

# Tokai: Travel and Other Tips

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## 1 Introduction

This document aims to provide some practical advice on how to travel to Tokai-mura by train, along with a few other bits of information that people may find useful. If you have suggestions for improvements that could be made to this document please send them to Matthew Lawe via email or Slack, or make adjustments yourself here before uploading a replacement copy of the document.

When making your way, be aware that the Japanese pronunciation of Tokai is with a longer *o* sound (“Toe-kai mu-ra” for English speakers). There’s a small but non-negligible chance they will not recognise the name if you use the T2K standard short-*o* pronunciation.

## 2 Train Travel

Train journeys in Japan have a fixed cost for the journey you are making (the ticket cost), and then an additional seat cost (seat reservation ticket) to ride on the fast (express) trains. Slow local trains do not require the purchase of a seat ticket. If you are unsure of what tickets you need it is best to go to the ticket office at a major station where they will be able to help, and most likely speak English.

For planning train journeys it used to be best to use hyperdia.com, however the site no longer provides timetable details (but can be used for route planning, getting costs and journey times). The current recommendation seems to be jorudan.co.jp (Japan Transit Planner) which has both a website and is also available as a mobile app.

When you get your ticket you will usually need to pass through a gate to get on the platform and again to get off. So you need to hold onto the ticket it until you finish your journey. Many station staff


























Time	Route	Fare	Seat Fee	UsefulLink
11 Min	 <b>NARITA AIRPORT TERMINAL 1</b> Add to favorite	┌		 Map  Rent-a-car  Hotel  Restaurant
[44 Min]	 Keisei Skyliner	¥1,270	Liner ticket: ¥1,300 	
55 Min 55 Min	 <b>KEISEI-UENO</b> Add to favorite	┌		 Map  Rent-a-car  Hotel  Restaurant
[8 Min]	 Walk			
63 Min 92 Min	 <b>UENO</b> Add to favorite	┌		 Map  Rent-a-car  Hotel  Restaurant
[88 Min]	 Ltd. Exp. Tokiwa	¥2,310	Reserved seat: ¥1,100 	
180 Min	 <b>TOKAI</b> Add to favorite	┌		 Map  Rent-a-car  Hotel  Restaurant

Figure 1: Journey plan for Narita Airport to Tokai.

will take pity on a confused foreigner who has lost their ticket, but they are supposed to ask you where you got on and charge you again.

## 2.1 From Narita Airport to Tokai

For travelling to Tokai-mura from Narita airport I would recommend following the route outlined in Figure 1, which uses fast trains, that run very regularly and has the minimum number of changes (although an additional change that is normally required at Katsuta is not shown). This exact route does not come up if you search jorudan.co.jp as it does not seem to allow for the walk between stations in Ueno. I provide a detailed breakdown of the necessary steps below.

### 2.1.1 Step 1: Narita Airport to Keisei-Ueno Station

At the airport the train station is in the basement level and there are clear signs from the arrivals area to the station.

When down at the station level proceed to the obvious Skyliner & Keisei Information Center or the Skyliner Ticket Counter to purchase a ticket on the Keisei Skyliner to Ueno.

All seats on the skyliner are reserved and there is plenty of luggage storage in each carriage, the journey to Ueno takes about 40 minutes, and the service operates between about 7:20 and 23:00 daily.

### 2.1.2 Step 2: Keisei-Ueno Station to JR Ueno Station

Upon arrival in Ueno, you need to change station to transfer from the Keisei railway station to the JR (Japan Railway Group) station. This involves a short walk as shown on the map in Figure 2 and described below.

1. Exit Keisei-Ueno station via a short flight of stairs that take you up and out through the Main Exit.
2. Once on street level turn left and follow the footpath along the road to the pedestrian crossing. Cross the road to the JR Ueno station building.
3. You can enter the station through the small entrance by all the shops below the bridge, but I would continue a little further to enter through the Hirokoji Exit (on the left just after you pass under the bridge).
4. Once inside proceed to the JR travel centre where you can purchase a ticket to Tokai.

