

Welcome to Disha Indian International School!

To help you in your decision process, or if you have already made a decision to come to DIIS, you have picked a beautiful country, rich in culture and history.

Japan has a deserved reputation as a safe, clean and welcoming country with a rich cultural heritage, great natural beauty and travel opportunities in all seasons. Its highly efficient transportation systems, affordable daily conveniences and wide selection of foods for all diets make it an easy place to live. Although the Japanese language is a challenging one to learn, the general level of English ability has improved and with the proliferation of technology, language barriers are addressed more readily than before, making many aspects of Japanese society more accessible to the international community.

DIIS Campus is located in a quiet residential neighborhood of Yokohama city and is also very convenient for families who choose to live in Tokyo, which is just over 45 minutes away by express train.

Climate

Japan experiences all four seasons. In August, when you arrive, you can expect the weather to be very hot and humid (average 30C or 86F), with some rainy days (10 on average). The heat continues until the end of September (average 26C or 78.8F). Autumn is beautiful with warm days and pleasantly cool evenings. Typhoons may be experienced until early October. From mid-December on, the weather turns cold. The temperature at this time is on average 1C- 11C (33.8F - 51.8F), but there is little snow in Tokyo. Spring brings a mix of pleasantly warm and not so pleasant days, with a fair amount of rain. It really begins to warm up in late April or May, again with intermittent rain (with an average of ten rainy days each month).

Culture Shock

A certain amount of culture shock is inevitable with any move. What you will probably need to accustom yourselves to first, are the crowds of people. Japan is very crowded, and nowhere more so than in Tokyo and Yokohama. If you have come from a less densely populated area, this can be a shock. If you drive you will experience more crowds on the roads as well, and trains are frequently packed, especially in the rush hour. Nonetheless, the trains are an excellent means of transportation.

Crime is increasing in Japan, but compared to almost anywhere else in the world it is still very safe, and crime against westerners is very low. Opportunistic crimes, such as mugging are uncommon.

For many people, the food can seem very unusual at first. While it is possible to get many western foods, at a price, you will also find many Japanese foods that are very different, and at first will often have no idea what to do with it, but gradually you will discover and enjoy new foods. Some favourite treats from home can help the transition. Another shock will be the prices of some items that are substantially cheaper at home. In the end you learn to live with it, but it can be a while before you buy one celery stalk for the equivalent of two dollars!

Even though Japan is expensive, your salary allows you to live very comfortably here. Taxes are relatively low. Sending money back to your bank account overseas is probably easiest done through GoLloyds (you can get more information from this at school, generally bank transfers cost around ¥2,000). Citibank online banking is efficient and easy if you bank with them. You will also find relatively good access to English speaking staff at branches and via the banks telephone banking service.

The School will also help you arrange a bank account, into which your salary will be paid directly.

It is very easy to visit other parts of Asia from Tokyo, and there are many reasonable package deals. Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, and Bali are just a few of the popular destinations. Ironically you may find it more expensive to travel within Japan itself, than to go to other countries. Good package deals are often available in Japan, and are frequently cheaper than trying to organise a trip on your own.

Arriving By Air

Be sure to make the time and date of your arrival known to the DIIS office. A DIIS representative will pick you up. Be sure to inform the school of your actual departure date as well as your arrival date and which airline you are on. All overseas-hired staff should book their flight to Japan by in collaboration with DIIS office.

Modes of Transportation

It will be important for you to find out where your apartment is located in proximity to the school. This may determine your transportation needs.

A bicycle is a popular mode of transportation. Scooters and mopeds are fairly inexpensive but are vulnerable to the interesting driving conditions found in Japan. They require international driving permits.

A car, albeit the most expensive mode, protects you from the elements as well as provides you an easy means of independent mobility. Be prepared to rely on others, your feet, or a bicycle as car purchasing takes time. Driving in Japan is on the left side of the road, a fact that newcomers adjust to quickly.

Public Transportation

Subways and trains are a very popular mode of travel in Japan. If you are fortunate to live near a train station then you can easily get around Yokohama and Tokyo and its neighbourhoods. The train will take you to certain key stations in order to take the subway which is the most popular mode of travel in Yokohama or Tokyo.

The average train fare is 300-400 yen and the subway fare is 200-230. The system is clean and runs on time, but stops at midnight. If you plan on going to restaurants or pubs in downtown, you will have to make arrangements for transportation between midnight and 5:00 am as the trains and subways do not run during these hours. Japan has a ZERO tolerance policy for drinking so alternate transportation is a must if you plan on enjoying the nightlife available. Buses are plentiful in many areas and are useful for getting to various parts of the city and some of the major train stations.

