

JAPAN

Asia



Travel & Possession Not Permitted Under Any Circumstance



Summary

As of December 12, 2024, Japan legalized cannabis-derived pharmaceuticals, but strictly prohibits recreational use, home cultivation, and unsanctioned medical cannabis. Non-Japanese patients cannot bring or use cannabis based on foreign prescriptions. Only approved medications like Epidiolex are permitted following government authorization.

Background

- The 1948 Cannabis Control Law bans cultivation, possession, sale, and use of cannabis buds/leaves; stems and seeds are allowed (e.g., hemp products)
- December 2023 amendments to cannabis and narcotics laws now recognize medical cannabis pharmaceuticals, to be regulated under pharmaceutical statutes by December 2024
- Industrial hemp cultivation is tightly regulated; CBD products (from stalks and seeds) are legal if THC-free 0.001 % THC. Proposed caps are extremely strict and could effectively ban many products

Non-Medical Cannabis

- Consumption/possession/cultivation of recreational cannabis remains illegal, punishable by up to 5-7 years in prison and heavy fines
- There is a loophole: personal consumption is not a direct crime, but possession of any amount is, and subsequent consumption is prosecuted.
- Synthetic cannabinoids are often sold in gray markets



Traveling to Japan with Medical Cannabis

Importing any cannabis or prescription medication containing THC is strictly illegal, must seek import approval in advance under the Narcotics & Psychotropics Control Law, with detailed documentation (doctor's notes, dosage, and disease). Visitors may bring non-THC medications (OTC or prescription) for up to one (1) month without special permission; narcotics require prior government permission. Bringing unapproved THC products (including medical-grade cannabis) will result in severe penalties including potential jail time.

Steps to Take Before Departure:

1. Do not attempt to bring any form of cannabis or CBD into Japan, even with a medical prescription, all cannabis products are strictly banned.
2. Understand that foreign prescriptions are not recognized, and there is no legal medical cannabis program in Japan.
3. Avoid traveling with items that may contain trace cannabinoids, including tinctures, edibles, topicals, or certain supplements.
4. Be aware that CBD is only legal in Japan if it contains 0.00% THC and is derived from mature stalks or seeds, anything outside this is illegal.
5. If you require cannabis for treatment, consult your doctor about THC-free alternatives that comply with Japanese import laws.

Practical Tips

- Do not bring medical cannabis or THC meds, it is illegal without prior import approval.
- CBD products are allowed, but must be under 0.001% THC, properly labeled, and compliant with proposed regulations.
- Any need for cannabis-derived medicines (like Epidiolex) requires contacting Japanese health authorities and possibly obtaining prescriptions and import permission.

The information provided reflects the most current data available; however, as cannabis laws are continually evolving, this content should not be interpreted as legal advice.

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