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# THE MIKAN

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## SUMMER 2014

STORIES & PHOTOGRAPHY  
RECIPES & EVENTS  
BY MIKANS FOR MIKANS

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## － 西条市からこんにちは! －

Autumn colors are currently covering Mt. Ishizuchi, pride of Saijo and the tallest mountain in Western Japan. (And \*ahem\* somewhere in the top 400 nationwide.)

With that standard seasonal greeting out of the way, we are pleased to bring you the Fall 2014 issue of The Mikan, the biannual magazine by Ehime JETs for Ehime JETs.

Inside this issue you'll find local travel tips, essays, recipes, and a plethora of other useful information. I want to extend a heartfelt おつかれさまでした to our contributors, as well as thanks to AJET for hosting us on their website.

Finally, thank you to Grey Cox, without whose design expertise you would be likely be reading a Microsoft Word document **with Comic Sans headlines**.

ではでは、soon we will be in hibernation under our kotatsu until the spring. The Mikan is only possible with the support of dedicated writers from Shikokuchuo to Ainan, and we look forward to reading your contributions! We hope you enjoy the fruits of our labors.

JOHN WHEELER

CIR, SAJO

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Hey Ehime! My name is Deandra Doyle. I'm an East Coast Canadian living in Matsuyama City! I've called Shikoku home for the past two years now, and I'm so looking forward to what this new year on JET has to offer. I love to travel, read, hike, eat, drink – the usual stuff! If you're ever in Matsuyama and want to grab dinner, coffee or a beer, let me know! I hope I can help make your transition into Japanese life as simple and enjoyable as possible! Can't wait to meet you all :) Here's to a wonderful year in Ehime!

Hello and welcome to Ehime! I'm Mbali, a 2nd year South African ALT based in Imabari. I am one of the RAs for the Toyo A region. I am having the time of my life in Japan and I am constantly falling in love with this country. The things I love most about Japan include the breathtaking scenery, karaoke, yakitori, Barysan and the 100-yen stores. I love travelling, you can never too many stamps in your passport, right?! I have a massive bucket list of places to visit and it keeps on getting bigger with every trip. I also enjoy cooking and hosting game nights with my peers and other ALTs. I love meeting new people, so if you ever find yourself in Imabari, give me a shout!



## BETTER KNOW AN RA

Learn more about some of this year's Ehime Regional Advisors! A big *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* from the whole RA Team!



Hey guys!! I'm Martin Saito from New Orleans, USA. I'm an ALT for the city of Imabari in Toyo A, but I live on an island called Hakatajima. I teach on both Hakatajima and another island called Omishima. If you're ever cycling the Shimanami Kaido you'll pass my apartment so give me a call or just yell my name! I'm big into music (jazz, hip hop, r&b) and I've been playing the electric and upright basses for a good number of years. I've gotten the opportunity to play a few times out here, but if you're looking to start a band or just jam, let me know! I look forward to meeting all of you!

Hi, Friends! It's me, Catherine, a 4th-year ALT living in Matsuyama City. A little about me: I'm from New York. No, not the exciting city part of New York, but the sleepy suburban part an hour or so away from the exciting city part. I enjoy: cooking fancy foods, eating any food, reading, Japanese Boy Bands, The Avengers, all-you-can-eat salad bars, watching movies, going to the beach, talking, and this owl. I do not enjoy natto, high school students who bike slowly in packs so I can't get around them, or humidity. The End.





The image shows the interior of a traditional German restaurant. The room features dark wood paneling on the walls and ceiling. A large window with a white lattice pattern allows natural light to enter. Several wooden tables and chairs are arranged in the room. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling, and a small clock is visible on the wall. The overall atmosphere is warm and rustic.

# Fate and Schnitzel

HOW DID THIS TRADITIONAL GERMAN RESTAURANT  
COME INTO BEING IN HUMBLE UCHIKO?



Explore Ehime





## AUTHENTIC GERMAN FOOD IN HISTORIC UCHIKO

MEGAN ROWE, ALT, UCHIKO

August marked one year since the opening of one of the most popular restaurants in town. Zum Schwarzen Keiler, located in the heart of Uchiko's historic district, offers a unique dining experience and yet blends in with its classic Japanese surroundings. The transition the owners have created from the building's elegant outer façade to the cosy interior with heavy wooden features, gentle lighting and alternative folk music works perfectly.

Walking through the doors of Zum Schwarzen Keiler, you are greeted by the beaming smiles of Nagahama-born Chisato and her husband Jens, who hails from a small town in north-west Germany. The couple met in Saitama just after Chisato had returned from a two-year round-the-world trip. Jens, who had no formal training as a chef, recalls that soon after meeting, he cooked for Chisato and her friends and they were impressed. After spending a few years

between Saitama, Chiba and Kyoto, Jens and Chisato were interested in moving to Ehime. Their first thought was to open a restaurant in Matsuyama.

When asked how they ended up in Uchiko, population 18,000, they both told me that it was "fate." They first became aware of Uchiko in 2012 when Jens was working in a German restaurant near Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture. It happened to be his day off when officials from Uchiko visited. They told the staff about their town and its connection with the German town Rothenburg ob der Tauber and handed over their business cards, insisting that Jens visit.

On this visit, they viewed a charming property on the machinami (the famous old street). Through the window they could see a cosy room with wooden features including an impressive bar, ideal for serving beer. Without even going inside, they knew it was for them.

# ZUM SCHWARZEN KEILER

2005 UCHIKO, KITA DISTRICT, EHIME 791-5301  
0893-44-2900 CLOSED WEDNESDAYS



# Keeping it Local

The picturesque setting of Uchiko is also the basis for the town's aforementioned relationship with the medieval Bavarian town of Rothenburg: This connection was formed when Rothenburg officials became interested in preservation techniques used on historic buildings in Uchiko, leading to an official Partner City Agreement being signed in 2001. For two decades, Uchiko has been taking students on an exchange programme to Rothenburg, and many other Uchiko residents have spent time there, too. One Uchiko meat specialist, whose German-style products are on sale at Uchiko's farmer's market Karari, even spent three years as an apprentice of a sausage master



and butcher in Rothenburg.

