

Patch Program

Konnichiwa Japan

Immerse yourself in the colorful world of modern Japanese pop culture! Explore food, fashion, art, language, and entertainment through hands-on activities that spark curiosity and cultural appreciation.

Grade level requirements:

- **Daisies (grades K-1).** Choose one activity from each category.
- **Brownies (grades 2-3).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Juniors (grades 4-5).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Cadettes (grades 6-8).** Choose three activities from each category.
- **Seniors (grades 9-10).** Choose three activities from each category.
- **Ambassadors (grades 11-12).** Choose three activities from each category.

When you're done, [submit photos](#) and a story to inspire other Girl Scouts to earn this patch, too. [Purchase patch](#) by April 30.

Discover

Uncover how Japan blends tradition with innovation as you learn about a culture that shapes modern entertainment, technology, and trends around the world.

- **Japan Is Closer Than You Think** -You might be surprised by how often Japanese culture shows up in your everyday life. From the games you play and shows you watch to the food you eat and products you use, Japan has a global influence— even though it’s thousands of miles away. What do you already know about Japan?
 - Where is Japan located on a world map?
 - What are some major cities in Japan?
 - What is Japan famous for around the world?
 - What popular characters, foods, or products come from Japan?

Using your five senses, brainstorm all things connected to Japan or Japanese culture that you have personally seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted.

- **Konnichiwa, Sayonara**- When you visit another country or meet someone who speaks a different language, it is respectful to learn a few key phrases to show that you care and are interested in their culture. Learn how to say these basic [Japanese words and phrases](#):
 - Hello - **Konnichiwa** (kohn-nee-chee-wah)
 - Thank you - **Arigatou** (ah-ree-gah-toh)
 - Good morning - **Ohayo** (oh-ha-yoh; sounds like the US state “Ohio”)
 - Good evening - **Konbanwa** (kohn-bahn-wah)
 - Goodbye - **Sayonara** (sah-yoh-nah-rah)
 - Please - **Onegaishimasu** (oh-neh-gah-ee-shee-mahs)
 - 1, 2, 3 - **ichi** (ee-chee), **ni** (nee), and **san** (sahn)
- **Watch Anime** - Anime is a distinctive Japanese style of animation, known for its colorful graphics, expressive characters (often with large eyes and stylized hair), and complex storylines that cover all genres, from action and sci-fi to romance, often adapted from manga (Japanese comics). Watch a [kid-friendly anime movie](#) like *Ponyo*, *Spirited Away*, or *My Neighbor Totoro*. As you watch the movie, jot down words, phrases, or sketches when you notice something interesting or uniquely Japanese. What parts of Japanese daily life did you notice? How was this movie different from American animated movies? How did nature play a role in the story? What lessons or messages did the movie teach?

- **Manga Mania** – Manga are comics or graphic novels originating from Japan. Manga is incredibly popular in Japan and a part of its national culture. In fact, in the 2021 opening ceremonies at the summer Olympics in Tokyo, manga even made an appearance! The placards introducing each country’s athletes were designed in manga’s traditional speech-bubble style. Manga has spread in popularity in America, too. Check out a manga book from your local library to see how it’s read (backwards!), then attempt to [draw your own character portrait](#) in the manga style.

- **Kawaii Culture Craze**- The kawaii aesthetic, which celebrates all things cute, playful, colorful, and childlike, is an important and recognizable part of modern Japanese culture. The word kawaii means “cute” or “adorable,” but it represents much more than just appearance. Kawaii culture can be frequently seen in Japan, from popular characters and cartoons to fashion, toys, stationery, advertisements, and even public signs and mascots. This style often uses bright colors, round shapes, and friendly expressions to create feelings of happiness, comfort, and fun. Over time, kawaii has grown from a youth trend into a major part of Japanese pop culture that is enjoyed by people of all ages. [Explore what kawaii means](#), how it developed, and why it continues to influence entertainment, products, and daily life in Japan.

- **Technology & Innovation** — Japan is known for using technology to make everyday life faster, easier, and more fun. Read examples of Japanese innovations below and check out some of these amazing [Japanese inventions](#). Think about what you could invent to make life easier or better!
 - High-speed bullet trains called *Shinkansen* can travel incredibly fast while staying safe and on time, helping people move quickly between cities.
 - Robots are often used to help with jobs like cleaning, delivering items, or greeting people in stores.
 - Japan is also famous for having vending machines that sell almost everything, from drinks and snacks to toys and umbrellas.
 - Even everyday items, like toilets, can be “smart,” with buttons that help save water and improve cleanliness.

Connect

Through creating, designing, and crafting, experience Japan in a hands-on way that blends art, innovation, and fun!

