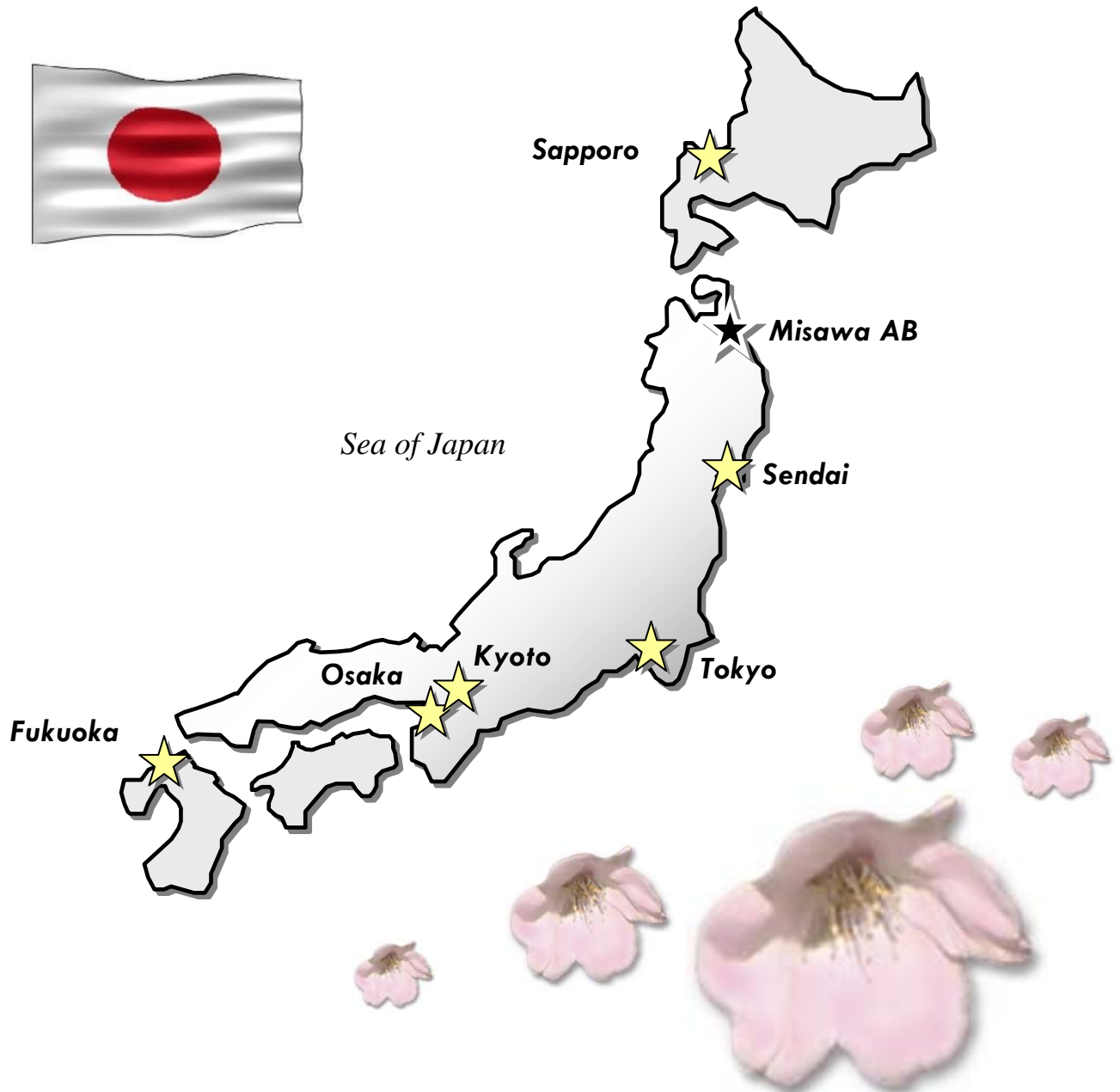


YŌKOSO Japan!