Building on this amazing opportunity, one of the couple's priorities at the restaurant is cooking with local ingredients. Wherever possible, they use vegetables from the Uchiko/Ozu area. They only ever use Uchiko pork, and their sausages are made by the aforementioned butcher. The cheese (look for the delicious mozzarella) is made by an Uchiko local, too.

## Fate and Food

It is this food that draws people from as far away as Yawatahama and Matsuyama to Zum Schwarzen Keiler. Whilst most customers have an active interest in Germany or German food, Jens tells me that many people try German food for the first time at his restaurant. He explains that most people know little of his country's food beyond sausages, and that Japanese customers sometimes find German food a little spicy.

The menu offers a wide range of German dishes. Jens explains that he learned most recipes from his mother in Germany. For me, the star of the menu is the Schnitzel, closely followed by the tender Saure-Sahne Hähnchen (sour cream chicken). I ask him about his ever-changing desserts (I've never seen the same one twice), and am told that they are almost all his mother's recipes, too. I am surprised to hear that not all of his dishes are of German origin, though. Coming from a Mennonite family that fled from Ukraine, to Siberia, to Paraguay (where his parents were born), some of his creations have a very interesting history. Mennonite foods on the menu include the Grillkäsehäppchen (grilled cheese dough bites) and handmade bread rolls.

However, Jens' love of food and cooking was not his only motivation to open the restaurant. He is passionate about German beer, which is hard to find in Japan. His personal favourite is Franziskaner, but they import a broad range,

taking up two pages of the menu. He came to know Schneider Weisse and Krombacher beers at the Lake Biwa restaurant. A beer named Keiler also stands out on the menu. Surprisingly, it is actually brewed in a small town in Bavaria and was recommended to Jens and Chisato by visitors from Rothenburg. The word "fate" springs up again.

Even though I spoke to Chisato and Jens separately due to the restaurant being busy on my most recent visit, both told me "it was fate" and "it's all connected" more than once. It may have been luck that brought them to the perfect spot in the old town of Uchiko, but it is their hard work and creativity that makes Zum Schwarzen Keiler stand out. I highly recommend visiting, whether you are interested in discovering some German food, in drinking some delicious beer, or are pining for European food. They have something for everyone!





THAT C<sub>10</sub> H<sub>14</sub> N<sub>2</sub>



Stories from Ehime



# AN ARTICLE BY JENNIFER CERNA

## ALT, IKATA

My roommate, Joe, was an excellent cook. We took turns cooking a nice surprise for each other after a long day of classes or for dinner and a movie. We stuffed ourselves, content with our lives, and went out to the balcony where we could smell the coffee from the café downstairs, see the lights coming from downtown, and hear the police sirens a few blocks away. It was usually dark by then, and there would be a cool breeze blowing by. I would bring out my phone so we could listen to music and we would chat about anything; new developments in our love lives, classes, friends, our hopes, our dreams, our futures, our worries. I would sit on my red crate that I turned upside-down and we lit up.

That was over a year ago. I remember those nights smoking cigarettes with Joe fondly. Whenever I feel down or stressed or angry, I think about those times and how happy I was. How smoking made everything in my life better.

I've always had trouble confronting and dealing with my emotions. I've had anger issues for as long as I can remember. When I'd become too stressed out or depressed, I would often forget

to breathe regularly. At least when I smoked, there were a few minutes where my breathing would be consistent and I could feel better. At least when I smoked, I was destroying myself, rather than punching the walls around me. At least when I smoked, I could stop crying because I was focusing on something that I enjoyed when everything else in my life was crap. On those days when I felt like I had no one, cigarettes were there for me day and night.

Like everyone in my generation, I know very well the health risks I take on when I smoke. I could get lung cancer, mouth cancer, heart disease. It would make me ugly and wrinkly and yellow in all the wrong places. My cardio would suck and I wouldn't be able to climb stairs

without sounding like a dying walrus. I learned in healthy psychology, biology lecture, biology lab, and every other body or health-related class I took what smoking does to a person. But even looking at a dead sheep's blackened lung that could only inflate halfway didn't bother me. I left that class and had my cigarette on the way home.



I smoked on-and-off throughout college. My relationship with smoking intensified when I had my first devastating heart break at the beginning of my junior year—Dustin. I hated Dustin. I'd never felt so rejected and inadequate in my life. In my self-hating rage, I smoked and smoked because even if Dustin wasn't there and my friends weren't there, cigarettes were. They were there when I needed them, and they made me feel the warmth in my chest that I craved. I'd go out into the balcony on those autumn evenings with a blanket and my laptop and create stories in the company of my cigarettes. Since then, they became something I needed to keep me level. If I ever felt too angry or too sad, they were always there to calm me down. If I felt really happy, well hey, let's have a cigarette to feel even happier.



FIGURE 2. COMPELLING EVIDENCE

I had been told a few times that I had a smoking “problem.” I was leaving my therapist's office one winter morning and on my way home, I found the gold that I had been looking for. I was broke at the time and could hardly afford food, much less cigarettes. But there it was, on the sidewalk, in the crack between two blocks of concrete. It was un-smoked, untouched it seemed. The paper on it was still crisp and I wondered how anyone could not have noticed a missing cigarette. “How could it have happened?” I wondered as I picked it up. “Is this a trick? Is this cigarette laced with something? Who wouldn't notice a cigarette fall out of the pack, maybe as they were pulling another out? Why would someone poison a cigarette if they couldn't target the person it would affect, or even see them die?” I looked around me. I was right outside of the apartment complexes where the rich kids lived. Maybe a rich kid was pulling out a cigarette, dropped one, and didn't want to lower himself to pick it up so he left it. In the end, I smoked it. That was when I realized that I did, in fact, have a “problem.”

