

The *FEMALE* Guide to Japan

****Every situation IS different, but it doesn't mean you can't be prepared!****

CULTURE SHOCK / HOMESICKNESS / LONLINESS

The language and cultural differences may be a challenge, but DO NOT let them be a barrier!!!

Don't isolate yourself

Make friends with teachers, people in your community, etc.

Involve yourself in social events and activities both in your community and JET

Join a gym

Travel

Join a club at school

Learn Japanese. Take a class.

Have a hobby? Pursue it in Japan. Teach your Japanese friends! Or...try a new hobby!

****Remember:** The Japanese are very friendly and will not only want to share their culture with you, but also learn about yours. Whether you are living alone or with a mate, you have control over how social or private you want to be. Know your needs!!

SAFETY

Japan is a relatively safe country, but YOU SHOULD STILL TAKE PRECAUTIONS!!!! Practice the same safety you do back home. Here are some common sense tips:

Know your neighbors and your neighborhood

Vary your routine, don't take the same route home

Avoid dark streets and parks at night

Carry a personal alarm (available in most 100 yen shops)

Keep important numbers beside your home phone and in your mobile

In you feel threatened, run or scream 'Fire!' ('Kaji Da!') and run to a nearby public place or police box and contact someone you trust (other JETs, neighbors, supervisor, or Japanese friends).

Even if you can't speak Japanese, say something. They'll be embarrassed if you're loud & draw attention

Don't readily give out your phone number, address, or other personal information.

If someone starts to ask too many questions, play the 'I don't speak Japanese' card

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Unfortunately, 'sexual harassment' is common in Japan. But, regardless, it does not mean you have to accept any behavior that makes you uncomfortable. Whether it is on a train, at school, at an enkai, at a bar, or anywhere, SPEAK OUT!!! If you are verbally or physically attacked, stay strong. You do not have to be a victim. If you are violated on a train, bring it to the attention of those around you. If you are attacked, FIGHT BACK. If you are put in a compromising situation at school or at an enkai, handle it with tact. Be strong and let him know that you will not tolerate his advances, you will be able to maintain good relationships at work this way.

Many Japanese people are wary of foreign women's perceived sensitivity to seku-hara (sexual harassment) in the workplace. However, at enkais (staff drinking parties), caution is abandoned and sexual harassment does happen. Even a simple 'toire wa doko desu ka?' (where is the bathroom?) can gracefully get you out of an uncomfortable situation.

You will get comments about your body, and often your social life, from students. Decide if you feel comfortable answering those questions. If a student is sexually harassing you, talk to your JTE, the student's homeroom teacher, your supervisor/principal, and/or your PA (Prefectural Advisor) for assistance. Do what you need to do to be comfortable at work.

Keep in mind that harassment of female JETs by male JETs is equally not okay. Just because you're in a closed community of anywhere between 1 and a 100 JETs doesn't mean you have to take it. Gaijin guys can be just as obnoxious as Japanese men at times, but don't feel pressured just to laugh it off. If it makes you feel uncomfortable, DON'T accept it. Even if they're drunk, there's no excuse. Talk to a friend or your PA and resolve the issue.

Here are some useful phrases you can use. When in doubt, getting loud and angry in any language works.

I don't want to answer: **kotaetaku nai**

That (question) makes me uncomfortable: **sonna... komarimasu**

Don't ask such a thing: **sonna koto o kikanai de kudasai**

Don't say things like that: **sonna koto o iwanade kudasai**

Stop it: **yamete kudasai**

That's not something to joke about: **jodan ha yamate!**

That's rude: **shitsurei desu.**

That's none of your business!: **anata ni kankei nai desu!**

Leave me alone!: **hottoite! / hitori ni shite!**

I'll call the police!: **keisatsu o yobu yo!**

Don't look at me!: **kocchi minai de! / kochi miru na!**

Don't follow me!: **tsuite konai de! / tsuite kuru na!**

Don't touch me!: **sawaranai de! / sawaru na!**

Groper / Molester: **chikan** (you may need to shout this on a train!)

