



nadiya

before

after



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before

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ISSUE 09

CAMPUS

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japan issue

japanese horror culture or trend?

tokyo on a budget
sumo cheat sheet

Jed's TAIPEI diary

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1600Hrs
Just arrived in Taipei city. This black Vespa I rented is uber cool. Beats taking the nancy train. I can feel this draft in my loins as I chug down the highway; it's VERY refreshing.



Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1900Hrs
Started at Shilin Night Market, and haven't stopped eating yet. Too. Much. Good. Food. Next, Huaixi Street "Snake Market". Very exotic. Very Jed. Jed Like. Ohhhh, snake wine. The Shi Fu says it is supposed to increase my virility 10 fold. I laughed at the man but took 3 shots anyway. When in Rome... Tried other strange concoctions like peanut ice cream with coriander, or skewered duck tongues. Hmmm... Quick souvenir stop. What says "I am thinking of all my friends" more than a fridge magnet that says "Taipei"?

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 2100Hrs
Hair. Check. Jeans with unintentional looking rips. Check. Tight muscle shirt. Damn! Mustard stain... Check. Clean briefs... ran out, go commando. Watch the zipper. Check. Checking out The Wall - a rock live house playing original music! Damn. More rocking than I expected. One of Taipei's crazy hot live music venues. I can't hear myself think! Wait. I can't hear! WOOOOO/00000000!

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 2300Hrs
Jed loves clubbing in a foreign land. Makes Jed loose, all Jed needs is some goose. Luxy is the venue Jed is going to rock. I can't stop saying Jed. Girls, please say Jed. I like that sound. Hellooooo Nurses. Wait. Is that Black Eyed Peas on stage?

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 0200Hrs
One of the friendlier countries I have been, I am now sitting with some new acquaintances at a supper place to get some more food. Oyster omelette..... mmmmmmm. Stinky tofu.... mmmmmmm. Fruit juice.... mmmmm. Damn, this fruit juice is fresh. And CHEAP! One more please.

Stinky tofu, anyone?



Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1000Hrs aka the Morning After
Last night was insane. This city definitely rocks. Ceiling.... nice.

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1130Hrs
Hot hot hot hot hot hot hot, nice nice nice nice. I love hot springs. Who knew Taipei has so many choices? Decided to splash out on a private room.

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1230Hrs
Still in hot spring... mmmmmmm. Jed is relaxed.

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1330Hrs
Wrinkled, hungry. Late! Off to the original Din Tai Fung. Thankfully, not too long a queue, xiao long bao, more xiao long bao, some more xiao long bao... :)

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1530Hrs
I would like a spot of tea. It is tea time after all. Bubble tea that is. How do they make it so much better here? I'll have another.

Jed Chua Hottie Audio Log. 1700Hrs
I am high. Really high, at the top of Taipei 101.

Sunset is amazing. Reminiscing over the past 24 hours, a sudden wave of emotion swept through me. Not the kind to bring a tear to your eye, but the kind to make you want to do it all over again.

Check it out!



