



Japan Shopping Checklist

What to buy, where to buy it, and what to skip

A free guide by Tedasuke Lab

- + Best items at every store type
- + Price ranges in yen
- + Priority ratings + pro tips
- + Tax-free shopping rules
- + Step-by-step shopping day plan

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Free tools for Japan trip planning

How to Use This Checklist

Quick Start

Print it or save it on your phone. Check items as you shop.
Priority ratings: 3 stars = must-buy, 2 = recommended, 1 = optional.
Prices are typical ranges in Japanese yen.

Store Overview

Japan has specific store types, each with different strengths. Here is where to go for what.

Store	What It Is	Hours	Tax-Free
Don Quijote	Everything store, late night	Most 24hrs	Yes (Y5k+)
Matsumoto Kiyoshi	Drugstore chain	10am-9pm	Yes (Y5k+)
7-Eleven / Lawson	Convenience stores	24hrs	No
Tokyu Hands / Loft	Stationery + lifestyle	10am-9pm	Yes (Y5k+)
Station shops	Last-minute souvenirs	Varies	Some

Golden Rule: Tax-Free Shopping

Tax-free = Y5,000+ at one store, one day. Bring your passport.
Items get sealed in a bag -- do not open until you leave Japan.
Look for the 'TAX FREE' logo at store entrances.

DON QUIJOTE -- Your One-Stop Japan Shop

Open late (some 24hrs). Chaotic, loud, overwhelming -- but the best prices on almost everything.

Item	Price	Priority	Pro Tip
Kit Kat (Japanese flavors)	Y200-400	3 stars	Matcha, strawberry, sake. Best souvenir for everyone.
Face masks (Lululun, etc.)	Y400-1,600	3 stars	3-5x cheaper than abroad. Buy in bulk.
Sunscreen (Anessa, Biore UV)	Y800-2,500	3 stars	Japanese sunscreen is genuinely the world's best.
Japanese snack variety pack	Y500-2,000	3 stars	Perfect for gifting. Look for 'assorted' boxes.
Eye drops (Rohto, Sante FX)	Y500-1,500	2 stars	The 'cool' sensation is unlike anything at home.
Tokyo Banana	Y500-1,100	2 stars	Classic gift, also available at stations for same price.
Whisky (Suntory, Nikka)	Y2,000-5,000	2 stars	Check your duty-free allowance before buying.
Rice cooker (small)	Y3,000-8,000	1 star	WARNING: Japan uses 100V. Check compatibility.

Don Quijote Survival Tips

- The store layout makes no sense. That's intentional. Ask staff for help.
- Tax-free counter is usually on a specific floor -- look for signs.
- Download the 'Majica' app for extra discounts.
- Visit after 8 PM to avoid the worst crowds.

DRUGSTORES -- Matsumoto Kiyoshi, Sundrug, Welcia

Often cheaper than Don Quijote for skincare and medicine. English signs at most locations.

Item	Price	Priority	Pro Tip
Sunscreen (Skin Aqua, Biore)	Y600-1,500	3 stars	Check here FIRST before Don Quijote.
Sheet masks (10-pack)	Y300-800	3 stars	Y300 for 10 masks. Unbeatable value.
Pain relief patches (Salonpas)	Y400-800	3 stars	You WILL need these. 15,000+ steps/day.
DHC Lip Cream	Y300-500	2 stars	Cult favorite. Best lip balm many people try.
Stomach medicine (Ohta's Isan)	Y500-1,000	2 stars	Essential if you're eating adventurously.
Hand cream (Yuskin, Atrix)	Y300-800	2 stars	Great winter souvenir.
Shampoo (Tsubaki, Botanist)	Y600-1,500	1 star	Only if you love Japanese haircare.
Collagen drinks	Y150-300 ea	1 star	Popular in Japan, niche elsewhere.

Best Drugstore Chain

Matsumoto Kiyoshi -- most foreigner-friendly. English signs, tax-free counter, helpful staff. The yellow sign is everywhere. Look for 'MK' branding.
Sundrug is often cheaper but has less English support.

CONVENIENCE STORES -- 7-Eleven, Lawson, FamilyMart

NOT for souvenirs -- but your daily essential stop. Open 24 hours, everywhere, and surprisingly excellent.

Item	Price	Why
Onigiri (rice ball)	Y120-200	Best quick breakfast in Japan
Egg sandwich (tamago sando)	Y200-300	Famously better than it has any right to be
Strong Zero / Chu-hi	Y150-200	The local way to end a long day of walking
Bottled green tea	Y100-160	Oi Ocha or Ayataka. Skip vending machines (same price)
Pocket umbrella	Y500	Sudden rain is a 'when,' not an 'if'
ATM cash withdrawal	--	7-Eleven ATMs accept almost all foreign cards

Cash Tip

7-Eleven ATM = your best friend for cash. Works with Visa, Mastercard, and most international cards. Withdraw yen directly, no exchange booth needed.

TOKYU HANDS / LOFT -- Stationery + Lifestyle

Stationery lovers, this is your danger zone. Budget accordingly.

Item	Price	Priority	Note
Pens (Jetstream, Sarasa)	Y150-500	3 stars	Genuinely the best pens in the world
Washi tape	Y200-500	2 stars	Beautiful Japanese designs, great gifts
Notebooks (Kokuyo, Midori)	Y300-1,500	2 stars	The paper quality will ruin you for other notebooks
Kitchen gadgets	Y500-3,000	2 stars	Unique items you won't find anywhere else

STATION & AIRPORT SHOPS

Last-minute only. Prices are 10-30% higher than regular stores.

