



**STORIES & PHOTOGRAPHY
RECIPIES & EVENTS
BY MIKANS FOR MIKANS**

W I N T E R 2 0 1 3 / 2 0 1 4

FROM THE EDITOR

HAPPY 2014, EHIME!

At long last we present to you our newest winter issue of **THE MIKAN!** I trust you're all back in the swing of things after your winter vacations and are *gaman*-ing your way through this final stretch of cold before the thaw. Whether you are a frequent patron of the nearest onsen or that neighbor with the heating unit blasting noisily at all hours of the day, keep doing your thing and we'll all make it to cherry blossom season with sanity to spare. And if you haven't touched a snowboard yet, get out there and try!

Another sincerely huge thanks and **OTSUKARESAMADESHITA** to this issue's contributors, a fine batch of familiar writers, some new faces, and an Ehime JET alum to boot. Read on and try your hand at a new recipe or two, get the inside scoop on local celebrations and the best artisanal paper, learn about New Zealand's cutest Mikan, and reach a cultural epiphany or two by the last page.

Until next issue!

HARRISON FUERST

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A WORD FROM OUR PAS

SAIKIN, SAMUI DESU NE?

There's no doubt that winter is here. From children's smiles hidden behind useless surgical masks, to waking up for your morning shower to discover your pipes have frozen, Jack Frost has arrived in Ehime drunk and hell-bent for leather. There's no doubt that Old Man Winter can keep you huddled indoors and cursing Japan's lack of home insulation, but it can also be the most magical time of the year (or so the holiday song says). We hope that you're getting out, meeting with friends, and enjoying the sights and festivities that only come along during this brisk winter season!

The beginning of the year always presents us JETs with at least one big choice – **SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?** – and before long you'll either be settling in for another blissful dozen months or preparing to surge into the wild, blue future. For those who are staying, we look forward to sharing another year together in this citrusy paradise. For those who have decided to forge ahead, we give our best wishes and would like remind you that we are available to answer any questions you may have about the transition.

As 2013 ends and 2014 begins, we'd like to thank everyone who helped to make our first stretch as Prefectural Advisors so rewarding. This includes, of course, our fantastic RA Team, as well as everyone who assisted with the Welcome Guide, Orientation, Skills Development Conference, and every other little project or ambition we've been crazy enough to attempt. And while we're at it, **A BIG OTSUKARE TO EHIME AJET** for all the wonderful events they've put together this past year, and an overall thank you to everyone for helping to make this such a great community!

We will both be staying on as your PAs for the 2014-2015 JET calendar, but many of our RAs will soon be moving on to the next big thing. We wish them nothing but luck - they've been absolutely wonderful and we hate to see them go. The show, however, must go on, and in February and March we will be working with the kencho to select new members for the RA team. If you're outgoing, sociable, and interested (or have questions), give us a shout at **EHIMEPA@GMAIL.COM** and let us know!

Stay warm, Ehime! Drink that cocoa, stuff yourself under that kotatsu, and don't French that frozen pole. Let's make this a fantastic 2014!

Warm regards through the cold weather,

MARK SCHNEIDER AND EMILY JOHNSON



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UCHIKO, EHIME

HANDMADE JAPANESE WASHI IN UCHIKO'S TENJIN DISTRICT

MEGAN ROWE

Stepping through the door of the small paper factory in Ikazaki (Uchiko) feels like stepping into the past. It is a cool autumn day when we are given a tour of the factory, and the temperature inside the building where the artisans work is no different from outside. The sound of running water and the clunk of wood against wood resonates throughout the old building. We are led straight to the paper-making room where two ladies are working silently at an incredible speed.

Here we watch as they each plunge a large tray into the water, which emerges covered in a fibre mixture and is quickly rocked back and forth until the mixture is level and no longer saturated in water. At this point, they carefully lift the screen from the tray, transferring the sheet to a pile of paper behind them, and turn back to the tub of water and fibres to start the process again. The stack of wet papers glistens in the light that finds its way into the building.



GETTING A FEEL FOR PAPER-MAKING

I was given the opportunity during our visit, as the newcomer in the small town of Uchiko, to try making paper myself (my colleagues had all tried before). I was led to a vat containing a pink fibre mixture, with a tray much smaller than the ones the women were using. The weight of the tray surprised me; I struggled to lift it back out of the water. It is important to rock the tray back and forth quickly to even out the mixture before the water drains away. Needless to say, I was feeling the pressure. So that I could see the finished product immediately, the young factory employee helped me to lay the sheet onto a revolving steamer. In no more than a few minutes, my paper was dry. I was fascinated to feel its rough texture and admire the small details such as flecks of pink and red petals.



