

nagaZasshi

VOL 1.4 NOV-DEC 2009

TRAVEL TIPS:
How to find CHEAP
plane and train
tickets

lifestyle
Culture
Japanese
Music...
and more

SURVIVING
THE WINTER

FESTIVALS
with
rubber ducks,
coffins, yams,
and boars?

Exploring
Neighboring
Taiwan



Over 2,000 years ago when rice cultivation spread to Japan, a ceremony was held each year to present the deities of heaven and earth with the newly harvested rice. They were shown gratitude for having protected the crops during the growing season and would then partake in the offering. It is thought that this ritual was first performed by the divine imperial ancestress, using rice freshly harvested from the sacred fields in heaven.

This ancient rice harvesting festival was called *Ninamesai* (新嘗祭), also known as Festival for the New Tasting, and has been nationally observed since 1873. Each year on November 23, the emperor presented the newly harvested rice to the gods at a special hall in the palace. Although the Imperial family still continues with this tradition, the rest of the country now celebrates a different holiday on November 23: Labour Thanksgiving Day.

As you enjoy a day off from work this Labour Thanksgiving Day, take time to appreciate your surroundings and feel thankful for all that life, and Japan, has to offer. Check out a local festival or help your neighbouring *obaachan* collect the last bundles of harvested rice. お疲れ様でした to all of you for your hard work this year, and best wishes for the end of 2009!

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WHAT'S INSIDE...

WHAT'S HAPPENIN'

4

CHOKOTTO Dake

CHEAP AND HAPPY TRAVELS

8

LIST ME TENDER: MIKAN MADNESS

9

CHRISTMAS IN JAPAN

10

JU-HACHI KIPPU

11

Cover art:



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and
Sarah Jane Humphrey

MY 2 YEN

BAR REVIEW: PANIC PARADISE

12

BOOK REVIEW: "SPARKLING RAIN"
AND OTHER FICTION
FROM JAPAN FOR
WOMEN WHO LOVE
WOMEN

13

LEARNING JAPANESE

14

THE REAL DEAL

EXPLORING TAIWAN

16

WAYS TO BEAT THE COLD

18

FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

20

Rock da House

22

NOV
7-8

MISOGORO FESTIVAL

Nishiarie, Minami Shimabara

Eat handmade somen noodles and watch Miso Goro-don dolls parade around the town.

NOV
8

DANDAN MATSURI

Kawatana

Root for your favorite *inoshishi* in this annual wild boar racing festival

NOV
14

"LOST CHILD"

Nagasaki

A play held at the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture.

NOV
15

CONTEMPORARY DANCE

アルカス Sasebo

Come see the charm and glamour of these modern dance performers.

NOV 19-
-DEC 25

KIRAKIRA FESTIVAL

Sasebo

Experience the magic as Sasebo is illuminated by sparkling Christmas lights.

NOV 24

OMURA FALL FESTIVAL

Seahat, Omura

Dancing, Okunchi performances, flea market and more.

NOV
29

OMURA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Seahat, Omura

A concert exploring the music from Mendelssohn to Schumann.

DEC 1-
-JAN 2010

SHIMABARA WINTERLAND FANTASIA

Shimabara

Illuminated decorations light up this beautiful city.

DEC
2

DANCE BATTLE

Brick Hall, Nagasaki

Japanese and South Korean teams go head to head on the dance floor.

DEC
4-25

CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY OF LIGHT

Huis Ten Bosch

Christmas lights, Christmas trees, and Santa Claus make the season come alive!

DEC
12

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

Brick Hall, Nagasaki

Get into the holiday spirit by watching the symphony orchestra/chorus perform your favorite carols.

Nov
15-17

NATIONAL SUMO TOURNAMENT

Brick hall, Nagasaki

Tickets went on sale October 10th for this not-to-be-missed event!

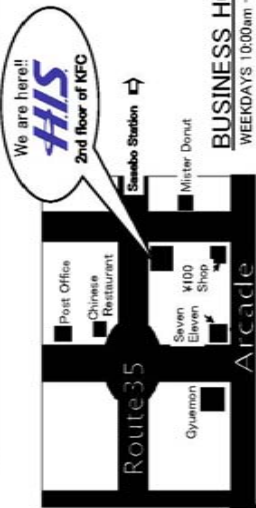


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What is JALT?

Are you one of the many language teachers in the area looking for ideas to spice up your lessons? Want to learn about cutting edge educational research and how to use it in your classroom? Want to know if chewing gum can actually make people smarter? Want to enjoy a few drinks and make new friends? Do you like getting FREE stuff?

If so, be sure to check out the next JALT meeting in Nagasaki City. The Japan Association for Language Teaching is a not-for-profit professional organization devoted to promoting excellence in language teaching in Japan. If you are at all serious about improving your professional career as a teacher (or just want to justify going for a few drinks with your mates), consider "paying your dues" and becoming a JALT member. It will not only help you now (I always come away from meetings with something new and useful), but it's good to have membership in a professional organization on your resume. Meetings are generally one Saturday a month, and afterwards we enjoy cocktails and dinner together.

Some recent meeting topics included brain research and interactive listening activities. Upcoming meetings will feature e-learning, a new ESL book, and a "buffet" of JET experiences and insights. Meghan O'Connell is JET/JALT liason, and Tim Allan is currently the President.

