




Starting Your Journey at Nagoya University


- Things you may want to know before coming to NU -


Tips from our current G30 students


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What should I prepare? What is important to bring to Japan? What is unnecessary?



Yong Jian: Documents for identification are important

Dillon: Bring several copies of important documents. This includes: passport-sized photographs, medical documentation, passport photocopies, school admission certificates etc. Some useful supplies like a day's worth of snacks, travel toiletries, stationery might be useful to bring along.

Nalinporn: Among all important documents, bring your national ID card too!

Hui Hui: Important medication, or those that you know work for you. Personally, I have found that brands over here are very different from my home country, with the additional difficulty of it being labelled in Japanese and many are not over-the-counter.

Do I need to bring any souvenirs from my home country?



Natasha: I don't think there is any harm in doing so! In fact, I brought my friends Indomie when I first came as an ice breaker.

Yong Jian: Not necessarily, but it could be a good idea to share your culture to make connections.

Liyang: It's more important to make sure your luggage doesn't exceed the weight limit for the flight. If there is extra luggage space, bringing souvenir is a good idea.

Shalini: I would say yes. You can give small souvenirs to your new friends, professors and dorm officers if you are planning to live there. Bring something which symbolizes your country.

Should I bring any food with me?
Is it difficult to continue a
certain diet, e.g. vegetarian
or religious diet?



Natasha: I think that if you have food that you'll miss from home, there is no harm in bringing it but I don't think you should prioritize it as you can easily get it from export shops. Also, there is a halal shop near the university!!

Yong Jian: Personally, I regret not bringing any. Eventually, I missed the food from home. Snacks or seasonings for cooking food you like are a nice idea to bring. Do be mindful of customs restrictions though.

Nalinporn: You should check the Japan Customs Restricted Items. There are some specific items, and from certain countries, that you cannot bring to Japan. Please refer to https://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/topix/dairy_products_en.html.

Yasin: I think it's more comfortable to have your own stash of food ready during the adaptation period. Since maybe reading the ingredients off the back of every food package is difficult for non-Japanese. But other than that, there are halal grocery shops available in Nagoya.

Dillon: Try to bring a small stash of snacks from home, as they can be a lifesaver when you are really homesick. You won't need to worry about maintaining specific diets, as there are plenty of options in the numerous supermarkets scattered around school. Do bring some local seasonings, especially if it is unique to your cuisine, as the selection in Japan can be very limited.

Elif: Luckily there is a Turkish market near to the university but I do make sure to bring certain spices (dried mint, sumac, dried pepper etc), nutella, chocolate and so on. If you are vegan make sure to check sites like rakuten and amazon since they sell vegan products that are not easily accessible in normal supermarkets. You might be also amazed how many dairy or animal products that Japanese companies manage to put into food. There are facebook groups or blogs on being vegan in Japan if you are interested.

June: I actually never thought I'd miss Korean food this much so I practically begged my parents to send me Korean food. If you can, bring as much as you can!

How about electronics?

😊😊 I heard electronics are cheap in Japan...



Natasha: Personally, I brought my electronics from home (Indonesia) as I do not see the need to get one in Japan. However, there are a couple of things you must take note such as Japanese electronics tend to have lower voltage (100V). So, if you bring or buy electronics you might need to get a converter to charge it in your home country/Japan.

Yong Jian: I brought mine, but you don't necessarily have to. You can buy them here too of course, but depends on whether you can live with the "features" of the electronics here, like JP keyboard layouts, flashing sound from the phone's camera function etc.

Nalinporn: Yes, definitely buy electronics devices in Japan. So you don't have to worry about voltage compatibility, custom tax, repairing or customer service. Unfortunately, function buttons and explanations are usually in Japanese.

Dillon: If you're buying them second-hand, then they can be very cheap. There are plenty of Facebook groups that let people all over Nagoya list, sell and buy stuff online. School organisations also sometimes organise flea markets, where good quality second-hand electronics can be found for absurdly cheap prices.



Any country-specific recommendations? 😊😊

Yong Jian: sambal, Malaysian curry seasonings etc for cooking Malaysian delicacies are good ideas in my opinion.

Natasha: If you are Indonesian, bring Indomie like the flavors you like because you might not find it here and it also tastes different.

