

# GUIDEBOOK FOR LIVING IN JAPAN



Immunology  
Frontier  
Research  
Center

Osaka University

**Immunology  
Frontier  
Research  
Center**



**We are ready to assist you.**



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# View your future with ambition!

As you can imagine, pursuing a career abroad is a unique and wonderful experience. It provides deeper insight into a country, and the many great experiences available in a new culture will develop you personally and professionally.

If you have never considered working or studying in Japan, one of the reasons why must be a question of “what life will be like while working or studying in Japan.”

This brochure contains the information you need when considering Japan as a destination for work or study. It contains details about the diverse cultural and social aspects of living, working, and studying in Japan. These details will bring better understanding and help you make a more informed decision for your future.

In this brochure, we have gathered the information you will need if you decide to work or study at our institute, the Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC), Osaka University, as an example.

We are dedicated to recruiting and accepting excellent research scientists and students, and providing you with continuous, comprehensive support for both research and daily life in Japan, and enabling you to focus deeply on your research.

We seek highly motivated scientists and students across all fields of Immunology, Imaging, and Informatics research.

See P10-11 for available programs and our contact information if you are interested in working or studying at our institute.

We are ready to assist you.

# What is Japan Like? What is Osaka Like?

## Japan

Population | **125.988 million** (as of Jan. 2020)  
Area | **377,975 square kilometers**

Japan is a fascinating country that encompasses busy, modern, and exciting cities as well as historical and traditional rural areas.

In addition, an exciting and healthy lifestyle coexists because of the wide variety of healthy foods using many natural ingredients. Japan also has an excellent and affordable health care system and accessible educational facilities.

Japan is well known for being safer than most countries. There is a very low crime rate and even women can generally walk safely outside at night.

Japanese culture is distinctive and each region has their own customs and dialect. In many places it is possible to find bilingual staff and shopkeepers as well as signs in English due to an increased interest in internationalization.

Japan is profoundly influenced by its four distinct seasons with a climate ranging from subarctic in the north to subtropical in the south. Northern Japan has warm summers and very cold winters with heavy snow on in mountainous areas and on the Sea of Japan side. Western Japan has very hot and humid summers (with temperatures frequently higher than 35°C) and moderately cold winters.

As you know, natural disasters do frequently occur in Japan. So, it's very important that you always be prepared for them.

## Osaka

Population | **8.82 million** (as of Jan. 2020)  
Area | **1,905.14 square kilometers**

Osaka is the second largest city in Japan. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Osaka thrived as the “Merchant City”. Osakans are friendly and like to joke and laugh with others in their daily lives. It is said that this regional characteristic is derived from the spirit of the “merchants”.

Osaka is the center of the Kansai region, and has easy access to Kyoto, Nara, and Kobe with plenty of amusement and delicious foods, and diverse places to see. Such as the ancient temples and shrines of Kyoto and Nara, the mountains and sea of Kobe, venturing further afield to the Sea of Japan or to Hiroshima is also easy by train.

The main areas in Osaka are Umeda called “Kita”, and Namba called “Minami”, and both are easily accessed by public transport. You can find anything you want in these areas.

### ► Tips!

Prepare to come to a warm place. Osaka has a much warmer climate than I anticipated. Even so, houses are built for the warm and humid summers, which means it is still nice to have some warm sweaters for winter. —Floris (from the Netherlands)

## Transportation

### Prepaid Smart Cards: ICOCA, PASMO, Suica etc.

There are several prepaid smart cards (called IC cards in Japan) that can be used for transportation such as trains, buses, and monorails as well as for cashless shopping. We recommend having one of these cards because ticket purchases for public transportation can be complicated due to many different private railways and bus companies serving the Osaka transport network.

## Driving Cars

### Driver's License

- International Driving Permit (IDP) (May only be used for one year)
  - Other Country's Driver's license with Japanese translation (Permitted countries only)
  - Japanese license converted from your driver's license
- ※ Scan the QR code for details. (Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department)



## Bicycles

### Bicycle Registration

All bicycles must be registered in order to identify the bicycle if it is stolen. The registration can be done when purchasing a new bicycle. It costs just 500 yen. The store staff will give you a sticker to be displayed on the frame of the bicycle after you fill out a form.