PRIVACY

The concept of privacy in Japan will be different from your home country. Whether living in a small town or a big city, you are a foreigner and you will stick out. They may stare and point, discuss your shopping habits in the teacher's room, take your picture, ask for your autograph, feature you in the town paper/magazine, etc. The attention is not usually meant with ill intent, but it may make you feel self-conscious or claustrophobic or even feel like your privacy is being invaded. Sometimes, there is no way to avoid this, but you can make sure you find a healthy balance between your social life and personal time. Making friends and participating in activities in your town may help you feel less like the 'strange gaijin' and more a part of the community. Make sure you assess your needs and figure out how to make yourself comfortable where you live.

HEALTH & HYGIENE

Periods: Pads, tampons and pain-killers are all available in Japan. Many local convenience stores even sell tampons. There is perhaps some outdated stigma associated with the use of tampons but I've never encountered anything more than having them handed to me in a hush-hush brown paper bag – and you could always put that down to the Japanese love of wrapping EVERYTHING!

Contraceptive Pill (避妊ピル – hinin piru): The pill was approved for use in Japan in 1999 and, generally speaking, is easily available, affordable and hassle-free.

In the back of your JET Diary is a useful English-Japanese medical glossary, with all the necessary words in it (Morning After Pill, contraception, STD test, etc). If you're nervous about your Japanese ability, you can bring this along and point at what you need. There's a good chance that none of the nurses will speak English, but happily, most doctors have at least a basic mastery of medical English.

Pill Availability: You can get the Pill from most Womens' Clinics across Japan, even in rural places. "Fujinka (婦人科)" is the type of clinic you'll be looking for and means "Woman's Specialties" which will cover all the OB/GYN stuff.

Initially the doctor may send you home with a 1 month supply to check there are no side-effects, but after that, he will probably give you around 3 months worth. Most doctors will understand what you mean if you just say "za piru" ("the pill" in Japanised English) though the Japanese word is "hinin piru". In the extremely unlikely event that a doctor is unwilling or unable to prescribe the pill, the easiest thing to do is just go to another doctor.

You can also consider bringing your prescription from home and having it filled in Japan, or going to a gynecologist and getting a new prescription (though you might need an examination).

A viable alternative is legally buying the contraceptive pill (and other drugs, including the morning after pill) from a website called www.inhousepharmacy.com. They ship from the States and the prices are quite reasonable. Parcels take about 1 week to arrive. www.medsdex.com and www.internet-drugstore-online.com have also been recommended though they are slightly more difficult to navigate.

Pill Prices: Although every situation is different, the pill in Japan costs about ¥2000/month. There will be a mandatory consultation on your first visit which may include some tests but the price shouldn't exceed ¥5000 for the pill, consultation and tests. This is a lot cheaper than what it would cost to get it from the States each month without insurance.

Pill Varieties: Brand names are different here, but dosages seem to be the same. Most JETs get a pill called "Anju 28" from their Japanese doctors. The pills available in Japan now are low-dose, low-side-effect dosages.

One problem you may find is that your options are much fewer here. The Pill they do offer is good, and they have a few back-up varieties if the Anju variety gives you side effects, but other than that, you're out of luck. They don't offer the specialty Pills designed to help with acne or weight-loss.

What do you need to do ?: You should be able to just walk into the clinic without an appointment, take a number and wait. The doctor may ask you to do a sonogram/ultrasound, a urine sample and a blood pressure test. Should you need an internal examination / PAP smear, the doctor will take you to a separate room with a spinning chair and a curtain. Just so you know! If you have taken the pill before, tell the doctor this as it'll probably save him from trying to explain all about how to take it, the health risks (bad for you if you smoke) and stuff like that in so-so English. It shouldn't take more than an hour.

Finding a Womens' Clinic: First, check your Prefectural JET homepage as these often have listings and recommendations for doctors. International Centres in your prefectural capital or other large cities often provide such information too. Prefectural Advisors (PAs) should also be able to help you, or at least point you in the right direction. Lastly, you always have other female JETs in your prefecture as resources. Ask around the 2nd and 3rd years to see if they have any recommendations.

