

HOW TO SERVE JAPANESE TOURISTS?

ACCOMMODATION SERVICES



This checklist is made to help you to evaluate your opportunities to provide rural

ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

for Japanese tourists. Some general pointers are highlighted first, followed by the special requirements of three target groups with most potential: women between 25 and 50 years old, families and intergenerational groups and group travellers.

The practical level tips presented here are based on the feedback and experiences collected in the CAITO project. The list is not exclusive, yet hopefully gives you some ideas on how to reach these target groups.

**GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT!**

REMEMBER:

- ✓ Accommodation is a large part of the rural experience for tourists, not just a place to sleep.
- ✓ Japanese tourists appreciate punctuality and politeness! Be sure that the services take place as promised and the service is polite!
- ✓ Pay especial attention to cleanliness.
- ✓ Manage the customers' expectations – make sure to provide detailed information beforehand to them.

Tips for the accommodation service. Try to be as objective and realistic as possible when filling in the checklist!	OK	Needs to be improved	Not possible to provide
Safety is important. There should always be someone who your Japanese customers can contact easily in case of a problem or emergency.			
Be sure that someone will welcome the guests, explain the practicalities clearly (at least in English, preferably in Japanese) and provide help! Pay especial attention to the politeness and friendliness of staff and guides etc.			
Instructions related to the accommodation should be in Japanese (or at least in English) e.g. on using the fireplace, kitchen facilities etc.			
Indoor plumbing and running water are a must! In general, most Japanese prefer to stay in hotels. That gives you an idea of the required quality. While Japanese tourists might expect a cottage type of accommodation in rural areas, a high service level, however, is required.			
Separate beds are preferable (even for married couples).			
Preferably each bedroom should have good and more or less equal quality. When travelling in groups, it is important that all guests in a group get rooms of the same standard. If there are different standards between rooms (e.g. the manner in which rooms are equipped, different view) provide this information on your own webpage as well as for travel agencies.			
Accommodation should be “guest ready” and require minimum effort from your visitors (i.e. related to heating, beds made ready etc.)			
Japanese can have problems adjusting to starlit nights; it is important for rooms to have dark (or blackout) curtains.			
Remember you should ALWAYS provide clear guidance, preferably in person, for a sauna experience.			
Wi-Fi should be available.			
Information on what activities are available, restaurants, shops (including opening hours), local culture is valued in English, preferably also in Japanese. Be sure to include proper and up-to-date information and on how these activities can be accessed.			
Japanese like to plan beforehand! Make sure that you have plenty of information and pictures of your accommodation services available on your webpages in English, preferably also in Japanese.			
Access			
Easy access is the key! Being able to provide transportation from a harbour, main bus station etc. is considered a competitive advantage!			
If providing transportation: it is absolutely unacceptable for the driver to talk on a mobile/cell phone , drivers should be experienced, stay within speed limits and drive carefully.			
Sometimes Japanese tourists expect to be served mineral water on buses, as a welcome gesture.			

In addition, keep the following in mind concerning the different target groups:

Women under 50 years			
This target group is a bit more adventurous than others. They are not likely to rent a car, but can be interested in using public transport. Thus, instructions for public transport should be available, clear and up-to-date.			
Lower levels of accommodation can also be acceptable for this target group, but they must know about it beforehand!			
Families			
Playgrounds, toys or facilities for children are valued as due to long travel it is not possible to bring much luggage. However, remember the safety conscious thinking of this target group!			
Groups			
When travelling in groups, it is important that all guests in a group get rooms of the same standard.			
Senior group travellers need to have easily accessible rooms.			
Bathtubs are preferred instead of showers. If there are only showers available , provide this information on your own webpage as well as for travel agencies.			
Transportation must be included in the package (either by you or the travel agency).			

MORE INFORMATION ON THE JAPANESE MARKET IN RURAL TOURISM:
<http://caitoproject.eu/>

HOW TO SERVE JAPANESE TOURISTS?

ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES



This checklist is made to help you to evaluate your opportunities to provide rural

ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES

to Japanese tourists. Some general pointers are highlighted first, followed by the special requirements of three target groups with most potential: women under 50 years old, families and intergenerational groups and group travellers.

The practical level tips presented here are based on the feedback and experiences collected in the CAITO project. The list is not exclusive, yet hopefully gives you some ideas on how to reach these target groups.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT!