www.taiwan.net.tw

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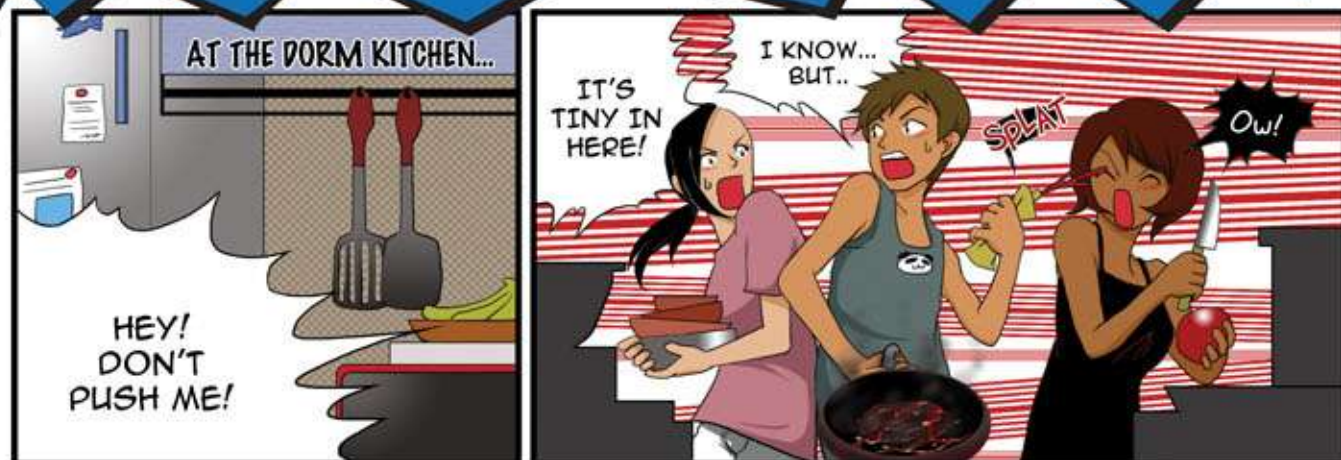
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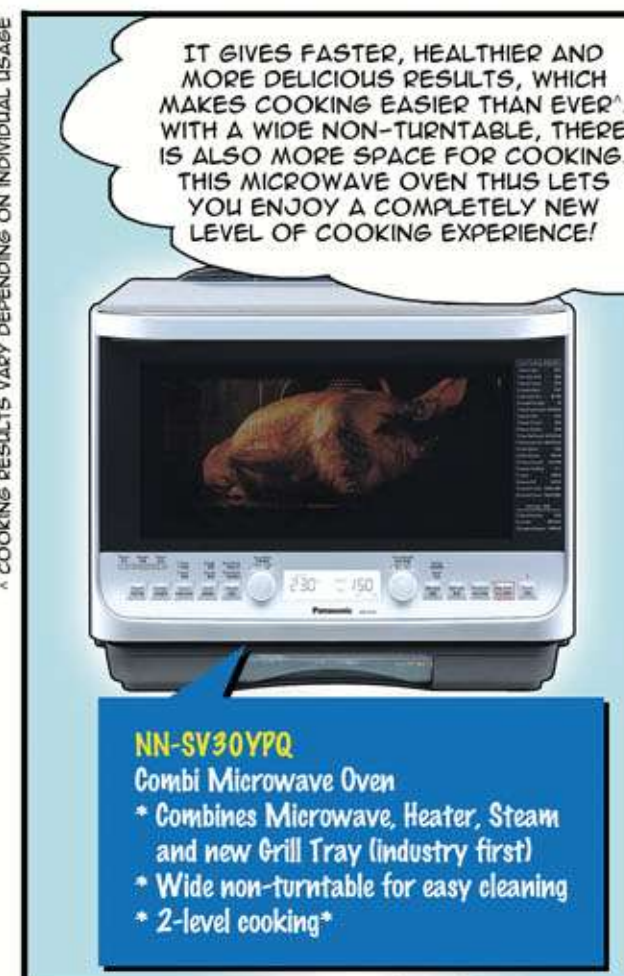
Mr Konosuke Matsushita's LESSON #5:

"RAISE THE BAR"

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BIZARRE JAPANESE FOOD & BEVERAGES

CONTRIBUTED BY
RAHIMAH RASHITH

By now everyone knows that the Japanese have a knack for creating bizarre dishes. Surely you've heard of things like Octopus Ice-Cream and Fugu (Pufferfish) being served in most Japanese restaurants. Here are some other delicacies that bring Japanese cuisine to a whole new level:

WASABI BEER

Usual beer brewed with wasabi, which is apparently pretty tasty.

PLACENTA JELLY DRINK

Contains actual pig placenta, but is tinted with peach flavour to conceal the bloody taste of placenta, said to rejuvenate one's skin.

WASP CRACKERS

Think dead and dried-up wasps encrusted in a chocolate chip cookie! Insects are a good source of protein.

KIMCHEE DRINK

You don't have to chew on vegetables anymore to enjoy Kimchi. Think fermented cabbage and red pepper blended together in a carton for drinking - just like HL Milk!

HACHINOKO (BEE LARVAE)

Resembles maggots minus the creepy-crawling, and is full of protein.

田子の黒

Fermentation Black Garlic

BLACK GARLIC CHOCOLATE

Semisweet chocolate with pieces of black garlic in it, said to increase energy levels and boost metabolism.

元気!

SHIRAKO (GENITALIA OF MALE FISH)

A few white sacks that contain seminal fluid, best eaten raw or slightly fried. It's said to help in fertility for men, as if you haven't guessed.

ZAZAMUSHI (AQUATIC INSECTS)

A variety of insect larvae, like the ones that live at the bottom of the river where it is sandy and rocky.

EEL SODA

Think carbonated fizzy syrup with a dash of eeeeeeel! Other forms of crazy fizzy drinks include curry or wasabi flavoured versions.

TACO SUSHI

A fusion of the classic Mexican taco filling with good ol' Japanese rice and seaweed. Fusion at its most edible.

特別な!



With a Navy blazer

A classic jacket-and-pants style. A navy jacket is best paired with grey pants for this look. Add Oxford shoes and a belt to give it a more dignified, professional look.

How to turn a plain white button-down shirt into 4 different looks:



Casual Style

This is a simple and relaxed look when paired with shorts - perfect for the tropics. You can add plain loafers, or a colourful pair of sneakers to stand out from the crowd.