Airman and Family Readiness Center
Multicultural Program
226-4735

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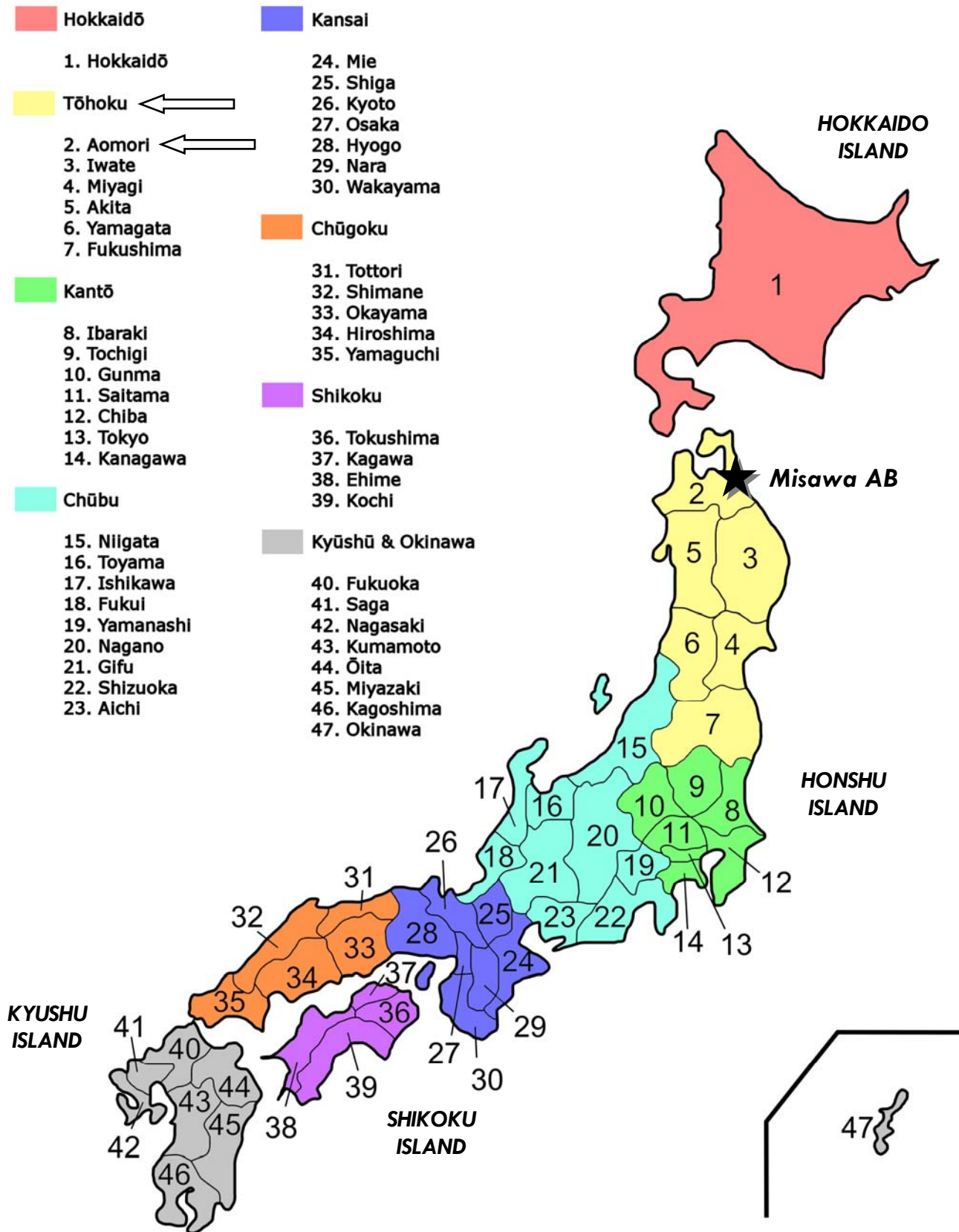
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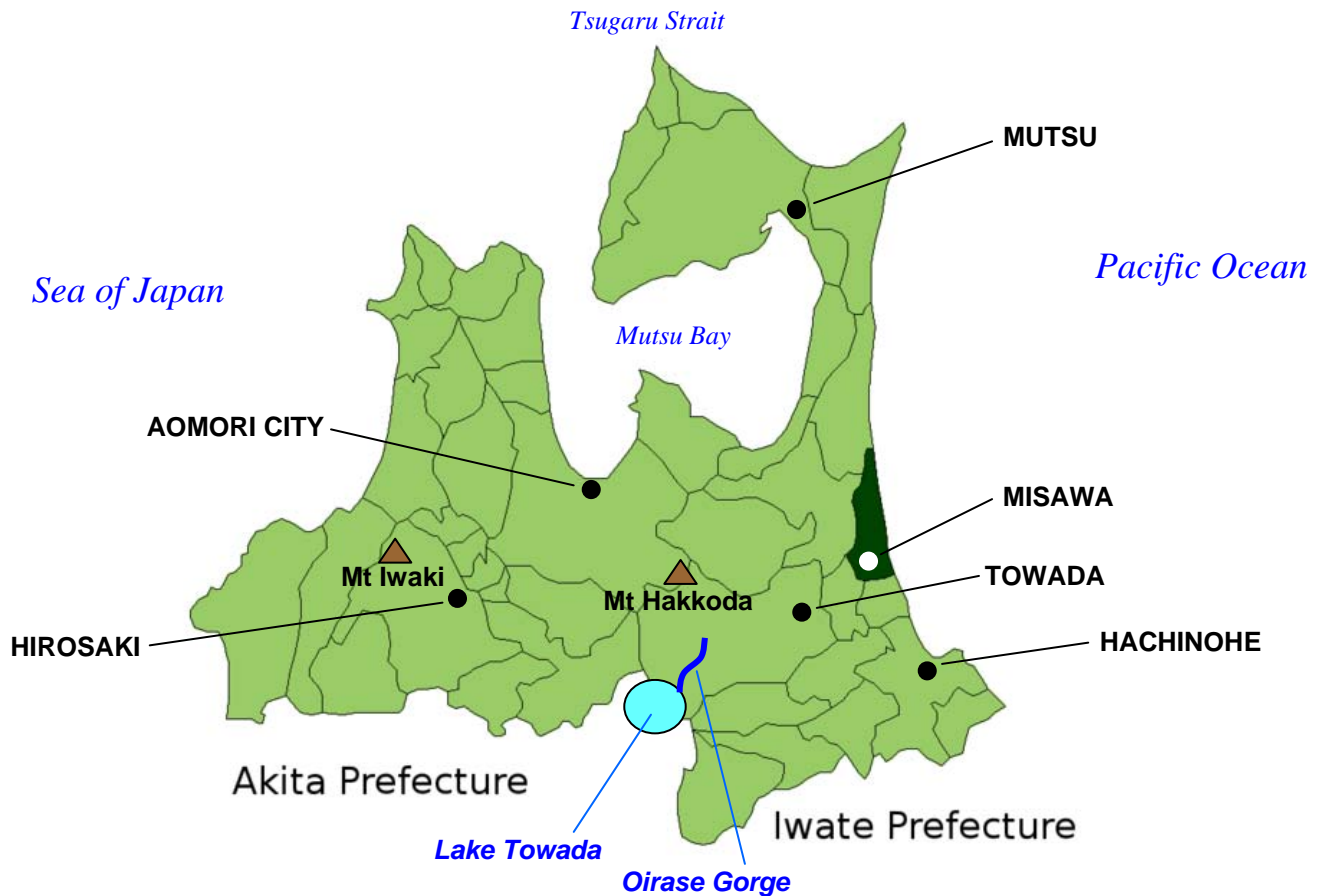
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Islands, Regions and Prefectures of Japan