Stigma?: The consensus seems to be that doctors and nurses are very matter-of-fact about such issues and rarely seem condescending or questioning.

Still, when looking for a Womens' Clinic, you may want to avoid asking your teachers or office for help. People who understand what the Pill is will assume that if you are on the Pill, you are having sex with someone (There's not much awareness about how it helps with PMS and stuff).

You may not want your office to start drawing any conclusions about your personal life. If they know you're on the Pill, they won't necessarily think badly of you, but they may jump to conclusions about the seriousness of any relationship you are in. Unless you want all that to be open for discussion at any office party, it'll probably be less complicated to keep it private.

Having said this, most Japanese women appear to be extremely naïve about the pill and view it with suspicion. You may hear that "it's dangerous", "it's unnatural", "it makes you infertile" and, most unbelievably of all "Japanese women are different to Western women and the pill acts differently upon their bodies".

Don't let that put you off. If you want it, go get it.

Other contraceptives: The Birth Control Patch, Birth Control Shot, the implant, IUDs and the birth control pill which you take continuously and only get 4 periods a year, are not yet available in Japan. The pill, condoms and abstinence are the only mainstream options at the moment.

The Morning After pill (モーニングアフターピル - **moningu-afuta piru**): As with the contraceptive pill, the Morning After pill may be obtained from most Womens' Clinics. The price is about ¥5000, including consultation. It can also be bought from www.inhousepharmacy.com, but as there is a 72hour window for taking it, it can only really be bought for future, preventative use.

Condoms: Foreign men may find Japanese condoms smaller and more expensive than they are used to. They are also sometimes made from a non-latex material which can make them more liable to split, so you may want to try ordering online from www.durex.jp (there are tons of internet sites where you can buy them) or just getting a ton from home. Also, they're the only things that will protect you from STDs, which the Japanese won't admit they have a problem with.

STD Testing: Again, available at Womens' Clinics. Just walk in and wait your turn. For HIV tests see www.hivkensa.com to find your closest clinic. It is in Japanese but is pretty easy to navigate. HIV Tests are free. Testing takes 30mins, first results after 1hr, final results in 1-2 weeks.

Pregnancy Tests: These are available over the counter in Japan and should cost about ¥2000. "Clear Blue" is the only test which comes with English instructions so be aware that unless you can read Japanese or have a Japanese friend to translate, this may not be the best option. A visit to the local hospital or Womens' Clinic is probably easier though it will not be covered by the JET Insurance.

Abortions: Worryingly, Japanese women tend to view abortions as a contraceptive in their own right. They are also prohibitively expensive and not covered by insurance. However, if you are in the position of needing one, they cost between ¥80,000 and ¥120,000. This cost is only for the actual abortion procedure and doesn't include the first medical examination fee, pregnancy test fee etc. If you have any questions about abortion in Japan, contact the Tokyo English Language Line (TELL) on 03-5774-0992

Yeast Infections: You cannot buy yeast medication over the counter so you must get a prescription from your doctor. However, it is possible to buy it online, though delivery may take up to 4 weeks.

Pamper Yourself!

HAIRCUTS: In urban areas, English speaking staff MIGHT be available, but look around first, bring a picture of the haircut you want with you, write a translation of simple words/phrases (cut, layer, short, long, colors, highlights, etc), or take a Japanese friend to translate.

WAXING: Places to get waxing done are around, especially in bigger cities. But, if you can't find one, just invest in a home waxing kit, pluck, or shave.

NAILS: In urban areas, manicures & MAYBE pedicures will be available, but usually expensive

SHIATSU & ACUPUNCTURE are covered by our insurance when done as part of medical treatment.

BE AWARE, some MAKE-UP and many LOTIONS (even SUNSCREENS!) have bleaching agents. Refer to our 'Additional Kanji' section before buying!!!

