Japan Vs China: Comparison Overview

Japan vs China

Japan and China are both Asian countries that attract many visitors for similar reasons such as unique histories and cultures, great food, friendly people, and charming scenery. But there are very certain differences under the surface of similarities.

We will compare Japan and China and discuss some of the major differences that can help you understand which destination is better for you.

- History
  - Japan history is affected a lot by China but has its own culture like Samurai
  - China has a long history replacing of dynasties
- Festivals
  - Kyoto Gion Matsuri& Sapporo Snow Festival
  - Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival
- Things to Do& See
  - castles, shrines, hot spring, skiing, cherry
  - Great Wall, Forbidden City, Terracotta Warriors
- Food
  - Washoku is fresher and healthier
  - Rice or noodles with different types of sauces and seasonings
- Accommodation
  - Wide range of hotels option with some Japanese Ryokan
  - Newly built clean and comfortable hotels with some Chinese style boutique hotels
- shopping
  - shopping paradise for fashion clothes, beauty products and electronic products
  - Mainly for Chinese feature goods like antiques, jade, and souvenirs like paper-cuttings
- Convenience of Travel
  - Japan would be easier to travel in and around with the highly efficient public transportation network
  - Convenient for travel around with metro, taxi and train. More and more direct international flights to more cities
- Budget
  - More expensive with developed countries standard
  - More affordable
- Best Time to Visit
  - Year-round, but best in autumn or spring
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History: Japan is influenced a lot by China.

Both countries have long and interesting histories, and Japan is influenced a lot by Chinese

history in terms of s writing system, architecture, culture, religion, philosophy, and law. And Japan started to develop its own unique culture from the 9th century CE.

According to the unique culture and customs foundations, the history of Japan can be divided into 5 historical periods: The Emergence of Japan, Samurai Rule & Civil War, The Edo Period & Tokugawa Rule, The Meiji Restoration & Imperial Japan and The Post-War Era & Modern Japan.

If you want to learn about Japanese history especially about Samurai, Edo and Tokugawa Rule, you are recommended to visit Osaka Castle, Nijo castle Tokyo Samurai Museum, Sensoji Temple District, Takayama for Edo Period building

China is one of four great ancient civilisations with over 5000 years. China History can be divided into ancient, imperial, and modern times. Qin Dynasty is the first emperor that united China, Qing is the last Chinese dynasty in history and ended in 1911 A.D. and in 1949 the People’s Republic of China is founded.

If you would like to explore more about China history, you can visit Great Wall and Terracotta Warriors that starting from Qin Dynasty and Forbidden City in Beijing used in Ming and QingDynasty.

Festivals: Japan with More Festivals and More Alive

Japan and China both have many unique festivals to show their culture, some of them have similar cultural roots and traditions. However Japanese festivals are fun, unforgettable and often very crowded, it is a good way to see a bit of Japanese heritage, rituals, and traditions.

Popular Festivals in Japan

Japan has more festivals (matsuri) than almost any other country in the world, there has over 200.000 festivals or Matsuri each year. The important element of Japanese festivals are processions, so They offer a good chance to get interact with the local and learn the Japanese culture.

Kyoto Gion Matsuri is the biggest and best festival in Japan. It takes place for the whole month of July at Yasaka Shrine. There are many ceremonies during the festival and the events on the 17th and 24th are particularly spectacular with the grand procession of floats. You can join the Yoiyama evening street parties, visit the floats, try the local street food and immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere.

Another famous festival is Sapporo Snow Festival, it is the biggest winter festival with a wonderland of snow and ice sculptures. It will take place in February for 1 week. It is held at the Odori Site, the Susukino Site, and the Tsudome Site where you can enjoy the long snow and ice slides, a huge maze made of snow and local food.

Other popular festivals in Japan include Takayama Matsuri, Obon festival, Aoi Matsuri, Sanja Matsuri and Jidai Matsuri.

Popular Festivals in China

Chinese festivals are an integral part of Chinese culture. The most important one is the Chinese Spring Festival, it has a long history of over 4000 years. The festival begins on the first day of the first month of the traditional Chinese calendar, it usually falls at end of January.

It is the time for the whole family to get together and enjoy delicious foods and a happy time. During the festival, most Chinese people return to their hometowns and this is the busiest time for domestic travel in China.

Another important is Mid-Autumn Festival, it is a traditional Chinese holiday for symbolizes harvest and family reunion. It is on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. Family members will get together and enjoy the full moon and eat delicious moon cakes.

Other popular festivals in China includes Yuanxiao Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Tomb Sweeping Day and Qixi Festival.