Aomori Prefecture

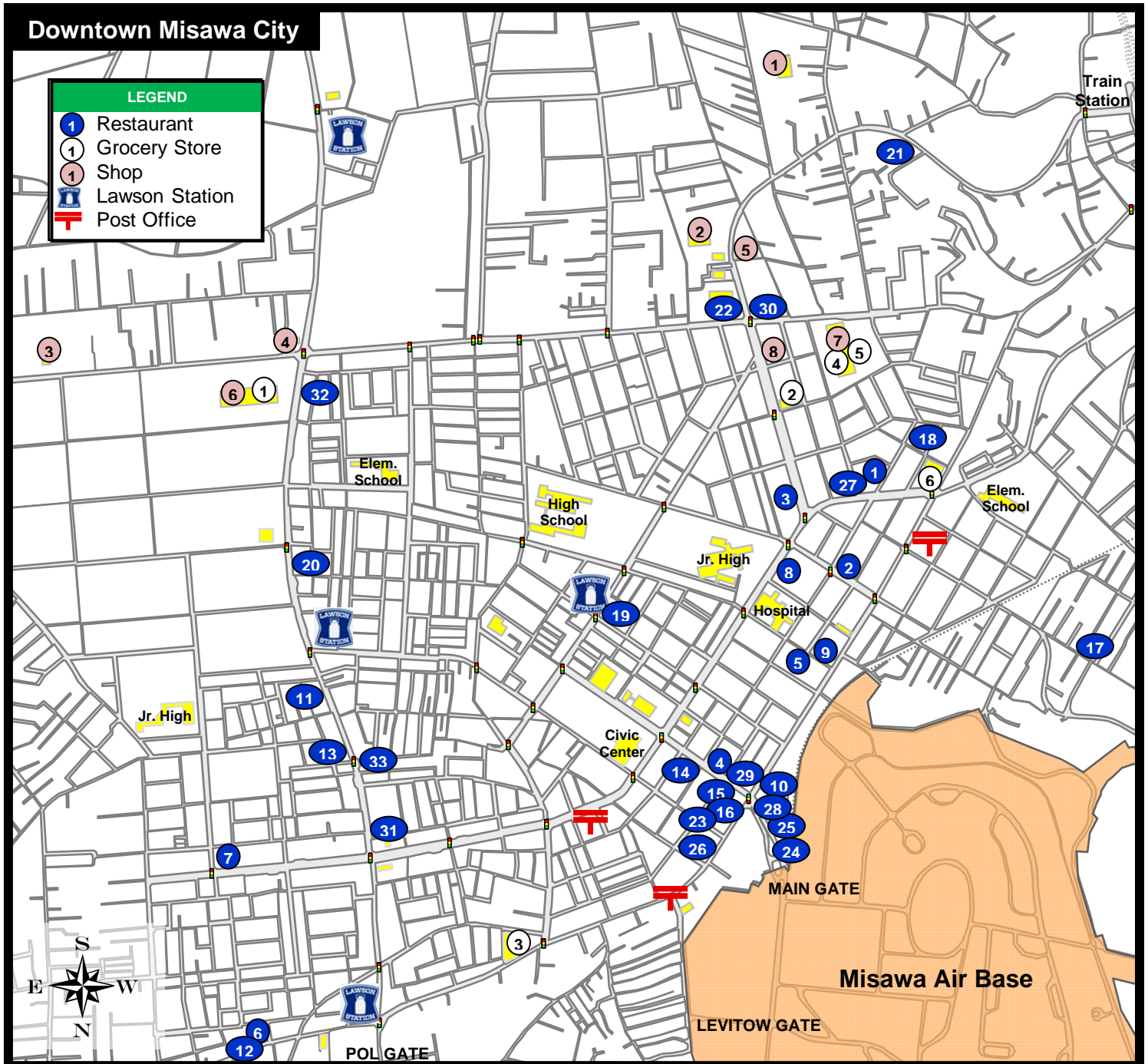


Aomori Prefecture is located at the northernmost end of Honshu Island. Misawa is situated on the eastern, or Pacific, side of the prefecture. Major cities in the Misawa area are Towada and Hachinohe, both great places for shopping, entertainment and leisure. Further west, Mt Hakkoda offers excellent hiking opportunities in the summer and world-famous skiing in the winter. On the way to Lake Towada, pass through Oirase Gorge, hosting serene waterfalls, rivers and forest hiking trails. This river gorge is especially nice in the fall, when the leaves change to vivid oranges and reds. Lake Towada itself is a large crater lake that is home to one of Japan's most beautiful national parks.

Heading north, pass through Mutsu on the way up the Shimokita Peninsula. On this northern tip of Honshu, one can find wild horses and snow monkeys, the highest latitude wild monkeys anywhere on the planet. Aomori City is the capital of the prefecture and hosts the famous Nebuta Festival every August. The third-largest city, behind Aomori and Hachinohe, is Hirosaki. During early spring, many come to Hirosaki from around the region to enjoy the city's spectacular *sakura*, or cherry blossoms. While cherry blossoms bloom around the country, the picturesque view of Hirosaki Castle with hundreds of *sakura* trees and Mt Iwaki, Aomori's highest peak, in the background is hard to match.

Misawa City

Misawa is a small city of about 43,000 people which sits on the southern shore of Lake Ogawara. The current city was founded on 1 September 1958, but the area has been used by the military since the Meiji period, when it was used as a cavalry training center for the Imperial Army. American forces began constructing Misawa Air Base in September 1945, and the U.S. Air Force has been flying out of Misawa since August 1948. Misawa is famous for hosting the world's first non-stop trans-Pacific flight in 1931. Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon took off from Misawa on the "Miss Veedol" and landed 41 hours later in Wenatchee, Washington, now Misawa's Sister City.



Restaurants in Misawa

Japanese:

- ① Ohashi
- ② Tsubohachi
- ③ Aburi an
- ④ Akanoren
- ⑤ Marumiya (Cheese Roll)
- ⑥ Koorakuen (Viking)

Sushi:

- ⑦ Sushi Hanakan
(Pink Sushi)
- ⑧ Sushi Hanakan
(Pink Sushi)
- ⑨ Takarazushi
- ⑩ Kikuzushi

Ramen:

- ⑪ Sapporo Ramen
- ⑬ Takumiya
- ⑫ Yumeya

Chinese:

- ⑬ Karinba
- ⑭ New Miyaki
- ⑮ Mika

- ⑯ Swan

Steak:

- ⑰ Yoshino

Italian:

- ⑱ Café Live Forever
- ⑲ Tutti
- ⑳ Angelo's

International:

- ⑳ Global Kitchen (Int'l)
- ㉑ Coco's (Int'l)
- ㉒ Marché (French)
- ㉓ Ankur (Indian)
- ㉔ Mike's (Tex-Mex)
- ㉕ Paddy's (Irish)
- ㉖ Phada's (Thai)
- ㉗ Dacha (Russian)
- ㉘ Tubes (American)

Fast Food:

- ㉙ McDonald's
- ㉚ Sukiya

Dessert:

- ㉛ Le Monde



Flag of Misawa



Satsuki Azalea,
flower of Misawa

Grocery Stores

- ① **Universe** (POL Road)
Open from 10:00 – 23:00
TEL: 50-1155
- ② **Universe** (Matsuzono-cho)
Open from 9:00 – 23:00
TEL: 57-1118
- ③ **Yokomachi**
Open from 10:00 – 21:00
TEL: 50-0707
- ④ **Super City Asahi** (Veedol Plaza)
Open from 10:00 – 20:00
TEL: 52-5025
- ⑤ **Farmer's Market** at Veedol Plaza
Open: monthly on the 9th, 19th & 29th
9:00 – 15:00
- ⑥ **Max Value**
Open from 10:00 – 24:00
TEL: 52-7010

Shops

- ① **Sanwado** (all-purpose)
- ② **Sunday** (home improvement)
- ③ **Pony Plaza** (Japanese souvenirs)
- ④ **Nogawa** (furniture)
- ⑤ **Seria** (¥100 store)
- ⑥ **Homac** (home improvement)
- ⑦ **Veedol Plaza** (mall & ¥100 store)
- ⑧ **K's Denki** (electronics)

Experience Japanese Culture

The Japanese Family

Many Japanese families expect the eldest son, who is also the main heir, to continue living with his parents even after he is married. The eldest son is also responsible for taking care of his parents in their old age. In some homes, even if they are not living together with their parents, married couples try to spend time with their parents, and usually meet at least twice a year during the *Obon* and *Shyooogatsu* festivals.



Obon in Kyoto

Obon: Obon, or *the Festival of the Dead*, is an annual Buddhist ritual holiday usually in August when families come together from around Japan. For several consecutive evenings, family members place lanterns by the gates of their houses or they also burn candles in paper lanterns painted with the family crest in temples and cemeteries. The purpose is to guide their ancestors' spirits home or back to the *ohaka*, or family tomb. The air is usually heavy with the smell of incense.