If you're feeling hungry, Ueno is a good place to stop for lunch with many convenience stores, cafes and restaurants in the local area.

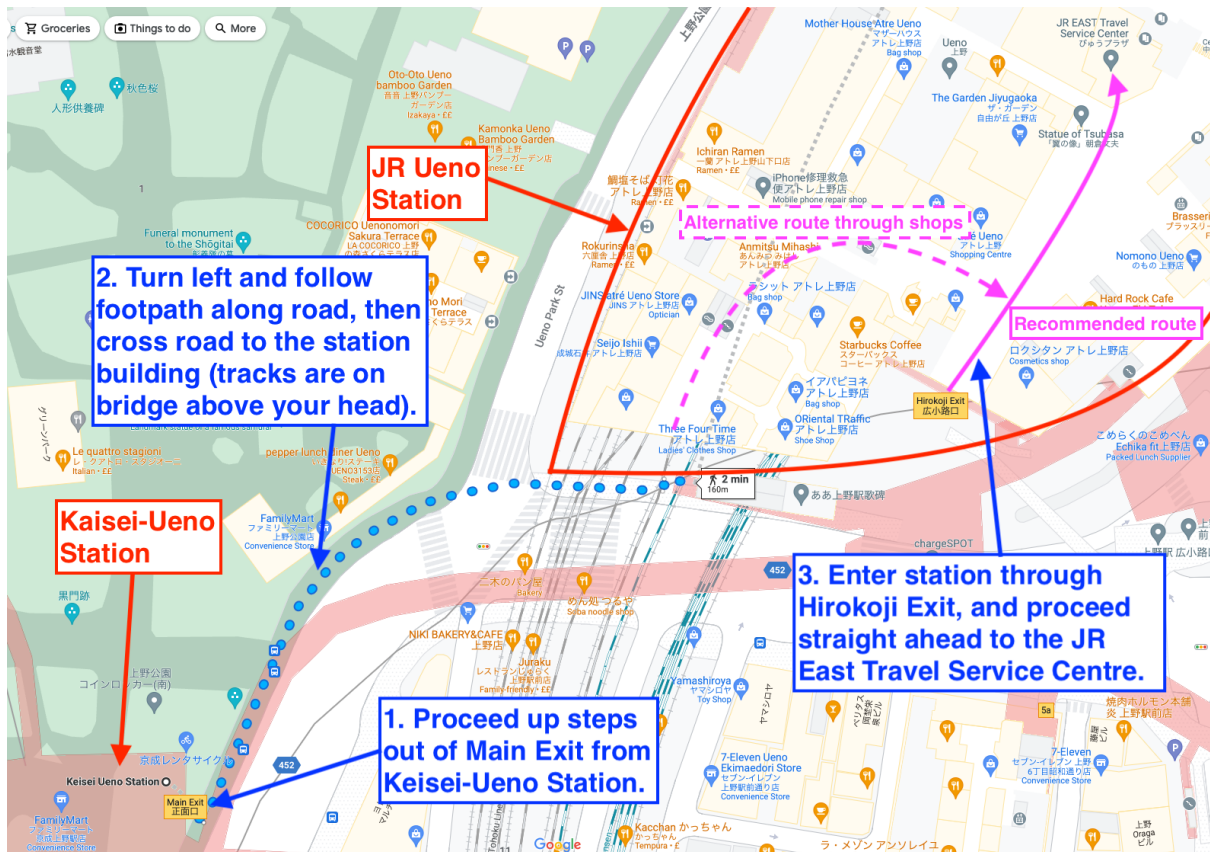


Figure 2: Station transfer from Keisei-Ueno Station to JR Ueno Station.

### 2.1.3 Step 3: JR Ueno Station to Tokai

Once inside the JR Ueno station, proceed to the ticket office within the travel service centre and buy a ticket to Tokai-mura (Tokai village) (東海村) which is in Ibaraki-ken (Ibaraki Prefecture) (茨城県). You will also need to purchase a seat reservation ticket for the fast train to Tokai at the same time. Here the staff will again likely speak English.

