



Rotary District 7475 2025 Short Term Youth Exchange Program to Japan Frequently Asked Questions

When should I apply for the program?

Applications are accepted beginning January 6, 2025. Students are encouraged to apply early. Interviews are scheduled in the order applications are received. Applications will be accepted until 20 students are selected for the program. Therefore, early submission improves your chance of being selected. The application can be downloaded from the website at <https://njrotary.org/SitePage/japan-youth-exchange>.

Where do I send my application?

1. Send an electronic copy to Jim Allison, Program Chair, at **JRA188@aol.com**. This will get you into the queue for an interview.
2. If you have questions, contact Jim Allison, STYEP Chair, at **JRA188@aol.com** or 201-213-6382

How are students selected to participate in the program?

Students and parents will participate in an interview and selection process held between January and March. We are looking for students who are well rounded, mature and interested in other cultures. Good candidates are open-minded; responsible; respectful of other people and their differences; able to communicate effectively; cooperative in a group setting; and capable of being away from home for three weeks. Students will be representatives of Rotary and ambassadors of goodwill from the USA.

We also take into consideration whether the student's family will be able to host two students for 6 days when the Japanese team arrives in August. Since this a YOUTH EXCHANGE program, preference for participation will be given to those students whose families agree to host.

What is the age group for participating students?

The age for students will be from 15 to 18.

When will the students depart and return?

The trip is now scheduled to depart on Thursday, June 26, 2025 and return on Thursday, July 17, 2025. The dates may change by a few days depending on the availability of airline tickets. The use of airline reward miles or upgrades is not available for group tickets.

What is the cost of participation in the program?

The cost of the trip is \$4,200, all inclusive. A \$500 deposit is due at time the student is accepted into the program. The final payment of \$3,700 is due at the orientation. These payments are non-refundable. Parents should consider purchasing optional trip protection insurance in the event the student is not able to participate in the trip for any reason.

Do I need a passport, visa or any immunizations to visit Japan?

A passport is required and you must have it by May 1, 2025. Airline tickets for the group are purchased at this time and passports are required to purchase the tickets. If you do not have a current valid passport, you should begin the application or renewal process immediately as it takes several weeks. Visas and immunizations are not required to visit Japan.

How many people will be on the trip?

The goal is to have 20 students and 2 adult leaders (one male and one female). In addition, we are hosted by Rotarians in Rotary District 2670 who provide many guides and chaperones during our stay in Japan.

How much spending money should I bring?

All of your transportation, meals, accommodations and activities are covered as part of the program. The amount of spending money you bring depends on how much you wish to purchase for souvenirs, gifts or personal items. You will also be expected to pay for any charges related to calling home or overweight baggage. During the orientation, there will be a discussion about credit cards, debit cards, cash, etc.

Where will the students stay?

All students (and group leaders) will participate in 4 homestays as part of the program. There will be a minimum of 2 students (same gender) in each homestay. The first day or two after arrival the group will travel together and stay in a hotel and tour major cities in the Osaka area. The group will then travel to Shikoku Island for the official welcome banquet and to meet their first host family. They will remain with this host family for approximately 4 days and then rejoin the group. The group will travel together by bus between each homestay. There will also be a hotel stay during the visit to Hiroshima and a final hotel stay on the last night of the trip before departing back to the US.

Who are the host families in Japan?

Host families in Japan are selected and carefully screened by Rotary District 2670. Careful consideration is given to the suitability of hosting our American students. Most host families are members of Rotary.

What types of activities will the trip include?

Activities include visiting cities in the Osaka area in southern Japan. There will be a special trip to Hiroshima to visit Peace Memorial Park and Museum. The balance of the time will be spent on the Island of Shikoku, the smallest of the four islands in Japan (approximately the size of New Jersey), where they will be treated to visits to temples, schools, Rotary meetings, along with visits to many cultural events, manufacturing plants, museums, etc. Most students find that the best activity is meeting and getting to know the host families, as well as the other students, and experiencing true Japanese culture in homestays.

Do I need to speak Japanese in order to be accepted?

Japanese language skills are not required, however learning some Japanese will help you enjoy your experience. You will want to memorize a few helpful phrases and greetings.

How much luggage can I take with me?

Bring one large suitcase or duffel (must have wheels) and one backpack for carrying onto the plane. Your suitcase must weigh less than 45 pounds. (Actually, it is 50 pounds, but our experience is that every student procures 5 - 10 pounds of souvenirs and gifts). If weight limits are exceeded (50 pounds) there is a \$100.00 over-weight charge that will be the responsibility of the student. Once we finalize the selection of the air carrier, we will share with you specific details about luggage requirements. Students are responsible for their own luggage. That means you will be required to carry and load what you bring.

