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## August Features

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All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, musings, poetry, prose, and any ideas to improve the Hyogo Times for the betterment of the Hyogo JET community. Submit by the 15th of each month to [hyogotimespublications@gmail.com](mailto:hyogotimespublications@gmail.com).

With August comes the continuation of sickeningly humid heat, the buzzing of cicadas, and a new year on the JET program. It is a time of beginnings and goodbyes. To all of our new JETs, I say "Welcome!" To our returners, "がんばれ!" To those leaving, "Good luck!" My name is Brittany Teodorski and I'm taking over as editor from Sean Mulvihill. I'm a third year in the small town of Ono. Only one person I've talked to has ever heard of it and it was quite a cause for celebration in my beloved Kyoto.

One of Ono's welcoming weekends (right after the Yashiro orientation coming up for prefectural ALTs) was awfully wonderful and wonderfully awful (okay, maybe just awful). I went to Himeji with several new friends to see the then-still-under-construction castle and one of my favorite cat cafes. That was good. The first attempt getting there went horribly awry and led to thumb-twiddling at Ao station. Never heard of it? There's a reason. That was bad. I went to the Ono Matsuri and watched some truly spectacular fireworks. That was good. I later fell into a gaijin trap trying to outpace dawdlers in the dark. That was bad. Returning to the matsuri was good. Losing my wallet was bad. Having had only a bit of cash in there was good. Finding a mukade on my pillow later that night was bad. To this day, I still check my bed every night. While I've had more many-legged visitors, they've thankfully stayed away from my mattress. Hopefully everyone has a much more enjoyable first few weeks here!

In this month's edition of the Hyogo Times, we welcome Mandy, an Osaka JET, as our food and cooking columnist. Her [recipe](#) this month is perfect for even the culinarily challenged (such as myself). Our online editor is taking over The

[Refuge](#) and I'm very excited to see where her story will lead! Returning this year are Rackle, with articles on [summer matsuri](#) and [special interest groups](#), and myself with a review on [Fukuoka](#) and some [suggestions](#) to pass your time while at school this summer. You'll also get to read greetings from this year's members of [HAJET](#) and a little bit about some second and third year [JETs](#).

Over the next year, I hope I can serve Hyogo well as editor. I also hope you write for us! We'd love to have your submissions, be it current events, fiction, pop culture, pictures, reviews; you write it, we'll almost definitely publish it! In the meantime, work hard and take in as many experiences as you can. As one of my friends is fond of saying, "We've got a long drive home." But it'll be over before you know it. Don't let your tank run dry and don't be afraid of taking a less-traveled path. You never know what wonders you may discover.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Hertel

Brittany Teodorski



The cicadas are chirping, the sun is melting everything, and for some unexplained reason your neighbors are wearing yukata on a random Tuesday. That's right folks; it's August here in Japan and that means a few things. First of all, it means hundreds of new JETs have just arrived in Japan! To them I say, on behalf of all JETs currently in Japan, we're really glad to finally meet you. Regardless of how lost you may feel now, just remember, we've all been in your place. We've all done things like standing in the soy sauce aisle thinking "Okay... which one of these is just regular soy sauce?" only to wait for someone to make a decision so that you can buy that one because "They seem like they know what they're doing."

August also means festivals everywhere. So go out and enjoy them while you can. I'll be trying to keep you up-to-date on what events are happening around Block 6 on the [Facebook](#) page. Another change that August brings is a new Block 6 Representative, namely, me. My name's Tyler Bissonnette and I come from a relatively rural part of Hyogo known as Tamba city.

You're probably asking yourself: "What's Block 6 and what does a Block Representative do?" Well luckily I'm here to answer those questions. First off, Block 6 encompasses three prefectures in the Kansai area of Japan: Hyogo, Kyoto, and Shiga.



As Block 6 Representative of these prefectures, I have a few responsibilities: organizing events such as the [Welcome Party](#) (September 5th) and the Halloween Party (October 31st), and representing you as part of the AJET National Council in front of CLAIR and the Japanese ministries.

That about sums it up. I'm your voice while here on the JET Programme. So when issues arise, don't hesitate to contact me. Conversely, if things are going amazing and you just feel like talking about what a nice day it is, you can contact me for that too. My email is [tyler.bissonnette@ajet.net](mailto:tyler.bissonnette@ajet.net)

*Tyler Bissonnette*

### *Peter Hein-Hartmann*

Hello everyone. My name is Pete. I am just starting my fifth year on JET (I am finally becoming one of those fabled and rare creatures!) and have been a member of the Hyogo AJET council for the past 3 years. I teach senior high school in Akashi and West Kobe. I'm very lucky to have two great schools and I'm loving my time on JET so far! Alas, I am bidding farewell to my long suffering co-worker Caitlin Rich. I hope you have an awesome time back in America!

In terms of my main duties on AJET this year, I am the main admin for our [Facebook](#) page. I will also be responsible for helping out at certain events, such as the farewell party we just enjoyed, and also for trying to find more businesses that you, as JET members, can get discounts at. I am also our official Hyogo/Kobe AJET liaison...for all your liaising needs...

As one of the long standing members of AJET, I'd like to give a warm welcome to our new volunteers and wish that they enjoy all the events we have coming up in the next year.

### *Ashlie O'Neill*

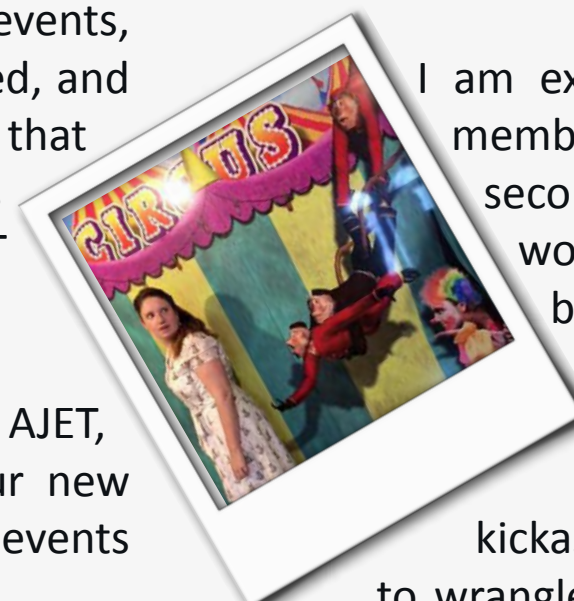
Hi all of you good-looking Hyogoians.

New JETs... WELCOME TO HYOGO! The land of all things great (especially the people).



To tell you a little about me, I am Ash, a 3rd year prefectural ALT in the Akashi/Kakogawa area. I like pina coladas and gettin caught in the rain... just kidding! I like wine, good food, road trips, singing badly and Formula 1 (so you can imagine how I feel about singing badly on a roadtrip to the Formula 1).

Since moving to Japan in 2013, I have become a 'YES' person and I highly recommend it. Some of the greatest experiences I have ever had here were unplanned, and were a result of me saying YES to something new. The best part is that being a yes person is easy! If someone asks you if you want to do/eat/drink/learn something something new (within reason obviously), you should reply with a resounding YES and see where the adventure takes you.



I am excited to be working as a member of Hyogo AJET for my second year. This year, I will be working alongside Ty (the block 6 rep hailing from our very own Sasayama Tamba area) and Hyogo AJET to organize some kickass events as well as trying to wrangle some amazing discounts/deals for you. Please feel free to contact me about helping you out or with any questions you have in the coming year.



### Chris Goodman

Hey everyone! It's just me, your friendly neighborhood Hyogo AJET rep-person thingy, just giving you a quick "Howdy do!" and what-not. I am in the quaint little town of Ako or Banshu-Ako as our station is called. This will be my 5th year on the JET program, so I have a fair amount of experience in all facets of JET life, such as beer gardens, beer gardens and a few beer gardens. Looking forward to helping the rest of you have a great year in any way I can. Ciao.



