JAPANESE HOMES

にほんのうち

YEAR 8 LOTE
This is the plan of a 2LDK city apartment, which accommodates a family of three: father, mother and child. 2LDK means two living rooms, which are also used as bedrooms, a dining room and a kitchen.

Because housing and education is so expensive, Japanese families are very small. Draw a plan of your house or apartment. Compare this to the plan below.
When visiting a home in Japan, it is considered polite to take off your coat before going in the front door. If there is no bell or intercom at the door, a guest will call out こんにちは (Hello) or ごめんください (Excuse me) before opening the door.

One enters a home wearing shoes, but only as far as the どま, the area immediately inside the front door. After exchanging simple greetings there, one takes off one’s shoes and proceeds into the home, having been invited in by the host who will say どうぞおあがりください (Please come in).

Once your shoes have been taken off you must put on a pair of house slippers and place your shoes into a storage unit called げたばこ or くつばこ.

One takes off one’s shoes facing the interior of the home. Then, stepping up one faces sideways and kneels on the floor to reposition one’s shoes facing the door.
1. Fill in the missing words within the following passage.
When entering a home one will call out _______________ or _______________ before opening the door. At the entrance, or ____________, people must take off their shoes and put on house slippers in the small area inside the door called______. There is a storage unit called a ____________________________ to put shoes in. Once you have taken off your shoes the host will invite you into their home by saying _________________.

2. Label the items and areas in the entrance in the following pictures
In a Japanese style room, one sits directly on a straw mat flooring called たたみ or on a cushion called さぶとん. Most Japanese houses and apartments have an alcove called とこのま and either a Shinto altar of Japanese gods called かみだな which is shaped like a small shelf and is kept on a shelf near the ceiling, or a family Buddhist altar called ぶっだん which are shaped like a cabinet with doors at the front that swing open. These things are all located within the tatami or Japanese style room.

Since the sixteenth century, according to the shoin style of traditional Japanese residential architecture within homes of the samurai, there has been a tokonoma, a space reserved for placing important items used in ceremonies. Now it is the most important place in a room, where seasonal ceremonial ornaments are put. To this day, pictures and vertical scroll of calligraphy are hung on the wall and traditional flower arrangements known as いけばな decorate the alcove.

One should not step on the しきい (the grooved lengths of timber along which the sliding door move) of the しょうじ (Paper sliding doors used as a curtain or shutter) and ぶつま (a thick paper sliding door between traditional Japanese style rooms and are covered on both sides with cloth or paper, which is often decorated with designs or pictures). One should not step on the cloth borders of tatami mats because, in former times, the pattern of the cloth was important in signifying the social status of the owner of the house.
In the picture below of a traditional Japanese room label the traditional items with the corresponding number.

1. たたみ (Tatami) 5. いけばな (Ikebana)
2. とこのま (Tokonoma) 6. ふつま (Futsuma)
3. かみだま (Kamidama) 7. しょうじ (Shouji)
4. ぶつだん (Butsudan) 8. かけじく (Kakejiku)

Write below five interesting facts you have learnt about traditional Japanese style rooms.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________
Most Japanese people still use a soft, thick mattress and quilt called a ふとん to sleep on. During the day it is folded up and stored in a cupboard with sliding doors called おしいれ. This enables rooms to have more uses: a living room during the day and a bedroom at night.
Japanese toilets are quite different to western toilets. Public toilets offer both types, but in homes usually have one or the other. A Japanese style toilet is built into the floor. To use it you squat facing the hood. This style of toilet is considered to be cleaner. This kind of toilet is used in some other countries.

Some homes may have western style toilets but these are slightly different to the ones we use. Some have a little basin and pipe on top of the cistern. When you flush the toilet water comes out of the pipe above the cistern at the same time so that you can wash your hands. Another clean and space-saving idea! Some very modern toilets have automatic switched on radios, heated seats and special body cleaning sprays.

1. Why are Japanese style toilets considered to be clean?

2. What other countries use a similar style toilet to the Japanese style?

3. Write down 5 interesting facts about Japanese toilets from the videos.
   A) ________________________________
   B) ________________________________
   C) ________________________________
   D) ________________________________
   E) ________________________________
Many Japanese say that they love to take baths, meaning that they like to relax in a hot tub of water. The large number of hot springs throughout Japan is probably one of the reasons for this custom, and because bathing is communal in hot springs, one always washes ones body outside, not in the bathtub.

The typical sequence even when bathing at home is this: rinse the body with hot water, get in the bathtub to warm up, step out of the bathtub to scrub carefully with soap, rinse off, and finally get in the bathtub again and soak. One should be careful to rinse off all the soap from your body with hot water before getting into the bathtub.

Discuss the similarities and differences between Japanese bathrooms and western bathrooms. Put a ✓ in the box if the statement is the same for each style of bathroom and a ✗ if it is different.

A) □ The toilet is always in a separate room to the bath.
B) □ Japanese people wash and rinse themselves outside the bath.
C) □ The bath is very deep and short.
D) □ The water is very hot and just for soaking in after washing.
E) □ The whole family uses the same tub of water.
F) □ Small children often take baths with their parents.
G) □ Bathing is an important time for relaxing.
H) □ There are many public bath-houses with very big baths where more than 10 people can bathe together.
I) □ Men and women bathe separately in public bath-houses.
J) □ There are many popular hot-spring baths (onsen)
HEATING AND COOLING A JAPANESE HOME

Many western homes have central heating or wood fires to heat them in winter. However, this is not usually the case for urban housing in Japan even though winter is very cold in most areas. Wood for burning is scarce and because houses or apartments are so close together, a fire would be disastrous. Oil, gas or electric stoves and heaters are used in each room with a foot warming こたつ being used in the main living rooms or たたみ rooms.

