

Japanese cuisine and the vegetarian lifestyle

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When I came to Japan, there were lots of things I was looking forward to. I wanted to discover Japan's public transportation, and see for myself the dreamlike scenery I had seen only in pictures. But the thing I was most interested in was Japan's food. Anyone who knows me knows that I love food, so I wanted to try authentic Japanese food.

I eat a lot of Japanese food in England. Two years ago, there used to be a Japanese restaurant in my university town. Even though my friends and I ate there every day, we didn't get tired of it. The most delicious was their tofu katsu curry. Unfortunately, that restaurant suddenly closed down. It was the hardest day of my life. But there are lots of other Japanese restaurants. For example, there is a chain restaurant called YO!Sushi. Of course, they have lots of sushi, but they also sell other Japanese food such as curry and takoyaki. Thanks to these restaurants, I developed an interest in Japanese food.

Japanese food is completely different to British food. The reputation and image of British cuisine is somewhat bad. For example, when compared to French or Italian cuisine, there is less diversity of ingredients and recipes. The staple foods of British cuisine are meat, fish, potatoes and eggs. The most famous meals are fish and chips, and roast beef with Yorkshire pudding. I don't hate British cuisine, but I think that when compared to other countries, it's not that interesting. Also, rather than things like meat and potatoes, I think that noodles and rice are more delicious. So, when I got hold of the chance to come to Japan, I really looked forward to eating the Japanese food I had always longed for.

But life is not so kind. The truth is, I don't eat fish or meat. I heard that living as a vegetarian in Japan was difficult, so since I had no choice, I decided to eat fish while here. But living here whilst not eating meat is incredibly difficult. It seems like there is hidden meat in everything. In England, food products and meals containing meat are clearly labelled, but Japan is different. For example, my friend ordered a simple cheese pizza. When she asked if there was meat in it, she was told that there was pork in the base. It's really difficult.

If you live in a big city, it's probably easier to live as a vegetarian. Every weekend, I go to Osaka with my friends who live in Kyoto. There, there are a lot of vegetarian restaurants. In Osaka, I can eat a lot of delicious food, so I'm happy. However, since Wakayama is a lot smaller, it's a bit troubling. Admittedly, there is one vegetarian restaurant in Wakayama. It's a delicious and pretty place, but

I' ve only been there once. The reason is that it' s a little far from the stations and other shops, so it' s inconvenient. This is probably my one complaint regarding Wakayama. But there aren' t a lot of vegetarians in Japan, so it' s likely inevitable.

But I still love Japanese food. Right now, I can' t really cook very well. However, in the future I want to become better, and create my own vegetarian Japanese meals. Perhaps one day, I' ll come back to Wakayama and open my own vegetarian Japanese restaurant. Everyone, please look forward to it!