

Japan has three main carriers (mobile phone network companies). Any given model of mobile phone can only be used with one carrier. If you change carrier, you can keep the same phone number, but not the phone's email address. These are the three the main carriers:

- [NTT DoCoMo](#) , 0120-005-250;
- [au](#) , 0077-7-111 (the company is called KDDI);
- [SoftBank](#) , 0088-919-0157.

There is also another smaller company:

- [Willcom](#) , which uses a cheaper system called PHS.

### Phone features

Almost all have email, web browsers, and cameras. Users can download images, ring tones, software, and music. More advanced features include facial recognition and fingerprint scanners, electronic money and credit card functions, television, and GPS.

### Buying a phone

To buy a mobile phone and sign up for a contract, you will need your [certificate of alien registration](#) . If you are going to be in Japan for less than 90 days, you will have to pay by credit card. The cheapest places are often small shops in less busy areas. If you need an interpreter, the shop staff can call the phone company, and the phone company staff will act as an interpreter over the phone. Shops display two or more prices for each phone. The cheapest price is for new subscriptions ( *shinki* ). The more expensive prices are for if you already subscribe to the same carrier ( *keizoku* ) and you want to carry on with the same contract. There is a range of discounts on the monthly fees, especially if all members of a family use the same carrier, or if you agree to stay with that carrier for a certain number of years. Prepaid mobile phones are also available.

### International calls

To make international calls from your mobile phone, you normally need to apply in advance. You can set a maximum monthly charge. KDDI and SoftBank Telecom have services that can save you money on international calls from mobile phones. (These are separate from their

business as carriers.)

### **Roaming**

Many non-Japanese cell foreign phones use GSM and will therefore not work in Japan. However, if you have a GSM phone, it is possible to rent a special cell phone at the airport when you arrive in Japan, and insert your SIM card. People can then phone you by dialing your usual number. For information about using phones from Japan in foreign countries and vice versa, see:

- [NTT](#)
- [KDDI](#)
- [Softbank](#)