

JAPAN TRIP ITINERARY

December 9–20, 2023 | 12 Days | Tokyo · Yokohama · Osaka · Kyoto · Nara
Kanto & Kansai Regions | Source: mariasometimesniskie.wordpress.com

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFO

Visa	Tourist/Business visa required for Filipinos Single Entry = max 15 days stay Applied via Attic Tours MOA — PHP 1,200 Returned in 3–4 business days
Currency	Japanese Yen (JPY) Rate: ~1 JPY = ₱0.40 Use GCash Debit Card at convenience store ATMs (7-Eleven, FamilyMart, Lawson) ATM fee: ¥110 per ¥10,000 withdrawal Always withdraw in JPY
Flight	Philippine Airlines (PAL) via ANA codeshare 2x23kg check-in + 7kg hand carry + insurance + in-flight meal
Language	Nihongo Use Google Translate Some English in tourist areas
Weather	Winter (Dec): 1–18°C Tokyo: 10–18°C Kansai: drops to 1°C Koyo (autumn leaf turning) still visible in December
Transport	Pasmo Card (stored value) — ¥1,500 (~₱600) 28-day tourist validity Use on trains, buses, convenience stores Taxi/Uber available but expensive
Shinkansen	Buy at train station — no booking fee, no fixed departure time Avoid Klook (adds ₱550 convenience fee) Non-reserved seats: Cars 1–3
Internet	e-SIM from Klook — PHP 792 for 10GB/15 days Download before departure Inconsistent after Day 8 — choose higher data plan
Shopping	Tax-free for foreigners with passport Min. purchase ¥5,000 Instant tax-free at point of sale — no airport redemption needed
Lockers	Available at airports and train stations Pasmo or coins Small ¥300/day, Medium ¥400, Large ¥500 4-day limit
Laundry	Coin laundry widely available Also at most hostels and Airbnb
Power	Type A/B 110V (same plug as Philippines)
Time Zone	GMT+9 1 hour ahead of Philippines

FLIGHTS & PRE-DEPARTURE COSTS

Item	JPY	PHP
Round-trip flight MNL ↔ Tokyo (PAL/ANA codeshare, 2x23kg + meal + insurance)	—	PHP 56,000
Philippine Travel Tax	—	PHP 1,620
Business Visa (Attic Tours, MOA)	—	PHP 1,200
e-SIM (Klook, 10GB/15 days)	—	PHP 792
Pasmo Card (tourist stored-value, includes ¥1,500 credit)	¥1,500	PHP 600

■ ACCOMMODATION SUMMARY

Item	JPY	PHP
DG Budget Hotel Salem, near NAIA T4 (Dec 8, pre-departure, private toilet)	—	PHP 2,100
Komatsu Ryokan, Ueno Tokyo (Dec 9–11, 2 nights, tatami-style, shared bath)	—	PHP 6,531
Hilton Tokyo Bay, Chiba near Disneyland (Dec 11–14, 4D3N — business trip)	—	PHP 43,000
Airbnb, Taito City near Asakusa (Dec 14–15, shared by 3 pax)	—	PHP 8,500
Hotel The One Shin-imamiya, Osaka (Dec 16–19, 4D3N)	¥22,016	PHP 8,806
APA Hotel & Resort Yokohama Bay Tower (Dec 19–20, 2D1N)	¥8,262	PHP 3,305
TOTAL ACCOMMODATION	—	~PHP 72,242

★ *Komatsu Ryokan: Near Ueno, Asakusa, Akihabara | Only 5 rooms | Highly recommended*

★ *Hilton Tokyo Bay: Sponsored by company (business trip) | Near Tokyo Disneyland*

★ *Airbnb Taito: Cute & clean | Lawson next door | Walk to Asakusa Station | Elevator*

★ *Hotel The One: Near Namba line to Dotonbori | Free toiletries + vendo machines | Umbrellas lent*

■ *APA Yokohama: Near Minato Mirai + Gundam Museum | Staff did NOT help with bags*

■ DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 0 — December 8 (Fri) | PRE-DEPARTURE, MANILA