As of my writing this, I have not smoked a single cigarette in over eight months. This is the longest I have gone without smoking since I was a teenager. I tell people this a lot because it keeps the pressure on me not to smoke. What would my friends think of me if they saw that I had started

smoking for the umpteenth time? I remember the embarrassment I felt when I told one of my best friends that I had decided to quit again and she responded with, “I'll believe you if you can last two weeks.” I didn't.

When I tell people how long it's been, a lot of them ask, “**So you don't have any cravings anymore, right?**” That's what I would have thought, too. But my cravings today are just as strong as they were a week ago, a month ago, eight months ago. I realized that I will always be a nicotine addict. Regardless of how long it's been since my last cigarette, I will always be craving them. Some days it feels like an uphill battle that I'm sure to lose one way or another. It's always the same struggle, the same mind games that I have to overcome. The idea of never smoking again is tragic and overwhelming. Cigarettes are that best friend that will always be there for you no matter what, if you'd just pick up the damn phone. Some days, though—some days are alright. I feel proud that I didn't smoke the day before, and I'm confident that I can stay away for at least another day.

You know that feeling when you're wearing something too tight and you can't breathe all the way? You know that if you'd just take it off, you could finally breathe. That's how I feel all the time. If I could just smoke a cigarette, I could finally just breathe in that relief. I remember that feeling of taking in the first puff of a cigarette. There's nothing like it. I miss everything about smoking: how it smelled, tasted, felt, the social aspect, the feeling of taking a short break from life. I miss it more than I miss extra cheesy pizza, more than I miss my friends back home, and more than I miss having an intimate partner.



FIGURE 3. INFORMATIVE WARNINGS

Last summer, when I was waiting to go to Japan, I decided that I would stop smoking. Surely, all of my triggers would fall away in the new environment, right? Wrong. Smoking is much more public here than it is in the Midwest. Smoking is allowed in designated rooms at airports and malls.

Smoking is allowed in restaurants. Smoking costs less in Japan. Needless to say, with the lovely smell of second hand smoke wafting around everywhere I went, I caved in within my first month of coming to Japan. I tried quitting again several times, smoking for a week or two and then stopping for another week or two only to repeat the process.

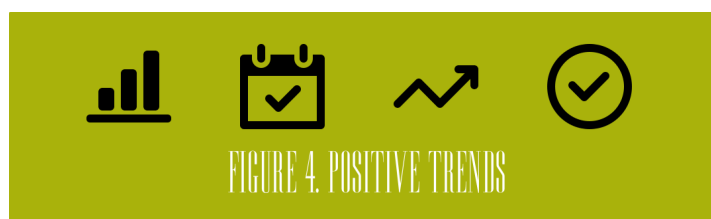
There were times when I stopped smoking for a bit, but found myself at an enkaï, the men surround me smoking casually. They didn't know that I was trying to quit. With alcohol in my system, the voice that often tried to keep me from smoking was drowned out. I would ask them for a cigarette and they would happily hand me one. I also found the new rural environment I was living in to be very stressful. There were many bugs and critters and infestations I found in my apartment and no one I felt I could turn to. You can guess where I turned for comfort.

So, how and why did I quit? How have I been able to stay away from smoking for this long? Quitting was one of my New Year's Resolutions. One more day was the goal. Just one more day. Days became weeks and weeks became months. I have it written on my white board at home. "Make it to 9 months no smoking."

When I think about those days smoking with Joe on our balcony now, I can look back fondly, but I realized that the happiness I remember is an illusion. Every time I thought about that happiness in the past, it has led me to smoking only to realize that cigarettes don't make me happy.

But that's not enough. I found that I need goals and distractions to work towards. For example, I'm a pretty athletic individual in spite of all those cigarettes. After I graduated from college, I started running long distances. Having the next race loom over me was really helpful. I had to train, and I was so focused on meeting a time goal that I wouldn't dare ruin it with a cigarette because I knew that **I could never, ever have "just one," regardless of what I told myself.** The regular dosage of endorphins definitely helped a lot, too. Being told, "Wow, you're fast" always made it seem like quitting was worth it, even if it was only for the fleeting moment the compliment lingered in my head.

But marathon season is over now and I haven't run consistently in over three months because of the heat. Without another race on the horizon, the lack of nicotine has been driving me crazy again. But I have a new goal now: to become champion at a karate tournament in December. It amazes me how much more I can breathe nowadays when I spar. It used to take nothing to get me winded. Now, I am one of the most energetic pupils at my dojo.



As I am a very competitive individual, I need to win that karate tournament, and by a large margin. I need to be untouchable. For that, I need to weight train and build up my stamina, something I can't do if I'm smoking. If I can make it to that day, I'm sure I can make it a full year without smoking.





# MATSURI BAKA

JOHN WHEELER; CIR, SAJO



Explore Ehime



In 2013, a late typhoon poured down on the first day of the lumbering, drunken parade that is Saijo Festival, turning the grounds in front of Saijo Shrine into a wallow wholly unfit for the usual “offering” that occurs start at midnight of the second day, when the 800kg (1700 lbs) behemoths known as danjiri are lifted off of their tires by several dozen locals and, after a thrilling run through the assembled revelers, are raised high in the air in homage to the shrine and the gods dwelling within. This ritual, performed in turn by each of the nearly 80 floats that participate in the centuries-old festival, is known as the *miyadashi*. Last year it went on as planned in spite of the weather and, somewhat miraculously, without major injury. Saijo Festival (or Saijo Matsuri) is one of countless harvest festivals that take place across Japan in mid-October. It is among the largest in the country and, as one long-time participant explained, also one of the most insular. While other seasonal festivals have adopted an outward-facing posture to promote tourism, Saijo Festival is firmly a local affair, and the city all but shuts down on October 15-16.

A confluence of factors including Saijo's agrarian roots; a hard-working, hard-drinking blue collar working population; and the city's distance from the political and cultural center of Japan overflows in a cathartic release of tension that builds for an entire year (a local matsuri-obsessed *izakaya* sells calendars that treat 10/15 as New Year's Day). The torrent of alcohol consumed, a subject touched on in each of my interview subjects for this article, exacerbates this release, giving the festival a mercurial, uncontrollable quality even as the danjiri march along a set path. Serious injury, vandalism and other problems are left in the wake of the rowdy, joyous celebration.

