

Shopping

This is a people-to-people exchange for learning culture and making friends. Please don't expect to shop every day. There is so much more to see and do.

Your host family knows that you need to buy gifts for your family and friends. If you need to shop or to buy stamps, ask your host mother when you can go shopping. Let her know what kinds of things you want to buy, so that you are taken somewhere you want to shop. If there is something that you really hope to find in Japan, tell your host family within the first 3-5 days so they can think about it and find out where such an item might be available and then include shopping for that item in their plans. Keep in mind that some things may not be available in some parts of Japan, or may be only available during a specific time period.

Bring some of your money whenever you leave the house, as you never know where you will go and what you might see. If your host family is not in a hurry to get somewhere, even some train stations sell interesting souvenirs, such as character keychains for the local prefecture.

Pay attention to the exchange rate, so that you know how much money you are spending, and don't forget to save money for the trip home.

If the value of the items you buy plus the value of the gifts you receive is more than the amount allowed back into the USA duty-free, you may also need money to pay duty at customs when you re-enter the United States.

100 Yen (Hyaku-en) Shops sell chopsticks, barrettes, paper balloons, kitchen items, paper goods and other items your family and friends might like. Stationery stores have interesting notebooks, cards, stickers, pens and other unique small items. Grocery stores and convenience stores offer chopsticks, snack foods, unique-flavored Kit-Kat bars, and quality kitchen knives. If a charity re-sale shop is in your area (similar to a Salvation Army store), you can sometimes find traditional Japanese crafts at a reduced price.