

Adventures in Japan

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As soon as I boarded the plane, I knew my life was about to change. Though I believed I had prepared myself for any cultural differences, experiencing them first hand was different. I created unforgettable memories, and unbreakable bonds. I accomplished one of my biggest aspirations and acquired new dreams and goals for my future. Because of this experience, I have changed future occupation, I now wish to become an English teacher in Japan instead of being a business woman.

When I landed at Kagoshima's airport my heart was beating so fast, I could not believe I was actually in Japan. Although I saw signs in Japanese everywhere, I did not hear much of it until later. I was amazed to see how fast people actually spoke, it made it seem almost impossible to ever understand it. People tend to use the dictionary form of verbs, which took me time to analyze and be able to change them as well. As I was being taken to my host school, I learned about the importance of punctuality in Japan. If you are going late somewhere, you need to call the other person to inform them. On the way I practiced a full introduction in Japanese, but I don't think I ever used all of it, students and teachers wanted to practice their English with me so I thought it would be better if I spoke to them in English and have them try to reply in English as well.

My life at school was awesome, I honestly have never enjoyed school so much. At first the school seemed to be big but as I walked through it everyday, it just kept getting smaller and smaller. There was a very small amount of students, so I was able to meet everyone. Students were lovely and tried hard to talk to me. I loved wearing slippers at school, it made everything feel professional. My least favorite part was lunch, not because the food was terrible but because we had to use chopsticks. I am sure I could have taken a spoon, but I wanted to challenge myself. I was always the last one to finish because it was very difficult (except on my last day). I felt bad because students had to wait for me to finish cleaning up. Compared to the school lunch I have everyday, Japan's school lunch is a lot better. My favorite part was cleaning at the end of the day. I had so much fun sweeping the floors and joking around with my cleaning 友達 (friends). In America, we have custodians and students don't usually take care of our school. In my classes, I didn't understand much, but they were never boring. My host school, was up a hill. I enjoyed walking up and down everyday, there were many trees and flowers along the way.

My host families were the sweetest people I have ever met. From each one of them I learned and experienced different things. My first host family had a mochi business which was

fascinating, I got to sleep in the room right above their factory, they told me it would be loud early in the morning but I never heard anything. I enjoyed eating mochi. I had a host brother almost twelve years younger than me but he became my best friend. My host mom cooked the most delicious food I have ever tried. Being my first week in Japan, I discovered a lot of things at their house. Japanese people usually shower at night and do their laundry every single day. Their bathroom is on a different room as where the toilet is, which I liked. By the end of the week I had to switch host families. It was heartbreaking seeing my host parents cry, within just a week I considered them my family. My second host family was always cheerful. I respect my host mother for having so much energy even after coming home from a tiring day of work. My older host sister had an advanced level of English. Everything we said turned into a joke. There was not a single day that went by without laughing. With my host sisters, I rode the train to Kumamoto city, one of my favorite experiences in Japan.

I lived so many experiences, I could write pages and pages about it. But I don't want to make this essay infinite. Now that I am back in the U.S. I am noticing more differences between American and Japanese daily life. I hope I can go back to Japan soon, I loved the country's system, lifestyle and met some beautiful people. Since I came back during midterms week, I was not able to share my experience with my classmates, however some of my teachers have already asked me to make a presentation for my classmates, which I will do as soon as winter break is over.