Contact them and find out more information at the Nagasaki JALT website:

<http://www.kyushuelt.com/jalt/nagasaki.html>

* Special membership discounts are available for new JETs!

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The Nagazasshi is always looking for enthusiastic writers with interesting articles and stories to tell. Be sure to send us an email at **nagazasshi.submissions@gmail.com**

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- **Feedback: [Issue#] - [Article Name]**

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- Lifestyle – columns, lists, book reviews, food/drink/restaurant
- Arts & Entertainment - music, games, movies, Events
- Culture – Topics dealing with life in Japan or Japanese customs etc
- Language Study – Japanese study, ESL lesson plans and tips
- Travel & Maps
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* Expletives and inappropriate language will be edited.

* Overly offensive articles will not be published (the writer will be informed of such and allowed the opportunity to edit his/her article).

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CHOKOTTO Dake

Happy and Cheap Travels Finding Last Minute Deals on Flights

SIERRA SROKA

As traveling gets more and more expensive, most of us tend to procrastinate on making that trip back home, or wind up suffering through outrageous airline prices. But with a little research and flexibility you can still find a reasonable deal back home or anywhere for that matter.

Although flying out of the Nagasaki Airport in Omura is convenient, it'll hurt your pocketbook big time. Your best bet to get a good deal is to fly out of an international hub, like Fukuoka. International hubs have more airline choices, a wider option of flight times and cheaper tickets.

Keep in mind Monday through Thursday departures and returns will yield the cheapest tickets, while leaving or returning on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday can automatically up the price. Traveling on or around Japanese holidays are also costly, so take advantage of off time and opt for leaving/returning 1-3 days before/after the holiday. By doing that you'll save yourself money and avoid crazy crowds in the airports.

The best place to start looking is actually by calling a local Japanese travel agent. H.I.S. is a nationwide chain that has English speaking staff and is usually where I call first to get ideas about cost (all travel agent info listed below). If you're a little phone-shy, No. 1 Travel Fukuoka takes English e-mail inquiries along with providing English

speaking staff via phone. Both places will call or e-mail you back usually the same or next day. You can also reserve the ticket for about a week at that price before having to make a payment.

Now that you have your itinerary safely reserved from the travel agent, it's time to start scouring the internet to see if there are better deals. Start with Orbitz or Expedia, they show various airlines, connections, timetables and most importantly prices. Most often the cheapest ticket could possibly be even cheaper if you book it directly from the airlines website. For example, on Orbitz a United Air flight is \$1,400 but searching the exact same dates directly from United Air yields a \$900 ticket. This can be hit and miss, since some airlines charge more if you purchase directly, but be patient since you could save yourself hundreds of dollars by going direct.

In the end it comes down to how much effort you put into your search and the flexibility of your dates. Remember weekdays are cheaper, steer clear of holidays and research, research, research. I've listed some useful travel sites and travel agents below.

Happy and Safe Travels!



International Tourism Site of Japan
<http://itcj.or.jp/en/index.html>

Willer Night Bus (Night buses all over Japan)
<http://willerexpress.com/bus/pc/3/top/>

Skymark Airlines (Cheap airfare within Japan)
<http://www.skymark.co.jp/en/>

JR Busan Fukuoka Beetle (Jetfoil to and from Korea)
<http://www.jrbeetle.co.jp/english/index.html>

Travel
Tips

H.I.S.

<http://www.his-j.com/fuk/index.htm> (Japanese site)

Nagasaki branch 095-820-6839
Mon-Fri 10am-6:30, Sat 11am-4:30

Sasebo Branch 0956-42-1525
Mon-Fri 10am-6:30, Sat 11am-4:30

No. 1 Travel Fukuoka

<http://www.no1-travel.com/fuk/index.html>

Fukuoka Branch 092-761-9203
Mon-Fri 10am-6:30, Sat 11am-4:30

Mikān Madness

List the Tender
MARIKA GALADZA

MIKAN (mandarin orange) SEASON is here, and unless you're a hermit, you'll be inadvertently receiving quite a few *mikans* in the near future. Here are a few creative ways to make the most of this produce and avoid week-old mouldy *mikans* in your fridge.

1 Pick out a nice plump one. Prod a generous hole in the flesh, insert lots of fancy liquor and wait for the juices to intermingle. Continue absorption for as long as your patience will allow. Drink, spoon or slurp ravenously. There is scarcely a thing sweeter than citrus and alcohol... home made Grand Marnier anyone?

2 But what to do with the rinds of your new favourite drink? Throw them in the tub! It's just like those Satsuma bath balls from The Body Shop, only cheaper and without the distracting hissing fizz. *Mikans* were used in traditional Chinese medicine to regulate ch'i. I highly recommend drinking number 1 while doing number 2.

3 When life gives you *mikans*...make *mikan* muffins. Check out the recipe to the right and impress all your friends with your baking skills. *Itadakimasu!*

4 Once upon a boring winter night I found myself drawing faces on *mikans* and having an impromptu fruity photo shoot. Although a bit eccentric, there is no better time to practice using the functions of your new camera. Work those angles, and get the perfect shot of Nagasaki's Next Top *Mikan!*

5 Japan is notoriously known as a country where fruits are few and far between. You will find yourself mid-winter, doling out 400 yen on an apple for the sake of freshness. Luckily *mikans* eschew that stereotype. Go buckwild on these things and prompt your digestion into action.

