

DS19

Homestay Experience

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This year due to COVID-19 we were all a little anxious that the homestay part of our scholarship might not go ahead. However, I am delighted to say all eight of us scholars managed to find homestay families and completed our one month homestay in different parts of Japan. Thank you so much to the Daiwa Tokyo Office for all their effort and optimism throughout the process of finding our homestay families. It has been quite a nerve-wracking year...

I spent my homestay on Sado Island in Niigata prefecture. I will be moving to Tsubame-sanjo in Niigata for my work placement in October of this year so I was keen to experience culture in this region and get to know the area a little before I started. The homestay was the perfect opportunity to do so!

I met my homestay family in Niigata City and stayed at their Niigata City house for the first week. We then took the ferry from Niigata City to Sado Island where I spent the last 3 weeks.



It was interesting to compare city life in Niigata and the countryside on Sado Island. Although the same prefecture the lifestyles I experienced were quite the opposite!

I had an amazing time on my homestay. Toyoki san and family were so welcoming and made me feel very relaxed. Their house on Sado Island was beautiful and very peaceful. I often spent afternoons lying on the traditional tatami floors while reading and looking out to the garden. I also enjoyed driving around the island with Toyoki san, sightseeing and doing various activities like sea kayaking and riding a traditional wooden Japanese coracle-like boat called a taraibune (たらい舟).



I must say I think Sado is one of the most beautiful places I have ever been! It was so interesting to experience the culture and compare and contrast my experiences of living in a big city like Tokyo. The seafood on Sado was amazing as well as the rice. I enjoyed trying lots of new and exciting foods with Toyoki san and family. The family even had their own rice field where they cultivated the rice we had for breakfast and dinner every day!



The nature and surroundings of Sado Island were amazing. I managed to see so many rare pink Toki birds and also some massive dragonflies which were beautiful. I enjoyed making cups and plates from bamboo with the Toyoki's and took some home with me.



One evening we even ate sashimi and drank sake from the bamboo plates and cups we had made that afternoon!



The homestay was an experience I will cherish forever and I look forward to meeting Toyoki san and family again someday soon.