FOOD

On average, most female JETs tend to gain weight during their first year in Japan. This is due to a number of reasons, including adjustment and Japanese diet. A lot of Japanese food is carb based and fried, which can be a challenge. Vegetarians have an especially hard time in Japan. And, fresh fruits and vegetables can be EXPENSIVE!! But, you are in Japan so experiment and enjoy! Here are a few tips to help you out::

If you get a school lunch (some of you will be required to at least pay for it), don't feel like you have to eat everything. They tend to be very high calorie and high carb meals. Eat what you want and bring a healthy snack with you.

Experiment with your cooking. Look online or buy a book to help you incorporate Japanese foods into your diet.

Find where the foreign food stores are. There are always a few in bigger cities. Many have websites and deliver to your doorstep!

Figure out what day your local grocery stores have sales. Most grocery stores cater to housewives and will have different items (meat, bread, produce, etc.) on sale on different days of the week.

Have friends or family send you comfort food from home.

Make your own lunch box. Save money by not eating out and you can watch what you eat and how much you eat.

Take a cooking class or cook with friends! Have an udon party!

Check out the Home Ec classes at your school. You can learn how to make some tasty Japanese meals!

Usually, 30 min to 1 hour before closing, grocery stores will put their fresh food items on sale. It's a great time to shop, if you don't mind being pushed and elbowed a bit.

SHOPPING

There is a myth that you actually cannot buy clothes in Japan as you will not fit into them and you won't be able to afford them. Although this may be true for some items and some shops, you will be able to find clothes that fit and don't cost loads of yen. However, this does require patience and a trial and error process. Some shops even carry bigger sizes, such as US14 or UK18. Many stores, particularly in the bigger cities, also carry a variety of foreign make-up brands, such as MAC and Clinique. Here are a few Japanese stores to check out:

Shimamura (しまむら): Very cheap with both small and large sizes available. It is a big discount chain found in most towns in Japan. Some Japanese people swear by it!

Forus / Parco / JUSCO: These department stores have a pretty wide selection of clothing. JUSCO, even though it may not be considered a 'cool' place to shop, has a decent selection of sports clothes, pants, and skirts.

Uniqlo: Japanese chain with casual clothing. Inexpensive and has variety of large and small sizes. Most comparable to an Old Navy, but with a much smaller selection.

Muji: Japanese chain carrying everything from clothes to furniture to notebooks to make-up to food. Clothes sold here tend to be a bit baggier so it is easier to find a size that fits.

Kao: Personal products, including the ever popular Asience shampoo and conditioner.

Shiseido: Largest cosmetics company in Japan, carrying variety of goods from shampoos to make-up to complete face and body sets. Products available at drugstores and department stores.

Kanebo: Food to toiletries to pharmaceuticals. Available in most drugstores.

Hisamitsu: Makers of the famous Salonpas. Also have a great line of Lifecella facemasks. Try the citrus mask!! Available in most drugstores.

**Or, you can also try shopping online. There are a variety of online stores that will ship to Japan. Here are a few:

www.jcrew.com : Shipping can be expensive since it is dependent on the total cost of your order and not the weight or volume

www.victoriasecret.com : Many bras in Japan are heavily padded & Japanese sizes tend to run small, so this is a useful site!

www.ae.com

www.shoes.com

www.shopinprivate.com : Carries feminine health products, skin care, sensual items, etc. Delivers to Japan within 1-2 weeks.

www.drugstore.com : American pharmacist online.

www.flyingpig.com : Costco, in Japan. Almost all items sold in bulk. If you have a card (your one from home will work), you can get a 5% discount. Certain items (deli) are only sold to western Japan. Payment is bank transfer, credit card or COD.

<http://www.fbcusa.com> : Another site to order foreign food. Also carries teaching materials. Designed for foreigners in Japan.

<http://www.alishan-organic-center.com/en/tengu/> : Health food.

www.manymoons.biz : Offers alternatives to tampons and pads. Airmail delivery to Japan. The Keeper (small, reusable menstrual cup) is available on this site.

www.strawberrynet.com : Free shipping to Japan! Carries discounted skincare, makeup, cosmetics, and fragrances. Mostly big name brands.

www.yesasia.com : Variety of Asian goods from Taiwan, China, Korea, and Japan. For fans of HK action movies or Taiwanese dramas, this is the site for you!

www9.cd-wow.com : Free delivery to Japan! CDs, DVDs, games, and MP3 players.

www.amazon.co.jp : Click on 'in English' link in top right. It's located in Japan so shipping is free on all orders over ¥1500. No credit card needed and you can request COD for just a few extra hundred yen. US & UK Amazon's also deliver to Japan, taking between 1-3 weeks.

