

Flying Fido door-to-door

*How much is that doggie in
the jumbo?*

COMPANY TRANSFERRING YOU OVERSEAS? No longer does this have to be a case of selling off possessions, tying up loose ends, and leaving everything—four-footed critters included—behind. As more and more companies branch into international markets, opening offices in new locations, bringing the comforts of old-home to new-home is easier than ever before—and that's certainly good news for pooch.

Japan's customs regulations are fairly straightforward in their requirements—you got the documents; you got the doggie. This primarily means having a health certificate, completed within 30 days of departure by a veterinarian, and these are often standardized forms that all vets have. (Some countries may additionally require an official stamp from your Department of Agriculture, so you may want to check this out well in advance.)

Escaping Japan's mandatory quarantine period, however, may be a little trickier. "Get used to a hassle," says Robert Chaiken, current Tokyo resident and owner of Teddy, a well-traveled and acclimated pup. "Unless you humble yourself [at the quarantine offices], or 'kiss ass,' you'll be leaving the dog behind at the airport for at least two weeks." The alternative option is home quarantine, and reporting to Narita with the dog once a week for two weeks. Teddy was lucky, because of her age (she's not a spring chicken any more), she was given more consideration and allowed to go home. Ruby-chan was not so lucky.

"We had heard about the possibility of home quarantine," says Tokyo-transferee Susan Norton—whose pup is a native Japanese resident (with American citizenship, of course)—"and so we brought photos of our house, to show that it was all fenced in, photos of the letterbox and mail with our address so they could see it was our house, and all our papers were in order. They still said no, apparently because she was healthy she needed to stay—go figure that logic!" Ruby was quarantined at Narita kennels for two weeks, at a cost of ¥3,000 per day, plus ¥3,000 for the transportation. In total, the quarantine period cost the family ¥43,000.

Once they got over the tragic two-week separation though, the owners were fairly impressed with the kennels at Narita. When Ruby was reunited with the folks, she had had her nails clipped, her ears cleaned, and there was "not a loose hair on her head." @

Bella Katz (bella@japaninc.net) in Tokyo



When coming to Japan

- Have your dog's current health certificate, with proof of appropriate vaccinations (specifically rabies), ready.
- If your dog is older, you may try for home quarantine. Have photographs and proof of your residence, showing the dog's enclosed living space.
- Be prepared for a two-week quarantine period at the airport kennels, costing you ¥3,000 per day plus ¥3,000 for transport to and from the kennel. Being an island country, Japan is serious about keeping disease out.

When leaving Japan

- Make sure your dog leaves in an International Dog Carrier. This is not your regular doggie-box, but a specially designed one. These boxes can be purchased at the airport for approximately \$50.00. Confirm availability in advance so that you're not left at the airport with no box and no choice.
- Check in early. Quarantine is a little out of the way, and you will have to go there and obtain special papers from the airport vet (¥1,500).
- Make sure you have up-to-date health certificates and vaccination papers.
- If you're planning on coming back with the dog, be prepared to provide firm return/reentry dates so that the staff can furnish you with the appropriate return papers.
- Airfare for dogs costs around ¥15,000.