

# 21 Reasons for Exporting a Used Car from Japan

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## Introduction

There has never been a better time to import a used car from Japan and save big dollars. Exports from Japan have been steadily increasing for the last three years as more and more dealers, wholesalers and private buyers around the world realize this great opportunity.

**Reason #1: Wide product range:** Due to the very competitive domestic Japanese car market, there are an abundance of models and manufacturers in Japan manufacturers including Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Fuji Heavy Industries (Subaru), Suzuki and Daihatsu.

**Reason #2: K-class Mini Cars:** This is a new type of car which has been created in Japan to address Environmental concerns, demand for fuel efficiency and the general the lack of space on Japanese roads. All K-class vehicles meet a specification which restricts the weight, engine displacement (maximum of 660cc) and exterior dimensions. K cars have excellent cost performance are in growing demand around the world.

**Reason #3: Excellent Japanese road conditions:** Despite the lack of space, Japanese roads are extremely well maintained meaning normal wear and tear which might be attributed to poor road conditions in other countries is not a problem in Japan.

**Reason #4: Average vehicle age:** The average age of all vehicles on Japanese roads is almost sure to be lower than most other countries. It is unusual to see cars older than 15 years on the roads at all. The Japan Automotive Manufacturers Association (JAMA) reports average vehicle age to be approximately 5.8 years.

**Reason #5: Higher model specifications:** Due to an abundance of models from each manufacturer and the Japanese penchant for new electronic and other gadgetry, the specifications of a Japanese vehicle produced for the domestic market will usually be much higher than foreign-produced equivalents. This means you can buy a Japanese export model with all the features you like for the same price as a base model bought domestically.

**Reason #6: Low mileage:** Most Japanese live in cities which lack space and are very dense in terms of population. Since everything necessary to live a comfortable life is within close reach for the typical Japanese, domestic drivers average mileage is typically less than half that of other countries. The Japanese Motor Vehicle Inspection Registration Association reports average mileage for Japanese domestic drivers to be around 9,000km annually. American drivers, on the other hand, drive an average of 19,000 kms each year.

**Reason #7: Relative cost:** Even after taking into account costs such as freight and local compliance it is almost always cheaper to import a used car from Japan than to buy an equivalent used car locally. There are several reasons for Japanese exports being so cheap, primary amongst them is the mandatory Japanese vehicle safety inspections which effectively increase the cost of ownership as the vehicle ages.

**Reason #8: Excellent resale value:** Japanese cars, particularly Toyota and Lexus, generally hold much more of their value over the lifetime of the product than foreign counterparts such as Ford and GM.

**Reason #9: Highly efficient automated auction systems:** Instead of purchasing from private sellers or through local used car dealers whose reputation and business practices may be circumspect, used Japanese cars may be purchased at wholesale prices through very efficient auction houses run by Toyota, Nissan and other reputable companies. Each vehicle placed into an auction is photographed, inspected and graded and this information is useful, accurate and available to potential buyers.

**Reason #10: No need to deal with sleazy local used car salesmen:** It is an unfortunate fact that the used car industry around the world has the reputation of being filled with unsavory types who deceive and lie in order to gouge their customers on every deal. Whether this is true or not, buying a Japanese export car removes the need to deal with these individuals at all.

**Reason #11: Japanese cultural habit of always buying new:** Typical Japanese drivers are loathe to buy a car that someone else has used, regardless of the value proposition inherent in doing so. Thus Japanese customarily purchase new cars every 5-7 years, creating a pool of high quality, low mileage, high-spec used cars ready for resale around the world.

**Reason #12: No need to waste time and money with private sellers:** It is well know that buying a used car from a private seller is sometimes a good way to find a bargain, but this kind of purchase may be quite risky for a buyer who is not mechanically inclined. It can also be very time consuming dealing with private sellers, trying to schedule meetings and test drives and traveling around town to inspect vehicles which are often not as advertised. .

**Reason #13: Abundance of Japan-based used car exporters and specialists:** Since Japan represents the second

largest vehicle manufacturing country in the world and the number of exports from Japan are growing every year there are many exporters and specialists who can assist you in sourcing and exporting your car. Due to the number of people vying for your business you can choose an exporter that you like and gain very competitive pricing as well.

Reason #14: Japanese safety regulations: The Japanese roadworthy testing system is a positive for two reasons: (1) All Japanese vehicles are subjected to exhaustive bi-annual testing and mechanical checks to ensure they are well maintained and (2) gaining roadworthy (called Shaken in Japan) usually costs a lot, artificially inflating the ongoing running costs year by year as the car gets older. The latter is one of the primary reasons Japanese drivers trade up to a new car so quickly and so often.

Reason #15: Increasing shipping capacity and shipment options: Many vehicle transportation companies are increasing their capacity to freight both new and used vehicles from Japan due to growth in this market. For individuals wishing to purchase 2-4 cars at a time shipment by container is also an option which may be faster, more secure and possibly cheaper depending upon the destination port.

Reason #16: Availability of objective information: On the internet today there are many automotive review sites dedicated to the provision of accurate, timely and objective data for all types of Japanese cars. It is no longer necessary for individual buyers to rely on salespeople or manufacturer marketing literature to gain an accurate understanding of specifications, prices and vehicle conditions prior to purchase.

Reason #17: Auction assessments and evaluations: Every auto auction house in Japan performs mechanical tests and assessments by trained technicians prior to entry of the vehicle at auction. These evaluations are very detailed and accurate and include all pertinent information along with grading for the exterior and interior of the vehicle.

Reason #18: Flexible payment terms: While most exporters prefer to be paid via telegraphic transfer, credit card/paypal payments and payments via letter of credit are becoming more common. Most exporters are open to alternative payment methods and the foreign buyer may also consider escrow services if hesitant about sending large sums of money abroad for the first time.

Reason #19: No need to speak Japanese: Due to the huge market which has developed in used Japanese car exports there are many people from many different nations involved in this business. Buyers from Pakistan can communicate with exporters in Urdu. Buyers from Russia can speak in local dialects with Japanese exporters in Northern states, where Russian speakers are common. Almost every Japan-based exporter speaks English too. You do not need to worry about communication problems.

Reason #20: Availability of parts: While Japanese domestic models are usually higher spec than their foreign-manufactured equivalents the fact that so many Japanese manufacturing plants exist around the world mean that common parts for popular vehicles are likely to be available cheaply in local markets. In the event that a part is not available domestically, there are many parts specialists who can help in locating a required part.

Reason #21: Trucks, buses and machinery also available: While used cars are currently the most popular automotive export, sourcing of buses, trucks and machinery is also becoming more common. Japanese trucks are mostly purpose-built, while those manufactured in other countries are not. Thus it is possible to obtain the perfect truck for the job at hand by exporting it from Japan. Once again, the quality and value of these items exceeds what could normally be attained locally.

## Conclusion

Buying a new or used car from Japan is a great way to get your dream car and save money doing it. Although it may not be the quickest way to buy, more and more satisfied buyers are taking advantage of this great opportunity. Since the purchase of a car is usually a major decision and an expensive proposition, exporting your next car from Japan is definitely worthy of consideration. Keith Gottlieb resides in Japan and maintains a website to assist buyers in exporting new and used Japanese cars & trucks (<http://www.ascent-trading.com>) to countries around the world.

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