

Homestay Plan



～What a wonderful opportunity to experience a Japanese family!! ～

Staying in a Japanese home will give you a chance to learn about the culture, language and customs from an angle not seen from the outside. It can be tough to make Japanese friends and acquaintances while studying in Japan without a chance to “get your foot in the door” (or *kikkake* as they say here), so wouldn’t you love the chance to make your own home in Japan?

～Some benefits to a homestay～

- Improve your Japanese – Use it or lose it! A homestay is the perfect chance to use the Japanese you learned in class every day in real life situations.
- Experience a bit of “everyday life” in Japan – Japan’s culture is lot different than you may expect! A homestay will give you a new perspective on the country and people.
- Make a home away from home – Make friendships you will treasure for life!

- ★Breakfast and dinner included at home with your family
- ★Pick-up service from OU to the house on the check-in day
- ★Your own room
- ★Free Wi-Fi
- ★Location approx. 30-60 minutes from the campus

Note:

It is your responsibility to pay for the transportation fee.



What do typical Japanese homestay accommodations look like?



single-family house



Typical “*Mansion*” or Condominium



Living room



“*washitsu*” or tatami mat room



Typical single room



Stories of Homestay Experience

Student 1 : Mr. Michael Abbott(Frontier Lab Program: University of California)

I had an overwhelmingly positive experience with the Fumoto family. They were all wonderfully welcoming to a foreigner like me and truly brought me into their family. The mother made sure to cook as many (and as much) Japanese dishes as she could think of including takoyaki, okonomiyaki, unagi, sukiyaki, sazae, and many others. One night, she had the children and I attempt to make gyoza for her to cook, shown in the first attached photo. The children got me out of the house to play with me and show me what being seven and four years old in Japan is like. The family also made sure I had as complete an exposure to the culture as possible. They brought me to a family barbecue, pictured in the second attached photo, where we played suikawari, volleyball, and baseball and enjoyed some delicious cooked meat. They also took me on a day trip to Kyoto to visit two famous temples, Kinkakuji and Kiyomizu-dera (pictured in the third attached photo). Additionally, they organized a tour of the Asahi brewery and a nighttime visit to Banpaku kinen koen for a night carnival complete with fireworks. They always made sure to support me in my professional work by coming to see my final research presentation and personally, welcoming me home after climbing Mt. Fuji with a warm meal ready. Overall, I cannot say enough good things about this lovely family whom I will miss dearly.



Student 2 : Mr. Brandon Okumura(Summer J-ShIP Program: University of California)

The Hokonohara family was everything I hoped for when I chose Homestay. Immediately upon my arrival, they were extremely hospitable and accommodating. Throughout my stay, I played with the children and talked to the parents about many things. They were kind enough to help me with my Japanese homework, and as a result, I learned a lot of new Japanese. I also taught them some English, so the interactions were always fun. We went on a number of excursions together and they were kind enough to invite my friends from school as well. We went to Nara Park, the Ethnology Museum, and Umeda together. I attended many of the children's events as well, and I met their family friends. They were also kind enough to host my father when he came to visit. The family has helped me navigate Japan and plan my excursions. They helped me get a bus card, make Shinkansen reservations, and navigate my way to school. The homemade food was always delicious, and they were accommodating when I stated I didn't like certain foods. They have become very close to me and helped me become closer to Japan. Simply put, doing homestay with this family was one of the best experiences of my life. I cannot recommend this family enough. They are the absolute best and my only regret is that my stay ended so soon.



Student 3 : Mr. Kailas Johnson (Winter J-ShIP Program: The Australian National University)

Living in a homestay instead of an apartment was one of the best decisions I made on this trip. My host family was kind and welcoming and within a week I felt like a true member of the family. On 成人の日, (coming of age day) they took me to get a family photo in traditional Japanese dress. The two children were so much fun. They were soon called me big brother and we would play together every day. My family only speaks Japanese so my Japanese has improved so fast. As well as this my host mother would cook delicious Japanese food for us every night and even asks me what I would like most for dinner. On some nights I would cook and everyone would gather round so I could teach them my recipes. I can't think of any better advice to other Japanese exchange students than to stay with a host family. I have had such an amazing time and I don't want to leave.

I know when I do leave I will always stay in contact with my host family. They will always be a second family to me.



Student 4 : Ms. Catherine LE(Winter J-ShIP Program: Monash University)

Staying with the Shimoji family while in Japan was an amazing experience. Throughout my stay they were very accommodating and genuinely cared for my wellbeing, always asking if there were any foods I would like to try, anywhere I would like to go, and also caring for me when I fell sick. We often spoke about general things and in particular, the differences between Japanese and Australian culture. My Japanese also greatly improved as they also helped with me my homework. Especially because I stayed in Osaka, I had the opportunity to also learn and become accustomed to their dialect, which is different from standard Japanese. They were kind enough to take me to many different places including Kyoto where they helped me try on a kimono for the first time, Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan where we also saw the many Christmas illumination shows and Fushimi Inari shrine for hatsumode. They also took me to many different Japanese food places such as sushi train, nabe and yakiniku. Just staying at their home was incredibly welcoming as well. As it was winter when I stayed, they found out I had never used a kotatsu before and was excited to show me ☺. The homemade food was always delicious and they always made sure to cook me something new to try. They also introduced me to other things such as watching the ice skating, Japanese dramas and the news. I also found out that my host sister was a big fan of the show Glee, and so we watched and discussed a lot about that. It didn't take them long to find out I was the biggest fan of eating desserts, and so they always bought me different types of sweet snacks and also recommended I go to Sweets Paradise, and all-you-can-eat dessert buffet, which I enjoyed immensely. For Christmas they held a small party with their friends and I was able to join in where we played purezento koukan, and for New Year's Day, we ate osechi ryori with their family. I was always immersed in their culture and had the opportunity to experience it all. They were the nicest people and I was so glad to have met and been given the opportunity to stay with them. My only regret is that I wasn't able to stay in Japan longer and continue to see them. My stay with them will stay memorable for a very long time.



Homestay FAQ



Q : I can't speak Japanese well. Will that be a big problem?

A : You should consider brushing up on your basics or learning a few phrases, but remember that there is much more to communicating with your family than language itself. The key to breaking the language barrier lies in using many different tools – Try gestures, pictures, sounds, drawing... have fun with it.

Q : I'm not exactly comfortable with eating raw fish, etc. Will that be a problem?

A : Not at all. Please let us know what foods you can't or don't want to eat and we will inform your homestay family beforehand. (But please consider trying something new! Japan has so much great food to offer.)



Q : I'd like to go out to eat with friends every so often. Do I have to eat at home every day?

A : You don't have to eat every meal at home. As long as you tell your host family ahead of time of your plans, it won't be a problem.

Q : I don't know very much about Japanese customs and culture. Is there anything I should do before my homestay?

A : We will tell you about major culture and custom differences, as well as common misunderstandings faced during homestay during your Orientation. Of course, trying to learn about the country you will visit by yourself is always a good thing, so feel free to ask around or read up on Japan.

