

Instructor Guide

Edo Japan: Gokaido Food & Survival Challenge (1715)

Overview

Students take the role of travelers in Edo Japan walking the Tokaido Road from Shizuoka to Hakone. The journey lasts 5 days. They must make survival choices about food and equipment while facing dangers such as weather, illness, thieves, and checkpoints.

The goal is to earn the highest survival score by balancing nutrition, practicality, and safety.

Setup for Instructor

1. Explain the premise (5–7 minutes):
 - o Give students the scenario: They are Edo-period travelers on a 5-day journey.
 - o Travel is risky; survival depends on wise choices of provisions.
 - o They may only carry a limited set of items.
 2. Distribute materials:
 - o Provide students with the item list with images.
 - o Hand out the challenge rules.
 3. Clarify the rules:
 - o Each student (or team) chooses 5 items total.
 - o At least 3 must be food items.
 - o Up to 2 may be non-food items (tools, medicine, protection, etc.).
 - o Some choices interact with each other (bonuses or penalties).
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Student Task (10 minutes)

- Identify and select 5 items from the illustrated list.
 - Write down their choices and reasoning.
 - Encourage them to think about:
 - o Nutrition balance (carbs, protein, vitamins).
 - o Food preservation (spoilage risk).
 - o Practical survival (weather, illness, checkpoints, thieves).
 - o Weight and legality (some items draw suspicion).
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Scoring (10–15 minutes)

After students submit their choices, run them through the challenge outcomes.

1. Assign base points from each item.
 2. Apply nutrition multipliers:
 - o +5 if diet is balanced (carb + protein + vitamins).
 - o -5 if all 3 foods are same type.
 3. Add/subtract points based on travel events:
 - o Storm → +5 if raincoat, -2 otherwise.
 - o Checkpoint → -3 if weapon, +5 if no illegal items.
 - o Food shortage → +6 if fishing rod, +5 if miso, +3 if fresh mochi (only if still fresh).
 - o Illness → +4 if medicine, +1 if umeboshi present.
 4. Calculate final survival score.
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Debrief (5–10 minutes)

- Ask:
 - o Which choices worked best for survival?
 - o What trade-offs did they face (nutrition vs. safety, legality vs. protection)?
 - o What does this reveal about daily life, travel restrictions, and food culture in Edo Japan?
 - Connect back to course themes (history, culture, resource scarcity, government control, etc.).
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Timing (suggested)

- Intro & setup: 5–7 minutes
 - Student selection: 10 minutes
 - Scoring & outcomes: 10–15 minutes
 - Debrief/discussion: 5–10 minutes
- Total class activity: 30–40 minutes

Gokaidō Food & Survival Game: Item List with Point Values

Food Items

1. Onigiri with umeboshi

Preserved rice ball, prevents spoilage; stable calories; widely carried by Edo travelers
+6 points

2. Himono (dried fish)

High protein, salty, lasts several days even in heat
+7 points (one of the best survival foods)

3. Tsukemono (pickled vegetables)

Vitamins, electrolytes; improves digestion; not filling enough alone
+4 points

4. Fresh mochi

High-energy, portable, but spoils quickly in summer and can harden
+3 points

5. Dried miso paste

Long shelf life; full of salt, probiotics, and protein; just add hot water
+5 points

6. Sake

Calories, sterilization, morale... but heavy and risky at checkpoints
+2 points

Non-Food Items

7. Straw raincoat (mino)

Critical in rain; lightweight; classic Edo travel gear
+5 points

8. Fishing rod & line

Provides sustainable food... if you have time and good conditions

+6 points

9. Paper lantern

Essential for night travel and safety; but fragile and short-lived

+3 points

10. Short blade (tantō)

Minor protection; extremely suspicious at checkpoints; could reduce points

+1 point (may incur penalties in event cards)

11. Medicine pouch (herbal remedies)

Useful for stomach issues, fatigue, and minor illness

+4 points

Gokaidō Travel Game: Events & Outcomes Chart

(Use during gameplay when students draw an Event Card)

1. Weather Events

Event	Effect
Heavy Rain	+5 points if student has <i>Straw Raincoat (mino)</i> ; otherwise −3 points for soaked clothing & slowed travel.
Cold Morning Fog	<i>Miso</i> , <i>mochi</i> , or <i>sake</i> gives +2 points for warmth/energy; no appropriate food = −1 point fatigue.
Summer Heat Wave	<i>Tsukemono</i> = +2 points; <i>mochi</i> spoils = −2 points if they brought it.

2. Health Events

Event	Effect
Stomach Troubles	<i>Medicine pouch</i> = +4 points; <i>miso</i> = +1; no remedy = −3 points.
Exhaustion	Any calorie-dense foods (<i>onigiri</i> , <i>mochi</i> , <i>dried fish</i>) restore +2 points; otherwise −2.
Minor Injury	<i>Tantō</i> increases risk: if carrying it = −2 points (cut yourself or scare people). <i>Medicine pouch</i> = +2.

3. Social / Travel Events

Event	Effect
Helpful Villager	If carrying <i>tsukemono</i> or <i>onigiri</i> , you share = +3 points. Otherwise 0.
Crowded Post Station	If burdened with 8+ items = −2 points for slow travel; light packers get +1.
Samurai Procession Passing	If holding a <i>tantō</i> = −4 points (suspicion). If not = safe (0 points).

4. Checkpoint (Sekisho) Events

Event	Effect
Bag Inspection	<i>Sake</i> = −1 point (questioned); <i>tantō</i> = −3 points; <i>medicine pouch</i> = +1 (seen as responsible).
Permit Verification	No direct penalty (students always have permit), but if carrying suspicious item = −1 point.
Questioning Travelers	Good provisions (<i>onigiri</i> , <i>miso</i> , <i>dried fish</i>) = +1; suspicious items (<i>tantō</i> , <i>too much sake</i>) = −2.

5. Food Spoilage / Foraging Events

Event	Effect
Food Spoils in Heat	<i>Mochi</i> spoils = -2 points; <i>dried fish</i> , <i>miso</i> , <i>onigiri</i> survive = $+1$.
Successful Fishing Stop	Only if carrying fishing rod = $+5$ points (fresh meal). Otherwise 0.
Dropped food	Lose one random food item (teacher decides). If you lose <i>miso</i> = -2 points extra.

6. Danger Events

Event	Effect
Bandits on the Road	<i>Tantō</i> gives $+1$ point for minimal defense; if no weapon = -2 points but safe.
Wild Animal Encounter	Food smell increases risk: carrying <i>dried fish</i> or <i>sake</i> = -1 ; carrying <i>miso</i> to hide scent = $+1$.
Night Travel Mishap	<i>Paper lantern</i> = $+3$ points (avoid accident); without lantern = -3 points.

7. Fortune Events

Event	Effect
Unexpected Host Offering Lodging	If you have <i>sake</i> to offer = +4 points; otherwise +2.
Clear Skies & Good Roads	Everyone gains +1 point.