REMEMBER:

- ✓ Authentic experiences (not just sightseeing) are greatly appreciated. The natural environment, peaceful ways of living, history, low population density are the attractions of our countries. Use them in your products!
- ✓ Japanese tourists appreciate punctuality and politeness! Be sure that the services take place as promised and the service is polite!
- ✓ Pay especial attention to cleanliness.
- ✓ National tourist boards are already promoting certain food or raw materials as part of their image marketing. Make the best use of those in an innovative way!



Tips for organising the activity programmes Try to be as objective and realistic as possible when filling in the checklist!	Is or can be included in my product	Not relevant/cannot be included in my product
Activities/experiences should be something typical for the country/area. Inspirational stories on activities and experiences are important – should be provided at least in English , but also preferably in Japanese to guarantee the full experience.		
The role of the guide is extremely important in interpreting the experiences and activities. Unlike Baltic and Finnish tourists, Japanese do not want to be just left alone. The guide should at least speak English, preferably Japanese.		
Japanese are very safety conscious. Safety aspects should be included when providing information on activities.		
The activities must be light and easily participated in! Japanese rarely value extreme activities. Provide activities that are not too physically demanding, like light hiking in a forest, bicycle tours, picking berries/mushrooms, etc.		
Activities including some natural elements are often appreciated in connection to rural tourism.		
Tasting local food is an important experience – stories/origin of food should be available (in English and Japanese). Always use locally sourced food, if possible!		
Enjoying forest and lake landscapes is important to this target group. Integrate these elements into your products.		
Sauna as an experience is highly valued! It needs interpretation though as Japanese sauna culture is a bit different.		
Rural tourists and FITs especially do not want tight schedules – they are there to relax.		
Taking part in local activities (where local people also participate) are appreciated. Provide information on where to meet local people and on local activities , such as markets, village festivals, etc. – “what to do” handouts!		
Beautiful natural sceneries valued. Connection to nature might be a way to go with this target group.		
This target group has a special interest towards cultural products . They also appreciate visiting historical sites. However, remember the interpretation and/or guiding!		
Places that locals visit are targets of interest. Not only the “biggest” sights (local cafés, parks, bars etc.).		
When travelling in a group, Japanese expect everyone to receive exactly the same treatment . It is recommended that the entire group is addressed e.g. in guiding, not individuals.		
Shopping		
Shopping/local souvenirs are of interest. However, remember the limitations of export/import rules and restrictions (not too heavy, difficult to transport etc.)! Need to be of high quality.		
Japan is a gift giving culture → need for small souvenirs that can be taken home for friends and family.		
Have information on the shopping opportunities available or include it in your programme. Note that Japanese are accustomed to longer shop opening hours than typically exist in rural areas.		
Access		
Easy access is the key! Make sure that you have instructions for public transport in your webpages, and they are clear and up-to-date. Most Japanese tourists are not likely to rent a car. Being able to provide transportation from a harbour, main bus station etc. is considered a competitive advantage!		
If providing transportation: it is absolutely unacceptable for the driver to talk on a mobile/cell phone , drivers should be experienced, stay within speed limits and drive carefully.		
Sometimes Japanese tourists expect to be served mineral water on buses , as a welcome gesture.		

In addition, keep the following in mind concerning the different target groups:

Women under 50 years		
Cultural lessons are also appreciated , such as handicraft workshops, baking/preparing local food, learning local folk music, etc.		
This target group enjoys “live like locals” type of products. Can you integrate this into what you offer?		