Things to Do& See: Great Wall Wall VS Mt.Fuji

For the first time visiting Japan, we suggest must-see cities like Kyoto, Osaka, Kyoto and Hakone. Which consider traditional Japan like castles, shrines and temples, Mt.Fuj, modern aspects with skyscrapers and Japan’s cultural activities such as traditional tea with a Geisha or relaxing in a hot spring

For China, the most highlight for the first-time traveller is the golden triangle include Beijing, Xi’an, and Shanghai for the famous sites of Great Wall, Forbidden City, Terracotta Warriors and exploring modern China in Shanghai.

Example Japan Travel Itinerary

When travelling to Japan, we usually suggest starting from Osaka, 1-2 days are suggested for visiting the magnificent Osaka Castle and the bustling district of Dotonbori to try Osaka’s favourite local dishes.

If time is flexible, you can do some side trips from Osaka to Hiroshima

Visit Miyajima Island to see the famous floating torii, acclaimed by the Japanese as one of the country’s three most scenic views.

Head for Kyoto for 2-3 days to Kyoto’s UNESCO World Heritage sites like Kinkakuji Temple and Nijo Castle, Take a walk along the streets of Kyoto’s geisha districts by trying some matcha green tea at a private teahouse in the company of a maiko or geiko.

After Kyoto, it is suggested to Hakone where is famous for hot springs, you can experience total peace at a traditional Japanese ryokan and onsen in scenic Hakone.

Tokyo is the last stop, you can Learn about Japanese emperors by visiting the Imperial Palace and the Meiji Shrine, feel the modern aspects with its prosperous shopping area.

If you are visiting Japan in winter, you can visit Hokkaido which is famous for winter sports and winter scenery. If you have more time, you can visit Takayama and Shirakawa-go for traditional rural lifestyles.

Example China Travel Itinerary

The Golden Triangle in China is an ideal tour for first-time visitors in that it covers the most popular three destinations and five World Heritage sites. You can visit Beijing by discovering the hidden halls in the Forbidden City, visiting a top-ranked section of the Great Wall and tasting crispy Beijing roast duck.

After Beijing, move to Xian for admiring the Terracotta Army, discovering a local craftsman's cave dwelling and learning how to make a mini terracotta warrior. You can also visit Ancient City Wall by walking or bike, visit a local family to learn how to make dumplings, or try a dumpling banquet, taste the local Muslim cuisine at Muslim Quarter.

The last stop for the Golden Triangle tour will be Shanghai, which is famous for the Bund and the Shanghai Tower. If you time is flexible, you can extend your shanghai trip to Water Town areas like Suzhou and Hangzhou.

If your travelling time is over 2 weeks, you can consider Chengdu for Pandas, Guilin for karst landscape and idyllic countryside.

Food Comparison: Both Eat Rice and Noodles but Japanese Food is More Famous for Fresh and Healthy.

Food is the reflection of values and culture. Both eat a lot of rice or noodles, however, Japanese and Chinese cuisines have certain similar cooking and food preparation styles, which make them somehow similar, but also different.

The Chinese cuisine’s main carbohydrate is noodles and rice, together with vegetables and meats in every Chinese meal with different types of sauces and seasonings

Chinese food is different from the different preferences of the local people. For example, people in southern China take rice as a staple food, while the northern people prefer to eat noodles or steamed buns as a staple food. Regarding the flavour, there are main four parts for the whole country: sweet south, salt north, sour east and spicy west.

Here are some popular authentic Chinese food for your reference when you travel in China: Peking Roasted Duck, Kung Pao Chicken,

Sichuan Pork, Braised Pork Balls in Gravy, Dumplings, Chow Mein, Steamed Vermicelli Rolls, Fried Shrimp with Cashew Nuts, Sweet and Sour Pork, Ma Po Tofu, Yangchow Fried Rice,

For Japanese food (washoku), rice is used as the main course with at least two more side dishes are served to complement the rice.

Japanese food is famous for the use of fresh ingredients, the healthy and light appearance of

the food. And it is always considered to be healthier when compared to Chinese food. And each meal in its own small bowl or plate as the Japanese don't like various food flavours mixed with each other.

Below are some recommendations for Japanese foods that everybody needs to try when traveling to Japan: Sushi, Tempura, Udon, Soba, Sashimi, Miso soup, Ramen, Kare-Raisu (Curry Rice), Okonomiyaki, Shabu Shabu, Onigiri, Unagi no Kabayaki and Kaiseki Ryori

Accommodation:

Both India and China have clean and comfortable hotels that are good for every type of traveller. The main differences are both counties have some local style accommodation like Ryokan in Japan and Courtyard in China

Japan offers a wide range of accommodation types in both Japanese and Western styles. With the limited land in Japan, the rooms in Japan hotel is not so big in China, it is very clean and up to standard.