Shyooogatsu: *New Year's* in Japan is probably the biggest holiday in Japan. With the exception of the service industries, the entire country goes on holiday during *Shyooogatsu*. This is family time, with most working fathers on paid leave from about 28 December to 3 January. The New Year is also a time to return to one's roots, with Japanese food, games, kimono and prayers taking place at a Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple.

Japanese School System

Education plays a very important role in the Japanese family, and parents spend a great deal of money on education. Students also invest a seemingly excessive amount of time studying to achieve their scholastic goals. You may notice that uniforms are mandatory in Japan from junior high through high school. There are three school terms a year, and the school year starts in April.



Most Japanese children start their education at a nursery or kindergarten. Elementary school is for six years, from the ages of six to twelve. Children then complete three years of junior high school. Here they start to learn English, but many teachers cannot actually speak English or understand it when it is spoken. The children mainly study English grammar, reading and writing, but make little progress conversationally. Many parents feel *juku*, or cram schools, are most important to the junior high school student because he or she will benefit most in preparing for the all important high school entrance exams. Although it is not mandatory, 94% of junior-high school students go on to complete three years of high school, and large proportions of them later go on to a college or university.

Japanese Restaurants

There are a few things to keep in mind in terms of etiquette and culture when you go to Japanese restaurants. While reservations may often be flexible in America, the Japanese are much more particular about seemingly small things such as time and the size of the group. When you make a reservation at a Japanese restaurant, be prompt with the reserved time or call in advance if you will be late. The restaurant may otherwise cancel your reservation. If your reservation is a large group, make sure the number in your party will be correct. In many cases, if some members of your group cannot attend, the restaurant will charge a fee for those that did not show up. Call in advance if the size of your group changes. Lastly, follow the Japanese polite and courteous manners when shopping or dining off base, or the locals may not let you return. Keep in mind that when you go off base, you are then a representative of America to the local host population and it is not unusual for the Japanese to keep a keen eye on you. Manners in public places and abiding by rules such as parking in the appropriate manner will go much further than you may think.



Japanese restaurants often present their menu as mock dishes with the prices in a window just in front of the entrance. When you enter the restaurant, the staff will welcome you with the word “*irashimase*” (welcome), also heard when entering many Japanese stores. After sitting down, the staff will serve you green tea or water, free of charge (including refills). You will usually get a wet towel (*oshibori*) to clean your hands before you eat. In some Japanese restaurants, you may eat sitting on *tatami* mats, made of tightly-weaved straw. Remember that you must also take off your shoes before stepping onto the *tatami* floor.

If chopsticks are not already put on the table, you can find them in a box. The bill will be given to you right after you get the meal. When finished, you will take the bill and pay at a cashier before you leave (it is very rare to pay at the table). In some restaurants, you have to pay first at the entrance and get a coupon, which you exchange for the meal inside. There is no tipping in Japan, and Japanese waiters may feel uncomfortable if extra money is left on the table.

Eating Tips



Rice: rice is eaten at virtually every meal in Japan. It is usually served in a small bowl. Instead of leaving it on the table, take the rice bowl into one hand and the chopsticks into the other. Do not pour soy sauce over white, cooked rice.

Noodles: in Japan, there are three main types of noodles: *soba* (thin & often grey), *udon* (thick & white) and *ramen* (thin Chinese noodles). All are eaten with chopsticks and do not hesitate to slurp!





Soups: drink the soup out of the bowl as it were a cup and fish out the noodles or vegetables with your chopsticks. For some kinds of soup, a ceramic spoon will be provided. Again, feel free to slurp.

Sushi & Sashimi: pour soy sauce, or *shooyu*, into a special little plate. For sashimi (raw fish without rice), add wasabi

into the soy sauce and mix it. The correct way of dipping sushi is to dip it upside-down with the fish part into the sauce. You can even eat a few kinds of sushi without soy sauce. You generally eat a sushi piece in one bite, and either hands or chopsticks can be used.

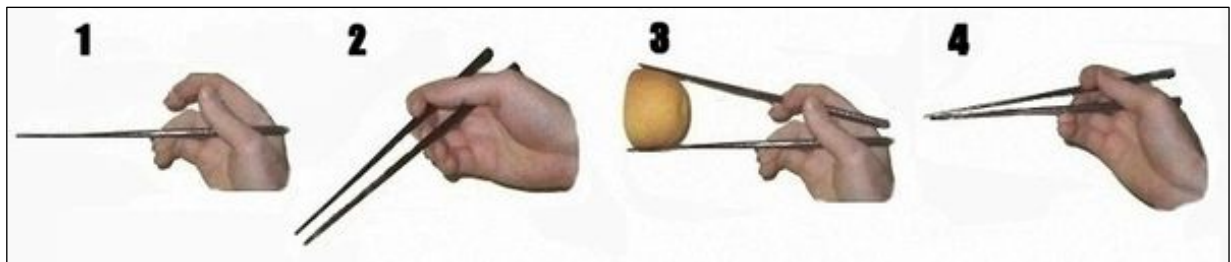


Using Chopsticks

If you eat Japanese food, you will unavoidably have to use “*hashi*” (Japanese word for chopsticks).



