

## Awareness Raising

Konnichiwa! We have some tips, which we hope would help you in your new life at Ritsumeikan APU in Beppu. As students, who had lived in Beppu for 4 years, we have written some information based on our personal experiences.

Your study abroad experience is what you make of it. We hope you will not waste time complaining about how everything is different. Instead, we hope you will enjoy and appreciate the differences and experience the real Japanese culture.

*(Please note that this document does not include obvious facts.)*

### 1. Familiarizing Yourself With Beppu Before You go

Beppu is not a large urban city like Tokyo or Osaka. So, you should not picture yourself in a busy Japanese city. It will be a good idea to accept this before you go. Beppu is a rural city, but, fortunately, it has its advantages. Living expenses are cheaper when comparing to the big cities and its calm and beautiful environment is one of the best places to concentrate on your studies. And, Beppu is a safe and a very clean city. When you move out to the city from hostel, the kind Beppu citizens will be helping you always, which will not happen in big urban cities.

### 2. What To Pack

Spices, any kind of instant food such as Maggie noodles (till you get used to the food there), coconut milk powder, rice (Japanese rice is sticky, so, you may pack some rice till you get used to the Japanese rice), bed sheet for summer, some English text books, which would help you if you are interested in teaching English, traditional dresses, music for cultural dances, pen drives

(Sri Lankan post office ships packages for Rs.250 per 1 kg, which will take around 15 to 20 days.)

### 3. Getting Used To Living Expenses

Please note that the given below are only rough prices. Prices for agricultural products are subject to change.

Item	Amount	Yen Price
Bread	6 slice package	156
Eggs	10	168
Milk	1 liter	168 or 190
Meiji Sliced Cheese	10 slices (190 gm)	196
Cabbage	1 head	138
Bacon	10 slices (150 gm)	166
Chinese Cabbage	1 head	100~150
Tomatoes	3	100~250

Potatoes	4	128
Onions	1	38
Chicken Breasts	450 gm	293
Mayonnaise	500gm	198
Rice	10 kg	3900
Broccoli	1	128
Carrots	3	100
Lettuce	1 head	250
Big Mac from MacDonald	1 burger	290~340
Cornflakes	1 big packet	300
Orange Juice	1 liter	180
Spaghetti	450g	150~200
Flour	1kg	200

#### **4. What To Buy Immediately**

Toiletries, frying pan, cooking pan, spoons, cups, mugs, plates, spice containers and stationary are some of the items, which you may want to buy soon. You can buy most of these from 100 yen shop.

#### **5. Checking Notice Board/Student Hand Book/Campus Email Account**

Especially in the first days, it is very important that you be alert on what is happening around you carefully as many activities such as going to the hospital for health check-up, registering for subjects, sitting for placement test for Japanese language classes, introducing banks for you to open bank account/s, introducing part time jobs, visiting 100 yen shop and etc will happen. Therefore, you need to read the news around as you will not be informed on these personally.

Make it a habit to check the information on notice boards often as notice boards provide many good opportunities such as exchange programs and etc.

#### **6. Getting Good GPA**

It is much better to focus on your studies in the first semester than getting extremely busy with part time jobs. With good GPA, you will be able to get a local scholarship, which will solve your financial burden. Good GPA will also give you chances for priority when registering to subjects.

#### **7. Learning Japanese**

Japanese language courses are taught almost entirely in Japanese. In the beginning, this might be challenging. But, this is one of the best ways to improve your listening comprehension. Also, be prepared for the fact that although the course will present new vocabulary and grammar, you will

spend little time applying it in class. In order to retain what you have learned, you will need to practice using it on your own. For that, making lots of Japanese friends is very important.

“SALC (Self Access Learning Center), which is located in Language Lounge allows you to exchange your language skills with other students. For an example, you can help a Japanese student in his/her English studies and, he/she will help you in your Japanese language studies.

Below are some phrases, which you will be hearing in Japan often. It is better you remember these phrases as you will be putting them to use immediately.