6 It's suffice to say, between *mikan* liquor, muffins and straight up *nama mikan*, you might get tired of the diuretic properties of vitamin C. So why not use them as paperweights, doorstops, sink plugs and other things that don't require you putting them in your mouth? Waste not, want not!

Recipe for *mikan* muffins

MUFFINS:

- 11 ounces fresh mandarin
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup melted butter
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1/3 cup milk

TOPPING:

- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 1/4 cup sugar mixed with
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (176 C). Drain oranges well and pat dry while mixing batter. Mix flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg. Add butter. Add drained orange segments and mix lightly. Combine egg and milk. Add all at once to flour mixture, and mix until flour is moistened. Spoon into greased muffin pan to about 3/4 depth. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from pan. While hot, dip in melted butter, then roll in cinnamon sugar mixture. Yield: 12 large muffins.

Courtesy of <http://homecooking.about.com>



listmetenderly@gmail.com

I DREAM OF A GREEN CHRISTMAS

TRISHA HOLLENBACK

CHOTTO DAKE

“It’s December 25th, Christmas. I’ll go see the Christmas lights with my boyfriend and afterwards we’ll have some fried chicken and cake. I can’t wait! It’ll be such a romantic evening,” is what comes to mind for many Japanese women. Like Valentine’s Day, Christmas is popular among couples, although a lot of families also celebrate the holiday. Similar to foreign children, many young Japanese children believe in and adore Santa Claus. Some families eat Christmas cake and exchange presents. It isn’t nearly as important as New Years is to the Japanese, which makes sense, doesn’t it? Even if there are Christians in Japan, the religious significance has been lost.

So, what does this mean for foreigners living in Japan? Although many return to their home countries and spend it with their families, what about those who stay in Japan? It can be really lonely, even if there are Christmas lights and Santa. But you can’t let it get to you! You have to chase away those feelings. Last year, I spent Christmas at my Australian friend’s house and we celebrated Christmas their way. Since it’s summer in Australia, we all wore t-shirts and flip-flops and had a barbecue. I tried “Christmas” cakes from Australia, Japan and even Italy. At the end of the night, we all fell asleep next to the Christmas tree. Of course, I still missed my family, but I wasn’t sad at all. Even if it was a barbecue, it still felt like Christmas.

「12月25日はクリスマスだ。彼氏と一緒にイルミネーションを見に行ったらそれからKF Cのチキンとクリスマスケーキを食べる。二人きりのラブラブなデートが楽しみ！」と、日本の女性だったら、こういう考えが浮かんでくるかもしれない。バレンタインデーのように恋人と過ごすことが人気である。日本の小さな子どもたちの間でも、サンタクロースは大好きで、外国の子どもと同じようにサンタクロースがいると思っている。家族でクリスマスケーキを食べてプレゼント交換をする習慣もある。キリスト教の人が日本にいても、宗教的な意味がなくされているので、日本人にとって正月のほうが大事であるのは当然だと言える。

それでは、日本在住の人にとってクリスマスはどうなるだろう？帰国して自分の家族と過ごす人もいるけれど、日本に残る人は？クリスマスの時、サンタやイルミネーションがあっても、寂しい気持ちがわき上がるかも。でもそれはだめだ！その気持ちを振り払わなきゃ！去年、オーストラリアの友達の家で過ごしたので、オーストラリア風のクリスマスとなった。オーストラリアは南半球の国なので、冬と夏が逆になる。みんな半袖でサンダルを履いて、バーベキューをした。そしてオーストラリアのクリスマスケーキや日本流のようなケーキやイタリアのフルーツケーキもあったので、全部食べてみた。最後にみんなと同じ部屋で小さなクリスマスツリーのそばに眠ってしまった。もちろん、家族と会いたかったけど、寂しいことはなかった。バーベキューをしながらでも、これはクリスマスだという気持ちでいっぱいだった。

“LIKE VALENTINE’S DAY,

CHRISTMAS
IS POPULAR

AMONG COUPLES”

nagaZasshi

Got something you wanna share?

Send it along to

nagazasshi.submission@gmail.com

see page 23 for more info

JU-HACHI KIPPU

TRAVEL CHEAP IN JAPAN BY TRAIN

ERIC FRANZ

Originally limited by age and marketed to college students looking for a cheap way to travel the country, the ridiculously under-utilized *seishun ju-hachi kippu* is now available to anyone: Japanese or foreign, student, *shakaijin* or unemployed, 18 or 81. For a little over *ichi-man yen*, you get five one-day tickets that you can use on any JR local or *kaisoku* train in Japan during one of the following designated holiday periods: summer, winter, and spring. You

¥10,560 each way). And I didn't have a hotel reserved, because, well, when you're on the *ju-hachi kippu*, it almost seems like sacrilege to plan too much. On the way to Usuki, I met an ALT from Oita city and through her I met about ten other great people who I am still in contact with.

Even if you disregard how much money the *ju-hachi kippu* saves you, so many amazing moments on my trips this summer would have been impossible if I had gone by *shinkansen* or flown. So, if you relish the freedom to travel without set plans, if you want to save a hell of a lot of money, and if you want to get the whole experience of Japan rather than

“WHEN YOU'RE ON THE
JR JU-HACHI KIPPU
IT SEEMS LIKE A SACRILEGE
TO PLAN TOO MUCH”.

can also share the tickets among friends.

