

Chapter 11

Information for Everyday Life



Saitama's Prefectural Mascot
Kobaton

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With the data broadcast program on TV Saitama (Channel 3 on digital terrestrial broadcasting), you can view information provided by the Saitama Consultation Center in six languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish).

1 Trash Disposal

Each respective municipality manages the collection of household trash. The day of collection depends on what type of trash is being disposed of – burnable, non-burnable, cans and bottles, recyclable items, etc. The collection of some items that are considered to be **bulky garbage or difficult to dispose of*** may require a fee or may not be disposable. Days of collection, categories of rubbish, the types of rubbish bags used, the method of disposal, and collection points all vary from one municipality to another. Please be sure to follow the rules in your area. For details, please contact the Sanitation Department (*seiso*

tantoka) at your local municipal or ward office.

Refrigerators, air conditioners, televisions and washing machines cannot be disposed of in the same way as 'bulky garbage.' You are required to contact a retail store which sells such appliances or the manufacturer, and pay them to collect the appliance.

***Bulky garbage and 'Items that are difficult to dispose of'** include: furniture, bedding, electrical appliances, kitchen items, and household items over a specified size (e.g. wardrobes, chest of drawers, tables, chairs, futons, carpets, rugs, bicycles, video cassette recorders, heaters, gas stoves, golf equipment). For details on how to dispose of such items, please contact the Sanitation Department (*seiso tantoka*) at your local municipal or ward office.

2 Neighborhood Associations and Children's Clubs

Each area has its own Neighborhood Association that coordinates assistance programs and activities to create and deepen friendships throughout the community. Membership is voluntary, but it is recommended that you join your Neighborhood Association to gain a better understanding of your community. Neighborhood Association events and activities are usually advertised by a circular bulletin that is handed from door to door (*kairanban*). If you receive such a bulletin, read it and pass it on to your neighbor as soon as possible.

Many Neighborhood Associations run children's clubs. These clubs cater to children in the local area by organizing and partaking in events such as festivals, sports days, radio calisthenics and excursions.

Monthly membership fees differ according to the association.

For information, ask your neighbors or contact your local municipal or ward office.

3 Japanese Customs and Etiquette

(1) Household Customs

Genkan: The entry foyer, known as the *genkan*, is usually one step lower than the other rooms in the house in order to prevent dirt on your shoes from outside being brought into the house. When entering the house, be sure to remove your shoes before you step up into the house. If your host provides indoor slippers, please put them on when ascending into the house.

Tatami: Straw mats laid on the floors of Japanese style rooms are called *tatami*. Take your slippers off before entering a tatami room.

Futon: Japanese bedding, known as a futon, is spread out on the tatami flooring

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every night and put away every morning. Since Japan is very humid, it is best to store your futon off the ground to reduce the amount of moisture absorbed. For hygienic purposes and to extend their life, it is a good idea to air your futon and blankets out when the weather is good.

Furo: You should wash yourself before getting into a Japanese bathtub, known as a *furo*. After washing, Japanese usually sit in the bath to relax. Be sure to not to let the water out after you have finished, because the next person to take a bath will use the same water.

Toilets: For most toilets, there are slippers used exclusively within that room. Change into and out of them when entering and exiting the toilet. There are two types of toilets in Japan: western style toilets (seated-use toilets) and Japanese style toilets (squat-use toilets).

(2) Gift Giving

It is customary to present small gifts in situations such as the following:

- When moving into a new apartment or house, it is customary to introduce yourself to your new neighbors and offer them a small gift (e.g. hand towels).
- When visiting the home of an acquaintance, one often takes a small gift (e.g. fruit, biscuits, cake).
- When traveling for business or for pleasure, it is customary to buy a box of biscuits or candy at your destination to share with your colleagues upon your return.

(3) Ceremonies

Celebrations: In Japan, if a friend is celebrating an event such as a wedding, birth, or entry into school or university, it is customary to send a gift or money. When giving or sending money, please be sure to use a special envelope (*shugibukuro*). It is also customary to give crisp new bills, which are available from banks.

Weddings: Japanese weddings are performed at churches, hotels, and shrines. Recently, most weddings are a combination of both Japanese and Western style ceremonies. Male guests typically wear black suits, white shirts and white ties, while female guests wear either kimono or formal dresses.

