



Hello Okaya

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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Center with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insights into Japanese culture. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or feedback you might have.

Come Visit Yamabiko Park!

Okaya's Toriidaire Yamabiko Park is located 950-1020m above Okaya on a mountainside overlooking Lake Suwa. On a clear day, you can enjoy the superb view of the Yatsugatake mountain range. The park boasts a range of different sports facilities and play equipment in a beautiful setting. Visit Yamabiko Park with family, friends, or even a special someone and enjoy summer to its fullest!



Enjoy Nature

- ★Central Plaza: With a water feature and shady trees, this is a very pleasant entrance to the park
- ★Mountain Stream & Picnic Area : Relax in beautiful surroundings
- ★Ikoi Plaza: BBQ among the trees in this luxuriantly green space
- ★Donguri Popo Train: ride the 2km loop of the park



Fun and Games

- ★Battery Powered Cars: A large selection of small vehicles for small children to ride on
- ★Funny Bikes: around 20 different kinds of interestingly shaped bikes
- ★Giant Slide : A long slide for both children and adults
- ★Dog Run: A free dog run where you can let your dog off its leash



Sports

- ★Cycling: Enjoy an exhilarating bicycle ride around the park's 1.4km cycling course
- ★Mallet Golf: A 36 hole woodland mallet golf course
- ★Disc Golf: Compete with friends by throwing frisbees into designated baskets
- ★Summer Bobsleigh: Take a speedy ride down the mountain on a specially designed bobsleigh
- ★Tennis Courts: Bring your racket and have a knock-about
- ★Sports Area: Can be used to practice and play baseball and softball
- ★Roller Skate Rink - A 200m rink which also boasts a hockey court



Seasons and Views

- ★Lavender Garden: Enjoy picking lavender (June-July)
- ★View Plaza - A popular spot with a breathtaking view of Lake Suwa and the Yatsugatake mountain range



Amenities

- ★Park Administrative Office and Shop - Local products and souvenirs for sale here
- ★Skyline Museum - Ideal for car fanatics! A museum with skyline cars on display that chronicle the ages
- ★Restaurant & Yakiniku Corner - Dine with an exquisite view. Yakiniku is by reservation



Goodbye 日本★Nippon★

If you are residing in Japan on a long or mid-term visa and plan on returning to your home country, there are several things you must do before you depart. If you forget about dealing with your health insurance and other services before leaving, it will cause you a lot of trouble down the road. This section will introduce the basics of what you need to do before you head home.

※These processes are only necessary when you're repatriating to your home country permanently and are not necessary when returning for temporary visits.

Notification of Moving Out

People residing in Japan on mid-to-long-term visas who are leaving Japan with no intention of returning within the period of validity of their visa must file a Notification of Moving Out (転出届け、てんしゅつとどけ) with their local city office. You will need your residence card (or certificate of special permanent residency), passport, or other form of identification when filing. You can file the form up to two weeks prior to your move. This step should be completed first, as it is connected to both your health insurance and pension plan. Failure to complete this step will make it difficult to file for your insurance and pension refunds, if applicable, so don't forget it!

Withdrawing from National Health Insurance

You are required by law to be enrolled in national health insurance while residing in Japan. When you leave Japan, you will need to withdraw from the insurance. People who are working are generally enrolled in the social insurance (社会保健 しゃかいほけん) scheme. When you leave your organization, the person in charge will file on behalf of you, so typically you will not need to carry out any special process. If you are enrolled in national health insurance (国民健康保険 こくみんけんこうほけん), you must go to your local city office to withdraw. You must bring your passport or residence card and something that shows your date of departure (such as an airline ticket). At that time, they will change the expiration date to your departure date and calculated any remaining payments or refunds.

Pension System (for people who are enrolled)

People who are exempt from participation in the social security pension plan do not have to take any action concerning the pension scheme before leaving Japan. **For people whose home countries have entered a reciprocal agreement with Japan, you can transfer your pension contribution back to your home country's pension system. For those whose home countries have not made an agreement with Japan, or for those who elect not to transfer their pension, you can receive a lump sum refund.** The pension refund only constitutes a portion of what you contributed to the pension scheme, and many people choose to transfer their contributions over to their home country's pension system and then draw from it at a later date, so think carefully about which option works best for you. For those not eligible for the pension transfer or for those who chose the lump sum payment, you are eligible for the lump sum payment after you have been enrolled in the national pension system (国民年金 こくみんねんきん) or the employment pension system (厚生年金 こうせいねんきん) for more than six months. You must fulfill several requirements to receive the payment, one of which is no longer possessing an address in Japan. You must first file a Moving Out Notice and then file for the refund after you have left Japan.