I had the good fortune of discovering the *ju-hachi kippu* this August, and my trip went something like this: From Nikko, I made it to Kurohime-shi in Nagano-ken in about eight hours. I stayed there two nights at a friend's cabin by the lake. The next day I stopped in Matsumoto to see its world heritage castle and take part in a *taiko* demonstration, and I still made it to Kyoto in about 10 hours, just in time to meet some friends and see Daimonji, a festival in Kyoto that involves huge flames that spell out *kanji* on the mountains surrounding the city. I stayed by the river to save money, and made it back to Isahaya the next day. It only took 16 hours and 10 train-transfers. But this being Japan, such a feat was not only possible, it was—dare I say it—pretty comfortable.

Even after returning to Isahaya, I still had two days left on the ticket! And I wasn't going to let them go to waste. So I hopped on the train just a week after getting back from Kyoto, and took another eight-hour journey, this time to Usuki-shi in Oita-ken for the *Hi Matsuri*, or Fire Festival. I was on my own because I couldn't convince any non-*ju-hachi kippu*-using friends to spend the money to go (a quick search on hyperdia.com reveals that on the express trains it would cost

just fly over it on the way to Tokyo, then forget the night buses and bullet trains. The *ju-hachi kippu* is for you!



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Panic Paradise Nagasaki City

SKYE LEE

You step off the street and venture down the staircase lined with a mix of movie and band posters. Once through the doors you are greeted by a dimly lit bar with wall after wall of CDs and vinyl; welcome to Panic Paradise. Settled into one of the booths it's hard not to feel a little at home here as it usually only takes the staff a few visits to remember your name. Panic, as most people call it, caters to a variety of clientele as eclectic as the music collection that adorns its walls; from retired local musicians to our scrappy group of *gaijin*, everyone is welcome.

Although there is no proper dance floor, it's usually OK to move aside a table or two, push the dominatrix mannequin to the corner, and get your groove on. To aide in this effect, the owner, who most know as Aniki ("big brother" in Japanese), has a plethora of musical choices and is always willing to take requests. Between exploring Aniki's music collection and the inevitable tequila shots, it is difficult to have an early night at Panic. If you get lost wandering the alleys of Hamanomachi trying to find your



way there, just ask anyone on the street, as Panic is a famed staple of Nagasaki nights.

Want to read more reviews?

Visit our blog on the web at
nagazasshi.wordpress.com
for more information about Nagasaki
bars, restaurants, places, and more.

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SPARKLING* RAIN*

By author Barbara Summerhawk

And Other Fiction from Japan Of Women Who Love Women

CRYSTAL UCHINO

In this dazzling and diverse collection of queer women's writing from Japan, editors Barbara Summerhawk and Kimberly Hughes provide international readers [of English] a rare glimpse into the depth of the heart and the history of women who love women in Japan.

"Sparkling Rain" brings together both noted and unpublished essays, stories, poems and *manga* from 17 queer women dating back to the 1920s (though most works are contemporary), creating a bridge to an extraordinary place where art, activism, sexuality, history, and life merge.

The book begins with an essay by Hitomi Sawabe, "The symbolic tree of lesbianism in Japan". Intimately told, it imparts a personal overview of the history of lesbian activism and social movements since the 1970s. Sawabe's reflections are interesting, informative and critical, serving to ground the unique Japanese lesbian struggle for humanity in the global movement, and acts as a reference point in which to situate other stories in the anthology.

The selected stories complement each other in a certain way that made me appreciate each one, even the ones that weren't really my jam. Some of the highlights were Kotichi Otake's poem, "Returning from Asakusa." A testament to the timelessness of the torment of loss, the poem juxtaposes religious and cultural icons against the forbidden identity of sexual deviance. Sae Amamiya's "Plica-chan" *manga* series humorously addresses issues of coming out, sex, navigating

social interactions and identity politics. And Marou Izumo's 'Mona Lisa Night' will forever have me searching for the sound of a rainbow.

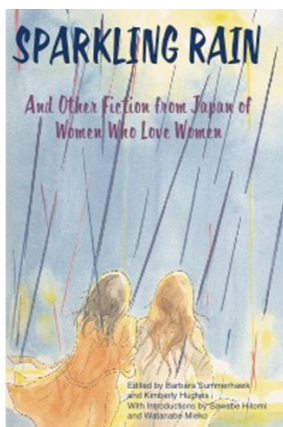
The book's title piece by Kaho Nakayama is a deeply poignant piece set in the home of two elderly lesbians during the last years of their lives. When 71-year-old Itsuko becomes paralyzed, her partner Yukino becomes her caretaker. "Sparkling Rain" is a tragic depiction of how the hardships

of old age become compounded by the isolation of a homophobic world. It is simultaneously a breathtakingly beautiful story attesting to the complexity and the strength of love, as it traces the evolution of the two old women's relationship and their determination to avoid institutionalization and separation.

This collection is groundbreaking, radical, and visionary in that it succeeds in amplifying the voices of lesbian artists and activists in Japan. It is beautifully translated and is an inspiring celebration of

women who continue to struggle against patriarchal and homophobic institutions. Check it out!

Sparkling Rain and Other Fiction from Japan Of Women Who Love Women. Chicago: New Victoria Publishers, Inc., 2008



QUICK TIP for avid readers

Want to read this book, but can't find it in your local library?

