

Chapter 11

Information for Everyday Life



Saitama's Prefectural Mascot,
Kobaton

- 1 Garbage Disposal
- 2 Neighborhood Associations and Children's Clubs
- 3 Japanese Customs and Etiquette
- 4 Transportation
- 5 Banking
- 6 International Exchange and Cooperation
- 7 Tourism
- 8 Libraries
- 9 Art Museums
- 10 Museums

On TV Saitama (Channel 3 on digital terrestrial broadcasting), you can view information provided by the Saitama Information & Support (SIS) in six languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish).

1 Garbage Disposal

The collection of household trash is managed by individual municipalities. The collection day varies depending on the type of garbage being disposed – for example, burnable, non-burnable, cans and bottles, or recyclable items. Some **oversized or difficult to dispose of*** garbage may require a collection fee, or may not be able to be collected with household garbage. Each municipality has its own rules regarding how to sort the garbage, the type of garbage bag to be used, the method of disposal, collection points and days of collection. For more information, please contact the Sanitation Department (*seiso tantoka*) at your local municipal or ward office.

A Guide to Living in Saitama

Refrigerators, air conditioners, televisions and washing machines cannot be disposed of as 'oversized garbage'. You will need to contact the manufacturer or an appliance store, and pay them to collect it.

***Oversized garbage and Items that are difficult to dispose of** include: furniture, bedding, electrical appliances, kitchen items, and household items over a specified size (e.g. chest of drawers, tables, chairs, futons, carpets, bicycles, video cassette recorders, heaters, gas stoves, golf equipment). For more information, please contact the Sanitation Department (*seiso tantoka*) at your local municipal or ward office.

2 Neighborhood Associations and Children's Clubs

Each area has a self-governed neighborhood association that serves the local community by creating a sense of connection and support. Membership is voluntary, you are encouraged to join your neighborhood association to get to know your local community better. Neighborhood association events, such as festivals and recreational activities, are usually advertised by a circular bulletin that is handed from door to door (*kairanban*). If you receive such a bulletin, read it and pass it on to your neighbor in a timely manner.

Many neighborhood associations run children's clubs for elementary school students. These clubs organise activities for children, such as participating in local festivals, sports competitions, radio calisthenics, and excursions.

Monthly membership fees differ according to the association.

For more information, ask your neighbors or contact your local municipal or ward office.

3 Japanese Customs and Etiquette

(1) Household Customs

- Genkan:** The entrance, known as the *genkan*, is lower than the other rooms in the house in order to prevent dirt on your shoes from being brought into the house. When entering the house, be sure to remove your shoes before you step up into the house. If your host provides indoor slippers, please put them on when stepping into the main area of the house.
- Tatami:** Straw mats laid on the floors of Japanese style rooms are called *tatami*. Take your slippers off before entering a tatami room.
- Futon:** Japanese bedding, known as a futon, is laid out on the tatami flooring every night and put away every morning. Since Japan is very humid, it is best to store your futon high off the ground to reduce the amount of moisture absorbed. For hygienic purposes and to extend their life, you should air your futon and blankets out under the sunlight when the weather is good.
- Furo:** You should wash yourself before getting into a Japanese bathtub, known as a *furo*. After washing, Japanese people usually sit in the bath to relax. The water is not changed after each person. After you have finished, leave the plug in as the next person will take a bath using the same water.
- Toilets:** Most toilets will have slippers allocated for use only in the restroom, different from the house slippers. Change into and out of them when entering and exiting the toilet. There are two types of toilets in Japan: western style toilets (seated toilets) and Japanese style toilets (squat toilets).

(2) Gift Giving

It is customary to present small gifts in situations such as the following:

- When moving into a new apartment or house, it is common to introduce yourself to your new neighbors and offer them a small gift (e.g. hand towels).
- When visiting the home of an acquaintance, people usually bring a small gift (e.g. fruit or snacks).
- When traveling for business or for pleasure, it is standard to buy small treats or snacks at your destination to share with your colleagues upon your return.