There are two types of fast trains that run towards Tokai, the Hitachi and Tokiwa services. They leave from Ueno station on the hour (00), and half past the hour (30), every hour between 07:00 and 23:00.

- The Hitachi services is the faster service that leaves on the hour until 21:00. It rarely stops at stations south of Mito and continues quite far north to Iwaki or Sendai. Only one Hitachi train a day stops at Tokai, so you will almost certainly **need to to change trains at Katsuta**.
- The Tokiwa service is the slower service that leaves at half past the hour until 21:30, and then on the hour and half hour until 23:00. It stops at several stations south of Mito and doesn't continue very far north, only going as far as Katsuta or Takahagi. Only three Tokiwa trains a day stops at Tokai, so you will almost certainly **need to to change trains at Katsuta**.

When buying your ticket you should ask which platform your train will be leaving from (likely to be 8, 9, 16 or 17). All seats on the fast trains are reserved, and your ticket will indicate which train car your seat is in, and markings on the platform will indicate where the doors open for each train car so it is easy to know where to stand and wait for the train (but ask staff on the platform if you need help working out where to go).

When buying your ticket it is also worth checking if the fast train stops in Tokai, or if you need to change trains at Katsuta (your seat reservation ticket should also tell you). You will almost certainly need to make this change, so exit the train at Katsuta and wait on the platform for the next train to come in. In general the local train that will take you to Tokai follows shortly after the fast train leaves, and goes from the same platform. If in any doubt, ask a member of staff on the platform. It is two stops on the local train to Tokai (Katsuta → Sawa → Tokai).

Time	Route	Fare	Seat Fee	UsefulLink
10 Min	HANEDA AIRPORT TERMINAL 3(KEIKYU) Add to favorite	┌		Map  Rent-a-car Hotel  Restaurant
[13 Min]	Keikyu Main/Airport Line Rapid Ltd. Exp.	¥300		
23 Min 57 Min	SHINAGAWA Add to favorite	┌		Map  Rent-a-car Hotel  Restaurant
[100 Min]	Ltd. Exp. Tokiwa	¥2,310	Reserved sea ▾	
157 Min	TOKAI Add to favorite	┌		Map  Rent-a-car Hotel  Restaurant

Figure 3: Journey plan for Haneda Airport to Tokai.

## 2.2 From Haneda Airport to Tokai

The easiest route from Haneda to Tokai is shown in 3. Not surprisingly, you end up on the same Hitachi/Tokiwa services as if you came from Narita, but initially you are coming from the south of Tokyo. Although you are crossing the city, Haneda is much closer so in practice the journey is slightly quicker. Again it is better to use the fast trains, especially when you have just arrived and are carrying luggage, and again you will almost certainly end up changing at Katsuta.

For the change in Tokyo, the two stations are built right next to each other, which saves walking but adds a little complication for first time visitors. This transfer is unfortunately really busy during rush hour (07:30~09:00) and (17:00~18:00). If you have a lot of luggage or otherwise find this stressful you might want to stop and have a coffee break at the airport to avoid the worst of it.

### 2.2.1 Step 1: Haneda Airport (Terminal 3) to Shinagawa Station

Almost all international flights arrive at Terminal 3. At the airport the train station is in the centre of the arrivals lobby. There are two companies: Keikyu and Tokyo Monorail; Keikyu is on the right side and the monorail is on the left. The easier route is with Keikyu on the right. There is a Tourist Information counter; I'm not sure if they sell tickets, but they will probably help you if you ask. Otherwise, the machines are quite easy and there is a button to make the ticket machine display in English. Check the price to Shinagawa (KK01) on the map—it should be around 300 yen—and buy a ticket of the corresponding price.