I was most amazed, however, by the hard work that goes into each sheet of paper made by the artisans. The ladies work from morning until night in the factory, producing hundreds of sheets of high-quality paper every day. Not only do they produce thick and thin paper with interesting textures, they also produce traditional

fine calligraphy paper and paper for shoji sliding screens. Their well-trained hands handle each sheet of paper with care, which can be seen in the endless stacks of flawless paper waiting to be dried in the next room.



The paper-making process is long. The soaking, boiling, natural bleaching and the removal of impurities from the fibres from the Oriental Paperbush and the Paper Mulberry tree take weeks, and after the paper is made it is left overnight to remove the moisture before it can be compressed the next day. In total, the whole process can take up to one month.

THE FUTURE OF OZUWASHI

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For the most part, the process of making “*ozuwashi*”, this local type of “*washi*” paper, has not changed for many years, and it is recognized by the Japanese government as a traditional craft. Despite its highly-regarded status, though, the demand for handmade paper has significantly decreased over the years and Tenjin’s factory is one of very few left in Japan. In 2012, however, the factory was given a boost of hope for the future, as a local lady in her early twenties joined the team of artisans. Over a year later, she is able to make almost all of the different types of paper produced by the factory. Her enthusiasm for the job was very evident in the tour she gave us of the factory. She recently appeared in an article in the Japan Times, and is quoted saying that she refuses to let this traditional craft die.

This charming factory is well worth a visit. Across the small street in Tenjin is their factory shop, where you can buy their paper in many shapes and forms, from notebooks and ornaments to sheets of calligraphy paper and beautiful letter-writing paper.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VISITING THE FACTORY:

<http://www.we-love-uchiko.jp/we-love-uchiko-e/spotguide/tenjin.html>

JAPAN TIMES ARTICLE:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/11/28/national/woman-makes-her-mark-in-papercraft/>



祭り

MATSUYAMA, EHIME

WASSHOI, WASSHOI!

MATTHEW THOMAS

Ehime is famous for its autumn festivals (*matsuri*). Everyone has seen pictures of the huge *danjiri* of the Saijo and Niihama *Matsuri* or the crashing *mikoshi* in Matsuyama. But take a look around your local area and you'll be sure to find groups carrying shrines chanting 'Wasshoi! Wasshoi!' I must admit that after three years in Japan, I've seen my fair share of *matsuri* but I have never had the opportunity to take part.

Luckily this year, an ALT who worked at my old school in Hojo called me up.

Our JTE was on a team and wanted us to take part in the three day *matsuri*. Now a *matsuri* team is made up of people from an area representing the local Shinto shrine. In his case, it was the Aratama shrine in Zennoji. And the Zennoji committee leader was none other than our JTE's father. So there was no problem with the two of us taking part.

Once we both said yes, our JTE wasn't about to go halfway about it. No, days before the *matsuri*, he took the two of us to a clothes shop to pick out some fabric. We then went to his house to have our measurements taken by his mother. She was going to make our *matsuri* gear! Before we could finish saying our thank you's and *osewa ni narimashita*'s, we were whizzed off to get our white shoes with the Zennoji emblem on them. There was no turning back now!

“LET'S MATSURI!”

The big day finally arrived and we were treated to a hearty afternoon lunch by our JTE and his friends. We were going to need it! Once suited up, we went out to face our first challenge: carrying the *danjiri* to the opening ceremony. The *danjiri* was massive, over 10 meters long! It could carry 8 people ringing bells and playing the *taiko* drum. There was also an onboard generator to light up the decorations.

Thankfully the *danjiris* at the Hojo Matsuri had two wheels making them easier to balance and push on the road. At the ceremony, the *matsuri* teams tried to out do each other with elaborate designed *danjiri* and flashing lights. They were also competing against each other over who could sing the loudest, carry their *danjiri* in the air the longest and drink the most.

By this stage you may be wondering how Japanese people reacted at the sight of two foreigners on a team.

