



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bachelor Food Technology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	26/09/2022 until 27/01/2023
Country (exchange)	Japan
City (exchange)	Tokyo
University (exchange)	Tokyo University of Agriculture
Faculty (exchange)	Applied Biological Sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

A study exchange provides numerous avenues for growth and further learning. Just placing yourself in an unfamiliar setting is enough to put you perfectly on the edge, to adapt to a new environment, learn a new culture, and discover a new place in the world.

I am an international student myself, so having spent two years in Wageningen, I was keen to expand my horizons to a greater extent in another country.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

Other European countries are a popular destination for Food technology students doing an exchange, especially Denmark.

I opted for a university far away from Europe because to be exposed to a completely different culture felt challenging, exciting.

Japan is also a technologically advanced country, and on top of that the university is well known in agriculture. I wanted to learn about agriculture from the perspective of a powerhouse like Japan.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

Alright is the trusted route:

Narita Airport to Shinjuku (express train/normal train if you want to save some money)

Shinjuku to Chitose-Fubanashi Station (train)

Chitose-Fubanashi Station to University (walk 15 mins, 25 mins if you consider luggage in your first trip)

At any train station, you can buy a Suica card. It is like an OV chipkart which lets you travel on trains and buses. Designed with green and grey stripes, plus a cute penguin on it. A souvenir to remind you of the trusty Tokyo transportation network.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Agro-Environmental Engineering	4	Novel technology to assist crop farming. Useful information for farmers to consider which technologies to integrate into the local agriculture sector	4	The teachers make a big effort to impart their knowledge on agriculture technology.
2	Comparative Developing Agriculture	4	Provide broad pictures and basic understanding of agriculture in three main tropical regions: Japan, Philippines, and Malaysia.	3	The information is mostly historical and cultural. Although I prefer technical lessons, I appreciated the new things I learnt.
3	Comparative Food Production Technologies	4	The content is surprisingly extensive, ranging from the 5 senses used by pests to the scientific approach to increasing the yield of tubular crops. At the end of the course, submit 2 reports, on any two lessons, for credits.	4	I did not like all the lectures, but for those that peaked my interest, I learned a great deal.
4	Edo Aesthetics and Environmental Resiliency	4	We learnt about the Edo period and each student had to give a presentation of their own research on the Edolites.	4	I started out not liking the course because it felt slow, but the more I learnt about the Edo period, the more invested I got and at the end of the semester, it was one of my favourite courses. My suggestion is to really throw yourself into researching about the Edo period (16 th century of Japan). It is pretty amazing.
5	Food and Health 2	4	The relationship between diet and health. Draws many real life examples from Japanese foods.	4	Personally, this topic interests me a lot since young. Some lectures were too slow, while others were captivating.
6	Molecular Biology and Biotechnology	4	A very technical course with lectures on cyanobacteria, gene modification, embryonic	4	Definitely the most intellectually challenging course. It is fine if you do not understand everything, but pay upmost

			development, DNA marker assisted technology to cross breed plants.		attention to achieve the maximum potential of the lectures.
7	Agricultural Trade	4	Group presentations on themes related to agriculture trade.	3	You learn a lot about the food culture and socio-economic aspect of agriculture of other countries, depending on which countries the other students are from.

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

All courses have lectures. The assessment is either reports, presentation, examination, or a mix of each.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

Japanese teachers and students are extremely polite and warm in welcoming exchange students. They are also very well mannered in general, so you may sometimes be even embarrassed into feeling like you are treated too nicely.

The difference with WUR is that the students are not very good in English, so this might pose a challenge to the communication. Learn Japanese and practise it with them, it will enhance your student interaction tenfold.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

Gym (extremely affordable, one time membership fee of 3 euros)

Food is accessible everywhere, such as in convenience stores. You can even find full meals there. There is a cafeteria in school that sells lunch too. Go before 12 noon or at 1 pm to avoid the lunch crowd.

Laundry facilities paid by coin in your dormitory.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

Dormitory room on campus. Around 280 euros a month.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

People are so well mannered and polite. Do not mistake it for shyness – they have been taught to respect people's space and to not cause disruptions.

Between themselves, they are very chatty. However, English is not their strength so they may not be very chatty with you. My biggest advice is to learn conversational Japanese.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

Around 280 euros a month. In Wageningen, Dijkgraaf recently raised the rent cost to over 400 euros. Although I would add that the room in Dijkgraaf is definitely bigger.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

If you are lucky to live in the dormitory, the university gate is 40 seconds away by foot.

I purchased a bicycle to make grocery trips fast. One of my best purchases here.

You will also realise that the Suica card I mentioned just now comes in very handy. In Tokyo, especially the city area, the train network is so well connected that you will come across a new train station every 400m you walk in any direction. An exaggeration, but you must see it to believe it.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

I recommend looking up a travel blog for must-see things in Tokyo. The list is endless.

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

I like exercising so I frequent the gym 3-4 times a week.

On the weekends, head out to the city with friends to explore. I was lucky enough to find a friend in a Korean exchange student who was keen on exploring many parts of Tokyo and asked me to tag along. If you do come here for exchange, you will have around 16 weekends. Even if you spend 10 out of 16 weekends exploring Tokyo, you will never tire of it. Do it with a good friend with good vibes and it is rather enjoyable.

The closest big cities to campus are Shinjuku and Shibuya. Shibuya has a statue of Hachiko the dog, to commemorate the place that he loyally waited for his master every day. And that is just one of the countless beautiful things about Shibuya.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

As always with living abroad, there will be moments you feel out of place or lonely. That is perfectly normal. Do your best to learn the language, engage in activities with friends, stay active. Willingness to try is half the battle won.

What was your best memory abroad?

Too many! Let me list them:

- Weekend exploration with friends
- Going to the laboratory and engaging in my own experiment on fermenting banana skin. All while struggling to communicate with the Japanese students there and yet we managed, laughing through the process.
- When my parents visited and we explored Tokyo together
- When my girlfriend visited during the holidays, and we explored Japan (Kyoto, Osaka, Hakone). I posted a vlog on Youtube on travelling in Japan, you can email me for the link. Hope it excites you to take up this adventure of a lifetime!

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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