

# Project: Plan Your Dream Trip to Japan!

## Materials Needed

- A computer with internet access
- A notebook and pen, or a digital document (like Google Docs or Microsoft Word) for taking notes
- A spreadsheet program (like Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel)
- Access to websites like Google Flights, Booking.com (or similar hotel sites), and Google Maps

## Introduction for the Student

Welcome, future traveler! You've expressed an interest in Japan, and this week, we're going to turn that interest into a practical, creative project. You will become a travel agent, researcher, and budget manager all in one. Your mission is to plan a realistic 5-day trip to Tokyo. This project isn't about memorizing facts; it's about using real-world skills like research, budgeting, and planning to design an amazing adventure. Let's get started!

## Your Mission & Budget

You will plan a complete 5-day, 5-night trip to Tokyo, Japan for one person. You have a total budget of **\$2,500 USD**. This budget must cover:

1. Round-trip airfare.
2. Hotel for 5 nights.
3. Activities, local transportation, and food.

Your final product will be a detailed itinerary that is clear, exciting, and, most importantly, within budget!

## Day 1: The Foundation - Budget & Flights

### Objective

To set up a budget tracker and find round-trip flights to Tokyo that fit within the budget.

### Tasks

- 1. Set Up Your Budget Tracker:**
  - Open a spreadsheet program (like Google Sheets).
  - Create the following columns: Item, Category (e.g., Airfare, Hotel, Food), Estimated Cost (USD), Actual Cost (USD), and Remaining Budget.
  - In the first row under "Item," write "Starting Budget." In the "Remaining Budget" column, enter \$2,500. Every time you "spend" money on your plan, you will subtract it from this total.
- 2. Learn the Currency:**
  - The currency in Japan is the Japanese Yen (JPY). Do a quick search for "USD to JPY." What is the current exchange rate?
  - This is important because many prices for things in Japan (like museum tickets or a bowl

of ramen) will be listed in Yen.

### 3. **Hunt for Flights:**

- Go to a website like **Google Flights**.
- Search for a round-trip ticket from your nearest major airport to Tokyo (the main airports are Narita (NRT) or Haneda (HND)). Haneda is closer to the city center.
- Choose dates about 3-4 months in the future to find realistic prices. Look for a 5-night stay. For example, you could depart on a Monday and return on the following Sunday.
- Find the best-priced flight that works for you. Note the airline, flight times, and the total cost.
- Add this to your budget spreadsheet under "Airfare." Subtract the cost from your total budget. How much do you have left for the rest of your trip?

## Day 2: Home Away From Home - Finding Your Hotel

### Objective

To research different neighborhoods in Tokyo and book a hotel that is both interesting and affordable.

### Tasks

1. **Choose Your Neighborhood:** Tokyo is huge! The neighborhood you stay in affects your experience. Research these three popular areas and decide which one best fits the trip you want to have:
  - **Shinjuku:** A bustling hub with giant skyscrapers, amazing restaurants, beautiful gardens (Shinjuku Gyoen), and lots of shopping. Great for seeing modern Tokyo.
  - **Shibuya:** Famous for the "Shibuya Scramble" crossing. It's a center for youth fashion, fun cafes, and nightlife. Home to the Hachiko statue.
  - **Akihabara:** Known as "Electric Town," this is the heart of anime, manga, and video game culture. Filled with arcades, themed cafes, and electronics stores.
2. **Find Your Hotel:**
  - Go to a hotel booking site like **Booking.com** or **Agoda**.
  - Search for a hotel in your chosen neighborhood for your 5 nights.
  - Use the filters to sort by price (low to high) and "Review Score." Look for a place that has good reviews (e.g., 8.0 or higher) and fits your remaining budget. Read a few reviews to see what people liked about it.
  - Choose one hotel and note its name, address, and the total cost for 5 nights.
3. **Update Your Budget:** Add the hotel cost to your spreadsheet. How much money is left for activities, food, and local transportation for 5 days?

## Day 3: Exploring Tokyo - Activities & Food (Part 1)

### Objective

To research and schedule activities for the first two full days of your trip, mapping them out logically.

### Tasks

1. **Brainstorm & Research:** Based on your chosen neighborhood and interests, what do you want to do? Here are some ideas to get you started. Research the location, opening hours, and cost (in Yen and USD) for things that interest you.