Funerals: If someone close to you dies, you should attend either the wake or the funeral. In Japan, the wake is usually held the night before the funeral. When attending a wake or funeral, you should present a monetary offering for the departed soul in a special envelope called a *koden bukuro* (do not use new bills for this offering) and write your name in the registration book. Men attending a funeral normally wear black suits, white shirts, and

black ties; women wear black formal wear. Note: Accessories, with the exception of pearl necklaces, should not be worn.

(4) Tipping

In general, it is not customary to tip in Japan. High-class restaurants, hotels, and banquet halls include service fees in their bills.



4 Transportation

(1) Trains

There are several methods for paying train fares.

Adult's and children's fares differ. Generally, adults are those who are 12 years and older, and children are those who are 6 to 11 years old. Elementary school students are children even if they are 12 years old. Two children under 6 years old are free per accompanying adult or accompanying child. The third child under 6 years old must pay the child's fare.

Standard fare: Regular ticket. You can buy this ticket at the station's ticketing machine.

Commuter Passes This can be used to ride a train as many times as you wish within a zone. Passes are available in 1, 3, and 6 month time frames. The user's name is printed on the pass. It can only be used by the pass holder. Proof of school enrollment is required when purchasing for a child. Please inquire at the station on how to purchase this type of pass.
(teiki-ken):

Multiple Trip Tickets: You can buy 11 to 14 of the same tickets for the price of 10 for travel within a particular zone. These tickets may be shared. Please note that these tickets have an expiry date. These can be purchased at the station's ticketing machine or ticket selling window.

Suica and PASMO (and other variants):

Suica and PASMO are two popular types of a range of IC cards that can be used to board JR (Japan Railway) lines and most privately owned railways, underground railways, and buses simply by touching the card on the automated ticket gate or bus fare box.

Suica are sold by JR East, and PASMO cards are sold by participating railway or bus companies. Suica and PASMO cards can also be used for subways, privately owned railways, and buses, as long as your card is recharged regularly.

A single card can be reused by re-charging it when the remaining balance becomes low.

The initial purchase of either card requires a 500 yen deposit, which will be refunded when the card is returned.

There are three types of Suica and PASMO:

- Commuter Pass: an IC card which functions both as a commuter pass and a prepaid card. No name is printed on it. Personal information is recorded and if lost, it can be re-issued (there will be a fee). Children's fare passes are also available.
 - Named prepaid card: an IC card registered to the user that functions as a prepaid card. By registering the card as your own, this card can be reissued for a fee if you lose it. Children's fare passes are also available.
 - Blank prepaid card: an IC card that functions as a prepaid card. There is no need to register your personal information, but if the card is lost, it cannot be reissued.
- * These fares may differ from paper tickets. For details, please ask a station employee.

(2) Buses

Adult's and children's bus fares differ. Generally, adults are classified as people who are 12 years and older, and children are classified as people who are 6 to 11 years old. However, elementary school students who are 12 years old can pay the children's fare. Bus fare for children under 6 years old differs depending on the bus company, but usually one child under 6 years per accompanying adult is free, up to a limit of two children. A third child under 6 years old, however, must pay the child's fare. All babies under 1 year old are free.

The method of payment depends on the type of bus. Generally, for buses with the entrance at the front, you must pay first. For buses with the entrance at the middle or back, you do not need to pay immediately. Instead, take a boarding ticket from the ticket machine at the entrance. It will have a number on it. There will be a fare board at the front of the bus that displays numbers and corresponding fares. When you get off the bus, put the amount corresponding to the number on your ticket in the fare box, along with your ticket. If you get on a bus at the first stop, a ticket may not be issued. In this case, you must pay the most expensive fare displayed on the board. You can use Suica, PASMO, or a similar IC card for payment in most cases.

In case you take a bus using Suica or PASMO, touch the card reader installed near the door with your IC card to record the location where you board; then the fare is paid when you get off by touching the card reader of the fare box with your IC card.

Announcements are made for every stop; however, the bus only stops if passengers indicate that they want to get off. Therefore, you should press the buzzer located near the window or hand rail, or tell the driver.

(3) Taxis

When taxis are available for hire, a “空車” (*kusha*, empty) sign is displayed in red letters, usually in the taxi's front window. You can call a taxi by raising your arm. The taxi fare is shown on the meter next to the driver.

Note: A premium is charged for taxis between 10 pm (11 pm in some places) and 5 am. When getting into or out of a taxi, there is no need to open or close the left rear door, because it is automatic.