TOILETS

Traditional Japanese-style toilets are perhaps one of the less pleasant but relatively unavoidable aspects of Japanese daily life. Long, baggy trousers and open-toed or open-sided shoes can make the process somewhat more irritating than need be. In any case, this is a Japanese toilet. You squat facing the big hub at the front. Then again, no-one else is gonna see you, so it doesn't really matter! Japanese women are highly-embarrassed by any kind of bodily noises so you may often find a small device at the side of the toilet which makes a running-water sound so no-one has to listen to you doing your business. If there isn't one, many women will just flush the toilet as they go – though this obviously wastes a lot of water. At the other end of the scale is the luxury bidet style toilet. It took me a while to build up the courage to use the wash function on it but I can tell you, it really is quite pleasant! Unlike our home countries, many Japanese toilets will not have hot water or soap so you can either take soap with you or wait until later to give your hands a proper good scrub. Some public toilets will not have toilet paper, so get in the habit of always carrying a tissue pack with you. Take the free ones they hand out on the streets, otherwise most public toilets will sell a pack for ¥100.

ONSENS

When you first come to Japan, it can be a pretty daunting experience to get naked and wash in front of people you don't know, but it can be a very liberating and relaxing experience. An onsen is a Japanese hot spring bath with natural hot spring water. Onsen water is often thought to have healing powers because of its mineral properties and onsens often have several different baths, each with different minerals in the tub. People often travel to onsens with work colleagues, as the relaxed and open atmosphere helps to break down some of the hierarchical stiffness inherent to Japanese work life. However, most visitors to onsens are not work groups but friends, couples and families.

There are 2 types of onsens: the local neighborhood onsen or Yu, which costs about ¥100 or ¥200 yen, and the relaxing onsen which can cost anywhere between ¥200 and ¥2000. Local onsens are usually places where the locals go every day to bathe, so they may be surprised to see you. These places tend to be crowded and have none of the luxuries that the relaxing onsens do. However, if you pay a little more and go to a nice onsen, you will have a really great experience...especially in the winter!!! They all have different water content and are sometimes set in beautiful gardens with waterfalls. There are many towns in Japan famous for their onsens and make a great weekend trip. This is a great way to immerse yourself in Japanese culture.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

You will be naked. Completely naked.

Either bring a towel or pay to rent a towel set (usually comes with a bath sized towel and a smaller modesty towel). Some onsens let you keep the towel. Collect them all!

Remember to wash before you enter the onsen baths. That's what all those showers and taps are for!

You may (or most likely will) be stared at. You are a foreigner and they are curious. If you go to onsens frequently or even just one onsen frequently, you will get stared at less and less or they'll just stop noticing you.

If you have a tattoo, cover it up if possible or be prepared to be asked to leave. Some gyms will not even let you be a member if you admit to having one.

Keep long hair tied up just in case. Some onsens prefer that your hair not hang loose in the water
IMPORTANT: There are still some onsens that are mixed, especially in Hokkaido and countryside areas. Depending on the onsen, these can be a rather unpleasant experience for foreign women not accompanied by male friends or partners. There will be a sign to indicate if it is mixed, but don't worry, almost all are not.

