



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DOING A WORKING HOLIDAY IN JAPAN

By boobooSKI –
Japan Working Holiday Specialists



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Welcome to our Ultimate Guide to Doing a Working Holiday in Japan. We at boobooSKI have been helping Working Holiday Makers have the time of their lives in Japan for almost 10 years now.

Based on feedback, suggestions, and questions from past staff, we've spent years compiling and updating these notes to give you the best possible overview of everything you need to know about doing a Working Holiday in Japan, and all the wonderful things you can (and should) do while in the country.



BACKGROUND: TYPES OF VISAS IN JAPAN



To work in Japan you need a Visa. Below are the different Visas and brief descriptions of what they are, how to get them, and what they are suitable for.

Working Visa

A Working Visa is suitable for people who wish to undertake long-term work on a full-time basis.

There are many sub-categories of Working Visas, although that is not so important and not something you need to worry about. The category of Working Visa will vary based on the kind of work your full-time job entails, but all of the categories are all the same when it comes to the Visa's main function – allowing you to live and work in Japan.

To get a Working Visa a company will need to be your 'sponsor', and present you with a 12-month contract and other documentation which you can present to either an immigration office within Japan, or an embassy or consulate if applying for the Visa from overseas.

Spousal Visa

On a Spousal Visa there are no limitations to the hours you can work or the type of work you can undertake in Japan. However, as the name of the visa suggests, you need to be married to a Japanese national to be eligible for this Visa.

Unfortunately Japan does not recognize same-sex marriages.

Child of a Japanese National

To be eligible for this Visa, one of your parents must be a citizen of Japan. Often in such a situation you may have a Japanese passport. In that case you too are a Japanese citizen and can travel to Japan on your passport without the need for any other documentation.

If you have a Japanese parent, but do not have Japanese citizenship yourself, you can use this Visa to come to Japan. The Visa is easy to apply for through your nearest embassy or consulate, and the length of the Visa is longer than that of a Working Holiday Visa or Working Visas which are typically only 12-months to begin with. A Child of a Japanese National Visa is 3-years in length.

Permanent Residency

If you have Japanese Permanent Residency, that's great! If you don't, you probably aren't eligible yet anyway. To get Japanese permanent residency first requires you to have spent a long period of time living and working in Japan – often upwards of 10 years.

When exactly someone becomes eligible to apply for PR is somewhat of a mystery to everyone as there are no clear guidelines. Many people try unsuccessfully once or twice before finally getting Japanese Permanent Residency.

We should also point out that unlike in English, there is no word meaning 'permanent' in the Japanese equivalent of Japanese Permanent Residency. A direct translation of the Japanese term for this visa, 永住権, pronounced 'ei-juken', means 'long-term residency permit'. Living outside of Japan for an extended period of time will result in the loss of this Visa.



Student Visa

A student Visa allows you to undertake study or research at a formal learning institution. The institution must provide documentation to you and immigration, similar to how a company sponsors those who wish to get a Working Visa.

On a Student Visa part-time work is allowed, although a special certificate must be sought from immigration while in Japan, and the work must not exceed 28 hours/week.

Dependent Visa

A Dependent Visa is ideal for someone who may be living with their non-Japanese parents while they work in Japan.

Part-time work is allowed, although the work must not exceed 28 hours/week.





Working Holiday Visa

Working Holiday Programmes are designed to foster young people with global perspective and enhance friendly relationship between Japan and partner countries/ regions.

Working Holiday participants are allowed to work for a certain period of their stay in order to cover the cost of travel funds to travel and stay in Japan.

Working Holiday participants can engage in any kind of job as long as their stay is deemed to be primarily a holiday in Japan.





AM I ELIGIBLE FOR A WORKING HOLIDAY VISA?

As the eligibility requirements and participating countries in the Working Holiday Visa reciprocal arrangement are constantly changing, we recommend you visit the Japanese Government's official website for the most recent details to check if you are eligible for a Working Holiday Visa.

http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/w_holiday/index.html

At the time of writing, in order to be eligible for a Working Holiday Visa, you must be:

- a citizen/national of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark or Norway currently residing in his or her country of citizenship, or must be a resident of Taiwan or Hong Kong.
- must intend primarily to holiday in Japan for a specific length of time.
- must be between 18 and 30 years of age.
- must possess a valid passport and a return ticket or sufficient funds to purchase a return ticket.
- must possess reasonable funds for living expenses, including medical expenses, during the period of the initial stay in Japan. For a single person, the minimum is US\$2000, for a married couple, US\$3000 or equivalent amount of the national currency. (France:3100Euro).
- must be in good health and not have a criminal record.