~Before You Repatriate~

Visa: Status of Residence

For those who are residing in Japan on a visa linked to employment or enrollment in school, if you leave your school or company, or if your company closes down, but you intend to stay in Japan, you must go to your local immigration authority and inform them within 14 days of your change in status. If you leave your job at the end of your contract and wish to stay in Japan for tourism after your visa has expired, you can file for an Application of Extension of Stay. If you leave your position but still have time left on your visa, you can stay in Japan for up to 90 days without working before you must leave the country or find other employment.

Relinquishing your Residence Card

When you leave Japan intending to not return within the period of validity of your visa, you must relinquish your residence card to the immigration authorities at your port of embarkation. For those people who wish to keep their residence card as a memento of their time in Japan, typically immigration will punch a hole in the card and return it to you.

Relinquishing your My Number Card

Starting in 2016, all people residing in Japan were issued a personal identification number (My Number). If you intend to leave Japan and not return within the period of validity of your visa, you must relinquish your My Number Card or My Number Notification Card to your local city office before you depart.

Bank Accounts

Please remember to take your bank book and ATM card to your bank or post office to close out your account before your departure. Make sure to pay any outstanding utility bills or other bills that are directly withdrawn from your account before you close it.

Accommodations

One month before leaving the country, or whatever is stipulated in your rental contract, inform your landlord or real estate company that you will be leaving and complete any necessary paperwork. Clean your apartment or room so it looks the way it did when you arrived. Beds, futons, and other furniture is oversized garbage, so you will have to confirm with your local city office as to where you can dispose of it.

Utilities

Make sure to cancel your water, gas and electricity before you leave and to settle any outstanding balances. First call on the phone to inquire as to any special procedures you may need to follow.

Cell Phone and Internet

Don't forget to go to your internet and cell phone provider to cancel your contract before you leave!

★ Moving Within Japan ★

If you are moving within Japan from one municipality to another, you must fill out and file a Notification of Moving Out form before leaving your old residence, and file a Notice of Moving In form at the city office in your new town or city. If you move without filing the Notification of Moving Out form, you won't be able to file for the Notification of Moving In form, and you'll have to go through a difficult bureaucratic process to get everything sorted. Don't forget to file your paperwork before you move!

Before you move

File a Notification of Moving Out form with your local city office

After moving

File a Notification of Moving In form with your new municipality within 14 days of moving. Generally, you must file the form yourself, but you can also appoint a proxy to do it on your behalf, but you must To file the form, go to your city office and fill out the Change of Residence (住民異動届 じゅうみんいどうとどけ) form and present the necessary documentation to the city officials.

<Required Documents>

- Proof of Reception of Moving Out form from your previous municipality (転出届証明書 てんしゅつとどけしょうめいしょ)
- Photo ID



From Meg, Okaya's CIR

Good bye, Okaya!

Four years ago, I left my family and moved halfway across the world. For the first two years, I worked as an ALT in Saku, teaching English and broadening the horizons of my students as they helped broaden mine, in turn. Then, in 2016, I was hired as the Okaya CIR and crossed the Wada Pass to come to my new home. I remember exactly how I felt that day--what kind of place was Okaya? What were the people like? How was it going to be living there?

Occasionally, living in Japan as a foreigner can feel like you have your nose pressed against the window of a house you can't enter. You want to make friends and talk to people, but for some reason, you just can't quite get in. However, I've never experienced that feeling even once while living here in Okaya. Ever since I arrived, every has welcomed me, whether it was at work, community events, or just around the town. I've made lifelong friends and had unforgettable experiences, and really feel like I became a member of this community. Okaya has truly become a second home to me.

It's bittersweet for me to say that I will be leaving Okaya at the end of June. After four years of living apart from my family, it's time for me to go home. Starting in September, I will be going to graduate school at the University of Washington, where I will study business and International Relations with a focus on Japan. I hope in the future to work in international business and relations. I will always have a deep personal tie with Japan and Okaya, so I'm sure you will see me around one day in the future! Thanks for everything, Okaya!