3



Add a Vest

Adding a vest to your monotone ensemble gives it a more casual feel - and yet makes it smart enough without wearing a full jacket. If you tuck your shirt in,



Monotone style

This simple shirt paired with black pants is a classic monotone look, but you can add accents to the look by adding a colourful scarf and dress shoes.



4

Men's
Style Tip
from a Japanese stylist

need styling help?

Get a stylist. The primary job of a fashion stylist is to make a person look and feel their best, and in the case of professional fashion styling, to make the clothing itself shine. Stylists do this through an understanding of up-to-the-minute trends in fashion, as well as the intricacies of design, colour theory, and lighting.

Tips and photos provided by
Taoki Mishima of

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HAIR & MAKEUP

Known for their unique street fashion, the Japanese are bold with their mesh of individualistic styles.

Outlandish colours and styles are the norms. The females don their long tresses in variety of candy-colours; the males look like they just walked out of a Manga comic with their Manga-like hairstyles - usually in blonde.

Girls will cake on their make-up as according to their fashion style. Different kind of fashion comes with different kind of make-up. For example, you have the Lolita girls caking on makeup to look more western, and the Ganguro girls will heap on weird make-up to make the effect of

having tanned skin especially around the eye-area. Especially in Japan, any make-up section of a department store has arrays of cosmetics ranging from fake eyelashes and the likes!

Guys don't normally cake-on the make-up, but they do take note of the little details - like the arc of their eyebrows!

In Japan, safe to say, almost all of the men have their eyebrows trimmed. Some are more obvious while others are subtle. Japan places great emphasis on personal grooming even for men. Hence a man who does not trim his eyebrows shows that he does not care about his personal grooming. Thus, it is considered rude for men to not have the eyebrows trimmed.



BY RATNA MASAYU

IN THE WORLD OF FASHION, YOU CAN'T NOT MENTION JAPAN AS ONE OF THE FASHION CAPITALS OF THE WORLD. WALK DOWN THEIR STREETS, AND YOU HAVE A RUNWAY OF FASHION TO FEAST YOUR EYES ON!

TRIVIA:

The second button from the top of a male's uniform is often given away to a female he is in love with, and is considered a way of confession. The second button is the one closest to the heart and is said to contain the emotions from all three years attendance at the school.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Uniforms are modified by students as a means of exhibiting individualism. This can range from lengthening, shortening, removing ribbons, hiding the badges, etc. And for most, personal home clothing is paired underneath the blazer. Safe to say, you won't find yourself in deep trouble for your uniform modifications as compared if you were in any local school.



CLOTHING

The Japanese pride on exhibiting their individuality through their sense of fashion.



LOLITA

Influenced by Victorian clothing, Lolita added gothic elements (Gothic Lolita) and original designs to the clothing and transform it into a unique fashion. Often to emphasize the childlike look, teddy bears and dolls such as Super Dollies may be carried.

The key look: Usually consists of a knee length puffy skirt or dress, petticoat, blouse, a headdress, knee high socks/stockings, high platform shoes and amazing makeup.

That said, there are many different types and other sub-genres of Lolitas and they don't necessarily revolves around black elements.

GOTHIC LOLITA: Addition of Gothic elements to Lolita

SWEET LOLITA: Focused more on the child and fantasy aspects of Lolita

CLASSIC LOLITA: More mature style of Lolita that focuses on Baroque, Regency, and Rococo styles

PUNK LOLITA: Addition of Punk fashion elements to Lolita

TRIVIA:

Visual Kei bands play a part in the rise of Lolita fashion. Mana, of the band Malice Mizer, was the one who truly gave rise to the fashion. Although a man, Mana was able to dress convincingly as a beautiful Gothic Lolita female, and he is credited for helping make the style popular in Japan during the late 1990s.



VISUAL KEI



VISUAL KEI

The style is characterised by outlandish make-up, unusual hairstyles, flamboyant costumes, and Androgyny style. Especially popular within the music industry with popular groups such as X-Japan and Dir En Grey carrying off the Visual Kei look.



DOLLY KEI

DOLLY KEI

It's a newly emerging trend based on European fairy tales. It consists of vintage skirts, dresses, etc and sometimes has religious symbols.

GANGURO

An alternative fashion trend of tanned skin coupled with blonde or orange hair. The trend peaked in popularity around the year 2000.



KOCAL

The look is based on a high school uniform with shorter skirts, loose socks and other modifications.

MORI GIRL (FOREST GIRL)

A Mori Girl is the currently increasing fashion trend of a girl who looks like she lives among the pine and cedar trees. She's part Little Red Riding-hood, part pastoral fantasy and part Alice in Wonderland. The style gives off a very ethnic and bohemian vibe. More and more girls are opting for this "Back To Basics" style.