First there were people like our JTE and his father, who were happy to share this aspect of Japanese culture with us. Then there were those who were pleased to have us so long as we pulled our weight and carried the mikoshi like everyone else. And finally those who thought that the autumn *matsuri* was a local event and should only be for locals. All these reactions were understandable and we both tried our best to show them that we took the event seriously and wanted to be there.

DAY TWO [次の日]

A successful first day over, we started the next at 5am. It was bitterly cold and everyone was shivering. But once the generator got going and the chanting started, we pushed our *danjiri* to the main shrine. After watching performances at the shrine, one telling the story of two foxes and the other of an old man and a monkey, we had a long rest for the afternoon. We were to meet up later that evening to parade and lift our *danjiri* through the streets.

Unfortunately disaster struck that evening! As we were carrying the *danjiri*, one of our team mates suggested I get on the top. At the time, this seemed like a great idea. However the extra weight made the *danjiri* unstable. The left side held up fine but the right side weakened, causing the *danjiri* to tilt violently, throwing me to the ground. As soon as I got up, I felt something was wrong. I took my shoe off to find my entire right foot had swollen to twice its size. My JTE found a stick I

could use because I was having trouble walking. The *matsuri* was over for me.

I didn't know it at the time but I had torn a ligament. For the next two months, I went to the doctor's to have it taken care of. Many people have asked me whether I regretted taking part in the festival. The truth is, even if I had known what was going to happen before the *matsuri* I would have still attended. The atmosphere was amazing and the camaraderie among our team was wonderful. There's no better bonding experience as pulling a shrine up a mountain!

That's thing about being on JET, every now and again you get the opportunity to do something completely out of the ordinary. So stay curious and ask your school or city office what is going on in your local area. You never know what might happen next!



blueberries

IKATA, EHIME

blueberries

drago flores

One time not too long ago, I invited a girl over to my apartment thinking nothing more than to talk about work and make some dinner. She was clearly upset over her job and had spent the last five minutes describing it “like poison to our bodies.” It was refreshing. To hear someone speak about our workplace using words that I had thought for so long...and a Japanese person at that!...really was comforting in a strange way. We talked, dinner turned out well, and it was all normal until I said goodbye and gave her a hug. Sure, I hardly ever see anyone hug in Japan but I had no idea that, to her, hugging implied much much more. In fact, in Japan people will hold (not shake) your hand way before they hug you. In fact, if they are not accustomed to hanging out with non-Japanese, it pretty much means let's date. So, needless to say, I had some explaining to do.

Japan is full of these cultural potholes, so to speak, that we do not see either because we do not realize they exist or because we are too busy thinking about the culture we left behind. They can be a bump in our day or a major disruption to our work/life experience. In my experience, I have encountered several, one in particular which I think you should know about before you too find yourself being jolted about or worse, with a resentful eye for cast upon your time Japan.

So, first things first, leave everything that you know about what is normal and throw it out the window. Constantly comparing your life now to the one you had back home--the job and kind of things you did--must stop right now. While it serves its purpose, it is destructive for what we are about to discuss. Taking a tame page from Ruth Benedict's controversial *Chrysanthemum*:

“A human society must make for itself some design for living. It approves certain ways of meeting situations, certain ways of sizing them up. People in that society regard these solutions as foundations of the universe [and therefore] some degree of consistency is necessary or the whole scheme falls to pieces.”

and into this Japanese “universe” are thrown we, students, so to speak, of whom are required “a certain generosity” to “see that other perspectives, even if they go against our own views, can have validity of their own.”

I usually cook my own meals but that day I decided to go to the restaurant down the street and have the (*higawari*) lunch-of-the-day. Eating my donburi, a scene played on the NHK drama *Gochisosan* where the heroine, Meiko, is criticized outright and then ignored completely for her efforts despite working to the point of losing consciousness (which

she does, later). “Poor her.” I say to the group of Japanese sitting near me who also frequent the establishment.

They look at me for a moment, seemingly perplexed (perhaps because they had found it funny) until one of them finally commits to announcing, “*Well, that’s just the way it used to be in Japan!*” which, to my surprise, I snap back with “*Well Japan must have sucked back then.*”

before I can bite my tongue. The looks on their faces told me everything: desire to admit that it did, indeed, suck...but also obligation to defend the thing, for criticism was and still is a very real part of the Japanese way.