While Saijo Festival has resisted the move toward accessibility that has been a trend in other traditional events and arts across Japan, a generational clash centered on those problems,

which have ostensibly increased over the past few decades, is palpable among the citizens.

In fact, it is almost as if there are two Saijo Festivals. One is a quasi-religious series of rituals centered around paying homage to the gods of three shrines in Saijo, which leave their dwellings in a small, ornate portable shrine known as the shinto to roam the city surrounded by an honor guard of *danjiri* floats, four mikoshi (lantern-covered floats pulled on massive wooden wheels), and a human retinue. Homage is paid at Saijo Shrine and at the gate of the former dwelling of the feudal lord of Saijo, now Saijo High School (one of a handful of high schools in Japan protected by an extant moat), among many other places across the city. In this version of the festival, rich with rough agrarian tradition and rituals arcane even to some locals, the focal points are the gods and the harvest. The drunken release after a year's hard work is an outcome, not an impetus. The second Saijo Festival pays lip-service to the gods and the year's bounty, but is centered on the danjiri, expensive multi-tiered floats adorned with dozens of paper lanterns, and their raucous 48-hour parade through the narrow streets of old Saijo, a procession set to an unceasing taiko rhythm and the *Ise Ondou*, a hearty traditional song with countless verses.

In both its forms, the festival promotes community-building, and yet it is a common opinion among the older generations that the shift in focus from the shrines to the danjiri, from gods to men, has stripped the festival of its deeper significance, leading to a decline into drunken revelry for its own sake. “Saijo Festival” actually denotes three festivals occurring one-after-the-other and centered on three different shrines in the city limits (Iwaoka, Isono, Iizumi). While each festival has unique rituals and significance, this article will focus on the largest and most revered of the three: the Isono Shrine Festival (Oct. 15-16).





**M**asahiko Yanagihara, or Yanagihara-kachou as he is known around Saijo City Hall, is a foremost expert on festival operations. The 52-year-old manager of the city's Tourism Promotion Division sits on a committee overseeing all 29 neighborhoods in the Omachi area of Saijo, the largest of the city's "blocks."

His committee's foremost responsibility is promoting community-building activities throughout the year, which Yanagihara explains are essential to maintaining both tradition and order on October 15-16. If the local residents don't feel a strong connection to each other, to their danjiri, and to Isono Shrine, then the likelihood of senseless drunken behavior increases.

"In the past, there were only about 35 danjiri whereas now there are 78, so we make great efforts to help install a traditional system in the newer neighborhoods. What used to be 'villages' are now 'neighborhoods,' and a lot of activities are necessary to put on the festival," Yanagihara explained.

"The festival is really a function of the shrine, and the danjiri parade does not happen without the shrine and the gods. There has been an increase in younger people who don't understand that

**E**ric Jansen and Kelly Workings are teachers at an eikaiwa school in Saijo. Originally from Detroit, Michigan the couple came to Ehime two years ago. While they spent their first festival watching and taking photos, last year they were invited to participate on a danjiri in the Omachi area.

"It was something that really got us involved in the community and we liked it," Jansen explained. "From then on, from last year until now, we're more a part of Saijo than we were in our town back home."

"It's kind of interesting in that it's not easy," Workings added. "I mean, who decides

to carry around this heavy thing all day and all night for several days in a row, and that's supposed to be fun and celebratory? But I think the shared struggle really brings people together as opposed to [American] holidays where

and don't respect that, and their selfish behavior is a cause of a lot of trouble."

Yanagihara's hope is that his committee's efforts will help return a sense of tradition, and an accompanying restraint, to the festival, and he expressed that there has been some improvement compared to the chaotic recent past.

Yet in spite of Yanagihara's severe appraisal of the festival's current state, he still exudes the spirit of the matsuri-baka, the obsessed local who treats the two-day festival as a year-round event. He spoke fondly growing up and growing old with the festival, from following behind the danjiri led by his father's hand to joining the Youth Association as a teenager, finally earning the right to carry it himself.

"No matter how much you want time to sleep, you want to be with the danjiri. Before you get married, for two days of the year the danjiri is your girlfriend. You don't bring your girlfriend to the festival," he reminisced with a laugh.

you just sit and eat and sit and talk. Something about that makes you bond more, makes it a fuller experience."

Workings spoke about overcoming the language barrier. "Drinking helps get rid of the language barrier," she chuckled. "...and shared experience. For me, I still had a little bit of trouble because I didn't know people so well, and I wasn't very certain of the women's role in matsuri, and a lot of the women on my team are younger than me, much younger, so it was a little bit different for me."

"For Eric, he doesn't need the language," she continued. "He can't speak it but he doesn't need it, so he made a lot of really good friends and he had a great time. Even though I was there and everyone understood our relationship, he had the men trying to set him up with other women and then also trying set me up with some of the guys!"

As with the other interview subjects, Jansen and Workings touched on the role that alcohol plays in the festivities, not just as a social lubricant but as a source of culture shock.

## THE OLD GUARD

## THE NEW COMERS





"It seems like underage drinking is not only allowed, it's somewhat encouraged. That was really strange to me," Jansen said. "Back home, there's nothing like that. That would be the one thing that I just couldn't get over. You don't see that on such a large scale."

"...with the parents around," Workings added.

In spite of uncomfortable encounters with underage revelers, the pair enjoyed the experience so much that it was a major factor in the decision to extend their work contract through this October.



## THE YOUTH COALITION

Yoshitomo Yamanouchi is the gregarious, motor-mouthed vice president of the Youth Association (seinendan) in the Kusunoki neighborhood. A 30-year-old father of two who works in industrial electrical outfitting, Yamanouchi speaks in jarring Saijo dialect, a trait of which he seems at once self-conscious and proud.