### Rackle Beaman

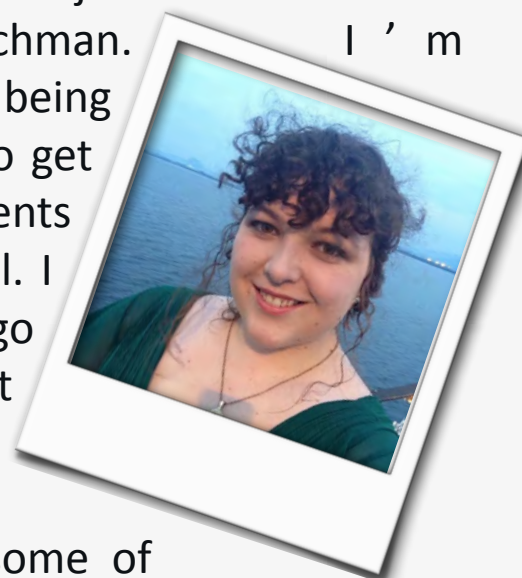
Hello my doves! Salutations to you all and welcome to our over sized family.

First off, just a little about me: my name is Rackle, like tackle as in rugby. I hail from Brisbane, Australia and I've just started my second year as a JET at Akashi-Nishi Senior High school out halfway between Himeji and Kobe. You'll generally find me barreling through life looking for new and interesting things while desperately trying to avoid direct contact with sunlight. I love stories, dancing, shoes I can never afford and all things delicious.

After arriving here in Japan a year or so ago, I have encountered a bevy of delightful experiences and personalities. The JET journey is an interesting one and for better or worse you are going to have your own crack at it. In my own experience,

I have learned that the best way to enjoy your time here is to just let yourself be swept along with it all and give it time to sink in. It's a pretty drastic lifestyle change, but not in the ways you'd always expect. I think if you let yourself open up to it all, it makes the transition that much easier.

I'm super excited to start my first year on AJET. I am essentially a designated jack of all trades and all around henchman. I'm looking forward to being part of it and helping to get some pretty snazzy events and activities for you all. I also write for the Hyogo Times which is a great publication (if I do say so myself) and hopefully will let you all in on some of the weird and wonderful things going on in the surrounding areas. If you've got any questions, love to chat or feel like trying your hand at amateur journalism, then please feel free to say hello. Just look for the giant mass of curly hair; I'm probably the one behind it.



### Kyle Cardine

Hey Hyogo!

Hello and an extended welcome to those coming to Hyogo for the first time! This prefecture is by far my favorite in Japan, with ample amounts of great food, places, and people. Really, you can't go wrong here.

My name is Kyle Cardine, and I am a third year JET located on Awaji Island. Although it may be my third year, this is my first year volunteering with Hyogo AJET. I am incredibly excited for the

opportunity and really look forward to the events we have under works.

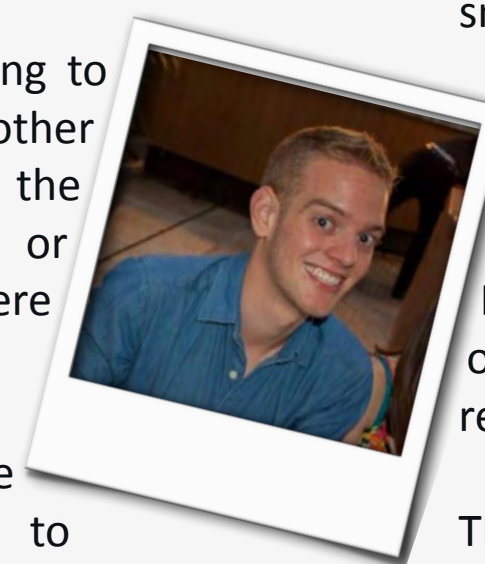
While many of you may only experience Awaji at the Mid-Year Conference in November, this island is truly a hidden treasure and I hope you'll visit another time. I will be providing such an experience by hosting an Awaji camping trip around May. On the trip, you'll get to experience our famous onions, beef, beer, bridges, and whirlpools that we're so fond of here.

Aside from that, I hope to plan other gatherings at some of the great cultural events located near Hyogo. For the fellow nerds out there, Kyoto's Miyako Messe will be holding the Kyoto Anime Fair on September 19 and 20 (which which is free for foreigners!), and then Bitsummit, an indie game convention, in July of next year. Having covered the Kyoto Anime Fair last year, I can say it's an absolutely fantastic event that only a place like Kyoto can provide.

This year, we're also hoping to bring fellow Hyogo JETs to other notable festivals around the prefecture, whether big or small. Stay tuned to see where we might head to next!

Of course, if you ever have any questions, feel free to reach out to me by email or in person at any event. I've grown to love Hyogo even more because of the fantastic community behind it, and I hope we show that through our plans in the upcoming year.

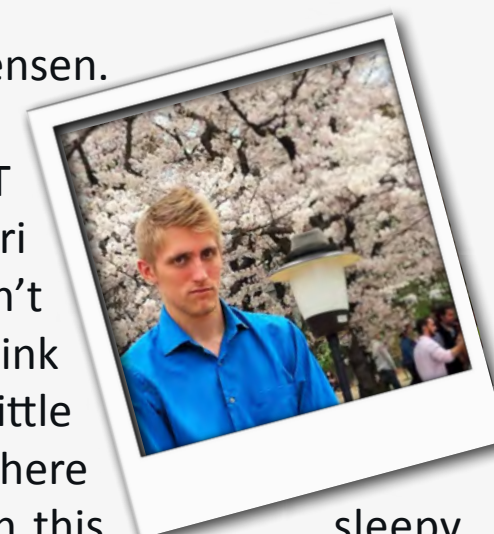
See you around!



### Cody Christensen

Hey there, lovely people.

My name is Cody Christensen. As of August 6th, I will be a second year ALT stationed over at Kamigori High School. Haven't heard of it? I didn't think so. Kamigori is a tiny little town west of Himeji. There isn't much to be seen in this sleepy town of 18,000, but there is a lovely community at large situated in an area dominated by nature. The town is surprisingly wide, with most of the space occupied by tall mountains and rice fields. For a city-goer like myself, it was quite the shock to see. This is the beauty of being a part of this program. I am here to teach English, but also become more of an active member in my international community, regardless of how small it may be.



I am a second year ALT. I am looking forward to all the shenanigans we will be a part of this coming year. If you play basketball or ultimate Frisbee, go to Osaka for some night excursions, or just want to go see a pleasant temple, I am ready to go.

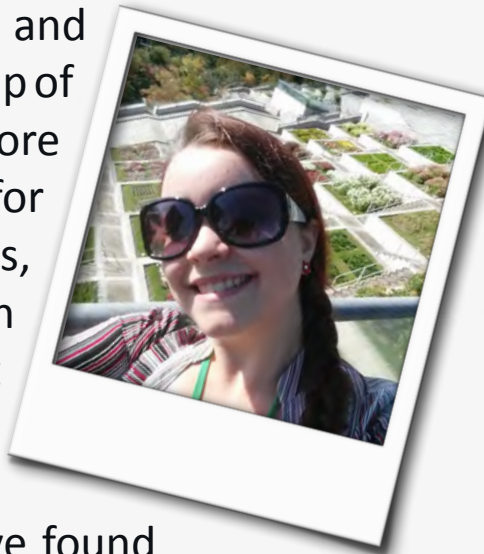
Thanks all. I hope to see you soon!

-Cody



### *Sadie Cornforth*

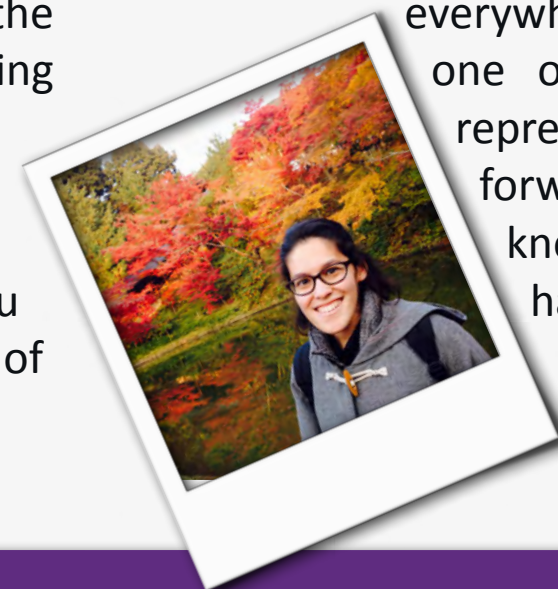
Hi, I'm Sadie, now a 2nd-year JET. I'm the one and only Tajima Representative, and I will be responsible for planning the Ski Trip and any other events North of the Wall. My hobbies include playing Wii U, learning how to make pie, and abusing my boyfriend's Japanese abilities. I live in Ikuno (read: boonies), and hang out with a great group of ALTs. We'd love to see more of you come up and visit for some of our Tajima events, including our Halloween Party, Snowball Fight Tournament, and various barbecue parties at Takeno Beach. If you have found it difficult to make Japanese friends, you'll have plenty of opportunities at one of our events!