Nalinporn: For food, Japanese people love Thai food. There are various kinds of Thai food (including instant ones) so don't worry. For administrative stuff, renewing passport/ID cards at the embassy or visa application to a third country destination cost a lot more money and time. Make sure you do all those from your home country if you want to avoid unnecessary cost and time.

Yana: For anyone who is very obviously foreign (aka not Asian or with a darker skin tone) be prepared to get some stares. You'll get used to it pretty quick though. Also, if your beauty routines are important to you bring a few key skin and hair products (especially if you have curly hair) that would last you enough to find suitable equivalents in Japan. Amazon is also an option but some imports can be ridiculously overpriced.

What should I do before leaving for Japan? Should I learn Japanese? Should I start studying for courses?



Japanese Characters ?	
HIRAGANA おおさか	KATAKANA オオサカ
KANJI 大 阪	ROMAJI OSAKA



Natasha: If you cannot speak Japanese, do not worry as you will have to take classes in your first year. Also, Japanese people are really nice so if you are lost or confused they will still be happy to help you even with the language barrier.

Yong Jian: I think knowing a little bit before coming is a good idea. You will learn more in your first year here, but knowing some can help with living more trouble-free in my opinion. If you have any troubles, you can always ask though, people are willing to help.


Nalinporn: I strongly recommend you studied Japanese A LOT before coming as you will be able to stay here (most likely) without problems. I came to Japan with N2 and everything went smooth as silk. Plus, you will get to learn Fourth language (Spanish/French/Chinese/Korean/Russian/German) while getting credits!

Yasin: I think it is fine if you don't know Japanese before you come to Japan, but if that's the case you have to be prepared to accept the reality that you might have trouble communicating just right after you land in Japan.

Yukina: It may be useful to learn some manners or words that you can use in daily life, because most of the Japanese are not proficient in speaking English. There is no worry to rush and study the language because there will be Japanese classes for beginners. As for IB graduates, I recommend spending a bit of time looking at what linear algebra is because matrix was removed from the syllabus a few years ago and I did not have any background in it until the first class started.

Liyang: I recommend you to learn at least a little bit of basic Japanese before coming. For courses, the overlap of 1st semester courses in NU and my senior high school courses has helped me a lot to become familiar with academic English. In science, the Chinese high school curricula are very close to the Japanese ones, and you can compare them with the curricula in your high school. However I don't know much about economics and humanities. Anyway, it's always good to learn something in your free time.



 **What are some apps and websites that make life easier in Japan?**



Natasha:

Google Maps : to get around

Navitime: to check train/bus schedules, I think it is only available in the Japanese app store

Google translate

Yong Jian:

Google Maps. You will travel a lot via walking/subways, and having Google Maps really help with determining how to travel around.

JP dictionary, Shirabe Jisho for iOS or any equivalent for your desired platform. Helps you with learning Japanese/reading stuff as you go about your life.

Hyperdia website: Useful to check for means and fares for public transportations, where to transfer etc. for your travelling needs

Nalinporn:

① The App called "Balance" allows you to check the balance of MANY KINDS OF CARDS including MANACA (transportation card in Chubu region), supermarket member cards, etc. (ps. I haven't tried the others) ② "SHIRU CAFE", you will get free drink at the Cafe called Shiru Cafe next to Nagoya University!

Steve:

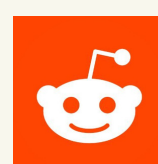
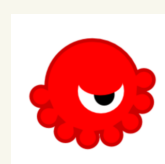
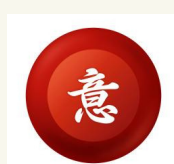
Groups for second-hand stuff like furniture and bikes are very useful. If you have time, it is always a good idea to keep a close eye on the groups, sometimes you will come across great deals. Be sure to ask lots of questions before getting the second hand stuff, of course.

One of the groups I joined on FB: Chubu Area Treasure Trove - Online Garage Sale.

Dillon: Reddit has 2 subreddits (r/livinginjapan and r/Nagoya) which are active and filled with a huge archive of information. There is also an especially useful dictionary on smartphones called "Takoboto" which I highly recommend for daily usage.

Elif:

imiwa (Japanese dictionary), News Web Easy (to study Japanese), Merukari do buy second hand stuff (be sure to purchase something with someone who understands Japanese because you have to talk with the owner of the product)





Any important information for the first days?



Natasha: If you need any help in any way, shape or form; Just ask your seniors for help! We are all more than happy to help you, don't be shy!