Youth Associations are one part of the neighborhood hierarchy in Saijo, and the leadership usually consists of a president, vice president, and accountant. As vice president, Yamanouchi assists both the president and accountant with preparations for the festival, and he can expect to be promoted once the current chief steps down. Members usually graduate to the general neighborhood association in their 30s.

Like many younger festival participants, Yamanouchi is unequivocally positive about the festival compared to the reserved Yanagihara. He described the social dynamics of the festival as one of its best aspects.

"If I break it down, my favorite thing about the festival is the people. Through the festival, people that normally never mix together can have a chance to interact. Building those sorts of relationships is the foundation of the neighborhood," Yamanouchi explained.

He also spoke about the role of the community leaders and what they are concerned about going into the festival.

"One thing we are especially concerned about is the state of the danjiri, which is paid for and owned by everyone in the neighborhood. So when we take it out for the festival, we want to make sure that the danjiri, and the humans carrying it, come back safe. As leaders, we also want to create a festival that everyone can look back on fondly," Yamanouchi explained.

When asked about any troubles that have occurred during the festival in the past, Yamanouchi describes an instance in which the cart that the danjiri rolls on broke, forcing the drunk and exhausted revelers to carry all 800kg back on their shoulders. He then spoke more generally about the festival.

"No matter what you do, something is bound to happen. For example, someone gets hurt or..."

"...someone blacks out and wakes up in the hospital," I interjected, referring to a mutual acquaintance who disappeared during a special excursion of 35 danjiri to Ise, Mie Prefecture last March. Thankfully he was unhurt when located the next day.

"Right, or they drink too much and collapse. That kind of thing happens every festival," Yamanouchi said.

While Yanagihara and Yamanouchi are from different generations, both described the necessity of passing knowledge about the traditional foundations of the festival as a harvest celebration from generation to generation, and to remember that the real meaning of the festival isn't just "getting drunk and going crazy."

When asked about the role of women in the festival, Yamanouchi discussed how things have changed on the local level in line with larger changes in the role of women in society.

"In the past, there were a lot of neighborhoods where women weren't allowed to carry the danjiri. I think that women also didn't participate on the same level, such as wearing the happi (the outer coat)," Yamanouchi said. "But the women [who carry] in Kusunoki work hard at their jobs and then participate in the festival. The older folks respect that."



## THE TRANSPLANT

**H**iroko Arai is a feisty septuagenarian possessing a command of English and a bevy of complex opinions about the festival that can be jarring to other Saijo citizens. A former teacher and administrator who moved to Saijo from Hiroshima in her early '20s, Arai has participated in the festival as a spectator and a cook for the danjiri carriers, the latter role being common among older women. Arai's criticisms touched on common themes of underage drinking and smoking, attributing these

problems in part to the decline in influence of the onigashira (lit. demon head), an appointed team of older men who roam the festival forcibly promoting order and morality. As the power of the onigashira diminished, strong community leadership, Arai explained, became the backbone of public order. Arai believes that the festival had declined in recent years, but also noted that efforts such as those of Yanagihara's committee have had a positive impact.



**T**he bright-eyed Arai, a veteran with her husband of the Shikoku Pilgrimage, finds the traditional elements of the festival to be wonderful, from the washi paper used in the lanterns to the intricate carvings of the danjiri.

The finale of the two-day extravaganza the Isono Shrine Festival is known as the kawa-iri ("river entering") in which the shinyo crosses the Kamogawa River to return the god to the shrine. The 60-odd danjiri from the city-side of the river (including Omachi) line up on the banks to see the shinyo off, and the 11 from Kanbei, the rice patty-covered neighborhood surrounding the rural Isono Shrine, actually enter the river to greet the crossing shrine.

"At the end of the two days, when the god returns to Isono Shrine, the danjiri try to stop it, saying 'won't you stay a bit longer, just a bit longer.' And the Kanbei danjiri enter the river and try to stop it from returning. That is a wonderful moment," Arai explained.

Both Yanagihara and Yamanouchi emphasized that foreigners are welcome to participate in the festival, and many Saijo and nearby Niihama ALTs join a neighborhood team each year. However, it is necessary to find an intermediary, either one of those foreigners or a Japanese team member, in advance.

***Speak to the Saijo JETs for more information about participating.***





# BIKING BLISS BEYOND THE SHIMANAMI KAIDO



# CYCLING ROADS, TAKE ME HOME [EXPLORING SHIKOKU BY BICYCLE]

JESSICA REID, 2ND YEAR ALT, OZU CITY

It was October 2010, and I was finishing up my second year as a children's eikaiwa teacher in Hyogo. I had picked up a cycling magazine on a whim in Kobe and was flipping through the pages at a hip café. One of the "cycling roads," as I came to know them, stood out to me. "The Shimanami Kaido." Still having only a basic grasp of Japanese, I often got these kinds of outdoor hiking and cycling magazines just for the maps and information on starting and finishing points. However, the images of bright orange groves, fishing villages, and the lush green islands in the Seto Inland Sea sparked my interest. Before I knew it, my friend and I were on the train to Ehime Prefecture. It was fate.

My desire to apply for JET was inspired by another cycling trip of mine, when I did a circuit of Awaji Island on the hottest day of summer during the then hottest summer on record at the time. My friend Casey and I hopped from beach to beach along the coast, celebrating her birthday. Despite almost passing out at one point from the heat, and getting a punctured tire in the middle of nowhere,

it was a life-changing experience. After a ride in a gas truck to our hotel, and being escorted the next morning to the bike repair shop by a group of eager elementary age girls, I could really feel the hospitality and kindness that came from rural Japan. I yearned for more, to have more than just a glimpse of life in the inaka. From then on out, it became my goal to apply to JET and hopefully end up "in the middle of bum\*\*\*\* nowhere."

These cycling adventures taught me that one of the best ways to explore Japan's rural areas is by bicycle. Where the JR and buses cannot reach, you can use your own power to head through and explore. You can act on impulse and check out an interesting looking hillside shrine, or stop in at that cute mom and pop general store and chat with the owner over an ice cream. Who knows what you may take away from this experience?