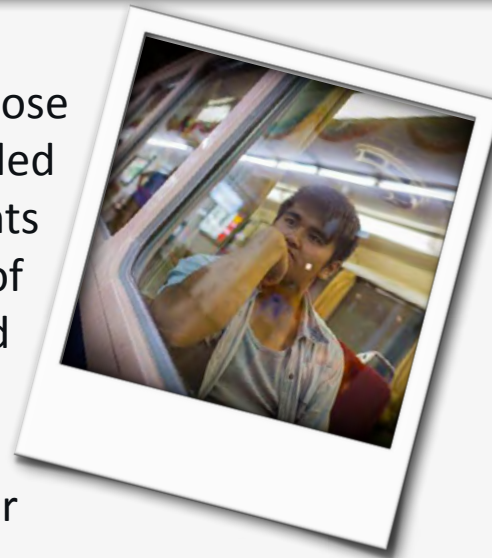
I haven't been in the south much, but I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you over the year. Please look for my face at upcoming events like the Development Conference and welcome parties. Until then, here's to a new year on JET! Let's make it a good one!

### *Alan Lau*

First of all, congratulations on making it on to the JET Program! Normally, I would say something along the lines of "great people blah blah... life changing experiences blah blah..." But I will not. Luckily for all of you (or unluckily), unlike your other 'NORMAL' JET friends, you have been placed in Hyogo; the Prefecture of the uncontrollable crazies!!!



Be prepared to lose yourself with like minded individuals at crazy events organized by a team of people that has honed and mastered the Art of Crazy (and is currently studying "Madness for Dummies").



Within that team is me; Alan. I'm a 4th year Kiwi JET based in the not-so-Kiwi city of Himeji. In my spare time, I enjoy destroying people's eardrums at karaoke, cycling, as well as some PC gaming. I am also the person who, besides maintaining the Hyogo AJET website and helping out at events, will be documenting your every act of lunacy with my camera. Your bad angles are not safe from me!

Welcome to Hyogo? No... Welcome to the fray! Muwahahahahahah!

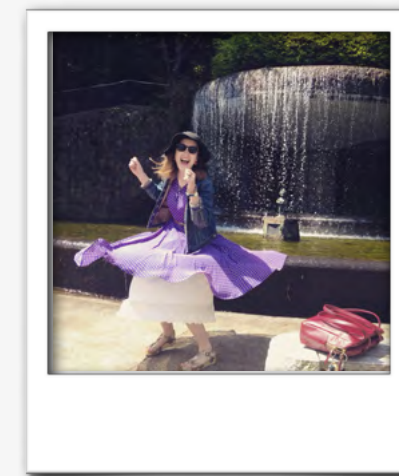
P.S. We're not actually crazy.

### *Aiko Lignon*

Hi, I'm Aiko from Itami. I'm a third year JET. I love traveling around Japan visiting new places and doing new things. There's so much to see and do that I don't know if I'll have enough time to go everywhere, but I will try! As one of your cultural events representatives, I'm looking forward to letting you know about neat activities happening in Hyogo and surrounding areas.

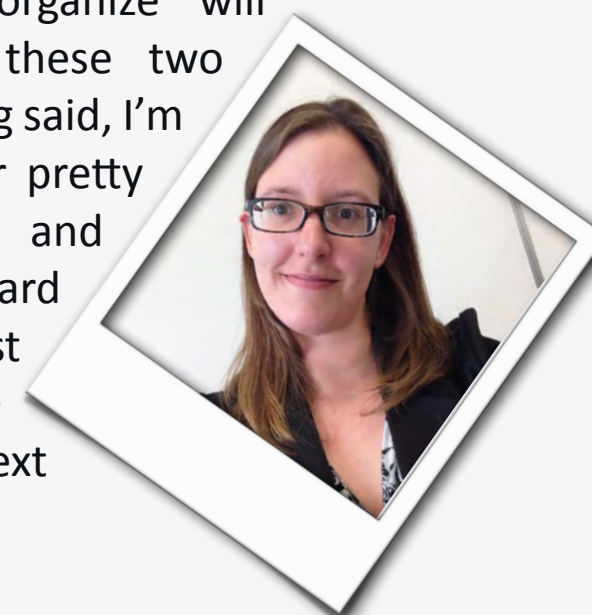
### *Jillian MacKenzie*

Hi, my name is Jillian. I'm a third year ALT in Nishinomiya (home of the incomparable Hanshin Tigers and lots of shopping malls). I love reading, collecting train station stamps, and wasting money on capsule toys and purikura. This year, I'm organizing the Hyogo book club. Yoroshiku!



### *Sylvette Pinet*

Hello all! I'm Sylvette Pinet, a second year JET currently living in beautiful Sasayama. I'm an avid traveler, whose current mission is to drive through as much of Japan as possible. So keep a lookout for me, and if you do happen to spot me, say hello! I'm also a theatre buff and a bit of an adrenaline junkie, so it's a good bet that any events I organize will centre around these two things. That being said, I'm usually game for pretty much anything, and am looking forward to having a blast with everyone this year! Until next time!



### *Brittany Teodorski*

Hello again Hyogo! My role on HAJET is primarily writing and editing for the Hyogo Times. I'll also be at every book club, so please come join Jillian and I in our reading adventures! I'm starting my third year at Ono High School (Oh no! No one's ever made that joke before, I can assure you), and apparently my favorite thing to do is leave Ono every weekend. On last count, I've stayed in my humble little town only five weekends since November 2013. I actually really like Ono. However, there are so many interesting places to see, things to do, and people to pester about writing for me. I'll see you guys monthly through this magazine, and maybe in person at HAJET events. Feel free to say hello anytime!



*Compiled by Brittany Teodorski*



As children, the excitement of no school during summer quickly devolves into crippling boredom. To pass the time, siblings may wage war, disasters are delivered unto kitchens, and the backyards have never before seen such ruin. As ALTs, our outlets may change, but ennui is just as likely to set in. For activities outside of school hours, below you will find JET groups that would love your participation.

## API AJET

What's up, JETs! We are API AJET, a special interest group committed to providing peer support to the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community in Japan, as well as to raise local and global awareness about the diverse range of issues that face this community. The group is open to any and all who wish to share experiences and/or promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions, events, activities, etc.

In the past, our block leaders across Japan have held various events in their communities, such as movie screenings of *Hafu*, a charity event for the Philippines, as well as local meetups and hangouts. Every year, we plan a National Meetup for members to get together.

This year, we're streamlining and revamping our social media presence, so stay tuned. In the meantime, get your discussion on and share your experiences with our weekly API AJET Q&A. Want to get those API frustrations onto paper? Write articles, poems, and other literature for

our API AJET magazine!

You can find us [online](#) or on [Facebook](#). Look for the API AJET group!

## Book Club

Do you love reading books? Do you love talking about books with like-minded individuals? Then join the Hyogo book club! We meet every two months in the cafes of Kobe to talk about a book we voted on, enjoy some late lunch (or perhaps an early drink), and choose our next book. Info about meetings will go up as a Facebook event on the Hyogo AJET [page](#). Our [first meeting](#) is September 6th, where we'll be discussing Margret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. Please come!



## ¡Hola! JETs

Do you like Hispanic culture? Have Latino heritage? Want to learn more about Hispanic and Latino culture within Japan and attend Latino or Hispanic events? Well, then why not join ¡Hola!JETs! We're a special interest group for those of Hispanic or Latino descent, or those

who are interested in learning about Hispanic and Latino culture. Todos estan bienvenidos! Everyone is welcome!