A こたつ is a low table with a removable top. Attached to the underside of the table is an electric heater. The table frame is covered with a quilt, and the tabletop goes on this. Feet and legs are kept warm by the heater and quilt while eating, studying or watching television. The quilt is removed in summer.

A Japanese summer is very hot and humid. Electric fans, hand fans and air conditioners are used in every home to make the summer season more comfortable. Summer plants and wind chimes are placed in prominent places to make the house seem cooler.

たたみ flooring is very practical because it is much cooler than carpeting and air can pass through it. Sometimes a soft straw mat is used on top of the ふとん for the same reason. It makes it much easier to sleep in hot weather.

1. What is a こたつ?

2. What cooling devices do Japanese people use in their home?
Japanese gardens are traditional gardens that create miniature-idealized landscapes, often in a highly abstract and stylized way. The gardens of the Emperors and nobles were designed for recreation and aesthetic pleasure, while the gardens of Buddhist temples were designed for contemplation and meditation.

Japanese garden styles include:

**Karesansui**, Japanese rock gardens or Zen gardens, which are meditation, gardens where white sand replaces water.

**Roji**, simple, rustic gardens with teahouses where the Japanese tea ceremony is conducted.

**Kaiyuushiki-teien**, promenade or stroll gardens, where the visitor follows a path around the garden to see carefully composed landscapes.

**Tsubo-niwa**, small courtyard gardens usually found in Japanese homes.

Japanese gardens were developed under the influences of the Chinese gardens,[2] but gradually Japanese garden designers began to develop their own aesthetics, based on Japanese materials and Japanese culture. By the Edo period, the Japanese garden had its own distinct appearance. Since the end of the 19th century, Japanese gardens have also been adapted to Western settings.
Greetings in Japanese Homes

When going to bed

Before Eating

When waking up

After Eating

When leaving home

When returning home

ただいま
おやすみ

ごちそうさま
おはよう

いただきます
いってきます
Exercise

Label each picture below in both hiragana and romaji.

じょうじ  こたつ  とこのま  ざぶとん
おしいれ  げんかん  にわ
ふとん  たたみ
Natasha’s first few days in Japan were exciting and confusing! Help sort out the details in her dream by completing the gaps with an appropriate word from the list below. Some are included more than once.

1. たこのま 2. にわ 3. ふろば
4. おふろ 5. スリッパ 6. さぶとん
7. かいだん 8. おいしいれ 9. ふとん
10. こたつ 11. たたみ 12. げんかん
13. いま 14. しようじ

This was my first day in Japan on a five week exchange program. I had been practising どうぞよろしく and ありがとう until I was blue in the face. Yet as I arrived at my host family’s house for the first time, every word I knew in Japanese seemed to have escaped me and everything looked strange.

I entered the house and stood in the __________. As I struggled to remove my shoes and step up into the house, I realised my lace ups were going to really get on my nerves in Japan. My host mum gave me some __________ to wear, but my heels hung over the back and I had trouble keeping them on as I walked along the polished wooden floor towards the __________. As she opened the sliding door, I saw a beautiful Japanese room with __________ on the floor, a low table which I learnt was called a __________ and red silk __________ to sit on. I went to step into the room, but the look on my host mum’s face and her sudden ah! made me think I was about to do something terrible! Of Course! Take off your __________ before going into the __________ room and just wear your socks, Natasha!

We sat down. I remembered to sit up on my knees as せんせい had taught us, but my host mum gestured to stretch my legs out under the __________. It was warm and I immediately felt more relaxed. I was dreading drinking the small cup of green tea that was placed in front of me, but somehow it didn’t taste as bad as the tea we had tried in the cooking lesson at school, especially with the sweet that went with it.

The tour of the house continued. We climbed the __________ to the top floor where I was shown my room. This time I didn’t hesitate to take off my __________ as I stepped onto the __________. There was no bed, in fact there was nothing in the room at all except a flower arrangement anda scroll with かんじ written on it hanging in the __________ in the corner. My host mum opened the __________ to let the light in and I could look down on a small Japanese-style __________ with carp in a small pond. I obviously looked worried wondering where I would sleep because my host mum rushed over to the __________, flung open the doors to reveal a brand new __________ with white covers which she proceeded to show me how to make up.
The Japanese bath was what I was most prepared for, or so I thought! I understood most of my host mums explanation but when I got into the ______________, took off my clothes and put them in the basket I suddenly realised that the handtowel I was given to dry myself would probably dry one arm if I was lucky! But there was no turning back now! I went into the adjoining room which contained a hand shower, many bowls and cakes of soap and a deep __________ filled to the brim with steaming water. Was this for cleaning or cooking me? I followed the washing ritual which せんせい had drummed into us. Then I slowly and nervously got into the bath. My legs went red and felt like they were cooking. Slowly though I was able to sit down until the water came up to my neck. It was very relaxing. I could get quite used to this. As I sat there I gradually became less worried about remembering words, phrases and customs and it suddenly occurred to me... wow! I’m really in Japan!

Find the following words in the wordsearch.

| た た み | ざ ぶ と ん |
| げ ん か ん しょう じ |
| た に は な お ふ ろ |
| ば わ う ち し と わ |
| こ た つ う い ん し |
| と こ の ま れ わ つ |

Getabako げたばこ
Tatami たたみ
Oshiire おしいれ
Genkan げんかん
Tokonoma とこのま
Niwa にわ
Zabuton ざぶとん
Washitsu わしつ
Kotatsu こたつ
Ofuro おふろ
Futon ふとん
Shouji しょうじ
Uchi うち

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