**If you feel like getting the most out of one of the long weekends coming up this year, why not make a cycling trip out of it?**

しまなみ

**Mikan, Islands, and  
Ramen:**  
*The Shimanami  
Kaido*

しょうどしま

**Olive Paradise:**  
*Visit Shodoshima  
Island*

しまんと

**Japan's Last Wild  
River:**  
*Cycling the  
Shimanto*



# THE SHIMANAMI KAIDO

*Even in the pouring rain, this route provided breathtaking views of several small rural islands on the way from Imabari to Onomichi in Hiroshima. You can do the route in one day, but you would be missing out. If you are like me, and have a love for exploring, it might be better to stop halfway on one of the islands.*

A perfect place to stop for lunch is the **Yoshiumi Rose Garden** on Oshima island. There are a bunch of interesting places to stop, I recommend picking up a cycling map from the tourist stop, or buying the nice set of maps (Japanese) from a bookstore, to see what suits your fancy. Eventually you will come to **Kamiura** town on Omishima Island, where I recommend you pick up any snacks or drinks for the night from the conbini, and head to **Minshuku Nagisa**, where the friendly local family will prepare a delicious dinner

with local ingredients for you. Relax and rest your weary bones, and the next day, get up early to head to **Tatara Onsen**. Bathe among the locals, and maybe pick up some fresh produce from the unmanned stand outside the onsen. Continue on over Tatara Bridge.. After entering Hiroshima Prefecture, you will come to a larger town called Setoda on Ikuchijima Island. In this town is one of the most odd and unique places I have found in Japan, **Kosanji Temple**. There are mini versions of several famous places around Japan, a stone cafe atop a stone hill offering amazing views of the surrounding area, (while serving delicious pizza and espresso), and a cavern holding several statues depicting Buddhist hell. Continue on your route, until eventually you will find yourself in Onomichi, where you can return your bike and enjoy some of Onomichi's **famous ramen and a nice cold beer**. Otsukaresama!

**Rentacycle:** ¥500 yen/day, plus ¥1000 deposit.

[www.go-shimanami.jp/sp/global/english/bicycle/](http://www.go-shimanami.jp/sp/global/english/bicycle/)

**Lodgings:** Minshuku Nagisa. Kamiura Town, Omishima Island.

¥6500 including two meals (non-meal plans also available)

<http://minsyukunagisa.ftw.jp>



# SHODOSHIMA ISLAND

*Shodoshima is the second largest island in the Seto Inland Sea, and easily accessible from Shikoku by ferry from Takamatsu. Due to its unique climate similar to the Mediterranean, Shodoshima is one of the only places in Japan where olives have thrived, and it has become quite famous for them.*

Recommended Route: You can rent cycles near the **ferry terminal from Takamatsu**. Cycle around the eastern side until you reach the **Olive Onsen & Rest Stop** area. Here you can go to the gift shop and try Olive Ice Cream, walk around some olive fields, and have a

delicious meal in the Olive Onsen building. Of course, you can also take a bath with a view of the sea! You can stay at the **Dutch Pancake Camping** up the hill from Olive Onsen. It is run by a friendly Dutch man and his Japanese wife. His dream was to own a campground, hers was to have a café, so they decided to combine their dreams into one, so the campground has a windmill shaped café building serving Dutch Style Pancakes (hence the name) daily. There is also a youth hostel near the port if you wish to return that day. If you are up for a real workout, you can cycle up to **Kankakei Gorge** and take in the breathtaking views of its famous gorge.

**Dutch Pancake Camping:** ¥800-1000/night. Tent rental available.

[ww8.tiki.ne.jp/~dpc-/index.htm](http://ww8.tiki.ne.jp/~dpc-/index.htm)

**Olive Youth Hostel:**

[www.jyh.gr.jp/shoudo](http://www.jyh.gr.jp/shoudo) (Japanese HP)

[shodoshima-oliveyh-en.tumblr.com](http://shodoshima-oliveyh-en.tumblr.com) (English), Bicycle Rental ¥200





# THE SHIMANTO RIVER

*The Shimanto River is known as Japan's last completely natural, undammed river. This scenic route will bring you across several of the Shimanto's famous chinkabashi bridges, or "sinking bridges", which have no sides to keep them from falling apart from the force of the river during floods. From Ehime, this route is super easy, as you can go entirely downhill and leave your bike at the southern terminus in Nakamura town.*

Start by taking the **Limited Express Train to Uwajima**, then transfer to the local bound for Kubokawa. Get off at Ekawasaki Station, where there should be a small tourist information center with **rent-a-cycles** available. Make sure to get a route map, as it is a little confusing to find the

beginning of the route from the station. Continue on, following the river and taking in its majestic views and quaint countryside. For lunch, stop at **Shaenjiri (しゃえんじり)** for a buffet of homemade, local foods prepared by friendly locals, at a very reasonable cost. You will be hard pressed to find any other food options on the way, so make sure you bring plenty of snacks just in case. There is also **Shimanto Canoe-Kan**, where you can rent canoes and kayaks, or sign up for an organized trip. You can stay overnight there and continue cycling in the morning, as the Canoe-Kan also has a rental cycle facility available. The end of your journey will leave you in **Nakamura Town**, where you can hop on a train to Kochi for the rest of the weekend, or take a bus back into Ehime.