Photo courtesy of ¡Hola!JETs

We are here to build connections with the Latin community based in Japan and encourage others to learn more about our cultures. Latino and Hispanic culture is something that is not as visible or heard of in Japan and so by creating this group, we hope that many more people become interested. ¡Hola! JETs provides various ways in which the community can stay connected. You can visit our [website](#), where we post bi-monthly spotlight articles which focus on specific Latin American countries. They showcase everything from travel, to food, to music, and are written by fellow members. We also share recipes and where to find those much needed ingredients.

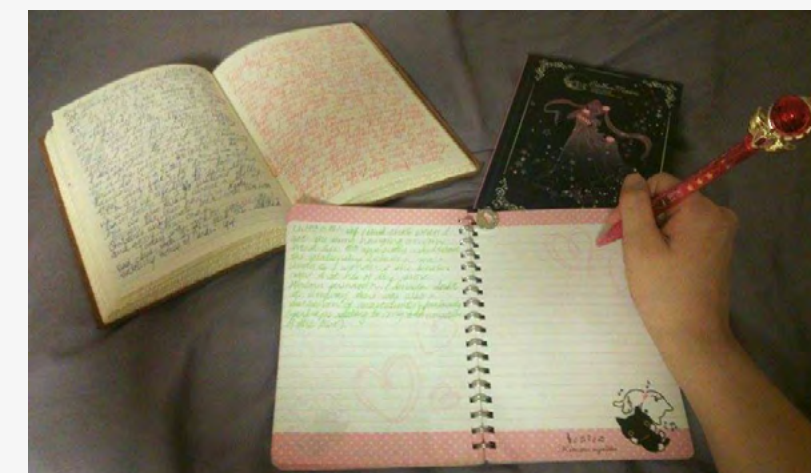
If you want to know about all the cool Hispanic and Latino cultural events happening in Japan, then you can check out our [Facebook](#) page. If you want to get involved, we're only an email and a click away. Feel free to message us at [holajets@ajet.net](mailto:holajets@ajet.net)! Hope you see many of you at all the upcoming meetings throughout the year! We help bring the Fiesta to Japan!

## Hyogo Science Coalition

The Hyogo Science Coalition is a group of educators, students, professionals, and community members who wish to promote scientific education and global understanding. We create and participate in events where people can learn about and discuss science while using English, such as the Hyogo E-Café where we invite guest speakers to present a topic at a coffee shop or other such venue, and then have a discussion afterwards. Future events may include a student poster competition and workshops. We are a very new organization, and are open to any ideas you may have. We're looking for ALTs who can help facilitate discussions with non-native English speakers, and who can advertise to students and any others they think may have an interest. Currently, all of our events are based in the Kobe area, but we also may expand elsewhere in the future. For more information, please contact us by e-mail at [HyogoScienceCoalition@gmail.com](mailto:HyogoScienceCoalition@gmail.com) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).

## Hyogo Writers' Group

Interested in writing and receiving friendly critique from other writers? Join the Hyogo Writers' Group! There is a Google [mailing list](#) where you can request membership.





## JCF

If you are a Christian or are interested in Christianity, JCF is the place for you! We are a non-denominational, unaffiliated group of Christians, who strive to love God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strengths and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have no membership requirements, or application process. Getting involved is as simple as giving us your email address, or joining one of our Facebook groups. From there, your level of involvement is entirely up to you. So what does JCF offer? Our goal is to get Christians connected with other Christians and with local churches. If you tell us where you live, we will probably be able to find a church that you can go to. At our retreats, which are our biggest events held twice a year, you can connect with other Christians from all over Japan. We meet once in east Japan and once in west Japan (usually in Kobe) for a time of teaching, fellowship, worship, prayer, and encouragement. The last few years, we have sent missions teams to the Philippines to help with disaster relief. We will continue to have missions trips both inside and outside of Japan. We also offer various Skype opportunities, such as Bible Studies and Prayer Meetings. Do you have a different way that you want to serve God in Japan? Let us know about your ideas, and we can provide a community that will support you, pray for you, and serve with you. For more information you can check out our [website](#). You can join our [Facebook](#) group JET Christian Fellowship, or send us an email at [jcfnatco@gmail.com](mailto:jcfnatco@gmail.com).

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:  
“Whom shall I send,  
And who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”  
(Isaiah 6:8)

## Kobe JET Rock Climbing (& Friends)

Our main focus is hanging out at a rock climbing gym and bouldering there, but we’re more than happy to try other climbing activities! You can find us on [Facebook](#).



Photo courtesy of Scott Beckner via flickr commons

## Stonewall Japan!

Stonewall Japan is an English-speaking LGBT+ group in Japan. Stonewall Japan connects the LGBT+ international community, shares information and resources, and provides a safe space for members to find support. It does this by...

1. Organizing a variety of events around the country.
2. Sending monthly emails about LGBT+ related information to its members.
3. Continually adding to a large amount of LGBT+ related resources on our website.
4. Maintaining a private ‘Facebook’ group for peer support and interactions.

Anyone living in Japan, or soon to be for an

extended period of time, can join! To become a member, all you have to do is join our Facebook group ‘Stonewall Japan’ and/or go to our website and join our [mailing list](#). No membership fee!



Photo courtesy of Stonewall Japan

Japan is divided into 6 geographic blocks, in order to better serve members on a local level. You can look on the website to find which block you are in and who the block leader is. Block leaders send out monthly block emails and organise events in the area.

Stonewall Japan communicates in English and is run by volunteers who are elected into the position of President, Vice President, Web Coordinator, and Block Leaders. We’re always looking for more volunteers!

Feel free to participate in the Facebook group discussions and join events. Many Stonewall members are JET participants, and there are many who are not, too. Whether you just want to keep up to date with the latest news in the LGBT+ movement, or want to help us organise events, find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or visit our [website](#)! If you have more questions, please email us at [stonewallsig@ajet.net](mailto:stonewallsig@ajet.net). We’re looking forward to hearing from you!

## VegJET

Do you like cooking vegetarian and vegan food,

but wonder how to do this in Japan? Do you want to contact other vegetarians and vegans who can offer insight into living the veggie life out here? Do you simply want to expand your knowledge of veggie food while getting to know some like minded people? If any of the above applies to you, then join our group, VegJET!

VegJET is an open, active community and a useful resource for vegan/vegetarian JETs living in Japan. (We also have non vegan/vegetarian group members who are simply looking to reduce their intake of animal products and therefore are looking for advice.)

We share helpful information on veggie life in Japan, special events taking place around the country, recipe ideas, new vegan or vegetarians products we’ve found in local stores, and so much more.

If you’re a current or incoming JET wishing to maintain a compassionate and healthy lifestyle, then you should join VegJET!

Email: [vegjet@ajet.net](mailto:vegjet@ajet.net)  
[Facebook](#)



“Vegan Bento Box” courtesy of Rain Rabbit via flickr commons

*Compiled by Rackle Beaman and Brittany Teodorfski*

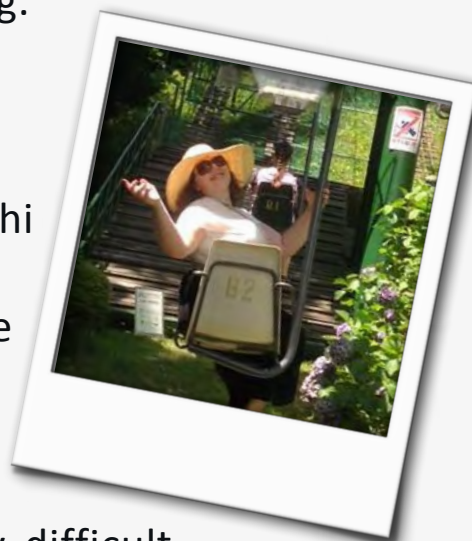


**B**elow you will find the answers to such pressing questions as “What is your favorite Japanese food?” and “What advice do you have for me, sempai?” These nine JETs have courageously risen to the challenge of satisfying our curiosity. Caution: Some reading between the lines is necessary. New JETs, we’d love to have your answers to a similar questionnaire for the September issue! Please email us at [hyogotimespublications@gmail.com](mailto:hyogotimespublications@gmail.com) if you’re interested in contributing.