- Dinner at **Blackbird, Nielson Tower**, Makati — post-birthday celebration
- Check in: **DG Budget Hotel Salem** near NAIA T4 — PHP 2,100 (private toilet)
 - *Book via app for cheaper rate | Good rest before early morning flight*

Day 1 — December 9 (Sat) | MANILA → TOKYO

5:00 AM — NAIA Terminal 1

- Settle Philippine Travel Tax | PAL check-in | Starbucks after immigration
- 10:00 AM — Depart for Japan via PAL (ANA codeshare)

2:30 PM — Arrive Haneda Airport Terminal 3

- Clear Customs & Immigration | Present Visit Japan Web QR code
- Lunch at **Misokatsu Yabaton**, Haneda Airport Garden (2F past immigration)
 - *Nagoya-style miso pork cutlet with red soybean sauce | ¥1,500–2,500 (~■600–1,000)*
 - *English menu | Cash & credit card accepted*
- Check in: **Komatsu Ryokan**, Ueno — PHP 6,531 (2 nights, tatami-style)
- Dinner: **Ichiran Ramen**, Ueno branch — ¥1,500–2,500 (~■600–1,000)
 - *Solo dining concept | English menu | Order via machine | 1-hour wait, open until 6 AM*

■ *Cash only | Best ramen broth — rich and full of flavor*

Day 2 — December 10 (Sun) | TOKYO — Ueno · Asakusa · Akihabara · Odaiba · Roppongi

Morning

- **Ueno Park** — winter maple koyo (leaf-turning) in full bloom | **FREE**
- Train to Asakusa | **Asakusa Rickshaw** — ¥15,000/2 pax for 1 hour (~■6,000)
 - *Human-powered vehicle from Meiji era | Stops at best spots in Asakusa*
- Snack: **Imo Pippi** — baked sweet potato + crème brule custard | ¥750 (~■300) | Cash only
 - *Eat near the store — considered rude to eat while walking in Japan*

Afternoon

- Train to Akihabara | **Premium Maid Cafe** — ¥10,000–15,000/2 pax (~■4,000–6,000)
 - *Unlimited drinks + omelet food | Maid entertains, takes photos, prepares food*
 - *@home cafe was fully booked — tried Premium Maid Cafe instead*
- Train to Odaiba | **TeamLab Planets** — ¥3,800 (~■1,520) | Book in advance via Klook
 - *Queue 30 min before scheduled time | Walk barefoot through water + immersive digital art*
- Bus to **Roppongi Hills** — Christmas Illumination + Tokyo Tower view | **FREE**

Dinner

- **Nikujiru Gyoza no Dandadan**, Higashi Ueno — ¥1,500–2,000 (~■600–800)
 - *Huge portions | Excellent gyoza | Stays open past 9 PM | Highly recommended*

Day 3 — December 11 (Mon) | TOKYO — Shibuya · Harajuku Area

- **Shibuya Crossing** — world's busiest pedestrian scramble | **FREE**
- **Hachiko Statue** — loyal Akita dog memorial outside Shibuya Station | **FREE**
- Snack: **Canele de Chianti** — French canele pastry + hand-drip coffee
 - *¥800–1,000 (~■320–400) | Cash or credit card | Matcha, caramel, honey-lemon flavors*
- Check out Komatsu Ryokan → Check in **Hilton Tokyo Bay**, Chiba — PHP 43,000 (4D3N)
 - *Spacious room, bathtub, plush beds, carpet floor, hallway ice maker | Breakfast included*

Days 4–5 — December 11–13 | HIRE READY SUMMIT (Business Conference)

- Recruiting conference at Hilton Tokyo Bay | Reconnected with colleagues
- Last night of conference: celebration at **Ce La Vi Tokyo**
 - *Rooftop bar (stayed inside due to cold) | Oceanview at Hilton Tokyo Bay*