Yong Jian: Fret not, enjoy your days here. If you run into any problems do ask your seniors, everyone here is willing to help you out.

Nalinporn: The period you will be coming (if still the same which is September-October). Take the pictures of red leaves as much as possible as it will be gone so fast T--T

Yana: If you're coming from far away prepare yourself for the jetlag. Other than that, try to not burden yourself with too many expectations and try to go with the flow and be sociable.

Yukina: I got homesick on the first week I moved in. It is normal to get homesick and feel lonely. Most people experience it. So, don't hesitate to talk to others about your feelings either with your family, friends, or Nagoya University staff.

Rajoo: Take time to enjoy your first days at university. Always carry your residence card with you. Always!.

Difficulties and how to overcome them?

Yong Jian: Taste palette is very different. Plus, Malaysian/ Singaporean food is quite rare around Nagoya. If you are prone to feeling homesick, bring ingredients/ snacks from your own country here. Amazon is your friend for stuff like these too, albeit expensive and not everything is available.

Dillon: Japan is very meticulous in their administrative work, so you will get frustrated at what you might perceive to be inefficient processes and excessive paperwork, but do understand that this is how stuff is done here and learn to respect it. Being organised and having a proper schedule for bills, important appointments etc. can go a long way in making your next four years here easier. Learning to sort the trash while you are still staying at the dorm will help you out greatly once you move out, as you will no longer have assistants at the dorm to help with any mistakes you make.

Elif: I suffered from depression at the beginning of my year because of the culture shock and feeling lonely. I wish I knew the existence of the university's student support division.



Overall advice on how to adjust to the new life in Japan



Yong Jian: Talk to your seniors or your friends, share your problems.

Natasha: My advice is that if you are stressed or worried about anything, it's fine! - its completely normal, everyone goes through it and you are not alone, your friends are probably going through it and your seniors probably have gone through it so please reach out and we are all in this together!

Nalinporn: I suggest you try joining a circle/club at Nagoya University. It helps with your Japanese language and etiquette (real quick). Japanese native friends at the circle are likely to be good navigators.

Steve: A bicycle is a good way to get around/explore the place. There is a maintenance cost for your bicycle, but if you take good care of your bike, it can be a good investment, considering you could save time and transportation fees.

Steve again: You will hear this a lot, but Yaosen (八百鮮) provides cheaper grocery options, without much dip in grocery quality.

Steve once more: Invest in good, warm, cozy socks for the winter!

Dillon: Remember, everyone else around you will also experience the same difficulties as you. While some might have it easier and some might have it harder, it is still going to be a shared experience amongst all of you, so work to support each other and be understanding of each other's differences. Your friends will be the most important pillar you have for the next four years here.

Elif: Learn Japanese

Liyang: If you have any problems, always talk to your friends and seniors! We're always willing to help you!

Natasha: It gets really windy here in Nagoya during winter, so having a good warm coat is great!

What is the one thing you wish you knew before coming to Nagoya?



Yong Jian: Not to bring so much unnecessary stuff here. Moving out will be a hassle.

Liyang: Also, the supermarkets, convenience stores and 100-yen shops in Nagoya are super convenient and have almost everything you'll need here.

Yana: If they ask you if you want to work when you're getting your residence card at the airport always say yes. If you don't use the work permit it can't hurt but if it turns out you need it, you'll have to go to the immigration office and trust me it's not the best way to spend 6 hours.

Elif: Purchase Nitori's warm blankets and Uniqlo's Heattech. You won't need to use the air conditioner. Also do take the Japanese summer seriously. I experienced heat stroke, it was not pretty.

How is the weather in Japan different from other countries?



Elif: I think Nagoya is hotter and colder than Istanbul.

Liyang: The climate in Nagoya is close to that in Shanghai or Nanjing, China.

Steve: I'm from Malaysia, so I can't speak for the cool/cold seasons, but summer here could get hotter than Malaysia, and it is definitely more humid than in Malaysia.

Rajoo: Summer in Japan (especially in Nagoya) can be very humid. So, please prepare your clothes accordingly. Winter is cold (yes, it does snow sometimes). If you come from a tropical country where winter clothes are not sold, you can buy them in Japan.

Elif: Please don't get the sim card that they recommend in the dorm. They don't provide you with a phone number and you will need a phone number. I use Line Mobile, it is cheap and really convenient.

How to get Japanese SIM card? Do I have to arrange something before arrival?

