

The experience of our students Alumni Network Tsukuba Trans-Pacific Program

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Since I was aware of Japanese culture, it attracted me a lot. This was when I was 5-6 years old and over time this interest also grew, and I hoped one day I could go. Just 2 years ago I found out that a friend from university had requested an exchange to Japan, specifically to the University of Tsukuba. At that moment I began to consider going on an exchange as well, I started researching and ended up doing the paperwork to go to the University of Tsukuba.

In general, they were good experiences; Tsukuba is a very quiet place, you can go everywhere by bike, wherever you are there are spaces full of nature. I met people with whom I connected, I learned a lot about Japan, its culture and the people; although not everything was as I expected, I am not complaining, it is one of those experiences that cannot be easily compared.

A big disadvantage, especially if you come from a Latin American country, is the cost of living, but if you organize, you survive and from time to time you give yourself a few luxuries. Another thing that, although it did not affect me much, because I almost always used my bike was the bus transport, which is usually very expensive.

I have to admit that one of the things I liked the least about my exchange was the classes in Japanese, not because they were bad as such, but personally, I'm not used to teachers letting you read the theory and in class alone exercise. Usually it is the other way around here in Mexico, the teachers teach you the theory and you practice with exercises at home. This did not happen in all classes, I also had other teachers (mainly foreigners) and their classes were similar to what best suits me and as I am more used to and I enjoyed them a lot.

Mainly they did not give me the JASSO scholarship and once there you can feel the currency exchange. There is also a lot of bureaucracy in everything, since you arrive and in things that are unnecessary for me, but even without knowing the language, they usually offer you support for these activities. Since I mention it, I went without knowing much Japanese and there I learned much more, but sometimes it is difficult to communicate and not many people speak English. For example, there were times where I got lost, and asking was not an option; The good thing is that in many places there is internet and with that you survive. Also when you take the metro there are too many lines and in order not to get lost you also need internet and checking the routes. Finally, it was not

a big inconvenience, but when choosing subjects there is practically only one schedule per class and I came across Japanese classes, which were mandatory for me, so I couldn't take all the ones I wanted.

In the city of Tsukuba, there is Mount Tsukuba and depending on the season you can see very beautiful landscapes and you can also visit the temple and if you are lucky you can see frogs (it is the representative animal of the area), in autumn the trees turn yellow to intense reds, in winter they are likely to see at least a little snow and in spring there are plums and cherry trees; In spring they usually sell ume snow (plum) and it is one of the richest flavors I have ever tasted. There are also several onsen in Mount Tsukuba, go, no matter how embarrassed you are, you are going to enjoy it, I was also sad at the beginning, but it went away quickly because it is really worth it.