

Destination Kobe



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Welcome To Kobe

Your Guide To Living In Kobe





While relocating to another country often turns out to be a wonderful, life-changing experience, there are always some traumatic obstacles and challenges that get in the way.

That is why the H&R Group is dedicated to being here for you every step of the way – while you prepare for your assignment, when you make the big move, during your time in Japan and as you prepare to go home. We love helping people get the most out of their “Japan Experience” and we are with you from beginning to end.

Our team of experienced, bilingual consultants are ready to help you with every aspect of your time in Japan. We offer support finding short or long term housing, relocation settling-in assistance and orientations, visa processing, immigration guidance, obtaining furniture, finding a car, helping you get a driver’s license and much more. Whatever you need to know about your time in Japan, we have a wealth of experience and knowledge to share. So, come and join the H&R Club!

The H&R Group believes in supporting the communities in which we work and live. Once you are settled in, I hope you can join with me in supporting some of the worthy charitable activities we are involved with. As we welcome you to our community, we hope that you will enjoy your time here by becoming part of it.

As we say at the H&R Group, we are “More Than Relocation” Thank you, and I hope you enjoy this book!

Warmest regards,

Steve Burson
President
H&R Consultants K.K.
ReloJapan K.K.

A Brief History of Kobe

The natural geography of Kobe is dominated by Cape Wada which was developed into a port and would become the dominant economic center of the city. Tools found in the western area of Kobe have led historians to assume that the area has been populated since around 1200 BC during the ancient Japanese Jomon period.

During the Nara period (710 to 794) and Heian period (794 to 1185), the port was known by the name Owada Anchorage (Owada-notomari) and was one of the ports from which imperial emissaries to China were dispatched. The city briefly became the capital of Japan in 1180 when Taira no Kiyomori moved his grandson Emperor Antoku to Fukuhara in present-day Hyogo-ku. However the Emperor returned to Kyoto after only five months. Shortly thereafter in 1184, the Taira fortress in Hyogo-ku and the nearby Ikuta Shrine became the sites of the Genpei War battle of Ichi-no-Tani between the Taira

and Minamoto clans. The Minamoto prevailed, resulting in the fall of the Taira clan and the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate under Minamoto Yoritomo in 1192.

As the port grew during the Kamakura period, it became an important hub for trade with China and other countries. In the 13th century, the city came to be known as Hyogo Port. The area combined with northern Osaka to compose the province of Settsu.

During the Edo period (1603 to 1868), the eastern parts of present-day Kobe came under the jurisdiction of the Amagasaki Domain and the western parts under that of the Akashi Domain, while the center was controlled directly by the Tokugawa shogunate. It was not until the abolition of the feudal han system of government in 1871 and the establishment of the current prefecture system that the area became politically distinct.

Hyogo Port was opened to foreign trade by the government of the Bakufu (Shogun) just before the advent of the Boshin War and the





Meiji Restoration. Since this period Kobe has become closely identified as a “Western” oriented city and reflections of this aspect are evident in the city’s culture and atmosphere. Many distinctly western residences from the period remain in Kobe’s Kitano area today.

Modern Kobe

Kobe, as it is known today, was founded on April 1, 1889. The modern day name is derived from the word “kanbe” which derives from the name of supporters of the Ikuta shrine, which is closely linked to the city.

During World War II, Kobe was bombed along with Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya on April 18, 1942, in the first American airborne assault on Japan, known as the Doolittle Raid. Eventually, Kobe would be attacked again with incendiary munitions by B-29 bombers on March 17, 1945. More than 8,841 residents perished and approximately 21% of Kobe’s urban area was destroyed in the incident which inspired the book

“Grave of the Fireflies” by Akiyuki Nosaka, later made into a well-regarded film.

The Great Hanshin Earthquake

On January 17, 1995, an earthquake measuring a magnitude 7.2 on the Richter scale occurred at 5:46 am JST near the city. 6,434 people were killed, and an additional 212,443 were made homeless. Large sections of the port as well as other parts of the city were destroyed and portions of the elevated Hanshin Expressway toppled over. In Japan, the earthquake is known as the Great Hanshin Earthquake (or the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake). Every December the city center is decorated with illuminated metal archways in a commemoration called the Kobe Luminarie.

While the recovery from the quake took several years the city managed to rebuild while retaining the verdant avenues and unique character that makes it one of the most desirable places to live in Japan.

Arriving with Unaccompanied Baggage

When relocating to Japan, it is necessary to fill out two copies of the “Customs Declaration” form in duplicate which will allow your personal effects to clear customs smoothly. With air shipment you may usually receive your shipment within a week or so after your arrival to Japan and submission of your custom forms. These custom forms are available from the flight attendant inside the airplane. Failure to submit these forms may delay the release of your personal belongings, and you will be required to provide additional paperwork.

The customs officer will stamp both forms and return one form to you which must be submitted to the local shipping agent so that when your shipment has arrived, it can pass the customs clearance process. Please be aware of importation quotas when sending medication, cosmetics, over the counter drugstore items, or contact lenses; even those

for personal use. For example, importing even one Tylenol containing codeine into the country would result in you being detained.

After retrieving your luggage, it is necessary to pass through the customs clearance counter. Once you exit customs, you will most likely transfer to either a bus or train to reach your final destination. One thing to keep in mind is that almost any transportation in Japan will require more walking than you think it will. Many people find that what they thought was a manageable size or amount of luggage will rapidly become a problem after arrival. After clearing customs, you may want to take advantage of one of the baggage delivery services located inside most major airports and avoid having to deal with carrying luggage all the way to your final Japanese destination. Baggage can be delivered as early as the following day for a nominal fee and is recommended when taking public transportation such as a shuttle bus or train, or when carrying a large amount of luggage.





Kobe is served by three airports: Kansai International Airport (KIX), Kobe Airport and Itami. KIX is the main international airport while Kobe Airport and Itami Airport serve mostly domestic flights.

Kansai International Airport

Kansai International Airport (KIX) is located on an artificial island in the middle of Osaka Bay, 38 km (24 mi) southwest of Osaka Station in Osaka Prefecture. Designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, the facility opened in September of 1994. KIX is the international gateway for Japan's Kansai region, which contains the major cities of Kyoto, Kobe, and Osaka.

Getting To And From KIX

Airport Limousine Bus

One of the easiest and cheapest ways to get to KIX is via the Airport Limousine Bus which operates from Sannomiya and Rokko Island non-stop door to door in about an hour. Buses departing Sannomiya are more frequent than Rokko Island.

www.kansai-airport.or.jp/en/access/index.html

Rail

The fastest way to KIX via rail is to board the JR Super Rapid at Sannomiya Station and change at JR Osaka Station to the Kanku Kaisoku, the Rapid bound for Kansai International Airport, which takes 65 minutes. Alternatively you can get off at Shi Osaka Station and take the Tokyu Haruka to KIX which takes approximately 50 minutes.

Getting Around

Bus

Osaka Airport Limousine operates buses to Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe.

Taxi

If you are traveling to Kobe via taxi note that fares are fixed rate depending on whether you are traveling during standard operating hours or late night hours. For more info on taxis go here: www.kansai-airport.or.jp/en/Access/taxi/index.html

Highway

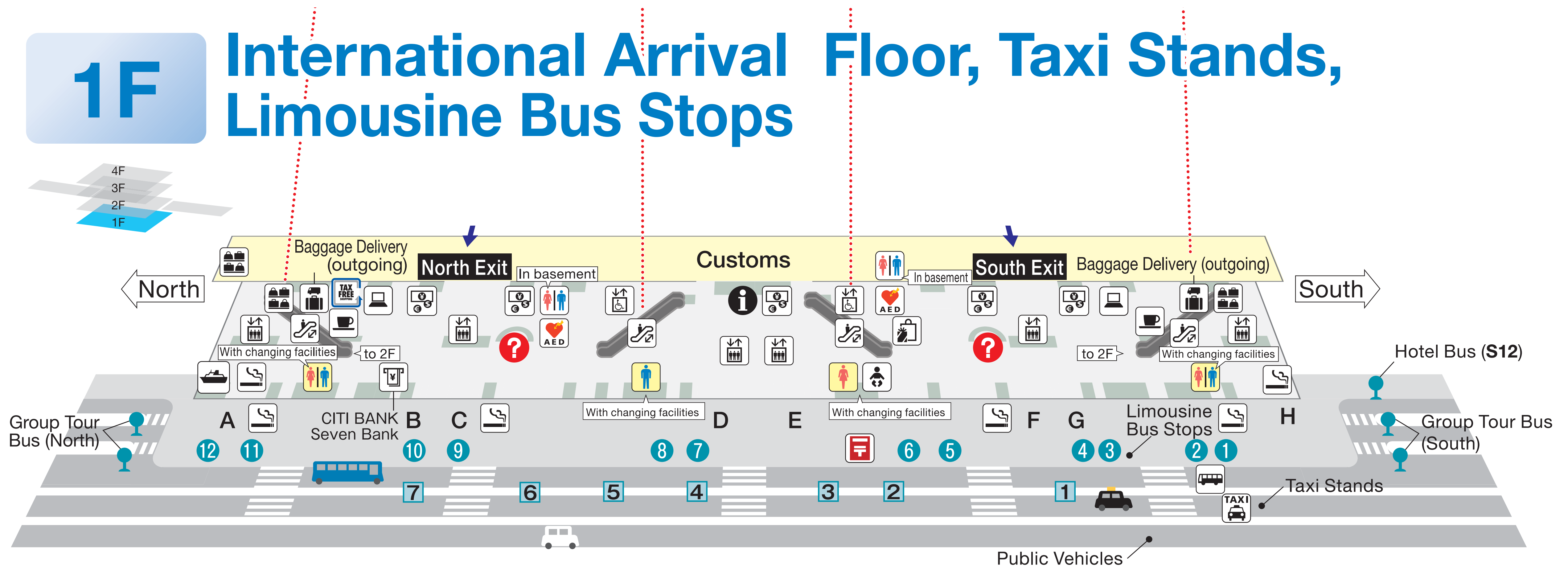
The airport is only accessible from the Sky Gate Bridge R, a part of Kansai Airport Expressway. The expressway immediately connects to Hanshin Expressways Route 5, Wangan Route, and Hanwa Expressway.

Parking

Two six story parking structures are located above a railroad terminal station, and there are two more double level parking facilities next to the Aeroplaza hotel complex.

For further information the airport maintains an English language website here: www.kansai-airport.or.jp





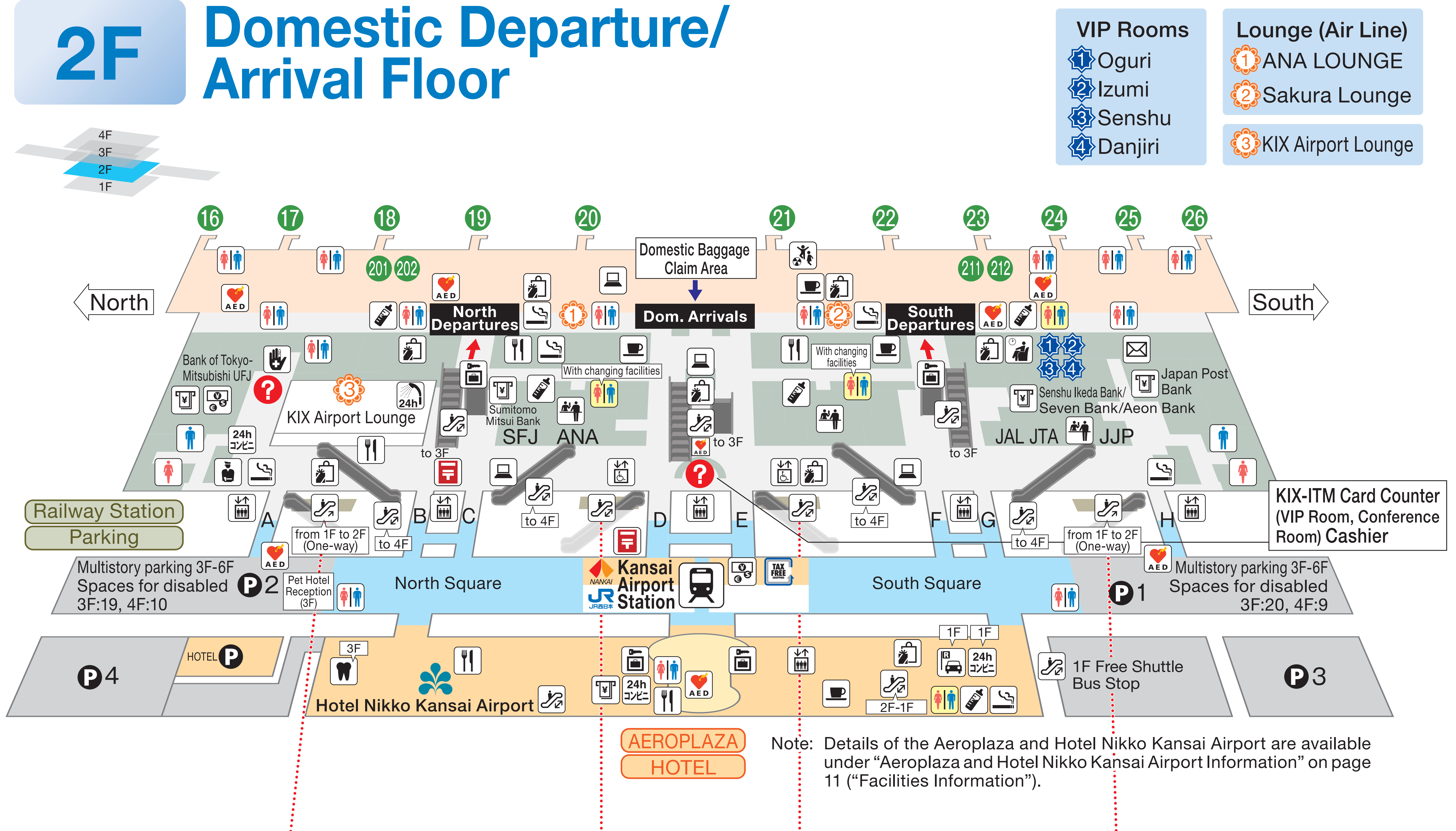
- TAXI** **Taxi Stands**
- 1 Reserved taxis (South)
 - 2 Taxis for Wakayama
 - 3 Short distance taxis
 - 4 Handicapped only
 - 5 Long distance taxis
 - 6 Taxi vans
 - 7 Reserved taxis (North)

- Limousine Bus Stops**
- 1 Kansai Airport Observation Hall, Night Bus (Rinku Town/Izumisano)
 - 2 Senboku Newtown/Kongo/Kawachinagano, Sakaihigashi/Nakamozu, Awaji/Naruto/Tokushima Night Bus (Nankai Namba Sta.)
 - 3 Wakayama, Ibaraki, Nanko/Tenpozan/Universal Studios Japan™
 - 4 Amagasaki, Nishinomiya
 - 5 Osaka Sta./Chayamachi/Shin-Umeda City/Senri Newtown, Himeji/Kakogawa
 - 6 Kobe Sannomiya/Rokko Island

- 7 Kintetsu Uehommachi/Shinsaibashi/Osaka Business Park, Takamatsu, Abeno Harukas
 - 8 Osaka International Airport/Hotarugaike Sta., Kosoku-Kyotanabe/Kyoto Sta. Hachijo Gate
 - 9 Nara, Kintetsu Gakuenmae/Gakkentoshi, Yamato-yagi
 - 10 Keihan Moriguchi, Neyagawa/Hirakata/Kuzuha, Higashi-Osaka
 - 11 Namba (Osaka City Air Terminal), Okayama, Nagoya
 - 12 High-Speed Ferry Port Terminal, Night Bus (Rinku Town/Izumisano), Rinku Premium Outlets
- S12 Hotel Bus**

2F

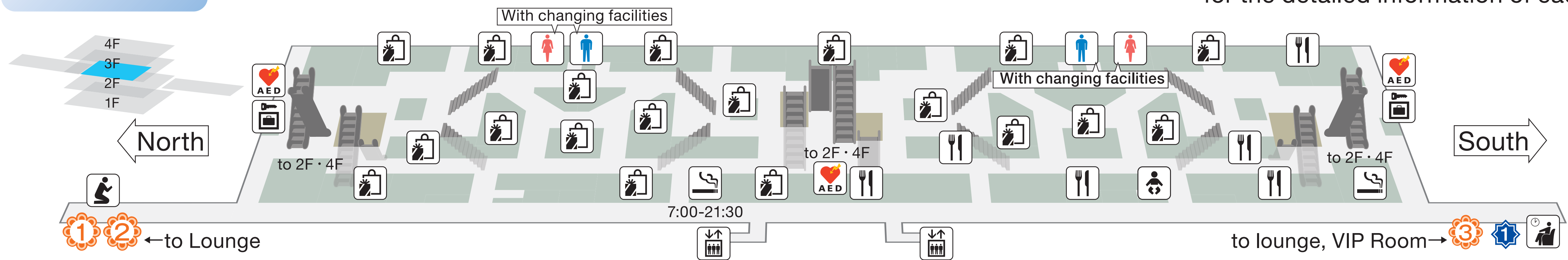
Domestic Departure/ Arrival Floor



Note: Details of the Aeroplaza and Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport are available under "Aeroplaza and Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport Information" on page 11 ("Facilities Information").

