

Home Stay Etiquette

Keep your dictionary handy, even Japanese familiar with English need help sometimes.

Slippers

- Take off your shoes when you enter their home and wear the slippers they provide
- Toilet slippers – there are separate slippers – never wear outside the toilet!
- Be careful, guest slippers can be very slippery on the floors – do not wear outside!
- Take off your slippers before entering a room with tatami floors

Activities:

- If they ask you what you'd like to do, you can say that you want to do something typical for Tajimi or just enjoy everyday life (*futsu na seikatsu*) with them. Most of these families have had home stay guests before and will probably have some ideas of things to do; go with the flow.
- You can ask to try foods famous in Tajimi (*Tajimi no meibutsu*)

Eating:

- Please try a little of each food that you are served.
- If they ask, “CAN you eat X?” they generally mean, “DO you eat X?”
- Eating at their home, you may be served small portions; you can ask for more, but be careful, there may be a succession of small dishes.

Sleeping:

- Your bedroom may be one of their children's rooms or the tatami mat room, please be careful of anything there
- Again, never wear your slippers on a tatami mat – only socks!
- Fold up your covers and futon in the morning.

Bath:

- Guests go first, sometimes before dinner or fairly soon after dinner. When your host asks “Would you like to take a bath now?” it means, “Take your bath. Now.” So make like Nike and just do it.
- Listen carefully when they explain where everything is – towels, soap, shampoo, heater, shut-off valve
- Have a bag for all your personal items as you will take them back and forth
- Take your personal items back to your room when done in the bath
- Soap up and wash thoroughly OUTSIDE the bathtub. Rinse thoroughly OUTSIDE the bathtub. THEN (and only then) get in and soak. Ahhh....
- After your bath, it's nice to talk with the family as one person after another takes their bath.

Train, Subway, Bus Etiquette

Subways

- Steve will teach you how to buy your ticket from the machines when we get there
- Have your change ready and know our destination
- Move quickly on and off the subway car, get out of the flow of traffic and wait for the group
- There are seats reserved for the elderly, handicapped and pregnant, usually at the rear or front of each car.

Trains

- When we have reserved seats for a long ride, please take your seat until the train is underway. Then you can trade seats if you'd like. Trade tickets too or the conductor will be troubled.
- When we leave Odawara, get your camera ready in case Mt. Fuji is visible.

Buses

- On most buses you enter at the back of the bus and take a ticket, unless we have a bus pass as we will for at least some of the time in Kyoto.
- You pay when you get off the bus
- Buses can be crowded, please be careful with your luggage/bag
- Keep your book bag on your lap, not on the floor

For all public transportation:

- Keep your bags close to your body to avoid hitting anyone with them
- Go with the flow of the crowd once you know they are going your way.
- Keep your ticket/rail pass handy at all times – the conductors will check.
- Put bags on the overhead rack if possible.
- Quiet voices at all times
- You may eat on the Shinkansen, but not on subways, local trains or busses.