Ryokan is traditional Japanese-style accommodation. When staying in a ryokan, dinner and breakfast are recommended to include as it gives you the opportunity to experience a traditional Japanese lifestyle. The best places to enjoy the Ryokan include Hakone, Kyoto, and Takayama.

China now has a range of good options from budget to top-end (luxury) hotels with clean, comfortable and spacious.

And there are many boutique hotels with uniquely Chinese way and distinctive Chinese architecture and decor. Usually, the boutique hotels are located revamped buildings with an intriguing past, which provide an intimate and ethnic experience. For example Double Happiness Courtyard Hotel in Beijing and Jing's Residence in Pingyao.

Shopping: Japan is a paradise for shopping

With the rapid development in China, China now offers nice shopping situations like in big cities Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. When shopping in China, you will find many different kinds of jewellery, leather goods, antiques, jade, and souvenirs like paper-cuttings.

Japan is a shopping paradise with a wealth of stores selling everything from traditional souvenirs and local food to the latest electronics and hottest fashion brands. Shopping in Japan can be a very rewarding thing. The best places for shopping in Japan include Ginza, Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, Akihabara, Shibuya & Harajuku.

Clothing like UNIQLO and GU, beauty products, electronic products, Matcha and Sake and the top things that you should buy in Japan.

The convenience of Travel: Both have Developed Transportation System

International travel:

In both Japan and China, there are many options for international direct flights to various different cities from other counties like the USA, Canada and Europe. The main exit and entry in China is Shanghai and Beijing and Tokyo and Osaka for Japan.

Domestic Travel

Japan has an efficient public transportation network with trains and subways. The Japanese transport is popular for travelling around with its clean, reliable, punctual and comfortable service. There is a large variety of trains in Japan, Trains go almost everywhere you'd want to visit, there are direct trains between cities within 4 hours by train.

With the development in China, China has a convenient high-speed rail system, most of the cities have direct bullet trains connections, but as China is very big, some duration time over 5 hours, so for China travel, we suggest bullet train and aeroplane combination. For example, The Golden Triangle, from Beijing to Xian, can reach by bullet train for 4 hours, and Xi a from Shanghai, we usually suggest flights as it takes 7.5 hours.

For travel within cities, we suggest travelling by a private car and guide for both countries which is more comfortable and save more time to explore more about the attractions.

Budget: China is a More Affordable

Japan keeps up with Europe both in livelihood and service standards, which means it will much more expensive than a trip to China. Vehicle and Guides are charged per hour. A private tour in Japan is normally 2-3 times that of China.

(For group based on 2 persons), In China, 4-star private tour is about USD200-260 per person per day, in Japan it can be USD400-600 per Person per day in high season (April, May, October), without any overtime service.

Currency and Cash vs Credit

The Japanese currency is the yen (?, en) 1 USD is equal to100 Yen.

Cash is still the most common payment method in Japan especially for small amounts and small entrance fees at tourist sights, at smaller restaurants and small shops. Credit/Debit Cards is mainly used in big cities, big hotel.

China's currency is the yuan (renminbi), 1 USD is equal to7 Yuan. Cash was widely used in China, but with the development of online payment, now 90% of people in China will use Alipay, or WeChat to make the payment. Credit cards are not widely accepted, mainly for hotel.

Best Time to Visit: Both Can be Visited Year-Round

Japan is an all-year holiday destination, and it has its own highlights for each season. The most

popular time to visit Japan is spring (March – April) and autumn (September – November) for the beautiful Sakura/ Cherry Blossoms and fall foliage. December to February are the coldest months in Japan, but it is perfect for some excellent skiing and snowboarding. Summer (June, July, and August) is a good time to enjoy fewer tourists and good prices.

China is also a destination that is suitable to be visited all year round. Considering the weather, the best time for visiting China is spring (April–May) and autumn (September–October) with cool and dry weather. Winter is the low season for travelling to China when you can avoid the tourist crowds and save money for travelling.

Conclusions

Both countries are fascinating travelling destinations in their own way. As their best travelling time is the same, if you’re travelling time is flexible over 2 weeks, you can consider visiting both countries together.

But if your time is fixed and need to choose one of them, you may enjoy China more if you are:

1. Like history that less influenced by the west
2. You are delight to try variety of cuisine
3. Interested in the giant pandas and Great Wall
4. Looking for an affordable trip with private service

You may enjoy Japan more if:

1. If you are interested in exploring the mix of culture, history and modern
2. You are planning to see Cherry or Mt.Fuji
3. Enjoy shopping while travelling
4. You are looking for an easy trip with public transportation and enjoy free of visa
5. You are interested in joining in the local festival and interacting with local people