3F Restaurants/Shops Area

*Note: Please refer to "Restaurant/Shops Guide" for the detailed information of each shop.



VIP Rooms

1 Namihaya

Lounge (Air Line)

1 KAL Lounge 3 JAL VIP Lounge

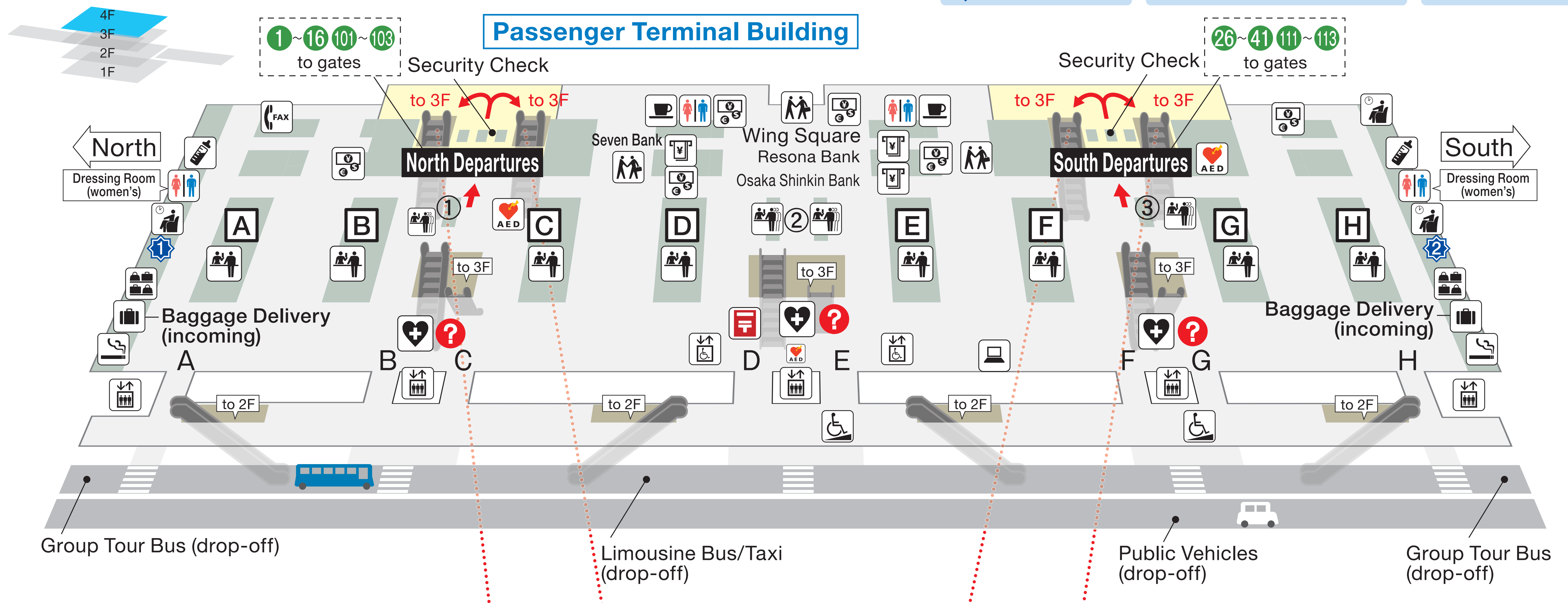
Lounge (Credit Card)

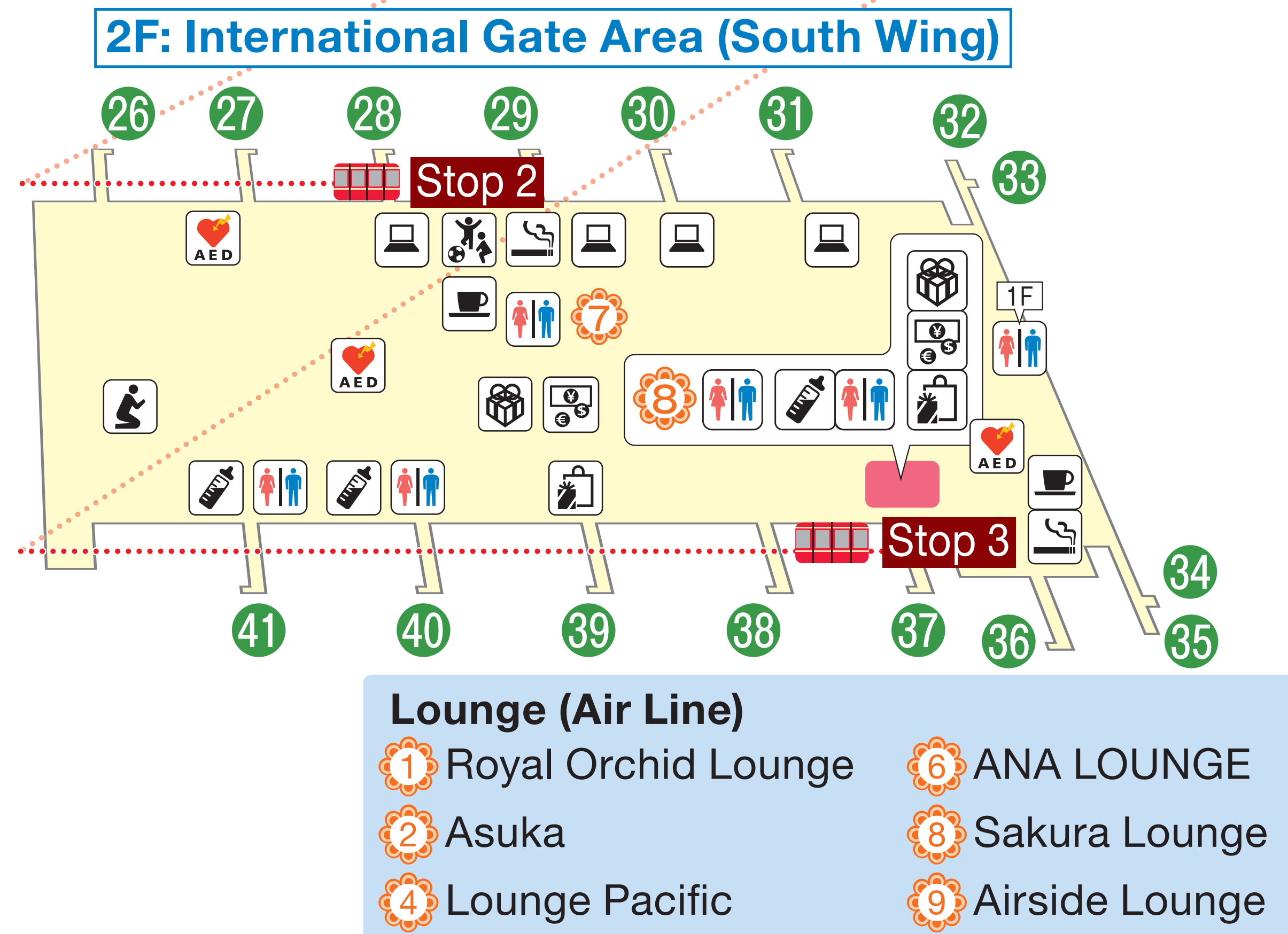
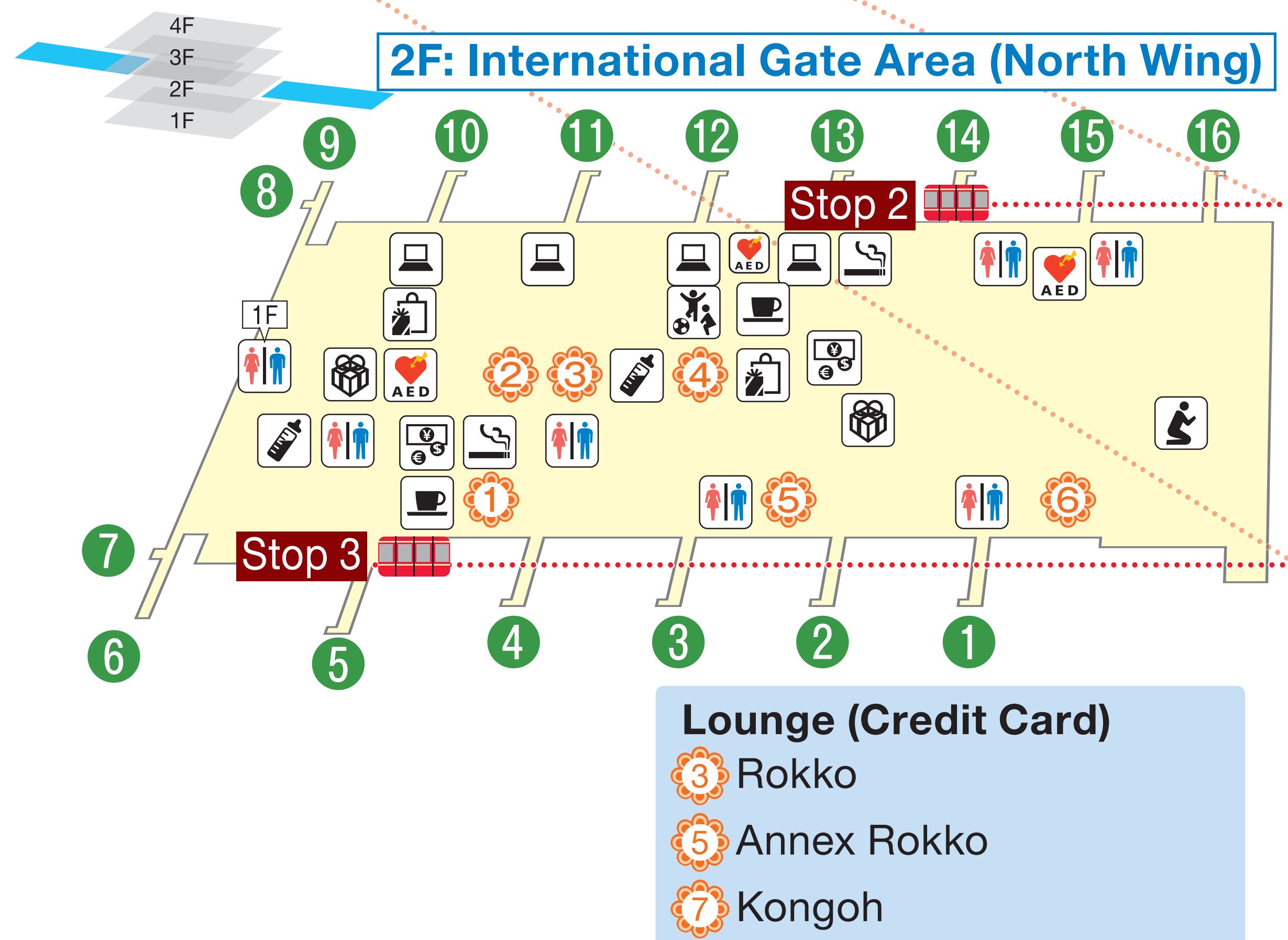
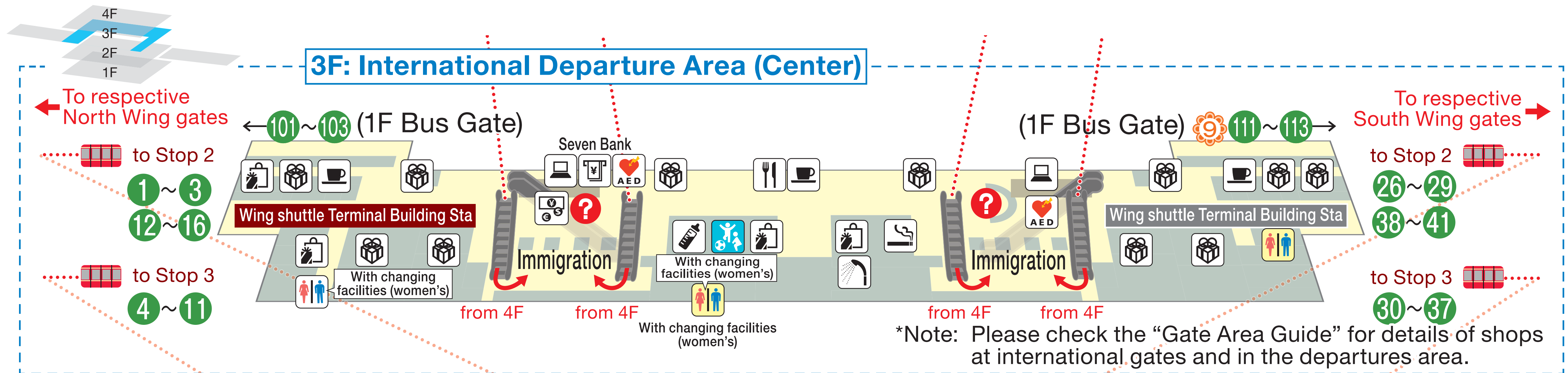
2 Hiei

4F International Departure Floor

*Note: There are no mail boxes beyond Immigration.

VIP Rooms	Group Tour Check-in	A-H:
① Naniwa (Entrance)	① North No. 36-46	Airline Check-in
② Kamigata	② Center No. 1-30	See reverse for details.
	③ South No. 61-85	





1F

International & Domestic Departure/Arrival Floor



Kobe Airport

Kobe Airport (UKB) is located on an artificial island just off the coast of Kobe, south of Sannomiya Station. It primarily handles domestic flights, but can also accommodate international charter flights.

Getting To And From Kobe Airport

Rail

You can travel to Kobe airport via the Port Liner, an automated guideway transit system. Travel time to Sannomiya is 16 minutes. From Sannomiya, it is 21 minutes to Osaka Station and 49 minutes to Kyoto Station by JR special rapid express.

Ferry to KIX

You can also travel via shuttle ferry to KIX. The trip lasts approximately 30 minutes and ferries depart every 45-60 minutes.

www.kobe-access.jp/en/index.php

Osaka International Airport (Itami)

Osaka International Airport (ITM) or Osaka-Itami International Airport is the primary domestic airport for the Kansai region of Japan, including the major cities of Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe. The airport is often called Itami Airport because most of its land is located in Itami, Hyogo Prefecture.

Despite its “international” designation, the airport’s scheduled passenger air traffic is entirely domestic. Kansai International Airport took over Osaka’s international traffic in 1994.

Getting to Osaka International Airport

By Rail

To get to Itami via rail from Kobe depart Hankyu Sannomiya station on the Hankyu Kobe line bound for Takarazuka. Change at Takarazuka to the Hankyu Takarazuka line and transfer to The Osaka Monorail at Hotarugaike. The trip takes approximately one hour.