Ask about interlibrary loans!

JASON'S TOP 7

JASON HOWARD

Wave you ever asked directions to a building in Japanese, only to be pointed in the direction of a beer vending machine? If so, then like me, you've probably confused the similarly sounding *katakana* words ビル (*biru*/building) and ビール (*biiru*/beer) without even knowing it. Given that *katakana* is only meant to approximate the phonemes of foreign words, it is no surprise that *katakana* words often appear mistranslated, confusing and otherwise a bit odd to students of the Japanese language.

Here are my top 7 trickiest *katakana* words, in order from least to most difficult. See if you can figure them out!

- ❑ パンク
- ❑ バイキング
- ❑ フリーター
- ❑ アイス
- ❑ パンツ
- ❑ スナック
- ❑ スマート

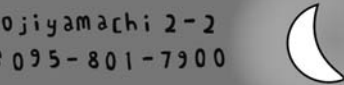
COULD YOU FIGURE THEM OUT?

❑ *panku* = "flat tire"
While at first glance it might appear to mean "punk" as in a bully, it actually comes from the word "puncture," as in a punctured/flat tire.

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J a P a n e s e .

TRICKIEST katakana WORDS

G *baikingu* = “all-you-can-eat buffet”

This word comes from the English word “Viking.” Get it? You are at a buffet, so eat like a Viking and go mad!

S *furiitaa* = “job hopping part-timer”

While this one is hard to make sense of at first, *furitaa* appears to come from a hybrid of the English words “free” and “time.” Be careful in how you use this word, as it does seem to carry negative connotations.

H *aisu* = “ice cream”

As you might have guessed, *aisu* comes from the longer *katakana* word *aisukuriimu*. Don’t confuse it with 氷 (*kouri*), which means ice cubes.

P *pantsu* = “underwear”

Pants means pants, right? Wrong! *Pantsu*

actually means “underwear” in Japanese, not pants as in khakis, blue jeans, etc. So now that you know the Japanese meaning of *pantsu*, you can avoid the embarrassing mistake of telling your Japanese friends they have “nice underwear!” If you want to say “pants” in Japanese, say ズボン (*zubon*).

S *sunakku* = “snack bar”

It does not refer to food eaten between meals, but instead to a type of hostess bar where you’re charged quite a lot for the “snack” you eat amidst female company. Sound confusing? It is. Not recommended for those on a budget or unsure about their Japanese.

S *sumaato* = “slim, nice physique”

If someone says you are *sumaato*, make sure to find out if they mean the *katakana* word *sumaato* or the English word “smart.” In Japanese, *sumaato* refers to someone as being slim or having a good physique, and has nothing to do with intelligence. Get these two mixed up and you really won’t sound smart! In case you are wondering, 頭がいい (*atama ga ii*) is the way to say someone is smart/intelligent.

As you can probably tell from the examples, *katakana* words can be extremely confusing, but don’t fret; these are some of the trickiest ones! Just make sure to rely on context and clues to figure out their meaning. Or best of all, just ask a Japanese buddy!

がんばってね!

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EXPLORING

Taiwan



SIERRA SROKA

Only two hours by plane with a one-hour time difference, Taiwan is conveniently close by yet far enough to feel like you're a world away. The mix of history and culture blended with the very old and new makes Taiwan a rich and exciting place for anyone to visit. The Portuguese had it right when they named Taiwan, "Ilha Formosa," or "beautiful island", since its landscapes are indeed quite breathtaking.

Taipei: The vibrant capital of Taiwan. With over two million people, skyscrapers and night markets galore, this is often the first sight most foreigners will experience upon arrival. Your first night should definitely be at the Shilin night market, one of the largest night markets in Taipei. Here you can

get Taiwanese food at its best! Meander off the main street to find Taiwanese frozen ice shops, where you'll often have to wait in line, but believe me, it's worth it! At a little under 100 yen a dessert, you'll have over 50 flavors to choose from. Take the MRT Danshui line and get off at Jiantan.



Open from 9 a.m., a visit to the Taipei National Palace Museum is a good morning activity. It houses hundreds of thousands of ancient Chinese and Taiwanese artifacts and should not be missed. Make sure to check out the famous jade napa cabbage. Take the MRT Danshui line and get off at Shilin station, take Red 30 bus or a taxi to the museum.

The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial is another must-see location. At the center of Taipei, this memorial is next to the national theater and concert hall, both of which were designed in traditional Taiwanese style. All 250,000 square meters is filled with beautiful flowers, green grass, ponds and sitting areas. It's a nice place to sit, relax and take a breather. Take the MRT Danshui or Beitou-Nanshijiao line and get off at the CKS Memorial Hall Station, exit 5.

Your next stop should definitely be Danshui (also known as Tanshui), a quaint market area along the ocean that is famous for iron eggs. Muster up some courage and try an iron egg or stroll along the market streets and try *tofa*, a sweet tofu dessert. Take the MRT Danshui line to Danshui station.

Sticking strictly to Taipei is not giving your vacation justice! So break away, and explore some places you may normally look over.