In my own personal experience, negative criticism and outright rejection of ideas and work have comprised 80% or more of my feedback. That is to say that a vast majority of the guidance I have received from my most immediate superior in the office has not been the “*Yes this part is quite good but perhaps if you changed it here a little, it would improve quite a bit.*” variety. There are times in memory that guidance consisted of simply “*Change it.*” or better yet, “*No one will come to an event like this.*” flat out rejection.

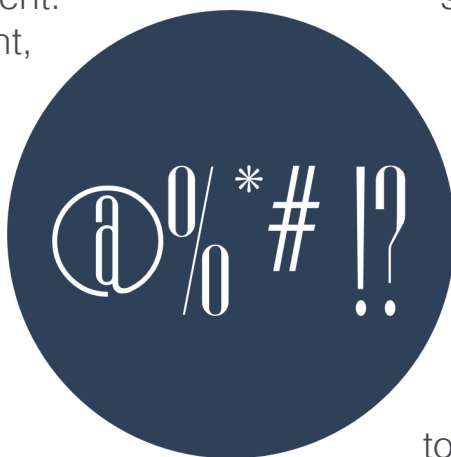
Admittedly, such encounters were extremely discouraging at first. A loss of morale and rising tides of depression were my companions as I struggled to come to terms with the Japanese way, that is—at the very least—the terms and conditions of the particular part of Japan I had found myself in. Still, as I looked around me and observed coworkers, I

began to find that such behavior was not without parallel and that even my superior was treated as such by her superior; ideas that she had spent days if not weeks on...turned down in an instant with barely more than a few words of advice.

How then do we, we who have grown so accustomed to the rhetoric of “constructive criticism”, find solace in such an environment? I am sad to say that I do not have the answer and cannot claim to have changed my workplace into a flower pot of encouragement. But! I am no longer ill at ease. I know the rough words stem from something deeper than a personal attack and equipped with that truth as my new lens I see that I am not so much being rejected as my bluff is being called. If you are told something will not work, do not back down! Instead, refine your ideas and approach your superiors with energy twofold! In fact, the popular phrase in Japan these days, “**やられたらやり返す! 倍返しだ!**” expresses exactly this feeling and it says to me that Japanese understand well your struggle. Taking some liberties in translation:

“*If they fuck you up you fuck them up! Fuck em double!*” or “*An eye for an eye...hell, take ‘em both!*”

I do not advocate revenge (though my quote of choice seems to imply so); I advocate ambition coupled with tenacity and stubborn resolve.



It was the first time I had asked for a long vacation: 5 days of strategically planned vacation time around the holiday meant a hefty 2-week year-end getaway. I had already written up my statement to request time off, included with it the contact info of the places I was going, the purpose of my trip, and flight information, and had the form stamped by everyone in my division, including the mayor (Standard procedure) It was all pretty much said and done until a few days later when my boss called me over to his desk and said to me, smiling:

“You know, we don’t normally do this. Let people go on such long vacations and all. It really should only be done for circumstances like a wedding or a funeral. We’ll let you do it this time but no more, ok?”

In an instant, I was uncomfortably guilty about using my paid leave. My contracted paid leave! What’s more, I was irritated that my own boss could be so passive aggressive. Had you not wanted me to take time off in the first place, you ought to have stated so at the beginning, and let that be the end of it, I wanted to say. Alas, it was not the last time I would have to trudge through such an episode.

It is safe to say that after observing my coworkers, speaking with other Japanese, and reviewing my own experience with taking time off, I have learned that paid leave is, plain and simple, none other than a pronoun for sick leave, and the only time you are to use your paid leave is:



**A) WHEN YOU ARE ACTUALLY SICK,
OR**

**B) WHEN YOU HAVE SOME
OTHER TYPE OF COMPLETELY
UNAVOIDABLE COMMITMENT
WHICH REQUIRES YOUR PHYSICAL
PRESENCE DURING WORK HOURS.**

What then of sick leave? Well, that is used exclusively for those who have found themselves unexpectedly in the hospital.

NOTE: Time off in lieu of time worked outside of your contracted workweek hours (called 振り休 *furikyu* or 代休 *daikyu*), is encouraged to be used.

I am not saying never use your paid leave. Go, but do so understanding the true thought behind the Japanese understanding of paid leave. When you do, be grateful for your time off, don’t brag about where you are going, and leave the awesome stories and pictures for those one or two coworkers that you are great friends with. Oh, and おみやげ.