By Bus

Osaka Airport Limousine offers cheap and convenient access with buses departing Sannomiya regularly. The trip takes approximately 45 minutes.

www.okkbus.co.jp/en/index2.html

Getting to Kobe by Rail

To Kobe From Osaka

The Hanshin Main Line

From Umeda Station to Sannomiya Station
Takes approx. 30 minutes

The Hankyu Kobe Line

From Umeda Station. to Sannomiya Station
Takes approx. 27 minutes

The JR Kobe Line

From Osaka Station to Sannomiya Station
Takes approx. 27 minutes

To Kobe From Tokyo

Take the JR Shinkansen (Nozomi)
from Tokyo Station to Shin-Kobe Station
Takes approx. 2 hours 48 minutes

To Kobe From Nagoya

Take the JR Shinkansen (Nozomi)
from Nagoya Station to Shin-Kobe Station
Takes approx. 1 hour 5 minutes

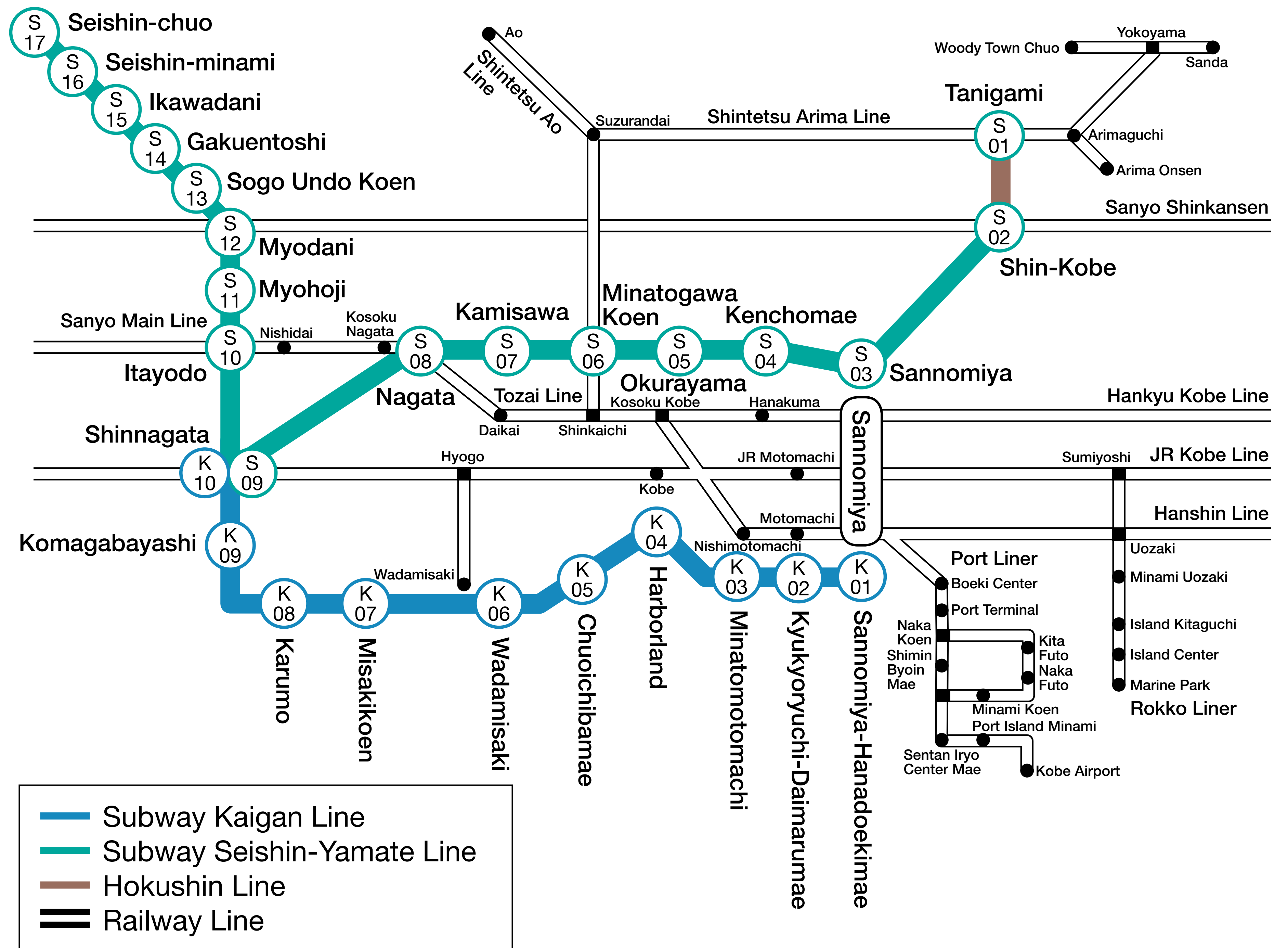


The Kobe Municipal Subway System

Kobe's subway system has two lines, the Seishin-Yamate Line (color-coded green) and the Kaigan Line (color-coded blue)

The Seishin-Yamate Line, which runs between Tanigami Station in northern Kobe to Seishin-Chuo Station in Nishi-ku is often referred to as the U Line due to its shape on maps. The Kaigan Line operates between Sannomiya-Hanadokeimae in Chuo-ku and Shin-Nagata Station in Nagata-ku.

The intersecting stations between the two subway lines are Sannomiya-Hanadokeimae and Shin-Nagata. Shin-Kobe Station on the Seishin-Yamate Line connects with the Shinkansen, Sannomiya with the Hankyu Line, Hanshin Line and Port Liner. Nagata and Itayado connect with the Sanyo Line to Himeji and through to Umeda Station in Osaka on the Hankyu Line.





The Kobe Rapid Transit Railway

The Kobe Rapid Transit Railway connects to the man-made islands Port Island and Rokko Island as well as Kobe Airport, which is also on an artificial island.

The Port Liner

The Port Liner originates at Sannomiya Station and terminates at Kobe Airport Station

The Rokko Liner

The Rokko Liner connects Rokko Island to Sumiyoshi Station on the JR Kobe Line.

City Loop Bus

The City Loop Bus features buses built to look like streetcars which travel a long loop through the city, stopping at Sannomiya Station, Kitano, Shin-Kobe Station, Meriken Park, Port Tower, Harborland, Kosoku Kobe Station, Motomachi, Nankinmachi, and other areas of sightseeing interest. For a single ride between any two stops it costs ¥250 (¥130 for children). The full-day pass allows you to get on and off as many times as you wish for ¥650 (¥330 for children). Note that due to consumption tax increases these fares are subject to change.

Finding The Right Spot



Where to Live in Kobe and Beyond

Sannomiya

Sannomiya is a bustling town center and is a great place to live if you want nightlife and an abundance of shopping and dining options. You can find department stores, theaters, bars, many fine restaurants and supermarkets - such as Ikari which stock imported foods and beverages and SJ Kobe which is right underneath the station in the basement shopping area.

Around the station are numerous shopping arcades such as the Sannomiya Center Gai shopping street, which runs from Sannomiya to Motomachi and Sanchica, a large underground shopping arcade. The area is also home to the 2km long Kokashita shopping arcade under the JR railway tracks.

The Motomachi and Tor Road areas are especially popular as is the nearby Nankinmachi China town (the only one in western Japan) which is home to a number of authentic Chinese restaurants and Chinese grocery stores. If you are active in sports check out the The Kobe Regatta and Athletic Club which is popular with foreign residents.

Access

Sannomiya is a major transportation hub and has stations on the JR West rail line, The Hanshin Line, The Hankyu Line, Seishin-Yamate Municipal Subway line as well as the The Port Liner.



Kitano

Full of winding alleyways, old clapboard mansions preserved from the first foreign settlement, trendy boutiques, cafes and fine restaurants, Kitano is one of the most charming places to live in Kobe.

Located about a 10 to 15 minute walk above Sannomiya and at the foot of the Nunobiki mountain. Kitano is favored by expatriates largely because of its unique foreign-friendly atmosphere. Nearby, The Kobe Grocers purveys a wide range of imported food. St Michael's International School and the Kobe Club are located here as well. The neighborhood is also well known for being the home to some of Kobe's most significant houses of worship - including the Kobe Mosque.

Access

The Kitano area is convenient to Shin-Kobe which is on the The Shinkansen line. Shin-Kobe is also served by the Seishin-Yamate Municipal Subway Line and the Hokushin Line.





Rokko

The Rokko area is popular as it is convenient to the city center but far enough away to be residential. You can find everything from houses to luxury apartments and the area is also served by the foreigner-friendly Kaisei Hospital and other English-speaking clinics. The Kobe Union Church and the Mormon church are both nearby. There are two international preschools in the area as well as the Oji Zoo and the Oji Sports Center and Park at Oji Koen.

Access

Rokko is a stop on the Hankyu Kobe Line.

Mikage and Sumiyoshi

Both Sumiyoshi and nearby Mikage have excellent transportation links making them convenient places to live. You can easily commute to Osaka - only eighteen minutes away, Sannomiya - eight minutes away, or even Rokko Island - which is only seven minutes away. Hankyu Mikage Station is closest to the popular expat neighborhoods Acorn Hills and Scarab Heights and the JR Sumiyoshi Station is conveniently located close to the ward

office and main post office and houses a Coop supermarket, a department store full of boutiques, and Uniqlo for one stop shopping. Hanshin Mikage Station boasts the Classe shopping mall right in front of the station.

Like other parts of Kobe you will find a wealth of dining and shopping options. Those seeking a bit of local culture should check out the Hakutsuru Sake Brewery Museum located inside a former brewery. Other breweries worth a visit are Kikumasamune and Fukujun which are famous for using Rokko water.

There are also several well regarded hospitals and clinics including the Konan Hospital in the area.

Access

Sumiyoshi is a stop on the Hanshin Main Line and has a Station on The JR West line. Sumiyoshi is also the terminal station for the Rokko Liner.

Hanshin Mikage Station is served by the Hanshin Main Line while Hankyu Mikage Station is on the Hankyu line.

Okamoto

Okamoto is home to several universities and has the distinct feel of a college town. Around the station are several supermarkets, an abundance of bakeries, restaurants and boutiques. South of JR Settsu Motoyama Station, you can find the Coop Living center, Sunshine Wharf and Sports Depot.

Access

Okamoto Station is served by the Hanshin line while nearby Settsu-Motoyama Station is on the JR Kobe Line.

Rokko Island

Rokko Island is a man-made island and home to a large community of foreigners. The relatively small land area manages to convey a compact yet open, safe and quiet atmosphere. It is connected to the mainland by the Rokko Liner from JR Sumiyoshi station and has two large hotels, shops, a sprinkling of ethnic restaurants, sporting facilities and playgrounds. The Foreign Buyers Club (FBC) offers a wide range of western food and

sundries and is conveniently located, and just downstairs is the popular Kobe Grocers. The Community Housing and Information Center (CHIC) is an invaluable source of all kinds of information for living and working in Kobe.

Rokko Island is favored by North Americans and Europeans due to the proximity of the Canadian Academy, and the Deutsche Schule Kobe / European School. It is also popular with families who have small children as there are several daycare options such as Building Blocks at the Canadian Academy, Deutsche Schule / European School, Peter Pan and The Entente International Pre-school.

Access

Rokko Island is served by the Rokko Liner which connects to Sumiyoshi station on the JR Kobe Line. There are three stops on the island, Island Kitaguchi, Island Center and Marine Park.





Ashiya

Nearby Kobe is Ashiya, an exclusive area is popularly known as the “Beverly Hills” of Japan because many famous people have homes here. It is also one of the most expensive places to live in Kobe and has a wide range of upmarket restaurants and shops to prove it. International supermarkets include Ikari, Peacock, and a small Daimaru department store located in front of JR Ashiya Station. Childcare options include the Ashiya International School, Poppins Babysitting Service and Kinder Kids.

The surrounding areas of Shukugawa, Nishinomiya and Kurakuen are less expensive and are also popular with foreign residents.

Access

Central Ashiya is served by JR West Ashiya Station. Hanshin Railway Ashiya Station and Uchide Station serve the southern part of the city, while Hankyu Ashiyagawa Station is located in the quieter northern area.

Shioya

The Shioya area in Western Kobe is popular with many ex-pats working in Akashi. Shioya Tochi boasts large western-style homes in a verdant community as well as the James Yama country club which has a long and distinguished history in the Kobe area. Shioya Kids Bright International Preschool is within walking distance of Shioya, and school buses go to Marist Brothers International School in Suma and the Canadian Academy on Rokko Island. Five minutes away by car is a large shopping complex, with a superstore, restaurants, a DIY store, an electrical store and much more. In addition, there is a general hospital and nearby clinics where English is spoken.

Access

Commuting on public transport is also convenient. JR Shioya is the nearest train station. It connects to downtown Kobe, Sannomiya, Akashi, and Osaka.

Making Your Move!





Relocating With Relo Japan

Not knowing what you don't know is just one of the many travails you endure when moving abroad. Anyone who has decamped to another country will tell you that it is invaluable to have eyes and ears on the ground in advance in order to help you prepare for all the changes that are coming.

Relo Japan has over 20 years of experience in Japan relocations, and their multilingual consultants are ready with a wealth of information about your destination, allowing you to put your focus where it belongs, on your work and family. Relo Japan takes care of all the little details of your move including obtaining a visa, getting you orientated in your new location and arranging for the delivery of your things from your home.

Once you have chosen where you want to live Relo Japan goes about setting you up. From turning on the electricity and water to hooking up your cable and internet – they do it all. Relo Japan aims to go beyond what is expected, and furthermore they will be your first friends in Japan. Relo Japan offers the following:

- Professional and comprehensive support to meet all of your relocation needs
- The www.ReloJapan.com website, a vital source of information on Japan. A recent extension of our “Log-In Center” provides you with all the materials you need to relocate in a digitalized format
- Offices in Tokyo, Nagoya, zztttt Kobe (Osaka)
- Japan-wide coverage through three offices and affiliates in many locations
- Access to all of the best properties available, through Japan Home Search, a multi-listing real estate agency
- Short-term accommodation arrangements in furnished or serviced apartments
- Settling-in services for individuals, couples and families
- Repatriation support leading up to departure
- Visa and immigration support, including local government compliance
- 24-hour Japan help line
- Tenancy management
- Expense management services, including payment of utilities



Finding a Home With Japan Home Search

While traditional real estate agents offer the vast majority of available properties in Japan, they are not all set up to be foreigner friendly.

Many landlords find renting to foreigners is simply too much of a hassle, especially to those who do not speak any Japanese at all. Japan Home Search is a real estate agency that caters specifically to expatriates relocating to Japan.

It is powered by JapanHomeSearch.com, a comprehensive, English-language property search engine. This popular site lists thousands of rental properties for a real-time snapshot of what is available on the market today.

The site features the “Pin Pointer” tool, which allows visitors to zoom in on the areas surrounding potential properties, and now also features a simplified web version for iPads and smart phones.

The Japan Home Search team prides itself on promptly answering all inquiries, and strives to find properties that meet each individual client’s needs.

The apartments and homes offered by Japan Home Search are pre-screened to allow foreign tenants, and unlike a traditional real estate agent, the entire rental process from start to finish is in English.

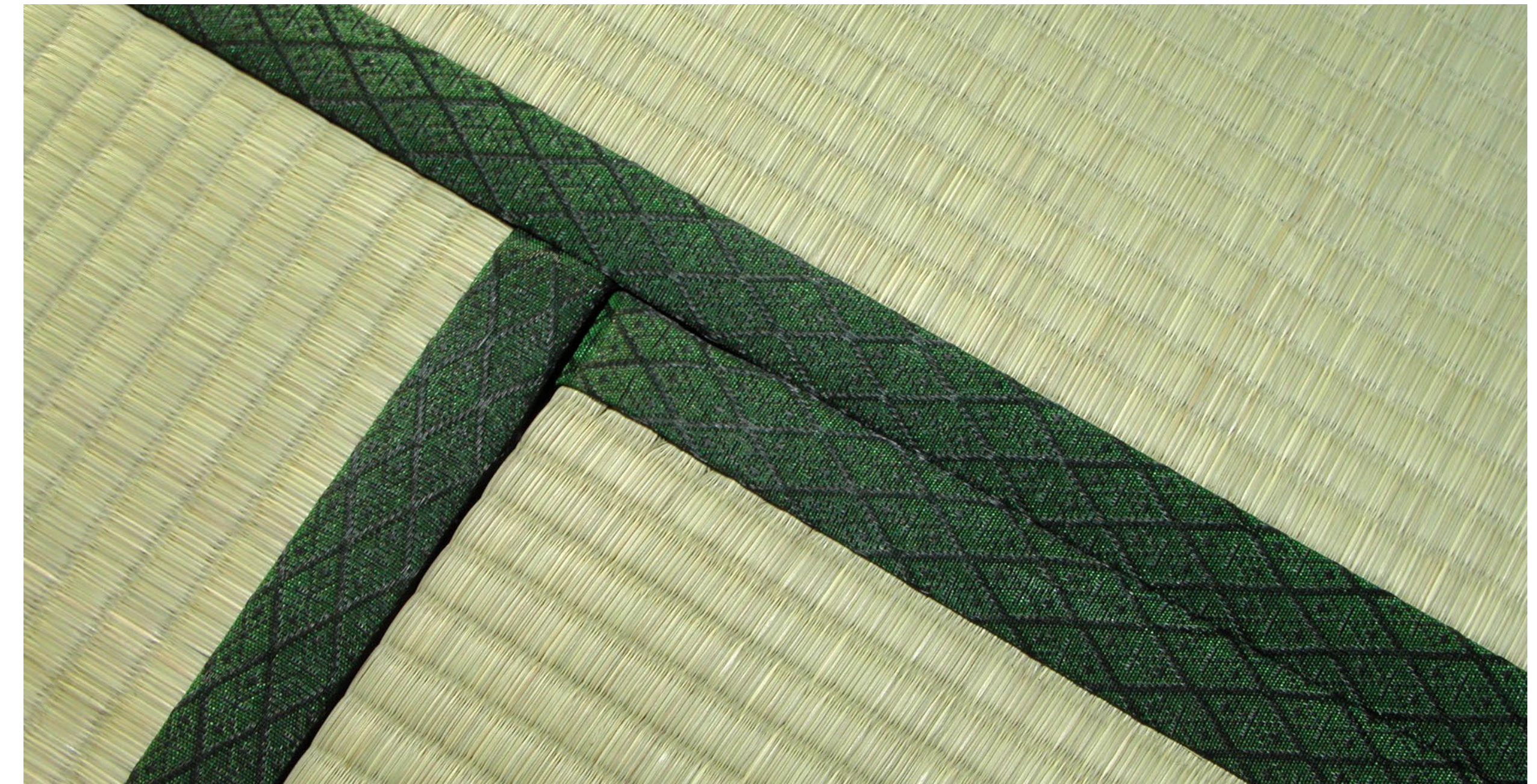
JapanHomeSearch.com offers the following:

- Multi-listing agent with access to thousands of rental properties
- Regularly updated “Hot Properties” featuring new and popular housing options
- User-friendly interface allowing visitors to search for several properties at once
- Comprehensive property details including features, interior and exterior photos, floor plans and much more
- Helpful information about popular expatriate areas
- Personalized support provided by bilingual real estate consultants
- Rent and condition negotiation to get you the best and most competitive deal
- Bilingual assistance at your “move-in” and your “move-out”
- On-going assistance with any maintenance issues
- Lots of advice on the rental process in Japan, and what you can and cannot do!