Item	Price	Priority
Regional sweets	Y500-1,500	3 stars
Tokyo Banana	Y500-1,100	2 stars
Royce chocolate	Y700-1,500	2 stars
Green tea (packaged)	Y500-3,000	2 stars

Warning

Buy your main souvenirs at Don Quijote or drugstores. Use station shops only for items you forgot or region-specific sweets.

5 THINGS NOT TO BUY IN JAPAN

- 1. Electronics at the airport** -- Overpriced, limited selection. Buy at Yodobashi or Bic Camera instead.
- 2. Expensive cosmetics at Don Quijote** -- Check drugstores first. Often 20% cheaper for the same product.
- 3. Tourist-trap chopstick sets** -- 100-yen shops have identical quality for a fraction of the price.
- 4. Anime goods at tourist shops** -- Go to Akihabara or Nakano Broadway for real selection and fair prices.
- 5. 'Japanese' goods made in China** -- Check labels, especially at station shops. Look for 'Made in Japan.'

YOUR SHOPPING DAY -- A Step-by-Step Plan

Save your shopping for ONE dedicated afternoon. Here is exactly how to do it efficiently.

1:00 PM

Start at Matsumoto Kiyoshi near your hotel

Buy: skincare, medicine, face masks (tax-free if Y5k+)

Budget: Y2,000 - Y4,000



2:00 PM

Walk to nearest Don Quijote

Buy: Kit Kat, snacks, variety packs, any electronics

Budget: Y3,000 - Y6,000 (aim for Y5k+ for tax-free)



3:30 PM

Tokyu Hands or Loft (if nearby)

Buy: pens, washi tape, unique gifts

Budget: Y1,000 - Y3,000



4:30 PM

Done! You have covered 80% of your shopping in 3.5 hours.

Total estimated spend: Y6,000 - Y13,000

That is roughly \$40 - \$90 USD

Day-of Tips

- Bring your passport for tax-free shopping.
- Bring a folding bag (stores charge Y3-5 for bags).
- Keep receipts organized -- you may need them at the airport.
- Do not carry everything around all day. Shop, then go back to hotel.
- Pay with credit card where possible to save cash for small shops.

7 Shopping Rules of Thumb

- 1 Compare before you buy**
Don Quijote, drugstores, and 100-yen shops often carry the same items at different prices. Drugstores usually win for skincare.
- 2 Aim for the tax-free threshold**
Y5,000 at one store, one day. Plan your purchases to hit this number. It saves you 10% instantly.
- 3 Shop in the evening**
Stores are less crowded after 7 PM. Don Quijote is open late -- use that to your advantage.
- 4 Snacks > expensive gifts**
A Y500 box of Japanese Kit Kats brings more joy than a Y5,000 souvenir. Buy more small things, fewer big things.
- 5 Download store apps**
Majica (Don Quijote), Matsukiyo (Matsumoto Kiyoshi) -- these apps give real discounts, not just points.
- 6 Check luggage weight early**
Japanese souvenirs add up fast. Weigh your bag before your shopping day. Budget 2-3kg for shopping.
- 7 Cash is still king (sometimes)**
Small shops and some tax-free counters prefer cash. Keep Y10,000-20,000 on hand for shopping day.

Quick Reference: Store Comparison

Category	Best Store	Why
Snacks & Kit Kat	Don Quijote	Biggest selection, good prices
Skincare & sunscreen	Drugstore	Cheapest prices, staff can help
Medicine	Drugstore	Specialized selection, English labels
Stationery & pens	Tokyu Hands / Loft	Unbeatable quality and range
Cheap souvenirs	100-yen shop (Daiso)	Everything Y100 -- surprisingly good
Premium sweets	Station shops	Region-specific, gift-boxed
Electronics	Yodobashi / Bic Camera	Tax-free, better than Don Quijote
Last-minute anything	Convenience store	24hrs, everywhere, reliable

The Holy Trinity of Japan Souvenirs

Matcha Kit Kat + Sheet Masks + Salonpas pain patches.
These three items will make you everyone's favorite traveler.
Total cost: about Y1,000 (roughly \$7 USD).

Typical Budget Summary

Spending Level	Budget (Yen)	Budget (USD)	What You Get
Light	Y3,000-5,000	\$20-35	Snacks + a few skincare items
Moderate	Y8,000-12,000	\$55-80	Full souvenir run for 5-10 people
Generous	Y15,000-25,000	\$100-170	Gifts for everyone + personal items

Liked this free guide?

TOKYO DAY TRIP STARTER PACK

This free checklist helps you **shop smarter**.

The Starter Pack helps you **plan your entire day trip**.

	Free Guide	Starter Pack
Shopping info	Yes	Yes
Day trip routes (5 cities)	--	Yes
Real cost breakdowns	--	Yes
Where to eat + prices	--	Yes
Destination comparison	--	Side-by-side
Packing checklist	--	By season
Survival Japanese	--	20 phrases
Train cheat sheet	--	With platform tips

For first-time visitors who want to spend **less time researching** and **more time enjoying**.

Y500 is less than one ekiben at Tokyo Station.

It saves you hours of scattered searches and helps you avoid a badly planned day trip.

Y500 (~\$3.50)

Get the Starter Pack at tedasuke-lab.vercel.app

Also free: [Day Trip Finder](#) / [Trip Planner](#) / [Budget Estimator](#)

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