

Let's Go! To Japan (2024)

After reading a social media post about how awful rulebooks are, I was inspired to reorganize the rulebook for Let's Go To Japan. Mostly because as a seasoned gamer, I had a lot of trouble with what turned out to be a fairly simple game.

Sources:

- <https://bsky.app/profile/dzeeszed.bsky.social/post/3kzdfvzxijl2p>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgPSuerB87c>
- <https://boardgamegeek.com/filepage/279420/player-aid>
- https://www.alderac.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/LetsGoToJapan_Influencer_EN_1P_Rulebook_FINAL-copy.pdf

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Overview

In Let's Go! To Japan, players are travelers competing to plan and experience the most personally fulfilling dream vacation in Tokyo and Kyoto.

The game consists of 13 planning rounds in which players draw Activity cards and strategically place them on different days in their week-long itinerary, followed by a final traveling round in which they ultimately go on their planned trip, activating each of their cards in order along the way. The player who collects the most points by the end of their trip is the winner!

Components



12+ tokens



Mood tokens



Stress tokens



Happiness tokens



Favorable Condition tokens



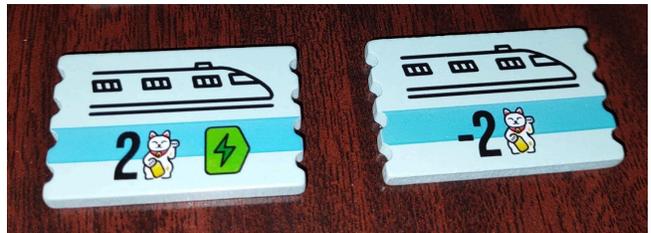
Experience tokens



Starting Train tokens



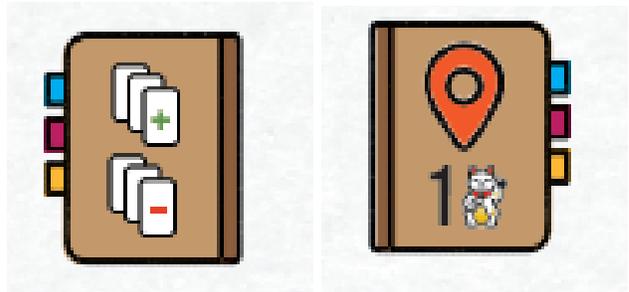
Train tokens



Wild tokens



Research tokens



Walk tokens



Round Tracker token



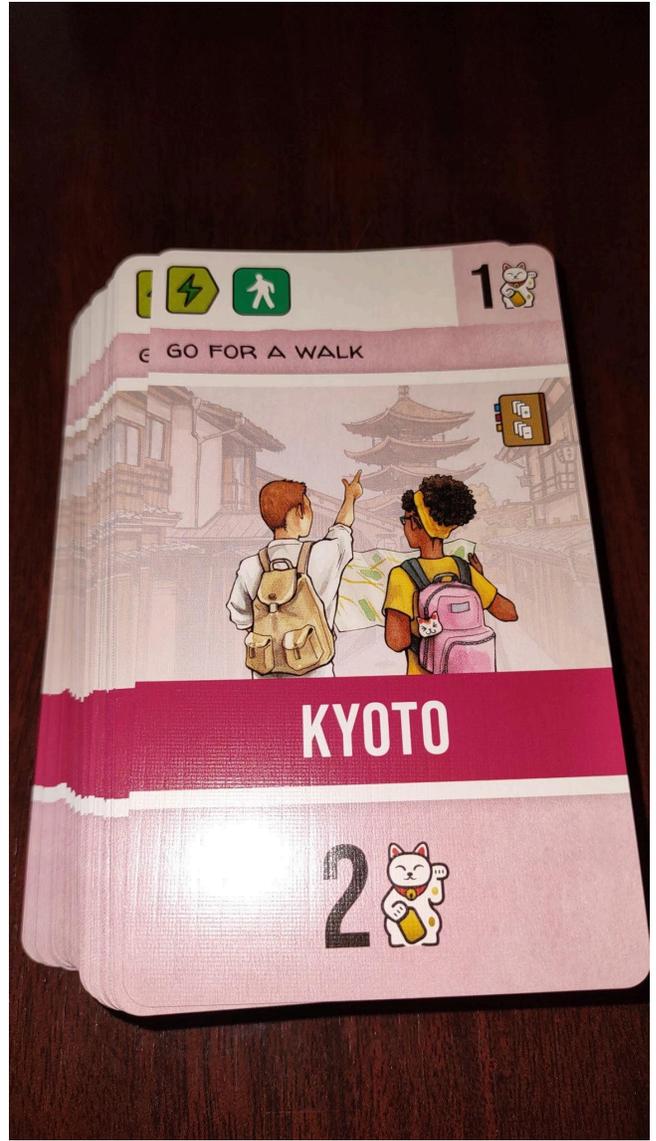
Round Tracker board



Tokyo Activity cards (blue)



