

Guide on How to Use Trains in Japan

In Japan, you may expect to use the wonderful train transportation systems. However, before taking a train, you need to know some TIPS because there are three different train systems in many cities in Japan including Tokyo.

(1) Long-distance Intercity Train System

JR (Japan Railway) group companies run long-distance intercity train systems including Shinkansen (Bullet Train) train lines. Intercity train system connects almost all major cities in Japan. For instance, you may take a direct train from Tokyo to Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Hiroshima, Hakata, Nagano, Niigata, Sendai, Aomori, Sapporo and other cities instead of using airplanes.

<<TIPS>>

- (a) In case of using long-distance intercity train, you are recommended to buy your train ticket and reserve your seat at a JR train station or travel agency. If you are student at Chuo, you can buy your ticket and reserve your seat at Chuo Univ. COOP (University Shop) as well.
- (b) If you are planning to visit Japan as a “temporary visitor”, you are eligible to buy “Japan Rail Pass” that is official discount intercity train ticket issued by JR group. You can save your travel expenses.
- (c) You may eat or drink on the long-distance intercity train. Various “Ekiben” (meal boxes) are sold at the stations or on the train.

(2) Short-distance Intercity and Inner-city Train System.

JR and private train companies run short-distance intercity trains and inner-city trains in major cities. Different from transportation systems in other big cities in the world, inner-city train system has been exceptionally developed in major cities of Japan.

<<TIPS>>

Please see (3).

(3) Subway (Tube/Metro) System.

In major cities including Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka and others, there are subway lines. Some subway lines in Tokyo are directly connected to short-distance intercity train lines and/or inner-city train lines.

<<TIPS>>

(a) You have two options. First one is buying ticket each time; second one is buying debit card, such as a SUICA or a PASMO.

(b) Buying ticket each time

(b-1) Find your destination and the cost of your fare on the map above the ticket machine. Buy a ticket.

(b-2) Proceed to the gate. After you insert your ticket into the gate slot, make sure to PICK UP the ticket and HOLD ON to it; you will need it again at your destination.

(b-3) Find your platform. Maps are usually provided on the platforms.

(b-4) At your destination, proceed through the exit gate the same way you entered. This time, when you insert your ticket into the slot the machine will keep it.

(c) Buying a SUICA or a PASMO

(c-1) By using ticket machine, buy a SUICA or a PASMO and charge debit values with paper money. JPY 500 shall be deposit for your card. You may ask for refund at the information counter of the stations if you no longer use the SUICA or PASMO.

(c-2) SUICA or PASMO holders can pass through ticket gate simply by touching the ticket gate scanner with SUICA or PASMO. You do not need to buy a ticket.

(c-3) Find your platform. Maps are usually provided on the platforms.

(c-4) At your destination, proceed through the exit gate the same way you entered by touching with SUICA or PASMO.

While riding the train, talking loudly and talking on cell phones are frowned upon.