ADVANTAGES OF A WORKING HOLIDAY VISA

Contrary to popular belief, it's now very easy to get a Visa which allows you to work or study in Japan. However, there are many advantageous points to a Working Holiday Visa – some of which are either overlooked or not utilised fully by many people.

Freedom

As a Working Holiday Visa allows you to move around Japan working odd jobs here and there, you have the freedom to go from place to place, seeing much more of Japan than would be possible if located in one place for the entire year.

If you come to Japan on a Tourist Visa, you get freedom to travel like on a Working Holiday Visa, however there are two huge differences:

- 1) You only have 3 months.
- 2) You can't work, so unless you have significant savings before arriving in Japan you wouldn't be able to sustain the life-style a Working Holiday maker could.

A Working Visa allows you to work in Japan, but only applies to full-time work, and only if a company sponsors you for the Visa. In such a case you will be fixed in a sole location due to your job, restricting travel to mainly weekends and public holidays – assuming that is, that you aren't required to work them as many English teaching jobs require.

Similarly, as a student on a Student Visa you have classes which you must attend that limit your ability to freely travel around Japan.

Choice

Finding employment can normally be quite challenging due to the Visa issue – a company would need to sponsor you for the Working Visa. Student Visas, Dependent Visas, and other Visas allow work up to 28 hours a week, but often such restrictions are a turn-off for employers, and would seriously impact the chances of you finding work.



By contrast, a Working Holiday Visa allows employers to legally hire you, with minimal paperwork and far less restrictions. This makes it a lot easier to find work and gives you more choice when it comes to finding employment.

Time

On a Working Holiday you get one year (or 18-months in the case of Australian citizens). That is plenty of time to work a little (in either one or several locations) and travel extensively.

While a tourist Visa (or the 90-day Visa exemption period for tourists of selected countries) still gives a substantial amount of time if you wish to view the major tourist destinations, a Working Holiday gives you the time you need to settle into one (or a few) communities and get so much more out of your experience.

Ease

Unlike a Working Visa or a Student Visa, a Working Holiday Visa is very easy to get. Simply fill out the paperwork and submit it to your nearest Japanese consulate or embassy. The application is also free (More details on the application process later in this guide).

While in Japan, you will be deducted 20% tax for the first 12-months, though this is not because you are on a Working Holiday Visa. The 20% tax deduction applies to anyone living in Japan for their first 12-months, including Japanese passport holders who grew up overseas.

Once in Japan, the Visa is looked upon favorably by employers, making it easier to secure a job than on many other Visa types.





WHY JAPAN?

The fact that you are reading this guide means you probably already have a rather clear idea of why you want to experience Japan, although if you're keen to learn more, I found this to be an incredibly accurate (and beautifully written) article:

http://www.adventuresinjapan.com/about_japan.html



PART 1:

APPLYING FOR THE VISA

So you've decided that doing a Working Holiday in Japan sounds like a fantastic idea. What's next?

Application Requirements for a Working Holiday Visa

Note: If you are keen to work in a Hotel/Resort as part of your Working Holiday experience, we do not recommend you apply for a Working Holiday Visa until after you apply online via our website and receive a tentative offer (usually about 4-6 weeks before the job is due to start).

If you do decide to apply through us, successfully receive a tentative offer, and accept it, we will send you detailed information on how to apply for your Working Holiday Visa at that time.

Until then, you don't need to do anything (except study Japanese to improve your chances of being offered a position as much as possible)!

If you decide to go to Japan anyway, regardless of whether or not you apply for Hotel/Resort work through us, there are a few things you should know before applying for your Working Holiday Visa.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

When you apply for your Working Holiday Visa, the Japanese Consulate will want to see that some thought has gone into planning your trip, so you'll need to give them a "Proposed Itinerary", detailing where you plan to go, and what you plan to see and do.



Even if you are only planning on staying in Japan for a few months, the Visa office often like you to fill out a full 6-month itinerary (because that is the initial length of the Visa you will be receiving).

