

# Japan Accessible Tourism Center

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Today, more and more people with disability or elderly people are travelling in Japan. So we have good accessibility around the country, and there are many barrier free / universal design tourism centers to help make your trip easier and more comfortable. But if you are a foreign tourist wishing to visit Japan, you may find some difficulties in finding accessibility related information, since most of them are available only in Japanese. So here, language is one of the barriers.

JATC ( Japan Accessible Tourism Center ) is a non-profit organization that provides accessibility information in multiple languages, thereby serving as a gateway for foreign tourists with disability. We can also help you by; making arrangements for care attendants, booking accommodations, offering tips for travelling, providing assistance in case of emergency problems during your trip, etc. We can also plan and coordinate group tours or study tours. All service is free of charge.

Barrier free tourist Center :

They give us local accessible information, especially hotel and tourist spot. Main target is elderly person who needs care and his/her family. Of course they help person with heavy disability. One of their services is arrangement of care attendant on their travel spot. Some center arrange hotel, but it is gray zone of Travel Agency Law. Their problem is always finance support. They get research cost from local government for average three years. After finishing that it is difficult to keep their activity. Many barrier free centers were born in rural city because not good accessibility and lack of accessible public transportation. It is not easy to travel in rural city without car. Many barrier on local train and bus. Their activity is not only for tourist, but also for local residence. Big city like Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, they do not need special barrier free tourist center because of good accessibility and public transportation. Ise-Shima has the most famous barrier free tourist center and Kobe has a famous universal tourism center. Different name, but the activity is similar.

Travel agency for elderly and with disability :

Mainly their business is outbound group tour tourism. The number of individual trip is few. Individual trip is planned customized. So the price is high. Famous travel companies for elderly and with disability are small companies because the work is hard. Many request from customer. Many research before tour. Some companies succeed their business. Their main target is elderly who needs care. Their customers are elder care facility, nursing home, special-needs school for the disabled, and facilities for the disabled. Many day-trip with lunch and hot springs. Big travel companies have a section for accessible tourism, but the scale is so pity. Specialized tour means high price. No cheap tour for the disabled and elderly.

Three key information ;

First one is “ transportation “. JATC provide special advice for person with mobility impairment to use train, bullet train, metro, bus, long distance bus, taxi, rental car, air, and ship. Also many link to train station map. It is helpful to find which train station is wheelchair accessible and where is a lift. There are few English station maps, but it is easy to understand the map for English speakers.

Second one is “ sleeping “. For wheelchair users it is tough for find an accessible room. JATC show many range of hotel as possible as we can. You can find accessible budget hotels. There are many hot spring hotel information all of Japan. The number of accessible hot spring hotel is increasing now, but mainly for elderly and their family. The third key information is “ sightseeing “. JATC try to give more than 30 city guide for person with mobility impairment. We do not research and evaluate each accessibility because it takes much time and costs. We connect with official site if tourist spot has an English site or accessible route map. Travel tips ( toilet, pavement, disability discount, electric wheelchair, care attendant, and rental wheelchair ) are other helpful information. Each country has each accessible situation.

Our goal :

Please discover Japan hospitality and feel our culture and society. We want many people with disability and elderly person to visit Japan. Good accessibility in Japan, today. What they travel in Japan is not only fun, but also nice chance to think their accessibility change better, especially for Asian country. JATC start in April 2011. We try to get many finance supporters and give useful information to people in the world on our web site. We sincerely hope that you will find our service useful and enjoy traveling in Japan !