### Bicycle Insurance

Bicycle accidents have become a social issue in Japan. If you have an accident you may be liable for compensation. Therefore, it is now mandatory to have bicycle insurance in Osaka. You can buy bicycle insurance at a convenience store. It costs around 300 yen per month.

### ► Tips!

The traffic is a bit different here than where I come from. Use the curved mirrors to check if traffic is coming around the corner and get bicycle insurance that covers your liability in case of accidents. —Floris (from the Netherlands)

## Japanese Customs and Manners

### Shoes

Shoes should be removed just inside the door when entering someone's house, Japanese inns, some Japanese restaurants, temples, and castles. If a room has tatami mats then slippers should also be removed.

### Phones

Except in emergency situations, people in Japan don't tend to speak on the phone in the train, bus, or in a shop. Phones should be kept on silent mode in public.

### Escalators

It is strictly stand right, pass left on Osaka escalators, and stand left, pass right on Tokyo ones. There is currently a campaign to discourage walking on escalators.

### ► Tips!

Learn some Japanese and immerse yourself in Japanese culture. —Floris (from the Netherlands)

# Useful Information for Living in Japan

## Location of Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC)

The Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC) is on the Suita Campus of Osaka University located 30 minutes by train from central Osaka and borders two cities; Suita and Ibaraki. The entire campus covers an area of 997,110.72 square meters and is surrounded by lush greenery.

The Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC) is located on the north side of the campus and is a 10 or 15-minute walk from the closest train station of KitaSenri.



Osaka University Suita Campus

Suita City



## Living Cost in the Area Around the Campus

### Layouts of Japanese Apartments

1R = Studio

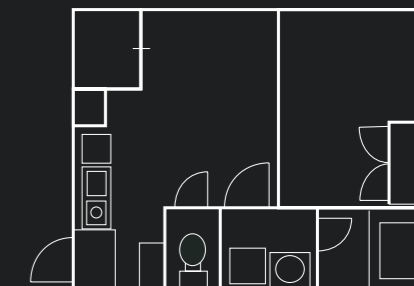
1K = One Room and Kitchen

1DK = One Room, Dining Space, Kitchen

3SLDK = Three Rooms, Service Room, Living & Dining Room, Kitchen

※ Service room is a space which cannot be specified as a room under the Building Standards Act often without windows.

4LDK = Four Rooms, Living & Dining Room, Kitchen



### Standard Room Sizes

Single Person: 1R, 1K, and 1DK

Family: 2DK or Larger

※1\$=105yen as of Sep. 2020

### Rent

#### ▶ Off-Campus Apartment (Utilities Excluded)



#### ▶ University Accommodation

##### Kasugaoka House (Utilities Included)



For researchers  
**92 to 184 thousand yen**  
(1R-2LDK)

##### Toyonaka International House



For researchers  
**37 to 99 thousand yen**  
(1R-2LDK)



For students  
**16 to 18 thousand yen**  
(1R-2DK)

※ MEXT scholars will be allotted a room near Osaka University. The rent will depend on the dormitory.

## Market Values-

### ▶ Utilities



Electricity: from  
**3,000** yen



Gas: from  
**5,000** yen



Water: from  
**3,000** yen



Internet: from  
**4,000** yen

### ▶ National Health Insurance

※ Students without income can apply for a discount on the monthly fee.

**Minoh City: from | 4,500** yen/month

**Suita City: from | 6,700** yen/month

**Ibaraki City: from | 5,100** yen/month

### ▶ National Pension Premiums

※ Students without income may apply for an exemption.

**16,540** yen/month (for FY2020)

See page 9 for details.

## Other Prices for Reference

### Average Price of Food

Milk (1L): 200 to 250 yen

Egg (10 eggs in a carton): 200 to 250 yen

Bread: 200-250 yen (baguette), 150 to 200 yen (half-size loaf of bread)

Rice: 2kg for 900 to 1,000 yen, 5kg for 1,600 to 2,100 yen

### Average Eat-Out Expenses

Lunch 500 yen to 1,000 yen /per person

※ Big Mac Value Set: 650 yen

Dinner 2,000 yen to 3,000 yen without drinks / per person

※ Soft drinks from 280 yen, Beer medium size from 500 yen, bottle from 550 yen

※ as of Sep. 2020



## Cost Simulation

Case (living alone):

**50,000 yen for rent and  
50,000 yen for food**

The minimum monthly cost will be around

**140,000 yen.**

※ The cost will change depending on frequency of eating out. The cost of insurance and pension premiums will change depending on income.



