

Tips to feeling more like a local when studying abroad <http://tinyurl.com/y9b9lf3>

As a student studying abroad in a foreign city, you obviously would like to see all the tourist hot spots. You definitely want to learn and see all the things that attracted you to pick that city. But where there are tourist attractions, there are lots of tourists. Often doing things and activities that the locals do gives you the student more insight into the people and culture of the city in which you are temporarily a member. The following are easy (and cheap!) ways to immerse yourself into the city you are learning in.

1. Get a newspaper. Just like papers that circulate here, there are sections dedicated to telling the reader what entertainment is happening for the week i.e. shows, local bands playing in parks, flea markets, etc. Many of these things are free or relatively cheap.

The **Japan Times** is probably the number one English-based newspaper in Japan. You can access the online version on the web at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/>

For students living in AP House, the Japan Times is available daily in the AP House lobby.

Or, grab a Japanese newspaper and use it to help with your learning of the language. The newspaper is an excellent source to help improve your language skills.

2. Ride public transit. Taxis are not only expensive, but they offer little interaction. Hop on a bus and just ride its route. You can not only people watch and observe, but you also can see a lot of the city that you might not have seen otherwise.

BY TRAIN

- Japanese trains are very dependable, fast, and comfortable. The national railway, Japan Railways (www.japanrail.com), runs the length of the country. Besides Japan Railways there are quite a few other privately owned railways.
- There are different types of trains to use for travel:
 - **Futsū or kaku-eki-teisha** are the slowest trains.
 - **Kyūkō** or ordinary express trains are just a bit faster than the Futsū and only stop at a limited number of stations.
 - **Tokkyū or shinkaisoku** trains are the fastest of the “regular” trains.
 - **Shinkansen or Bullet Trains** are the fastest and most popular of all the trains in Japan.
- To purchase train or bus tickets you can go to a travel agency or to a Japan Rail (JR) station and purchase a ticket at the Green Window.

BY BUS

- Long-distance buses are available in Japan, however, they are much slower than the trains and the price is about the same as a Futsū train, so travelers generally choose to travel by train.
- Within cities the bus systems are quite extensive, but are difficult for foreigners to use, as they don't always have bus numbers listed on them and the writing is all in kanji.

3. Shop at flea markets and local stores. In flea markets, many handmade and home grown products can be found. You can get many unique pieces at these markets and local stores.

TENKUSAI is a 2-day market organized by APU:

<http://www.apu.ac.jp/home/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1438>

4. Eat local cuisine.

(Give suggestions of nearby restaurants and a general overview of what Japanese food students will find)

5. Walk and wander. Though riding public transit is part of the experience, walking is an adventure all in itself. You will come across a variety of shops, eateries, clubs, etc. You will find things you did not know existed. As well as discovering hidden treasures, exploration will help you better acquaint yourself to the city. In no time, you will be able to easily find your way around town and may even be comfortable enough to give directions to others. Then you will really feel like a local and less like a tourist or visitor.

Beppu is a small city surrounded by the mountains and the ocean. There are a few parks near the university and they are popular locations for BBQs. The main park in Beppu is Beppu Koen (Beppu Park). The Beppu Koen is about a 5 -10 minutes walk from the Beppu Train Station

Other great places to wander:

- 1) Jigoku (Hells) Onsen (Hot spring)
- 2) Takasaki Monkey Park
- 3) Umitamago Aquarium

To see details about these places, I would recommend the following website
<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e4700.html>

These are just five simple actions you as a student can do to “fit-in” and learn about everyday life for locals in the city you are studying abroad in. These are cheap and easily accommodating ways to feel like a local on a student budget. When not popping around the city with a camera, take a break and do as the locals do.