

Japan Travel Packing Guide: Additional Needs

A practical supplement for travelers to Japan who identify as having additional needs — including neurodivergence, chronic illness or pain, fatigue, sensory processing differences, or reliance on daily medication.

Packing for Japan with Additional Needs

Japan is safe, efficient, and thoughtfully designed in many ways, but it can also involve long walking days, crowded transport, strong sensory input, and unfamiliar routines. Packing with intention helps reduce physical strain, sensory overload, and stress so you can enjoy the experience on your own terms.

Medication & Health Supplies

- Daily prescription medication in original packaging
- Printed and digital prescription copies
- Over the counter pain relief that works for you
- Topical pain relief (creams or patches)
- Supplements you take regularly

Some medications commonly used elsewhere are restricted or unavailable in Japan. Bringing what you rely on avoids unnecessary stress.

Sensory Regulation & Neurodivergent Support

- Noise-canceling headphones or earplugs
- Sunglasses or tinted lenses
- Familiar comfort item (scarf, hoodie, texture safe fabric)
- Notebook or app for advance planning

Japanese cities are visually rich and busy. These items help reduce sensory overload, especially in large stations and during peak hours.

Chronic Pain, Fatigue & Mobility Considerations

- Supportive, well broken in walking shoes
- Compression socks
- Lightweight braces or supports
- Foldable cane or mobility aid (if used at home)
- Travel safe heat or cold packs

Japan often involves 15,000–25,000 steps per day. Packing support items can prevent flare ups and exhaustion.

Japan's Help Mark

The Help Mark is a red tag with a white cross and hearts that signals a person may need additional consideration, even if their needs are not visible. Visitors are allowed to use one and no documentation is required. **You can request a Help Mark for free at city or ward offices, major train station information desks, and some hospitals.** Simply asking for a 'Help Mark' or showing a photo is usually sufficient.