Housing

Renting a house or apartment in Japan is a very different experience from any other place in the world. Yokohama is a very large, crowded city, and apartments tend to be smaller than many teachers are used to. Most people live in apartments, not houses, especially if they live close to the school. It is important to know that when you move into an apartment in Japan you may have to pay up to two month's rent up front in "key" money and agent's fees (one month's rent), and a two-month deposit before you have even paid the first month's rent. i.e. five month's rent. (Note: Some teachers have been able to avoid paying the two months of "key money" by asking the agent, although this is not a common practice). This is non-refundable. A refundable deposit is also paid; usually one or two month's rent. The school will assist you with this payment. This makes moving very expensive, so it is important to choose somewhere that you think you will be happy in (but you only have a few days to decide, so it's best to bring a written list of your priorities regarding location, size, etc.).

At the end of every two years, an additional month's rent is often charged as a renewal fee. The office staff will help teachers find an apartment near the school - usually no more than a twenty-minute walk away.

Apartments (to give you an idea, an apartment with two bedrooms, one tatami room, living/dining room, kitchen, bathroom and separate toilet is 65 m^2 and comfortable) and houses are much smaller than in most other countries. The floors may be wood, or carpet, and many apartments will have one room with tatami (Japanese woven rice straw matting) on the floor. The kitchen, which is generally small, will have a vinyl or wood floor.

Apartments are usually rented completely unfurnished; there is never a refrigerator, washing machine or oven. Sometimes there is a two or three burner stove top cooker (this is the normal stove set up in Japan). In some cases light fixtures will also need to be bought. Most apartments

have at least one air conditioning unit, which is essential in summer. These things can be purchased brand new at high prices, but more cost-effective options are local "Recycle Shops" (fraction of the cost of new) or by contacting current or departing teachers.

Electricity in Japan is 100 volts, 50 cycles, but many American appliances which are 50/60 cycle work just fine, although items that rely on a timer may not function accurately. The plugs on Japanese appliances are identical to those in America. If you are coming from India that use 220 volts, it is probably easiest to buy appliances in Japan, unless you already have step down transformers. These transformers are, however, rather expensive.

PHONES

CELL PHONE:

It is recommended to buy a cell phone in Japan. Not necessarily phones from your home countries work here. Cell phones can be bought outright or can be taken on contract. If not used extensively your phone bill will probably be on average ¥3,500 though, depending on the plan you choose, your bill each month may be over ¥5,000 or even closer to ¥9,000. Applying for cell phone in Japan is not any more a difficult procedure now because of some changes in Japanese law.

INTERNET

Plans vary considerably. You might like to speak to DIIS office about assistance for applying for an Internet service. It might also be a good idea to bring a wireless router from home if you have one. It will take a couple months to get Internet set up in some cases. Other apartments will have it within a month or so.

Health Care in Japan

The quality of health care in Japan is on a par with the U.S., European countries and other industrialized countries. Most people use single-doctor or small group clinics to deal with common health issues. Mid-sized and large hospitals also have most departments common in western countries. Although the level of English at clinics varies, a growing number of hospitals provide free interpretation services for non-Japanese patients. There are also healthcare providers frequented by DIIS staff close to the school, including alternative healthcare options.

Taxation

Japanese taxes are complex and not insignificant. The Japanese taxation system is a progressive income tax system comprising national taxes and local taxes that are phased in over a period of time. So for incoming new teachers taxes are low in the first year and increase in years two and three, after which they level off. Taxable income varies considerably according

to individual circumstances (e.g., salary, allowances, family size/number of dependents, social insurance status, etc.) but for most teachers in the third year of employment and later, the effective income tax rate averages between 10 - 14% of gross income. Added to this, from the second year of employment employees are assessed residents tax, comprising municipal and prefectural taxes, at a rate of 10% of taxable income for the previous year. Again, the calculation of taxable income will vary considerably from individual to individual, but generally speaking for a teacher in the third year of employment the total of income and residents tax combined works out to about 15 to 20% of gross income.

Employees whose sole income is from school at DIIS, generally need not file income tax returns, as withholding tax is deducted by the business office per pay period. There is also a year-end tax adjustment in December, and most employees receive slightly higher net pay that month.

School Fees

You will have to pay 10% of the school Tuition fee.

Some useful Websites

<http://www.diisjapan.com>

<https://www.ajai-indians.org/> (Very Useful website run by an Indian)

<http://www.japan-guide.com> - General information

<http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/index.htm> - Guide for foreign residents

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp> - Local newspaper

<http://metropolis.co.jp> - Local magazine (good for sayonara sale ads & event information)

<http://jisho.org> - A useful Japanese dictionary

<http://grace.hyperdia.com> - Train schedules

<http://www.japanican.com/tours/> - Tour information

<http://www.tokyogaijins.com/> - Sporting activities