

Our Farm Stay Memories

ターニャ、焦、張、アディナ

✓ Chopstick making experience

At the Tsukichi Sanpei Center, there was a gymnasium and a variety of different rooms where events take place. During our free time after lunch we were allowed to explore the area more, to take pictures and enjoy the beautiful weather. I distinctly remember the mountains surrounding the area, making it look like we were in the middle of a valley.

Chopstick making involves a few simple steps.

- 1) Sand your stick of wood
- 2) Sand your other stick of wood
- 3) Oil your sanded sticks of wood
- 4) Make pretty chopstick holder (opt.)

Actually making chopsticks was a tedious task, but was also fun. I tried to make chopsticks very sharp, however their lengths were a bit uneven. My friend, Sunny, discovered her passion for making chopsticks, she wanted to make another pair. Once we finished sanding and oiling our hand-made creations, we chose a piece of coloured paper and made origami chopstick holder. I thought it made the chopsticks look very cute.

✓ The Storehouse experience

After making chopsticks and eating a good meal, we visited the storehouses in Masuda. They are very well preserved storehouses and one particularity which impressed me is the “matryoshka dolls system” of the architectural style, that is building a house inside a bigger house. The interior house was generally used for welcoming guests, while the space between the walls of the small house and the ones of the big house could be used as room for kitchen or other purposes. Moreover, the bigger house protects the smaller one and in winter it helps to keep warm inside. After climbing the steep stairs and watching out not to hit the head against something, we arrived on the upper-level, which was designated especially for storing things.

The interior design and the stored things varied from storehouse to storehouse. For example, in the only 3 stories house, which can be seen in Masuda, we saw a western style decorated guest room and there were also Matryoshka Dolls. We weren't allowed to take pictures in other storehouses, but we could see and touch the fur of different animals, like wolf or sheep. Also, we saw the boxes in which kimonos are being kept, old archive documents and holders for miso. In the museum of lacquer we could admire a kimono sewed with golden thread and also the restaurant where some scenes of the korean drama “IRIS” were shot.

The entire atmosphere of the place was beautiful and for a second it seemed as if the time stand still. The interior design, the natural light reflected on the wooden floors and the lacquer walls, everything conferred the place a feeling of peace.

✓ Onsen-Park experience

After arriving at the house, we made conversation and then we went to an Onsen before dinner. Mr.Suzuki brought us around the mountain by car. He drove the car fast. We could feel the wind pass by the window. When the car climbed up the mountain, Mr.Suzuki suddenly decelerated the car to let us see the famous mountain named Matoyama in the distance. It was a little cloudy, so we couldn't see Matoyama very clearly. But it was still very beautiful. This was the first time for me to go to an Onsen. The Onsen is famous for the water containing some apples. However, it was too hot. A cup of cool water after the Onsen was refreshing.

The second day, during the break in the afternoon, I wanted to stroll around the farm and I met Tanya by coincidence on the lane. So we decided to take a walk together. Then, we went to a park on the mountain. There were many people having a picnic. We saw a sculpture called "ringo no uta"(the song for apple) but we didn't understand the correct meaning of the song. After taking some photos of the flowers, we climbed the mountain for a minute and saw some training equipment. Tanya was good at playing on them. We became too hot, so we both wanted to go back to the house for a drink.

✓ Farm stay experience

When we arrived at the house, the most impressive thing for me is that the style of the house. The house was very traditional in style. There were tatami mats, rice-paper doors, stoves and lots of decorations that might be bought from many countries. The rooms were very clean and comfortable with all modern facilities available. The view of the farm from the Mr Suzuki's house is especially breathtaking, you just feel yourself relaxing and letting the worries of the world pass you by. Then the hostess cooked very delicious food for us, for example , curry, apple cake, and many desserts. At that time, I think this family is so happy because they have a hostess who can cook the foods like chef does. After dinner, we talked with Mr Suzuki, we found out, that he travels abroad every year and he seemed very interested in collecting stones from the places he visited. I think his hobby is very special.

The second day, we went to the garden to pick apples and pears. This is the first time I did t farm work, and it was very sunny that day, so I felt excited. One branch can bear 5 or 6 apples . Our work was to pick the unnecessary apples and pears and leave only one on the branch. Mr Suzuki told us that if we let all the fruits grow, in the end the apples and the pears would be very little and the sweetness would be lower. In the afternoon, we finished the farm work and prepared to leave. Even though we all felt tired, we were still very happy because the farm stay was very meaningful for us.

✓ Farm stay impressions

タニヤ一: I really enjoyed the trip to Yokote because the weather was beautiful and the scenery was beautiful too. I've made chopsticks before but the apple weaning was something I haven't done before, along with seeing the Kura. I made some good memories.

アテナ: The trip was a wonderful opportunity to explore the life on the countryside and our guest family was very hospitable and nice to us. On the first day in the evening we had a very interesting conversation with our family while eating delicious food. The next day apple experience was also pleasant.

張: I think the farm stay was very enjoyable. I learnt how to pick apples and pears, which I never know and I will never forget the time that spent with the friendly host.

焦: The farm stay was great! I think maybe I will be good at doing the farm work. The Suzuki was really kind to us.