



DRIVING ETIQUETTES OF JAPAN

Driving in Japan offers a unique and enjoyable experience, but it's essential to understand and adhere to local traffic laws and customs to ensure safety and compliance. Below is a comprehensive guide to driving etiquette and regulations in Japan:

1. Driving Orientation

Keep Left: In Japan, vehicles drive on the left side of the road. This may differ from your home country, so remain vigilant, especially when making turns or entering intersections.

2. Speed Limits

Urban Areas: Typically between 40 km/h to 60 km/h (25-37 mph).

Rural Roads: Around 50 km/h to 60 km/h (31-37 mph).

Expressways: Usually 80 km/h (50 mph) but can go up to 100 km/h (62 mph) on some expressways.

Always observe posted speed limits, as they can vary depending on the area and road conditions.

3. Seat Belts and Child Safety

Seat Belts: All occupants, including those in the rear seats, must wear seat belts at all times.

Child Seats: Children under six years old are required to be secured in an appropriate child safety seat.

4. Alcohol Consumption

Zero Tolerance: Japan enforces strict laws against drinking and driving. Any detectable amount of alcohol can lead to severe penalties, including fines, license suspension, or imprisonment.

5. Mobile Phone Usage

Prohibited While Driving: Using a mobile phone without a hands-free device while driving is illegal and can result in fines or other penalties.

6. Pedestrian Right of Way

Yield to Pedestrians: Drivers must yield to pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections. Always be prepared to stop for pedestrians, as they have the right of way.

7. Traffic Signals and Signs

Stop Signs: In Japan, stop signs are triangular and may display the word "止まれ" (Tomare) or "STOP." Ensure a complete stop at these signs.

No Left on Red: Unlike some countries, turning left on a red light is not permitted unless explicitly indicated by signage.

8. Use of Hazard Lights

Expressing Gratitude: It's customary to flash hazard lights briefly to thank another driver, such as when they allow you to merge.

9. Parking Regulations

Designated Areas: Always park in designated parking spaces. Illegal parking can result in fines or towing. In urban areas, parking can be scarce, so plan accordingly.

10. Emergency Vehicles

Yielding: When an emergency vehicle approaches with lights and sirens, promptly move to the left side of the road to allow it to pass.

11. Toll Roads

Expressways: Many expressways in Japan are toll roads. Be prepared to pay tolls, either in cash or via an ETC (Electronic Toll Collection) card.

12. Tour-Specific Etiquette

Do Not Overtake the Lead Car: During the tour, always stay behind the lead car and do not attempt to overtake.

Keep Your Walkie-Talkie On: Ensure your walkie-talkie is switched on, and pay close attention to instructions from the tour leader.

Drive Safely While Keeping Up: Do your best to keep up with the lead car, but prioritize safety. Do not rush or overtake other cars in the group.

By following these rules and respecting local customs, you can enjoy a safe and memorable driving experience in Japan. Safe travels!