor & shaving gel
- ✓ Tampons and Pads

Your tour leader carries a well stocked first aid kit so you do not need bandages, plasters (band aids) or other similar products. However, you may wish to bring:

- ✓ Pain killers (Aspirin, paracetamol, Ibuprofen etc.)
- ✓ Motion sickness tablets

### Miscellaneous

- ✓ Paper / notebook (for writing your diary!)
- ✓ Pen / pencil
- ✓ Reading material - a good book never goes amiss!
- ✓ Earplugs (good on the plane and if you are sharing a room)
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Camera recharger / spare camera batteries (charged!)
- ✓ Inflatable travel pillow
- ✓ Phrase books or Dictionaries
- ✓ Laundry detergent (available in Japan but you may prefer your own brand)
- ✓ Plug converter (for recharging your digital camera)

### You do NOT need

- ✗ **An Umbrella** - these are available everywhere in Japan for a very low cost
- ✗ **A large towel** - towels are provided at all night stops on our tours
- ✗ **Regular Batteries** - All standard battery sizes are available to buy in convenience stores for less than the UK price
- ✗ **A hair dryer** - these are provided at nearly all night stops. Hair dryers brought from the UK will not work due to the lower voltage in Japan.





## Money and currency

### What money to bring

The Japanese Yen is the currency in Japan and you should make sure that you have access to plenty of it during your stay as Japan is still very much a cash society. There are several different ways to get your hands on those precious yen and it is just a case of deciding which suits you best.

### Obtaining money

#### Travellers Cheques

You can change travellers cheques at banks across Japan as well as at the airport upon arrival. However, it can be a time consuming process. We recommend bringing travellers cheques only if you intend to change all of them for yen at the airport (where the exchange takes next to no time), or if you wish to keep them as emergency back-up. It is probably best to bring your travellers cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling as you can change these anywhere. Euro, Australian Dollars and Canadian Dollars are also widely accepted. You can bring JPY travellers cheques but you will be hit for charges changing them back to your home currency should you decide not to use them.

#### Japanese yen in cash

This is one of the best ways to bring yen to Japan. You can purchase yen from most banks or in the UK from the post office. You can then be sure to arrive in Japan well equipped with currency. Again, make sure you don't bring more than you plan on spending as you will have to pay to convert any leftovers into your home currency.

#### Foreign Currency in cash

You can bring your home currency in cash to change at the airport or at banks and post offices during the tour. You actually get a better rate for cash at the airport than for travellers cheques. It is also much quicker to change cash at the post office than it is to change travellers cheques at a bank. However, not all post offices and banks offer this service so you can end up spending time trying to find one that does!

#### Credit / Debit cards

Possibly the most convenient way to manage your money in Japan is to use your credit or debit card to withdraw cash from ATMs. **Every post office and 7-11 convenience store in the country has an ATM that will except your foreign issued cards.** Just be sure that you know your 4 digit PIN. It is also advisable to notify your card issuer before you travel that you will be in Japan, otherwise there is a possibility that the transaction will be blocked for security reasons.

In conclusion we recommend using a combination of a couple of methods to manage your money whilst you are in Japan. We suggest bringing a substantial amount of JPY in cash to Japan or changing a large amount of money at the airport. If you need more we suggest using your credit or debit card to make withdrawals from the post office or 7-11 ATMs.

### How much money will I need?

This is the \$1000 question so to speak! Everybody spends a different amount when they visit. However, nearly everyone finds Japan a lot less expensive than they were expecting. Eating out is very reasonable and as food is one of the biggest expenses (and pleasures!) when travelling, this helps keep costs down.

Local transport, which is generally NOT included in our tour packages, is also not expensive with the highest fare on the Tokyo subway being just 310 yen. Entrance fees to shrines, temples and museums are also very reasonable with most being in the region of 200-300 yen. Occasionally you will need to pay as much as 1000 yen but this is not the norm.

As a rough guide we recommend 100,000 yen per person as a good amount to cover basic costs on a 2 week trip. This should cover your meals, drinks, local transport and any entrance fees. What this won't cover are souvenirs and other purchases you may wish to make. Beer and drinks can also add up very quickly so if you like a tippie of an evening you may need to budget a bit more.