# Social Insurance System

in **J**apan



As a general rule, foreign nationals who have a resident visa (a stay longer than 3 months) in Japan must join social insurance in Japan regardless of nationality.

## Health Insurance

There are two types of health insurance in Japan. All people living in Japan, both citizens and temporary residents with a resident visa, are required to join either the Employees' Health Insurance or the National Health Insurance. Under the current health insurance system, 70% of the cost associated with hospital visits, tests, and prescriptions are covered by the insurance. However, some special treatments, tests, and hospitalization will not be covered.

### National Health Insurance

This is for unemployed people, self-employed people, students, and people who work less than 30 hours per week.

※ Foreign students must join this insurance.

### Employees' Health Insurance

This is for people who work more than 30 hours per week.

※ Foreign researchers must join this insurance.

## Pension Insurance

Pension insurance is a system in which the premiums paid by the working generation are used to support people aged 65 and over.

### National Pension

This is obligatory for all people who are 20 to 60 years old, and foreign nationals are no exception.

※ Foreign students must join this pension, but you can apply for an exemption to the contributions.

### Employees' Pension

This is a pension that anyone who works in Japan must join in addition to the national pension. The Employees' pension insurance includes a segment for the national pension and is deducted from monthly salary half the premium is paid by the company or organization the employees belong to.

※ Applicable to foreign researchers.

# Fellowship, Scholarship, and Postdoc Programs

## For Researchers

### JSPS Fellowship



The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), one of the major public funding agencies in Japan, provides overseas researchers with an opportunity to conduct collaborative research under the guidance of host researchers belonging to institutes in Japan. These programs are intended to help advance the overseas researchers' research activities while promoting science and internationalization in Japan. All fields of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences are included under this program.

※ In principle, applications are accepted twice a year. Scan the QR code for details.

### Kishimoto Foundation



IFReC has a fellowship, named the Kishimoto Fellowship, which was established in 2008 in honor of Dr. Tadamitsu Kishimoto, who, during the 1980s and 90s, elucidated the function of interleukin-6 (IL6), a key molecule for stimulating immune responses. This program is open to postdoctoral researchers of non-Japanese nationality who seek to collaborate with IFReC immunology researchers. Scan the QR code for details.

### Advanced Postdoc Program



The Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC) at Osaka University is recruiting postdoctoral researchers for its original "Advanced Postdoc" program. IFReC, the top-level research center for immunology in Japan, has a team of world-recognized principal investigators using state-of-the-art facilities. Active interaction with outstanding members will enhance your productivity and achievements in your career. The center also provides information assistance in English for daily activities in IFReC. This research environment is the ideal foundation on which to base your successful career in research.

※ JPY 5.6M to 7.5M as an annual salary, and JPY 3M per year as a grant for your original research are provided. The employment term is for 3 years. Scan the QR code for more details.

## For Students

### Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho: MEXT) Scholarship



The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan offers scholarships to international students who wish to study in graduate courses at Japanese universities under the MEXT Scholarship Program. Application procedures for this scholarship are conducted through Japanese embassies or consulates in your countries.

If you require any further information regarding MEXT Scholarships, contact a Japanese embassy or consulate in your country, or institutions of higher education in which you wish to enroll. Scan the QR code for details.

# Comprehensive Support for Foreign Nationals in IFReC

IFReC provides comprehensive support to foreign nationals to help with their research and daily life in Japan.

### Support Before Arrival

The first thing you need to do before coming to work or study in Japan is obtain a visa. We provide each individual with the necessary information and advice to obtain the required visa to work or study in Japan.

### Support Upon Arrival

We offer assistance with various things required for setting up life in Japan, such as registration procedures at city hall, opening a bank account, helping you buy items for living, as well as joining the Japanese health insurance and the public pension systems.

### Support in Daily Life

We offer many kinds of support for foreign nationals such as translating notifications from public organizations, explaining procedures, filling out documents required by organizations or companies. We are also available to listen to and assist with any other issues that you may have during your stay in Japan whenever you need.

### Research/Study Support

We provide foreign nationals in IFReC with all essential information in English, from paperwork to facility orientation and consultations related to your research or study. We also assist you in applying for Japanese research grants, by checking your application form or translating the documents into Japanese as required.