THE KEY STYLE:

- ~ Loose shapes and lightweight fabric.
- ~ Browns, whites, pastel pinks, red, creams and grays are the best colours
- ~ Layers of clothing with scarves.
- ~ 1920's styles shoes
- ~ Hair kept at natural state.
- ~ Natural make-up



COSPLAY

COSPLAY

Short for "costume roleplay", it is a type of performance art where one dresses themselves up as a specific character often taken from manga, anime, tokusatsu and video games. The less elaborate and less common ones, will be those who dress up as characters from live action television shows and Japanese pop bands.



The origin of J-Pop is said to be of the Japanese rock music inspired by The Beatles. Initially, the term J-Pop was used only for Western-style Japanese musicians. Over the years, with the evolution and development of music, J-Pop became a blanket term covering other music genres. Its blend of techno, pop and rock are especially appealing to the younger generations. And you don't have to know Japanese to enjoy it.

Boy bands are especially popular and as effective a marketing strategy in J-Pop as in any other market. They are the definition of stage charisma and energy with performances that are full of life and doesn't seem rehearsed or stiff. Japanese boy bands make no apologies for having the most ridiculous outfits, magnificent stages, sets and props ever. You have them flying in the air, dancing above a water jet, galloping on horses into the concert arena, riding Harley Davidsons on stage, you name it. Attending their live concert is a visual treat equivalent to that of performing arts.

Here are a few boy bands that have reigned over the Japanese Oricon music charts since their debut: SMAP, ARASHI, KAT-TUN, NEWS, EXILE.

BY RATNA MASAYU

JPOP

Johnny's Boys



The Johnny's Boy-Band "Formula" for success:

1. Pretty boys with talent
2. Not-so pretty boys with talent
3. Showmanship
4. All-rounded in singing, dancing, acting and hosting and.....
5. A very good PR



AUTHOR'S RECOMMENDATION TO FIRST-TIME LISTENERS: KAT-TUN

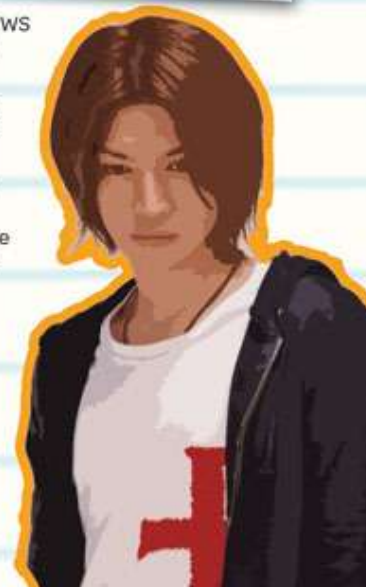
The group consists of 6 *ikemen* (good-looking guys) who've flourished individually as they have as a group, with each member heavily participating in dramas, movies, variety shows, etc. KAT-TUN is an acronym based on the first letter of each member's surname: Kazuya Kamenashi, Jin Akanishi, Junnosuke Taguchi, Koki Tanaka, Tatsuya Ueda and Yuichi Nakamaru. They were initially formed as a support group and back-up dancers, but due to their overwhelming popularity, they became a permanent unit with their official debut in 2006. The group has since reeled off ten consecutive #1 singles in Japan. All albums by the group have also topped the charts. They are currently promoting themselves as a 5 member-group with the departure of their bandmate Jin Akanishi, who went solo in the U.S. The 'KAT-TUN' music style is one with synthesizer beats, loud guitar riffs or drumbeats, with member Nakamaru's beatboxing incorporated in most of their songs. But that said, they are also skilled in carrying off different genres of songs ranging from pop, rock, R&B and ballad.

MUST-LISTEN SONGS FOR STARTERS: Real Face, Keep The Faith, Rescue, No More Pain, White Xmas, Love Yourself.

イケメン!

BEING A JOHNNY'S BOY

What do KAT-TUN, Arashi, SMAP, Tokio and NEWS all have in common? They are one of the many successful groups produced by the famous entertainment empire - Johnny & Associates. The agency known for creating charts-topping, hearts-breaking boy bands, including famous acts such as Tackey & Tsubasa, V6, KinKi Kids, Hey! Say! Jump, Kanjani8 and more. Formed in 1962 by Johnny Kitagawa (born 1931) - the US-born Ojisan you should thank for the source of your J-Pop eye-candies - this all-male talent agency is a company full of only *ikemen*, and has held a virtual monopoly on the creation of boy bands in Japan for over 40 years. A "Johnny's Junior" (aka trainee) is recruited from as young as 10 years old, and trained in all areas - performing as backup dancers to their seniors, or appearing on variety shows - before he's pro enough to debut.



NADIAH

NADIAH

TOP: Woven Top, S\$40

BOTTOM: Denim Pants, S\$29

SHOES: Boots, S\$40

after



TOP: Lemonade, from ALT, S\$39

BOTTOM: Lemonade, from ALT, S\$79

SCARF: Cindora, from ALT, S\$19

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Visit our Facebook page at campus.singapore to vote for your favourite make-over & see more behind-the-scenes shots!