What should I bring with me?

In general, you will need enough clothes for 7 days, as you will have the opportunity to do laundry during your homestays. The temperature will be hot and humid; at most you might need a sweatshirt to stay warm on the airplane. In Japan you will only need summer attire. Specifics will be discussed in detail at the orientation meeting.

Should I bring gifts for host families?

Yes, gift giving is part of the culture of Japan. You will want to bring a gift for each of your four host families. Something typically American and made in the USA is what is appreciated. Never bring anything made in Japan or China. Remember whatever you bring you will be required to carry in your luggage. Items that are fragile, perishable or of high value are discouraged. Host families will generally provide you with a gift as well.

Will my family be required to host an incoming Japanese student if I participate?

Hosting two Japanese students for 6 days in early August is strongly encouraged. This program cannot exist without the participation of host families both in the US and Japan. The Japanese students will be visiting New Jersey the first three weeks in August. Preference in selecting students is given to families who are willing to host Japanese students for a 6 day period. Details of hosting will be discussed at the interview.

I don't live in New Jersey. Can I still be a part of the District 7475 STYE?

Preference is given to students who live in Rotary District 7475 in New Jersey. Some students from out of the area may be permitted to participate on a space available basis. Out of area students are still required to attend the interview and orientation training

meeting in New Jersey. They are also required to travel with the other students to and from the airport.

Do I have to eat with chopsticks?

Yes, there will be times when only chopsticks "Hashi" are available. Practice in advance. Get into the spirit of the trip by learning some Japanese ways of doing things.

What kind of food will there be in Japan?

Students need to be open-minded and try new and different foods. Sometimes there will only be Japanese meals available. Other times there may be a western style food choice. Host families try to accommodate the likes and dislikes of our students.

I'm a vegetarian. Will there be any conflicts with meals because of this?

There are times when there will be no vegetarian meals available. Most times host families understand vegetarian preferences, but it is advised that vegetarians carry high protein bars or peanut butter as meal substitutes. If you are a strict vegetarian, you should be aware before signing up for the program that vegetarian meals will not always be available.

What kind of medical attention is available should it be needed?

Emergency medical care is available. Japan has one of the finest healthcare systems in the world. Our Rotary friends in Japan have excellent connections with the healthcare system. Whenever treatment has been required in the past, it has always been done with the best interest of the student in mind. Parents will sign a medical release authorizing Rotary leaders to make decisions for emergency medical treatment.

Do I need any special medical insurance?

Yes, travel medical insurance is a mandatory requirement. We will suggest insurers at the orientation meeting. The cost for this insurance is \$91. Most US medical insurance will not be accepted in Japan. This medical insurance requirement will be discussed in more detail at the orientation meeting.

As a parent, will I know where my son/daughter will be and how I can contact them?

If you need to contact your child in the event of an emergency it will need to go through the youth exchange committee. Contact Jim Allison who will have communication access. Your child may have access to the internet, FaceTime, Skype, etc., to communicate with you. We will also provide you with the phone numbers, days and times when the students will be at hotels so you can call. Additionally, our leaders in Japan are always in touch with the STYE committee here in the US. Students will be writing journals of their activities and some of these will be shared with you via email during the trip.

Is access to the Internet available?

Wi-fi is not as readily available in Shikoku as in the US. There may be times when access to the internet will be limited for several days at a time.

Is it OK to bring a laptop, cell phone, etc.?

Students are discouraged from bringing expensive items to Japan. The program is not responsible for any lost or damaged items. We realize that most students will bring their cell phones, however we believe that constant communication detracts from the overall trip experience.

Can I stay longer in Japan, take a side trip to another city or visit with friends or relatives as part of the Short Term Youth Exchange?

No. Students must travel and stay with the group and/or their host families. The schedule of activities is very busy and no time is available for side trips or visits. This is a group program. Students must be part of the group when traveling to and from Japan, no exceptions.

Will I need to contact my local Rotary Club?

Yes, students will need to ask their local club to sponsor them and make arrangements to pick up "club banners" that will be exchanged when visiting Rotary clubs in Japan. Your local Rotary club may ask you to make a presentation on your experience in Japan when you return. Contact information for local Rotary clubs will be distributed at the orientation meeting in April.

What is Rotary's Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth?

Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners and other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability, the welfare of all participants.