

Reading and Talking

TDL and TDS are back

Tokyo Disneyland (TDL) and Tokyo DisneySea (TDS) closed on February 29th because of the coronavirus. They reopen on July 1st, but there are special rules. Visitors have a body temperature check at the entrance. Everyone must wear a mask indoors and outdoors, and they must keep social distancing. Some attractions are still closed and, sadly, Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters are not going to come near you. Also, please do not scream on the roller coasters! TDL and TDS open at 8 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. instead of 10 p.m.

(98 words)

Do you want to go to Tokyo Disneyland or Tokyo DisneySea in July?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Do you want to go to TDL or TDS? / When did you last go there? / Where do you usually have lunch or dinner there?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you like going to TDL or TDS? / Do you want to go to a summer sale in July? / Do you want to go to the beach in July?)

Have you ever been to Tokyo Disneyland or Tokyo DisneySea alone?

↳Yes, I have. (--Why did you go alone? / How was it? / Which do you like better, going to TDL or TDS alone or with someone?)

↳No, I haven't. (--Have you ever been to a zoo alone? / If you go to TDL or TDS, who do you want to go with most? / Have you ever ridden a "kanransha" big wheel alone?)

What's your favorite theme park or "yuenchi" amusement park?

↳I like [XXX]. (--How come you like it? / What's the best ride there? / Is there something delicious to eat there? / What's your least favorite theme park or amusement park?)

↳Nowhere special. (--Do you like riding roller coasters? / Have you ever been to Hanayashiki in Asakusa?)

(June 26, 2020)

More information

TDL and TDS are back

Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea (aka TDL and TDS) have been closed since February 29 because of the coronavirus. They reopen on July 1, but with special procedures and rules. Visitors have a body temperature check at the gates. Everyone must wear a mask indoors and outdoors, and keep social distancing. Some rides, attractions, and shows are still closed and, sadly, Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters are not going to approach or hug you. One more thing: no screaming on the roller coasters, please.

Ticketing is also changed. For adults, a One-Day Passport for entry after 8 a.m. is ¥8,200 (for entry after 11 a.m. ¥7,300; for entry after 2 p.m. ¥6,300). If you've already purchased an Annual Passport, it can't be used from July 1 until things are back to normal. For the moment, the parks open at 8 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. instead of 10 p.m.

Another popular theme park, Universal Studios Japan in Osaka, opened on June 8, but only people who live in Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Wakayama, Nara, and Shiga Prefectures, or who already own one-year passes, are currently admitted.

(192 words)

(June 26, 2020)

Reading and Talking

Starbucks Japan signing store

Sign language uses hand movements instead of speech. It is used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Starbucks Coffee has four stores where sign is the main language. They are in Malaysia, the U.S., and China. On June 27th, Starbucks' fifth signing store opened in Kunitachi, Tokyo. It has 25 employees, 19 of whom are deaf or hard of hearing. If you can't use sign, you can say what you want, and the staff understand you by lip-reading. You can also order by pointing at the menu, writing, or using speech-to-text software at the counter.

(102 words)

Do you want to go to the first Starbucks signing store in Japan?

↳ Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Is Kunitachi near where you live? / Do you know anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing? / Do you like Starbucks? / When did you last go to Starbucks?)

↳ No, I don't. (--Have you ever been to Kunitachi? / Do you like Starbucks? / When did you last go to Starbucks?)

What's your favorite coffee shop chain?

↳ I like [Starbucks / Tully's / Doutor / Komeda Coffee / Saint-Marc Café / Caffé Veloce / Ueshima Coffee / XXX]. (--How come you like it best? / What do you usually order there? / Where do you usually sit? / What's your next favorite coffee shop chain?)

Do you make coffee at home?

↳ Yes, I do. (--Do you like strong coffee or weak coffee? / Do you drink coffee black, or with sugar or milk?)

↳ No, I don't. (--Do you like coffee? / Do you make tea at home? / Do you make green tea or oolong tea at home?)

(June 26, 2020)

More information

Starbucks Japan signing store

Sign language uses hand movements instead of speech. It is used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Did you know that Starbucks Coffee's 31,000 cafés around the world include four where sign is the primary language? The first opened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2016. Since then, Starbucks has opened signing stores in Washington D.C., U.S., Guangzhou, China, and Penang, Malaysia. On June 27, it opened a fifth signing store in Kunitachi, Japan.

Kunitachi is a western suburb of Tokyo. The Starbucks signing store there has 25 employees, 19 of whom are deaf or hard of hearing. When you enter, you receive a warm greeting in sign language. If you can't use sign, you can say what you want, and the staff understand you by lip-reading. You can also point to the item on the menu, write it on a notepad, or use speech-to-text voice recognition through a tablet at the counter.

Kunitachi was chosen for Japan's first signing store because there is a school for the deaf near the station. The store hopes it's going to encourage those students, and offer a chance for others to learn about that condition.

Note: Due to the coronavirus, for the immediate future the Kunitachi Starbucks signing store has take-out orders only.

(216 words)

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