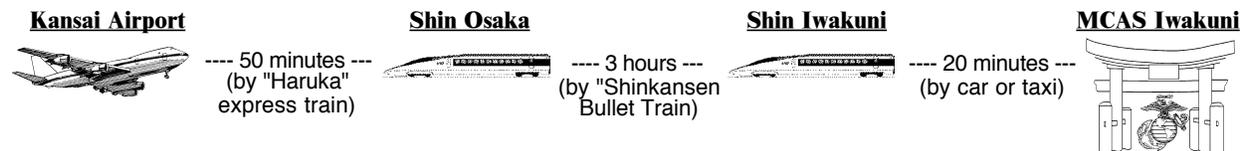


Directions:

Kansai Airport (Osaka) to MCAS Iwakuni

Getting to MCAS Iwakuni from Kansai International Airport in Osaka is really quite simple. You may be a little disoriented and certainly tired after your long trip to Japan but if you just use common sense you will get to the base with little effort.

Kansai Airport is located approximately 350 miles north of Iwakuni. You'll need to take a 3 to 4 hour train ride to Iwakuni. Let's look at an overview of the route you will be taking to the base and get you started.



1. When you get off the plane you'll be at an International gate, which is separate from the main terminal. Follow the crowd and get on the shuttle tram that will take you to the main part of the terminal. Get off the tram there and follow the crowd down the escalator to Immigration. Go to the far side of the room to the lines that say in English, "Foreign Passports." Have your Immigration paperwork ready (i.e., Passport, Orders, ID Card, etc.)

2. Once you finish with Immigration, proceed out the door and downstairs to the Baggage Claim and Customs area. Claim your baggage and get in a line to go through Customs. The lines usually move very quickly. (You shouldn't have to pay any Duty as SOFA status personnel are exempt.)

3. When you finish Customs, proceed out the door to the arrival lounge. This area is usually pretty crowded with people waiting to meet arriving passengers. Look to your LEFT and note the location of the escalator going up. You will go up this escalator shortly. Nearby is a currency exchange. Purchase Yen now if you need to do so. You can pay for the train tickets with a credit card but taxi drivers will only take Yen. The cost of the rest of the trip is a minimum of 12,660 Yen per adult and 6,330 Yen per child (4 -11 years old) for the train plus 3,500 Yen for a taxi. (Children under 4 travel free.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: American ATM cards will not work in most Japanese ATM machines.

4. If you have large bags, it is recommended that you ship them via the "Airport Baggage Delivery Service" located in the arrival lounge due to lack of space on the trains. The address to use is: MCAS Iwakuni, Misumi-cho, Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi-ken 740, ATTN: Joint Reception Center (JRC)

5. Proceed up the previously noted escalator to the second floor. At the second floor go RIGHT and proceed outside across the covered causeway. When you enter the building across the causeway, go to the TIS travel office which is in the back left hand corner. (It has a green border around the top and is beside a bunch of ticket machines.)

6. Here you are going to buy tickets for two trains, one for the "Haruka" express and one for the "Shinkansen" Bullet Train. The people that work here are accustomed to seeing foreigners and will get you going in the right direction. Tell them you want to go to Shin Iwakuni, whether or not you want a smoking seat, and that you would like a receipt. Assuming reserved seats, the tickets will cost 12,660 Yen per adult and 6,330 Yen per child if he puts you on the "Kodama" or "Hikari" OR 13,430 Yen per adult and 6,710 Yen per child if he puts you on the "Nozomi." (Personally, I always ask for the Nozomi. It's newer, faster, and more comfortable.)

Note that only Yen, a credit card or the vouchers provided by PCP accepted. Each person will get at least three tickets. One is the regular train fare from Kansai Airport to Iwakuni, one for the Haruka, and the last one for the Shinkansen. (I know they will all look alike to you but don't sweat it, the people that work the trains know which is which.)

7. Now that you have your tickets, you are ready to get on the first train. Proceed directly across the way from the ticket office to the ticket gate where a man will stamp your Haruka ticket and give it back to you. (If you don't know which one it is, just give them all of them and he'll stamp the correct one and give them all back to you.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Don't throw away any tickets. You'll need them to show them to conductors on the trains and you must surrender them at the end of your trip in Iwakuni.

8. Go down the escalator to the train platform. Once at the bottom of the escalator, your track will be on the right. Look at the overhead sign with the Haruka train schedule on it. Look at your Haruka ticket and determine the train number. (Your Haruka ticket is similar to the Shinkansen ticket. See "How to read you Shinkansen Ticket") When your train number is at the top of the sign, your train will be the next one to arrive and depart.