ALT

A brand new lifestyle concept store occupying three levels at The Heeren. ALT carries a wide range of merchandise from beauty, perfumery, shoes, bags, fashion, lifestyle to gifts and novelties.

Level 1 - Cosmetics, Shoes & Bags

Featuring favorite beauty brands like Paul & Joe, Inouvi, newcomers bsc Panadda, Lotree and shoes and bags from a slew of international and Asian brands.



Level 2 - Ladieswear

Showcasing contemporary Asian fashion brands from Shanghai - Broadcast; Thailand - Panadda, Lemonade, Cindora; to local brand Miss Retro.



Level 3 - Beauty, Lifestyle, Gifts & Novelties

This floor houses a wide range of merchandise like novelty gifts, lifestyle, gadgets, beauty and wellness products from Japan, Korea and Taiwan.



Styling tips from stylist Julia at ALT



Makeup session at RMK at Isetan Scotts



Getting hair done at Shunji Matsuo



Colouring the eyes at the RMK counter

Hair by shunji matsuo

Styling by dial for style

Makeup by R M K

Nadiah's wardrobe by

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AT THE HEEREN

Studying at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) Oita, Japan

Interviews conducted
by Rahimah Rasith

Imagine yourself a part of one of the most culturally diverse student bodies in Asia, where half the students are from 90 countries. Imagine studying under inspirational, global-minded professors who push you to succeed at every opportunity. If you have the dream and the drive, APU will help you get the skills you need to reach your goals.

For Lisa and Hye Jung, their journey of a lifetime began at APU:



Lisa Tan Shen Hui (center)

FULL NAME: Lisa Tan Shen Hui
NATIONALITY: Singaporean
EDUCATION: Bachelor of Business Administration / 2005
WORKPLACE / OCCUPATION: Accenture Japan / Consultant (2007-2010), Terraclouds Private Limited / Director (fr 2010)

Most Singaporeans tend to head for the same destinations such as the UK and the US to further their studies. Quoting Robert Frost, "I took the [road] less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." Japan is popular as a tourist destination, but not as a place to pursue higher-level education because of the additional language barrier to overcome. I found that APU offered a good solution to this and provided an attractive international environment. Therefore I took the plunge and the benefits of my decision continue to pay off.

One of the most remarkable aspects of my APU experience was the opportunity to mix with a diverse range of nationalities from all over the world. You can't find a university anywhere else in Japan with such a good mix of Japanese and international students and faculty. On top of that, because we stayed in a small town, we became a close-knit family.

As for the coursework, APU offers most courses in both English and Japanese. For example, Marketing is taught in both languages, but we can choose to take the subject in a language we are more comfortable in according to our language proficiency. This was useful to not only me, but to a lot of students because it helped us to learn in a more efficient way. In addition, I learned beyond just the textbook through multiple presentations and supplemental hands-on activities. We also had camps where we merged education and fun together.

My experiences at APU offered me an insight into not only Japanese culture but also opened doors to the rest of the world through the people I met and the opportunities presented to me. As I mentioned, it was the whole experience that made all the difference.

When initially considering my overseas education, I was trying to decide between 2 universities—APU and another international university in London. I finally settled on APU as the administration and faculties made APU a more enticing choice.

I was pleased to learn that APU provides various language courses and modules related specifically to Asia Pacific. Language courses include not only English and Japanese, but also Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai and Spanish. Modules focus on various relevant subjects like management, tourism, environment and international relations. In essence, my education has equipped me with the necessary skills needed to work for a multi-national company.

Outside of class, the university supports various cultural activities. Traditions from all over the world are celebrated at APU's regular events and performances, which allow regional students to show off their cultural beauty.

As the world becomes more globalised, it is essential that we be exposed to international diversity even before we start work. Since APU was established, Oita



Kwon Hye Jung (center)

FULL NAME: Kwon Hye Jung
NATIONALITY: South Korean
EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in Social Science / 2007
WORKPLACE / OCCUPATION: Executive in Corporate Strategy Department at KDDI Singapore

prefecture has overtaken Tokyo as the Japanese city with the highest proportion of foreign residents. This diversity, paired with my educational training, has helped me in my career to analyze regional data, facilitate communication between East-Asian clients and, at the core, simply to understand and appreciate diverse cultures. It was really helpful having language skill, communication skill and people skill which were trained from university period by nature.

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ICP International Cooperation Policy
IMAT Intl. Material Flow Management, Dual Degree with Trier Uni., Ger.
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THE LIST

By Laila Humairah

Jidoohanbaiki - Japanese Vending Machines

With 1 vending machine for every 23 people, Japan has one of the highest vending machine densities in the world. Which means you could probably buy anything - from bananas to lingerie and toys - from a vending machine, or jidoohanbaiki, from the streets of Japan!