## Rackle Beaman

Brisbane, Australia  
2nd year at Akashi Nishi SHS

- Favorite Japanese food: Salmon sushi and custard taiyaki
- Favorite place in Japan: This is a really difficult question because every place I’ve gone, I’ve found something I loved. I think Kinosaki; it’s beautiful and it’s a town built entirely on the concept of eating, drinking, having a bath and then repeating, which is something I can really get behind.
- Best memory on JET: The Block 6 Yuki Matsuri festival trip to Hokkaido. It was just a hoot. I spent time with great people, it was my first time seeing real, proper snow and I spent the whole time jumping in snow drifts and trying to eat everything in sight. It was awesome.
- Goal: Try and pass the JLPT (HAHAHAHAHA \*sobbing\*)
- Advice: Don’t wallow; homesickness is a very real thing here, but it’s worse if you let it fester.



Also, learn the difference between the kanji for custard and curry. Seriously, many a lunch choice has been ruined for me by this.

## Kyle Cardine

DeKalb, Illinois, US  
3rd year on Awaji island

- Favorite Japanese food: My favorite Japanese food is anything that ends in 焼き: Okonomiyaki, takoyaki, tonpeiyaki, you name it. Having said that, the streets of Osaka is by far my favorite place to dine.
- Favorite place in Japan: I have too many fond memories of hanging around Dontonbori and the surrounding Osaka downtown area to not call it my favorite place in Japan. However, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention Shikoku. I traveled around the island on the infamous Shikoku Henro Pilgrimage Trail last year and there’s no other real experience that compares to walking a 1200 year old road to temples about just as old.
- Best memory on JET: My best experience on JET thus far is participating in the yearly summer festivals. Just knowing that the big summer festival season is right around the corner gets me giddy. Getting together with the people around you and just having a good time is something I really treasure. And they’ll make sure that you have the time of your life. If you ever get the opportunity, never hesitate to say “yes!” to throwing on some tabi, fundoshi, and dancing the night away!
- Goals: My main goal for this year focuses on trying to bring Hyogo together as much as possible. This prefecture is an absolutely massive place, and it can be hard to see the other parts where fellow JETs live. However, the events that have brought us together have been some of my favorites, most notably the



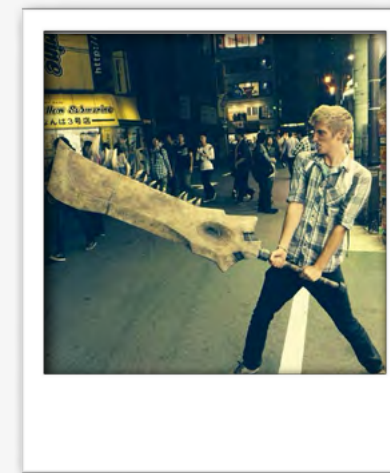
car rally this last year. I finally got to experience a bit of Northern Hyogo and I’m really glad I did. I hope to facilitate other events in which Hyogo JETs can come together and explore this great prefecture.

- Advice: My advice here is going to get a little meta, and deal with advice itself. Know that for as spread out as the JET program is, everyone’s encounters and experiences are going to differ in some way. You’ll perhaps soon come to hate the phrase, but “every situation is different” is absolutely true. Having said that, always make sure to get a second opinion, whether it be about work or life here. There’s going to be as many ways to deal with a situation as there are people on the program, so don’t limit yourself to just one person’s advice or anecdote. You’ll become a more rounded individual in the process as well. Never fear to ask for help!

## Cody Christensen

US  
2nd year at Kamigori High School in Aioi City

- Favorite Japanese food: Hiroshima-style okonomiyaki is what made me thank God for giving me five senses to use. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that dish.
- Favorite place in Japan: So far, I have really enjoyed my time in Kyoto. I will travel there for a week this summer to thoroughly explore the city, but the culturally-rich atmosphere is very exciting. Otherwise, for a good party I always have to choose the Namba district in Osaka.
- Best memory on JET: Traveling to Okinawa with two of my closest friends. We visited many different kinds of places, such as the Churaumi Aquarium, Shuri Castle, and some movie



festival welcome for the actors. If I knew who they were, I am sure I would have been floored by my amazement, but even as an ignorant viewer, it was really fun.

- Goals: My personal and AJET goals align for this year: visit new and exciting places. I have been focused on activities in southern Hyogo, so I have not ventured up north much. I haven’t even been to Kinosaki yet! It’s madness! So, I wish to become involved in the entire prefecture for both AJET and personal reasons. I will visit those sleepy towns, darn it.
- Advice: Learn to cook. Every day, I cook the same mix of veggies and meat while adding a carb and it saves me a ton of money. In the beginning, I bought convenience store food quite often and realized that all that money could be spent on traveling and other various activities. With student loans weighing me down as well, learning how to cook is great for your wallet and, if you try, your health. The strongest opinion I hold for life in Japan is to avoid the thoughts of “me vs. them.” It is easy to become flustered at culture quirks and being out of the loop at times, but I can assure you that people living in Japan are just as human as you are. These mistakes can occur anywhere. It’s rather comforting believing this, as you realize everyone is trying the best they can given their background. We learn from each other, and that is what makes our experiences valuable. I think you will find that as long as you try your best, you can find many qualities that you absolutely love. Focus on that.



### Stephen Crafton

Michigan, US

2nd year Hyogo JET in Kobe City, Tarumi Ward

- Favorite Japanese food: Okonomiyaki
- Favorite place in Japan: Sannomiya area, downtown Kobe.
- Best memory on JET: Traveling with other ALTs throughout Kansai.
- Goals: I want to join a conversational community group, prepare for the JLPT in December, and the Foreign Service Officer Test next year for the U.S. State Department (future career goal).
- Advice: There's never a need for panic. Relax and adjust to any scenario. Don't be afraid to ask for help from other ALTs and your school. Make good relationships. Don't force anything; let it develop naturally through trial and error.



### Aiko Lignon

New Zealand (born in France)

3rd year in Itami

- Favorite Japanese food: My favourite Japanese food is natto. If you haven't tried it, give it a go!
- Favorite place in Japan: One of my favourite places in Japan is Kyoto as I love traditional Japanese culture with its old shrines, temples, traditional craft shops, kimonos, tea ceremonies, and much more! But truthfully, it's so hard to pick one as Japan has so many great places! I have loved almost every place that I've visited as each place has its own unique characteristic.
- Best memory on JET: One of my best memories on JET thus far is rafting in Shikoku. I had a great time on the Hyogo AJET Rafting trip meeting



new people and sharing the adventure. I loved it so much that I went back again earlier this year with my friends. It was just as epic the second time around as the first.

- Goals: My goals for the upcoming year are to improve my Japanese and meet more fellow Hyogo JETs.
- Advice: My advice for incoming ALTs is if you want any information about what's going on at your school, you'll have to be proactive and ask as otherwise your school may not inform you of things.

### Jillian MacKenzie

US

3rd year in Nishinomiya

- Favorite Japanese food: Macha parfaits
- Favorite place in Japan: Naoshima; I've been three times!
- Best memory on JET: Taking the red-eye ferry from Kobe to Takamatsu...it has a beautiful theme song that plays loudly on repeat at 4:30 AM to wake you up...
- Goals: Go to bunny island. Go to cat island. Go to fox village.
- Advice: Start a stamp collection ASAP. They are great, FREE souvenirs from nearly every train station and tourist spot! I am kicking myself for not starting this until my second year.



### Roz Scoular

US

2nd year in Ono

- Favorite Japanese food: My favorite food probably depends on the day. I really love tonkatsu and vegetable tempura. For sweets, I



love matcha ice cream and strawberry daifuku.

