



MIA news

Miyakonojo International Association

Miyakonojo International Association
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Rural Life: Miyakonojo and Wisconsin - James Robertson (Miyakonojo Technical High School ALT)

Hello! My name is James Robertson.

I have been living in Miyazaki Prefecture for almost three years. I am from Wisconsin in the United States of America. During my time living in Miyakonojo, I have grown to love the rural style of living here! In the next few paragraphs, I will compare and contrast the climate, food, and culture between Miyakonojo and Wisconsin.



Before I start, I should probably introduce Wisconsin! Wisconsin is in the Northern part of the United States. Most of Wisconsin is very rural. My hometown, Phillips, only has about 1,600 residents! Wisconsin is known as the "Dairy State" because of its high milk and cheese production.



Now that you know a little about Wisconsin, let's explore some differences and similarities between it and Miyakonojo!

First, the climate of Wisconsin and Miyakonojo are very different. Because Wisconsin is much further north than Miyakonojo, it has a climate that is similar to Hokkaido, with warm summers and very cold winters. It is very common to have snow on the ground for five months of the year! When I was growing up in Phillips, I really enjoyed the cold winters and cool summers. In Miyakonojo, the weather is much warmer. There isn't any snow in the winter, and the summers are really hot! I still have not gotten used to the heat, even though I have lived in Miyakonojo for years.

Second, the food of Wisconsin and Miyakonojo are also different. I think the climate is one reason why! Because the weather is much harsher in Wisconsin, people must eat hearty food that will help them survive the long winters. As I wrote earlier, Wisconsin is known for its dairy industry. Cheese and milk are very important to Wisconsinites (residents of Wisconsin)! Amongst these, a very famous food is cheese curds.



Various flavours of cheese curds mixed together.

Cheese curds are a product of the cheese-making process. When you make cheese, you add rennet to milk to make "curd" and "whey." After that, cheese is usually made from the "curd," and the "whey" is made into other products. In Wisconsin, many people enjoy eating the curd before it is

made into cheese, so cheesemakers sell the curds in stores! They can be eaten raw or deep-fried in oil. The taste is very mild and delicious. In Miyakonojo, the climate is much warmer, so the food is different. Many people enjoy eating local fruits and vegetables, and meals tend to be much lighter than in Wisconsin. One similarity between Wisconsin and Miyakonojo food is the love of deep-fried foods. I have enjoyed many deep-fried foods here (chicken nanban, pork, vegetables) and in Wisconsin (cheese, chicken, pork, vegetables)!

Last, the cultures of Miyakonojo and Wisconsin are surprisingly similar. One similarity is that people from both places have a relaxed attitude. In my time living here, I have noticed that most people seem to enjoy living life more slowly than in places like Tokyo or New York City. People try to not be as busy, and the same is true in Wisconsin. It makes me think of the idiom, "Stop and smell the roses." This phrase means to take time to relax and enjoy life. I was very happy to find that people in Miyakonojo like to "smell roses" as much as Wisconsinites! Another similarity is the kindness of the people. People here and in Wisconsin are always willing to help others and do what is best for everyone. I am very lucky to have been assigned to Miyakonojo for my teaching job. Without the kindness and helpfulness of people living here, I would not as happy or successful living here. I am thankful every day for my friends and colleagues.

I have really enjoyed my time here in Miyakonojo. I have learned so many new things and have been lucky enough to share Wisconsin rural culture with others. It has been surprising to see how similar the rural lifestyles are, even though there are many other differences. I will be sad when I leave Miyakonojo in July, but my time here has been wonderful and fulfilling.



Memories of Miyakonojo, and the Kamiyone Park Sakura, 2020

MIA Information

◇ Miyazaki Support Center for Foreign Residents

Consultations and Support for Foreign Residents living in Miyazaki Prefecture is now available at the Miyazaki Support Center for Foreign Residents.



Business Hours: Tue - Sat, 10AM - 7PM
Location: Carino Miyazaki, B1F
Phone: 0985 - 41 - 5901
Fax: 0985 - 41 - 5902
Homepage: <https://support.mif.or.jp/>

Please note that the Support Center is closed on Sundays, Mondays, Public Holidays, and from December 29th to January 3rd.

◇ MIA Annual General Meeting

Due to the impact of the Novel Coronavirus, and out of the consideration of the health and wellbeing of all of our members and staff, it has been decided that this year's AGM will be cancelled.

Inquiries:

Phone: 0986-23-2295
E-mail: mia@btvm.ne.jp

◇ Information Regarding The Novel Coronavirus

Over the past several months, the Novel Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) has continued to spread around the world and throughout Japan. As of April 17th, Japan has also declared a nationwide State of Emergency. For those seeking assistance and guidance during these critical times, we would like to recommend the following websites and services:

- **City Hall**

The Miyakonojo City Hall Home Page will provide you with the latest details regarding the local situation, as well as other relevant news from Consumer Affairs, the Ministry for Health, Labour & Welfare, and many other locations. As of March 16th, Miyakonojo City Hall now provides machine translation services throughout their site, which can be accessed through the Foreign Language button at the top of the page. For information specific to the region, it is recommended that you check here first:

<https://www.city.miyakonojo.miyazaki.jp>

- **The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)**

CLAIR is host to a range of information directed at the welfare of foreign visitors and residents, and through their multiculturalism (*tabunka*) portal, provides information in many languages regarding COVID-19, preventative measures, and announcements from various ministries:

<http://www.clair.or.jp/tabunka/portal>

- **Ministry for Health, Labour & Welfare (MHLW)**

The Ministry for Health, Labour & Welfare is the national body responsible for providing advice on COVID-19 countermeasures and actions. For information regarding the COVID-19 status around the country, restrictions being enforced, statements from various government agencies, and other broad-spectrum information, head to the MHLW home page:

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/>

- **Prefecture**

For the latest details regarding the situation around the prefecture, updates on warning levels for regions around the prefecture, information for businesses around the area:

<https://www.pref.miyazaki.lg.jp/>

- **Association for Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA)**

From their homepage:

"AMDA is an international organization dedicated to realize a peaceful world community through humanitarian efforts in medical health care sector. Founded in Okayama City, Japan, in 1984, AMDA is a non-governmental, non-profit organization with an international network of 30 chapters and 47 collaborating organizations around the world". AMDA runs an international medical information center in Japan, aimed at providing interpretation services for foreign residents at Japanese medical institutions. As of April 8th, they have begun providing consultation services for foreign residents centered around COVID-19 related issues. Details of this service can be found on their home page:

<https://www.amdamedicalcenter.com/news>

The Miyakonojo International Association would like to wish all of our members good health and wellbeing during these trying times.



Movies info

C-Plaza Cine-port (Tel: 0986-24-2571)

17-9 Nakamachi, Miyakonojo, Miyazaki Map-Code (GPS): 117 488 540*55



● Harley Quinn: Birds of Prey (Japanese Sub)
 ● Judy (Japanese Sub)
 ● Parasite (Japanese)
 ● Kamen Byoutou (Japanese)
 ● Sumaho wo Otoshita Dake Nanoni: Torawareno Satsujinki (Japanese)

● 1917 (Japanese Sub)
 ● Maeda Kensetsu Fantasy Eigyoubu (Japanese)
 *The 1st of every month is ¥1,100 for everyone.
 *Every Wednesday is 'Ladies' Day', all ladies ¥1,100.
 *The cinema is closed every Tuesday.
 *For session times visit: <http://movie.walkerplus.com/th286/>