PRODUCT

PRICE

Eggs	300 yen = S\$4.70
Beer and Sake	150-200 yen = S\$2.40-\$3.30
Lobsters	200 yen = S\$3.30
Fresh Vegetables	100-300 yen = S\$1.60-\$4.70
Canned Bread	340-350 yen = S\$5.40-S\$5.60
Rice	2600-3500yen = S\$41-\$55 per 10-kilo bag
Board Games	Monopoly - 3000yen = S\$47
Pet Rhinoceros Beetles	Male - 300 yen = S\$4.70 Female - 100 yen = S\$1.60
Umbrella	400 - 1,000 yen = S\$6.40-S\$16
Fortune	100 yen = S\$1.60

* SGD based on current exchange rate

TECH AND ENTERTAINMENT

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MERRY CHRISTMAS II YOU
MARIAH CAREY

This 13-track album is easily her most impressive work since 'The Emancipation of Mimi', showcasing Mariah's version of classics like 'Santa Clause is Coming To Town' and 'Little Drummer Boy', as well as a rework of her hit, 'All I Want for Christmas Is You'. Her signature vocal acrobatics are in ample supply, combining pop, jazz, gospel, R&B and hip-hop that captures the energy of a holiday house party.



THE BEGINNING
THE BLACK EYED PEAS

Kicking off with 'The Time (Dirty Bit)', which fuses melody and lyrics sampled from 'The Time of My Life' of Dirty Dancing, the album features tracks that have some of the most addictive beats that beg to be club hits, including 'Light Up The Night', 'XOXOXO' and 'Don't Stop The Party'. With catchy synth riffs and ethereal strings thrown in the beat, this is a dance party mix album from beginning to end.



SPEAK NOW
TAYLOR SWIFT

At only 20, Taylor has stepped into adulthood with her third album that seems to be inspired by romantic chick flicks. In uptempo tunes like 'Mine' and 'Sparks Fly' and ballads like 'Back to December' and 'Enchanted', her voice shows off how masterful she has become as a singer. There is a minimum of country rhythm in this album - she likes her tempos fast and her choruses rock-sized.



TOKYO GIRLS COLLECTION

Japanese street fashion takes centre stage at Tokyo Girls Collection, a bi-annual fashion show that showcases everyday wear modelled by Japanese celebrities, against a backdrop of live concerts and performances. Apart from attracting huge crowds of up to 25,500 visitors, this unique

VISIT THEIR WEBSITE!
[HTTP://TGC.ST](http://TGC.ST)

event's e-commerce link allows visitors to buy the clothes modelled on the runway on-the-spot by accessing relevant websites via their mobile phones. This year marks its 10th anniversary, with a Beijing show planned for next spring. Currently, the only way to experience it is to go to Japan (there are official English tours via JTB) where you can ogle at high-profile celebrities and spot the next Japanese trend. The next show is in February 2011 in Nagoya.

CR8T1V3|B4R|C0D3S|

written by Aveek Katiyar

A friend of mine went to Japan last year for a design exhibition and told me some funny, some fascinating, and some downright weird things about the Land of the Rising Sun. For one, there are giant Coca-Cola robots doing the rounds, tempting kids to crack open a cold one (to severely misquote). But what I found most interesting was the application of the flower to the heart on all things Japanese - especially something as mundane and purpose-oriented as the bar code.

Bar codes - or UPC labels - are found on just about everything today; from magazines to milk and sake to Swiss chocolate, you can find the innocuous black-and-white stripes on pretty much anything you will ever buy. It's one of those rarely noticed, rarely bothered with emblems of our consumerist civilization. So I was marginally surprised when I chanced to find a curiously cool bar code on the carton of sake my friend had given me.

First off, let me tell you that it's pretty damn hard to find the UPC label on most Japanese products due to the intense amount of graphic design on any available space. But congested as their lifestyle (products) might be, I gotta give 'em credit for one thing. These guys really pay attention to detail. They have taken this utilitarian, lacklustre icon of the industrial empire and given it a thoroughly Japanese makeover.

From castles to cliffs, creepers to couches, and rain to rabbits, inventive and original bar codes have been springing up on all manner of products. Trust the Japanese to make your train ticket an object of fascination, eh? Who in their right minds would even consider the cute-ification of the corporate billing system? The Japanese, that's who. Not even Hello Kitty has escaped this glorification (as if it needed any more!), with fantastically geeky kitty-kats with straight A whiskers. Without encroaching on the numbers required in the code, these smooth graphics give you a reason to smile, to wonder, and are often related to the product they appear on.