Once in Japan you're allowed to change your plans anytime, it's just to show the embassy/consulate that you aren't doing the Working Holiday on a whim, and are seriously interested in learning about the culture while you are there.

In addition to the various popular guidebooks you can pick up at any book-store or library, there are also some fantastic online resources to help you learn about all the wondrous sights, flavours, cultural intricacies, and exciting things to do around the country. Here are some of our recommended resources:

[*http://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan/things-to-do*](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan/things-to-do)

[*http://www.japan-talk.com/jt/new/102-things-to-do-in-Japan*](http://www.japan-talk.com/jt/new/102-things-to-do-in-Japan)

[*http://japantravelmate.com/50-things-to-do-see-in-japan/*](http://japantravelmate.com/50-things-to-do-see-in-japan/)

For some of our own favourite ideas, check out our Blog post about the topic: [**Our Suggested Itinerary for Making the Most of your Working Holiday in Japan**](#)



Proof of Sufficient Funds

At the time of application for a Working Holiday Visa you must show that you have a few thousand dollars available in your bank account (the actual amount depends on your country). The Visa office needs to know you have sufficient funds to pay for your airfare, and support yourself while living in Japan. You will need to submit a bank statement as proof.

We know this kind of money can be hard to raise. Before their Visa application, many of our Resort work applicants receive “gifts” from their parents, of a few thousand dollars. This is fine, as long as you show the Visa office an accompanying letter from your parents, explaining that they have given you the money for your stay in Japan.

Tips for Filling Out the Documents



There is a question in the application forms about a “Guarantor or Reference in Japan”. If you have friends etc. in Japan, you can put their details here, or if not, it’s OK to just leave this section blank, or write “N/A”.

There is also a “Declaration of Intent” document, where you must include “Names and Addresses of persons you Intend to stay with” – in this section, apparently you have to research a hotel/hostel (or friend’s house) where you might stay, and include their details in your application.

Upon arriving in Japan, one of the 1st things you have to do is to register your new address at your local City Hall anyway, so the address you give in the Declaration of Intent document is not so important.

You may also need to submit a “Written reason for applying for a Working Holiday Visa”. This should be about one A4 page in length, and should include all the reasons that you’d love to visit Japan.





Applying for a Working Holiday Visa

NOTE: You must be in your Country of Nationality to apply for a Working Holiday Visa.

The Application Process varies slightly depending on which country you are from, but you can generally download the relevant application forms from your local Japanese Consulate website. Visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan website to read all about the Visa Application process, find out the specific requirements for your country, and find links to your local consulate, including details about how and where to apply:

http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/w_holiday/index.html

The Visa can take up to 3+ weeks to process.

Take care to provide all the necessary documentation and a suitable photo – Japanese are very particular about this.

If you ever have any questions about the process, feel free to **contact us** anytime – we're here to help!





PART 2: PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

NOTE: As mentioned previously, if you are planning on applying through us for Hotel/Resort work, we do not recommend you start preparing for your trip until after you receive a tentative offer (usually about 4-6 weeks before the job is due to start).

If you successfully receive a tentative offer, and accept it, we will then send you detailed information on how to prepare for your trip. Until then, you don't need to do anything.

If you decide to go to Japan anyway, regardless of whether or not you plan to find temporary work in a Hotel/Resort, this information should help you prepare:



Practice your Japanese

There are some great free text / audio resources out there:

<http://www.nhk.or.jp/lesson/english/>

<http://www.freejapaneselessons.com>

<http://www.howtospeakjapanese.ca>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/japanese/>

You might also find our own list of **Japanese expressions** useful. We have compiled this list for our applicants who work in Ski and Beach resorts around Japan, although many of the expressions are also applicable in daily life.

Are you a university student? If so, your uni probably has either a club, or something less formal like a fortnightly language exchange group (often with Japanese exchange students who come along to help). Other groups that seem to be popular are ones where people go out to Japanese restaurants every few weeks, or watch Japanese films. Joining such clubs and groups is a great way to practice your Japanese, meet others who share a love of Japan, and to meet Japanese people studying in your country.

Ask your uni student services department or Japanese teachers about these clubs or groups. Not happy with the groups at your uni? Try starting one! Facebook makes that very easy!



You may also be interested in taking Japanese Language lessons before you go. We are proud to offer an Intensive Japanese language course encompassing 8 Online Group lessons, for only USD\$79.