These should be placed on the table pointing to the left, and often “*hashioki*” (chopstick rest) will be provided to rest the tips of your chopsticks. You are supposed to place your chopsticks on the *hashioki* when not using them. If you plant them vertically in your rice, you will give your table companions a shock, as this is how rice is offered by Buddhists to their deceased ancestors.



1. Put one *hashi* between the palm and the base of the thumb, using the ring finger to support the lower part of the stick. With the thumb, squeeze the *hashi* down while the ring finger pushes it up. This one should be stationary and stable.
2. Use the tips of the thumb, index and middle fingers to hold the other stick like a pen. Make sure the tips of the two sticks line up.
3. Pivot the upper *hashi* up and down towards the stationary lower *hashi*. With this motion one can pick up food of surprising size.
4. With enough practice, the two sticks function like a pair of pincers.

Hashi generally should be held at the thicker end about a third of the way along their length for balance and efficiency. If you have never used *hashi* before, it may take a little time getting used to. If you are to live in Japan for any length of time, however, it is definitely a skill worth becoming proficient at.

The following are considered *bad table manners*:

- Spearing pieces of food with your chopsticks
- Using your chopsticks to shift dishes around
- Waving your chopsticks about in the air while deciding what to eat next
- Picking up a dish with the hand that is holding the chopsticks
- Rummaging about in the food looking for the tastiest morsel
- Passing a piece of food directly from one set of chopsticks to the other
- Pointing with the chopsticks at something or someone



Other food utensils:

Knives and forks are used only for Western or foreign foods. An example of this is the typical use of a fork and spoon when eating spaghetti. Spoons are used for eating certain Japanese dishes, such as *donburi* or Japanese-style curry rice. As noted above, a Chinese ceramic spoon is sometimes used to eat soups.



Uni donburi (sea urchin with rice)



Japanese curry rice

Table manners



In Japan, you start eating after saying “*itadakimasu*” (I will receive) and finish with “*gochisoosama*” (thank you for the meal). As noted above, it is customary in Japan to slurp when eating noodles or soups. When drinking beer or sake (Japanese rice wine), it is also customary pour the beverage into each other’s cups. It is very important in terms of Japanese manners that one does not pour it into his or her own glass, especially when you dine with Japanese guests. You should always check if your friend’s cups are getting empty, and if so give them more. If someone wants to give you more to drink, you should hold your glass toward that person. Lastly, blowing your nose in public, and especially at the table, is considered very rude.

Seating order

Among Japanese, the most important guest sits on the honored seat, or *kamiza*, which is located farthest from the entrance. The host or socially lowest person is supposed to sit next to the entrance (*shimoza*). Of course, there are more factors to be considered in every specific case.

Sitting Techniques



Many Westerners often find it difficult to sit on the floor while eating a meal. In Japan, sitting upright on the floor is still common in various situations. Traditionally the Japanese eat sitting on the tatami floor on a low table. In the tea ceremony and many other traditional events, one also sits on the floor. In casual situations, men usually sit cross-legged while women sit on their knees or both legs to one side. The latter is considered a female sitting style. The formal way of sitting for both genders is kneeling

symmetrically. This way of sitting is required at very formal occasions and traditional events like the tea ceremony. Those that are not used to sitting in this position may start feeling uncomfortable after a few minutes, and their legs may get numb. Most Japanese, however, do not expect foreigners to be able to sit in this position for a long time.

Japanese Hot Springs

Natural hot springs, or **onsen**, are very popular in Japan. There are many *onsen* in Japan because it lies in a region where several continental plates meet. Many towns with hot springs have become large tourist resorts. Hot springs can be found outdoors and indoors, and many public baths use the water from hot springs. Many hot springs can even be found in the middle of nature. Because of the minerals in the water, hot springs are believed to have the power of healing through contact with the skin. Taking a bath in a hot spring can be extremely relaxing year-round.



Japanese Public Baths

Public baths, or **sentō**, have existed since the *Edo* period and have been important in the past when not very many private houses were equipped with a bathroom. Today, the number of public baths is decreasing and thus many modern public baths try to attract more people by offering additional features such as saunas and fitness centers. Note: one does not wear a bathing suit or any clothes in a Japanese *sentō*. Men and women take their baths in separate halls. The hot baths are for relaxing and not for rough-housing or playing. Tickets cost on average ¥300 for adults, ¥150 for children and ¥50 for infants.

In a Japanese Onsen

Step 1: Wear casual clothes (some people go in pajamas!) and leave your valuables at home. Although soap and shampoo are often provided, it is a good idea to bring them just in case. Put your soap, shampoo and other washing gear in a small plastic basket.

Step 2: Leave your shoes in a shoe locker in the entrance and go in the men's or women's door as appropriate. You either pay the attendant in advance or buy your ticket out of a machine. You may encounter a few surreptitious stares, but this is perfectly natural. Simply ignore them.