### IFReC Japanese Class

We hold Japanese language classes free of charge for foreign nationals to help alleviate stress and inconvenience in research operations and daily life that may be caused by the language barrier.

The classes have been held since 2012, and to date, the cumulative total is over 300 participants. We have two classes, one is for elementary to pre-intermediate level, and another is for intermediate to advanced level.

### Financial Support for Monthly Rent for Kasugaoka House

We provide financial support of 30% of the monthly rent to foreign researchers in IFReC who live in Kasugaoka House, Osaka University's accommodation for foreign researchers.

## Contact Information

Immunology Frontier Research Center  
Osaka University  
Email: ifrec-office@ifrec.osaka-u.ac.jp

“**Wai Tuck Soh, PhD (Malaysian)**

**Specially Appointed Researcher (PostDoc),  
Immunochemistry**

It has been almost a year now since I live in Osaka. Living in Japan has been smoother than I would expect. Despite the language barrier, but due to Japanese professionalism, I felt confident in dealing with Japanese. Throughout my stay, I can see that there have been continuous efforts in creating a much friendlier environment for foreigners, especially within the institution. Japan has its own unique and distinct cultural value. Personally, I find the cultural aspects unique and interesting. Living and working in Japan has brought me invaluable life experience.



“**Jason White, PhD (American)**

**Specially Appointed Researcher (PostDoc),  
Experimental Immunology**

I have been working at IFReC and living in Osaka for about a year and a half, and have greatly enjoyed it. Further, I came here essentially knowing no Japanese, and I found it surprisingly easy to navigate everyday life (though I definitely recommend learning the language—IFReC has a weekly class that is helpful in this regard!). COVID has obviously made things a little strange for everyone recently, but I am definitely impressed at IFReC's flexibility in remote-work / changing work hours to emphasize safety while still doing science. Also, the food / scenery / architecture here is amazing, highly recommended!



“**Floris Van Eerden, PhD (Dutch)**

**Specially Appointed Researcher (PostDoc),  
Systems Immunology**

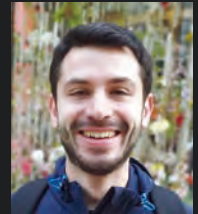
By now I have been living in Japan for three years, and it has been a very rewarding experience. Working at Osaka University has not only offered me the possibility to perform state of the art research, but also to get the opportunity to get submerged in culture that is very different from my own background. Osaka is a pleasant city to live in, it has a metropolitan vibe, but nature is not far away. The city's location in the Kansai region means also that it is surrounded by a wealth of cultural heritage. Of course, there are challenges when moving to a completely different country, but I have found the people at Osaka University to be always very supportive. Japan is an excellent place to work for ambitious scientists, providing top-notch research infrastructure in a stimulating environment.



“**Aybars Nazlica, MD (Turkish)**

**PhD Student, Systems Immunology**

I've been living in Japan for three years now. I'm financing my Ph.D. studies with a Monbukagakushou (MEXT) scholarship. All this time, I didn't have any difficulties thanks to the management staff of the institute that helped me through the MEXT scholarship application procedure before coming to Japan, and also after I started living in Japan. My experience in Japan is very positive. Living in Japan is as easy as living in any other foreign country. Learning basic Japanese before coming might be helpful because even a very basic conversation skill in Japanese makes wonders. Overall it's been an enjoyable time here and I'd like to stay more.



“**Shailendra Kumar Singh, PhD (Indian)**

**Specially Appointed Researcher (PostDoc),  
Host Defense**

I have been living in Japan for the last eleven years. I came to Japan in year 2008 when I got the Japanese Government *Monbukagakusho* MEXT Scholarship, for my PhD studies. I still remember that I was worried about life style, food, people from different cultural background and language barrier before coming to Japan. When I came here, I was surprised to see that most of the people can easily communicate in English. Moreover, outside of the University, the local Japanese people helped me by using electronic dictionary; I was amazed to see that. Life in Japan is really easy and comfortable, you can find out assistance (English language) everywhere, for example hospitals, clinics, banks, post offices, city offices and of course University administration. Working environment in Japan is really nice and especially in advance research field. During my research career, I feel Japan is the best place for scientific research career.







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