

A visit to Japan Culture & Customs



1) Match the words in Column A with the definitions in Column B.

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| 1. island | A small white vegetable that is the root of a crop. It has a very strong sharp taste and is often made into a sauce. |
| 2. monarchy | A piece of land that is completely surrounded by water. |
| 3. robe | A piece of equipment for washing floors. |
| 4. bow | A round metal or plastic container with a handle attached to its sides. |
| 5. vending machine | Political system based upon the undivided sovereignty or rule of a single person. |
| 6. horseradish | Light footwear that are easy to put on and off and are intended to be worn indoors. |
| 7. slippers | A loose piece of clothing which covers all of your body and reaches the ground. |
| 8. mop | A person employed in a school or building to clean the public areas, remove garbage and do minor repairs. |
| 9. bucket | To clean a surface with or as if with a broom. |
| 10. janitor | A machine from which you can get things such as cigarettes, chocolate or coffee by putting in money and pressing a button. |
| 11. sweep | To bend the head or body forward as a way of showing respect, expressing thanks or greeting someone. |



2) Read the text.

Everyday Life in Japan

Japan is an island in East Asia. Its capital city is Tokyo and the people speak Japanese. The people in Japan call their country "Nippon", which means "the land of the rising sun". You can see the rising sun in the middle of their flag. The currency used in Japan is the Yen. Japan is well known for its national sport – The Sumo. Japan is a constitutional monarchy where the power of the Emperor is very limited. The Emperor acts as the head of state on diplomatic occasions. Naruhito is the current Emperor of Japan. He is the 126th Emperor. The two major religions in Japan are Shinto and Buddhism.

Most Japanese people today wear western style clothes. But during holidays, festivals and at other special times, they may wear traditional robes called "Kimonos". In Japan, it is polite to greet one another by bowing. Japanese people are always on time so DON'T BE LATE FOR appointments!

Japanese culture has made important contributions. Ikebana is the art of flower arranging, bonsai is the cultivation of miniature trees and origami is the art of paper folding.

Vending machines are everywhere in Japan. Not only can you buy candy, juice, cigarettes and soda pop you can also buy hot coffee in cans, cold beer, rice, milk, bottles of scotch, batteries, compact discs, software, panty hose, magazines, and pornography. Some offer manicures.

Parents and teachers in Japan tend to discourage teens from dating, which means that many young adults don't start dating until after high school. Perhaps due to very structured family environments.

A traditional meal is served with rice, vegetables and miso (fermented soy bean paste) soup and fruit is often eaten as dessert. Many dishes usually come with soy sauce or wasabi (very hot mustard-like green horseradish). A typical breakfast consists of rice, miso soup, spinach and egg. Most people eat breakfast at home. It's hard to find a restaurant that serves breakfast. In Japan, it is impolite to pour your own drink when eating with others – you pour your companion's drink and your companion pours yours. And, if you don't want any more to drink, leave your glass full!

It is normal to pay a restaurant or bar bill at the register instead of giving money to the waiter/waitress. (There is no tipping in Japan)

School Life in Japan

The school day lasts from around 8:00am to 3:00pm but varies from day to day. Japanese students generally have more free time and breaks during their time at school. Sports clubs, even ones for elementary school, sometimes require students to show up for practice early in the morning or stay at school until 6:30 or 7:00pm.

Elementary school students always change into slippers when they arrive at school and put their shoes on special shelves.

"Souji" ("honorable cleaning") is a period of about 15 minutes each day when all activities come to a stop, mops and buckets appear and everyone pitches in cleaning up. The teachers and principals often get on their hands and knees and join students.

Japanese schools don't have any janitors because the students and staff do all the cleaning. Students in elementary school, middle school, and high school sweep the hall floors after lunch. They also clean the windows, scrub the toilets and empty the trash cans under the supervision of student leaders.

Japanese students eat their lunches in the classrooms (there are no cafeterias in Japanese schools)

3) Find synonyms for the following words.



1. POLITE

2. APPOINTMENT

3. DISCOURAGE

4. IMPOLITE

5. LEADER



4) Answer the next questions.

1.- How is Japan also called ?

2.- Name two major religions in Japan

3.- What's the national sport in Japan?

4.- How do Japanese people greet each other?

5.- What do Japanese people usually eat ?

5) Answer the next questions True and False statements.

1.- In Japan it is normal to give tips at restaurants

2. Japanese students eat their lunches in their classrooms

3. Japanese students change their shoes at school.

4. Janitors do all the cleaning at schools.

5. It is common to find vending machines everywhere.

6. Japanese people are unpunctual.