Day 6 — December 14 (Thu) | TOKYO DISNEYLAND + Move to Asakusa Airbnb

- **Tokyo Disneyland** — via Klook: **PHP 3,429.90**
 - *Tip: Visit Mon–Wed to avoid peak crowds (Thu–Sun are busiest)*
 - *Christmas churros ¥500 | Pepper-flavor popcorn | Japanese Curry lunch*
 - *Night parades with Christmas theme | Met Daisy Duck | Hollywood Dream roller coaster*

- *Download Disney app for ride queues | Buy Express Pass for priority access*
- Check out Hilton → Check in **Airbnb Taito City** near Asakusa — PHP 8,500 (3 pax)
 - *Clean, small but cute | Lawson next door | Walk to Asakusa Station | Has elevator*

Day 7 — December 15 (Fri) | MT. FUJI & HAKONE TOUR (Partial)

- **Mt. Fuji & Hakone Day Tour** (Klook) — PHP 4,893
 - *WEATHER ISSUE: Overcast day — ropeway, Lake Kawaguchi & pirate ship cancelled*
 - *Only partial refund: PHP 1,200 for 2 people | Organizer considered unreliable*
- Only activity completed: **Gotemba Premium Outlets** shopping
- Dinner: **Gyukatsu Motomura**, Shinjuku — ¥2,000–2,500 (~■800–1,000) | Cash only
 - *Beef cutlet served medium-rare on stone plate | Wasabi + soy sauce | Best beef cutlet ever!*
 - *Located in basement — hard to find | Staff very helpful in directing*
- Dessert + coffee: **Hoshino Coffee** near Gyukatsu — ¥1,500–2,000 (~■600–800)
 - *Hand-drip coffee + soufflé | Highly recommended original Japanese coffee chain*

Day 8 — December 16 (Sat) | TOKYO → OSAKA via Shinkansen

- **Shinkansen** Tokyo → Osaka (Klook) — PHP 5,990 one-way
 - *Bought via Klook at Ueno but had to rush to Tokyo Station — buy at nearest station instead*
 - *Klook adds ■550 convenience fee + fixed departure time — buy at station to save money*
- Arrive Osaka | Check in: **Hotel The One Shin-imamiya** — ¥22,016 (~■8,806) for 4D3N
- Explore **Dotonbori** — neon lights, restaurants, bars, entertainment district
- Snack: **Kukuru Takoyaki** — ¥1,500 (~■600) | Loaded with octopus | Best takoyaki ever!
- Dinner: **Ajinoya Okonomiyaki** near Dotonbori Arcade — ¥2,000–4,000 (~■800–1,600)
 - *Bib Gourmand rated | 1-hour wait | World's best okonomiyaki + yakisoba*
 - *Note: Each person must order separately (no sharing single orders)*
- ★ *Osaka transport: PasmO works here | Buy Osaka Amazing Pass only if visiting multiple museums*
- *Osaka Amazing Pass must be used on consecutive days — plan carefully before buying*

Day 9 — December 17 (Sun) | KYOTO DAY TRIP from Osaka

- Train: Osaka → Kyoto (~1.5 hrs) | ~30,000 steps today!

Arashiyama

- **Togetsukyo Bridge + Bamboo Grove** — iconic Japan landmarks | **FREE**
 - *World Heritage & National Treasure area | Walk bridge then enter bamboo grove*
 - *Sagano Scenic Railway nearby — autumn leaves in Nov–Dec, sakura in Mar–Apr*
- Snack: **Cafe de Emu** — mitarashi dango (sweet soy rice dumplings) + matcha ice cream
 - *¥500 (~■200) | Traditional Japanese street snack*

Gion

- **Gion District** — historic geisha district, traditional machiya townhouses | **FREE**
 - *Visit at night for best atmosphere | Geishas more likely spotted at dusk*

Ninenzaka & Kiyomizudera

- **Ninenzaka** (Ninen-zaka) — cobblestone lane with souvenir shops & old Kyoto buildings | **FREE**
 - *Starbucks in 100+ year old sukiya-style building — a must-visit!*
- **Kiyomizu-dera Temple** — approached through Ninenzaka | Iconic hilltop temple