5 Banking

In many cases, you will need a bank account in Japan to receive your salary or pay your rent. To open a bank account, you will need personal identification (e.g. your Residence Card, passport, etc.) and a personal seal. Each bank will have a different procedure for opening an account, so please ask for more details from the bank where you would like to open an account. It is very convenient to have a cash card made when you open an account so that you can use ATMs.

6 International Exchange and Cooperation

The Saitama International Association (SIA) works to advance international exchange and cooperation on a regional level by supporting international exchange and cooperation activities involving prefectural citizens. It also operates a counseling office for foreign nationals residing in Saitama. Furthermore, the Association established the “International Exchange Plaza” in order to support numerous groups promoting international exchange and cooperation within Saitama and to serve as a place for obtaining information on activities sponsored by these groups.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Telephone	Address	Hours
Saitama International Association http://www.sia1.jp/	048-833-2992	Urawa Godo Chosha 3F 5-6-5 Kita-Urawa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi,	Mon - Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 8:30 - 17:15

7 Tourism

Saitama Prefecture possesses a number of attractive features. There are various sightseeing spots where people can experience the beauty of nature, learn about areas rich with history and culture, and enjoy sports activities.

Saitama Prefecture Official Tourism Website “Welcome to Saitama (Chokotabi Saitama)”

English

URL: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/chokotabi-saitama/eng/index.html>

Simplified Chinese

URL: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/chokotabi-saitama/ch-kan/index.html>

Traditional Chinese

URL: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/chokotabi-saitama/ch-han/index.html>

“Welcome to Saitama (Chokotabi Saitama)”

Facebook (English): URL: <https://www.facebook.com/saitama.japan.en>

Facebook (Traditional Chinese): URL: <https://www.facebook.com/saitamajapan.zhtw>

Facebook(Thai): URL: <https://www.facebook.com/saitamajapan.zhl/>

Instagram: English: <https://www.instagram.com/saitama.japan.official>

Saitama Prefecture International Tourism Promotional Animation (Available on “Anime do Saitama” Website)

URL: <http://www.skipcity.jp/channel/ani/>

Saitama Promotional DVD

URL: <https://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0301/doga/puromodvd.html>

List of Public Facilities in Saitama Prefecture

URL: <https://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/shisetsu/index.html>

Saitama Cultural Event Information Website

Provides information on cultural events held in Saitama Prefecture relating music, theater, art and more

URL: <http://event-saitama.jp/> (official site)

SAITAMA ART GUIDE 100xα

Offers information on approximately 100 facilities exhibiting art in Saitama Prefecture

URL: <http://art-saitama.jp/> (official site)

Guide to Saitama's Modern Buildings

A guide introducing 113 modern architecture-related points of interest in Saitama Prefecture

URL: <http://tatemono.art-saitama.jp/> (official site)

8 Libraries

In Japan, public libraries are available for anyone to use, free of charge. People who live, work or attend school in Saitama Prefecture can borrow books, magazines, CDs, videos, and DVDs from the Saitama Prefectural Library. It is possible to request an item at the library in your municipality of residence and have it sent from another library in the prefecture. Please inquire at your local library.

The Saitama Prefectural Kumagaya Library has a Foreign Language Materials section containing many foreign-language materials.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Telephone	Address	Hours
Saitama Prefectural Kumagaya Library	048-523-6291 FAX: 048-523-6468	5-6-1 Hakoda, Kumagaya-shi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General materials, Saitama-related materials, newspapers, magazines, CDs, videos, DVDs Tue - Fri 9:00 - 20:00 (June - Sep) 9:00 - 19:00 (Oct - May) Sat, Sun & Holidays 9:00 - 17:00 • Children's materials Tue - Sun & Holidays 9:00 - 17:00
Saitama Prefectural Kuki Library	0480-21-2659 FAX: 0480-21-2791	85-5 Shimohayami, Kuki-shi	
Urawa Branch, Saitama Prefectural Kumagaya Library	048-844-6165 FAX: 048-844-6166	1 st Floor of Prefectural Archives, 4-3-18, Takasago, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi	Tue - Sun 9:00 - 17:00 *You can borrow and return reserved materials, and use the copy service (no books stored)

Saitama Prefectural Library websites

- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/> (日本語)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/eng.html> (English)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/chi.html> (中文)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/kor.html> (한글)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/por.html> (português)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/spa.html> (español)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/fre.html> (français)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/simjpn.html> (やさしいにほんご)