- Favorite place in Japan: My favorite city is a tie between Nara and Kyoto. Both places have beautiful temples and natural sites as well as fun shopping. And of course in Nara you can go hang out with the deer in the park.
- Best memory on JET: My best memory has been traveling with friends. Over Christmas break, I went to Shizuoka, Tokyo, Nara, and Kyoto. Nara was my favorite because we stayed at a small hostel with a very sweet owner and the people in Nara were very friendly.
- Goals: I want to travel to one new country and improve my kanji ability.
- Advice: Try new things, meet new people, and travel whenever you can. It is amazing how fast time flies and you only have a few years with JET.

### Brittany Teodorski

Oregon, US

3rd year in Ono

- Favorite Japanese food: Donburi, okonomiyaki, salmon nigiri (which is apparently a Norwegian spin on the Japanese dish; who knew?)
- Favorite place in Japan: It's so stereotypical, but I truly love Kyoto. I have an incredible time every time I go, and I've made so many friends there!
- Best memory on JET: It's so hard to pick just one! Traveling to Kinokuniya with my fellow Ono ALTs last year, being surrounded by cats on Ainosima, and road tripping to Amanohashidate followed by an obscenely brightly lit game of Mao are possible contenders. Honestly, almost all of my time on JET has been incredible. I'm excited to see what the next year will bring!
- Goals: Actually follow my own advice and study during my downtime. Also, I still want to



travel to many more places, including Taiwan, Vietnam, and Lao.

- Advice: Travel as much as possible. Say yes to everything you're invited to (and can actually do). I've spent only a handful of weekends in my town over the past two years and I still wish I could have done more!

### Mandy Wong

Colorado, US

3rd year in Toyono-cho, Osaka

- Favorite Japanese food: Ichigo daifuku (mochi stuffed with bean paste and a strawberry! Yum!)
- Favorite place in Japan: I love Kansai!!! Otaru, the town of music boxes and glass artwork in Hokkaido is also very nice <3
- Best memory on JET: Seeing fireflies for the first time. Plus, rounding a mountainside biking Lake Biwa and seeing windsurfers tearing it up on the lake.
- Goals: Pass a kyudo (Japanese archery) test, try a new recipe at least once a week, learn how to bake bread, and incorporate more practical English skills into the school environment.
- Advice: Keep an open mind and be ready to adapt to the various teaching styles of your JTEs. Also, take the opportunity to explore more of Japan and the nearby countries on your many 3-day weekends. Check your calendar and plan ahead! :)



Compiled by Brittany Teodorski



**F**inally the holidays are here! Classes are drawing to a close, you have more free time than you can wave a stick at and the humidity has finally reached a level where you begin to wonder if jumping into the school pool would actually make any difference. It also means it's summer festival season, so dust off those yukata, crack out the geta sandals and let's get into it.



Japan is a country that loves a good festival, aka matsuri, and there's one for everything. From the massive nationwide events like Obon, to city specialties like Daimonji Gozan Okuribi in Kyoto on the 16th of August (seriously, they set a mountain on fire), to the little local town festivals that pop up every other weekend during the holidays. Festivals are everywhere and they are a wonderful opportunity for you to get in and have a wonderfully authentic Japanese cultural experience.

Generally speaking, summer matsuri are remarkably similar to the local town fairs of our respective homelands. Often, there are local cultural performances like taiko drums,

traditional dance troupes, Japanese folk singers and traditional Japanese orchestras, as well as some of the more interesting displays like salsa dancers, hawk hunting and hip hop artists. There are rows of street stalls selling all kinds of interesting cuisine like karaage, cotton candy, sausages, ice cream, chicken cartilage, taiyaki, yakisoba and many other unique treats. You can also find various side show games if you wish to try your hand at catching gold fish, lucky dips and numerous other skill tester games.



The festivals are a chance for everyone to wear their yukata and spend time with friends or family. The areas will be teeming with people meandering from stall to stall: gaggles of school girls in coordinated outfits giggling over any and every thing, old men chatting over beer, couples on dates making puppy eyes, families introducing their young ones to the delights of their culture and packs of grandmothers commandeering space with militaristic precision in order to catch

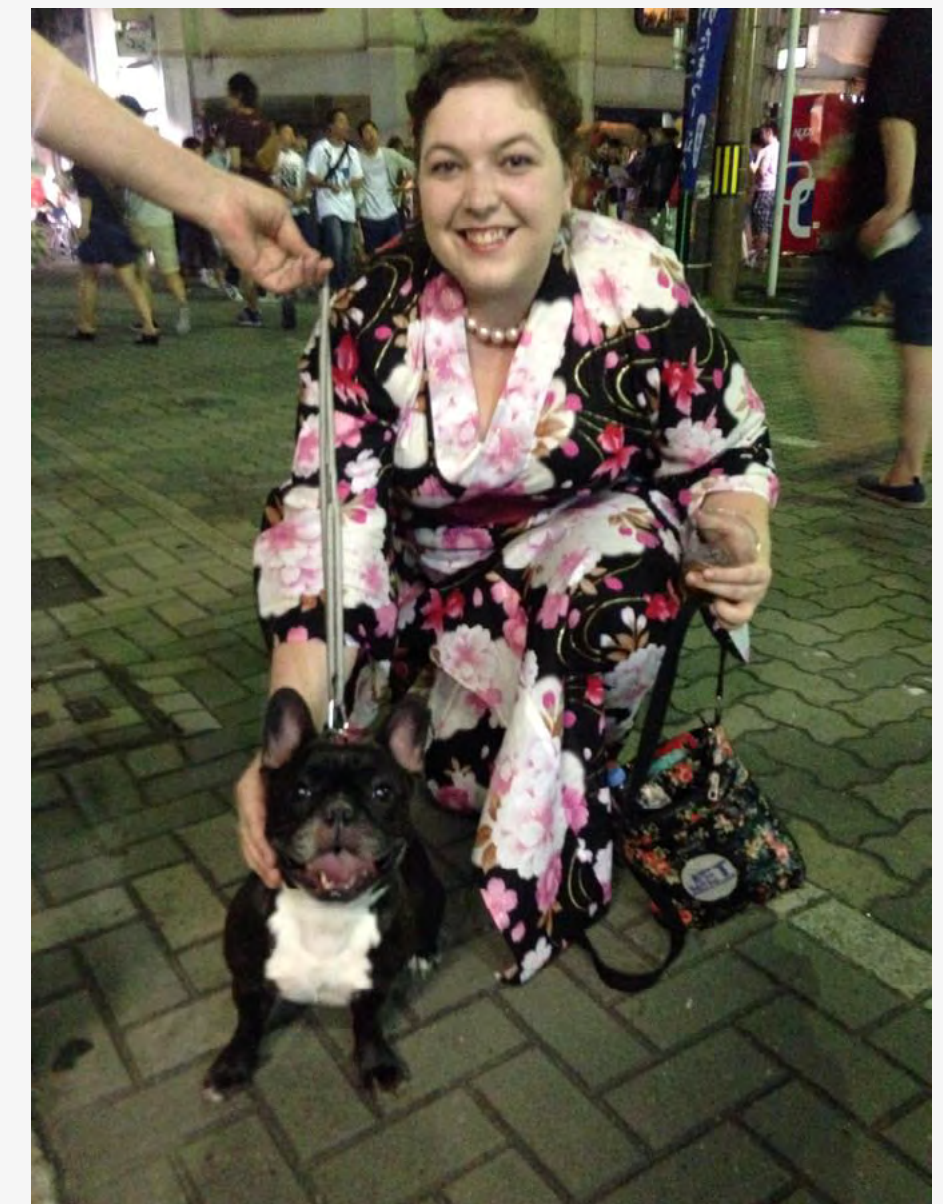
up on the weekly gossip.



You don't have to worry if you don't have a yukata either. They aren't a requirement for attendance but they are fun to wear. If you want to buy your own, you can easily purchase one for around 6000 yen in a local department store or cheaper still at the likes of second hand or bargain shops like Don Quixote. Personally, I bought mine from [Yukata Kimono Market Sakura](#) as I'm on the taller and rubenesque side of things. You can also get one custom made at a yukata shop but it will definitely cost you a pretty penny depending on the fabric and fit.



A festival is, in my opinion, one of the best ways to simply enjoy being in Japan and soak up the culture, people and day to day life. They are a chance to indulge, socialize and connect with a part of Japan that is often hidden away from the main tourist traps. So if you hear word of a festival nearby, be it from your co-workers, fellow JETs or advertisements, I highly recommend you go. I can guarantee the experience is one you will treasure.