Fushimi Inari

- **Fushimi Inari Shrine** — thousands of vermilion torii gates | **FREE**
 - *30 min from Ninenzaka | Gates line trails up 233m Mt. Inari | Most important Inari shrine*
- Izakaya night back in Dotonbori, Osaka — draft beer, whiskey, sake + Japanese dishes

Day 10 — December 18 (Mon) | UNIVERSAL STUDIOS JAPAN, Osaka

- **Universal Studios Japan (USJ)** — ¥8,600/person (~■3,440)
 - *Weekday visit recommended — avoid Thu–Sun crowds*
 - *No need for Express Pass on weekdays*
- Highlights: Hollywood Dream roller coaster (choose your own music!) | Jaws scene | Spider-Man | Sadako | Harry Potter
- Nintendo World: Download USJ app + register after buying ticket | Timed entry pass required
 - *Arrived at 7:50 PM entry time — limited time for Nintendo World rides*
- Souvenir: Boo the Ghost headband — ¥2,500 (~■1,000)

Day 11 — December 19 (Tue) | NARA + YOKOHAMA

Morning — Nara

- **Nara Park** — free-roaming sacred deer | **FREE entry**
 - *Buy deer crackers ¥200 (~■80) | Deer bow to you when asking for food!*
 - *Deer are Japan's official natural monument — antlers are cut annually*
- **Todaiji Temple** — world's largest bronze Buddha statue | World Heritage Site
- Nakatanidou Mochi Shop — yomogi mochi pounded live in theatrical show | Must-try!

Afternoon — Travel to Yokohama

- 2:30 PM — Depart Osaka via Shinkansen → Yokohama
- Train disruption at Yokohama Station — delayed arrival at accommodation
- Check in: **APA Hotel & Resort Yokohama Bay Tower** — ¥8,262 (~■3,305) for 2D1N
 - *4-star hotel | Near train stations + Minato Mirai + Gundam Museum | Self check-out available*
- Late night: McDonald's (most stores closed at 10 PM)

Day 12 — December 20 (Wed) | YOKOHAMA + DEPARTURE

Yokohama

- **Gundam Factory Museum** — entrance ¥1,650 (~■660) | Gundam Deck Tower ¥3,300 (~■1,320)
 - *Full-size Gundam robot moves every hour | Truly impressive*
- **Minato Mirai** waterfront — Landmark Tower (296m), Chinatown, Sankei-en Garden

Departure

- Haneda Airport via Uber | Sushi dinner at airport
- Depart Japan → Arrive Manila ~7:30 PM | No flight delay

■ FULL COST SUMMARY (PHP)

Pre-Departure & Flights

Item	JPY	PHP
Round-trip flight MNL ↔ Tokyo (PAL/ANA, 2x23kg + meal + insurance)	—	PHP 56,000
Philippine Travel Tax	—	PHP 1,620
Japan Business Visa (Attic Tours, MOA)	—	PHP 1,200
e-SIM (Klook, 10GB/15 days)	—	PHP 792
Pasmo Card	¥1,500	PHP 600

Accommodation

Item	JPY	PHP
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Komatsu Ryokan, Ueno Tokyo (Dec 9–11, 2 nights)	—	PHP 6,531
Hilton Tokyo Bay, Chiba (Dec 11–14, 4D3N — company-sponsored)	—	PHP 43,000
Airbnb Taito City, Asakusa (Dec 14–15, shared 3 pax)	—	PHP 8,500
Hotel The One Shin-imamiya, Osaka (Dec 16–19, 4D3N)	¥22,016	PHP 8,806
APA Hotel Yokohama Bay Tower (Dec 19–20, 2D1N)	¥8,262	PHP 3,305

Transport in Japan

Item	JPY	PHP
Shinkansen Tokyo → Osaka (Klook, one-way)	—	PHP 5,990
Taxi Haneda Airport → Tokyo (split among group)	—	~PHP 3,000
Uber Yokohama → Haneda Airport (departure day)	—	~PHP 800
Asakusa Rickshaw (1 hour, 2 pax)	¥15,000	PHP 6,000