Ganbatte kudasai (Try your best)–Hai, ganbarimasu.(Answer)

Daijoubu desuka? (Are you OK) – Hai, Daijoubu desu (Answer: I am OK) Iie, daijoubu dewa arimasen (Answer: No, I am not OK)

Onegai Shimasu - Please

Wakarimashitaka (Do you understand?)– Hai, Wakarimashita (Yes, I understand/all right.)

Otsukaresamadesu (Good job)

\*\*Once when you exchange names with a person, you should not use “anata (you)”. Make sure to use that person’s name instead.

Eg:

Would you like to have some cake?(Wrong)

Would Noriko san like to have some cake? (Correct)

## **8. Expressing Gratitude**

Always try to be humble and, be sure to always express gratitude, which will go a long way in Japan. You may invite people for a Sri Lankan meal, which is one good way of expressing gratitude and to initiate/strengthen relationships.

## **9. Extra-curricular Activities**

Ritsumeikan APU is much more than getting good grades. The opportunity to build solid relationships with Japanese and international students is one of the unique features APU offers you. Getting engaged in extra-curricular activities is a good way of making friends. And, you will be able to practice several work ethics such as practicing time management, prioritizing and learning about long term commitments even before you start working for a company. The experiences you gathered while doing extra-curricular activities will indeed look great on your CV.

## 10. Spending Time With Host Parents

Spending time with host parents is one of the best ways to spend your weekend/vacation. You will be able to practice your Japanese skills and you will get the chance to feel the real Japanese culture. You may check notice boards regularly to apply for host parents or you may anyway talk to the student office when you are ready to find host parents.

## 11. Separating Garbage

In Japan, garbage is basically separated into burnable, non-burnable and recyclable items. Garbage separation in Japan is very important as to recycle waste, this separation is needed.



Take your trash to the designated pickup point in the morning of the scheduled collection day. Trash in the wrong bag may not be picked up and they might even inform you.

## 12. Unpredictable Weather & Survival In Winter

The weather can be highly unpredictable in Beppu especially in the transitional period from one season to another. In this period, you may leave home in a clear sunny morning, but, when you reach campus, you may find it cold!! Remember to bring sufficient warm clothing especially in such period. If it's mid cold, try to dress in layers so that you can add or remove clothes throughout the day. Wearing more than one layer on your legs will also help you to fight the winter. 80% of total body heat loss is from your head and neck areas. Therefore, it is important that you cover your neck properly as well.

## 13. Part Time Jobs

You should refer to notice board or get help from seniors to find part time jobs.

## 14. Moving Out From Hostel

Some apartments will request for a guarantor and APU will be your guarantor. Some apartments will ask for key money of 3 to 4 months rent.

Kamegawa is the nearest place you can move out to. You may also check places from Kamegawa to Beppu, Beppu or Kannawa.

### **15. Transportation**

You will find odd times such as 10.06 a.m. or 4.37 p.m. in the train/bus time table. Surprisingly, buses and trains work right on the said schedule. Upon boarding public transportation, you have to put the mobile phones on silent mode. But, you can text or listen to music quietly.

Students may find the price of bus pass, which is for 3 months/6 months/1 year expensive. Therefore, some students buy used scooters, which will probably cost around 40,000 yen to 70,000 yen. You also need to have insurance for scooter. However, you have to keep in mind that riding the scooter in the winter when it is snowing can be very dangerous.

### **16. Keeping Last Semester Free For Thesis**

Choosing right subjects at the right time also counts a lot. You should not leave any difficult subjects for the last year as you have to concentrate on your thesis and job hunting. Keeping the last semester free for writing thesis is a better option than running behind the subjects trying to finish reports and exams.

### **17. Applying For Internships In Vacation/ Jobs After Graduation**

Right attitude, innovative ideas, team work and respect for diversity are important facts to keep in mind when applying for jobs. More than your grades, your interest in the company and how you use that opportunity to shape your future will matter when applying for internships.

Japanese CV is very different; in fact, you need to write it by hand. It will be a good idea that you familiarize with standards of Japanese CV before the final year.

### **The End**

Do not underestimate the potential challenges that you will be faced with, especially if you have never lived away from home. You will be confronted with communication and cultural problems particularly during the first months. But all this is normal and to be expected. Play safe and have fun! We wish you all the best!!!!!!