Once you have bought a ticket go through the gates to the right and downwards to the platforms in the basement. The route branches out in two directions, but the trains you want will go to *Shinagawa* (品川) or possibly *Narita airport* (成田空港). If you are unsure it is absolutely fine to wait around for the next train, they go every few minutes during the day. The type of train (local, express, limited express) does not matter.<sup>1</sup> As long as it is going toward Shinagawa, all trains stop there and your ticket is valid on any of them. The express trains are also very common so there's not usually any point in getting on a local service, but it will still get you there.

This route does not have reserved seating, and it runs from 5:20 to 24:00 daily. It takes about 15~ 25 minutes to get to Shinagawa, depending on what service you end up on.

### 2.2.2 Step 2: Transferring at Shinagawa (Keikyu Line to JR Lines)

*Note: there is a long-term project to add the Maglev (“Chuo Shinkansen”) terminal at Shinagawa Station. This will involve the entire station being replaced by 2027. So if you are reading this in 2024 or later the location of everything might have changed.*

Most local people who exit Keikyu station at Shinagawa will transfer directly into the JR station, through gates on platform 1. But to do this you need to have your completed Keikyu Ticket *and* a ticket for JR line (or an IC card), and if you are following this guide you probably only have the Keikyu-line ticket. Instead, the normal exit of the Keikyu Station is downstairs on platform 2 (where

<sup>1</sup>This is unusual, normally limited express trains require a different ticket.

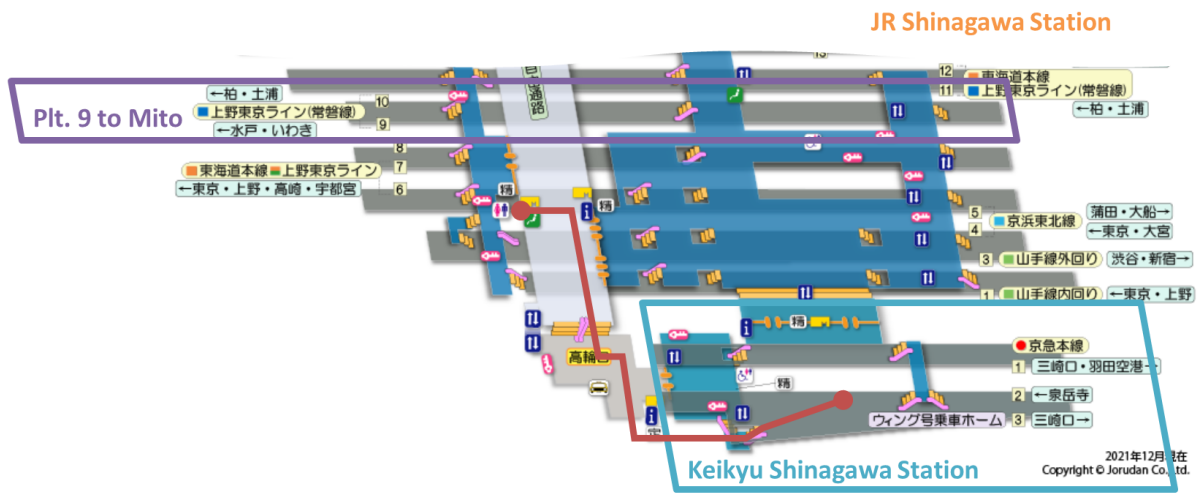


Figure 4: Station map for transfer from Keikyu Line to JR Lines in Shinagawa.

you get off if coming from Haneda). Go down the stairs or take the lift, exit the station, and then turn right and go up the escalator outside to reach the JR station concourse.

On the concourse, the travel service centre will be ahead on the left, just before the North Gate. See Figure 4 for details.

### 2.2.3 Step 3: JR Shinagawa to Tokai

At the travel service centre go to the ticket counters and buy a ticket to Tokai-mura (Tokai village) (東海村) which is in Ibaraki-ken (Ibaraki Prefecture) (茨城県). You will also need to purchase a seat reservation ticket for the fast train to Tokai at the same time. Here the staff will likely speak English.

There are two types of fast trains that run towards Tokai, the Hitachi and Tokiwa services. They leave from Shinagawa station at quarter-to (45), and quarter-past (15) the hour, every hour between 07:00 and 21:00. They make a stop at Tokyo and then at Ueno, after which you are on the same service as if you had arrived at Narita.