List of public libraries in Saitama Prefecture

<https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/about/post-1.html> (Japanese)

9 Art Museums

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama is located in Kita-Urawa Park, a short walk from JR Kita-Urawa Station. The museum contains exhibitions for a wide variety of art from foreign artists such as Monet, Chagall, and Picasso, to Japanese contemporary artists. There are also a lot of stylishly designed chairs on display for visitors relax on. Boasting a museum shop full of art books and goods and a restaurant offering authentic Italian Cuisine, the museum allows visitors to fully immerse themselves in an artistic atmosphere.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Telephone & URL	Address	Hours
The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama	048-824-0111 http://www.pref.spe.c.ed.jp/momas/	9-30-1 Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi	10:00-17:30 *Last admission to the exhibition room: 17:00 *Closed Mondays (open for national holidays and Saitama Residents' Day) (Closed for New Year's Holidays from Dec. 27-Jan.3) *Admission free, entrance to the exhibition room (MOMAS collection, Special exhibitions) is charged

10 Museums

① The Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore is located in Omiya Park, a 5-minute walk from “Omiya-Koen Station” on the Tobu Urban Park Line (Tobu Noda Line). As a general museum of humanities specializing in history, folklore, and antique art objects, the museum boasts a wide range of Saitama Prefecture-related information and items including national treasures such as swords, knives, and the Taihei-ki picture scroll, all of which have been designated as national or prefectural cultural assets. In addition to holding special and planned exhibitions on selected themes several times a year, the museum features a permanent exhibition illustrating the 'Lives and Culture of People in Saitama,' focusing on their history, folklore, and art. The museum also includes the 'Yume Taiken Hiroba' corner that allows visitors of all ages to learn through various first-hand experiences.

②The Saitama Prefectural Ranzan Historical Museum is located in the Sugaya Yakata (Castle grounds) nationally designated as a historical site. This historical site was home to many samurai residences in the Kamakura Period, followed by castles in the Sengoku (warring state) period. The museum allows visitors to learn about Saitama Prefecture in the Middle Ages (approx. 12th to 16th century).



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Telephone & URL	Address	Hours
①Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore	048-641-0890 http://www.saitama-rekimin.spec.ed.jp/	4-219, Takahana-cho, Omiya-ku, Saitama-shi	9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July & August) *Last check-in time is 30 minutes before closing time. *Closed Mondays, Dec.29-Jan.1 and other special closed days and special open days (except for national holidays, compensatory holidays, Golden Week period and Saitama Residents' Day) Temporary closed for New Year's holidays
②Saitama Prefectural Ranzan Historical Museum	0493-62-5896 http://www.ranzan-s-hiseki.spec.ed.jp/	757, Sugaya, Ranzan-cho	9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July & August) *Last check-in is 30 minutes before closing time. *Closed Mondays (except holidays, compensatory holidays, during Golden Week and Saitama Residents' Day) Temporarily closed for New Year's holidays Admission: 100 yen (free for junior high school students and younger)
③Museum of Sakitama Ancient	048-559-1181 http://www.sakitama	4834, Sakitama, Gyoda-shi	9:00-16:30 *A multilingual directory for Sakitama

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Name	Telephone & URL	Address	Hours
Burial Mounds	-muse.spec.ed.jp/		Ancient Burial Mounds is available. *A multilingual brochure for items (special swords etc.) in the national treasure room is available (in Japanese, English, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, and Korean)
④Saitama Museum of Natural History	0494-66-0404 http://www.shizen.spec.ed.jp/	1417-1, Nagatoro, Nagatoro-machi	9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July & August) *Last check-in is 30 minutes before closing time. Closed on Mondays (except holidays, compensatory holidays, during Golden Week and Saitama Residents' Day as well as between July 1st and August 31st) Temporary closed for New Year's holidays Admission: 200 yen (free for junior high school students and younger)
⑤Saitama Museum of Rivers	048-581-7333 https://www.river-museum.jp/	39 Kozono Yoriimach	9:00-17:00 (extended in July & August) *Last check-in is 30 minutes before closing time. *Closed Mondays (except holidays, compensatory holidays, during Golden Week and Saitama Residents' Day as well as between July 1st and August 31st) Temporarily closed for New Year's holidays. Admission: 410 yen (free for junior high school students and younger) Parking: 300 yen for regular cars