Regardless of your Japanese level, or whether or not you are interested in working in a Resort through us while in Japan,

our Language Course will help brush-up your speaking ability, to give you a better head-start when you arrive.

For further details or to enrol in our Japanese Language Course, please visit:
<http://www.boobooski.com/language-course/>





Book your Flight

Over the years, we have found the following sites are the best place to find the cheapest flights, anywhere in the world.

<http://skyscanner.com>

<http://www.priceline.com>

<http://flightfox.com>

Purchase Travel Insurance

We like travel insurance from **World Nomads** because they offer the best value travel insurance that we've found so far. If you can find something better then please let us know and we will update this info!



Prepare a Japanese Resume

Regardless of your plans while in Japan, at some point you will most likely need to fill out a Japanese resume (in Japanese), to submit to your potential employer.

As you are a foreigner, and the Japanese understand your command of the language will be limited, it doesn't need to be detailed; just a brief description of your personal details, education, work experience etc.

You can download the most common Japanese Resume Template [here](#).

You can also download a **Sample Resume** (with English Headings) that we prepared for our Resort work applicants, to give you an idea of what to write.

If you need help writing Japanese, we recommend you ask your Japanese teachers (if you have any), or someone you know who can write Japanese. Again, it doesn't need to be detailed – even a few simple words should be fine.

NOTE: Always remember to stick a passport-size photo onto the top-right corner of your Resume. Not attaching a photo to your Resume is considered very rude in Japan.

Pack your Bags

You might find these lists useful - they are the packing lists we send to our Beach and Ski Resort staff before they come to Japan. There may be a few additional items you may not need if you don't plan on sampling Japan's amazing Resorts, but most of the items will be useful to bring, no matter what you plan to do while you're there!

Packing List if you're coming to Japan in [Winter](#) / [Summer](#).





8F

和民

7F

和民

6F

はや

4.5F

はや

はや

3F

全品 280円

2F

白木屋

1F

珈琲の青山

B1F

びくりドンキ

白木屋

ガルフネッ

www.gulfnet.com

かた

らめん専門店

文庫

珈琲の青山

びくり

PART 3: ARRIVING IN JAPAN

We want to make sure you have all the info you need to get settled in to Japan comfortably, so you can make the most of your Working Holiday experience, without the setting-up hassles that many people go through in the beginning!

Even if you don't decide to apply for Hotel/Resort work through us, we're always here for you. So if you ever need help/advice with anything at all, for the entire time you're in Japan, feel free to **Contact us** anytime!

Here are some of our most useful tips/ideas for your time in Japan:





Resident Card

The Japanese Government recently reformed their immigration system, and now all foreigners are issued with a “Resident Card” when they arrive at the airport. Read our **Blog post** for full details about how this applies to you, and what conditions you will have to abide by while you are there.

Getting Around

If you’re wanting to get to/from an airport, Limousine Buses are usually the cheapest/easiest way to get there, and generally depart from most major train stations / hotels.

For traveling throughout the country, although they’re slightly more expensive, Trains provide a much more scenic trip than **Highway buses**.

Don’t know how to get somewhere? Just type in your Origin and Destination on this handy website, and it’ll display all the possible routes for you:

<http://www.jorudan.co.jp/english/norikae/e-norikayin.html>

If you’re traveling each day to/from work, buy a “Teiki-ken”, which is either a weekly or monthly pass, saving about 10% off the normal fare, and meaning you don’t need to stop and buy tickets every time.





Sight-Seeing

Kyoto and Nara are 2 must-see locations if you make it over to West Japan. Himeji castle and Hiroshima are also breathtaking.

If you're there in Spring, the cherry- blossom season is not to be missed (or even better, the Ume blossoms which start blooming in March-April are even more beautiful in our opinion)! Make sure you head to a Temple / Shrine to really witness these flowers in all their glory.

In the East, Fuji-san opens to climb in Spring, but be sure to pack some warm clothes! Nikko is also apparently well worth a visit. Tokyo has to be done, but if you plan to live and work in Japan for a while, we definitely recommend the Kansai area instead (Osaka / Kobe / Kyoto / Nara) – much less claustrophobic, and more cultural! (not to mention Osaka people are known for having the best sense of humour in Japan).