Renting a House or Apartment

Sometimes finding a place to live in Japan requires a willing suspension of disbelief from a western mindset. As with so much in Japan, or any other foreign country for that matter, things are simply done differently. And no experience in Japan quite compares to the unique way that the Japanese live and manage their living spaces.

For starters it bears repeating that space is at a premium. The more space you want, the more of something else you will have to give up: time, money or convenience. Choosing between renting an apartment or a house means deciding what kind of lifestyle you prefer. Want to be near the shopping and restaurants of the city? Space will be hard to come by. Want a bit more green and a larger place to live? Prepare for a commute. These choices are familiar to anyone who has lived in an urban area. However Japan tends to put a lot more of a premium on space. Even a big place in Japan might still seem small compared to what you are used to.



How Japanese Apartments and Houses are Measured

Japanese properties are typically measured according to how many tatami mats fit into each room. While modern Japanese apartments and homes are constructed with flooring and often do not have the traditional straw mats or tatami; the tatami standard of measurement is still used.

One jo means one straw tatami mat. The size of a tatami is roughly 85.5cm wide and 179cm (33.5" by 70.5") If the room is 6 jo, it will be about 8.6 square meters. (Tatami size varies according to whether it is used in a free-standing house or apartment and also varies in different locations of Japan.)

Tatami	Square Meters (ft ²)
4	5.8,62.4
6	8.6,92.6
8	11.6,124.9
10	14.5,156.1

Japanese Apartments

Japanese apartments can be notoriously small, especially in Tokyo, where even some high-end properties are as small as a den or even a large bathroom in many western countries. However, as Japan becomes more international, properties are becoming more and more “western,” and although space is limited, “open spaces” are now more popular than a number of tiny rooms, which is traditionally the case in Japanese homes.

The situation outside of Tokyo is relatively better. Most rental properties tend to be larger and are a better value. Apartments will generally not include utilities in the rent, although some do charge fees for water usage. Parking is usually an extra fee which normally runs somewhere between ¥5,000 to ¥30,000 per month, depending on location.

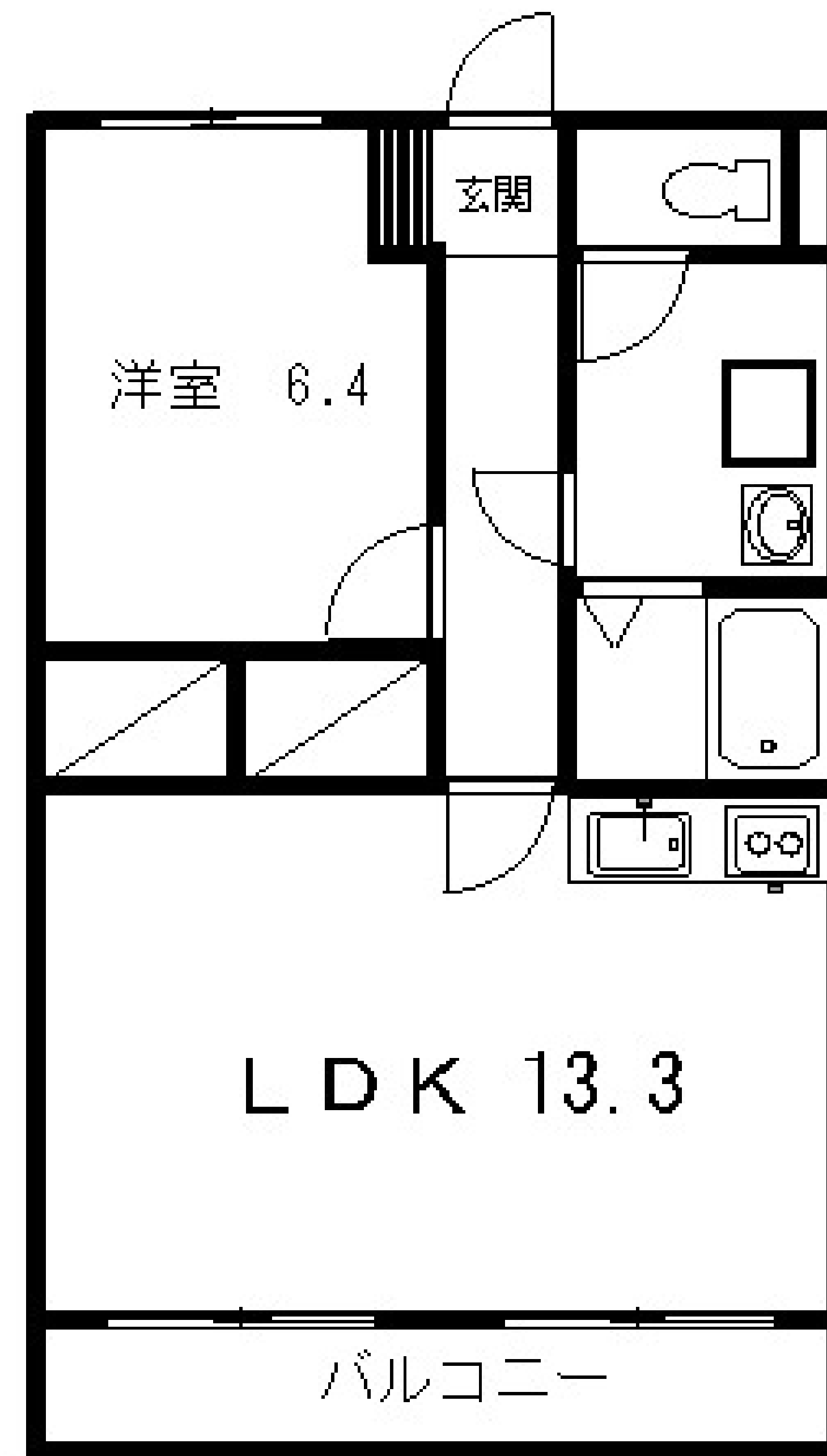
Common Apartment Configurations

Apartments come in many sizes, and Japan has a unique alphanumeric code for each type of apartment. For example a “1K” is a one room apartment with a kitchen. A 1DK is a one room apartment with a dining room with a joining kitchen. A 1LDK means that the apartment has an adjoining living area as well and one bedroom. Thus the more numbers an apartment has the more “rooms” it has. Just remember that LDK (living, dining, kitchen) is generally one room, not three! The difference from “K” to “DK” to “LDK” is the size of the room containing those areas.

[Here is a sample](#) of a 1LDK floor plan. As you can see, the “LD” portions occupy the same space.

[Here is a 2LDK floor plan.](#)

Larger apartments such as a 3LDK will often have one or more rooms with tatami flooring, and while these rooms often wouldn’t be considered by Westerners to count as an “additional bedroom”, they are counted as one bedroom amongst the three bedrooms in 3LDK.



Rental Houses In Japan

Houses in Japan tend to be smaller and simpler than those in other countries, and most foreigners residing in Japan for work tend to choose homes that could be described as “luxury” in the local market. These properties are generally western-style homes with a full suite of amenities not often found in Japanese houses. Clothes dryers, dish washers, central heating, and multiple bedrooms are all features that are now commonly available in upscale Japanese properties.

If the house comes with a garden it will be limited in scope, however high-value rental properties will be located in more spacious communities and often nearby a public park. The trade off is such houses are often not close to train or subway stations and therefore the use of a car is necessitated.

Expats with the benefit of a relocation company like Relo Japan, will have someone take

care of all the little details of the employee’s move, including finding them a house or apartment, sourcing furniture and, or cars for lease or purchase and arranging the delivery of the client’s belongings from their home country. Generally, the company will pay for these services, but a little bit of knowledge will help the employee get the most out of them.

Finding an apartment on your own in Japan can be a daunting task if you have never done it before. It seems like just about everything is a little harder in here, and if you do not speak Japanese your options are fairly limited. One of the first differences between Japan and the west is that apartments and houses are rented through real estate agents and the landlords designated “management company” or “representative”, rather than directly with the landlord. This is why you rarely see “for rent” signs in front of apartments, and when you do the contact information is a local real estate branch office.





Real Estate Agents: Japan Home Search

While traditional real estate agents offer the vast majority of available properties in Japan, they are not set up to be foreigner friendly. Many landlords are simply not willing to rent to foreigners in general, especially to those who do not speak any Japanese.

As one foreign resident has recounted: “I remember hearing the agent who helped me with mine say to my prospective landlords over and over again, “He is foreign, but he is from the United States and speaks Japanese. “ Usually, this was followed quickly by, “Oh, really? I understand, thank you for your

time.” I felt bad for him watching the list of properties he was able to show me get smaller, and smaller, until we were left with about 5; out of an original 25.” Getting a foreigner into housing can be a challenge in Japan.

JapanHomeSearch.com

specializes in serving the specific housing needs of foreign client’s. The apartments and homes they offer are pre-screened to allow foreign tenants, and unlike a traditional real estate agent, they can basically take you through the rental process from start to finish in English.

Fees and Policies

Key Money

Key money or *reikin* is a one-time fee that a tenant may be asked to pay a landlord when a lease contract is concluded. This is considered a gratuity for the conclusion of the lease contract. This business custom dates back to an old Japanese tradition whereby wealthy families in positions of power paid cash to a landlord as a gratuity. Unlike a deposit, this payment will not be returned at the termination of the contract. High rent property owners generally do not request key money and instead, charge deposit plus one month advance rent.

While the “key money” tradition seems overly exorbitant, one must understand that monthly rent is much lower in Kobe than other cities in Japan where key money is not so prominent, and there are no penalties to canceling contracts at any point during the housing contract. Contracts usually

automatically renew in Kobe, without any renewal fees, so the key money you need to pay up front is simply a “different system” and the overall situation should be considered when evaluating the initial costs of entering a new rental home.

Deposits

Deposits or *hoshokin* are standard for rental agreements and are collected in advance as collateral to cover potential arrears in rent and property damage and/or future cleaning fees at termination of the contract. Typically 2~6 months rent will be charged as deposit. As in most other countries, the deposit is in principle refundable. However, some landlords can be quite punitive in the damage they charge.

Rent

Rent or *yachin* is usually paid monthly, in advance to the owner. In some cases there is a late fee if payment is overdue.

Maintenance Fee

It is standard for the landlord to require *kyoekihi*, a monthly fee for general building maintenance, including grounds, electricity for the elevator and outside lighting as well as up-keep of the structure.

Agent Fees

Most properties are found through a real estate company. The realtor will charge an agent's fee *chukai tesuryo* as payment for acting as an intermediary, from the start of the home-finding process through conclusion of the house contract and move-in inspection. The ceiling of the fee, regulated by law, is 1 month's rent plus consumption tax.

Tenant Insurance

Housing contracts often stipulate the tenant to take out tenant insurance *jutaku hoken*. There are very reasonable comprehensive tenant insurance packages available which offer protection for the whole family providing personal liability and damages

caused fire, water leaks, theft, lightning and earthquake.

Repairs

The responsibility for repairs is usually clearly outlined in the housing contract. Owners are responsible for "general wear and tear" called "*shizen-shomo*" in Japanese, while tenants are responsible for any damage outside normal wear and tear. However, it is important to understand that in Japan all repairs are generally done by the owner's stipulated management company or repairman. You become responsible for the cost, but it is not custom in Japan that you conduct your own repairs.

Pets

Many rental properties don't allow pets, so having a pet is likely to reduce your rental options significantly. However, pets are now very popular in Japan, so we have seen relatively more properties in recent years that will take your poodle or your Siamese beauty. Even when properties are

labeled "pet friendly", it is common case-by-case permission must be obtained from the landlord.

Some properties, for example, will allow small pets, but not large dogs. Some places are OK with dogs, but don't allow cats. Sometimes, additional deposits or rent can be required and there

may be additional "cleaning" or "disinfection" charges at the end of the contract.

Big dogs and cats are very hard to find places to live with. Less than 20% of properties will allow pets generally, and only around 5% would allow a big dog or a cat.



Guarantor

Many companies act as lessee and enter into housing contracts on behalf of foreign employee or “tenant”. In these cases no guarantor is needed. However, if you enter into a private contract and will be the signatory, you will also need a guarantor. The guarantor can be a Japanese colleague or company established to provide just such services. Recently, many owners are using “guarantor companies” who will charge you a flat fee for this service. You will need to provide documents such as copies of your residence card and visa stamp and submit a Certificate of Employment from your company in order to enter into a contract with the “guarantor company” which in turn allows you to make a contract with the house property owner.

Contract Terms

Housing contracts in Japan are generally for a set two years and include clauses for

early termination and renewal. It is standard for contracts to automatically be extended unless a cancellation notice has been submitted. When your assignment in Japan has ended, it will be necessary to terminate the house contract and related services such as utilities. Most housing contracts require one-two months prior written notice of termination. There will be a final inspection when you move out at which time the owner, realtor and, or management representative will ascertain cleaning and damage fees to be deducted from the deposit.

In addition to standard two-year contracts, there are also fixed-term contracts that are common if the owner is planning to return to their property at some point in the future. Fixed term contracts cannot be renewed, so any extension of the initial contract would require a completely new contract. Fixed term contracts are normally for longer periods of four-five years, but the termination process remains the same as for standard two-year contracts.



Appliances and Furniture

When moving into a new apartment or house it is common that there will be little, if anything, in the way of furnishings and built-in appliances. Often you may be required to buy lights, air conditioners, curtains and other white appliance items that you might consider standard in rental properties elsewhere. Either way the utility of such devices and the way they work will need a little study to figure out.

Washing Machines

You should be aware that Japanese washing machines usually wash only with cold water, as there is not often hot water available for the laundry areas of Japanese housing. Japanese clothes dryers are often combination machines, or are separate units that are powered by electricity only, and therefore take hours to dry clothes fully. Powerful clothes dryers don't tend to be common because the Japanese usually dry their clothes outside on a line.

Kitchen Appliances

A Japanese kitchen will be set up quite differently from its western counterpart. An stand alone oven is uncommon and is usually part of an appliance that includes a microwave with an electric oven feature. A lot of people use only a toaster oven in their apartments, as even a smaller “full size” oven will simply not fit. Many stoves

burn propane gas, have two to four burners and include a fish grill that sides out from under the burners and operates as a small broiling oven.

In larger western-style properties, larger ovens and white appliances are available, but in typical Japanese properties even a small dishwasher is rarely included in the kitchen.



Toilets and Baths

Historically Japanese did not have a toilet in the bathroom and the two facilities had their own separately dedicated spaces. A traditional Japanese bath requires that most washing is done out of the bath, which is used primarily for soaking and relaxation. The bathing area was intuitively a “clean” space and the inclusion of a toilet effectively negated this concept. These days however you will find something called a “unit bath” in smaller apartments. A unit bath will have both a toilet and a bathtub with a shower attachment, effectively merging the two functions in a nod to the reality that space is at a premium and some traditions must be sacrificed.

Japanese Toilets

The American equivalent of the “bathroom” or “restroom” is referred to simply as “the toilet” (toire) in Japan, as in European countries. While you will still find standard “squatting” toilets in public facilities and older buildings,

most modern Japanese toilets are quite superior in technology and function to those you may have encountered in other countries. Most will have heated seats and it is also common to include both a bidet and “washlet” (posterior washing spray) functions utilizing warm water. Some will also feature “blow dry” modes to limit the amount of toilet paper that is used.

The Japanese Bath

As mentioned above, the Japanese have traditionally utilized the bath for relaxation. As the body is washed outside of the bath in a shower area, the water in the bath is often used by several people before it is let out. Modern baths will allow you to re-heat the water for later use. Showering is usually done sitting on a stool and for this reason you will find that it is hung lower than you might expect. Most shower heads are attached via a hose and can detach from the wall and be used separately from their normal position.



Furnishing Your Home

Depending on your situation and budget, there are many options for furnishing your home in Japan.

Shipping

If you are coming to Japan for an extended period of time, your company may ship your furniture to Japan and back for you. Being surrounded by familiar things is a great way to help you ease into life in a new country.

Be aware however that shipping can be a bit of a hassle and can take between six to eight weeks, not including any problems that may arise at customs. Additionally some things simply may not fit into a Japanese apartment or house, so keep in mind what types of things you are bringing and if they will suit your new place. Often the size of doorways and elevators in Japan are smaller than back home and so it is best to confirm whether things will fit or not before you send them. What can you

do with a refrigerator that won't fit in your house after all? For this reason it is a good idea to bring the measurements of any large items you plan on bringing with you on a home-finding tour.

If you do decide to ship your household items you will need to decide for what to do while you wait for everything to arrive. You may choose to stay in a hotel, or you could just make do living out of a suitcase on the floor. Alternatively Lease Japan offers a convenient short-term furniture rental service which can keep you comfortable during the interval between when you arrive and when your stuff does.

Buying New Furniture

Another option is to buy all new furniture. However you may find that the size and variety of furnishings available may not match your preferences. While western-style furnishings are increasingly common, the quality and price performance for what you get can often be disappointing to foreigners.

Buying Used Furniture

Like anywhere else, you can also purchase used furniture in Japan. One popular way of finding what you are after is to check “sayonara sales”, moving home sales by other foreign residents.

