Do

1. **Do bring your most important personal hygiene products!**
   Although you will certainly be able to find Japanese equivalents for many products (shampoo, toothpaste), you should still bring any personal hygiene product that you don’t think you could live without. Japanese deodorant is very different (and much weaker) than American varieties, so it’s best to play it safe and bring some of your own.

2. **Do bring a debit card!**
   Japan is still a cash-based society and most places will not take your foreign credit cards, but you can withdraw money from most post offices and 7-11 convenience stores by using a debit card. There will usually be a withdraw fee, so try to only withdraw money every two weeks or so.

3. **Do go to Mori Tower in Roppongi Hills!**
   Most foreigners think Tokyo Tower is the best place to get a view of the city, but they are wrong! Tokyo Tower is still a fun place to visit, but Mori Tower, centerpiece of the new Roppongi Hills development, is by far the better option. Not only is the entry fee cheaper (1000 yen vs. 1400 yen to go to the top of Tokyo Tower), but Mori Tower is much bigger, has floor to ceiling viewing areas, lounges, and even an incredible art museum that is free with any viewing ticket! Roppongi is easily accessible by metro, but is not on the JR Yamanote line.
4. Do try an Onsen!

Onsen, or hot springs, are the best possible way to relax after a full day of walking around the city. Some of the dormitories and hotels you stay at may have an Ofuro, or large bath, but it’s not quite the same as a naturally decorate Onsen. Japan is filled with great Onsen destinations, but there is a top quality Onsen park located right in Tokyo! Ooedo Onsen, located in Odaiba in Tokyo Bay (accessible via the Yurikamome line from Shinbashi Station on the JR Yamanote line), features over 20 different baths in two different rooms that rotate from male to female on different days. Along with the Onsen, the building has a Edo-period carnival inside complete with food court and carnival games. The best deal is to arrive after 6pm, when tickets are only 3000 yen and you can stay overnight if you feel too tired to go back into the city.

5. Do bring old sneakers for hiking Fuji!

No trip to Japan is complete without conquering Japan’s iconic Mt. Fuji. Climbing season begins in early June and lasts until the end of July. Your best bet is to go in July when most of the snow will be gone. You can get tickets for the bus (5200 yen round trip) at the bus depot at Shinjuku Station on the JR Yamanote line.

Plan to arrive at the 5th Station (where the bus drops off) around 9 pm. That will give you an hour to buy a walking stick or grab a last bowl of ramen before beginning your trek up the mountain. Depending on the crowds, making it up the mountain can take anywhere from 4-8 hours. Leaving at 8pm-9pm will let you skip the crowds, but you will probably arrive at the top much earlier than the 5am sunrise. It is a tradeoff either way, but waiting in the cold at the top is a small price to pay for the peaceful tranquility of walking alone or with your friends on the way up.

You will need the old pair of sneakers for the way down. Sliding through the volcanic pebbles is a fun and quick way to get down the mountain, but it will rip your shoes to shreds, so make sure you are wearing a pair you won’t mind losing.
In addition to the sneakers, bring some trailmix, energy bars, or even some candy to keep you going through the night. The scattered stations on the way up will sell bottled water and assorted snacks, but the prices will be five times what you would pay back in Tokyo. Also, the mountain gets very cold at the top, even in July, so bring at least a fleece and a hoodie, and earmuffs and gloves to stay warm. Definitely wear pants, and you may want a pair of sunglasses for hiking down the next morning. Also bring sunscreen and be sure to put some on every hour or so on the way up, even at night. With the altitude, it’s easy to get severe sunburn if you’re not careful. Finally, buy a headlamp before you go. Even if you don’t want to pay the 3000 yen for a headlamp in Tokyo, you will be glad you have it once you’re on the mountain. There are several parts where you will be using both hands to hold onto ropes on some of the more difficult parts, and if you’re ahead of the crowds, there may be no other source of light!

If you’re really hardcore (as many of the Japanese hikers will be), you can wear some waterproof gear in case it rains, but don’t worry if that seems like too much trouble. From personal experience, I can tell you that hiking up Fuji is completely possible in only jeans and a hoodie!

**Don’t**

1. **Don’t eat on the train!**

   Even if you’re in a rush in the morning and just want to grab a quick snack, don’t eat on the train! It’s rude and smelly, especially when there are crowds, and will mark you as an insensitive foreigner.

2. **Don’t talk loudly on the train!**

   It’s perfectly fine to talk quietly with the person next to you, but if you find yourself with a group of friends, remember to keep your voices down! You are a cultural ambassador by default, and it’s important to respect Japanese customs.
3. **Don’t be afraid to ask the locals for help!**

   Tokyo may be a big city like New York, but foreigners are still few and far between. Residents would love to talk to you! Some Tokyo-ites may seem cold, but they’re probably just shy and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. So if you find yourself unsure when the next train will arrive or which route to take, don’t be afraid to walk up and ask someone!

4. **Don’t wear your shoes in other people’s houses!**

   It’s common to take off your shoes in Japan, so if you end up visiting a friend’s house, remember to take off your shoes!

5. **Don’t tip at restaurants!**

   Though they often have much better customer service than American restaurants, don’t worry about tipping when you eat out! In Japan, treating the customer well is a given, not something that requires extra compensation, so enjoy the benefits while saving some money!