- **Culture & History:** Senso-ji Temple, Meiji Jingu Shrine, Ghibli Museum (requires booking far in advance!), Tokyo National Museum.
- **Modern & Quirky:** Tokyo Skytree, Shibuya Sky observation deck, teamLab Borderless digital art museum, a themed cafe (like a cat cafe or anime cafe), exploring Harajuku's Takeshita Street.
- **Relaxation & Nature:** Ueno Park, Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden, a boat trip on the Sumida River.

## 2. Plan Your First Two Days:

- Open a new document or a new tab in your spreadsheet. Title it "Itinerary."
- For "Day 1" and "Day 2," create a schedule. Try to group activities that are geographically close to each other to save travel time. Use Google Maps to check distances between your hotel and your planned activities.
- For each activity, list its name, a short description of why you chose it, the cost, and the estimated time you'll spend there.
- **Don't forget local travel!** A day pass for the Tokyo Metro is about 600-800 JPY (\$4-6 USD). Add this to your daily budget.
- Update your main budget tracker with the estimated costs for these two days.

## Day 4: Finalizing the Fun - Itinerary Days 3-5 & Food

### Objective

To complete the daily itinerary and create a realistic food budget.

### Tasks

#### 1. Plan Days 3, 4, and 5:

- Using the same process from yesterday, fill out the rest of your itinerary.
- Maybe one day is your "Anime/Gaming Day" in Akihabara. Maybe another is a "Nature & Culture Day" visiting a park and a temple. Be creative!
- Make sure to schedule in some free time for spontaneous exploring. Sometimes the best discoveries are the unplanned ones.
- Update your budget tracker with the costs for all activities and local transport. Are you still within your total budget? If not, what can you adjust? Maybe a free activity like walking through Ueno Park instead of a pricey museum?

#### 2. Budgeting for Food:

- Food is a huge part of visiting Japan! You don't need to plan every meal, but you need a budget. Here's a sample daily budget to help you estimate:
  - **Budget-Friendly Day (approx. \$30-40 USD):** Breakfast from a convenience store (*konbini*) like 7-Eleven (surprisingly delicious!), a bowl of ramen for lunch, and a simple curry or donburi bowl for dinner.
  - **Mid-Range Day (approx. \$50-70 USD):** Cafe breakfast, a sushi lunch, and a nice dinner at an *izakaya* (Japanese pub with food).
- Decide on a realistic daily food budget. Multiply it by 5 days and add this total amount to your main budget spreadsheet.

## Day 5: Presentation - Share Your Trip!

### Objective

To organize your research into a clear, compelling travel plan and present it.

## Tasks

### 1. Organize Your Itinerary:

- Review all your documents: the budget spreadsheet and the daily schedule.
- Create a final, clean presentation. This can be a simple, well-organized document, a slideshow (like Google Slides), or you can even make a short video talking through your plan.
- Your final plan should include:
  1. Your final budget showing all expenses and confirming you stayed under \$2,500.
  2. Your flight and hotel details.
  3. A day-by-day plan that includes activities, costs, and a brief note on why you chose each one.
  4. A map of Tokyo with your hotel and key activities pinned. (You can create this with Google's "My Maps" feature).

2. **Present Your Plan:** Share your trip with me! Walk me through your choices. Explain your favorite part of the plan. What was the most challenging part of staying on budget? What are you most excited about? Be prepared to explain your decisions and show off all your hard work.

## Project Assessment Rubric

Category	Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
<b>Budgeting</b>	Budget is meticulously tracked, accurate, and stays under the \$2,500 limit. All major categories are included.	Budget is tracked and stays within the limit, but may have minor calculation errors or miss a small category.	Budget is incomplete, inaccurate, or exceeds the \$2,500 limit.
<b>Research &amp; Planning</b>	Itinerary is creative, well-researched, and shows logical geographic planning. Choices are clearly justified and reflect personal interest.	Itinerary includes good activities, but they may not be grouped logically for travel efficiency. Research is adequate.	Itinerary is sparse or contains activities without research into cost, location, or hours.
<b>Clarity &amp; Organization</b>	The final presentation is polished, easy to follow, and includes all required components (budget, itinerary, flight/hotel info).	The presentation includes most required components but may be slightly disorganized or hard to follow in places.	The presentation is disorganized and missing multiple key components.
<b>Problem-Solving</b>	Student clearly made thoughtful trade-offs to stay on budget and thoughtfully explains these choices.	Student made adjustments to stay on budget, but the reasoning is not fully explained.	Little evidence of adjusting the plan to meet constraints.