



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Study programme WU | |
| Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy) | 08/04/2024 until 04/08/2024 |
| Exchange destination: University | Kyoto University |
| Faculty | Agriculture |
| Country | Japan |
| City | Kyoto |

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to improve my Japanese speaking.

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

There are many Japanese-speaking people in Japan.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

I was late in applying, so this was the only option left for Japan.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

Public transport is very convenient and always on time. If you fly on Kansai International Airport you can take the Haruka Limited Express straight to Kyoto.

4. University and studying

a. 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 | Philosophy of Agricultural Science1A | 6 | Doing presentations on agricultural science papers and discussion | 4 | |
| 2 | Agri-food System Management1A | 6 | Getting assigned a topic (e.g. organic crop | 4 | As my background is not in agriculture sometimes the |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | | | production) and making a presentation on at least 4 papers | | presentations were difficult to follow. |
| 3 | Biology of Marine Resources | 6 | This course was about how to critically review academic papers, focussing on hormone secretion in fish | 5 | Small group of students, funny and enthusiastic teacher. I felt very welcome |
| 4 | Agricultural Policy AnalysisA | 6 | How to apply statistics to agricultural problems | 3 | Difficult course, take only if you have a background in statistics. |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, but they are little compared to the courses in Japanese.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): Originally I wanted to follow courses like Buddhism and philosophy, but you should take into account that you have to follow at least a certain amount of courses in the faculty that you are assigned to.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, they were quite high level. This was challenging, but allowed me to gain experience in a field different but related to my main one, so it was satisfactory.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes. Except the statistics one, I would opt to choose for something not as difficult next time.

f. What is it like to study there?

It's very different from Wageningen. Firstly, the semesters are per half year, as opposed to per month or two months in Wageningen. Usually one course is 1.5 hours per week. Secondly, if you are a master's student, you generally come together in your research group once a week to socialize with the other students from your specialisation. There is a strong sense of community.

g. What is the culture of the university?

In Japan there is a clear hierarchy between students and professors. You call them by their last name and use respectful language. The university staff is usually very friendly and extremely helpful.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

Free sports facilities, sports circles, clubs with all different kinds of activities. There is a lot going on outside of class hours. I joined the running circle, international circle, and Chinese-mandarin learning circle.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

I was very lucky and got assigned to a university dorm called Mizuki dorm. If you are not so lucky you have to find something yourself.

b. What is the culture like?

As opposed to the individualistic Netherlands, Japan is very collectivist. Don't stand out, listen to the rules (e.g. traffic light) and do as the others do. As an international student you will inevitably stand out. This can be both a good and a bad thing, depending on the situation.

c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

Convenient and cheap. Traveling from Osaka to Kyoto by non-express train costs little more than 3 euros. Buses can be delayed sometimes due to traffic, so it is recommended to get a bicycle.

6. Expenses

a. Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?

| Category | Expenses |
|---|-----------------------|
| Travelling there | 1150e |
| Visa - if applicable | - |
| Vaccinations - if applicable | - |
| Insurances (extra) - if applicable | 30e |
| Daytrips/sight-seeing | 2000e |
| Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation | 200e/month, dorm room |
| Grocery costs per month | 200e |
| Public transport costs per month | 100e |
| Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month | 300e |

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands: Lower, especially for eating out. Sometimes it can be cheaper to eat out than to cook yourself.

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

In the time I went to Japan the Yen was very low. There was a time where 1 euro equaled 172 yen. At the time for Europeans Japan was very cheap.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

I really liked Kifune at the north of Kyoto. Inside Kyoto, there's Kamogawa river, Yasaka-jinja, Kiyomizudera, Nanzenji, Ryoanji, Fushimi-inari; there are so many nice shrines and temples to visit in Kyoto.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

When travelling in Japan, always look up the local cuisine of the place you are visiting. Japanese people do this themselves too when traveling. It is definitely worth it splurging a bit to experience the unique dishes they have in each part of the country.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

When in Japan I tried to do as the Japanese. Speak as the Japanese, eat as the Japanese, live like the Japanese. But somewhere along the way I realized I am Dutch, not Japanese. After that I quit the imposter syndrome and started acting more like myself.

b. Best memory?

I was visiting Otaru, Hokkaido and in a hostel I met a girl from Okinawa. She played the traditional instrument of Okinawa (sanshin, lit: three snares) and sang for me and my friends.

9. Contact details

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Is the reader allowed to contact the writer? | yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | no <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Name & email address (if yes) | tesselaalten@hotmail.nl | |