### Emergency Funds

When travelling abroad it is always advisable to have emergency funds tucked away somewhere in case of unexpected occurrences. In Japan this is not such an issue as it might be in other parts of Asia but it is perhaps best not to rely on your plastic for this money. We recommend keeping £100 / \$200 of cash on one side. This can be in your home currency or in yen but make sure it is there and don't spend it! You never know when you might need those extra funds.

### Exchange Rates

During 2007 the yen reached record lows against the pound and weakened considerably against the US Dollar. However, 2008 has seen a considerable shift in the currency markets which sadly has pushed up the cost of travelling in Japan. However, after 15 years of 0% inflation Japan is still an affordable destination and is a world away from the

crazy prices of the bubble era.

### Exchange rates as of 16th December 2008:

- 1 Australian Dollar AUD = 61 yen
- 1 British Pound GBP = 135 yen
- 1 Canadian Dollar CAD = 73 yen
- 1 Euro EUR = 124yen
- 1 United States Dollar USD 89 yen

Be sure to have a look at the rates before you travel as the levels are unlikely to continue indefinitely.

### Tipping

There is no tipping in Japan. This means that at restaurants you should not leave anything extra on top of the bill and you should not tip staff in hotels or taxi drivers. However, if you feel your Tour Leader has done an outstanding job on your tour a tip is always appreciated!

### Every day prices

Loaf of bread	200 yen
Big Mac Meal	620 yen
Litre of milk	180 yen
Banana	100 yen
Litre of Petrol	123 yen
Snickers	120 yen
500ml beer	290 yen
Shop sandwich	230 yen
Umbrella	500 yen
Newspaper	150 yen
Bottle of water	150 yen
Subway journey	160-310 yen
Taxi (per car for 2km)	680 yen
Starbucks Tall Latte	360 yen

Entrance to a shrine/temple/museum: Usually between 200 yen and 600 yen per person.

Lunch: Sit-down lunch around 1000 yen, sandwich / *onigiri* / snacks from a convenience store around 500 yen. Beef bowl from Yoshinoya is 400 yen.

Dinner: Multi-course meal around 3000 yen per person, bowl of noodles up to 1000 yen per person, hot "*bento*" (box) dinner from a convenience store around 800 yen per person.

Of course, as in every country you can pay a LOT more for food if you like. Some restaurants in Tokyo and Kyoto will set you back as much as £250 / \$500 per person! However, if your tastes are not too extravagant then there is no reason to spend large sums on your meals.





## Climate

Japan has four distinct seasons with winter being quite cold but dry, spring warm with regular rainy days, summer very hot and humid and autumn warm and wet for the first few weeks and dry towards the end. There is also the risk of typhoons from July through to around the middle of October.

Below you can find a chart of the average temperatures in Tokyo through the year. This is a good indicator of the kind of temperatures you can expect to experience during your trip. However, Japan is a geographically very diverse country and this does have an effect on the temperature. The western regions of Honshu and Kyushu island can be quite a lot hotter than Tokyo. The reverse goes for

the northern regions of the country which can get a lot colder than Tokyo. Much of Japan is mountainous and of course, the higher elevation you go, the colder it gets!

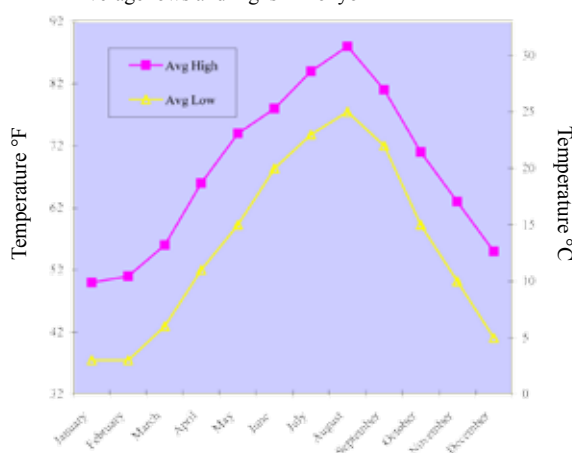
Temperatures in Hokkaido can reach as low as -25 °C in winter with very heavy snowfall. The same goes for the Japan Alps and other mountain regions of Japan. Be sure to take all this into account when packing for your trip. If you are heading up into the mountains you will need warmer clothing. Even in summer the temperatures can drop quite low during the night.