Kyoto Activity cards (pink)



Scorepad



Setup

1. Each player takes the following items
 - 1 Player board
 - 1 Starting Train token
 - 1 Mood Tracker token
 - 1 Stress token
 - 1 Happiness token
 - 6 different Favorable Condition tokens (matching player board color)
 - 5 different Experience tokens
2. The Starting Train tokens will sit off to the side of the board until the final scoring round.
3. Each player places their Mood Tracker token on the center space of the Mood Track at the top of their player board. Each player places their red Stress Tracker token on the leftmost space of the Stress Track just below the Mood Track and does the same with the green Happiness Tracker token on the leftmost space of the Happiness Track.
4. Each player places their 5 Experience tokens on the leftmost space, "0", on the Experience Track on their player board.
5. Choose one player to randomize their six tokens. They will place one token on each day (Monday to Saturday) in the circular spot at the bottom of their player board. The other players will match the same tokens to the corresponding days on their own player boards, ensuring that everyone has the same setup.



6. Shuffle the Activity cards marked "Tokyo" on the back and place them with the "Go for a walk" side up in a Tokyo deck in the central play area, within reach of all players. Do the same with the Activity cards marked "Kyoto". Leave space for a discard pile.

7. Place the Round Tracker Board in the central play area. Place the Round Tracker token on the first (leftmost) circular space, so as not to cover the little TK icon.
8. Make accessible piles of the wild tokens, train tokens, research tokens, walk tokens, and 12 plus tokens in the central area for everyone to use



Trip Planning

13 Rounds total:



For each round, players perform each step simultaneously but wait for all players to finish before moving on to the next step: Draw Cards > Play Cards > Pass Cards

Draw Cards

Players will draw Activity cards *simultaneously* to their hand as indicated by where the Round Tracker token is on the Round Tracker Board.



This icon means players should draw 1 card from the Tokyo deck and 1 card from the Kyoto deck.



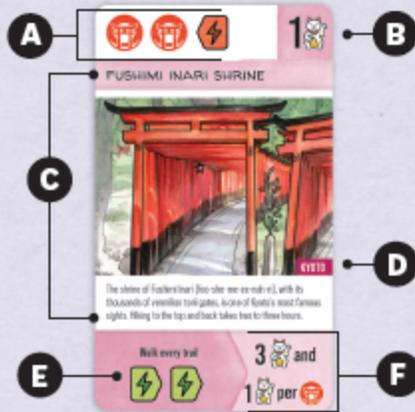
This icon means players should draw 2 cards from the Tokyo deck and 2 cards from the Kyoto deck.



This icon means players should **draw the entire stack of cards** from the upper right corner of their own player board. The number of cards in the stack should **match exactly** the number indicated on the icon.

At the beginning of round 13, players should draw their choice of 1 card from either the Tokyo or Kyoto deck, and then draw the 1 card remaining on their player board. (Players are not allowed to look at that card before deciding which deck to draw from.)

CARD ANATOMY



A. Experience and Mood Track Icons: Indicate which Experience and Mood Track tokens will be moved on a player's board when the card is activated at the end of the game.

B. Points: The number of points the card is worth at the end of the game.

C. Activity Name and Description

D. City: Indicates whether this activity takes place in Tokyo or Kyoto. This is also indicated by the color of the card's background (blue for Tokyo, pink for Kyoto). If the card has a yellow background and no city listed, it can be counted as *either* Tokyo or Kyoto.

E. Highlight of the Day Requirements: Indicate what is needed to earn the card's bonus points.

F. Highlight of the Day Bonus Points: The number of bonus points the card can earn if the requirements are met.

ICONS



Temples/Shrines

There are approximately 100,000 Shinto shrines and 80,000 Buddhist temples scattered throughout Japan. Many of them have become popular sightseeing spots for tourists. As the historic cultural center of Japan, Kyoto is home to many of the most famous ones.



Food/Drink

Japan has many famous dishes and different types of dining experiences from elegant kaiseki meals to inexpensive ramen houses. Tokyo has more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other city in the world.



Nature/Gardens

Japan offers many opportunities to appreciate nature in all forms. Cherry blossom viewing, called *Ohanami*, is a large draw for visitors. Kyoto, sitting among the mountains, is particularly known for its fall foliage and beautiful temple gardens.



Shopping/Goods

From traditional handmade crafts to modern goods like manga and anime collectibles, Japan has something for every shopper. There are distinct neighborhoods in Tokyo that specialize in luxury goods, street fashion, cookware, and electronics.



