

RULES OF RYOKAN

STEP1

WHAT IS RYOKAN

A ryokan is a type of traditional Japanese inn dating from the Edo period (1603–1868), when they served travelers along Japan's highways. They typically feature tatami-matted rooms, communal baths, and other public areas where visitors may wear yukata and talk with the owner.



STEP2

FEE SYSTEM

The greatest difference between a Western-style hotel and a Japanese ryokan is the fee system, with the ryokan charging for 'one night's stay with two meals'. The two meals are the evening meal on the day of your arrival, and breakfast served the following morning.



STEP3

ENTERING THE ROOM

At a Japanese ryokan, it is common for guests to take off their shoes at the entrance and to change into slippers or zori (Japanese sandals). This custom, which is also practiced in ordinary homes, stems from the tatami culture. The tatami is an indoor flooring peculiar to Japan. When entering a tatami-matted room, you must also take off your indoor slippers. In recent years, at an increasing number of ryokans, the guests do not have to remove their shoes at the entrance but can keep their shoes on as far as their guestrooms. Slippers and zori sandals are shared items and so are kept clean for the arrival of each new guest.



IN YOUR ROOM

In traditional rooms, you sit on cushions placed on legless chairs. During formal occasions you sit with your heels tucked under you, but it is most acceptable to sit cross-legged when relaxing.

STEP4

STEP5

GOING TO THE ONSEN

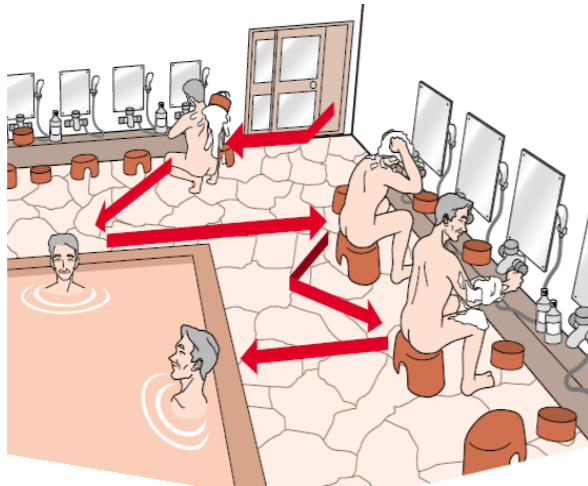
Japanese ryokans attach great importance to bathroom facilities. The bathrooms are luxurious and spacious in order to fully satisfy their guests. Another of the charms of hot springs is the magnificent landscape from the bathroom. The outdoor scenery comes in a rich variety of the sea, mountains and rivers, forests, bamboo groves, valleys, and so on.



STEP6

ETIQUETTE OF ONSEN

When using ONSEN, it is the custom to first rinse yourself off before entering the tub. After getting nice and warm, return to the spigots and wash yourself, using the soap and shampoo to work up a good lather. After rinsing carefully, return to the tub for that final relaxing soak. It is the custom not to wash standing up. When entering the bathtub, one strips to the skin without wearing a towel around the body or wearing a swimsuit. Also do not bring a towel into the tub.



STEP7

WEARING THE YUKATA

The YUKATA is a cotton kimono worn while sleeping or relaxing. It can also be worn on short excursions outside the ryokan as well. After taking a bath, we recommend you to change into the yukata placed in your guestroom. The room maid will make sure that the yukata is the right size for you. There are men's kimono and women's kimono, and at some ryokans, you will be able to choose from a number of designs and obi sashes.

Sets of yukata, haori and obi are placed in accordance with the number of persons staying in each guestroom. The tabi and zori will also be provided depending on the season. You will also find bath towels and face towels, and other amenities for your use.



STEP8

EATING JAPANESE FOOD

While meals basically consist of set menus, the ryokan may do its best to meet your advance request for items that conform to your dietary needs (especially due to religious or health reasons). For breakfast, some ryokans offer buffet-style (known as "Viking" in Japan) meals or Western-style meals and selections.



STEP9

SLEEPING ON FUTON

In Japan, people sleep on mattresses and bedclothes called 'futon' placed over the tatami mats. The word 'futon' is also used as a general term for the entire set of bedding consisting of the 'kake-buton' (quilt) and the 'shiki-buton' (mattress), as well as blankets, hada-kake (thin and soft blankets used during hot weather) and pillows, and these are changed according to each season. Similar forms of the 'futon' used by the Japanese today can be found in the ukiyo-e paintings depicted in the Edo Period, but the materials used and the quality of the futon have been greatly improved over the years. At some ryokans, down-feather 'futon' are provided. There are, of course, some ryokans which offer guestrooms fitted out with Western-style beds, but we recommend you to sleep on the futon for a most comfortable and memorable experience.

