

VISIT THE REMARKABLE PLACES IN JAPAN AND TEACH ENGLISH



For those who are used to living in the western world, Japan might seem like the land of extremes and contradictions, almost surreal. Once you get there, you'll realise that Japan is a charming country, with fascinating traditions rooted deeply in its history, but it's also exciting and vibrant, with cities that offer unusual and surprising things to see and do.

The pros of living in Japan

- **Health and safety.** This is a relatively safe country to visit in terms of pickpocketing and muggings, but it's always worth keeping an eye out in highly touristic areas. It prides itself on having one of the best healthcare systems in the world. Equipment in hospitals is modern and technologically advanced, and all medical staff are highly trained. This is one of the few remaining countries to limit the number of visitors when the rest of the world had already lifted all travel restrictions after the pandemic.
- **Amazing food.** You might not be a fan of raw fish, but there are so many incredible dishes to try that you will fall in love with its cuisine. Mainly, Japanese dishes are based on rice, vegetables, and high-quality meat and fish.
- **Efficient public transport.** You can forget about driving there, especially living in big cities. Buses and trains are frequent and timely, and their network reaches far and wide.
- From snow-capped mountains to sandy beaches, Japan has it all. The myriad of islands are like hidden treasures to discover. Keep an eye out, especially for those [less known islands](#).

The cons of living in Japan

- **The cost of living.** From accommodation to imported high-quality goods, living in Japan can be expensive.
- **Work-life imbalance.** It's common for employees at any level to work up to 12 hours a day.
- **Frequent natural disasters.** Because of its location on a tectonic plate, earthquakes of different magnitudes are frequent.

While Japan might not be suitable for everyone, it could be a wonderful destination for some of those who are planning on teaching English as a foreign language abroad.

Where to teach English in Japan

The cost of living is higher in big cities, which is reflected in the salary. A TEFL teacher's salary can range between 200,000 and 600,000 yen a month. The kind of institution you work at can have a huge impact on your salary.

However, salary is not the only difference between the different types of schools. The classroom size, the number of teaching hours, and the benefits they offer can vary greatly from one school to another. So, let's see **how to get a job teaching English in Japan**.

- **State or international schools?** To work in a state school, chances are that, as an international teacher, you would be hired as an assistant language teacher (ALT) to support

local teachers in the classroom. This system has been devised because the government prioritises giving employment to Japanese teachers. Furthermore, they rely on ELT teachers to bring modern teaching approaches to the language classroom.

As an ATL, your role would be to bring a fun element to the lessons and to give both learners and teachers the opportunity to get a glimpse of your culture. This is particularly important if you work in a rural area. Classes in state schools are large, with up to 40 students per class. As well as national holidays, you'll benefit from 10-20 days of paid holiday.

You could be hired by a state school directly, or you could apply for a teaching role through a government-sponsored programme. [Jet is one of the most famous programmes](#), because of its high salaries and renewable contracts.

International schools are basically private primary and secondary schools, where students' proficiency in the English language ranges from intermediate to advanced. These schools are very selective during the hiring process and expect their teachers to have at least two years of teaching experience behind them. These requirements are met with excellent pay and perks.

- **University opportunities.** Offering up to three months of paid holiday and the highest teaching salary in Japan for around 15 hours of work a week, university teaching roles are highly sought-after. However, to be considered for one of these positions, you need to hold a master's degree in your field and extensive teaching experience.
- **Private language schools/academies.** The most popular choice for international teachers when starting their life in Japan is to work at an eikaiwa, a private language school. Your working hours will be mainly in the afternoon and evening, 5-8 hours a day. The classes are much smaller than those in state schools, with a maximum of 15 students per class.

Some of these academies are large school chains, while others are family-run, independent schools.

The school chains have branches all over the country, especially in the big cities. They offer a good salary, some perks, and professional development. In return, you are expected to sell products to your students (e.g. additional courses or materials) as well as teaching your classes.

Independent schools are on the other end of the spectrum. They are often established in rural areas, which are often less appealing to international teachers due to the scarcity of students. However, living in these parts of the country will give you the chance to fully immerse yourself in the traditional Japanese culture and have a completely different experience from hectic life in urban areas. An advantage of working at a family-run eikaiwa is that you'll have much more freedom to develop your own lessons and use your own material. This is because their teaching resources are quite outdated, due to the smaller budget of these schools.

What's the bottom line?

For a westerner, Japan can be a challenging country to live and work in. A high cost of living and very long hours at work might put you off from choosing this enchanting country as your teaching destination. However, the glorious landscape, the exciting city life, and the traditional rural environment might make it the ideal location if you want to step out of your comfort zone and experience something out of the ordinary.

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