Unique Experiences

This symbol represents unique, one-of-a-kind experiences, such as performances, meals, and unexpected encounters. These are the memorable events that visitors will excitedly recount to their family and friends back home.



Wild



Stress



Points



Happiness

Play Cards

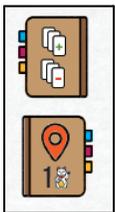
Each round, players will play either 1 or 2 Activity cards *simultaneously* to their itinerary, as indicated by the text on the Round Tracker Board.

There are 4 possible actions that can all happen during this phase:

- Research
- Plan an Activity
- Plan a Walk
- Day Bonuses

Research:

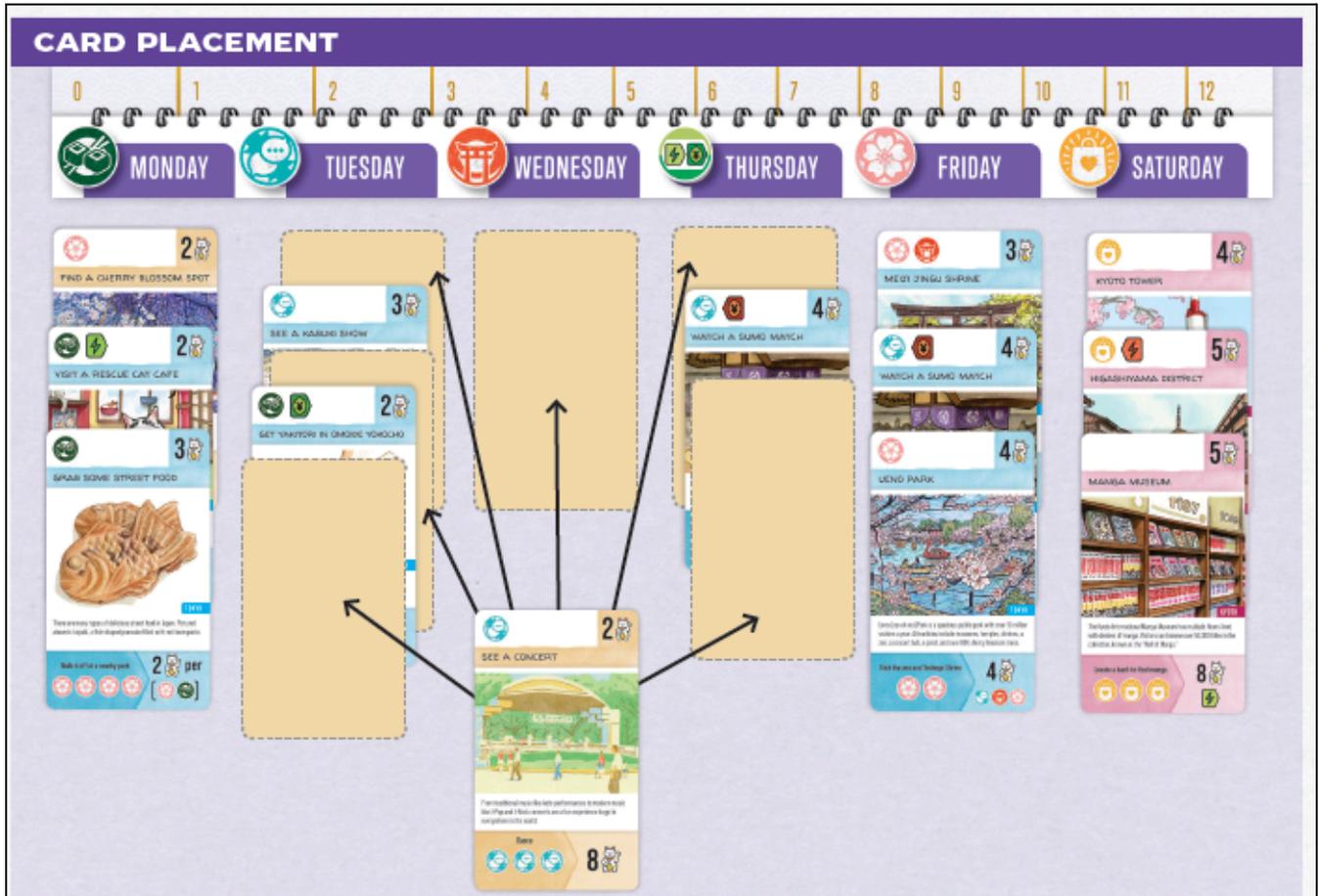
At any time after drawing their regular cards for the round but before passing cards, a player may discard a Research token to the supply to draw 3 cards in any combination from the Tokyo and Kyoto decks to their hand. The player must then IMMEDIATELY discard any 3 cards to the face-up discard pile in the center play area.