* * *

Integrating your culture, introducing it to Japanese people, can be done, and best is done in little niblets, that is to say bite-size, manageable units. The key is to take something that is familiar to your friend and throw in a little something unfamiliar and new. This is why the kitchen is used so much in cultural exchange events. The setting is familiar, the ingredients are similar, but the way we mix the spices makes something new.

Most people like pancakes and in Japan it is no different. Pancakes with whipped cream, honey, chocolate syrup, strawberries, bananas, blueberries, you name it, and it's been on a Japanese pancake. But have you ever seen a blueberry pancake, with blueberries in the pancake? Probably yes, but apparently not too many native Japanese can say the same.

Recalling a story a teacher told me, he recounted introducing elementary school students to the idea of adding a blueberry directly to the plain pancake batter. "The students loved it!" he said. They ate up both the idea of adding new flavors to the batter as well as the pancakes themselves! A feast for the tummy and the mind!

Taking destructive and hurtful criticism, holding back from taking a long vacation, using your paid vacation instead of your sick leave to go to the clinic, the lack of hugs and blueberry pancakes, these are all things that one must face and deal with in their own way after coming to Japan. None of them are easy to come to terms with. I, for one, have yet to come to terms with a couple of them...but rest easy knowing that uncomfortable and irritated feelings towards a current situation are natural and fade with time as they teach us new lessons.



What is necessary, then, is only to understand that these differences exist and that finding your balance among them is your challenge. While doing the opposite of your coworker may feel like you are introducing new ways of thinking, it does not constitute internationalization when it acts as a cementing agent whereupon your coworker feels it necessary to reaffirm or defend the only thing they have ever known. The key is blueberries. Accept the dull batter you have found yourself thrown into and discover new ways make it flavorful to everyone around you through positive and unique cultural blueberries.



capsule acculturation

IMABARI, EHIME

CAPSULE ACCULTURATION

HARRISON FUERST

This exhortation by the insightful Frantz Fanon is something of a mantra for my time living abroad. While this context could not be any more different from that of Fanon's text, it still serves as a reminder always to question how one's experiences are informed by projection of identity, by how others interpret us, by how we interpret ourselves. Little did I know that my final Japanese winter would bring about so many questions.

Nearing ever closer to the end of my third year living in Japan, this year's winter vacation was shaping up to

be a kind of exciting yet normalized experience. For the first leg, a New Years night to remember in Osaka's Amerika-mura, my favorite stomping ground and home to the wonderful Time Bomb Records. After the rocking, rolling, and late night drinking, I would then fly straightaway to Seoul to kick off 2014 by visiting Korean friends I'd met during my first year EPIC intensive course. The whole trip turned out to be a blast and countless memories were made. *Natsukashii*, as they say. In the end, though, a brief Osaka capsule hotel stay was the experience that stuck with me the most, and for a most peculiar reason.

“my body, make of me always a man who questions.”

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Japan's capsule hotels are very nearly a tourist attraction in their own right for many. At five feet and an inch, though, I've never thought of them as anything more or less than a perfectly cozy and economical way to shack up for a night someplace. True to form, I went with a centrally located capsule option for my brief stint in Osaka. The "B&S Eco Cube" it was called. The digs were not visibly out of the ordinary. It was a hotel. With capsules. By 5pm a bit of a crowd had amassed for check-in, a mixture of

Seconds later the rest of us poured into the fourth floor ready to unload our bags. A young-looking guy to my right was examining his capsule like it was a space station control panel, asking to nobody in particular in a British accent, "What does this green light mean?" Happy to score a floor level capsule, I tossed my coat and luggage in and took a seat inside to go over the next day's itinerary. Out in the walking area between the two long rows of capsule units, a conversation began. "Hey man, you military?"



Japanese and foreign nationals of various stripes. I was relieved to finally get my keys and sauntered over toward the elevator. Fumbling with the plastic block attached to the keyring I checked the inscribed number – looked like I'd be heading to the fourth floor. A group of us piled in and the car lurched upward, eventually coming to a stop on the third floor. Confirming the floor with their own sets of keys, the Japanese men in the elevator quietly and casually filed out past me. The doors rattled shut.

