

Drug Laws in Japan

Please be reminded that you are bound by Japanese local laws and subject to the penalties accordingly while in Japan. Be aware that some of the local laws and penalties may be harsher than the standards of your country.

All students are urged to observe Japanese drug laws, which are rigorously and strictly enforced. The possession, receipt, use and sale of drugs, including marijuana, is subject to investigation by the Japanese customs and police authorities. Any students who are convicted of these crimes shall be expelled from our program immediately.

Persons arrested in Japan, even for a minor offence, may be held in detention without bail for two to three months during the investigation and legal proceedings. Further, penalties for drug offences include lengthy imprisonment. Use or possession of small amounts of drugs may result in a prison sentence of between one and ten years and Japanese law allows for a fine of up to 5,000,000 yen. Some people convicted of drug related offences have been issued a deportation order. People deported under these circumstances are not permitted to return to Japan for five to ten years.

You should also be aware that Japanese authorities aggressively pursue drug smugglers with sophisticated detection equipment, drug-detecting dog, and other methods. Incoming and outgoing mail, as well as international packages sent via DHL or FEDEX, is also checked carefully. The Japanese police make arrests for even the smallest amounts of illegal drugs.

You can refer to the following information for the drug restrictions in Japan. Please take your time to review them especially if you are planning to bring your own medication. Also, be aware that items sometimes marketed as “diet pills” or “health supplements” or “herbal medicines” may contain chemical substances that are banned for importation or possession in Japan.

From the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare web site:

URL: <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/import/index.html>

The following are controlled substances in Japan:

- Opium related substances (morphine, codeine, heroin, etc.)
- Cocaine related substances (cocaine, coca leaves, etc.)
- MDMA related substances (pethidine, fentanyl, etc.)
- Artificially-produced hallucinogens (LSD, Extasy, etc.)

From the Japanese Consulate web site:

You can bring up to one month's supply of prescription drugs into Japan, and up to two month's supply of non-prescription drugs without completing any paperwork. This same rule applies to mailing prescription and/or non-prescription drugs.

It is always a good idea to have a copy of the prescription and/or letter from the prescribing physician explaining the nature of the medication, the purpose of taking it, recommended dosage, and frequency of ingestion.

Most prescription drugs are permitted, including drugs that may not be available in Japan, such as birth control pills. Drugs that are hallucinogenic, narcotic, and/or psychotropic in nature will be confiscated, except in extenuating circumstances where prior approval has been obtained (e.g., a cancer patient taking a type of medication that has a high percentage of pain killer; these cases are treated on a case by case basis).

The following over-the-counter medications are prohibited in Japan since they contain narcotic or stimulant ingredients in excess of the Japanese standard:

1. Tylenol Cold	7. Dristan Cold ("No Drowsiness")
2. Nyquil	8. Dristan Sinus
3. Nyquil Liquicaps	9. Drixoral Sinus
4. Actifed	10. Vicks Inhaler
5. Sudafed	11. Lomotil
6. Advil Cold & Sinus	