A player may use more than 1 Research token, as long as they complete the draw and discard actions for each token separately. A player may use a Research token earned on that turn as long as they complete the draw and discard actions before passing cards. Research tokens not used by the end of the game are worth 1 point each, as indicated on the other side of the token.

Card Placement (for the sections below)

NOTE: Once a card is placed, it may NOT be discarded, moved to a different day, or swapped with the position of another card in the same day.



The cards in each column should overlap one another so that the upper section of each card is visible and the card at the bottom of the column is the only one that is fully visible. This card is the player's current "**Highlight of the Day**" for that day, the bonus points at the bottom of the card may be earned during the final round.

Whenever a card is added to a day that already has 1 card in that column, the player decides whether the card is tucked underneath the other card, and thus at the top of the column, or placed at the bottom of the column, overlapping the other card and replacing it as the "Highlight of the Day."

Whenever a card is added to a day that already has 2 cards in that column, the player has the additional choice to place the card in between the 2 cards, making sure the upper section of each card is visible.

Each day can have a *maximum of 3 cards* in its column. (Extra Walk cards earned during Day Bonus are the exception.)

Some cards have a **yellow background** and do not list a city. These are generic activities, and a player chooses separately for each of these cards whether to count it as Tokyo or Kyoto.

Plan an Activity:

Players will add Activity cards to their itinerary by placing them in a column below any one of the days, Monday to Saturday, on their player board.

When playing cards, players should consider maximizing points by:

- Placing cards on the day in which the Favorable Condition token on their player board matches the most icons in the upper section of the card, since that will earn them bonuses. (See details in [Day Bonuses](#), below.)
- Placing Tokyo cards adjacent to other Tokyo cards and Kyoto cards adjacent to other Kyoto cards, so that fewer Regular Train tokens (worth -2 points each) will be used to travel between Tokyo and Kyoto. (See details in the [Trains](#) section of After the 13th Round.)
- Placing cards so that the requirements for the bonus points on the card in the “Highlight of the Day” position for each day are met by that point in their trip. (See details in the [Highlight of the Day](#) section of Going on a Trip.)

Plan a Walk:

If a player does not like the card options in their hand, they can decide to leave part of their schedule open to chance by going for a walk and exploring Japan.



A player does this by discarding 1 card from their hand to the faceup discard pile, taking the top face-down card (without looking at it) from either the Tokyo or Kyoto deck, and placing it face-down in their itinerary as they would any other Activity card. It does not need to match the discarded card. The player also takes 1 Research token from the supply. The icon on the card is a reminder to take the Research Token. The player will not look at the card until the [final round](#). When the player goes on their trip in the final round and arrives at this card, they will reveal it and decide whether to play and activate the card face-up in its current position or leave it face-down. Walk cards may occupy the “Highlight of the Day” position and, if face-up and activated, earn bonus points as normal if the requirements are met. If left face-down, the card is worth 2 points, as indicated at the bottom of the card.

Face-down Walk cards are counted as being in the same city indicated on the back of the card. If a facedown Walk card is later revealed to have a yellow background and the player chooses to play it face-up, the card still counts as being in the same city indicated on the back of the card.

Day Bonuses:

Whenever a player places a third Activity card in the column for a single day, they have finished planning that day and should check for bonuses by counting the total number of icons in the upper section of the 3 cards for that day that match the Favorable Condition token for that day. (These matches mean that a player has scheduled activities on a day when the conditions are particularly favorable, such as nature activities when the weather is nice or shopping activities when there are big sales going on.) **They can always choose a lesser bonus if they wish.** For example, a player who has matched three icons may opt for the bonus for two icons or one icon instead.



If the player only has *one icon* matching the favorable condition token, they may move the [mood tracker token](#) icon one space to the right.

If the player has *two icons* on the day that match the favorable condition token, they may choose to earn **two research tokens** or **one [wild token](#)** right now. (The wild token can be spent when they go on their trip.)

If they have *three or more icons* on the day that match the favorable condition token they may choose to take a [luxury train token](#) (for traveling between Tokyo and Kyoto) or go on an extra walk. When taking the **Extra Walk Bonus**, a player simply takes a facedown card (without looking at it) from either the Tokyo or Kyoto deck and places it

face-down in their itinerary in the SAME DAY for which they earned the bonus, so that there are 4 cards in this column, otherwise respecting placement rules. When the player goes on their trip in the final round and arrives at this card, they will reveal it and decide, as they would with other Walk cards. However, unlike with regular Walk cards, players do NOT earn a Research token for placing an Extra Walk card in their itinerary.