9. Look at your Haruka ticket again and determine the car number and seat number. (Cars 1, 2, and 3 are the non-reserved cars.) Board the train, put your luggage in luggage rack at either end of the car and find your seat. Now sit back and enjoy the 50 minute ride to Shin Osaka.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Unless there has been some natural disaster or snow conditions, Japanese trains are always on time. If the schedule says the train departs at 1424, it'll leave at 1424. If it's really close to departure time, board quickly even if you aren't at the correct car. You can walk through the train to get to the correct car after the train has left the station.

10. The train will make one stop before stopping at Shin Osaka. The conductor will come through and check your ticket once during the ride, usually before the first stop. He won't check your ticket again. When the announcement is made that you're about to arrive in Shin Osaka, get your luggage and make your way to the exit. When the train stops, exit quickly as the stop will be very brief. (Less than 2 minutes!)

11. After you exit the train, go up the escalator or stairs to the main train station area. When you arrive here it will seem to be a big and confusing place but it's really not. Look at the signs at the top of the stairs. There will be signs that point to the direction of the Shinkansen. This is where you want to go. Proceed to the Shinkansen ticket gates and look for one that is manned and not automatic. Give the man your tickets and he will stamp the correct one and give them back to you.

12. Look at your Shinkansen ticket and determine the train number. (See "How to read you Shinkansen Ticket") As you enter the Shinkansen area, there will be an overhead sign that changes between English and Japanese. It will tell you the track number for your Shinkansen. Proceed to the track for your Shinkansen.

13. Once at your track, look at the overhead sign with the train schedule on it. When your train number is at the top of the sign, your train will be the next one to arrive and depart.

NOTE: There are two types of tickets; Reserved and Unreserved. If you have a Reserved ticket, your ticket will have a car and seat number on it. If you have an Unreserved ticket, you must sit in the unreserved cars which are usually cars 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. (Do not board a Nozomi with an Unreserved ticket as all seats are reserved on the Nozomi.)

14. Next we will discuss where to stand on the platform to wait for the train. Look at your ticket and determine your car number. If your ticket says car 4 and your train is a Kodama, stand near the YELLOW sign on the platform with the 4 on it. If your train is a Hikari or Nozomi, stand near the WHITE sign on the platform with the 4 on it. If you can't figure out where to stand, you can always ask a station employee for assistance.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the schedule says the train departs at 1424, it'll leave at 1424. If you haven't found where to stand and your train arrives, board quickly even if you aren't at the correct car. You can walk through the train to get to the correct car after the train has left the station. Nozomi and Hikari trains rarely stop for as long as two minutes and usually the stop is much shorter.

15. When you board the train, you can put your luggage in the rack above your seat or behind the last seat in the car. (The rack above your seat is small and won't hold large luggage.) If you are getting on an unreserved car be sure to get a seat quickly because once they fill up, you may have to stand until someone gets off. Take a seat and enjoy your ride.

16. If you're on a Kodama skip to Step 18. If you are on the Hikari or Nozomi, you will need to change trains at Hiroshima. (Only the Kodama stops at Shin Iwakuni.) Prior to each stop, there will be an announcement; first in Japanese then in English. When the announcement is made for Hiroshima, get your luggage and make your way to the exit. When the train stops, exit quickly as the stop will be very brief.

17. The Kodama will usually be waiting at Hiroshima and will be on the opposite track on the same platform. Since the Kodama can be as short as 4 cars, and the Nozomi and Hikari are 16 cars, you might have to look up and down the platform to find the Kodama. Board the Kodama and find your seat. Check the overhead sign to make sure you get on the correct train.

18. Shin Iwakuni is the next stop after Hiroshima and is only an 18 minute ride. When the announcement is made for Shin Iwakuni, get your luggage and make your way to the exit. When the train stops, exit quickly as the stop is very brief.

19. Once you exit the train, take the stairs down to the station. At the exit, the man will take your ticket and keep them. The front of the building is to your right. Phones are in the back near the rest rooms. Call your sponsor or the Joint Reception Center (JRC) for a ride. To call the base, use a green phone and dial 21-4171. Tell the operator the extension or to connect you to the JRC or Officer of the Day. (Make sure you tell them you are at Shin Iwakuni station NOT Iwakuni station as they are miles apart.) Then wait out front for your ride. Or if you choose, there are plenty of taxi's that can take you to the base for about 3,500 Yen. (They take only Yen!) It takes about 20 minutes to the base.

Summary: The most important thing to remember is to try to stay relaxed and don't make it harder than it is. It's really quite simple and once you go through it you will also see it is relatively easy. Everywhere you go there will be signs in English to guide you on your way. Be sure to get plenty of yen before you start your trip. Plan on about 15,000 to 20,000 Yen per adult. It's better to have too much than not enough. (You can buy Yen at International airports including Kansai International Airport.) Good luck and enjoy!

Revised 24 Aug 2000

NOTE: This is a revision of a document originally written by a MGySgt Grant of MALS-12.