(3) Celebrations and Ceremonies

- Celebrations:** In Japan, it is customary to give a gift or money if someone close to you is celebrating an event such as a wedding, birth, or entrance into school or university. When giving or sending money, you should use a special envelope called *shugibukuro*, which can be bought at stores. It is also customary to give crisp new bills, which are available at banks.

Weddings: Japanese weddings are held at churches, hotels, and shrines. Recently, most weddings are a combination of both Japanese and Western style ceremonies. Male guests typically wear a black suit with white shirt and white tie, while female guests wear either kimono or formal dress.

Funerals: If someone close to you passes away, you should attend either the wake or the funeral. In Japan, the wake is usually held the night before the funeral. When attending a wake or funeral, you should present a monetary offering for the departed soul in a special envelope called a *koden bukuro* (do not use new bills for this offering) and write your name in the register book. Men attending a funeral normally wear a black suit with a white shirt and black tie; women wear black formal wear. Accessories, with the exception of pearl necklaces, should not be worn.

(4) Tipping

Generally, it is not customary to tip in Japan. High-class restaurants, hotels, and banquet halls include service fees in their bills.

4 Transportation

(1) Trains

There are several methods for paying train fares.

There are different fares for adults and children. Generally, persons 12 years and older will pay the adult fare, and persons 6-11 years old will pay the children's fare. Elementary school students are eligible for the children's fare even if they are 12 years old. For each fare-paying adult or child, up to two children 5 years old and younger can ride free of charge. Each subsequent child will be charged the children's fare. Infants under the age of 1 year old can ride free of charge.

Paper ticket: A regular ticket. It can be purchased from ticketing machines at stations.

Commuter Passes (*teiki-ken*): This pass can be used to ride the train as many times as you wish along a specified route. Passes are available in 1, 3, and 6 month periods. The user's name is printed on the pass and can only be used by the registered person. Certification from your school is required to purchase a student commuter pass. Please ask a station employee for information about how to purchase this type of pass.

Multiple-Trip

Tickets:

You can buy 11 to 14 of the same tickets for the price of 10 for travel on a specified route. These can be used by people other than the person who bought the tickets. Please note that these tickets have an expiry date. You can buy these tickets at station ticket machines or the station office.

*Availability varies by railway company. Please ask a station employee for details.

Suica and PASMO:

Suica and PASMO are IC cards that can be used to board railways, and buses simply by tapping the card on the automated ticket gate or bus fare box.

Suica are sold by JR East, and PASMO cards are sold by private railway, subway or bus companies. Both Suica and PASMO cards can be used on JR lines, subways, private railways, and buses.

These cards can be reused by charging it when the remaining balance becomes low. The initial purchase of either card requires a 500 yen deposit, which will be refunded when the card is returned.

There are three types of Suica and PASMO:

- Commuter Pass: functions both as a commuter pass and a prepaid card. The user's name is printed on it. With your personal information registered, this card can be reissued for a fee if you lose it. Children's commuter passes are also available.
- Registered prepaid card: With your personal information registered, this card can be reissued for a fee if you lose it. Children's passes are also available.
- Blank prepaid card: You do not need to register your personal information, but if the card is lost, it cannot be reissued.

* Fares may differ from paper tickets. For details, please ask a station employee.

(2) Buses

There are different bus fares for adults and children. Generally, persons 12 years and older will pay the adult fare, and persons 6-11 years old will pay the children's fare. Elementary school students are eligible for the children's fare even if they are 12 years old. Bus fares for children 5 years old and younger vary depending on the bus company, but usually, for each fare-paying adult or child, up to two children 5 years old and younger can ride free of charge. Each subsequent child will be charged the children's fare. Infants under the age of 1 year old can ride free of charge.