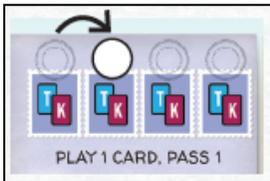
No additional bonuses are earned for matching 4 or more icons to the Favorable Condition token for a single day.

Pass Cards

For rounds 1 to 7, players will place the passed card(s) by placing it **face-down** (“Go for a Walk” side up) on the indicated space in the upper right corner of the player board of the player on their **left**.

Beginning in round 8, as indicated by the circular arrow icon on the Round Tracker Board, players will instead pass cards to the player on their **right**.

At this point players should have no cards left in their hand.



The round has now ended and the Round Tracker token should be moved 1 space to the right.

After the 13th Round

At the end of the 13th round (when the Round Tracker token would be moved past the end of the board), *unused* Research tokens should be flipped to the side showing 1 point.

Placing Trains

After the end of the 13th round, players should place all necessary Train tokens for traveling between Tokyo and Kyoto. Each time a player will be traveling from Tokyo to Kyoto (or vice versa), they must place one of the following Train tokens between the Activity cards in their itinerary.

Starting Train token:



No benefits or penalties. (This does NOT need to be placed if the player has enough luxury train tokens.)

Luxury Train token:



(Previously earned by the player as a [Day Bonus](#).) Benefit of 2 points and 1 energy which moves a player’s Mood Tracker 1 space to the right. This energy increase occurs in between the activation of the 2 cards in different cities. Unused Luxury Train tokens at the end of a player’s trip are worth 0 points.

Regular Train token:



(Taken directly from the supply.)
Penalty of -2 points.

Players *must* take as many Regular Train tokens from the supply as needed to complete their itinerary. If a player ends a day in Tokyo and begins the next day in Kyoto (or vice versa), they still must take the Train token and place it above the cards in the column for the second day. Some cards have a yellow background and do not list a city. These are generic activities, and a player chooses separately for each of these cards whether to count it as Tokyo or Kyoto.

EXAMPLE: TRAINS

In the previous example, Haruto would need to place Train tokens between the cards: Take a Drumming Class and Ueno Park, Stay at a Ryokan and Stay in a Capsule Hotel, Stay in a Capsule Hotel and Onsen. He would also need to place a Train token above the card Stay at a Ryokan, since he ended Monday In Tokyo and began Tuesday In Kyoto.

All the travelling back and forth is exhausting. So far he has accumulated -6 points just from train travel!

Reflect on your journeys

If you have traveled twice, this bonus scores 2 per for each train ride you have taken.

5 and 2 per

Any type of Train token placed in a player’s itinerary counts toward future “Highlight of the Day” bonus requirements showing an icon.

Going on a Trip!

At this point, using the scorepad, players add up the points for their individual itinerary days, Mood Tracker, Experience Tracker, Trains, and leftover Research tokens (which should be flipped to the side showing 1 point).

	PLAYER	M	H		
	Monday	13	24		
	Tuesday	11	12		
	Wednesday	15	13		
	Thursday	19	18		
	Friday	18	17		
	Saturday	21	18		
Stress / Happiness Trackers	 	12	2		
Experience Tracker		24	20		
Trains		2	-8		
Research Tokens	 +		1		
	TOTAL	135	117		

Wild Tokens

A player can discard a Wild token at any time to move an Experience token of their choice 1 space forward on the Experience Track. Wild tokens may NOT be used to move the Mood Tracker token or count as a Research, Train, or Walk token. This can be done immediately before activating the “Highlight of the Day”