Activities & Entrance Fees

Item	JPY	PHP
TeamLab Planets, Odaiba	¥3,800	PHP 1,520
Premium Maid Cafe, Akihabara (2 pax, unlimited drinks + food)	¥10–15k	PHP 4,000–6,000
Tokyo Disneyland (Klook)	—	PHP 3,430

Mt. Fuji & Hakone Day Tour (Klook — partial, weather issue)	—	PHP 4,893
Universal Studios Japan (per person)	¥8,600	PHP 3,440
Gundam Factory Museum entrance	¥1,650	PHP 660
Gundam Deck Tower	¥3,300	PHP 1,320
Ueno Park, Shibuya Crossing, Roppongi Illumination, Fushimi Inari	FREE	FREE

Food Highlights

Item	JPY	PHP
Misokatsu Yabaton, Haneda Airport	¥1,500–2,500	PHP 600–1,000
Ichiran Ramen, Ueno	¥1,500–2,500	PHP 600–1,000
Imo Pippi sweet potato (Asakusa)	¥750	PHP 300
Nikujiru Gyoza no Dandadan, Higashi Ueno	¥1,500–2,000	PHP 600–800
Canele de Chianti, Shibuya	¥800–1,000	PHP 320–400
Gyukatsu Motomura, Shinjuku	¥2,000–2,500	PHP 800–1,000
Hoshino Coffee, Shinjuku	¥1,500–2,000	PHP 600–800
Kukuru Takoyaki, Dotonbori Osaka	¥1,500	PHP 600
Ajinoya Okonomiyaki, Dotonbori	¥2,000–4,000	PHP 800–1,600
Cafe de Emu mitarashi dango, Arashiyama	¥500	PHP 200
Deer crackers, Nara Park	¥200	PHP 80
Boo Ghost headband souvenir, USJ	¥2,500	PHP 1,000

■ KEY TIPS & REMINDERS

Visa Tips

- Business and tourist visa stamps look the same — different requirements only
- First-time travelers can get approved — just be honest and follow requirements
- No need to book hotel/flights in advance for visa application
- Sample itinerary submitted: 4 days, even if staying 12 — this was accepted
- Multiple entry visa available if you've visited Japan at least once before

Transport Tips

- Shinkansen: Always buy at train station nearest to you — cheaper, no fixed timing
- Pasma Card: Works all over Japan | Don't let credit expire — use it up before Day 28
- Haneda → Tokyo by taxi: ~**¥3,000** — split cost with travel companions
- Google Maps is essential — use it for every train and bus connection

★ *Most train stations DO NOT have elevators — pack light or bring a small backpack next time*

Shopping Tips

- Tax-free at point of purchase (show passport) | Min spend ¥5,000 | Instant, no airport claim
- General goods (clothes, electronics, jewelry) — can use in Japan, tax-free immediately
- Consumables (food, cosmetics, medicine) — must remain sealed and unused until home

General Etiquette

- Do NOT eat while walking — considered rude; eat near the store or in designated areas
- Keep voice low in public — Japanese maintain high discipline and silence
- Always carry cash — some restaurants (Ichiran, Imo Pippi, Gyukatsu) are cash only
- Toilets: Always clean | Bidet + heated seat | Every private bathroom has a bathtub

Osaka-Specific Tips

- Osaka Amazing Pass: Only buy if you can use it on consecutive days — limited flexibility
- Dotonbori is best explored at night — neon lights, food stalls, izakayas all open late
- ★ *Osaka is more lively and night-friendly than Tokyo — enjoy the izakaya culture!*

Things to Do Next Time

- Tokyo: Taipei Observatory, Christmas Night Market, more tonkatsu spots
- Kyoto: Stay overnight | See geisha at Gion at night | Sagano Scenic Railway
- Yokohama: More time in Minato Mirai, Chinatown, Sankei-en Garden
- Disney: Get Disney Express Pass | Visit Monday–Wednesday for fewer crowds
- Mt. Fuji: Hike in summer (blog notes intention to return for actual hike)

Source: mariasometimesniskie.wordpress.com | Japan Trip Guide — December 9–20, 2023

Currency note: 1 JPY = ■0.40 PHP used for all JPY conversions (Dec 2023 rate)