

Tourist Assistance

English-language assistance, travel information and instant interpretation services are available for foreigners travelling in Japan. To access these services, telephone 371-5649 in Kyoto and 502-1461 in Tokyo. Outside these cities dial toll-free 106 and ask the operator to place a collect call to the Tourist Information Centre. Most major Japanese train stations have an English-language tourist information service although it may not always be readily accessible. French-language service is virtually non-existent.

Business Hours

The work week in the Kansai is similar to that of Canada, although staff at many companies remain at their desks until 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. Many offices are open on Saturday (though that is rapidly changing) and it is usually difficult to arrange business meetings that day. Since people in the Kansai spend several hours each day commuting to and from work, meetings should not be scheduled before 9:00 a.m.

Public Holidays

It is normally not possible to arrange business meetings on the following major holidays as business offices are closed:

New Year's Day	January 1
Adult's Day	January 15
National Foundation Day	February 11
Vernal Equinox Day	March 21
Midori Day	April 29
Constitution Memorial Day	May 3
Children's Day	May 5
Respect for the Aged Day	September 15
Autumnal Equinox Day	September 23
Physical Education Day	October 10
Culture Day	November 3
Labour Thanksgiving Day	November 23
Emperor's Birthday	December 23

In addition, most offices are closed for four or five days over the year, during Golden Week (end of April and beginning of May) and for several days in mid-August for "obon" (the Festival of Souls).

Newspapers and Bookstores

There are four daily English-language newspapers available at five-star hotels and at kiosks in most major train stations. The *Asahi Evening News* (¥ 120) contains good syndicated articles, reviews and translations from the Japanese *Asahi Shimbun*. The *Japan Times* (¥ 140) is perhaps the most complete English-language daily. The *Mainichi Daily News* (¥ 120) is popular for its Kansai coverage and business-related reporting. The *Daily Yomiuri* covers major world events and some local news.

Major bookstores that carry English-language (and some French) publications include Asahiya Shoten (06) 313-1191, Kinokuniya Shoten (06) 372-5821 and Maruzen (06) 251-2621. These bookstores carry all the major international newspapers and magazines, including the excellent monthly, *Kansai Time-Out*, which is an indispensable guide to food, drink, music and local events in the Kansai area.

Postal Services

The mailing section of post offices offer a number of special services including express delivery (sokutatsu), registered mail (kakitome), domestic electronic mail (letakkusu) and international electronic mail services (kokusai denshi yubin). A regular-sized letter under 10 g costs ¥ 100 for air mail to Canada, while post cards cost ¥ 70.

Electricity

In Tokyo and eastern Japan, the electricity supply is 100 V, 50 cycles, while in Osaka and western Japan, it is 100 V, 60 cycles.