A Canadian, twenty-something by the looks of it, offered his hand for a handshake. "Uh, yeah." came the reply from the (younger?) soldier in U.S. military fatigues as he shook the Canadian's hand. In the background various others chatted away with travel partners or just made small talk with strangers. A shirtless guy opposite my capsule stretched and burped. Any pretense of capsule hotel etiquette appeared to have been left at the front desk.

And then it hit me. I had been pre-sorted as a foreign national and was segregated from Japanese guests on a designated non-Japanese floor. Grumbling to myself under my breath, I made a beeline to the elevator to test my theory by perusing the third floor a bit. Stepping out of the elevator I was met with a comfortably familiar silence broken only by the footsteps of the small handful of Japanese men going about their business. By leaps and bounds, most of the two long rows of capsules were unoccupied. The evidence was compelling, but what was I supposed to do about it?

Having grown up in the United States, a society steeped in identity politics and equality rhetoric, every bone in my body was just waiting to cry foul, to confront a manager, to demand an

explanation, or just DO something.

I returned to my fourth floor capsule and sat there, half of me hoping the non-Japanese floor wouldn't be so bad after all, the other half plotting action. After toughing out another fifteen minutes it seemed that a good night's sleep to prepare for my early morning flight to Korea was not in the cards, and I made my way to the front desk with no clear goal in mind.

On the way down to the first floor I remembered that the girl checking in guests spoke in native northern dialect Mandarin Chinese. On top of being infinitely more comfortable communicating in Mandarin, I thought maybe the comparatively lax


and unstructured way of doing business in China might help in solving the segregation issue. Again, Fanon comes to mind.

Approaching the desk I half-whispered in Chinese, "Excuse me, do you mind if I use Chinese to talk to you for a second?" With a brief look of understandable shock, she said it would be fine and asked what I needed. Having already grown unaccustomed to confrontation, I found myself couching my words in a softer and more conciliatory tone.

"Listen, I know that you assigned me to the fourth floor along with all of the non-Japanese guests. First, I think that's not really fair. And second, it's super noisy and I have an early morning flight to catch. I'd like to either

be moved to the regular third floor area or a refund if possible. I saw nothing about floor segregation on the website when I booked my room." At the last minute I had come to the conclusion that I would at least like to be treated like any regular Japanese guest, which meant moving to the regular, much quieter, third floor.

The Chinese girl understood and went to look for the manager. Moments later the manager, a friendly looking Japanese guy, emerged from a small back room. The girl from the front desk and I fumbled around verbally in Chinese and Japanese, letting him know I was aware of the floor segregation and what I was requesting. Seconds passed as the manager stood

"A man who has a
LANGUAGE
consequently
possesses 
the world expressed
AND IMPLIED BY THAT
LANGUAGE."

there wearing that neutral expression you wear when you're found out and are contemplating your next move. Finally breaking the awkward silence, the manager looked at me and said "OK." Keys were exchanged and I triumphantly moved my belongings from capsule 402 to 308.

Capsule 308 wasn't special, but I had earned it. Changing the hotel policy was out of the question, and I at least cherished my small personal victory. I graduated to Average Guest status! Sighing with relief I rested my head on my backpack, contented. No yapping. No noisy bodily functions.

But wait a second. A new and uncomfortable feeling suddenly washed over me. What seemed only moments ago to be a positive if meek attempt to be treated as an equal along with Japanese guests now felt like a betrayal to that very sentiment. It occurred to me that, obviously, the only reason this comfortable floor existed was because the noise was contained on the fourth floor. I found myself being truly relieved that I could get a good night's rest, and yet that relief was directly facilitated by the segregation I felt up in arms about. In a strange hybridized version of acculturation, felt as if I had simultaneously performed the

role of a disgruntled Japanese guest asking to be moved away from noisy foreigners, and the disgruntled North American guest demanding my own equal treatment. It clicked at that moment that these liminal experiences straddling two worlds, at times weaving between each, are happening constantly in our lives as JETs. At times it seems we are the star peg that doesn't fit into the circle holes for Japanese or the square holes for international travelers, and being a star can be awfully confusing times.

It's from that peculiar position we as JETs can define our professional and social goals – both to "internationalize" our Japanese communities as outsiders, and to make our communities (including Japan itself!) visible to the world as insiders. My experience at the capsule hotel was enlightening, but messy and ultimately unsatisfying. I wasn't prepared to act within the gray area as an Ehime JET from the U.S. If I could do it all over again, I think I would ask the hotel manager why they didn't simply put up signs or hand out a simple etiquette guide to guests from other countries, or even offer to help with a draft via email. All I can do now – indeed, all we can ever do – is prepare for the next encounter, keep questioning, and *ganbarimasu*.



