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A Guide to Japanese Visas

II. Exemption of Visas

Visas are not required when applying for landing permission at a port of entry in Japan in the following cases:

A. Nationals of Countries and Areas with Visa Exemption Arrangements with Japan

As of February 2008, Japan had taken measures concerning the waiver of visa requirements with 62 countries and regions, as shown in the accompanying table. Nationals of these countries and regions holding valid passports can apply for landing permission for short-term stays for such purposes as sightseeing and business trips without obtaining a visa. However, **cases involving paid activities in Japan are excluded**. Also, the waiver of visa requirements are not applicable in the case of stays exceeding the period of time stipulated in each arrangement. In such cases, it is necessary for foreigners to obtain a visa.

B. Those Having Obtained Re-entry Permission

If foreigners who already reside in Japan, having acquired a status of residence for a long-term stay, such as for work, wish to leave the country temporarily during the period for which they have received permission to stay in Japan, they can obtain a re-entry permit before departing Japan. This permit enables them to re-enter Japan without having to obtain a new visa, as long as their re-entry is within the valid period of the permit. For such foreigners, the procedures for entering Japan are **much simpler than the usual landing procedures**.

Applications for re-entry permits can be made at the nearest immigration authority under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. When re-entry permission is granted, the permit is stamped on the foreigner's passport.

In principle, re-entry permission is valid for only one time. However, foreigners who have to leave Japan frequently can apply for multiple re-entry permits.

It is **not** possible to obtain re-entry permission at an embassy or consulate after departure from Japan. However, if a foreigner who has departed Japan after acquiring re-entry permission is unable to return to Japan before expiration of the permit for unavoidable reasons, such as illness, the foreigner can apply at an embassy or consulate for an extension of the re-entry permit's period of validity.

List of Countries and Regions That Have Visa Exemption Arrangements with Japan

(62 countries and regions as of February 2008)

Areas	Countries and regions	Term of residence
Asia	Singapore	3 months or less

	Brunei	14 days or less
	Hong Kong (BNO, SAR passport)	90 days or less
	Republic of Korea	90 days or less
	Taiwan	90 days or less
	Macau (SAR passport)	90 days or less
North America	Canada	3 months or less
	U.S.A	90 days or less
Latin America and Caribbean	Mexico	6 months or less
	Argentina	3 months or less
	Bahamas	3 months or less
	Chile	3 months or less
	Costa Rica	3 months or less
	Dominican Rep.	3 months or less
	El Salvador	3 months or less
	Guatemala	3 months or less
	Honduras	3 months or less
	Suriname	3 months or less
	Uruguay	3 months or less
	Barbados	90 days or less
Middle East	Israel	3 months or less
	Turkey	3 months or less
Oceania	Australia*	90 days or less
	New Zealand	90 days or less
Africa	Lesotho	3 months or less
	Mauritius	3 months or less
	Tunisia	3 months or less
Europe	Austria	6 months or less
	Germany	6 months or less
	Ireland	6 months or less
	Liechtenstein	6 months or less
	Switzerland	6 months or less
	United Kingdom	6 months or less
	Belgium	3 months or less
	Croatia	3 months or less
	Cyprus	3 months or less
	Denmark	3 months or less
	Finland	3 months or less
	France	3 months or less
	Greece	3 months or less

Iceland	3 months or less
Italy	3 months or less
Luxembourg	3 months or less
Macedonia	3 months or less
Malta	3 months or less
Netherlands	3 months or less
Norway	3 months or less
Portugal	3 months or less
San Marino	3 months or less
Slovenia	3 months or less
Spain	3 months or less
Sweden	3 months or less
Andorra	90 days or less
Bulgaria	90 days or less
Czech Rep.	90 days or less
Estonia	90 days or less
Hungary	90 days or less
Latvia	90 days or less
Lithuania	90 days or less
Monaco	90 days or less
Poland	90 days or less
Slovakia	90 days or less

Notes: In the case of the waiver of visa requirements of up to three months or 90 days, foreigners are granted upon landing a temporary visitor status for a period of 90 days (15 days for Brunei).

Nationals of countries and regions that have taken measures concerning the waiver of visa requirements with Japan for stays of up to six months in principle are granted permission to stay in Japan for 90 days at the time of landing. Nationals of these countries and regions who wish to stay in Japan for more than 90 days must apply at their nearest immigration authority in Japan for an extension of their period of stay.

In the case of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Iran, the waiver of visa requirements is temporarily suspended.

In the case of Malaysia, Peru and Colombia, it is recommended to obtain visa.

In the case of China, visas are not required only for students of elementary, junior and senior high school in China for the purpose of school excursion staying in Japan less than 30 days.

In the case of Taiwan, visas are not required for Taiwan-passport holders with their own personal ID numbers stipulated in their respective passports.

C. Special Cases of Landing

If the passengers of an airplane or ship that lands at an airport or seaport in Japan wish to enter Japan temporarily for shopping or rest, they can receive special landing permission from the immigration authority at the port of arrival even if they do not possess a visa.

In principle, applications for such special landing permission are made not by the foreigners wishing to enter Japan themselves but by the captain of their airplane or ship or by the carrier (transportation company) operating the flight or voyage. When special landing permission is granted, the foreigners concerned are not given any status of residence or period of stay, but restrictions on landing time and scope of movement are stipulated as conditions for permission. Also, special landing permission is not granted if the applicant will be returning to his or her place of departure (for example, coming from

Hawaii and then returning to Hawaii).

Please note that these permits are for very short stays, they cannot be extended, and the route to be followed in transit, etc. is subject to restrictions. If foreigners wish to travel in Japan, they are recommended to acquire a transit visa or a short-term visa before coming to Japan.

For more details concerning special landing permission, please inquire at the nearest immigration authority.

(a) Permission for Landing at Port of Call

Special dispensation, called a shore pass, may be granted to foreign passengers aboard an airplane or ship that is proceeding to another destination via Japan who wish to enter Japan temporarily for shopping or rest. A shore pass permits such foreigners to enter Japan as long as they remain in the vicinity of their port of call (in principle, the municipality in which the port of call is located) and for a period of less than 72 hours.

(b) Permission for Landing in Transit

This dispensation is called a transit pass. There are two types: permission for landing in transit for sightseeing and permission for landing in transit for departure at a neighboring port.

(i) Permission for landing in transit for sightseeing

Permission is granted to the foreign passengers of a ship arriving at a Japanese port of entry who wish to travel in Japan for sightseeing purposes and then rejoin the same ship at another port of entry in Japan. This permission is valid for up to 15 days.

(ii) Permission for landing in transit for departure at a neighboring port

Permission is granted to foreign passengers of an airplane or ship proceeding to another country via Japan who wish to enter Japan from their first port of call and then move to another port of call in a nearby area for departure. This permission is granted when a foreign passenger wishes to depart Japan within three days.

In principle, another port of call in a nearby area is regarded as a port that is under the jurisdiction of the same regional immigration bureau, or the immigration bureau of a neighboring region. (For example, Narita Airport to Haneda Airport or Narita to Nagoya Airport are acceptable, but Narita Airport to Kansai Airport is not allowed.)

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