- The Hitachi services is the faster service that leaves at 45 minute past. It rarely stops at stations south of Mito and continues quite far north to Iwaki or Sendai. Only one Hitachi train a day stops at Tokai, so you will almost certainly **need to to change trains at Katsuta**.
- The Tokiwa service is the slower service that leaves at 15 minutes past the hour until 21:15, and then one more at 21:45. It stops at several stations south of Mito and doesn't continue very far north, only going as far as Katsuta or Takahagi. Only three Tokiwa trains a day stops at Tokai, so you will almost certainly **need to to change trains at Katsuta**.
- There are few later services starting at Ueno, so you can take the Yamanote line there and still catch a train up to Tokai. The service center staff should tell you if that is the only option.

Both services normally run from platform 9, but you can check this when buying your ticket. All seats on the fast trains are reserved, and your ticket will indicate which train car your seat is in, and markings on the platform will indicate where the doors open for each train car so it is easy to know where to stand and wait for the train (but ask staff on the platform if you need help working out where to go).

When buying your ticket it is also worth checking if the fast train stops in Tokai, or if you need to change trains at Katsuta (your seat reservation ticket should also tell you). You will almost certainly need to make this change, so exit the train at Katsuta and wait on the platform for the next train to come in. In general the local train that will take you to Tokai follows shortly after the fast train leaves, and goes from the same platform. If in any doubt, ask a member of staff on the platform. It is two stops on the local train to Tokai (Katsuta → Sawa → Tokai).