MIKAN FOR MIKANS

EMMA CRAWFORD

[UWAJIMA ALT, 2010-2013]

Hello Mikans! My name is Emma and I'm an ex-Ehime JET. I lived in Uwajima from 2010 until the middle of this year. I'm now back at home in New Zealand taking on another adventure.

Ehime (and our beloved mikan) has found me again however, despite us being oceans apart. This time, not in the form of a sweet mandarin, but instead as a cute ball of feathers with a feisty attitude!

Upon returning home, I found a new job as a Kiwi Ranger at Franz Josef Glacier. This career is definitely different from teaching English to a classroom full of shougakkusei. But, I can tell you, there are plenty of skill crossovers. Things such as dealing with cheeky 'children' who you need to keep a constant eye on (lest one claws you and makes a desperate attempt for freedom), or barriers to communication (what exactly do you mean by, "PEEEEEEP!" anyway?).

Kiwi chicks are extremely vulnerable to predation by introduced mammals. Because of this, chicks left out in the wild only have a small chance of reaching adulthood and the kiwi populations have been steadily declining. My work at the wildlife centre aims to conserve the kiwi by hatching and rearing chicks in captivity for release back into the wild once they are big enough to defend themselves.

How Ehime ties into all of this is that on my first day at the West Coast Wildlife Centre, a little Haast tokoeka kiwi hatched. Because of the great timing, I got the honour of choosing its name. After much discussion amongst friends, the name "Mikan" was decided upon. What a wonderful idea to have Ehime's own little representative right here in New Zealand!

So, without further ado, may I introduce to you the newest member of our Ehime family, baby Mikan!





Mikan will stay at the wildlife centre until she is eating independently and has regained her hatch-weight (kiwi lose weight for the first week or so after they have hatched as they utilise their internalised yolk, then begin gaining weight once they start eating). Mikan is getting very close to this stage now at 25 days of age, so soon will be taking the next step and moving to an outdoor pre-release pen. The kiwi stay here so that they can get used to life outside with the elements, and also so that they can have a chance to catch live prey (insects and other invertebrates form the bulk of their natural diet).



Once we are happy with their progress, they are moved to an off-shore, predator-free island where they can grow up in safety. After about one year, they'll be big enough that they can fight off their main predator, the stoat (a European introduction). At this point the "stoat-proof" kiwi make their final journey back to their home forest where they will spend the rest of their lives (up to 80 years) running about the forest floor, hopefully making more babies! :)



Let's wish Mikan all the best on her journey.

You can do it, Mikan!

ファイト!

おなか
すいた？

RECIPES

味噌田楽



MISO DENGAKU

HARRISON FUERST

GETTING LEAN AND MEAN WITH MISO

For the vegetarians and general miso lovers among us, living in Ehime means that we will most likely wind up consuming either white miso (*shiromiso*) or a mixed miso (*awasemiso*) variety with soups or other dishes when dining out. Red miso (*akamiso*) dishes like dark miso sauce slathered pork cutlets or noodles tend to be more ubiquitous in regions outside of our little slice of Shikoku. That's where miso dengaku comes in.

Dengaku is a miso-based glaze that is most often paired with eggplant or tofu, grilled or baked to flavorful perfection. Any miso will work nicely, though in most cases (and for this recipe) a predominantly red miso base is used. If you peruse the chilled miso section of your local grocery store, you may stumble upon a small

squeezable packet of prepackaged dengaku miso sauce. But really, who needs that?! Read on for a basic-yet-awesome recipe for whipping up your own miso dengaku concoction in most any JET kitchen, and feel free to experiment with other vegetables or even konnyaku!



YOU WILL NEED....

60g Red miso (*akamiso*)
20g White miso (*shiromiso*)
30g Beet sugar syrup (*tensai*)
10g Cooking sake (*ryourishu*)
20g Mirin
Splash of hot water
Sliced eggplant, tofu, etc



NOTE white cane sugar is a suitable alternative for beet sugar, but the consistency will be harder to glaze with



STEP ONE

Pour mirin and cooking sake into medium sized bowl.

Use a splash of hot water to break down the miso more easily and stir vigorously.