Short-term Accommodation

24hr onsen, usually called “Kenkouland” (健康ランド), are very cheap and fun alternatives to staying in a hotel – and often have “Capsule” hotels, which are a must-do while you're here! They're usually located very close to major stations – ask at the Information desk at the station, or taxi drivers should know the nearest ones. Tennoji Spa World (Osaka) is the biggest indoor Spa in the world – don't miss it!

For very short stays (a few days), try Googling “cheap hotel japan” or “cheap hostel japan”, and you should be able to find a nice selection of places.

Some places we've come across over the years:

Toco – Tokyo Heritage Hostel – awesome staff, and a beautiful traditional Japanese style building complete with garden (they also have a fantastic new guesthouse nearby, **Nui**).

Guest House **BOLA BOLA** in Kyoto

TEN hostel Osaka /Guesthouse U-en

Sen Guesthouse, located in historic Matsuyama on the rustic Japanese island of Shikoku.

If you can read a bit of Japanese, **“Jalan”** allows you to book almost any hotel in Japan, at much cheaper rates than if you book anywhere else!

For weekly or monthly rental options, **Borderless House** is apparently a great-fun share house to stay in with other Japanese and foreigners. **“Gaijinpot”** and **“Metropolis”** websites should also have a good range of accommodation options for foreigners.

Finding an Apartment

For the Kansai region (Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Nara), the **“Kansai Flea Market”** (KFM) will probably be your best source of apartments for rent. The KFM also includes “Sayonara sale” information, posted by people going home who often need to get rid of their items as quickly as possible, so will often accept peanuts just for you to take it off their hands!

As for decking your apartment out with all the utensils etc., Daiso, or other 100yen shops are a fantastically economical way to get everything you need, from cutting boards to coat-hangers to toilet brushes, all in one easy, cheap, place!

Wherever you end up, don’t forget to update your registered address at your new local city office (and don’t forget to visit your city office when you’re leaving to - you’ll need a certificate to show you’re moving).

Finding a Job

Hotel/Resort Work

If you apply online through us, we’ll do our best to source the best position for you, and usually let you know at least 4-6 weeks before it starts. We also provide delivery to your Hotel/Resort, and support for the entire time you’re there.

There are quite a few positions available each season, so if you’ve got any friends that might be keen, please tell them about us too!





What Visa you Need for Hotel/Resort Positions:

Most people coming to Japan to partake in Hotel/Resort positions do so on a Working Holiday Visa. This is because other than a spousal Visa, Japanese PR, having a Japanese passport (citizenship) or a being a child of a Japanese national, it is the only Visa which allows you to participate in the kind of work these positions entail, free of the restrictions of those listed below.

Working Visas, Student Visas, Dependent Visas and Tourist Visas are not suitable.

Volunteer

It's Not Just Mud (INJM) is a non-profit volunteer organization specializing in disaster relief, grass-root support and rehabilitation of disaster affected individuals and small businesses. They are based in Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture, Japan and work in the Tohoku region.



Teaching / Other Jobs

A simple comparison:

English teaching = any location = less Japanese immersion but more money (though higher living costs in the cities erode your savings).

Resort work = Snow/beach = great experience, make friends, improve your Japanese, but less money.

If you prefer teaching / other jobs in the big cities, check out the **“Gaijinpot”** website. It has the largest listing of various jobs of any website we’ve seen.

The magazine **“Metropolis”** is also pretty good for Tokyo jobs, or if you prefer to work in the Kansai area (Osaka / Kyoto / Nara / Kobe), the **“Kansai Flea Market”** has the best list of jobs / accommodation etc. in its weekly publication.

If you’re headed to Tokyo, the Japan Association of Working Holiday Makers (**JAWHM**) may provide some great resources to not only help you find a job, but help you get settled in as well.

QUESTIONS? WE’RE HERE TO HELP

We hope the above information proves useful for planning your Japanese adventure.

Wishing you the most awesome Working Holiday experience to come!

Your friendly team,

<http://www.boobooski.com>

<http://www.japaninternship.net>

boobooSKI Pty. Ltd.

contactus@boobooski.com

Call / Chat with us for free on **SKYPE** (username: booboooski).

24hr Support Lines:

Australia: (+61) 3-9018-7280 (or 03-9018-7280 if calling from within Australia),

Japan: (+81)80-2445-0138 (or 080-2445-0138 if calling from within Japan).