Sayonara sales are usually advertised by word of mouth, but you may find one by searching on the internet. If you get lucky, this is the cheapest method of furnishing your house, but there is no way to guarantee that you will get your home furnished with any sort of expediency. In addition running around and collecting things from people in a new city is a bit of a hassle.

Alternatively you can try one of the “recycle shops” which sells used items. Think of them as permanent garage sales. You never know what you might find in them, and the prices can be much higher than you would expect. Lastly there is the problem of ferrying things back to your residence. Some shops will deliver (depending on how much stuff you buy) but most will expect you to take what you buy home with you.

Most foreigners will tell you that sayonara sales are worth checking out if there is something you can't get elsewhere. Roughly the same goes for used stores, though they tend not to be of very good value.

Leasing Furniture

There are several reasons why leasing furniture is an attractive option for expats. One point to consider is that when it comes time to return home you will either have to ship it home or otherwise get rid of it in Japan. If you can't sell the things you have collected you will have to dispose of them which can be quite expensive and time consuming. If you wish to throw away large items you must reserve a pick up day and pay a fee for anything that cannot be placed in a standard garbage bag.

If you decide to lease furniture then it will be delivered and picked up at your convenience. This is especially useful for people who want to make a contract for the exact period of time that they will be in Japan. You can even have your residence furnished and ready for you before you arrive.

Lease Japan will furnish your home tastefully and quickly without investing a lot of cash up-front. They do the work for you so that you have time and energy to concentrate on getting settled in and acquainted with your new environs. Their English-language service is stress free and easy to use.

Here are some of the services that they provide:

- Tasteful furniture and appliances selected by you from their catalogue. Order piece by piece, or one of their convenient packages, specially selected to provide you with all the essentials.
- Delivery and installation of the items in your home.
- Continued support for maintenance and repair issues.
- Collection of furniture and appliances from your home at lease end.
- Service in English; including contracts and service documentation
- English appliance manuals, when possible.

For more information go to: www.leasejapan.com/furncatalogue.asp



Dealing With Garbage

In Kobe the rules for garbage collection are as follows:

- Only put out garbage and recyclable items between 5:00 am and 8:00 am on collection days.
- Only use designated bags.
- Place garbage and recyclables at designated “clean stations” in your neighborhood.

Types of Garbage

Here is a list of the categories you need to sort your garbage and recyclables into. Check with your neighborhood leader to determine the days each is collected.

Cans, Bottles, PET Bottles - Collected once a week

- Aluminum cans
- Glass bottles and jars
- Plastic bottles marked with the “PET” recycling mark

Container Plastics and Trays - Collected once a week

- Plastic cups and packages
- Styrofoam food trays (The city encourages you to recycle these at supermarkets)
- Plastic bags and wrapping
- Plastic bottles (please wash out before disposal)

Oversized Garbage - Request a pick up (fee is charged)

- Items too large for the designated 45L bags
- Items which fit into the designated 45L bags and weigh more than 5kg
- Large furniture
- Bicycles
- Bulky garbage

To have these items picked up please call or fax the reception center:
Tel: (078) 392-7953 Fax: (078) 392-5500

Non-burnable Garbage - Collected twice a month

- Glass, Ceramics
- Small Electrical Appliances
- Small Metal Items

Gas Cartridges, Spray Cans - Collected twice a month

- Gas Cartridges
- Spray Cans
- Aerosol Cans

Note that these should only be disposed after you have emptied the contents, made a hole in the can to release pressure, and separated them from the other non-burnable garbage.

Burnable Garbage - Collected twice a week

- Kitchen Waste
- Paper Waste
- Leather, Fabrics
- Plastic Items
- Wood Items

In addition newspaper and cardboard materials and other paper waste are collected on designated days each month. A complete guide to dealing with garbage in Kobe is available in English here:

www.city.kobe.lg.jp/life/recycle/waketon/img/english.pdf

Purchasing or Leasing a Car in Japan

Purchasing a Car

First, the good news. You are spoiled for choice when purchasing a car in Japan. Used cars are an especially good option as the Japanese tend to be meticulous when it comes to maintaining and servicing their automobiles. No matter what brand or model you are after, there is a good chance you can find a car that suits your needs.

Naturally, purchasing a car involves registering the vehicle to get it on the road. There are also permits to obtain for parking, as well as fees, taxes and additional costs that will be added to that price you see on the windshield. All-in-all though, if you have dealt with your department of motor vehicles in your home country you can get through the hurdles required to have your own wheels in Japan - but there is a lot to be done!

The Basics

- First, register your inkan seal at city hall or your local ward office, and get an inkan shomeisho or Certificate of Seal Registration.
- Next, find a car you would like from an individual or a dealer.

Buying a Car from an Individual

Go to your local police station and ask for the following:

- *Hokan basho shomei shinseisho* (Police Parking Application Form)
- *Hokan basho shomei* (Certificate of Permission For Parking Space)
The owner of your parking place must fill out and stamp this form to prove you have a place to park the vehicle arranged.



Location of parking lot and space:

This can often be obtained from the real estate agent, building owner or building management company. You will need a map that shows your parking space in relation to other property, as well as show the dimensions of the space.

When you have completed the forms, take the documents and your inkan stamp to the police station and turn them in. You will have to pay a fee, usually around ¥2,000, and you will be advised when to pick the documents up again. Some departments will charge you a fee, usually ¥500, to collect the documents when they are completed.

Prepare forms to be signed by, or received from the seller. You will need to go to a vehicle registration office and ask for:

Meigi henkou
(Re-Registration Form)

Both forms must be stamped or signed by the previous owner.

A notarized signature is only valid for three months and cannot be renewed if the party has left Japan. The validity period for the certified stamp varies, but is generally also three months.

Required forms to get from the seller:

- *Ininjou* (Power of Attorney)
- *Joutou shomeisho*

(Certificate of Transfer/ Bill of Sale)
Both forms must be completed in Japanese, and all information must match the notarized signature form. This also applies to the seller's information.

- *Jidoushazei noufusho* (Certificate of Vehicle Tax Payment)

This receipt must be kept as proof of payment of taxes, and given to the buyer if the car is sold.

- *Shakkensho* (Vehicle Registration Certificate)

This certificate must be kept current and with the car. It must be given to the buyer if the car is sold.

Vehicle Registration

Once you have received your approved documents from the police, and had the documents stamped by the previous owner, take the car and all the documents to the kensa touroku jimusho (Inspection Registration Office).

Like any department of motor vehicles, everything at the Inspection and Registration Office is bureaucratic, and will take some time. In addition to the long lines, you will be sent to many different desks and windows as the process continues. Plan on spending at least a few hours, and bring a book.

Every location has different procedures, but in general you will need to submit the papers gathered previously, fill out some other forms, and pay any required fees, such as the following:

- Taxes on the vehicle.
- If the car is from another prefecture, you will need to buy

new plates.

After completing the procedures at the Inspection and Registration Office, the car will be registered to you, and a new shaken certificate issued in your name.

Buying a Car from a Dealer

The dealer should assist or instruct you on how to get the following forms:

- Hokan basho shomei shinseisho (Police Parking Application Form)
- Hokan basho shomei (Certificate of Permission For Parking Space)

Vehicle Registration

Again, the dealer should do all the registrations at the Vehicle Inspection and Registration Office for you, and provide the new Shaken Certificate in your name when they deliver the car to you. Some dealers may charge a fee for this service.



Leasing a Car

Because purchasing and registering a car in Japan can be complicated, you may decide to lease a car instead. Lease Japan offers a comprehensive service for foreigners who wish to obtain a car this way.

What is a Car Lease?

Automobile leasing means that you pay only the amount that a vehicle's value depreciates during the time you are driving it. Depreciation is the difference between a vehicle's original value and its value at lease-end (residual value), and is the primary factor that determines the cost of leasing. Basically, you pay for the part of the car value that you use up during the lease term. There are other costs that may be included in the lease fee. These include insurance, registration fees and the addition of other options such as GPS navigation systems.

The Advantages of Leasing with Lease Japan

- Fewer hassles
- Leases generally come with full service maintenance and full coverage insurance policies included in the monthly lease fee.
- The lease company will be there to assist from the time of delivery to the day the car is returned.
- Lease Japan specializes in providing services and contracts in English.
- At Lease Japan, all of our consultants are bilingual in English and Japanese and we boast a great mix of foreign and Japanese staff.

- **Lower Monthly Payments:** as you only pay for the portion of the car that you actually use, your monthly payments will be 30%-60% lower than a purchase loan of the same term.
- **Lower up-front cash outlay:** most leasing companies, including Lease Japan, require no down payment, which makes getting into a new car more affordable and frees up your cash for other things. We generally ask for the first and last month's lease payment in the first month, as we find this easier for the client, who will not have to make a payment for the last month of the lease (and probably the last month of being in Japan).

This means you will not need to worry about making sure you still have your bank account open to pay the last payment. You can focus on more important last minute things whilst still driving your car until the very last day.

- **More Car, More Often for new car leases:** Since your monthly payments are lower, you get more car for the same money and can drive a brand new vehicle every two to four years, depending on the length of your leases.
- **Fewer Maintenance Headaches:** most people like to lease for a term that coincides with the length, in months, of the manufacturer's warranty coverage so that if something goes wrong with their car, it is always covered. At Lease Japan, we also offer free 1/6/18/24 month maintenance checks on all new cars. We will collect the car from your place of work or residence at a time that suits you, take the car to have its maintenance check and return the car the same day.
- **No Car-Selling Hassles:** with leasing, the headaches of selling a used car are eliminated. When your lease ends, you simply return it back to the leasing company and walk away.

- **Bonus Service Bundles:** different companies make leasing even more attractive by bundling different services with their lease packages. At Lease Japan, we offer:
- **ETC Card (Electronic Toll Collection System):** get an ETC card without the hassles of a Japanese credit card. We will supply you with an ETC card without the need for applying for a Japanese credit card.
- **24,7 Emergency Help Line:** When you lease a car from Lease Japan, you will automatically be eligible for our 24/7 English Help Line Assistance Service. If you have an accident or have any problems with the lease car, you will be able to contact one of our native English speaking consultants for immediate assistance.

Easy Steps to Leasing a Car

- Request an estimate for your desired car type, grade, color, options, etc.
- An estimate is prepared and sent to you for verification. Changes and new estimates may be requested at this point.
- When everything is agreed upon, sign the estimate for your new lease car and return it.
- When the signed estimate is received, your contract will be mailed to you. At this point, the lease agent will begin ordering and registering the car.
- To register the car, the lease agent will need some things from you:
- A copy of your *jyuminhyo* (Residence Certificate)

- *Hokan basho shomei* (Certificate of Permission For Parking Space)
The owner of your parking place must fill out and stamp this form to prove you have a place to park the vehicle arranged.
- Your *inkan* seal on the registration paperwork

Types of Leases:

Closed-end Leases

Closed-end leases, sometimes called “walk-away” leases, are the most common consumer leases today. This type of lease allows you to simply return your vehicle at the end of the lease and have no other responsibilities. Closed-end leases are based on the concept that the number of miles you drive annually is fairly predictable (12,000 miles per year is typical), that the vehicle will not be driven in rough or abusive conditions, and that its value at the end of the lease (the residual) is therefore somewhat predictable.

Open-end Leases

Open-end leases in the west are used primarily for commercial business leasing. In this case the lessee, not the leasing company, takes all the financial risks, which a business will simply count as an expense. Annual mileage on a business lease is usually much higher and less predictable than a standard 12,000 miles-per-year non-business lease.

In Japan, however, the law forbids companies from taking out open-end leases so they are primarily used by individuals as an alternative method of financing a new car; like a car loan, but more complicated.

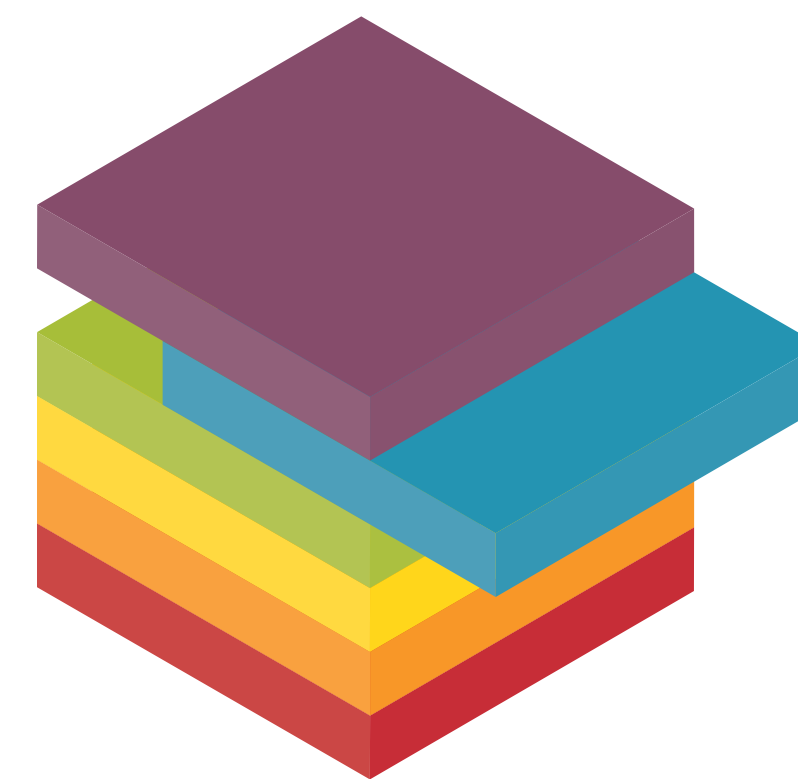
Open-ended leases are also popular with foreign ex-pats in Japan because they are not usually eligible for normal car loans or financing through Japanese banks.

In an open-end lease, the lessee (driver) is responsible for the difference between the estimated lease-end value of the car (the residual) and the actual market value of the car at the end of the lease. This could amount to a significant sum of money if the market value of your vehicle has dropped or you drive more miles than expected.

Often, the residual value for an open-end lease is set much lower than a non-business closed-end lease, which reduces your lease-end risk, but increases your monthly payment amount.

Lease Japan invites you to view our selection of new and used cars to buy or lease. We put you in the driver’s seat with comprehensive leasing, purchasing, and after care services.

Find out more at: www.LeaseJapan.com



LEASE JAPAN



Converting your Foreign License

Like all countries Japan has its own peculiar rules of the road. Signs, traffic laws and customary behavior are quite different from other countries. For this reason, you will have to pass through their regulatory system to drive legally. For some the path is wide and easy. For others it is a bit more narrow; this is one thing you do not want to do on your own.

Fortunately, Japan Driver's License has bilingual experts on hand to assess your place in the system and guide you through it. Essentially foreign license conversion in Japan can be divided generally into two groups, depending on what country issued the foreign license.

The Lucky Ones

The first group includes license holders able to convert their foreign licenses directly to a Japanese license. For this group, conversion is a shorter bureaucratic process that takes a couple of hours at the license center; if your license was issued in one of these countries:

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Taiwan and South Korea

...and it is valid (not expired, etc.), and you can prove residency in that country for a minimum of three months after license issuance you are not required to take either the written test or road test to convert your license.

Let's Take A Test!

The second group includes license holders who require both a written and a driving test in order to get a Japanese driver's license.

Valid foreign license holders from countries not listed above - held by people who can prove a minimum of three months residency in the country that issued the license after it was issued - may be allowed to convert their license only after filing paperwork, taking a short written test, and passing a driving test on an enclosed course at the testing center in their prefecture. If you are not in either of these groups, then the Japan Driver's License consultants can advise you on the best way to go about being certified. If you do not speak Japanese it may be difficult to get through these steps, and most centers require that you bring someone with you who can speak Japanese.

Official Translation of Your Foreign Driver's License

To start the process, both groups of license holders need to obtain an official translation of their foreign driver's license from an approved source. This is most commonly done through the Japan Auto Federation (JAF).

Gather Required Documents

After you obtain your official translation, you must go to the licensing center that serves your area with the following documents:

Valid foreign driver's license – and previous licenses, if you have them; if the license does not show the date of issue, or if the license was recently renewed, it may be necessary to submit additional documentation.

- Japanese translation of foreign license, available from the Japan Automobile Federation: www.jaf.or.jp/e/switch.htm or sometimes at the embassy or consulate of the issuing country.

- Residence Card
- Jyuminhyo x2 (Certificate of Residence)

- Passport and any expired passports; these are required to prove that you were in the country that issued your license for at least three months after you obtained your license.
- One 3 x 2.4 cm photo; must be taken within the last six months.
- Previous Japanese license, if you have one.

There's a Sign For That!

Some of the road signs you will need to know when driving in Japan!



Applying at the Driver's License Center

The application procedure begins with an inspection of your documents to make sure that you have lived in the country that issued your license for at least three months after issuance, and that all of your documentation is up-to-date and complete.

Eye Test

Standard eye test; you will be required to point in the direction that the image is pointing (this will make more sense when you see it). Once you pass the eye exam:

- If you are in group one, you will usually receive your license that day and you will be finished.
- If you are in group two, once you pass the eye exam, you will take the written test. Carry on!