## Cycling Info:

¥1500 8:30-5:00, or ¥2000 for 24 hours. [www.canoekan.com/rinrin.html](http://www.canoekan.com/rinrin.html)

## Shaenjiri Cafe:

Open 11-2pm, ¥1000, closed Wednesdays (except during summer vacation)  
[www.shimanto.or.jp/GT/55shaenjiri/shaenjiri.html](http://www.shimanto.or.jp/GT/55shaenjiri/shaenjiri.html)





— RECIPES —

LOCAL SPECIALTIES

FROM LOCAL MIKANS



- SIMPLE RECIPES FOR SIMPLE PEOPLE BY HOGAN GILL -

# JAPANESE CURRY RICE

KIA ORA—

HERE'S A LITTLE RECIPE TO HELP ANY NEOPHYTES OUT THERE GET A COOKABLE MEAL UNDER THEIR BELTS. I GOT TO EHIME A YEAR AGO AND I'M STILL PRETTY CULINARILY-CHALLENGED, BUT [HTTPS://EN.COOKPAD.COM/](https://en.cookpad.com/) TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I DO KNOW. IT FEATURES A PLETHORA OF JAPANESE HOMEMADE RECIPES TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH. THIS FOLLOWING RECIPE ISN'T FOR THOSE WHO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MANDOLIN AND A MEZZALUNA — IT'S FOR THE POOR BASTARDS THAT SURVIVED OFF CONBINI MEALS AND ONIGIRI FOR THEIR FIRST FEW WEEKS IN JAPAN. GANBATTE KUDASAI...

## - A NOTE ON CURRY RICE -

**Curry rice is super easy to make, costs piss-all, and tastes pretty damn good.** If you obtain yourself a massive-arse pot, you can cook up a whole lot at once and chuck it in the freezer to be enjoyed for weeks! It really doesn't matter what veggies are in it; I personally like all of the ones listed below. You can also fry up a **bit of beef (or other meat)** and add it in near the end, but for me it tastes **just as good without it** so I skip the cost of the meat and keep it vegetarian. I manage to make **10~12 meals-worth at a time for roughly 2000 yen.** Along with a big ol' pot, a rice cooker is essentially essential.



## - INGREDIENTS -

(This will make a standard-sized pot's worth, enough to be enjoyed for about 2~3 meals.)

### THE BASICS

- Rice
- A packet of Curry Roux  
*(pick any of the million options of curry packets from their dedicated aisle in the suupaa, apart from the ones with apples on them... unless you want sweet curry)*

### VEGETABLES

- 2~3 small potatoes *(or sweet potatoes)*
- 1~2 carrots
- 1 stalk of broccoli
- 1 onion
- 1 pack of the stringy mushrooms *(enokitake)*
- A few mini tomatoes
- Any other veggies that are cheap/in season/that you like

### OTHER POSSIBILITIES

- Pumpkin
- Leek
- Green Peppers
- Cabbage
- Eggplants
- Other varieties of mushroom

**\*\*MAKE SURE THAT THERE'S ENOUGH ROOM IN THE POT TO STIR THE RAW VEGES AROUND WITH RELATIVE EASE.**





## STEP 1.

Put the rice and water in the rice cooker and press the big button. (Assuming you already own a rice cooker. If not, you're on your own. God only knows how to cook rice without a rice cooker.)

## STEP 2.

Cut up all the veggies into roughly similarly-sized bits. About the width of a 500 yen coin is a good guide. It's best to peel the potatoes and carrots before chopping.

## STEP 3.

To make sure all veggies are cooked evenly, you'll need to add them to the pot in at least three separate intervals.

- (1) Harder, starchy type veggies like **potatoes and pumpkin will take the longest time.**
- (2) Hard but non-starchy ones like **carrots will take a little less time** to cook.
- (3) The softer, light veggies such as **onions, eggplants and mushrooms will require the least amount of time.**

The list of ingredients above is **ordered by necessary cook times.**

Fill the pot 1/2~2/3 way with water. Shove in the potatoes (or whatever vege takes the longest to cook) and pop it on the stove at medium to high heat. Let it come to the boil then reduce to medium heat. Boil away for a good 10~15 mins or until the vege can be easily speared with a sharp knife. You want them almost half-cooked before you put in the next lot of veggies.

## STEP 4.

Continue adding veggies, waiting until the prior ones look about half-cooked before adding the next round. Once they've all been added, make sure the water level is sitting about even with the level of the veggies. You should be able to stir them round, but you don't want them to be swimming. You'll get the hang of it after a few attempts.

## STEP 5.

Once everything is 98% cooked you wanna reduce down to a low heat and start plopping in the curry chunks, 2 or 3 at a time. Pop a lid on if you have one, giving it a gentle stir every few minutes and adding a couple more curry chunks. The curry will gradually thicken: **the more chunks you add, the thicker it'll get.**

## STEP 6.

Once the desired thickness has been reached, reduce it down to a simmer and let it sit there for another 10-odd minutes.

## STEP 7.

Serve up the rice, slop the curry on top and enjoy!



NOW GO FORTH MY LITTLE MIKANS AND MAKE YOURSELVES SOME BLOODY SCRUMPTIOUS CURRY!

TAKE CARE NOW, BYE BYE THEN,

- HOGAN

- FROM THE KITCHEN OF JESSICA RIED, ALT, OZU -

# SAUSAGE, PEPPER & EGGPLANT SAUTE



## INGREDIENTS

MAKES 2-4 SERVINGS

- 1 LARGE EGGPLANT, CUT INTO THIN 2-3MM SLICES
- 2-3 SMALL GREEN PEPPERS OR 1 LARGE BELL PEPPER, CUT INTO STRIPS
- 1 SMALL ONION, CHOPPED OR DICED
- 1 GARLIC CLOVE, MINCED
- 1 MEAT GUY SPICY SAUSAGE
- 1-2 PACKETS OF TOMATO PASTE OR 1/4 CUP TOMATO SAUCE
- OLIVE OIL
- SALT
- PEPPER
- GARLIC POWDER
- DRIED BASIL
- GROUND RED PEPPER OR SHICHIMI



# SAUSAGE, EGGPLANT & PEPPER SAUTE



## STEP 1.

**Chop vegetables.** Take the uncooked sausage cut the casing so you are left with the meat inside. Heat some olive oil on low in a frying pan, and add the sausage, bringing the flame up to medium, and continue cooking until just cooked through but not yet browned. Carefully remove cooked sausage and set aside.