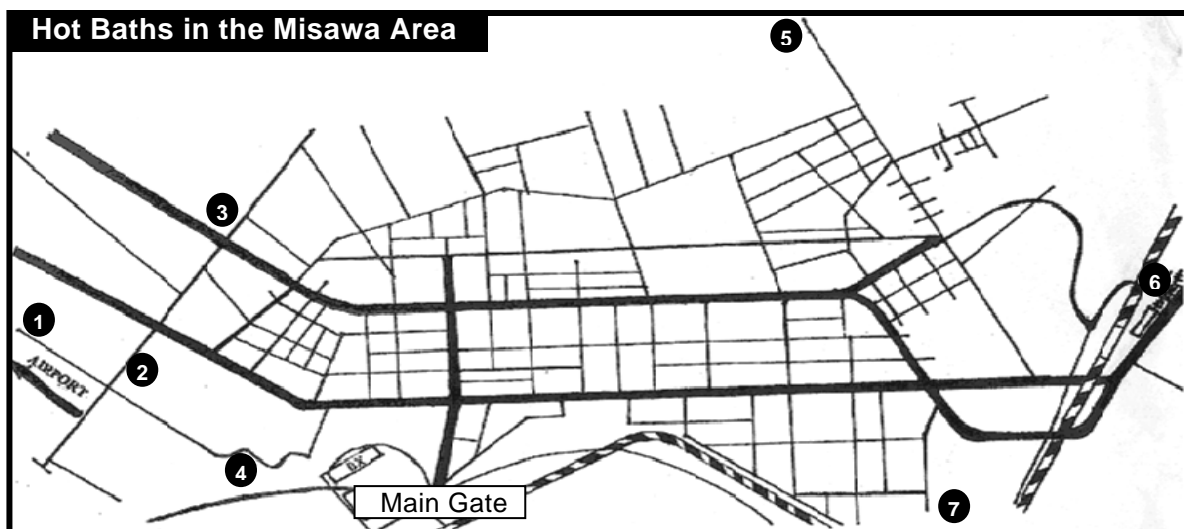
Step 3: You then take off your clothing in the changing area. Put your clothes in one of the free lockers provided. Put the locker key around your wrist so you don't lose it.



Step 4: Always wash and rinse yourself before getting in the bath. Little plastic stools and wash basins will be provided. Sit on one of the little plastic stools to wash yourself with the hand-held shower. When washing yourself, be careful not to splash your neighbors.

Step 5: Get in and relax for as long as you like. Remember to never get in the bath with soap still on you!

Note: There are usually two separate tubs, one very hot, and one super-hot, so be careful not to burn yourself.



1 Kuukoo Onsen
TEL: 53-4167
Open: 6:30–24:00
Open every day

2 Katsura Onsen
TEL: 57-4335
Open: 5:00–23:00
Open every day

3 Okamisawa Onsen
TEL: 53-6129
Open: 6:00–23:00
Open every day

4 Hirahata Onsen
TEL: 57-4045
Open: 6:00–24:00
Open every day

5 Kizakino Onsen
TEL: 53-8700
Open: 5:00–22:00
Open every day

6 Komaki Onsen
TEL: 51-1111
Open: 6:00–24:00
Open every day

7 Aoba Onsen
TEL: 50-1455
Open: 6:00–23:00
Closed: Every 2nd Tue
for cleaning & re-opens
from 16:00–23:00

Shopping in Japan

Bargaining, or haggling, is typically unheard of in Japan, but you may try at special places like open markets or small shops. In Japanese supermarkets, you rarely see store staff bagging your groceries. After you have paid, take your groceries to a counter and you bag your own groceries. Besides department stores and supermarkets, there are many small shops specializing in a particular line of goods. It is often better to buy fresh fish at a fish market, or *sakana-ya*, or fresh vegetables and fruits at a grocer's (*Yao-ya*) or fruit shops, called *Kudamono-ya*, than frozen goods at a supermarket.

Money and Money Exchange:



Coins are minted in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 yen. Bank notes are printed in higher denominations of 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 and 10,000 yen. Other currencies may be exchanged for Japanese yen at international airport exchange centers or at city banks in Japan. The yen exchange rate varies daily, but the average varies around ¥100 per one U.S. dollar. The rate for each day is posted at most banks for U.S. dollars.

Cash: it is generally safe to carry cash in Japan. Small amounts of cash are needed for most forms of transportation, for dining spots that do not accept credit cards or traveler's checks, and for other small purchases.

Checks and credit cards: personal checks are not in general use. Yen traveler's checks, however, can be purchased at overseas banks. Although credit cards are more widely used in larger stores today, they are most often not accepted in smaller shops and restaurants. Shops and restaurants that accept credit cards have stickers at the entrance or signs posted elsewhere to designate which cards are accepted.

Japanese Toilets

There are two kinds of toilets in Japan: Japanese-style and Western-style. In order to use a Japanese-style toilet, one has to squat down and keep your balance. This may be a little bit difficult for some foreigners. The Japanese toilet is essentially more hygienic since the user does not get in direct contact with it. Japanese style toilets can be found on most public washrooms. Western-style toilets can be found increasingly in public washrooms, especially in tourist areas.



The two toilet styles sometimes exist side by side. Most toilets in newly-built private houses are western-style. Many of them are equipped with luxury gadgets such as heat or small built-in *washlets*. When entering the washroom in a private house, common etiquette is to change into special toilet slippers.