Curiously, bar code imagery is not something new to us. Our entire public history seems to be littered with iconography that can somehow be traced back to bar codes. From Abbey Road to portraits created completely from tiny black-and-white stripes to entire building facades, our fascination with linear forms seems to befit the importance Design Barcode (the Japanese firm responsible for this makeover) places upon the humble UPC label. Even MAD magazine paid homage to them in an issue dating back to the late 70s.

We can spend endless hours (and yen) pouring through product packaging, looking for the next trophy addition to our collection of unbelievable imagery in the form of bar codes.

Scan me!



By Cheryl Tan Kay Yin

TOKYO ON A BUDGET!

You'd love to go to Tokyo for a holiday, but think it's too expensive? Fellow students, have no fear! Tokyo may have a high cost of living, but that shouldn't stop you from visiting the country to explore everything from the traditional to the modern gems of Japan. Follow these simple travel tips and you'll be well on your way to an awesome, positively memorable holiday in Japan!

Before we begin, the exchange rate as of November 2010 is 64 yen to 1 SGD



Shrine?



Tsukiji Fish Market



Rikugien Garden

TRAVEL TIP #1: GRAB A FREE TOUR GUIDE

Instead of having to learn a whole new language before going abroad, simply book a FREE volunteer guide when you travel to Tokyo. Booking must be made in advance, but it's simple, using the online form. This way, you can travel around Tokyo, including the suburbs, without the worry of getting lost in translation! Book them here: www.tokyofreeguide.com

Note: You have to cover their meals, entry fees to museums and other paying attractions as well as transport.

Your tour guide can't be with you 24/7 though, so knowing a few key Japanese phrases will help. Keep a basic conversational handbook with you to refer to must-know phrases:

1. Do you speak English? - Eigo ga dekimasuka?
2. Can you please help me? - Tetsudatte kuremasenka?
3. How do I get to [place]? - [place] wa dou itta houga ii?
4. Can you help me take a photo? - Shashin o otte itadakemasu ka?
5. Where is (name of place)? - [Name of place] wa doko desuka?

TRAVEL TIP #2: PLAN YOUR TRIP

You want to get to know Tokyo inside and out? Select a few key attractions you wish to visit, but keep your trip open to experience the authentic daily life and culture of the Japanese. Here are a few suggested locations:

CENTRAL TOKYO

1. Tsukiji Fish Market - Go here in the wee hours of the morning to catch the tuna auction sale. You'll never guess what some of these sea creatures are!
2. East Gardens of the Imperial Palace - Great place for a morning jog.

WESTERN TOKYO

1. Harajuku: This place is filled with teenagers donning the wildest styles.
2. Free Cosplay Festival every Sunday: Try and guess what character they're trying to be - catch them parading between Harajuku, Yoyogi Park and the Meiji Shrine entry path.
3. Harajuku's Oriental Bazaar: One of Tokyo's largest souvenir shops for Japanese souvenirs such as kimonos, dolls etc.

NORTHERN TOKYO

1. Rikugien Garden: Features a Japanese-style garden and scenes from famous poems. Admission applies.

SIDE TRIPS FROM TOKYO

1. Hakone (Mt. Fuji): Hakone is famous for close views of beautiful Mt. Fuji.
2. Kyoto and Osaka during Cherry Blossom Season: In Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, the best time to go is at the end of March through early April.

Ship To Hakone



Mt. Fuji



TRAVEL TIP #3: SAVE ON ACCOMMODATION

Instead of staying at a standard hotel where service comes at a higher price, go for a traditional Japanese living experience.

APARTMENTS/DORMS

These feature shared restrooms and showers.

- SOHO Asakusa - Cost: 5,100 yen / person (private room)
- Jimbocho Sakura Hotel - Cost: 3,150 yen / dorm bed.

RYOKANS

Ryokans are Japanese-style inns. They usually have tatami floors, futon beds and Japanese-style baths and local cuisine.

- Fujime-en Hakone (90 mins by bus/train from Tokyo Station) - Cost: 4,950 / person
Well worth it for views of Mt. Fuji from your room, plus it's got onsen facilities on-site.
- Ryokan Kangetsu - Cost: 5,250 yen / room
Has indoor and outdoor onsen baths.



CAPSULE HOTELS

Rooms may be small, but they come with all you need, including (shared) bathroom facilities. Some hotels are men-only, but here are 2 women-friendly joints.

- Central Inn Gotanda - Cost: 3,300 yen / person
Free wireless connection.
- Hotel New Gyorinso Asakusa - Cost: 3,000 yen / person
Has a scenic bathing facility overlooking Asakusa and the Sumida River.

TRAVEL TIP #5: EAT NUTRITIOUS MEALS WITHOUT SPLURGING

When you're on the move exploring Tokyo, it's a good idea to have some snacks in your bag to munch on.

CULTURAL CAUTION: It is considered rude to walk and eat at the same time. As much as possible, try to find a bench or a spot to sit and eat or snack.