ONSEN KANJI:

Rotemburo – an outdoor tub 露天風呂	Sand bath –you get buried in sand, a great feeling- 砂湯
Stone sauna – really great for your skin! you lie on a heated stone bed –岩盤浴	Sauna –many onsen also have sauna rooms – むし湯、サウナ
Onsen –this is the kanji for your basic onsen- 温泉	Mixed onsen 混浴
Mud onsen –you can soak in mud here! great for mudfights- 泥湯	Women`s only onsen 女性用 and for women 女 (onna)
	Men`s onsen – Please don't make a mistake!! – 男 (otoko)

DATING & RELATIONSHIPS

Most of this information is taken straight from Being A Broad in Japan, by Caroline Pover. Please be aware that much of what follows IS simply broad generalizations. There are always exceptions and EVERY SITUATION IS DIFFERENT. Also, with exception to the Lesbian section, most of the content refers to opposite-sex relationships and issues. Also, now that we are in Japan, "FOREIGN" refers to NON-JAPANESE people!

"...Living in Japan can wear foreign women ragged... you feel like it's you against the culture in many ways and it can be exhausting..."

BEING SINGLE:

First off, most foreign women agree that being single in Japan is usually different than being single back home. Oftentimes, being single back home is a matter of choice, but here in Japan, it seems more like a given. Back home, there always appears to be a "possibility" of finding love, in Japan, it appears to be a myth.

ISSUES FACING SINGLE WOMEN: Usually, the #1 issue you must tackle is dealing with the realization of being a woman in a male-oriented/dominated society.

Feelings of loneliness, mixed with living in a foreign land, can be profound.

Random & everyday compliments are few, and sincere attention and human touch decreases.

Often, in regards to friendships and socializing, you must start from scratch.

The lack of "suitable" partners in Japan, Japanese or otherwise (more on this later)

Sometimes, an increase in negative feelings about ourselves and towards others.

BE AWARE: Being single in Japan can be discouraging and confusing. This can lead to negative thoughts and feelings about ourselves, our appearance, our values, and even towards others (or men in particular). Developing an aversion towards all men in general is not uncommon among foreign women living in Japan.

Also, at the risk of reinforcing the stereotype that women are jealous and insecure beings, Japan tends to bring out these feelings, more so than in our familiar environments. You must learn to deal with these issues and feelings of insecurity and jealousy ASAP

ADVICE: maintain a positive and healthy attitude and outlook on life.

Be careful of feeling over-critical or defensive.

Be careful of giving off "don't-talk-to-me-you-jerk" vibes, you have to be open and approachable!

Try to develop a wide social circle.

Having a relationship can be overwhelming, but it may also be wonderful! So, hang in there, believe in yourself, have self-confidence, and don't wait for it... or look so hard. ENJOY LIFE J !!!

BEING A LESBIAN:

Being a lesbian in Japan can be difficult. It may feel like having to come out all over again. You are likely to run in to communication problems. Most likely, you will have to develop a support/social group from scratch,

REMEMBER: Although homophobia is not as prevalent nor does it manifest itself as violently here as it may be back in your home country, being "open and frank" in Japan is not exactly welcomed with open arms either. It will tend to make Japanese extremely uncomfortable. This is usually due to the culture, NOT personal opinions.

ADVICE: Most large cities (Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, etc...) have an active gay scene, you just have to look around a bit or inquire about your local area. Look online!

LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS:

A long-distance relationship is one of the hardest things to do, but if the bond, love, and trust are strong enough, it can work.

REMEMBER: Your partner back home will NOT be sharing a common experience with you while you're in Japan. You can't expect them to understand everything.

Frequent contact is FUNDAMENTAL (email, telephone calls, visits, pictures, home-movies, snail-mail, etc...). There are many relatively cheap broadband companies (Yahoo BB) that allow you to call other countries DIRT-CHEAP!

ADVICE: Due to your new life, you are bound to change as a person, more so than your partner will.

You MUST be aware that it may be difficult, or take time for your partner to adjust to the "new" you.

COMING WITH A PARTNER:

New joys and challenges may arise, simply from living in Japan. Moving to and living in unfamiliar circumstances can put a great deal of stress on the relationship. First things first, the most important thing is to maintain the stability and commitment in your relationship during the initial chaos of relocating to Japan.

POSITIVES: You have the bonus of added familiarity, security, and support of a partner, especially in the first few months, which can be rough. They will understand what you are going through.

You may become closer, and when you leave Japan, you will have a stronger relationship.

There is always someone there to share the emotions with, like excitement for example.