Stay Connected & See Japan

Telephone Instructions

Pay Phones

The Nippon Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (NTT) operate the Japanese commercial telephone system. Pay phones accept either yen coins (¥10 or ¥100) or Japanese phone cards. Phone cards can be purchased at convenient stores and can be inserted into green pay phones. Pay phones are essentially prepaid phones, and each is identified by a specific color. The most common phones you will see are:

- *Green phones* – Used for local as well as long distance calls, accepting yen coins or phone cards.
- *Grey phones* – Privately owned and used in the same manner as regular home phones. Charges are made for all calls, both local and international.
- *Pink phones* – Privately owned but for public use. These are found in many businesses, restaurants and stores. These phones accept only ¥10 coins and are restricted to local calls.

Useful Japanese Phrases on the Phone

Moshi moshi	<i>Hello?</i>
Denwa wa doko desu ka	<i>Where is a telephone?</i>
Dare desu ka	<i>Who is this?</i>
Anata no denwa bangoo wa nan-ban desu ka	<i>What is your telephone number?</i>
Machigai desu	<i>It's a wrong number.</i>



Dialing Instructions

Calling from off-base to on-base dial:

63-XXXX for **222**-XXXX numbers

64-XXXX for **226**-XXXX numbers

NOTE: the area code for the Misawa area is (**0176**). This must be added before the number above when dialing from outside the local area **and is always included when dialing from cell phones.**

Calling from on-base to off-base dial:

99 + the area code (only if the number is outside the local area) + the number

Calling from the United States:

U.S. country code (011) + Japan country code (**81**) + area code (176) + number

Example: for 226-4735 (on-base), dial: 011-81-176-64-4735

NOTE: Japan's country code is **81** & the "0" in the local area code is omitted when dialed from the U.S.

Traveling in Japan

Taxi

Off-base taxis can take you anywhere in the city, but they are rather expensive and must be paid in yen. On-base taxis (*Kichi Taxi*) may be paid in yen or dollars and are used throughout Misawa Air Base. Passengers usually ride in the back unless there are too many to squeeze in. The back doors are opened and closed automatically by the driver, so remember to stand clear of them. Most taxi drivers speak only a little English, so it is often useful to carry a business card for the business or location to which you would like to go. Unless it is a well-known place, you may have to give directions.



Bus

Buses operate in Misawa and can be caught outside the front gate area at the White Pole intersection. Buses must be paid in yen and you pay when you get off the bus. Most buses are one-man operated and the driver plays taped announcements telling you the name of the next bus stop, giving various warnings and other information. Press the buzzer if you want the bus to stop. If you are not sure of being able to recognize your stop when you come to it, ask the driver when you get on the bus.



Train

There are a variety of trains available in Japan. Trains range from local trains (*Futsuu*), which stop at every station, to express trains (*Kyuko* and *Tokkyu*) which travel long distances for supplementary fares. Japan's bullet train, or *Shinkansen*, is one of the fastest trains in the world and travels from Hachinohe to Tokyo in approximately three hours. To purchase a *Shinkansen* ticket from Misawa to Tokyo, a round trip ticket will cost approx. ¥30,200, while a one way ticket will cost approx. ¥15,810. Note: if you buy a round trip ticket, you have to use it within ten days.



Air

Japan Air Lines (JAL) operates out of Misawa Airport. There are three flights to Haneda (Tokyo's domestic airport) every day and one daily flight to Osaka. You may purchase JAL tickets from Misawa Airport, online, or at Bay Area Travel located on the second floor of the MPF Building. Tickets from Misawa to Tokyo by plane are: round trip ¥53,600 and one way ¥29,600 (these prices can be greatly reduced if bought in advance).



Car

Driving in Japan can be difficult at first to get used to because you must drive on the right side of the road and roads in Japan are very narrow. Toll roads are also expensive when traveling long distances. The round trip fees from Misawa to Tokyo average approximately ¥26,000, and from Misawa to Sendai will be around ¥12,400. Gasoline is about \$4 per gallon, so remember to fill your car on base before traveling.



Japanese Signs

When seeing Japan, you will encounter a number of signs both in businesses and on roads written in *kanji*, the Japanese word for Chinese characters. The Japanese use over 2,000 *kanji* characters in daily life, and reading *kanji* is usually very difficult for Westerners. However, some *kanji* characters on Japanese signs will be markedly more useful for you to know than others, some of which are presented here:

立入禁止	tachi-iri-kinshi	no entry
駐車禁止	chuusha-kinshi	no parking
危険	kiken	danger
禁煙	kin-en	no smoking
無料	mu-ryoo	no charge
有料	yuu-ryoo	charged
料金	ryookin	fee
両替所	ryoogae-ijo	money exchange office
お会計	okaikei	cashier
円	en	yen
入口	iriguchi	entrance
出口	deguchi	exit
非常口	hijyoo-guchi	emergency exit
営業中	eigyoo-chuu	open for business
故障	koshoo	out of order
工事中	kooji-chuu	under construction
駐車場	chuusha-jo	parking lot
満車	man-sha	parking lot full
トイレ/お手洗い/御手洗/化粧室	toire/otearai	restroom
男	otoko	men
女	on-na	women
大人	otona	adult
小人/子供	kodomo	child

