

## PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM RECENT NP:J STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

### Packing:

- “When you pack, make a list so as not to forget anything.”
- “Wear light clothes and really comfortable shoes the whole time.”
- “Prepare to come back with more stuff than you left with.”
- “Pack light. No, not because it’ll be easier to carry or anything, but because you’ll need the extra space for gifts you’ll bring back.”
- “Bring a foldable bag to bring back gifts in (trust me you’ll have tons)” OR “Make sure to pack a big bag with tons of space to bring back souvenirs.”
- “You don’t need as many clothes as you think.” AND “Just pack at most 5 sets of clothing.”
- “Bring very good walking shoes – you will walk a lot.”
- “Watch out for the 50 lb. [airline] weight limit for luggage.”
- “Pack light as you will be carrying your luggage up stairs.”
- “You don’t need to pack a lot because the host family lets you do your own laundry.” OR “Your homestay family will do your wash so you really don’t need too many clothes.”
- “Bring a digital camera with lots of memory and practice.”
- “Only bring one carry-on, a backpack being the best.”

### Homestay:

- “Don’t be nervous about meeting the host family.”
- “When in Rome do as the Romans: do your best to live a Japanese lifestyle even if the customs seem awkward at first.”
- “The host family experience may seem scary at first, but after a day or two, you feel like family.”
- “Get close to your family: Be engaged, ask questions, be open.”
- “With your host family, offer to help out with things before they ask you to. This will set a good impression.”
- “It’s also good to know some Japanese phrases – it makes your homestay with the host family much better.”
- “Body language is universal so make an effort to smile!”
- “Speak out during the host stay. Even if you only speak two words [of Japanese], USE THEM!”
- “Don’t walk out of the bathroom with bathroom slippers on.”
- “Don’t stress out about your gifts or your host family – they’ll love everything.”
- “Everything will flow naturally – everyone is just as nervous as you. Anything you say, your host family will love.”
- “Bring a lot of pictures of your family, your house, and maybe your room because they are really interested in knowing you better.”
- “The photo scrapbook really helps (or any visual aid).” AND “Bring picture albums to GIVE to your host family (it makes them feel closer to you).”
- “The host family is a blast – just be patient.” AND “Don’t be afraid to tell them what you want to do.”
- “Don’t be nervous about the homestay! I was really stressed about it prior to the trip, but it turned out to be completely painless and lots of fun.”

### Host School:

- “Don’t be shy about socializing with the Japanese students – they’ll love you – trust me.”
- “Be brave at the host schools – they are more nervous than you are!”
- “Stay cool and calm at school and be polite, but outgoing.”
- “At school, be prepared to take off your shoes a lot.”
- “Wear sandals when attending school – you need to change into slippers a lot.”

### **Gifts:**

- “Bring gifts with a theme of America or your home state.”
- “Take gifts that have something to do with your hometown.”
- “Bring lots of U.S. state quarters as gifts to random people.”
- “I would tell them to bring extra *omiyage* if you can.” AND “Pack more small gifts.”
- “Bring gifts for not just your host family but for those who especially helped you.”
- “Bring *omiyage* for your host family to interact with (for example, cards to teach “Go Fish”).”
- “Bring American candies to your host family because they are all so different.”

### **For those NP:J participants studying Japanese:**

- “Know how to say ‘please’, ‘thank you’, and ‘I’m sorry’. And ‘I am full’ is a very good expression to learn for your host family.”
- “Learn lots of useful phrases such as ‘that was tasty!’ or ‘that was interesting.’”
- “You don’t need to have a real advanced vocabulary, but you do need to know something.”
- “Learn the word *wakarimasen* which means ‘I don’t understand’ – you’ll use it a lot.”
- “Learn basic requests for things like going to the bathroom.”
- “Be sure you know how to order food and ask for things in Japanese.”
- “Definitely bring an English-Japanese dictionary – the Oxford Pocket Dictionary was the best one I could find.”
- “Bring a phrase book.” AND “An electronic dictionary is very worth it.”
- “Learn simple, polite ‘survival’ phrases.” AND “Learn full phrases BEFOREHAND.”
- “Learn more about how to say things when you are buying or ordering things.”
- “Know a lot of ‘I don’t know,’ ‘yes, please,’ and ‘no, thank you’ phrases.”
- “When you don’t understand something in Japanese, look in a dictionary or ask your host.”
- “Try your best in speaking Japanese – they will love it.”
- “Make sure to try and talk as much as possible (even if they laugh) – they appreciate your effort!”

### **General:**

- “Don’t take any outside pre-judgments with you, even those given by teachers. You’ll likely be very surprised.”
- “Be prepared to embarrass yourself – no matter what, it will happen. But you will laugh about it later. Most important, just have fun and don’t worry about the little things.”
- “Always know where anything important is (passport, tickets, money).”
- “If you want to talk with someone, take the first move and just introduce yourself. Try everything (food, games, sightseeing) even if you think you’ll hate it.”
- “You can talk to strangers. They think Americans/English are cool so don’t be shy.”
- “Be prepared for the heat.” AND “Be prepared for a lot of walking. Don’t think about fashion or trivial concerns. Dress for exercise and drink a lot of water or energy drinks.”
- “Be sure to bring enough money for the things you think you would like to get and extra for the unexpected expenses.”
- “Extra money is never bad (and you can always bring it back).”
- “Interact as MUCH as possible with people – 99% of them are very polite and friendly.”
- “Be prepared to be fawned over/chased/ photographed if you have unusual eyes or hair color.”
- “Don’t be afraid to ask questions.”
- “Japan isn’t as strict as you’d think – don’t scare yourself.”
- “Practice physical endurance [before departure].”
- “Be careful of the heat and make sure you drink plenty of water.”
- “Do not under plan, be open-minded, expect the unexpected, learn as much as you can, and love being in Japan.”