Walks

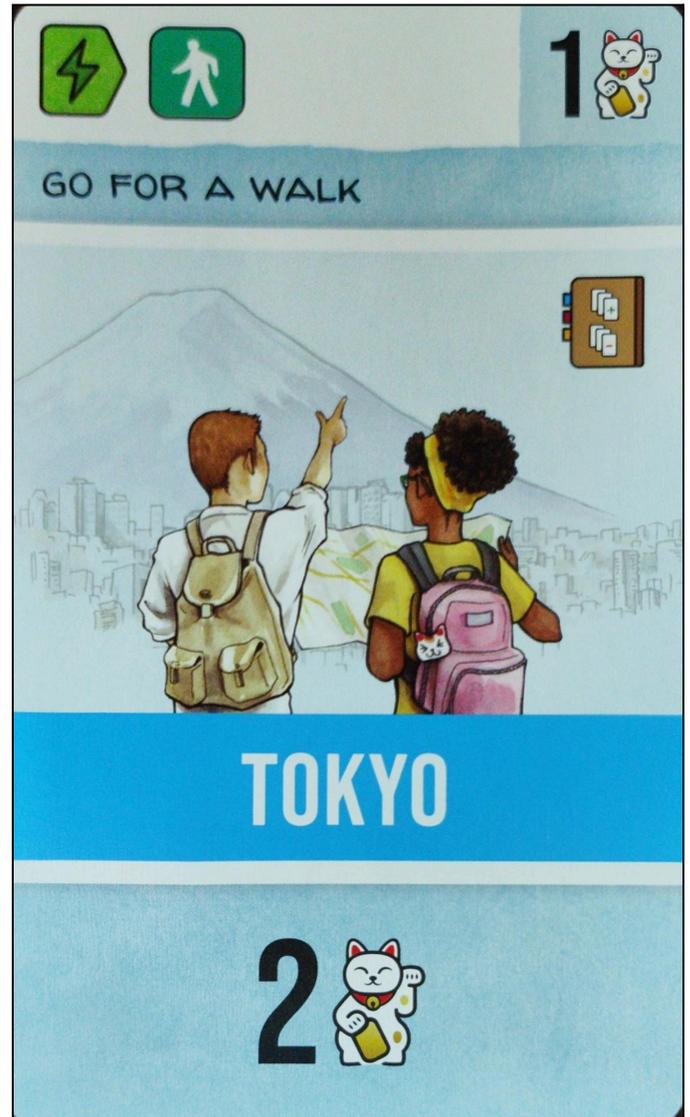
As the trip is being scored, when a player comes upon a face-down Walk or Extra Walk card they placed in their itinerary, they reveal it and decide whether to play and activate the card face-up in its current position or leave it face-down.

If a player chooses to activate the card face-up, they should take 1 Walk token from the supply and place it on the upper section of the card as a reminder that card was played as a Walk or Extra Walk. This token counts as a Walk icon for future “Highlight of the Day” bonus requirements.



If a player chooses to leave it face down, the icons on the upper section of the card activate: 1 point of Happiness on the Mood Tracker and a Walk icon, which counts toward future “Highlight of the Day” bonus requirements. If a Walk or Extra Walk card was placed at the bottom of a column in the “Highlight of the Day” position and the player chooses to leave it

face-down, then that card scores an additional 2 points, as indicated at the bottom of the card, with no requirements that need to be fulfilled.



Itinerary Days

Players activate the cards in their itinerary in order from Monday to Saturday, starting with the card at the top of the column for Monday and going downward in that column so that the upper section of each card is activated. This is followed by the activation of the visible **“Highlight of the Day”** bonus on the final card at the bottom of Monday’s column. The total number of points a player scores for Monday should be recorded in the corresponding row on the scorepad. Players repeat this process in their itinerary for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, in that order.

It is strongly recommended to have players take turns narrating the enriching activities they did for each day. It’s more fun that way! Alternatively, experienced players can activate and score their cards simultaneously.

EXAMPLE

Machiko is scoring Monday on her Itinerary.

First, she scores 3 points for Kinkakuji Temple and moves her Temples/Shrines token 1 space to the right on her Experience Track.

Second, she scores 1 point for Kiyomizudera Temple and moves her Temples/Shrines, Nature/Gardens, and Unique Experiences tokens 1 space each to the right on her Experience Track.

Third, she scores 3 points for Otagi Nenbutsuji Temple and moves her Temples/Shrines token 1 space to the right on her Experience Track.

Lastly, she checks if she has scored any bonus points for Otagi Nenbutsuji Temple, since that card is at the bottom of the column in the “Highlight of the Day” position. Since her Temples/Shrines token has reached 3 on her Experience Track, she has fulfilled the requirements for the bonus and scores an additional 5 points, plus 1 point for the 1 Unique Experiences icon she has earned by this point in her trip. (If she earns additional Unique Experience icons later in her trip, they do NOT score additional points for this bonus.)

In total for Monday, she scores 13 (3+1+3+5+1) points!

“Highlight of the Day” bonuses

The “Highlight of the Day” bonuses reward players for having done complementary activities up to that point in the trip. In addition to points, some “Highlight of the Day” bonuses grant additional movement of a player’s Experience Track and Mood Tracker tokens, as indicated by the pictured icons on the card. Some “Highlight of the Day” bonuses score points based on the number of specific icons a player has already activated in their itinerary up to the point the “Highlight of the Day” bonus is scored. These are calculated at the time the “Highlight of the Day” card is scored, so any matching icons on future days do NOT score additional points related to that bonus.

“HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY” EXAMPLES

THE GOLDEN RULE: “Highlight of the Day” bonuses only activate and score based on icons and tokens activated by that point in a player’s itinerary.



For example, if the card shown to the left were placed at the bottom of a player’s Wednesday column, it would score 1 point for each Temples/Shrines icon from Monday until the end of Wednesday, including at the top of the card itself. Any Temples/Shrines icons subsequently activated on following days would NOT score additional points for this bonus.