- **Cute (Kawaii) Crafts & Origami**- Make a traditional or pop-inspired Japanese craft:
 - [Origami](#) animals or cranes
 - [Koinobori](#) (Carp Streamer) or [Maneki-neko](#) (Lucky Cat) Crafts
 - Color and cut out popular [Japanese food items](#) to add to your “lunch box”, also known as a [bento box](#).
- **Nature & Landscapes** - When people think about Japan, they often picture beautiful natural scenery such as Mount Fuji, Japan’s famous snowcapped, symmetrical volcano. Images of cherry blossoms (sakura) blooming in spring and peaceful bamboo forests may also come to mind. [Japanese nature art](#) is well known for woodblock prints, including works like Hokusai’s “The Great Wave” and Hiroshige’s landscape scenes. These artworks highlight Mount Fuji, sakura, and other elements of nature through bold lines and vivid colors. Using this traditional art style as inspiration, create your own [woodblock-style nature print](#).
- **Taste of Japan** - Japanese food is known for its fresh flavors, simple ingredients, and beautiful presentation. Everyday meals often balance taste, nutrition, and appearance. Popular foods like ramen, sushi, and onigiri are enjoyed by people of all ages and can be found at restaurants, convenience stores, or made at home. Try preparing one of these simple dishes:
 - [Ramen](#) is a comforting noodle soup with broth, noodles, and toppings like vegetables or eggs.
 - [Sushi](#) highlights rice paired with fish or vegetables and is often eaten on special occasions.
 - [Onigiri](#) (rice balls) are easy, portable snacks filled with savory ingredients.
- **Crane Games** – Known by many names—claw machines, crane games, or UFO catchers—these iconic games capture Japan’s love of challenge, innovation, and playful creativity. They offer an exciting experience that blends suspense, skill, and the thrill of winning unique prizes. In Japan, thousands of UFO catchers fill arcades across major cities, making them a beloved part of everyday entertainment. Now it’s your turn—try building your own [DIY claw machine](#) using a few simple materials and bring a piece of Japanese arcade culture to life.

- **Harajuku Fashion** - [Japanese street fashion](#) is a bold, creative style that celebrates individuality and self-expression. Found especially in areas like Harajuku, street fashion mixes colors, patterns, textures, and influences from pop culture, vintage clothing, anime, and global trends. Instead of following strict fashion rules, people create unique outfits by mixing-and-matching unexpected pieces, turning the street into a living fashion runway. Choose a season (spring, summer, fall, or winter) then [create an outfit](#) (draw it or collage from magazines) that includes:
 - One mix-and-match clothing idea
 - A pair of statement shoes
 - One pop culture element (color, graphic, or accessory)

Compare your finished design with your troop, friends or family and discuss what inspired their different looks.

- **Video Gaming** - Japan is a global leader in video game culture, shaping how people play and experience games around the world. Companies like Nintendo have created some of the most iconic and beloved franchises in history. Games such as Pokémon, Mario, The Legend of Zelda, and Animal Crossing are known for their creativity, colorful characters, and imaginative worlds that appeal to players of all ages. Pokémon encourages exploration and strategy as players collect and train creatures. Mario games focus on fast-paced platforming and problem-solving. The Legend of Zelda combines adventure, puzzles, and storytelling, while Animal Crossing offers a calm, social experience centered on creativity and community.

If you were to create a new video game, what themes and type of play would it focus on? Who is the main character? Where does the game world take place? Come up with one challenge or goal for the player, then draw a cover image with a short description of your new game.

Take Action

Step out and explore where Japanese culture lies in your own backyard. By taking action locally, you can build global understanding while making meaningful connections close to home.

- **Cultural Scavenger Hunt**- Immerse yourself in Japanese culture without ever leaving your hometown! In this [Japanese Scavenger Hunt](#), visit a sushi restaurant to observe Japanese dining customs, use chopsticks and try a

new dish. Explore a Japanese garden noticing features like bridges, koi ponds, and carefully pruned bonsai trees. Stop by a library or bookstore to read a manga book. Once completed, reflect on how modern Japanese culture shows up in your daily life.

- **Take a Virtual Tour** – Grab a virtual reality headset (if available) and experience a [virtual tour](#) of some of the most famous places in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. As you explore, pay attention to how people move through the cities, how public spaces are used, and how nature is integrated into daily life. Think about ways tourists and local citizens can protect the environment, such as reducing waste, respecting cultural sites, using public transportation, and keeping public areas clean. Write down some small actions you and others can do to help preserve these cities for future visitors and residents alike.
- **Girl Scouts of Japan** – Did you know that girls in Japan have their own Girl Scouting organization? [Girl Scouts of Japan](#) is an associated member of WAGGGS (the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts), with its own unique Promise and Law and even different names for age levels. While the mission is similar, the experience can look quite different. How might your Girl Scout journey compare to that of a Girl Scout in Japan? Explore the similarities and differences between the two organizations and discover how Girl Scouting connects girls around the world.
- **J-Pop Karaoke Party**- Host a high-energy J-Pop Party where you and your troop can share fun Japanese snacks, learn a simple dance routine to a popular J-pop song, and come up with unique stage names to match your pop star personas. Dress up in colorful Harajuku-inspired outfits and create your own girl group posters. Wrap up the party with a fun karaoke performance where each group can show off their moves and personality for the troop!
- **Attend a Japanese Festival or Convention** - Find a Japanese pop culture festival (anime, cosplay, gaming, manga, J-pop, etc.) or convention near you by searching local event calendars or asking local hobby spots like libraries, game stores, or comic book shops what events are coming up.
- **Girl Scout Destinations** –Check out the amazing Japan travel opportunities offered through Girl Scout Destinations like [Japan: Land of the Rising Sun](#) or a [weeklong overnight camp session](#) in the Japanese Alps. Girl Scouts who travel on Destination trips gain a rich global perspective and appreciation for other cultures while fostering their own independence.