Possibility to “peek” into everyday activities e.g. local supermarkets is interesting for this target group.		
Programmes that combine city holidays and rural breaks could be interesting for this target group.		
Shopping: design products are important and typically known beforehand to the target group. Shopping for these can also be combined into rural holidays .		
Families		
For younger couples guiding in English might be sufficient.		
Young couples though, might like to try something a bit more adventurous.		
If your target group is families, remember to also include activities suited to children’s abilities!		
Families prefer nature, wellbeing, famous children’s characters, such as Moomin, Santa Claus, the aurora borealis. Use these in your products, if possible.		
Young couples like experiences, natural phenomena, special/historic sites, aesthetics. Include these aspects in your products if possible.		
Domestic animals are often interesting for children with families.		
Tasting local food is an important experience – but remember to also provide some familiar foods for children.		
A flexible schedule is preferred by this target group – make sure the schedule for your product is not too busy.		
Images for social media are important, Wi-Fi access preferred .		
Groups		
Group travellers book their holidays through a travel agency. Thus, they are your primary clients. Your products must fit their requirements.		
Cultural lessons are also appreciated , such as handicraft workshops, baking/preparing local food, learning local folk music, etc.		
The activities/experiences should be easily accessed .		
Interest towards cultural products . They also appreciate visiting historical sites. However, remember the interpretation and/or guiding!		
When in a group, they expect everyone to receive exactly the same treatment . It is recommended that the entire group is addressed e.g. in guiding, not individuals.		
Programmes that combine city holidays and rural breaks could be interesting for this target group.		
All the activities/experiences should be properly introduced and described beforehand – what is the idea of the activity, why it is interesting, how long it takes, how one should be equipped etc. Use a lot of pictures!		
Make sure that ALL the information on activities/experiences is provided on your own webpage as well as for travel agencies .		
Transportation to all activities/experiences must be included in the package (either by you or the travel agency).		

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HOW TO SERVE JAPANESE TOURISTS? CATERING SERVICES



This checklist has been made to help you evaluate your opportunities to provide rural

CATERING SERVICES

to Japanese tourists. Some general pointers are highlighted first, followed by the special requirements of three target groups with most potential: women between 25 and 49 years old, families and intergenerational groups and group travellers.

The practical level tips presented here are based on the feedback and experiences collected in the CAITO project. The list is not exclusive, yet hopefully gives you some ideas on how to reach these target groups.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT!

REMEMBER:

- ✓ If the food is bad, it is very difficult to compensate for it with other elements in your programme. However, if the food is excellent, it can help to alleviate potential slips → It is a worthwhile to focus on good quality food!
- ✓ Japanese tourists appreciate punctuality and politeness! Be sure that the services take place as promised and the service is polite!
- ✓ Pay especial attention to cleanliness.
- ✓ National tourist boards are already promoting certain food or raw materials as part of their image marketing. Make the best use of those in an innovative way!
- ✓ Tour operators sometimes organise the catering services for groups. Therefore, they also set requirements for your services. Make sure you meet them.

Tips for the catering service. Try to be as objective and realistic as possible when filling in the checklist!	OK	Needs to be improved	Not possible to provide
The opportunity to eat and taste local food is greatly appreciated! Local cuisine and products are among the most important factors for Japanese in choosing the tourism destination.			
Stories and information on the origin of the food are important to create a successful experience → ALWAYS accompany local food with stories and local culture whenever possible.			
Possibility to have catering services even in the cottages is important. Japanese women do not want to cook on their holidays.			
In restaurants, special attention needs to be given to food quality and quantity, guests' wishes and waiters' manners. E.g. when entering the restaurant each guest should be welcomed with eye contact.			
Good atmosphere (ambiance) is important and includes communication, room design and decoration.			
Indicate the ingredients that are recommended even on the buffet table. Some dishes might be unfamiliar for Japanese.			
Japanese are small eaters. Remember the portion sizes that Japanese are used to are typically smaller than expected by Western tourists.			
Menus in restaurants should be translated into English/Japanese. Japanese also appreciate pictures on the menu.			
Older guests do not eat a lot of meat. Menus need to be made very carefully.			
Japanese prefer a range of vegetables (both fresh and cooked).			
Visual impression of food and its arrangement is very important. Remember this when setting the table.			
Japanese guests prefer to sit inside the restaurant, regardless of the season			
Authenticity of food, seasonal treats and raw materials are valued.			
Opportunities to participate in the cooking or collecting of the raw materials for the dishes as a guided activity might be interesting.			
Access			
Easy access is the key! Make sure that you have instructions for public transport in your webpages, and they are clear and up-to-date. Most Japanese tourists are not likely to rent a car.			
Being able to provide transportation from a harbour, main bus station etc. is considered a competitive advantage!			