REMEMBER: Some “Highlight of the Day” bonuses, if their requirements have been met, give players icons that grant additional movement of a player’s Experience Track and Mood Tracker tokens. These earned icons should be treated and counted the same as the icons previously collected on the upper sections of the cards when scoring future days in the itinerary. Players can refer to where their tokens currently are on the Experience Track to quickly count how many they have of each of the 5 Experience Track icons.

BRACKETS

Any bonus showing brackets means points are scored PER COMPLETE SET of the indicated icons. In this example, a player who



has activated 3 Temples/Shrines and 2 Nature/Gardens icons in their itinerary up until that card would score a total of 4 points

because they have 2 complete sets.

MOOD TRACKER ICONS

For any bonus requirements that show Mood Tracker icons, players must take care to look at their cards (and Luxury Train tokens)



rather than the Mood Tracker to see if they have met the exact requirements, since the Mood Tracker token moves both left and

right. Players must also take care to differentiate between each of the 2 types of red Stress icons and 2 types of green Happiness icons; they are not equivalent! In the example above, a player must have activated 2 Stress icons in their itinerary up until that card; Happiness icons do not count. If so, the player scores 5 points plus 1 point per Happiness icon in their itinerary up until that card, including those on used Luxury Train tokens, but no points for Stress icons.

WALK ICONS



Bonus requirements showing Walk Icons mean that a player must have taken at least that number of walks in their itinerary

up until that card to score the bonus. A player can count the number of walks they have taken by looking for Walk icons, which are at the top of any Walk cards left face-down, and Walk tokens, which should have been placed each time they chose to activate a Walk card by turning it face-up. If the card with the bonus was played as a Walk card itself and activated face-up, it should have a Walk token placed on it as normal, which does then count toward the bonus requirements.

TRAIN ICONS



Bonus requirements showing Train Icons mean that a player must have used at least that number of Train tokens in their

itinerary up until that card to score the bonus. Starting, Luxury, and Regular Train tokens all count toward fulfilling these requirements. Train tokens that will be used after this card to travel to a different city at the beginning of the next day do not count.

“X” ICONS



Bonus requirements showing an “X” through an icon mean that a player must not have any of that particular icon activated on any of their cards in their itinerary up until that card to score the bonus.

CITIES

Any bonus showing points for a particular city (Tokyo or Kyoto)



means points are scored for each day up until that card in their itinerary in which all of the Activity cards take place in the indicated city. (A Train token used solely at the beginning of the day, before the first card in the column, does not invalidate this.)

Remember that for any card with a yellow background, a player chooses whether to count it as Tokyo or Kyoto. However, Walk cards, whether left face-down or activated face-up, are counted as being in the city indicated on the back of the card. (See page 13.)

WILD ICONS

Bonuses that show Wild tokens mean that, if the requirements are met, a player takes that number of Wild tokens from the supply.

Mood Tracker

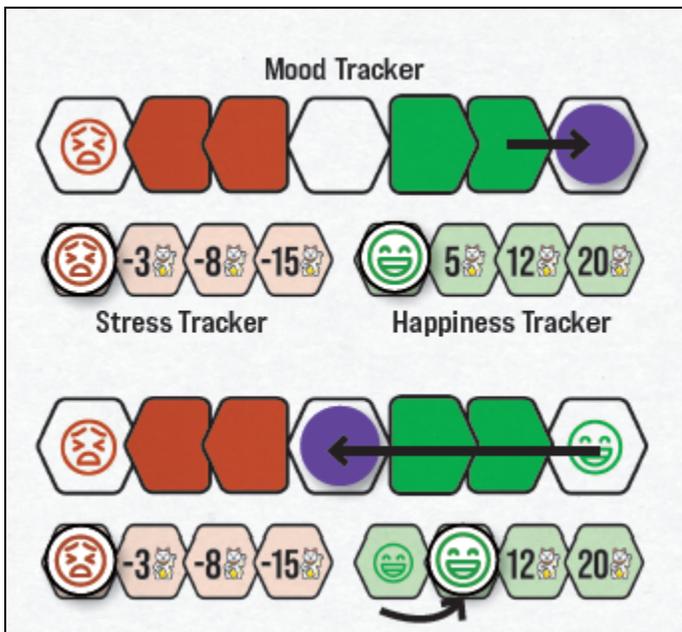
Traveling can be an immensely rewarding experience, but it can also come with frustrations, as represented on a player’s Mood Tracker.

There are 4 types of arrow icons that move a player’s Mood Tracker token:



Either red arrow moves a player’s Mood Tracker 1 space to the left, while either green arrow moves a player’s Mood Tracker 1 space to the right.