As a starter I recommend Jiufun, an old mining town about an hour and a half outside of Taipei. It is truly unique since it is literally nestled on the side of a steep mountain. The most famous area is Jiufun Old Street, which is a tiny lane lined with shops and restaurants winding through the town. Jiufun is known for its red lanterns that line Old Street. It is rumored that Miyazaki Hayao got inspiration from Jiufun for his movie *Spirited Away*. Sample foods and find cool souvenirs for friends back home. Don't miss wild

boar sausage on a stick or Jiufun's famous yam dessert. From Taipei take the Keelung Bus from Zhongxiao Fuxing MRT station (Exit 1) to Jiufen.

A short ride away from Jiufun is Keelung, a fishing and port city known for its famous Miaokou night market. Miaokou market is a perfect dinner spot after a day of wandering in Jiufun. Here you'll find fresh seafood at modest prices. If seafood isn't your ideal dinner there are plenty of other choices including soups, stir-fry, meat on a stick and much more. Come hungry since you'll want to sample many things. The market is open until at least 2 a.m. so take your time eating and exploring Dianji temple, located in the center of Miaokou market. From Jiufun grab a taxi to Keelung. From Taipei take the East-West bus of the Kuo-Kuang bus company located on the left side of Taipei Station.

If you have the time you must make the trip to Sun Moon Lake in Taichung county. Sun Moon Lake is surrounded by temples, forests and small towns, so it's great for walking, bird watching and relaxing. Tours are offered by private boats to famous temples and spots around the lake. I strongly recommend you take a boat tour, where you'll get to see the lake up close, enjoy a relaxing ride and meet fellow travelers. Try to haggle the price down as much as you can so you can get the best deal.

Make your way eventually to Wen Wu Temple (Literature and War Temple). It has bright orange roofs, elaborate colors and is unlike any other temple you've probably seen in Japan. From Taichung, take a Renyou bus or Nantou bus directly to the lake (from Taipei, Kuo-Kuang bus offers direct service to the lake).

In the same area there is the Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village, a great place to see the original ten tribes of Taiwan. When you first enter the park, you'll probably be slightly confused, since all you'll see is a European garden and amusement park rides. Not to worry—the mock tribal villages are there with plenty of things to learn and see. There are free performances throughout the day, so you can see the tribal costumes and dances.

These are only a handful of the cool places Taiwan has to offer, so branch out and explore! I know you won't be disappointed with Taiwan.



WAYS to BEA

MUTIA ADISOMA

The days have become increasingly colder, so with a heavy heart I've decided it's finally time to pull heavier clothing out of storage. If you are someone who enjoys cold weather, go ahead and do your little victory dance because it looks like winter is here. However, do not break into that little jig of yours if this is your first winter in Japan! Even though you may think you like this season, there's a possibility you will not like it here.

"Now why wouldn't I?" you might ask. First of all, unlike buildings in the Western world, most here are not insulated. If cold winds blow strong enough, trust me, you'll feel them inside your home. Second, there is no guarantee your workplace will have central heating (or any kind of heating for that matter). Those of you who are English teachers might even see puffs of your own breath as you walk down the hallways of your school! Yes, it really will be that cold. All day. Every day.

But don't fret! Just follow these tips to survive the months ahead. Hopefully they'll help keep you a little toastier and a little less miserable until the temperature rises again.

1 WEAR THERMAL CLOTHING

When I was a child I used to dread my mother stuffing my little legs into long johns. The material was scratchy, and the waffle-like texture of it left indents in my skin when squashed between my legs and whatever horrendous 90's discount clothing I had on for the day. But this is no longer the case with thermal clothing. You'll hardly be able to tell them apart from your regular apparel! Head to places like JUSCO and check out what they have to offer, or skip the department stores altogether and make a beeline for Uniqlo. Their Heat Technology Line (ヒットテック or *hittotekku*) offers t-shirts and turtlenecks (as well as camisoles and leggings for you girls out there) in a vast array of colors for a reasonable 1,000 to 2,000 *yen*. The materials are light enough to go layer-crazy without looking like you're off to climb Mt. Everest.

2 USE (lots of) HEAT PACKS

You might have seen these if you've ever spent time on the slopes. Heat packs can be shoved into pockets or mittens, and they last for hours on end. You'll find them in all different sizes and shapes; my personal favorites are the ones designed to fit perfectly into the tip of your shoes. Some even come with adhesive so you can stick them to your stomach or your back. Heat packs are available at any convenience store in Japan, but go to a supermarket to buy them in bulk. Ask for ホットカイロ (*hottokairo*) if you have trouble locating them.

3 USE AN ELECTRIC CARPET

In Japan they're known as ホットカーペット (*hottokaapeto*) and they're wonderful! If you prefer sprawling out on the floor to sitting on chairs, this is a worthy investment for you. Plug it in, adjust the temperature, and spend hours...lying on your back counting the days until spring.

4 USE A KOTATSU

Electric *kotatsu* are in my opinion one of the most amazing inventions ever created. They are low tables that can be used as normal tables during warmer months, but come winter you can pull the top off, throw a blanket or futon over it, place the top back on, plug it in, scoot yourself under, and *voila!* You'll have your own personal haven of warmth and joy. But do beware: once in the *kotatsu*, you might not be able to get back out. Try to remind yourself that the dishes *do* need to get done, you really *should* go to the toilet, and you *do* have to go to work whether you like it or not.

5 SLEEP WITH AN ELECTRIC BLANKET

So you're shivering in bed despite layers upon

Did you know?