Written Test

The written test for license conversion is much simpler than that given to people getting their first license. The test itself is available in English; however, the instruction session just prior to the test will be in Japanese.

The main point of the Japanese explanation to understand is that in Japan X means false and O means true, and that when you have completed the test you may leave the room. The best way to study for the test is to read the Japan Auto Federation's English-language book, "Rules of the Road."

The Driving Test

This driving test is infamous. The test itself is not difficult, but there are many simple sequences and processes that the test proctors are looking for, and if you are not aware of them, you will not pass.

It is not uncommon for foreigners to take the driving test five times or more, simply for the lack of a little knowledge, rather than a lack of actual driving skills.

Considering that each attempt requires nearly a full day at the testing center, fees and lost wages can make converting your license on your own a time-consuming, expensive, and frustrating experience. The average pass rate unassisted is 20%. Japan Driver's License clients enjoy a greater than 70% first time pass rate, and 95% pass by the second try.

Once you pass the eye exam and written test, you will be scheduled for your driving test. The test is not offered on the same day you apply; you will have to come back to the testing center. Most likely; it will be a testing block period, rather than a specific time.

You may be able to change this schedule on the spot or over the phone later. You will usually also receive a map of the driving course, which you will be required to drive from memory on test day. Take the opportunity to walk the driving course before you leave if possible, it will help you to memorize it.

Depending on the driving center, you may be required to pay an additional car rental fee. Be prepared to spend a lot of time waiting. When your turn comes, you will be required to get in the car and drive the prescribed course with an examiner, who will speak only in Japanese. It is necessary to memorize all the turns and elements of the course in advance; you will not receive instructions from the proctor.

If you make a "major" mistake you will fail on the spot. Whether or not you passed, you will be instructed to go inside and wait for the results with the other test takers. If you were not successful, you'll be given a paper with your next scheduled opportunity to try again.

If you are successful, you should receive your new license that day. This will entail paying more fees, getting your picture taken, and filling out forms.

If you are going to drive in Japan, especially if you are here for more than one year, you must convert your license.

What To See And Do



Kitano Ijinkan (Kitano Street)



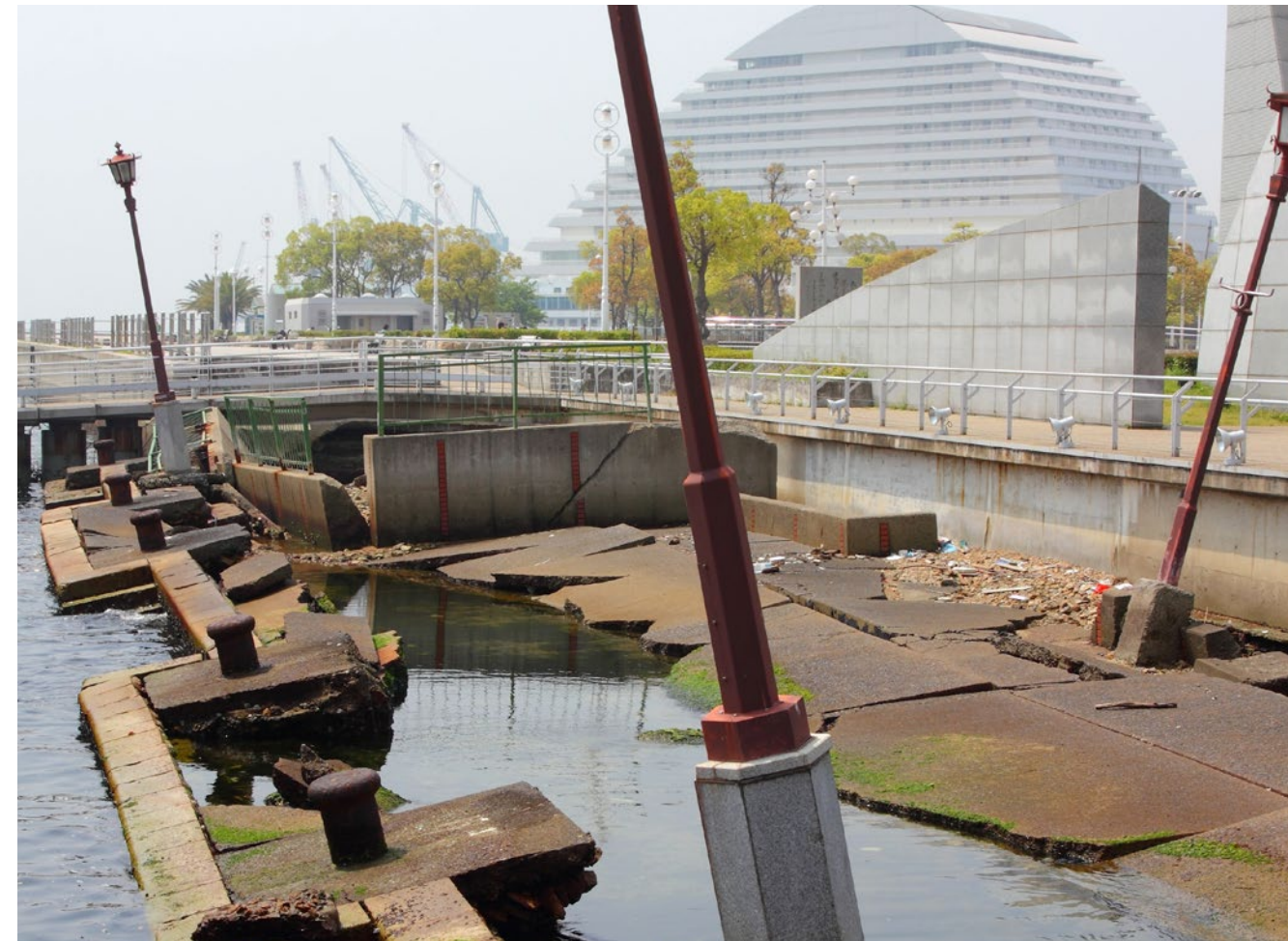
Kitano Street is famous for the western houses built in the late Meiji and early Taisho era by some of the first foreign traders and businessmen in Japan. These homes which sit atop a hill overlooking the city are open to the public and maintain their old-world feel. Along the street itself are shops, museums, galleries and restaurants.

The Kitano Area is served by the Kobe Loop Bus

Nearest Station: Shin-Kobe, Subway Seishin-Yamate Line

[Map](#)

Port Of Kobe Earthquake Memorial Park



The Great Hanshin earthquake of 1995 had a profound effect on the city and part of that legacy is this park and a museum. The park is worth a stroll around to see the many statues, sculptures, plaques and commemorative fountains dedicated to those who died. There is a small area where a part of the Meriken Wharf has been preserved to show how it was affected by the earthquake.

Located inside Meriken Park
Hatoba-cho 2, Chuo-ku, Kobe

Nearest Station: Minatomotomachi Station, Subway Kaigan Line

[Map](#)

Chinatown (Nankin-machi)



Despite it's relatively small size there is a lot to Nankin-machi, one of three officially designated Chinatowns in Japan. Three archways demarcate Nankin-machi proper: Changan Gate to the east, Xian Gate to the west, and Nanluo Gate to the south. There is no archway at the northern entrance, which is guarded by a pair of lions. A pavilion with stone carvings of the 12 Chinese zodiac signs marks the intersection of the north-south / east-west axis of Nankin-machi.

Nearest Station: Motomachi Station, Hanshin Main Line / JR Kobe Line

[Map](#)





Kobe Harborland



Kobe Harborland features an assortment of department stores, superstores, and speciality shops and hotels. It also has a small amusement park complete with ferris wheel. This is a good place for a stroll along the waterfront boardwalk and at night along Gas Light street.

www.harborland.co.jp

Nearest Station: Kobe Station, JR Kobe Line / Harborland Station, Subway Kaigan Line

[Map](#)

Mt. Rokko



Mt. Rokko (Rokko-san) is famous for it's excellent view of Osaka Bay. A cable car ride is the best way to get to the top of Mt. Rokko, where you will find the Garden Terrace - a complex of restaurants, shops, a botanical garden, and a music box museum. The mountains are a popular hiking site with myriad trails, waterfalls, and wild boar. Ask at the Tourist Information Center for hiking maps.

Nearest Station: Rokko Station, Hankyu Kobe Line

[Map](#)

Arima Onsen



Arima Onsen is one of the oldest hot springs in Japan and is said to have been opened by Buddhist monks who built a sanitarium here in the 8th century. The bathing resorts in the area contain a variety of hot springs including some containing twice the sodium of seawater, carbonated springs, radium springs, and a number of springs featuring naturally acidic and sulfur-rich water.

Getting There: Take the Hankyu Line to Rokko Station and continue up Mt. Rokko on the cablecar. Connect with the bus loop line to the Rokko Arima Ropeway, then take the ropeway down to Arima Onsen.

www.arima-onsen.com

[Map](#)

Nofuku Temple and the Hyogo Daibutsu



This temple is known as a place where Taira no Kiyomori (a general in the late Heian period of Japan) became a priest. It houses the Hyogo Daibutsu (Great Buddha), once regarded as one of the three Great Buddhas in Japan, on par with the ones in Nara and Kamakura. The current Buddha is the second one and was reconstructed in 1991.

Nearest Station: Hyogo Station,
JR Kobe Line

[Map](#)

Himeji Castle



While a bit farther afield, Himeji Castle is one of the most attractive tourists destinations within easy reach of Kobe. Unlike many other Japanese castles, Himeji Castle was never destroyed in a war, earthquake, or fire and it survives in its original form. It is both a national treasure and a UNESCO world heritage site. Many locals and visitors come in early spring to admire the cherry blossoms in the surrounding grounds and to picnic and spend the entire day in this pleasant location.

Nearest Station: Himeji Station,
JR Kobe Line

[Map](#)

Ikuta Shrine



Ikuta Shrine is surrounded by a forest of the same name - the site of a battle between the Genji and the Heike clans - and has some historical landmarks connected with both sides. The shrine is not only revered by local people as a guardian deity of the city of Kobe, but also known as a shrine of the god of marriage and a shrine to be visited by athletes to pray for victory.

Nearest Station: Sannomiya Station,
Hankyu Kobe Line / Hanshin Line / JR
Kobe Line

[Map](#)

ikutajinja.or.jp/language/english.html





Hakutsuru Sake Brewery Museum



This sake brewery and museum is entertaining and the surrounding neighborhood is quaint. There are several renowned sake breweries within the vicinity, so sake enthusiasts will not be disappointed coming here. The museum is informative and visitors can taste and buy fresh sake, some of which is not sold elsewhere. The museum takes you through the brewing process as explained by a pamphlet, and well-made English language videos.

Nearest Station: Sumiyoshi Station, JR Kobe Line

[Map](#)

www.hakutsuru-sake.com

Kobe Science Museum



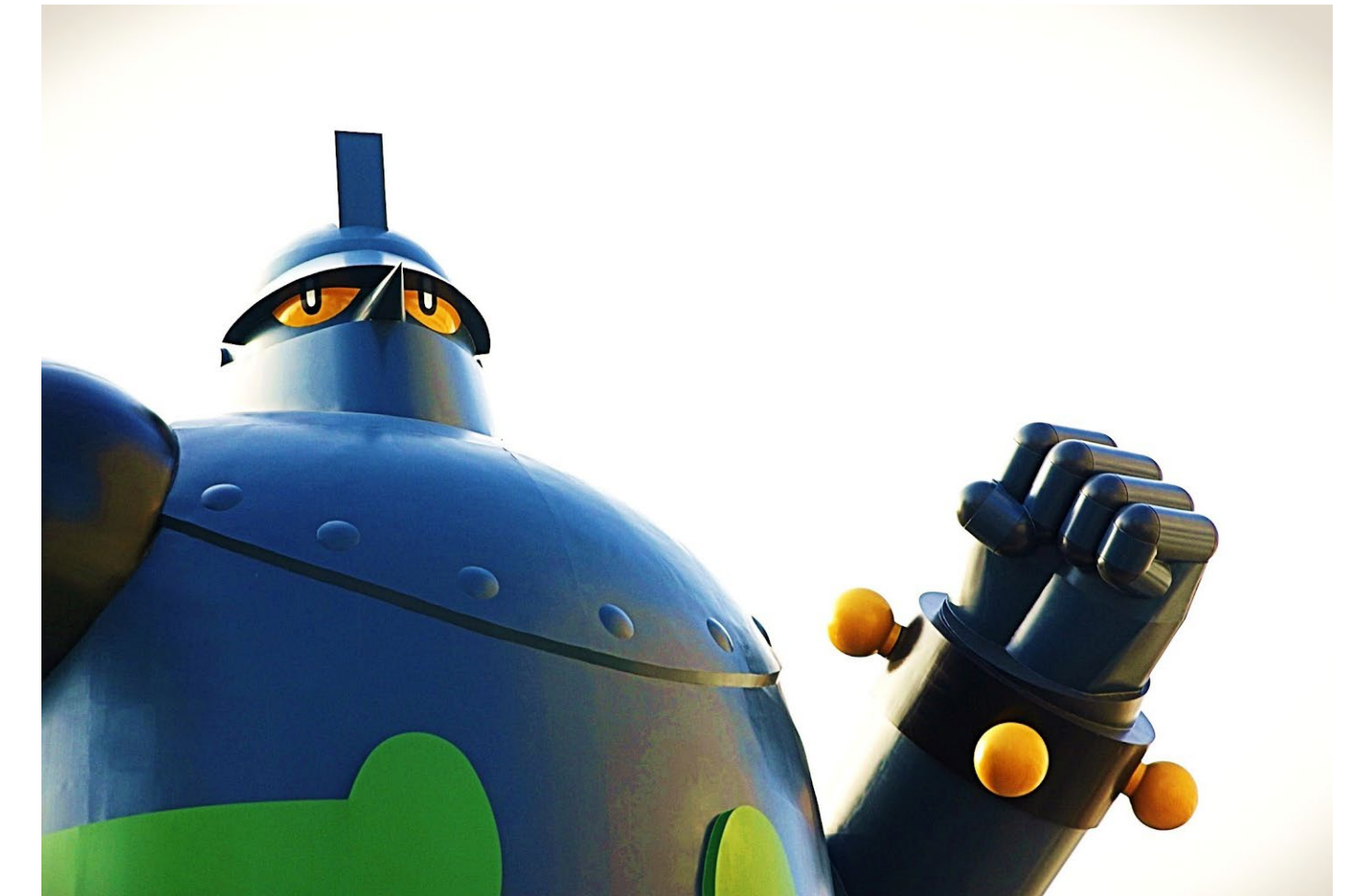
The Kobe Science Museum on Port Island Kobe is a five-story building with exhibits focused on Power and Energy, Creative Science, City Science, Environmental Science, Life Science and Information Science. The highlight is the planetarium. Featuring a number of interactive exhibits with English explanations.

Nearest Station: Minami Koen Station, Port Liner

[Map](#)

www.kobe-kagakukan.jp/kobe-science-museum

Tetsujin 28-go Monument



This huge monument is a reproduction of Tetsujin 28-go, the main character of the eponymous comic series by Mitsuteru Yokoyama, a cartoonist from Kobe. The monument was created as a symbol of the recovery from the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake and the revitalization of the Kobe community.

Nearest Station: Nishidai Station, Sanyo Main Line

[Map](#)





Kobe Beef

Mouriya

Teppanyaki

Kobe beef is world famous, and if you are want to try it while you are here Mouriya is a good choice. While there are three shops in Kobe, the original location is still the most popular. Choose from an series of courses. The food is prepared for you at your table.

2-1-17 Shimoyamatedori, Chuo-ku, Kobe
(078) 391-4603

www.mouriya.co.jp/en/mopr

Izakaya

Kokoroya

Japanese

Located under the railway track just north of Sannomiya, Kokoroya is a small Japanese restaurant serving standard izakaya-style favorites - everything from yakitori to sushi. No English menu but very friendly and welcoming.

2-1-363 Kotonoocho, Chuo-ku, Kobe
(078) 222-5558

kokoroya.hp.gogo.jp

French

Bistrot Cafe de Paris

French Cafe / Restaurant

This French bistro and cafe is popular with Japanese and foreigners alike. The food is authentically French yet not prohibitively expensive. They offer set menus and one of the best places to enjoy outdoor dining in Kobe.

1-7-21 Yamamotodori, Chuo-ku, Kobe

(078) 241-9448

www.cafe-de-paris.jp





American

Nailey's Grill

American

Nailey's is a popular restaurant serving fresh and expertly prepared American-style food. The service is great and the staff speak English. Their Caesar Salad is extremely popular. Situated in Kitano.

2-8-12 Kanocho, Chuo-ku, Kobe

(078) 231-2008

www.naileys.com

British

Hobgoblin Kobe

British Pub

Located just a short distance from Sannomiya station Hobgoblin is the perfect spot for a few pints. Great selection of bottled beers with ales on tap. English pub fare is available and they serve a full English breakfast and roasts on Sundays.