These movements occur, as normal, when going on a trip in the final round – NOT when the card is initially placed. (The exception is when a player chooses to take the Happiness Day Bonus. In that case, the Mood Tracker token should be moved immediately.)



Whenever the Mood Tracker token reaches the rightmost space on the Mood Tracker, move the Happiness Tracker token 1 space to the right and reset the Mood Tracker token to the center space. Players will earn points at the end of their trip corresponding to where their Happiness Tracker token is.

Similarly, whenever the Mood Tracker token reaches the leftmost space on the Mood Tracker, move the Stress Tracker token 1 space to the right and reset the Mood Tracker token

to the center space. Players will lose points at the end of their trip corresponding to where their Stress Tracker token is.

If either the Happiness or Stress Tracker token should be moved when it is already on the rightmost space, then it does not move and stays where it is, but the Mood Tracker token resets to the center space as normal.

EXAMPLE: MOOD TRACKER

Haruto is scoring Tuesday on his Itinerary.

First, he scores 3 points for Stay at a Ryokan, moves his Food/Drink and Unique Experiences tokens 1 space each to the right on his Experience Track, and moves his Mood Tracker token 1 space to the left on the Mood Track. It was already 2 spaces left of center because of Take a Drumming Class on the previous day, so it has reached the leftmost space. He moves his Stress Tracker token 1 space to the right and resets the Mood Tracker token to the center space.

Second, he scores 1 point for Stay in a Capsule Hotel and moves his Mood Tracker token 2 spaces to the right.

Third, he scores 1 point for Onsen and needs to move his Mood Tracker token 2 spaces to the right on his Mood Track. After moving it 1 space, he has reached the rightmost space of the track, so he moves his Happiness Tracker token 1 space to the right and resets the Mood Tracker token to the center space. Then he moves the Mood Tracker token 1 space to the right.

Lastly, he checks if he has scored any bonus points for Onsen. The  icon on Stay at a Ryokan does not count toward the bonus requirements, since it is a different type of stress. However, the  icons on Take a Drumming Class from the previous day do count, so he has fulfilled the requirements and scores 5 points, plus 2 points for the  icons he has previously earned. (The  icons on Stay in a Capsule Hotel do not count, since they are a different type of happiness.)

In total for Tuesday, he scores 12 (3+1+1+5+2) points! His points for his Stress Track and Happiness Track will be determined by where his tokens are at the end of his trip.

The illustration shows a game board with a spiral notebook interface. The top part of the notebook has a Mood Track with spaces 0, 1, 2, and 3. Below the notebook are two player cards for Monday and Tuesday. The Monday card shows activities like 'TAKE A DRUMMING CLASS' (4 points), 'UENO PARK' (5 points), and 'GO TO A BASEBALL GAME' (8 points). The Tuesday card shows 'STAY AT A RYOKAN' (3 points), 'STAY IN A CAPSULE HOTEL' (1 point), and 'ONSEN' (1 point). At the bottom, a Mood Tracker token is shown on a track with icons for stress (sad face) and happiness (smiley face). The token is currently on the center space (space 2).

Experience Tracker

At the end of their trip (after they finish scoring Saturday), players earn points for where each of their 5 Experience tokens is on their Experience Track. 12+ tokens are not needed unless there's a tie.

EXAMPLE: EXPERIENCE TRACK

At the end of her trip, Machiko's Experience Track looks like this.

- She scores no points for her Shopping/Goods token as it did not reach at least the "4" space.
- She scores 4 points for her Nature/Gardens token.
- She scores 8 points for her Unique Experiences token.
- She scores 8 points for her Food/Drink token.
- She scores 12 points for her Temples/Shrines token.

If a player needs to move one of their Experience tokens past the "12" space (which is worth 15 points), the player should move the token back to the "0" space, take a "+12" token from the supply, place it under the Experience token, and continue moving the Experience token forward as normal. This will keep track of the Experience token for potential "Highlight of the Day" bonuses. However, the Experience token will NOT score any further points on the Experience Track than the maximum of 15 points from reaching the "12" space.

Trains

- Starting Train token: No benefits or penalties.
- Luxury Train token: Worth 2 points. Unused Luxury Train tokens at the end of a player's trip are worth 0 points.
- Regular Train token: Penalty of -2 points.

Research Tokens

- Unused research tokens are worth 1 point each

Final Score

The player who has the most points has fulfilled their individual goals for their trip the best and is the winner!

If players are tied, they have had equally remarkable trips and share the victory! (But if they insist, they can add up the number of spaces each of their 5 tokens has moved on the Experience Track and see who has the higher total. If still tied, they must agree that their trips were equally impressive.)