## STEP 2.

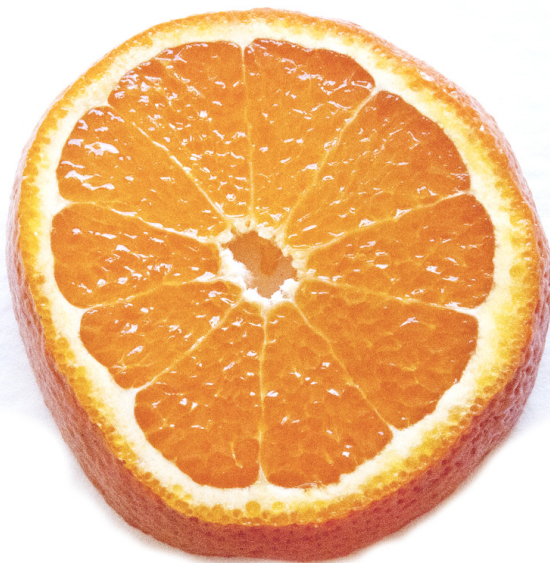
**Add the eggplant slices to the still hot pan** and sauté until it begins to turn soft. With a spatula, push the eggplant to the far sides of the pan, and add the peppers and onion to the middle of the pan. When the onion begins to soften, add the garlic to the pan, pushing it around often in the pan to prevent burning.



## STEP 3.

**After about one minute, add** the sausage back into the pan and stir to combine. Season with a few dashes of salt, pepper, garlic powder, basil, and red pepper to taste. Finally, add the contents of the packet(s) of tomato paste (or sauce), stir to combine and cook for 1-2 minutes, until heated through. Serve over pasta if desired and enjoy!

# AJET 2014-2015



AJET (Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching) is an independent volunteer organization run by current JET program participants who plan and coordinate social events throughout the year. There are National and Prefectural AJET chapters. National AJET represents all AJET chapters in Japan and provides daily living support services such as information on Japanese local events, professional development opportunities, teaching tools and techniques, and life support call center ([www.ajet.net](http://www.ajet.net)). Prefectural AJET chapters serve and support prefectural JET community by providing online publications ([www.ehimeajet.com](http://www.ehimeajet.com)) on local events and sightseeing information, as well as planning charity, social, and sport events throughout the year.

Ehime AJET serves the Ehime JET community by publicizing local Japanese community event information and useful travel tips, hosting social events, and connecting dispersed Ehime JETs together through these resources. Our mission for the upcoming year is to extend the AJET presence to the Japanese community and initiate more grassroots internationalization by creating opportunities for JETs and non-JETs to engage, connect, and learn about different cultures.



# MEET THE TEAM



## Joy P

Hello and welcome to Ehime! I'm Joy, a second year Imabari ALT from Alberta, Canada. I'm a foodie and I absolutely love to travel. I enjoy looking for travel deals, so let me know if you need any travel tips! This year, I'm one of the two Ehime AJET executives that handle the Ehime AJET website, so give me a shout if you have any suggestions or comments! Have a wonderful time in Ehime!

## Jessica Anne Reid

Why hello fellow mikans! I'm Jessica Reid, your AJET representative living in Ozu City, in the good ol' Nanyo region. I hail from the lovely city of Rochester, New York. This is my second year on JET, but third time living in Japan. I love anything outdoorsy, being crafty, and cooking for my friends. I hope I can put these skills to good use at several of the epic events AJET has planned this year! Cookies, anyone?

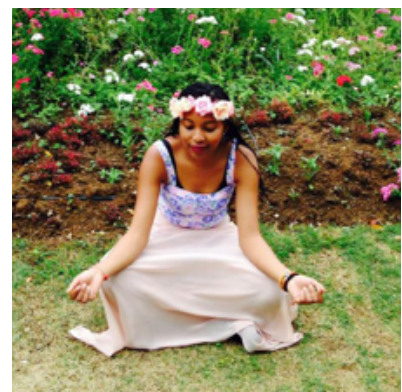


## Hannah Rennie

Hey, I'm Hannah, hailing from the rainy land of Scotland. I'm a second year ALT living in Yawatahama, the land of mikans, down in Nanyo B area. When I'm not running around trying to teach English to Japanese junior high schoolers, I'm usually found hopping on a train to go travelling, practicing my shorinji (it's a martial art), or eating some delicious food. Feel free to contact me anytime, as I'm always willing to travel to new towns and meet new people.

## Mbali Sexwale

Hello beautiful people of Ehime! I'm Mbali, a second year, South African ALT based in Imabari. I am also one of the RAs for the Toyo A region. I am having the time of my life in Japan and I am constantly falling in love with this country. I hope to see you at the awesome AJET events. Let's jam!



## Michelle Yoon

Michelle Yoon is my name; California is my game. Ehime AJET are my bros, lots of events are a-go!



## Eriko Stronach

HEY FELLOW MIKANS!!! How's the year going?! I'm a third year ALT in Matsuno (where the gorgeous Nametoko Gorge awaits you) near Uwajima, originally from Boston, Massachusetts (Red Sox, Cheers, Boston Terrier, clam chawda etc). I love exploring, learning, discussing, eating, laughing, decoding kanji, attempting to play sports and getting to know people most of all. AJET is all about supporting the Ehime JET community and distributing info about local events! We've got plenty of fun activities to do, whether you're an outdoor or an indoor kind of person (or both!), and places to see, so why not explore with us and make new friends along the way?! OH! And def. check out our website [www.ehimeajet.com](http://www.ehimeajet.com) for updates on AJET and local Japanese events. Also I strongly advise you to try Jess's delicious cookies once in your lifetime. Thank you! Hopefully we'll see you soon!



## AJET EVENTS

Halloween Event  
@ Matsuyama

NOVEMBER 29TH (SATURDAY)

Mid-Year Skills Development Conference After Party Dinner  
@ Matsuyama

JANUARY 31ST (SATURDAY)

NOVEMBER 1ST (SATURDAY)

Thanksgiving Potluck  
@ Matsuyama

DECEMBER 1ST

AJET Winter Ball  
TBA