4-3-2 Kanocho, Chuo-ku, Kobe

(078) 325-0830

www.hobgoblin.jp

Kitano Club Terrace Restaurant

International Cuisine

While the Kobe Club is a private club, the Kitano Terrace Restaurant is open to the public. A regular menu of favorites with daily specials such as spring seafood salad with kiwifruit dressing and white asparagus puree, or smoked cherry blossom sea bream. An elegant atmosphere, the separate bar and lounge has fabulous panoramic views of Kobe.

1-5-7 Kitanocho, Chuo-ku, Kobe
(078) 222-5123
www.kitanoclub.co.jp/restaurant





Indian

Raja

Raja has some of the best Indian food in a town full of great Indian restaurants. A real tandoor oven and a full menu of authentic dishes to choose from.

B1 Sanotachi Building, 2-7-4 Sakaemachidori Chuo-ku, Kobe
(078) 332-5253
www.raja-kobe.com

Vietnamese

Thang Cafe

Hanoi Cuisine

If you are looking for authentic Vietnamese food in the Kobe area then you will want to head to this popular restaurant which specializes in Hanoi regional cuisine. The Spring rolls, Bun Cha noodles with vegetables, stir fried beef and vegetables are recommended.

San Plaza B1, 1-8-1 Sannomiyacho, Chuo-ku, Kobe
(078) 391-0335

Chinese

Bekkan Botanen

Bekkan Botanen has a long and established history in Kobe's Motomachi area. While many Chinese restaurants in China Town offer menus that have been adapted to the Japanese palate here you will find more authentic food and a friendly and attentive staff.

1-11 Motomachi-dori Chuo-ku, Kobe
(078) 331-5790





Malls and Outlets

The AEON is a chain of one-stop shopping store featuring general merchandise and food. Some of the stores are quite large.

AEON MALL Kobe Kita

1-1, Kozudai 8-chome,
Kita-ku, Kobe-shi, Hyogo
Tel: 078-983-3200

[Map](#)

AEON Kobe Harborland Umie

1-7-2, Higashi-kawasakicho,
Chuo-Ku, Kobe, Japan
Tel: 078-382-7100

[Map](#)

AEON Kobe Tarumi Store

1-1 Tennoshita-cho
Tarumi-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-704-3800

[Map](#)

Mitsui Outlet Park

Marine PIA Kobe

Kobe's authentic outlet mall, overlooking the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge. Over 130 shops. Tax free shopping available.

12-2 Kaigandori,
Tarumi-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-709-4466

www.31op.com/kobe/foreign/index_en.html

[Map](#)

Umie Kobe Harborland

225 stores all in one area including major specialty shops of a wide-variety of fashion and gourmet food stores. Cinemas as well.

1-7-2, Higashi-kawasakicho,
Chuo-Ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-382-7100

umie.jp.e.kv.hp.transer.com/shop/lists/

[Map](#)

COSTCO Kobe

This American giant everything store has locations in Japan as well. You must purchase a membership to shop among the amazing selection of imported and Japanese goods.

868-26 Aza-Kotsukayama,
Tamon-cho, Tarumi-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-796-3500

www.costco.co.jp/p/locations/kobe

[Map](#)

Supermarkets and Imported Food

Daiei

Very reasonable supermarket with several floors devoted to foods and sundries. Parking available.

Daiei Sannomiya

6-1-15 Kumoidori,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-291-0077

[Map](#)

Daiei Ashiya

Takahamacho 6-1,
Ashiya
Tel: 0797-32-8411

[Map](#)

Daiei Konan

8-7-18 Motoyama Minamimachi,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-431-4711

[Map](#)

The Foreign Buyers Club

FBC offers imported foods, beverages, cleaning products and educational items from the U.S. and

more. English spoken here. While their main store is online they have a physical store on Rokko Island where you can purchase directly.

FBC Rokko Island Shop

5-15-3F Koyochonaka,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-857-9001

www.fbcusa.com

[Map](#)

Ikari

An upscale supermarket chain offering many imported goods.

Ikari Ashiya

1-25 Iwazono-cho,
Ashiya
Tel: 0797-32-7001

[Map](#)

Ikari JR Ashiya

1-20 Narihira-cho,
Ashiya
Tel: 0797-38-3014

[Map](#)

Ikari Mikage

1-25-12 Mikage Gunge,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-854-2623

[Map](#)

Ikari Rokko Shop

2-6-15 Miyayama-cho
Nada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-821-5650

[Map](#)

Ikari Okamoto

1-4-3 Nishi Okamoto,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-431-6888

[Map](#)

Ikari Hankyu Sannomiya

4-2-1- Kanou-cho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-391-9700

[Map](#)

Seijo Ishii Kobe Station

High quality imported and domestic foods and beverages at reasonable prices. Online shopping is available.
Aioi-cho 3-1-1,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-382-3065

[Map](#)

Kaldi

Kaldi is a chain of small grocery shops that specialize in roasted coffee and a surprising selection

of imported food and alcohol from around the world. Many locations, some highlighted here:

Kobe Motomachi 3-9-8
Motomachidori,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-393-8068

[Map](#)

LaLaport Koshien
1F, 1-100 Koshien Hachimancho,
Nishinomiya
Tel: 0798-81-6605

[Map](#)

Online Shopping

The Meat Guy

Excellent selection of gourmet meats at great prices. Whether you want the best steaks, sausages, bacon, cheese they have a lot to choose from.

www.themeatguy.jp

YoYo Market

Imported food from Costco and more. Order online and have it delivered.

www.yoyomarket.jp

Tengu Natural Foods

Natural and organic food store online

store.alishan.jp

Indojin Indian Food

Spices and specialty Indian ingredients.

www.indojin.com

Home Furnishings

Actus

Reasonably priced and eclectic interior furnishings.

Rokko Store
Southern Mall Rokko
1-2-1 Shinzaike Minamimachi,
Nada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-854-1351

www.rokko.actus-interior.com

[Map](#)

IDC Otsuka

Kobe Showroom
High-end imported furnishings.
Membership system.

HDC Kobe 7th-10th floors,
1-2-2 Higashi Kawasakicho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe

www.idc-otsuka.jp

Tel: 078-360-4321

[Map](#)

Ikea

Home center originating in Sweden. Home furnishings at reasonable prices. Delivery service available at nominal cost.

8-7-1, Minatojima Nakamachi,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 0570-01-3900

www.ikea.com/jp/en/store/kobe

[Map](#)

Muji

Natural and simply designed low priced clothing, furnishings and furniture.

MUJI Life Acta Nishinomiya

Acta Nishinomiya West Bldg.
1-1 Kitaguchi, Nishinomiya-shi
Tel: 0798-69-3391

[Map](#)

Kobe BAL MUJI

Kobe BAL 3-5F,
3-6-1 Sannomiya-cho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-391-9225

[Map](#)

Mikage Classe MUJI

2F. Mikage Classe,
3-2-1 Mikage Nakamachi,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-858-7271

[Map](#)

Nitori

Low-cost home furnishings and interior items.

Nitori Kobe Mikage

2-5-9, Mikage-honmachi,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 0120-110-180

[Map](#)

Home Centers

Home centers in Japan are usually very large stores, often located in suburban areas with large parking lots. They stock a combination of hardware store items, home furnishings, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) goods and may often sell plants and gardening supplies. Some of the larger stores also sell bicycles and have auto shops.

Konan

The original DIY home center pioneer in Japan with 182 outlets in Kansai alone!

Konan Harborland Store

1-3 Bentencho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
www.hc-kohnan.com/shop/map_89.html
Tel: 078-367-3057
[Map](#)

Konan Nada Oishikawa Store

5-1-8 Shimokawaharadori,
Nada-ku, Kobe
www.hc-kohnan.com/shop/map_52.html
Tel: 078-805-2411
[Map](#)

Konan Uozaki Store

4-3-16 Uozaki Minamimachi,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
www.hc-kohnan.com/shop/map_66.html
Tel: 078-411-2057
[Map](#)

Tokyu Hands

Hobby, crafts, home improvement, novelty and lifestyle products available. Somewhat expensive but has things that you usually can't find at other stores.

2-10-1 Yamatedori,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
www.tokyu-hands.co.jp/en
Tel: 078-321-6161
[Map](#)

Electronic Shops

Yamada Denki

Labi Sannomiya

1 Chome-5-8 Sannomiyacho
Chuo Ward, Kobe
Tel: 078-391-8171
[Map](#)

Yamada Denki

Techland Kobe Wadamisaki

1 Chome-2-35 Yoshidacho
Hyogo Ward, Kobe
Tel: 078-652-9091
[Map](#)

Yamada Denki

Techland Kobe Honten

2 Chome-3-1
Wakinohamakaigandori
Chuo Ward, Kobe
Tel: 078-272-9122
[Map](#)

Discount Shops

Don Quijote

You know all those crazy products you've heard about from Japan? Well this is where they sell them. A trip to Don Quijote is a shopping experience of a lifetime. Games, toys, strange imported food - you name it.

Don Quijote Main Shop

3-2-23 Wakinohama-cho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-230-4811
[Map](#)

Don Quijote Sannomiya Store

2-12-3 Shimoyamatedori,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-335-0311
[Map](#)

Daiso

There is a proliferation of ¥100 shops all over Japan selling daily necessities, dry foods, drinks, make-up, toiletries, tools, stationery, kitchen items, clothing, toys, gifts and the list goes on!

Daiso Hyogo-ku

Daikaitsu 1-1
Hyogo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-574-4625

[Map](#)

Daiso Kita-ku

Kozudai 8-1-1
Kita-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-983-5995

[Map](#)

Daiso Nishi-ku

Ikegami 1-chome,
14-9 Nishi-ku,
Tel: 078-978-1197

[Map](#)

Babies and Kids

Toys R US

This well-known worldwide chain sells toys, nursery items baby strollers, child safety seats and etc. Most of the stores are located in the suburbs and have parking.

Toys R US / Babies R Us Kobe Harborland

Kobe Harborland Umie
NORTH MALL 4F
1-7-2 Higashi Kawasaki-cho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-382-2888

[Map](#)

Babies R Us HAT Kobe

2-2-2, Wakinohama, Kaigan-dori,
Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-261-2050

[Map](#)

Toys R Us Kobe James-Yama

7-6-2, Aoyamadai,
Tarumi-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-754-1660

[Map](#)



Living in Japan With Your Pet

Many people who will be in Kobe for an extended period will think about bringing their pet with them. Importing a pet is a difficult decision so before you make it you need to consider how your dog or cat will fare on a long flight and a period of quarantine.

Importing Pets into Japan

Japan is a rabies-free island nation and it is particularly careful about importing animals that may introduce the virus to the domestic animal population. For this reason the Japanese government has implemented a fairly strict quarantine system for those who wish to bring animals into the country.

The Japanese Animal Quarantine Service (AQS) is the official source of information regarding the import and export of pets in Japan. The full procedure with timelines is outlined in their very helpful English website.

Essentially you must submit an advance notification of the planned date of arrival, the number of animals and other items to the AQS which has jurisdiction over your intended port of arrival. This must be completed at least 40 days prior to arrival in Japan. Note that you may be requested to change the date or place of import depending on the situation at quarantine facilities maintained by the AQS.

Animals coming from Taiwan, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii, and Guam have an easier time. If you have a certificate for the animal issued by the responsible government agency of the point of export containing information such as the microchip number for individual identification, the quarantine period will normally be completed within 12 hours.

However, for all other countries the situation is a bit more complex. If the aforementioned certificate, as well as dates of rabies vaccinations and rabies

antibody levels as well as a certificate stating that the animal underwent a period of isolation for 180 days in the country of export, the quarantine period will be completed within 12 hours. In all other cases the quarantine period can be up to 180 days.

The Animal Quarantine Service will issue an "Import Quarantine Certificate" on completion of the import quarantine. Anyone importing a dog is required to register their animal under the Rabies Prevention Law and may need to take the Import Quarantine Certificate to their local authorities once they have arrived.

It is the importer's responsibility to take care of their animals during quarantine. The importation inspection which is carried out by the animal quarantine officers is free, but the importer must cover the cost of transportation, food, onsite veterinary treatment and other care. Bear in mind that veterinary treatment has to be done at the quarantine facilities of AQS during quarantine.

Note that the AQS is unable to grant exceptions and that animals which have not met all requirements as described on their website are subject to being held for extended periods of quarantine, or may possibly be deported back to the origin of the flight. Should the animal fail to successfully complete the quarantine, the importer is responsible for the return or disposal of their animal.

More information about how to import your cat or dog to Japan can be found at the [AQS website](#)

Registration

You must register a dog, but not a cat, at your local city ward office. If you brought your pet with you from overseas you will need to take the Quarantine Certificate that you were given at the port of entry with you. You only need to do this once in Japan, although if there is any change in status, for example, if the dog goes missing, dies, your address changes, or you plan to leave Japan, you must notify the ward office.



The Japanese Health Care System

While medical care in Japan is good, English-speaking physicians and medical facilities that cater to foreign expectations are expensive and not widespread. Japan has a national health insurance system which is available only to those

foreigners with long-term visas for Japan. National health insurance does not pay for medical evacuation. Medical caregivers in Japan require payment in full at the time of treatment or concrete proof of ability to pay before they will treat a foreigner who is not a member of the national health insurance plan.

Western-style and standard psychiatric care can be difficult to locate in major urban centers in Japan and generally is not available outside of Japan's major cities. Extended psychiatric care for foreigners in Japan is difficult to obtain at any price.

Foreign prescriptions are not honored in Japan, so if you need ongoing prescription medicine you should arrive with a sufficient supply for your stay in Japan or enough until you are able to see a local care provider. Certain medications, including some commonly prescribed for depression and Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), are not widely available.

Emergency Situations

There are two major emergency numbers in Japan:

110 will connect you with the police

119 will connect you with the fire department and ambulance service.

Throughout Japan, an emergency phone call can be made free of charge from any phone including public pay phones. In an emergency you may not be able to convey the exact nature of what is happening, especially if you do not immediately reach an English-speaking operator. However there are some basic things you can do in advance to help you in case of emergency.

Write the relevant numbers down near your phone so you will have them at the ready in case you need them

Be able to describe your address or location in Japanese. Have your address written down in roman characters so that you will be able to read it to the operator or enlist a friend who can do so.

Learn how to say your telephone number in Japanese

Here's how to deal with emergency calls for ambulance or fire in Japan.

First Steps

In case of emergency, dial 119
(may not work from cell phones)

In case of fire, say: *Kaji desu*
(There's a fire)

To call an ambulance, say:
Kyu-kyu desu (Please send an
Ambulance)
Do not hang up until the
dispatcher understands your
address and telephone number

Send someone out to the nearest
major intersection to meet the
ambulance or fire truck.

What May Happen During Your Call

Dispatcher: *Shou bou desu...*
Kaji desu ka? Kyu-kyu desu ka?
(Fire department... Fire or
ambulance?)

Caller: *Kyu-kyu desu* (Ambulance)

Dispatcher: *Dou shimashita ka?*
(What happened?)

Caller: (see vocabulary below)

Bleeding: *Shukketsu desu*

Broken bone: *Kossetsu desu*

Burn: *Hidoi yakedo desu*

Difficulty Breathing: *Kokuyuu
konnan desu*

Convulsions: *Keiren Desu*
Chest Pains: *Mune ga taihen
kurushii desu*

High Fever: *Kou netsu desu*

Injury: *Kega desu*

Poison: *Dokubutsu desu*

Sick: *Byouki desu*

Unconscious: *Ki fumei desu*

Giving Your Name, Number and Address or Location

My name is...*Watashi no namae
na* (say your name)... *desu*.

My telephone number is... *Denwa
bango wa* (say your telephone
number)... *desu*.

The emergency service people
need to know how to locate you in
order to help.

The dispatcher may say: *Jushyo
wa?* or *Nani ku, Nani machi, Nan
ban desu ka?*

Explaining Your Location

Since many Japanese streets
do not bear names and
house/building numbers are not
consecutive, it is very important
that you learn how to give
adequate directions to your
residence in case you need to
explain it to a dispatcher, usually
guiding them by way of major
landmarks. You can describe your
location relative to recognizable
landmarks using the following
vocabulary:

Front: *Mae*

Behind: *Ura*

Diagonally In Front: *Nana me mae*

Next to: *Tonari*

Intersection: *Koosaten*

One of the best tests to determine
if you have the capability to guide
someone to your residence is

being able to order a taxi, and not
from a company which has your
information already programmed
into its computer.

Japanese neighbors are a great
source of information - ask
them to tell you, word by word,
how they direct people to their
residences. Practice these
directions on a regular basis
and keep a cheat sheet by your
telephone for family, babysitters,
or friends to use in case of need.

Assuming you are not calling from
a mobile phone, just stay on the
line. Emergency operators at the
fire department in most major
urban centers have the ability to
trace calls to your location.

Going to the Doctor's Office

Japan has a number of large and
quite modern medical facilities.
However chances are that you will
never visit any of them unless you
have first been referred by a clinic.

While exceptions abound,
visiting a non-specialty clinic or
doctor's office does not require

an appointment. Simply present your insurance card to the receptionist upon arrival and you will be seen in turn, much like an emergency room. Wait times are usually less than an hour, but can be significantly longer at big hospitals. Specialists like dentists, psychiatrists, or OBGYN will more likely accept appointments.

