Clothing

You will need a sun hat. They are required for camp, and many Japanese people wear them outdoors in the summer to protect themselves from sunburn. Ideally, it should protect your ears and if you have short hair, the back of your neck. Baseball-style hats are allowable, but a cloth hat with a brim on all sides would be better. Labo Campers like to sign each others’ hats, so if you want to join in, bring a hat that your fellow campers can sign with a black marker.

Japan can be hot and the "dress code" is more conservative than what may be worn by your friends. Clothing usually seen at your gym or the beach is likely not appropriate. Shirts should cover the chest to the collarbone. No exposed belly or cleavage. Plan to wear lightweight clothing. Jeans and sweats are too hot; bring pants that are a lighter-weight fabric and please make sure they don’t drag on the floor. Unless your pants have an elastic waist, you must wear a belt. Shoulders must be covered. This means no tank tops or spaghetti straps.

T-shirts, short-sleeved shirts and polo shirts are fine. Button-up and long- sleeved or short-sleeved shirts are fine. Shorts should be knee length or longer and not super-baggy like some basketball shorts. Capri pants are fine. Knit shorts, yoga pants and leggings are not good in hot weather and are best left at home. If you must wear them, your shirts MUST be long enough to reach the thigh and cover your bottom and the crotch of your knit pants. Dresses and skirts should be knee-length or longer. Bring a slip if your dress/skirt needs one. Floor length skirts can be inconvenient at times, especially on crowded trains, stairs and escalators. Sun dresses or dresses with cut-outs are not appropriate. If you have a question about clothes, feel free to contact the outbound coordinator.

Since Japanese mothers do laundry almost daily, you can bring 4 to 5 changes of clothes and never run out. Don’t bring clothing which needs special care, such as hand-washing or dry-cleaning. If you need to wash clothes, talk with your host mother. She will want to wash them with the family laundry. If you want to try to do your own laundry, ask her to show you how, and take notes. The washing machines are different and the buttons are in Japanese. Many families hang all their laundry to dry, rather than use the electricity of the clothes dryer, so plan ahead to allow for drying time.

You will want to bring some modest dark-colored knit shorts or PJ pants and a t-shirt to use as pajamas. At camp, all the boys sleep in one room and the girls in another.

Some schools may be in session when you arrive. If you are able to attend school in Japan, you might need a modest (not see-through) white shirt of a woven fabric (one that buttons) and a dark blue skirt or pants and a pair of black shoes. Don't look for these yet, as your host may be on summer break or be able to lend you a uniform. You can ask your host family if you need to bring clothes for school.

Each delegate should bring at least one "outfit" appropriate for going out to a nice restaurant. A nice pair of pants or skirt and a nice woven or polo shirt without a lot of words on it would be fine. A dress would be fine, too.

After your first overnight in Japan, you will travel to meet your host family. Please dress nicely. You can wear a skirt or capris/pants, but no shorts, with your 4-H t-shirt.

Bring socks that are in good condition, as you will be taking off your shoes in all homes and even in some restaurants and other public buildings.

If you are traveling with the Nihongo program, you may want to also bring a watch, as you will not have a cell phone to tell you when your lunch break is over.

A repeat on shoes: bring comfortable shoes in which you can walk all day on pavement, on and off trains, up and down stairs and possibly in a light rain. Japan is humid and hot, so a heavy leather basketball or skate shoe won’t be as comfortable as a lightweight sneaker or Converse canvas shoe. If, in addition to the walking shoes you wear on the plane (and any hiking boots you want to bring to Camp), you want to bring a second pair of shoes, you can. Choose something comfortable and easy to get on and off (laces are ok).

If you wear sandals, bring a clean pair of socks in your day bag just in case. Some tea houses and temples would rather people didn’t enter with dusty feet, so you’ll want to put on your socks. Japanese people do not wear the rubber Teva-style sandals or flip-flops in public, except to the beach. Crocs are not allowed on many public escalators and clogs are a problem on trains.