To find out more about festivals in your local area, you can ask your JTE, check out the JET event pages, go to your local civic center or go online and do your own research.

*Rachle Beaman*



Working as an ALT, especially during the summer holidays, can wage war on your senses. Often, we have nothing, or less, to do. It can be so easy to slip into the abyss that is the internet, wasting countless hours checking Facebook, reddit, tumblr, imgur, and many more. For those who want to feel a little more productive, this is the article for you!

### Lesson Planning

It's wise to finish all of your actual work before messing around. Or at least get started on it. It's impractical to work on it constantly, and you'll burn yourself out. But you should still talk with your JTEs to see what they'd like to do for fall classes. Ask for the textbook if you're new and don't have it. Pester everyone for the schedule so you can know when you might have sports days, cultural festivals, and exams. If you need inspiration, the Hyogo AJET Dropbox has many lesson plans from people in our own community. Keep an eye out on the Hyogo AJET [website](#) for other methods of accessing these.

### Join in Summer Activities



Check in with teachers at your school and see what clubs you could join. If you have an English Speaking Society (ESS), they'd love to meet with you and

do fun things together. My ESS will be performing two plays during our open high school. You can do that, watch movies in English, play games, mostly anything so long as the vehicle of interaction is English.

### Study, Study, Study

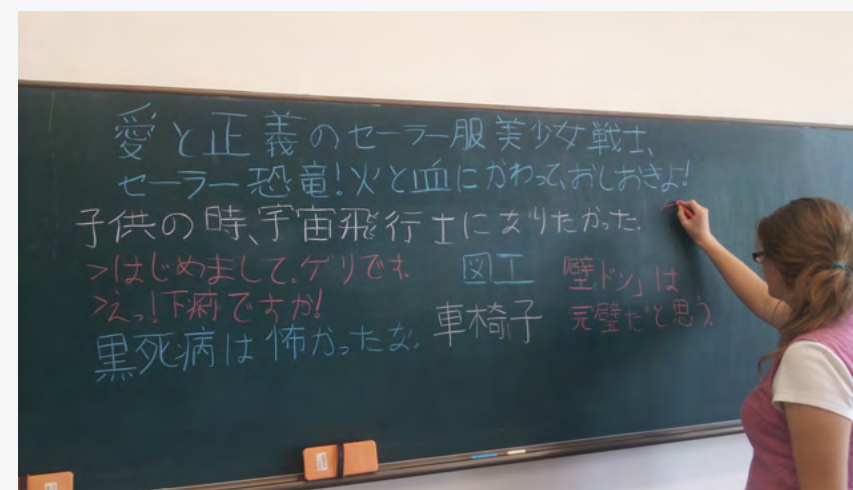
While living in Japan, your daily life will be exponentially easier if you can express your wants and needs in the native language of 98.5% of the people around us. Some of my favorite ways to study Japanese include [Memrise](#) and the [Anki app](#) for vocabulary ([Nihongo](#) is an [iPhone alternative](#) and was developed by a Hyogo JET alum's spouse), the Nihongo Soumatome series for a structured 6-week review, and the Genki textbook series for grammar, especially if you have a partner you can practice the exercises with.



Though it is not exactly necessary, writing kanji has been the easiest way for me to really learn the meanings and readings. If there is a free classroom (as there often will be in summer), blackboards great for practicing stroke order without wasting massive amounts of paper.

If studying Japanese has burnt you out, or you have other priorities, there are plenty of other subjects to study. Do you plan on continuing your education after JET? You can study and even sit for many tests in Japan, including the MCAT and GRE (computer-

based tests are in Osaka and Tokyo; paper tests are offered in Okinawa and Fukuoka--make a weekend trip out of it and use our travel reviews for advice on what to do). [Khan Academy](#) offers many free online courses. Are you interested in learning other languages? [Duolingo](#) can serve as an introduction to several different tongues and the gameification aids in motivation. Again, Memrise is fantastic for vocabulary and can even help with grammar. They also have content other than languages.



### Vacation Planning

Ask for a schedule of the year from your supervisor. From that, you'll be able to see when your midterm and final exams are. These are the perfect times to travel without the crowds you'd encounter during school and national holidays.

My typical method for planning vacations is to decide where to go and what I want to do, when I'm going, how I'm getting there (usually [Peach](#) for farther locations or China Eastern for places even farther), and where I'm staying, followed by a quick set of bookings for airfare and accommodation. Google flights can help you select specific criteria for your airfare if Peach doesn't work out for you. [Hostelworld](#) and [hostels.com](#) are helpful for looking up places with availability, but I always reserve on [booking.com](#) as it doesn't require any sort of deposit.

### Vacationing

Remember, there are 5 days of summer leave for prefectural JETs. If money isn't an issue, this is a convenient time to travel. Traveling together with your fellow JETs is extremely enjoyable and makes some of the best memories you'll have while on the program. (If you're in need of friends, come meet everyone at the HAJET Welcome Party!) Try to avoid larger tourist draws in Japan, though, as many students and their families will take advantage of one of the only times they can travel. Theme parks are particularly awful between the humidity, heat, and (massive numbers of) humans. If you are considering a specific travel destination, check out our [travel section](#) on our [website](#) to see if we have any tips!



Photo courtesy of Abby Smith

### Reading and Writing

You didn't really think you'd get through this without a shameless plea for contributors, did you? Writing for the Hyogo Times is a wonderful way to pass the time, can be good fun, and looks great on your resume! We also need your help!

If you still are struggling to find things to occupy yourself at this point, reading is mentally stimulating. Read fiction, read history, read science, read Oryx and Crake before the HAJET Book Club [meeting](#) on September 6th. There are so many ways to get involved and stay productive! Good luck, JETs!

*Brittany Teodorski*



After reading the most recent Hyogo book club selection, *From the Fatherland, With Love*, I felt I already had a connection to the city of Fukuoka, where most of the novel takes place. Fortunately, there have been no recent attempts to invade the prefecture's capital, though interestingly enough, the origin of kamikaze stems from one such invasion. In the 1200s, an unmatched Mongolian invasion force nearly took over Fukuoka before a typhoon decimated their numbers. This typhoon was named kamikaze. Hopefully, no more divine winds will be needed in the future.

### Getting There and Around

Using the shinkansen is expensive, but also offers you so much more flexibility than flights. If you go the cheaper route with Peach, though, the airport is well connected to Hakata, one of the transportation hubs in Fukuoka.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Hertel

The train lines in Fukuoka are fairly convenient. If you want to travel to the glorious feline haven, Ainosima, you'll need to ride a bus and a ferry in addition to a train. Make sure you line up relatively early for the ferry ride back. We would have missed it were it not for three kind women giving up their seats and those of us with a plane to catch would have been cutting it uncomfortably close.

### Where to Stay

As always, [Toyoko Inn](#) is affordable if you share a room and has many well-located hotels. Another recommended option is [Hana Hostel](#). It's between Tenjin and Hakata stations, so you can easily explore the lively parts of the city. They also have branches in Osaka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima where you can use a point card.

### What to Do

In Japan, food stalls are called yatai. They are usually set up only for [summer festivals](#), but Fukuoka is home to about 150 permanent ones.

They are a great dining experience as long as you know what you're getting into. Always choose one with listed prices, or else they're likely to take advantage of you. The highest rated yatai in Fukuoka is Mami-chan's near Tenjin station. It's easy to see why. Her food is incredible (the gyoza in particular are amazing, and though we ate too much before we could try it, the mabo tofu looked delicious as well), she is a great hostess, she serves complimentary chicken wings, and the customers she attracts are a fun and talkative bunch. Mami-chan also likes to take pictures to put up on her [website](#). Be warned that the wait can be a bit lengthy depending on what night you go as she is popular.