You have someone to go home to at the end of a "stressful" day.

Because you have each other, it minimizes homesickness.

It can enrich your time spent in Japan.

NEGATIVES: If your relationship had problems prior to coming to Japan, living here will NOT make those issues disappear. They NEED to be resolved ASAP... in addition to NEW arising challenges.

The length of the "coming-to-Japan-honeymoon" period may be different for both of you, which will lead to each of you feeling different emotions at different times.

Be careful to not become TOO dependent on each other. The pressure to "always be there" for someone and maintaining the role as somebody's sole source for comfort and support can put too much strain on a person and can lead to separation.

Be prepared for all the attention (i.e. female) your partner will get from his friends, his colleagues, and women in general. This may be difficult to deal with.

ADVICE: Try to seek out activities, friends, and social activities that are independent from your partner. You MUST find a healthy balance between doing things together and doing things separately.

Use this time in Japan as a chance to look at the relationship from a fresh perspective!

RELATIONSHIPS WITH JAPANESE MEN:

First things first, MOST Japanese men are SHY SHY SHY!!! This being said, usually, it is YOU who must be willing to do most of the work, communication and otherwise.

First off, ask yourself in the beginning as to whether or not you can truly accept him and live with the rules of his culture on a daily basis.

REMEMBER, you are in Japan, you will have to adapt a bit too.

A gentleman always pays, but in Japan, going "Dutch" is more common, if not the norm after a few dates

POSITIVES: Japanese men can be gentle, sensitive, handsome, and submissive.

Can be interesting, exciting, and can add a new depth to a relationship that you'd never known before.

They are not physically nor emotionally dominant or aggressive.

Temporary J (maybe a positive or a negative?)

He's fluent in the language! (But be careful not to use it as a crutch).

You can share insights into each other's cultures, especially if he had lived abroad.

He already knows where the "best" of everything is.

He can make your "Japan" experience more authentic, deeper, and richer.

NEGATIVES: Communication will probably be your #1 challenge. You should try to learn as much as possible about the Japanese culture's style of communication, as well as his own.

Language and culture barriers are difficult to overcome.

You often have to make the first move, or initiate the first date, and so on...

Unable to ever have a DEEP relationship.

OFTENTIMES, THEY WILL NOT BE "BIGGER" THAN YOU, AND YOU MAY EVEN WEIGH MORE THAN THEM.

They are not physically nor emotionally dominant or aggressive.

Temporary.

They may fall short of your expectations or standards.

They might have different principles on intimacy and monogamy.

If he is a salary man, office worker, company employee, or works at all in any sort of way... be prepared for after-work alcohol- and sex- related entertainment pressures. Keep in mind that this is NOT considered immoral, and traditionally, it is seen as a good way to maintain work relations. Simply put, it is the CULTURE.

REMEMBER: Oftentimes, Japanese men DO NOT share the same "equal level" ideas about men and females, and their value system may be very different than your own.

Many times, Japanese men do not meet the standards, BOTH physically and emotionally, of foreign women. BUT... we MUST keep in mind that this is NOT so much the fault of Japanese men, but instead, a result of our own expectations, values, and cultural upbringing.

ADVICE: NEVER sell yourself out! ALWAYS be honest to yourself!!! Be VERY clear from the beginning about who you are and what you want. Don't do, or succumb to something you normally wouldn't or that is against your nature, just to fit someone else's cultural standard or ideal of how, or what, a woman should be.

It may be a struggle to make him see your culture's ideal of womanhood and equality, but this is important.

DON'T try to change him, at least not while he lives in Japan. And, don't become resentful, angry, or bitter towards him or the culture.

Pay attention to NON-VERBAL communication. Miscommunication can often be culturally explained, or simply a personal issue of your partner.

NEVER SUBMIT TO THE JAPANESE IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD! ...UNLESS YOU TRULY WANT TO!