In addition, keep the following in mind concerning the different target groups:

FAMILIES			
Our traditional food can sometimes seem very odd to the Japanese. Remember to have also some neutral dishes available , especially for children.			
Make sure you also have facilities for children , like suitable chairs in the restaurant.			
GROUPS			
In Japanese groups, everybody should be served evenly. Note this!			
Our traditional food can sometimes seem very odd to the Japanese. Remember to also have some neutral dishes available.			
Transportation must be included in the package (either by you or the travel agency)			

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HOW TO SERVE JAPANESE TOURISTS?

MARKET YOUR RURAL SERVICES



This checklist has been made to help you evaluate your opportunities to

MARKET YOUR RURAL SERVICES

to Japanese tourists. Some general pointers are highlighted first, followed by the special requirements of three target groups with most potential: women between 25 and 50 years old, families and intergenerational groups and group travellers.

The practical level tips presented here are based on the feedback and experiences collected in the CAITO project. The list is not exclusive, yet hopefully gives you some ideas on how to reach these target groups.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT!

REMEMBER:

- ✓ National tourist boards are already promoting certain food or raw materials as part of their image marketing. Make the best use of these in an innovative way!
- ✓ Make sure the style of your webpages or advertising matches the Japanese criteria.
- ✓ Join forces whenever possible! Marketing is an expensive business.
- ✓ Group travellers book their holidays through a travel agency. Thus, they are your primary clients. Your products must fit their requirements.
- ✓ Group travellers want a lot of information beforehand. In order to avoid disappointments, the travel experience should be well organised and the information on the service should be explicit and detailed!



Tips for marketing your services Try to be as objective and realistic as possible when filling in this checklist!	OK	Needs to be improved	Not possible in my company
Online marketing can be effective for this target group , but remember to choose the right channels according to Japanese standards!			
Make sure you are visible in social media , but remember you have to add new posts regularly.			
Remember the target group! The images should be cute and soft according to Japanese taste.			
The information should be available at least in English , but also preferably in Japanese .			
Do not underestimate the importance of travel magazines, guidebooks and trend setters or other influencers . Use these if possible!			
Japanese prefer to plan their trip ahead. Detailed descriptions of the destination, accommodation and activities are a must!			
Japanese are very safety conscious - emphasise safety in your marketing messages.			
Use some kind of visible sign of the destination's trustworthiness ; e.g. national travel association logo, if possible. Investigate whether you can connect your product to some known brand or travel magazine.			
Combining city and rural destinations could be attractive as a marketing message (combine familiar & new products) → trustworthiness with a familiar brand. Rural tourism products rarely have a large enough reputation alone , do you need to connect with other brands or a country brand?			
Emphasise similarities between Japanese and Finnish & Baltic people , create a safe and familiar image.			
Finland and the Baltics are relatively novel destinations in the Japanese market, highlight this! Japanese are eager to discover new countries and destinations.			
Explain what is meant by rural tourism , do not just use the word since it may have a different connotation in Japanese than you mean.			
Market clean and unspoiled nature & natural phenomena .			
Easy access is the key! Make sure that you have instructions for public transport in your webpages, and that they are clear and up-to-date. Most Japanese tourists are not likely to rent a car. Being able to provide transportation is considered a competitive advantage!			
Possibility to buy			
This target group can be reached through internet shops, however, easiness is valued, Japanese prefer to buy and pay before the trip – this target group can also sometimes buy products on the spot, but still prefer to be prepared before starting their holiday.			
Use either direct reservation systems or co-operation with the travel agencies who have one . E-mail or especially bookings by phone are not preferred.			

In addition, keep the following in mind concerning the different target groups:

Women under 50 years and Families			
Flexible packaging can be seen as a competitive advantage → co-operation with cities / city hotels?			
Groups			
As group travellers book their holidays through travel agencies – provide detailed information (the quality of accommodation, the activities provided, catering) of your service to travel agencies. This is also your “insurance” in case of potential problems.			
In addition, to travel agencies, detailed descriptions of the destination, accommodation and activities are a must on your own webpages			
Include plenty of images of your service on your own webpage.			
Group travellers utilise guidebooks to get information on destinations – examine whether this could be used to disseminate information on your business.			
Senior group travellers book their holidays beforehand in Japan, the role of physical travel agency is still vital! → make agreements with Japanese travel agencies .			
Use either direct reservation systems or co-operation with the travel agencies who have one . E-mail or especially bookings by phone are not preferred.			

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