When you pay depends on the type of bus. Generally, for buses with the entrance at the front, you must pay when you board. For buses with the entrance at the middle or back, you will not pay when you board. Instead, take a ticket from the machine at the entrance, which will have a number on it. There will be a screen at the front of the bus displaying numbers

and corresponding fares. When you get off the bus, put the fare corresponding to the number on your ticket into the fare box, along with your ticket. If you get on a bus at the first stop of the route, tickets may not be issued. In this case, you will pay the most expensive fare displayed on the board.

You can also use Suica, PASMO, or a similar IC card on most buses. If you would like to pay using Suica or PASMO, tap the card reader installed near the door with your IC card to record the location when you board; tap the card reader on the fare box with your IC card when you get off to pay your fare.

Announcements are made for every stop; however, the bus only stops if passengers indicate that they want to get off. Press the buzzer located near the window or hand rail when your stop is announced to let the driver know you want to get off.

(3) Taxis

When a taxi is available, a “空車” (*kusha*, empty) sign will be displayed in red letters in the windscreen. You can hail a taxi by raising your arm. The taxi fare is shown on the meter next to the driver. There is a surcharge between 10 pm (11 pm in some places) and 5 am. When getting into or out of a taxi, there is no need to open or close the left rear door as it is automatically operated by the driver.

5 Banking

In many cases, you will need a bank account in Japan to receive your salary or pay your rent. To open a bank account, you will usually need personal identification (such as your Residence Card or passport) and a personal seal (*inkan*). Each bank will have different procedures and required documents for opening an account, so please contact the bank where you would like to open an account for more information. It is recommended to have a cash card made when you open an account so that you can use ATMs.

6 International Exchange and Cooperation

The Saitama International Association (SIA) works to advance international exchange and cooperation on a local level by supporting international exchange and cooperation activities involving prefectural citizens. It also operates a counseling office for foreign residents in Saitama. Furthermore, the Association established the “International Exchange Plaza” to support groups promoting international exchange and cooperation within Saitama, and to provide a place to find information on these groups.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Phone	Address	Reception Hours
Saitama International Association https://sia1.jp/	048-833-2992	3F Urawa Godo Chosha 5-6-5 Kitaurawa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi	Mon - Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 8:30 - 17:15

7 Tourism

Saitama Prefecture is home to many wonderful attractions. There are numerous sightseeing spots where you can experience the beauty of nature and learn about history and culture, as well as facilities where you can enjoy sports activities.

Chokotabi Saitama, Saitama Prefecture Official Tourism Website

English:	https://en.chocotabi-saitama.jp/
Simplified Chinese:	https://ch-kan.chocotabi-saitama.jp/
Traditional Chinese:	https://ch-han.chocotabi-saitama.jp/
Korean:	https://kr.chocotabi-saitama.jp/
Thai:	https://th.chocotabi-saitama.jp/

Saitama Tourism Support Desk

English:	https://saitama-supportdesk.com/
Simplified Chinese:	https://saitama-supportdesk.com/zh-hans/
Traditional Chinese:	https://saitama-supportdesk.com/zh-hant/

Chokotabi Saitama Tourism Information Bureau

Facebook

English:	https://www.facebook.com/saitama.japan.en
Traditional Chinese (Taiwan):	https://www.facebook.com/saitamajapan.zhtw
Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong):	https://www.facebook.com/saitamajapan.zhkh/
Thai:	https://www.facebook.com/saitamajapan.th

Instagram

English:	https://www.instagram.com/saitama.japan.official/
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Welcome to Sai-no-Kuni - Tourism

<https://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/theme/kankou/>

Saitama Cultural Event Information

Lists information about music, theatre, art and other cultural events held in Saitama Prefecture.

<http://event-saitama.jp/> (official site)

8 Libraries

In Japan, public libraries are available for anyone to use, free of charge. People who live, work or attend school in Saitama Prefecture can borrow books, magazines, CDs, videos, and DVDs from Saitama Prefectural Libraries. You can make a request at the library in your municipality for an item to be sent over from another library. For more information, please inquire at your local library.