You can be sure that it will rain during your stay in Japan! In fact average rainfall is nearly double that of the UK so it really

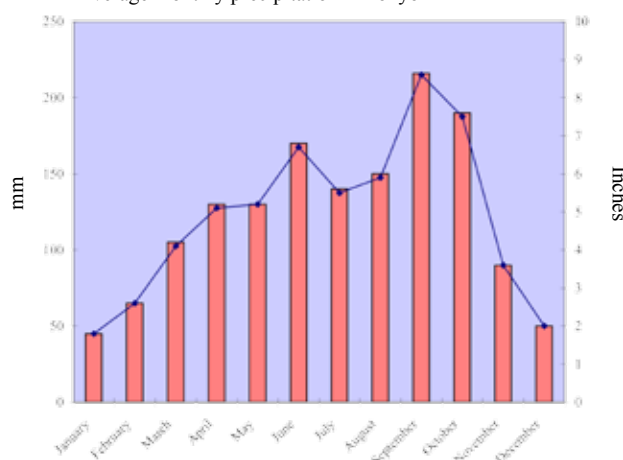
does rain a lot. The wettest month of the year is September. However, this is mainly because of typhoons dumping huge amounts of rain in very short spaces of time, so you do get a lot of dry days as well as the very rainy ones!

Rainy season in Tokyo officially begins on 8th June and runs through until 20th July. However, the period of heaviest rain tends to be the last week in June and the first week in July. As with all these things though, exactly how much rain will fall in rainy season is very hard to predict and some years you really wouldn't know it was rainy season at all!

Average lows and highs in Tokyo



Average monthly precipitation in Tokyo



## Recommended Reading

There is no shortage of reading matter for Japan whether it be non-fiction books about Japan, Japanese fiction or non-Japanese fiction about Japan. Here are some of our top recommendations for both reading and viewing.

### Novels

Matsuo Basho: Narrow Road into the Deep North  
 Haruki Murakami: Norwegian Wood, Dance Dance Dance, The Wind-up Bird Chronicle  
 Banana Yoshimoto: Kitchen  
 Murasaki: Tales of Genji  
 Soseki: Botchan/ I am a cat  
 Junichiro Tanizaki: The Makioka Sisters, In Praise of Shadows  
 James Clavell: Shogun  
 Arthur Golden: Memoirs of a Geisha  
 Liz Dalby: Geisha  
 Pico Iyer: The Lady and the Monk  
 Natsuo Kirino: Out  
 Giles Milton: Samurai William

### Non-fiction

John Lowe: Old Kyoto - A Short Social History  
 Will Ferguson: Hokkaido Highway Blues – Hitching in Japan  
 John Bester and Junichi Saga: Confessions of a Yakuza: A life in Japan's underworld  
 Dr. John Nathan: Japan Unbound  
 Stephen Addiss: How to Look at Japanese Art

Kakuzo Okakura: The Book of Tea  
 Donald Richie: The Inland Sea  
 Nicholas Bornoff: Pink Samurai  
 Robert Whiting: You've Gotta Have Wa  
 Patrick Smith: Japan - A Reinterpretation  
 Alex Kerr: Lost Japan  
 Jeff Yang et al: Eastern Standard Time  
 P. Sean Bramble: Culture Shock Japan

### Recommended Viewing

Takeshi Kitano: Zatoichi, Hanabi, Dolls  
 Studio Ghibli: Spirited Away, Princess Mononoke  
 Akira Kurosawa: The Seven Samurai  
 Tetsuya Nakashima: Kamikaze Girls  
 Sofia Coppola: Lost in Translation  
 Rob Marshall: Memoirs of a Geisha  
 Katsuyuki Motohiro: Summer Time Machine Blues  
 Shunji Awai: All about Lily Chou-chou (Riri Shushu no subete)  
 Kinji Fukasaku: Battle Royale  
 Hideo Nakata: Ringu

Check out <http://www.midnighteye.com/> for the latest and best in Japanese cinema.