Another difference to note is that clinics are not open every day of the week, and many big hospitals offer specific services only on set days. Additionally, the actual office hours will generally be divided into mornings and afternoons. Morning hours will generally run between nine and twelve. After morning hours the office will close until about two, and be open again from then until six. For these reasons it is especially important that you check the schedule before making your plans.

While many doctors speak some English their staff and paperwork is generally in Japanese. If you are not proficient in Japanese you may need to bring someone along to help you through the process.

Following is a list of what to expect when you visit a doctor or stay in a hospital along with a list of medical clinics in your area that will generally offer some sort of English service, though to what extent will vary.

What To Expect

Doctors in Japan, especially older practitioners, still subscribe to a “doctor knows best” philosophy that makes the relationship a bit different from what you might experience in other countries. If you are going to a small neighborhood clinic you should understand that, especially with older doctors:

Asking directly for a second opinion may be offensive. If you are unsatisfied with their diagnosis or treatment you should get one somewhere else.

They may determine the best course of action and go with it, rather than talking the options over with you.

They can be curt to the point of

seeming dismissive. Most are very busy, and though they have your best interest at heart they will want to hear the symptoms and diagnose; no chit chat.

For day to day ailments, the Japanese medical system is top notch. However If you have issues with a doctor you should stop going to them and find another.

What to Bring

If you are just going for a routine check-up, then all you need is your insurance information or national health system card. However if you are staying overnight or longer, you should bring your own towels, slippers, tooth brush, tissues, and sundries. These items are often available at the clinic or hospital, but are expensive.

Families often bring supplies to an admitted family member to keep costs down. If you are hospitalized for a lengthy period there will be a number of items that you will be expected to have provided for you by family or friends.



General Hospitals

Kobe

Kobe Kaisei Hospital (Kobe Kaisei Byoin)

General Hospital

Most doctors speak some English. Interpretation service is available. National Health Insurance accepted. Check website for opening times.

Nearest Station: Rokko Station on the Hankyu line. Shuttle bus departs every 20-30 minutes.

5-11-5 Shinohara Kitamachi, Nada-ku, Kobe

www.kobe-kaisei.org/english

Tel: 078-871-5201

[Map](#)

Rokko Island

Rokko Island Hospital

National Health Insurance accepted.

Check website for opening times.

Nearest Station: Island Center Station on Rokko Liner line

2-11 Koyochonaka, Higashinada-ku, Kobe

www.kohnan.or.jp

Tel: (078) 858-1111

[Map](#)

Ashiya

Ashiya Municipal Hospital (Shiritsu Ashiya Byoin)

National Health Insurance accepted.

Outpatient Service in English

available Tues 9:00-14:00 and Thu 13:00-15:00

Nearest Station: Shuttle bus service from JR Ashiya Station (20 minutes) and Hankyu Ashiya Station (25 minutes) Parking available.

39-1 Asahigaoka, Ashiya

www.ashiya-hosp.com/en/index.html

Tel: 0797-31-2156

[Map](#)

Gynecology Obstetrics

Kobe

Palmore Hospital

Specializing in gynecology and obstetrics, pediatrics and internal medicine. Some English spoken.

National Health Insurance accepted.

Appointment system after first visit

Mon-Sat, 9:00-12:00

Closed Sundays, Holidays

Nearest Station: 3 minute walk from Motomachi Station on the JR &

Hanshin Lines

4-7-20 Kitachokyudori,

Chuo-ku, Kobe

www.palmore.or.jp

Tel: 078-321-6000

[Map](#)

Clinics and General Practitioners

Kobe

Kobayashi Clinic

Internal Medicine, Urology

National Health Insurance accepted.

English spoken

9:00-12:00 Mon-Sat, 17:00-19:00

Mon-Wed, Fri-Sat, Closed Sun and Holidays

Nearest Station: 5 minute walk from Hankyu Mikage Station, 6 minute walk from JR Sumiyoshi Station

1-30-17 Mikage Gunge,

Higashinada-ku, Kobe

Tel: 078-846-5330

www.kobayashi-clinic.net

[Map](#)

Ogawa Clinic

Specializing in internal medicine.

National Health Insurance accepted

English spoken

9:00-12:00 and 16:00-19:00 Mon/

Tue/Wed/Fri 9:00-12:00

Closed Sun, Thu and Holidays

Nearest Station: Nada Station on the JR Kobe Line

10-1-3-101, Nadakita-dori,

Nada-ku, Kobe

www.ogawa-clinic.info/english/index.html

Tel: 078-805-3282

[Map](#)

Rokko Island

Koizumi Clinic

Internal medicine, Pediatrics

National Health Insurance accepted

English spoken

9:00-12:00 Mon-Sat, 16:00-18:45

Mon/Wed/Fri, Closed Sun, Holidays

and last day of the month

Nearest Station: Island Center

Station on the Rokko Liner

2-1 Koyochonaka,

Higashinada-ku, Kobe

Tel: 078-857-7885

[Map](#)

Ophthalmologists

Kobe

Matsubara Ganka Clinic

Ophthalmology

9:00-12:00 Mon-Sat, 16:00-19:00 Mon/Wed/Fri, Closed Sun and Holidays

Nearest Station: 1 minute walk from JR Sumiyoshi Station

KiLaLa Sumiyoshi 2F,
4-4-1, Sumiyoshimiyamachi,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe

www.matsubaraganka.com

Tel: 078-857-1146

[Map](#)

www.ohno-shika.jp

Tel: 078-822-8241

[Map](#)

Yamazaki Dental Clinic

Preventive Dentistry

9:00-12:30 Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri/Sat

13:30-18:00 Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri,

14:00-17:00 Sat, Closed Thu/Sun and Holidays

Nearest Station: 2 minute walk from Motomachi Station on JR Kobe Line

Koikawa Bldg.3F,
4-1-12, Kitanagasaku-dori,
Chuo-ku, Kobe,

www.ydc-smile.com

Tel: 078-392-0037

[Map](#)

Mikage-cho, Higashinada-ku, Kobe

Tel: 078-845-2888

www.tatsuno-kyousei.com

[Map](#)

Takeuchi Dental Orthodontic Office

Preventive dentistry, Orthodontics
10:00-12:30, 14:00-19:00 Mon/Tue/
Wed/Fri/Sat Closed Thu/Sun and
Holidays

Nearest Station: 2 minute walk from Sumiyoshi Station

Sumiyoshi Honmachi,
1-5-8 Higashinada-ku, Kobe

Tel: 078-822-0321

www.hancock.co.jp/takeuchi/hippo1.shtml

[Map](#)

Dentists

Kobe

Ono Dental Clinic

Pediatric and Adult Dentistry

9:30-12:30 Mon-Sat, 14:30-19:30

Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri, 14:30-17:30 Sat

Closed Thu afternoons, Sun and
Holidays

Nearest Station: 3 minute walk from JR Sumiyoshi Station

Sumiyoshi Honmachi

2-14-19 Higashinada-ku, Kobe

Orthodontists

Kobe

Tatsuno Dento-Facial Orthopedic Office

Preventive dentistry, Orthodontics

10:30-13:00, 15:00-19:30 Mon/
Tue/Wed, 2nd and 4th Sat Closed

Tues, Fri, 1st and 3rd Sat and
Holidays.

Nearest Station: 1 minute walk from Hankyu Mikage Station

Saito Bldg 3F, 1521 Mikage Gunge,



International Schools

Ashiya International School

Preschool (Ages 1.5-6)
Nearest Station: Ashiya Station (Hanshin Line)
School bus available from JR Sumiyoshi Station, Hankyu Mikage Station, Mikage Yamate Post Office, Fukae 4-1 Yoko-cho, Ashiya
Tel: 0797-35-5011
www.aischool.ed.jp
Map

Kansai International School

(Osaka and Ashiya campuses)
Preschool to elementary school (Ages 1-12)
Nearest Station for Higashi Osaka Campus: Nagata Station (Keihan Hanna Line)
Nearest Station for Ashiya Campus: Koroen Station (Hanshin Line)
1-5-1- Nagata, Higashi Osaka
Tel: 06-6784-0014
www.kansai-intlschool.jp

[Map \(Osaka Campus\)](#)
[Map \(Ashiya Campus\)](#)

Marist Brothers International School

Preschool to high school (Ages 3-18)
Nearest Station: Suma Station (JR Kobe Line)
School bus available from Motomachi, Rokko Island, Mikage, Ashiya, and Shioya 1-2-1 Chimori-cho, Suma-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-732-6266
www.marist.ac.jp
Map

St. Michael's International School

Preschool to elementary school (Ages 3-12)
Nearest Station: Motomachi Station (JR, Hankyu Line, Hanshin Line), Sannomiya Station (JR, Hankyu Line, Hanshin Line)
School bus available from Rokko Island, Rokko and Ashiya 3-17-2 Nakayamate-dori, Chuo-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-231-8885

www.smis.org
zztt

Canadian Academy

Preschool to high school (Ages 3-8)
Nearest Station: Marine Park Station (Rokko Liner) School bus available from Rokko, Mikage, Ashiya
4-1 Koyo-cho Naka, Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-857-0100
www.canacad.ac.jp
Map

Deutsche Schule Kobe (European School Kobe)

Preschool to elementary school (Ages 1-12)
Nearest Station: Island Center Station (Rokko Liner)
School bus available from Ashiya, Mikage, Rokko, Kitano, Shin-Kobe, Sannomiya
3-2-8 Koyo-cho Naka, Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-857-9777
www.dskobe.org
Map





Childcare Pre-school Elementary

Peter Pan (Rokko Island)

Preschool to elementary school
(Ages 2-8)

Nearest Station: Island Center Station
(Rokko Liner) for Rivermall School,
Marine Park Station (Rokko Liner) for
Canadian Academy School
River Mall East 703,
1-18 Koyo-cho Naka,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-857-5144

www.peterpan-preschool.com
Map

Roly-Poly

International Pre-school & Childcare
Preschool (Ages 1.5-6)

Nearest Station: Rokko Station
(Hankyu Line)
1-4-2 Sowa-cho,
Nada-ku, Kobe

Tel: 078-843-8101
www.ne.jp/asahi/roly/poly
Map

The Entente Child Care Room

Rokko Island
Preschool (Ages 3 months-4 years)
Island Center Station (Rokko Liner)
5-15 Koyo-cho Naka,
Higashinada-ku, Kobe
Tel: 078-858-0650

www.entente-i-pre-school.com
Map

Kansai International School

Mommy & Baby Class
Age (0.5-2)
Nearest Station: Nagata Station
(Keihan Hanna Line) for Higashi Osaka
Campus, Koroen Station (Hanshin
Line) Ashiya Campus

Address
1-5-1- Nagata,
Higashi Osaka
Tel:06-6784-0014
www.kansai-intlschool.jp/english/
Map (Osaka Campus)
Map (Ashiya Campus)

Poppins Baby Sitter Service

Age (Newborns+)
Nearest Station: Ashiya Station (JR)
www.poppins.co.jp/english

Destination Kobe

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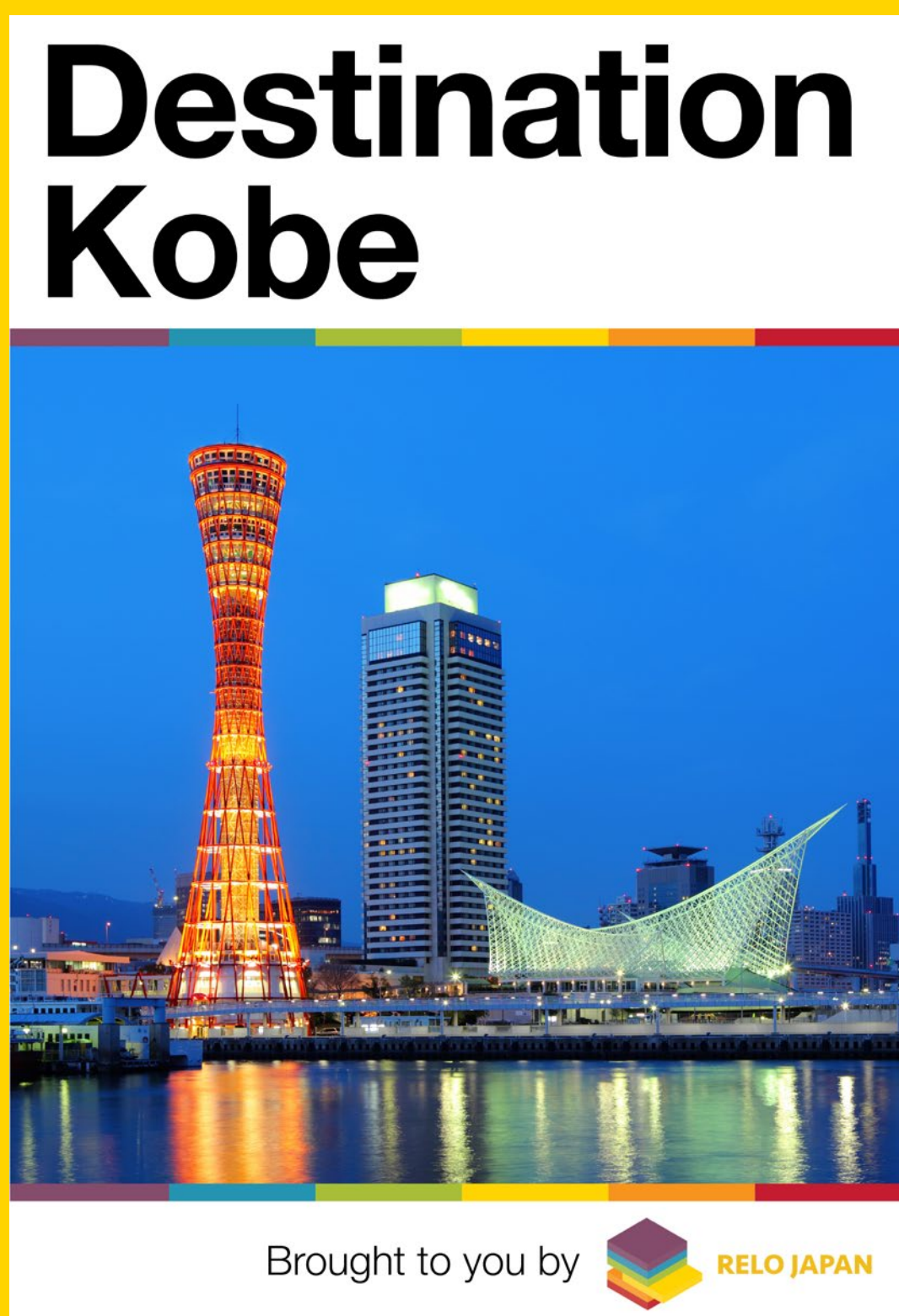
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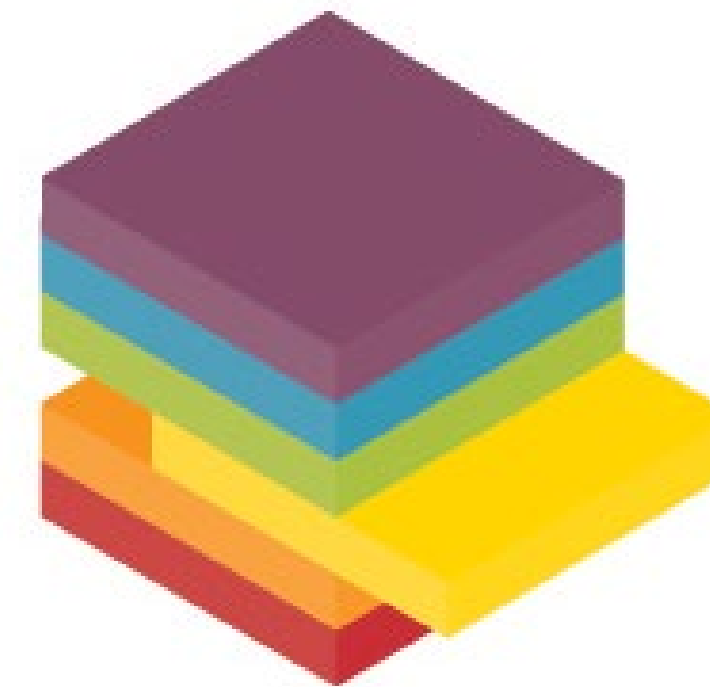
www.carterwittmedia.com
info@carterwittmedia.com

Preciosa Mitsuke 105
1-22 Mitsuke-cho, Chikusa-ku
Nagoya 464-0817 Japan

Tel: +81(0)52-788-2123
Fax: +81(0)52-788-2124



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www.relojapan.com

Tokyo Office

2F EXOS Ebisu
1-24-14 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150-0013 Japan
Tel: +81-(0)3-5449-7220
Fax: +81-(0)3-5449-5830

Kobe (Osaka) Office

8F Shinkobe Bldg.
1-1-1, Sannomiya-cho,
Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0021
Tel: +81-(0)78-325-3650
Fax: +81-(0)78-325-3651

Nagoya Office

4F Nakato Marunouchi Bldg.
3-17-6 Marunouchi, Naka-ku
Nagoya 460-0002 Japan
Tel: +81-(0)52-973-3973
Fax: +81-(0)52-973-9293