The Saitama Prefectural Kumagaya Library has a Foreign Language Materials Corner containing many foreign language materials. There are also search and consultation services available if you require assistance locating materials.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Phone	Address	Reception Hours
Saitama Prefectural Kumagaya Library	048-523-6291 Fax: 048-523-6468	5-6-1 Hakoda, Kumagaya-shi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · General materials, Saitama-related materials, newspapers, magazines, CDs, videos, DVDs Tues - Fri 9:00 - 20:00 (June - Sept) 9:00 - 19:00 (Oct - May) Sat, Sun & holidays 9:00 - 17:00 · Children's materials, etc. Tues - Sun & holidays 9:00 - 17:00
Saitama Prefectural Kuki Library	0480-21-2659 Fax: 0480-21-2791	85-5 Shimohayami, Kuki-shi	
Urawa Branch*, Saitama Prefectural Kumagaya Library	048-844-6165 Fax: 048-844-6166	1 st Floor Prefectural Archives, 4-3-18 Takasago, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi	Tues - Sun 9:00 - 17:00 *Reception desk for borrowing, returning and photocopying reserved materials (no book collections stored)

Saitama Prefectural Library website

<https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/> (Japanese)

<https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/foreign/index.html> (中文, 한국 • 조선어판, Tiếng Việt, English, Português, Español, Français, やさしい日本語)

Guide to Using Saitama Prefectural Libraries

- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/chinese.pdf> (中文)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/korean.pdf> (한국・조선어판)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/vietnamese.pdf> (Tiếng Việt)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/english.pdf> (English)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/portuguese.pdf> (Português)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/french.pdf> (Français)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/spanish.pdf> (Español)
- <https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/collection/docs/japanese.pdf> (やさしい日本語)

List of public libraries in Saitama Prefecture

<https://www.lib.pref.saitama.jp/about/post-1.html> (Japanese)

9 Art Museums

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, is located in Kita-Urawa Park, a short walk from JR Kita-Urawa Station. From foreign artists such as Monet, Chagnall and Picasso to contemporary Japanese artists, the museum has a wonderful selection of works on display. There are also many stylishly designed chairs on display.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Phone & Website	Address	Reception Hours
The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama	048-824-0111 https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/	9-30-1 Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi	10:00-17:30 *Last entry to the exhibition room is at 17:00 *Closed Mondays (unless it is a National Holiday or Saitama Prefectural Citizens Day) *Closed for New Year's Holidays, and temporary closure/maintenance days <u>Admission fee</u> MOMAS collection General admission: 200 yen University and senior high school students: 100 yen Junior high school students and younger: Free Admission fees will vary for special exhibitions.

10 Museums

① The Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore is located in Omiya Park. As a comprehensive museum of humanities specializing in history, folklore, and traditional arts, the museum boasts a wide range of Saitama Prefecture-related materials including national treasures such as swords, knives, and the Taihei-ki picture scroll, all of which have been designated as national or prefectural cultural assets.

② The Saitama Prefectural Museum of the Sakitama Ancient Burial Mounds is located within the Sakitama Kofun Cluster, a nationally designated historical site. The museum exhibition rooms house countless priceless materials unearthed from the burial mounds, including national treasures such as the Musashi Inariyama Kofun artifacts.

③ The Saitama Prefectural Ranzan Historical Museum is located in the Sugaya Yakata castle ruins, a nationally designated historical site. This historical site was home to a samurai residence in the Kamakura period (1185 -1333), followed by a castle during the Sengoku (Warring States) period (1467-1568). The museum provides a place for visitors to learn about Saitama Prefecture in the Middle Ages (approx. 12th to 16th century).

④ The Saitama Museum of Natural History is a comprehensive museum which introduces visitors to the nature and natural development of Saitama, as well as the relationship between nature and human life. Here, fascinating wonders such as an actual *Paleoparadoxia* fossil (a nationally designated natural treasure) and a reconstructed model of a gigantic shark *Carcharodon Megalodon* can be seen.