Add syrup and stop stirring when sauce reaches a smooth and thick almost ketchup-like viscosity.

STEP TWO

Slather the dengaku sauce over the eggplant, tofu, etc and make sure to coat as evenly as possible.

Place onto standard baking sheet if using an oven, or alternatively onto a grill if you have one.



NOTE Slicing up and seasoning a bit of burdock root (*gobou*) is not necessary but highly recommended!

STEP THREE

Preheat oven at about 180°C, then insert the baking sheet and bake for 20-30 minutes until your eggplant or other topped ingredients are soft and fully cooked.

Some recipes suggest holding off on topping eggplants with the miso sauce until $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ through the cooking process, but I've always enjoyed the easy and flavorful red miso sauce cooked right through.

Finally, remove from oven and garnish with green onions and toasted sesame seeds.

ENJOY YOUR AMAZING DENGAKU!

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M	I	K	A	N	S		

JESSICA REID

MIKANS, MIKANS EVERYWHERE!

DO YOU HAVE TOO MANY MIKANS ON YOUR HANDS? WONDERING WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO WITH THEM BESIDES PEEL AND EAT? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS!

A HOT BARI [VARIATION ON A HOT TODDY]

Need a drink during these cold winter months? Why not try a hot Bari?

➔ mikan cut into thin slices
honey
whiskey or bourbon
ginger Ale
cinnamon Stick

In a mug, add ginger ale and a slice or two of mikan.
Insert a cinnamon stick.

Microwave ginger ale until hot.

Mix in honey to desired sweetness, add whiskey or bourbon to taste, and stir with the cinnamon stick.

NOTE Instead of ginger ale you could use grated ginger and hot water. Or Cut the bourbon and have a virgin Hot Bari.

PUT THOSE PEELS TO WORK!

Dry the peels and use them to make a fragrant bath.

Dry them out under a sheet of wax paper, then grind them to make a mikan peel spice you can use in recipes. Add it to crushed pepper, salt, and dried onion or garlic to make a unique spice blend.

Zest your mikans before eating and use the zest in orange chicken, sugar cookie dough, cake mix, or a frosting. You can find a million recipes online that use orange zest!



WANT MORE EHIME INSPIRED RECIPES?

VISIT JESSICA'S BLOG **WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU MIKANS** AT MIKANCOOKING.BLOGSPOT.COM.

ORANGE [MIKAN] CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

These are nice for gifts for the holidays or Valentine's Day!



1 carton cream
4-5 chocolate bars (dark works best)
mikan or orange (or both!)
dried chili peppers
powdered chocolate

Break your chocolate into as small pieces as possible. You can do this by putting the chocolate in a heavy duty Ziploc bag, then using a hammer, mallet, or another heavy utensil in your apartment to crush it.

Using the smallest part of a grater, grate the skin of the mikan or orange. Stop when you reach the white layer of the orange. You will be left with a very fragrant zest. Set this aside.

Heat the cream with the chili peppers over low heat, until it begins to bubble. Using tongs or chopsticks, take out the chilis and discard.

Quickly throw in the zest, and immediately pour about half over the broken chocolate pieces. Stir the mixture, trying to get as much of the chocolate in contact with the hot cream as you can.

Add the rest of the cream, and stir until the chocolate is melted. If it isn't completely melted, you can put it in the microwave for a few seconds then stir it again, but be careful as the microwave could scorch the chocolate. Set this mixture in the fridge for several hours, or in the freezer for 30 min or so, until it is pretty solid.

Using a small melon baller or a spoon, form small balls out of the mixture and roll in the chocolate powder so they won't stick to each other.

These last about a week or two in the fridge, and a couple days at room temperature.

NOTE If you want it with a real kick, let the chilis steep in the cream in the fridge for an hour or two, then reheat.

I have found with some recipes I have either too much chocolate or not enough, depending on the mix ins I use, so keep some extra chocolate or cream on hand in case you need to adjust the recipe. The chocolate/cream ganache should be a thick, smooth paste like consistency.

VARIATIONS (In these recipes, take out the chili and orange zest.)

White chocolate with lemon zest & crushed pistachios instead of chocolate powder; use instant coffee in the cream while heating; steam cinnamon sticks overnight in the cream and reheat; add mint flavoring to the cream while heating

THE MIKAN WINTER 2014

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