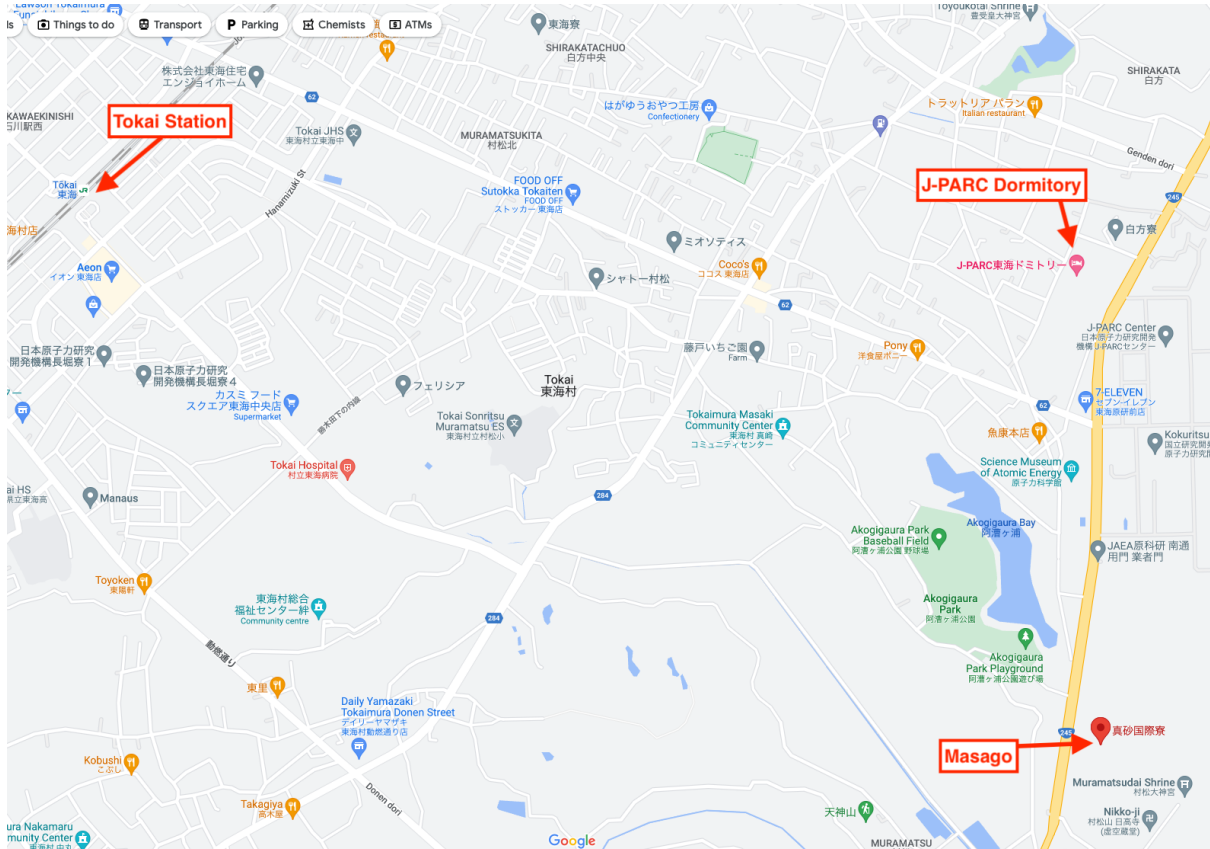


Figure 5: Accommodation in Tokai.

### 2.3 IC Cards (Suica, Pasma, etc)

If you are travelling around regularly it might be beneficial to get yourself a IC card, which for those issued by JR East are branded as a Suica card.

You can top these cards up with money and then use the card to tap in and out of ticket barriers, with the journey fare then deducted from your card balance (akin to an Oyster card when travelling in London). This saves you having to buy a ticket for each journey you make, however if your journey requires a seat reservation, then you still need to separately purchase the seat ticket. The extra use for these cards is that they can also be used to pay at convenience stores, vending machines, coin lockers in stations, etc.

## 3 Taxi from Tokai Station to Accommodation

From within Tokai Station, take the East Exit and proceed to the taxi rank just outside the station. Tell the driver you destination, either J-PARC dormitory (J-PARC東海ドミトリ) , or the Masago (真砂国際寮) . Both are indicated on the map of Figure 5.

## 4 Landing Requirements

When you land in Japan you must complete a disembarkation card, customs declaration, and prove your Covid-19 vaccine status (3 doses) or provide evidence of a negative PCR performed within the previous 72 hours.

Both the disembarkation card and custom declaration forms require you to know the address and telephone number of your accommodation in Japan, so it is worth having it written down somewhere easy to find. For the J-PARC dormitory and Masago the addresses are:

- J-PARC Dormitory: 203-1 Shirakata, Tokai-mura, Naka-gun, Ibaraki. Phone: 029-284-4947

- Masago International Lodging: 146-16 Muramatsu, Tokai-mura, Naka-gun, Ibaraki. Phone: 029-287-0757

It appears that the Covid status, disembarkation card and customs declaration should now be filled out online in advance, please see Visit Japan Web for details.

## 5 Who's at J-PARC?

When arriving into Japan it can be useful to know who else is going to be in Tokai at a similar time to you, such that you might contact them to make travel or dinner plans, etc. The easiest way to find this out is to look at the Neutrino Users spreadsheet which lists those currently visiting J-PARC (first tab), and those expected in the coming months (second tab), based on visit notifications received by the Users Office. This document is updated very regularly.

## 6 Free Wi-Fi

Airports and most major train stations now tend to have free Wi-Fi available, along with some coffee shops, convenience stores, tourist information offices, etc. To save registering on multiple networks it can be useful to use the Japan Wi-Fi automatic connection app to streamline the process.

## 7 Cash Machines

For withdrawing cash in Japan I have always found cash machines operated by 7 Bank or the post office to work well. In the past other ATMs operated by other banks have not worked, although I expect the situation has improved in recent years.

Fortunately there is a 7-11 (with 7 Bank ATM) and post office (with ATM) by the J-PARC main gate making withdrawing cash easy when staying in Tokai.

If you are elsewhere in Japan and want to find an ATM, 7 Bank has an ATM locator that works nicely, and similarly Japan Post Co has a post office finder which has a indicator for the presence of an ATM.