

The experience of our students Alumni Network

Tsukuba Trans-Pacific Program

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Undoubtedly, Japan is a country that has a diversity of opportunities and experiences to offer. Being able to spend a semester at the University of Tsukuba has undoubtedly been one of the most rewarding experiences in both my academic and personal life.

It all started in the fall semester of 2022, when I began my exchange student program at the university. As any new stage of living in a new country, the first thing I encountered was a long bureaucratic and academic registration process. Personally, I often found the whole process complicated; however, the university provided me with help whenever I needed it.

Tsukuba is a town that mixes the city with the countryside, as you can find big stores as well as large expanses of nature. In general, it is a very quiet life, perhaps for some who like more movement it can become monotonous, but it is certainly a place that exudes peace and security. This is one of the reasons why I chose the University of Tsukuba, because it offers beautiful natural scenery and allows you to rest from the noise of the big cities. At the same time, it has a great connectivity with the TX train line, which allows you to visit Tokyo easily. On the other hand, life will be much easier if you can get a bicycle to move around. While there are buses, and the classic walk, getting a bike will make your transfers much more efficient and autonomous. My bicycle was my great ally during this stage, even taking me to other cities or points of interest in the prefecture of Ibaraki.



So, if you are a person who likes this kind of activities, it is worth investing in a good bike. Fortunately, in Japan there are good secondhand stores where you can get almost everything for discounted prices.



Regarding university life, I encountered a barrier where exchange students generally hang out with other exchange students. This meant for me that at the beginning I practiced my English more than Japanese. If you are interested in learning more about the language and culture, my recommendation is to join the university's community clubs. In my case, participating in meetings allowed me to meet both foreign and local people. But without a doubt what made me learn more about the

culture and language was traveling around Japan and trying to survive. Along with the classes, the experience of traveling around Japan gave me a lot in many ways. So, if you can do it, don't hesitate! Every season in Japan has a lot to offer.

Regarding food, in general the schedules and eating habits here are different from those in Chile. For example, lunchtime in Japan is usually between 11 am and 1 pm at the latest. So, if you go to the cafeteria after that time, you will not find anything. It was also a challenge to explore the new ingredients that are usually eaten there, as trying to replicate the food in my country was quite difficult. My recommendation for this is to go with an open mind to discover new dishes and recipes; you can find various nutritious and cheap ingredients in the supermarket if you look for them. Worst case scenario, there are always places to eat 24 hours a day for those moments when you give up and don't want to cook anymore.



Overall, although there may be more complicated than others since one is living in a new country, I had a great time getting to know the Japanese culture. Learning from the people around me and having the opportunity to make great friendships. I appreciate the opportunity that the University of Tsukuba gives many students every year to be able to study and live in the best way possible.