Based on the lunar calendar, the traditional Japanese name for November is 霜月 (*Shimotsuki*). *Shimotsuki* literally means "the frost month" because in many parts of the country this is when frost starts to appear.

AT the COLD

layers of blankets? You might want to consider buying an electric blanket (電気毛布 or *denkimofu*). It will not only keep you warm but also allow you to put away your portable heater, which I highly recommend for safety reasons (two winters ago my comforter slid off my bed, pressed up against my portable heater, and caught on fire!).

6 HAVE A NABE PARTY

If you've never experienced the joys of having a *nabe* party, do so right away! A concoction

of vegetables and tofu (plus meat, fish, or noodles if you so desire) in a boiling hot broth (*miso* and kimchi are my favorite flavors), this delicious dish will warm you up in a second. Not only that, but it's incredibly social! Prepare *nabe* with your friends or prepare the basics yourself and have a "Mystery Nabe Party". Ask every guest to bring an ingredient of their choice and dunk it into the boiling broth while nobody looks. Then dig in and guess what's in the mix. You never know what crazy ingredients you'll bite into!

There are tons of other little

ways to keep warm, such as carrying a thermos of your favorite hot drink everywhere you go, getting your blood flowing with regular exercise, or hanging out at places that blast heat like shopping malls, restaurants or your favorite bar. Don't let the cold get the best of you! Though you'll

rarely have the chance to make snow angels in this part of Kyushu, you too can find ways to bear the winter season in Japan and hopefully...

enjoy!



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Wacky, Silly & Bizarre FESTIVALS around the World

MEGHAN O'CONNELL

There is no better way to experience a slice of Japanese culture than to attend some of the abundant festivals this country has to offer. Other than the regularity of that delicious *yakitori* stand or the performance by the local dance troupe, each festival is very unique and in some cases, just a little crazy too! However, Japan isn't the only country to have its fair share of wackiness. Thanks to the help of Nagasaki's foreign born residents, we've found evidence of some very interesting festivals on the other side of the world too!



FROZEN DEAD GUY DAYS

KRIS KOHTZ

Nederland, Colorado in America is home to 1,338 residents, one of whom has been frozen for almost 20 years. Grandpa Bredo is 109 years old, frozen, and lives in a shed. Every March, thousands of people go to Nederland for the Frozen Dead Guy Days festival to see him. This story stretches from Norway to California, to Colorado, involving cryonics, deportation, psychics, celebrations, and a dedicated Ice Man.

Frozen Dead Guy Days boasts events for the entire family such as a costume contest, parade, polar plunge, frozen turkey bowling, and the famous coffin races. Of course no festival is complete without great food, beer, and live music – all of which are plentiful at what has been called the “Cryonics Mardi Gras.”

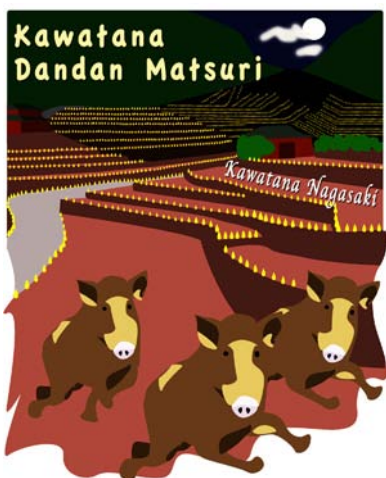


TRELAWNY YAM FESTIVAL

ANETTE LESLIE

The Trelawny Yam Festival is held every year during the Easter holiday, in the parish of Trelawny, Jamaica. The yam, a potato-like root vegetable (known in Japan as *yamaimo*), was brought to the Caribbean from West Africa.

Delight your taste buds at this festival with the yam pita, yam juice, yam pudding and the ever popular roasted yam and saltfish, among other interesting treats made from over fifteen types of yams! Activities include a school competition in traditional song, poetry and dance, entertainment by local artists and cultural groups, the yam farmer's competition, the yam hill digging competition, a 50k cycle race, a king and queen pageant, beach volleyball competitions and last but not least, the Trelawny 1/2 marathon.

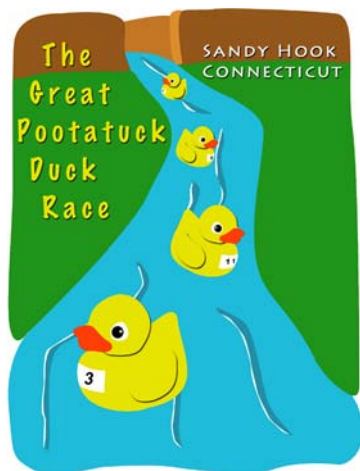


THE KAWATANA DANDAN MATSURI

MUTIA ADISOMA

Have you ever seen a wild boar? Or better yet, have you ever placed bets on boars named after the likes of Hollywood celebrities? Up in the hills of Kawatana town, Japan (located between Omura and Huis Ten Bosch), the annual Dandan Matsuri is a small but lively event where *inoshishi* (wild boar) race to the finish line of a net-encapsulated trail. You can watch these little creatures frantically scurry forward, backward, over each other, and even up and down stone walls as everyone cheers on their championed boars. Afterwards, warm yourself up from the crisp November air with some piping-hot *inoshishi* curry! To top off the festivities, at sundown tiers upon tiers of rice paddies are lined with lanterns and lit to illuminate the entire valley.