⑤ The Saitama Prefectural Museum of Rivers focuses on the prefecture's main river, the Arakawa River. The museum provides an overview of many aspects of the Arakawa River, including its natural environment, the history of its floods and management, as well as its historical usage, mainly as a form of transportation. Additionally, the museum also outlines the relationship between the river, its waters and human life.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Phone & Website	Address	Reception Hours
<p>① Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore</p>	<p>048-641-0890 https://saitama-rekimin.spec.ed.jp/</p>	<p>4-219 Takahana-cho, Omiya-ku, Saitama-shi</p>	<p>9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July - August) *Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. *Closed Mondays (unless it is a National Holiday (including substitute holidays), the Golden Week period or Saitama Residents' Day). *Closed Dec 29 - Jan 1 *There may be other temporary closures and open days.</p> <p><u>Admission fees</u> Permanent exhibitions -General admission: 300 yen, -University and senior high school students: 150 yen</p> <p>Temporary exhibitions, Special exhibitions -Admission prices will vary by exhibit -*Free admission for middle school students and younger</p>
<p>② The Saitama Prefectural Museum of the Sakitama Ancient Burial Mounds</p>	<p>048-559-1111 https://sakitama-muse.spec.ed.jp/</p>	<p>4834 Saitama, Gyoda-shi</p>	<p>9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July - August) *Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. *Closed Mondays (unless it is a National Holiday (including substitute holidays), the Golden Week period or Saitama Residents' Day). *Closed during the New Year's period *There may be other temporary closures and open days.</p> <p><u>Admission fees</u> General admission: 200 yen University and senior high school students: 100 yen Free admission for junior high school students and younger.</p> <p><u>Languages</u> *Explanations of the Sakitama Kofun Cluster and other artefacts in the nationally designated treasure exhibitions (including the Musashi Inariyama Kofun artefacts) are available in multiple languages.</p> <p>*Information pamphlets on nationally designated treasures (such as the Musashi Inariyama Kofun artefacts) are available in multiple languages.</p> <p>(Languages available: Japanese, English, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Korean)</p>

A Guide to Living in Saitama

Name	Phone & Website	Address	Reception Hours
③ Saitama Prefectural Ranzan Historical Museum	0493-62-5896 https://ranzan-shiseki.spec.ed.jp/	757 Sugaya, Ranzan-cho	9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July - August) *Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. *Closed Mondays (unless it is a National Holiday (including substitute holidays), the Golden Week period or Saitama Residents' Day). *Closed during the New Year's period *There may be other temporary closures and open days. <u>Admission fees</u> General admission: 100 yen University and senior high school students: 50 yen Free admission for junior high school students and younger.
④ Saitama Museum of Natural History	0494-66-0404 https://shizen.spec.ed.jp/	1417-1 Nagatoro, Nagatoro-machi	9:00-16:30 (9:00-17:00 in July - August) *Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. *Closed Mondays (unless it is a national holiday (including substitute holidays), the Golden Week period, Saitama Residents' Day, or between July 1 - 31 August). *Closed during the New Year's period *There may be temporary closures. <u>Admission fees</u> General admission: 200 yen University and senior high school students: 100 yen Free admission for junior high school students and younger.
⑤ Saitama Museum of Rivers	048-581-7333 https://www.river-museum.jp/	39 Kozono, Yorii-machi	9:00-17:00 (extended opening hours during the summer holiday period) *Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. *Closed Mondays (unless it is a National Holiday (including substitute holidays), the Golden Week period, Saitama Residents' Day, or during the summer holiday period). *Closed during the New Year's period *There may be temporary closures. <u>Admission fees</u> General admission: 410 yen University and senior high school students: 200 yen Free admission for junior high school students and younger. Parking: 300 yen for standard cars