“...Moving to a foreign country is a conscious or subconscious decision to remove yourself from your past and the old you; to develop in new directions and learn more about yourself. The disadvantages of being single in Japan can be turned into opportunities to move towards the new you. The lonely times can be turned into times where you learn more about yourself or start new things. Japan lends itself to great opportunities...” (Being A Broad in Japan)

ADDITIONAL KANJI

指圧 - shiatsu - finger-pressure therapy
指圧師 - shiatsu-shi - finger-pressure therapist
美容師 - biyoushi - hairdresser
ジム・スポーツクラブ - gym
温泉 - onsen - hot springs
髪 - kami - hair
顔 - kao - face
化粧 - keshou - make-up
シャンプー - shanpu- - shampoo
コンディショナー - kondishona- - conditioner

生理 - seiri - menstruation
生理痛 - seiritsuu - menstrual cramps
生理用ナプキン - seiriyu.napukin - sanitary napkins
タンポン - tanpon - tampon
漂白剤 - hyou hakuzai - bleaching agent
コンドーム - condom - condom
婦人科医 - fujinka-i - gynecologist
婦人科検診 - fujinka kenshin - gynecological exam
鎮痛剤 - chintsuuzai - painkiller
避妊 - hinin - birth control (general)

ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS?

One of the great benefits of being on the JET Programme is having easy access to a very extensive counseling system. If you have a problem or just need someone to talk to, you've got lots of good options:

Other JETs. They're likely to be going through some of the same issues as you

Your PA. It's their job to try and help you out and they're bound by a confidentiality agreement, so you don't need to worry about gossip.

Your supervisor.

CLAIR's JET Line. Weekdays 09:00 to 17:45. 03-3591-5489. CLAIR is also able to source professional advice and consultation from members of their Counseling System Committee, should you require it.

Self-Support Group Leaders. CLAIR's support system for speakers of languages other than English. Contact CLAIR for further details.

AJET Peer Support Group. 20:00 to 07:00, you can call for a chat or advice from fellow JETs 0120-437-725 toll free. Calls are strictly confidential

Tokyo English Life Line (TELL). A non-JET counseling system which can advise on issues such as abortion 03-5774-0992

AMDA International Medical Information Center provide telephone counseling in English, Thai, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese & Filipino 03-5285-8088

www.being-a-broad.com

JET Guides. They may be big, but they're useful!

What do Japanese women have to say about us???

The good, the bad, and the ugly

**We asked more than 20 Japanese females to tell us what they think about us Western women. Here is what they had to say...

The Good

- 1. We' re aggressive (honest)**
- 2. We' re strong (emotionally and physically)**
- 3. We are easier to get to know than Japanese women.**
- 4. We have more self-awareness.**
- 5. We're smart. We're knowledgable about & like to discuss business, world, politics, etc.**
- 6. We think men & women are equal.**
- 7. We' re friendly and active.**
- 8. We' re more natural. We wear less make-up.**

The Bad

- 1. We' re aggressive (too straight / too direct)**
- 2. We think men & women are equal.**
- 3. We are knowledgable about and like to talk about business, world, politics, etc.**
- 4. We don' t speak Japanese**
- 5. We are unfashionable.**
- 6. We are bigger (overweight / curvy) and taller.**
- 7. We use tampons and birth control.**
- 8. We divorce a lot.**

Top Ten Reasons....

Why it's great to be a FEMALE in Japan!

1. Shopping

Japan is one big shopping mall!

2. Dampering

Onsens, salons, massages, etc.

3. Exoticism

It's Japan, and we're not Japanese.

4. Food

Deserts, chocolate, bakeries, cafes, etc.

5. Credibility

Foreign women are...nani?

6. Freedom with style

The Japanese like to experiment with fashion...try it!

7. Safety

Generally speaking, Japan is quite safe. Most likely it is much safer than your home country, but don't forget to take the same safety precautions.

8. Trains

After 8pm at night, ladies get their own train carriage!

9. Toilets

Western style toilets have warmed seats! Squater toilets aren't so great but at least you don't have to worry about anyone leaving the toilet seat up. And, men like to primp just as much as females in Japan, so often the line for the men's bathroom is just as long, if not longer, than the line for the female bathroom.

10. Indulge your inner child!

Hello Kitty your heart out!!!!