This festival is a great chance to interact with people who don't often see foreigners around their parts. But grassroots internationalization aside, it's something you shouldn't pass up because...well, when else in your life will you be able to bet on a scruffy little bandana-wearing wild boar named Angelina Jolie?



THE GREAT POOTATUCK DUCK RACE

EMILY KOH

There isn't much to see in the little town of Sandy Hook, Connecticut, USA, but you can be sure that there will always be a crowd at the Great Pootatuck Duck Race. If you're expecting to see any fowl or feathers, you're going to be in for a *squeaky* surprise. The only eligible birds, in fact, are yellow, rubber and one of Ernie's bath time staples: rubber duckies!

Held on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend in May, the Newtown Lions Club, which helps support international and state programs by contributing to local community projects, sells raffle tickets for \$5 each. Each ticket number corresponds to a rubber duckie. On the day of the race, the rubber duckies are dumped into the Pootatuck River, where they travel downstream about 500 yards to the finish line.

This year's grand prize for the fastest rubber duckie was \$2,000 in cash! The Lions Club also donates the majority of the proceeds to various projects within the community, such as repairing the town hall or improving public park equipment. Looks like rubber duckies aren't just for bath time anymore!



ROCK Da HO

MUSIC AND ARTS

J-addicts anonymous

HIP HOP

I'll be the first to admit that the very idea of

Japanese hip-hop makes me quite suspicious. To be sure, there are a lot of groups/MCs who merely present a stylized image of hip-hop's more 'gangster' tendencies for shock value. However, over the years, a few acts have risen above the rest to present skilled rhyming, bangin' beats, and a good dose of independent street spirit.

These artists truly separate themselves from the rather overtly market-conscious acts that appear on the weekly music countdown programs. For this issue we'll stick with three MC-based acts and leave the beat professor DJs for next issue.

First up is Scha Dara Parr (スチャラパー), which consists of MCs Bose and Ani, and DJ Shingo, who are essentially the veteran progenitors of Japanese hip-hop. Their success in balancing mainstream popularity (most famously with their 1994 mega-hit "Konya wa Boogie-back") with a good dose of street cred for street-level purists has often led to their association with the Beastie Boys.

This connection is bolstered by SDP's humorous, often nonsensical lyrics as well as a one track collaboration with Mr. Adam Horowitz (Ad-rock himself) on "Where ya at" in 2000. For my money though, their funky, sample-based beats and laid-back flows are closer in style to one of their previous collaborators, De La Soul. Long before I ever knew who SDP was, I was in-

ANDREW MORRIS

trigued by their apparently random (and largely anonymous) appearance on De La's sickeningly amazing 1993 album Buhloone Mindstate with the track "Long Island Wildin'". The short but oh-so-sweet track came about after a relationship was formed between the two groups, when SDP opened for De La on their 1990 Japanese tour.

Not ones to sit around on their godfather status laurels, SDP has continued to make great music to this day, including great recent collaborations with electro-pop vets Denki-Groove. Shibuya born K-dub Shine, the story goes, first encountered hip-hop in his teens during an 8-year stay in America, where he studied the ways of the original masters like KRS-ONE, Rakim, and Run DMC. K-dub first came on the scene by forming a group with two other American-educated Japanese hip-hop *senpais*, Zebra and DJ Oasis, in 1993.

After that he released a number of classic albums with his two compatriots as King Giddra, and by himself (although often still with the production assistance of DJ Oasis). K-dub is not so much

"Occasionally his ideas can get a little too zealous and tend toward extreme nationalism..."

a 'flow' rapper as he is a 'message' oriented, sometimes even poetic lyricist.

The sound always bumps, but it is his confrontational and controversial ideas and themes that have generally set him apart from the pack. These themes have also given him quite a bit of success. He has managed to crack the Japanese pop music top ten with a number of his albums and singles.

The general theme of his lyrics is his perceived devolution of Japanese society and the economic inequalities that are prevalent—yet not often spotlighted by the media—here in Japan. Occasionally his ideas can get a little too zealous and tend toward extreme nationalism, but on the whole he has had a positive impact on the Japanese hip-hop scene, taking a particular interest in working to help underprivileged children. To check out K-dub's vibe I highly suggest his 2000 album *Ikiru*, which has long been a personal classic.

While the push for mainstream acceptance from rappers like K-dub and Zebra has done much to open the market to hip-hop culture at large, it has also earned them their fair share of detractors. For those purists there is another leader of the pack, and that would be Tha Blue Herb.

The trio of MC II-Bostino, studio beat producer O.N.O., and live dj DJ DYE, practice a self-proclaimed "abstract hip hop". The beats are often dark and spacey and the rhyming sometimes sounds more spoken word than rapping, but the end result always hits hard and drips of drive and purpose. Hailing from Sapporo (and damn proud of it), The Blue Herb has risen to the forefront of the underground scene by steadfastly maintaining their independent roots: they started their own record label, refuse to appear on TV, and generally stay true to their D.I.Y. aesthetic. In somewhat of a play on this ideal, they named their 2002 album (and my personal favorite) *Sell Our Soul*, which pulses with such intense energy that it can't help but command your full attention. So if you're a fan of hip-hop's outlying experimentalists like Dälek, Cannibal Ox, and El-P, then Tha Blue Herb is sure to get your head a-noddin' as they drag you into their hypnotic beatscapes. Do your eardrums a favor and check them out.



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