As for touristy things, Fukuoka is home to Japan's first Zen Buddhist temple, Shoufukuji (which is also

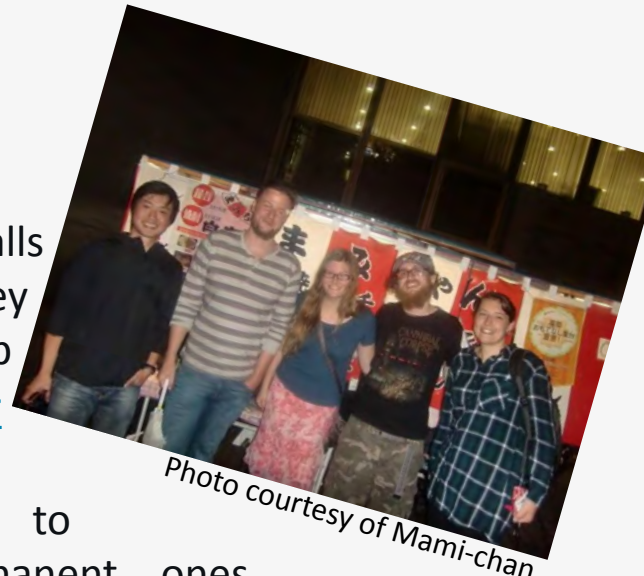


Photo courtesy of Mami-chan

home to a rather aloof cat). The Fukuoka Asian Art Museum and Artium art gallery are both great for art lovers. Artium had an exhibit on animation from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Croatia while we were there and we could have spent far more time there than what we had available to us. Fukuoka Tower and Robosquare are both near each other and are mildly interesting. Fukuoka Tower is expensive, as most other observatories in Japan are, and they try to make you buy pictures and other silly things. Robosquare has cute little robot shows throughout the day.

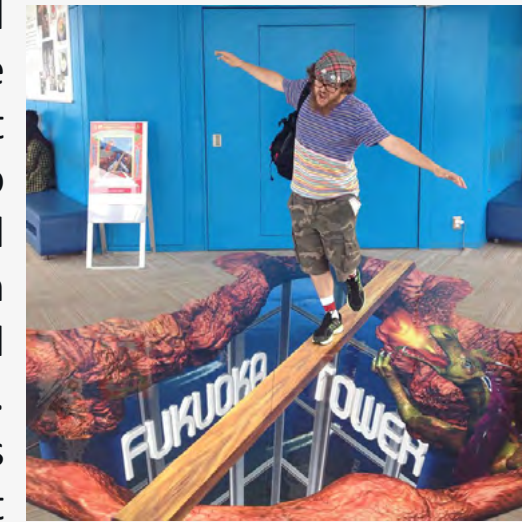


Photo courtesy of Ryan Hertel

As the crazy cat lady in training that I am, one of my favorite parts of Fukuoka is Ainosima, the cat island. After stepping off the ferry, you will see several cats lying around in the street, waiting for someone to give them love or treats. They're the same thing, really. If you somehow become bored with the kitties, there is a shrine you can hunt for.



Along the path, there are ridiculous numbers of caterpillars (at least in June). Once your hunger strengthens, you can eat at the single restaurant on the island. It has a selection of noodles and seafood and is actually quite good. Everyone enjoyed their meal and the waitress was very sweet. Pet the cats at least a couple more times before you get in line for the ferry back to the mainland.

After a full day of sightseeing, you may be in need of liquid relaxation. Tenjin houses many bars and live houses. One of these, Frog Town, is run by a man who lived in Los Angeles for more than twenty years, so he's practically American. The bar is well-known for its mojitos. For our group, it was hit or miss. Some of us liked them quite a lot and some of us didn't care for them at all. The Dark Room has a rooftop terrace, but it was closed when we ventured in. The place lives up to its name and is, indeed, dark. There is an area where you can dance to your standard fare of club music while watching a Mute Pantera concert anthology. Off Broadway is your standard gaijin bar, but you may get free nachos out of the deal if you order and they forget to put it on your bill! Queblick, a live house, put on one of the best shows I've seen in Japan. Definitely check it out if that's your thing.



### Last Minute Points

- Car 16 of the shinkansen appears to be a magical place. Check there first if you're buying tickets near the last minute.
- Don't forget your ICOCA (if you have one) for easier train riding!
- Along with yatai, Fukuoka is also famous for its ramen, tonkotsu ramen especially. Eat some. Or lots. Ramen Stadium in the Canal City mall has many options. The gyoza at the Sapporo shop are gigantic.

Fukuoka has a great deal to do and is worthwhile to visit for just a weekend and maybe even a week. Three day weekends seem like they'd be the perfect amount of time to get a taste for the city, and what do you know! We have quite a few in the fall term. I will definitely return for another trip filled with yatai and cats.

Brittany Teodorowski



(Food processor required)

L

iving in Japan, there are times that we miss certain foods or tastes from back home. For me, avocado is one of these refreshing tastes I like to revisit now and then. Here's a super fast and simple recipe for those tiring days where you just want to whip up a quick dinner. Summer is here and this sauce is also great cold!

P.S. You can find avocados at your supermarket or local veggie vendor at around 100円 - 200円.

**Yield:** 2~3 servings mixed in with pasta

**Ingredients:**

- 1 clove Garlic
- 4-6 Basil leaves (I suggest buying a basil plant at the start of the season & saving the seeds for next year)
- 1-2 Tbsp Lemon juice (about ½ a small lemon)
- 1 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 Ripe Avocado (peeled & pitted)
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- Extra liquid (water, milk, soymilk, etc.) in case the sauce is too thick

**Instructions:**

1. Pulse the basil and garlic clove in a blender to mince.
2. Add olive oil, avocado, and lemon juice. Blend till well mixed.
3. Taste the sauce and check for consistency. Add a bit of extra liquid if the sauce is too thick and add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Add sauce to your favorite pasta and sautéed protein/vegetables as desired.

Enjoy!

*\*mandy\**

Sometime last week, the birds in the attic started whispering. They want a new leader but can't decide if the Mohawk or Fireflight is preferable. I told them I endorsed the Mohawk so I think they will choose the other. On my way down from their congress, I stopped to visit my mother. She's been feeling under the weather and everyone keeps telling me to check up on her. I think the weather she's been under is rather dry and probably covered in smoke. That's the weather glowering overhead right now. It's been the weather for two months. Perhaps Mother feels she must express the weather more fully than the rest of us.



So, I check on her every once in a while to see if she has succeeded in becoming a puff of hot soot. Today, she sits looking out the window, concentrating on the grating in the gutters below. She has not transformed into anything yet.

At the bottom of the stairs, my dog stares at the front door. She needs to use the yard, so I tell the house I'm going out for a minute and open the

door. From here I can see my ruined mountain through the smoke. Great roiling clouds rise from the south. But I think the fire has finally passed the city. Fewer homes should burn now. Fewer people.

The fires have burnt one hundred fifty two McMansions, twelve apartment complexes, four condominiums, and thirty seven backyard sheds. Three mothers, two children, five dogs, and one uncle have died. I didn't know any of them, but the mountain is mine. I knew the poplar on Manitou ridge. I knew the deer in Helen Hunt valley. They died too.

The birds in the attic came that first week of the fires. For two months now they've been holed up, keeping quiet. They call themselves survivors. They are not. They are like college dropouts at the homecoming dance. The fire called them but they are not birds from my mountain. They are here because it is more convenient than where they should be. It is warm and submissive when their rightful place insists on being cold and hard to win. Should I kick them out?

My dog is finished with her business, and has started to sniff her way down the block. Though a walk is tempting, I call her back.

*Louise Warren*



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
All month:	Awaji Flower & Water Tropical Garden				1	2
	Bohemian Glass Exhibition (ends 8/30)				Kakogawa Fireworks	
					Awaji Island Festival	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kinosaki Furusato Fireworks			Takarazuka Fireworks			
Taga Taisha Lantern Festival, Shiga				Lake Biwa Fireworks, Shiga	Port of Kobe Fireworks	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			Sasayama Carnival		Kita-ku Welcome Party	Daimonji Gozan Okuribi, Kyoto
					Tamba Sasayama Dekansho Festival	
					Summer Sonic Festival, Osaka	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
					Kobe Seaside Bon Dance	
					Minatogawa Craft Fair	
					Summer Canyoning Trip	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
					Tajima Welcome Party	
31						