1. Where to pick out your munchies:

- a. Convenience stores
- b. ¥100 shops - they're easy to find
- c. DON QUIXOTE - Open 24-hours

2. Inexpensive popular Japanese snacks:

- a. Individually-packaged rice crackers
- b. Onigiri: rice balls stuffed with filling and wrapped in seaweed
- c. Bottled green tea - best to buy from supermarkets, it's usually cheaper than vending machines (Note: In Japan, bottled ocha usually has no added sugar)

Bento



3. Proper Japanese meals on a dime:

- a. Bento boxes: these are great as you can get them at any train station or convenience store. Grab them for a discount after meal hours
- b. Restaurants/stalls near offices: they offer low priced drinks and food for around 300 yen

5. Must-have desserts:

- a. Japanese ice-kacang (kakigori)
- b. Traditional warm red bean paste desserts (anpan)
- c. Matcha imo (green tea ice cream with sweet potato)

Kakigori



TRAVEL TIP #4: TRAVEL SMART AND LIGHT

BEFORE GOING TO TOKYO

Pack your luggage such that there is still adequate space for you to stash your souvenirs from Japan. Always check the weather forecast to ensure the clothes you bring are suited to the current weather conditions and season!

ESSENTIALS

1. Jogging/walking shoes (discovering Tokyo does require walking girls, so don't just bring high heels!)
2. A set of formal wear: you may decide to eat at a high-end restaurant in Tokyo - top-grade sashimi for the taking!
3. Leggings/ thick stockings for the ladies (You can wear short dresses to look stylish and still keep warm! The Japanese sure love them.)



Good walking shoes are essential!

Ryokan

CHEAP EATS

Shin Yokohama Raumen Museum - 30% off

Ezogiku at Totsuka - 100 yen off

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

Studies at | Étudiant à | Est. de Enseñanza
University of Singapore
Name | Nom | Nombre
J. Su
Born | Né(e) le | Nacido/a el
01/02/1989
Validity | Validité | Validez
Sep 2010 to Dec 2011

FOR DISCOUNTS VISIT:
statravel.com.sg/isic-discounts

HOT DEALS WITH THIS CARD

Air Do (Hokkaido) 15-20% off
Shosen-Mitsui Ferry (Sunflower) 10% off
Kamogawa Sea World 25% off

CHEAP TRIPS

Cheap Sleeps

Oak Hotel - 15% off
Co-op Inn Shibuya - Specific Cardholder Rate
Grand House Chang Tee - Free Internet

statravel.com.sg/isic

If you're a student, get this for great discounts across Japan

JAPANESE HORROR FILMS

BY JULIA LUCKER

Besides being trendsetters for bizarre dishes and unique fashion, the Japanese are also widely known for being the best in Asian Horror. Japanese Horror has become so popular that even Americans have taken a strong liking to it, so much so that they have made adaptations of some well-known Japanese horror flicks such as *The Ring*, *One Missed Call* and *Pulse*. What separates Japanese horror from other genres is the amount of psychological elements and eerie atmospheres used in the films. Each film has a certain dark and disturbing feel to it, sending chills down anyone's spine.

HISTORY

Japanese folklore has influenced this well-known genre of Japanese horror, with themes of possession, exorcism, precognition, ghosts and poltergeists. *Kaidan*, also generally known as classic ghost stories consisting of strange and bewitching phantom, often is the basis of most Japanese horror films.

COMMON GENRE ELEMENTS

Spirits & Vengeance

Spirits with unresolved issues often have an unsettling afterlife, leaving room for unforgiving and bloodthirsty vengeance in Japanese horror scripts. Such spirits are fundamental to most Japanese horror flicks and can be typically referred to as *Yūrei*, a transformation of the person's soul due to strong emotions of hatred and revenge. It is said that when a person dies, his soul enters purgatory and waits there to receive proper funeral rituals.

However, when the soul does not receive any proper rites due to unresolved murder or suicide, the person's *Reikon* (soul) is transformed into a *Yūrei* or *Onryo*, which is led by intense feelings of vengeance and proceeds to enter the physical or living world. Directors and filmmakers have tweaked this concept to form a more frightening take on Japanese ghosts.

Lady in White

We have no idea why, but an image of a woman wearing a long white dress with hair flowing all the way to her toes, creeps us senseless. Compare this with a short-haired female wearing a cute little black dress. Although there are ghostly characters in red or muddy brown dresses depending on the story behind their deaths, it is probably the colour of



Innovative peeking

pure white which is most terrifying. Combining the dark ambience of a scene with a lady in white creates an extremely uneasy feeling among the audience.

Unexpected Situations

The Japanese have a different way of rattling our bones from the typical cheap tricks of Western horror flicks, like unexpected loud noises that make us jerk out of our seats. By combining minimal sound effects together with uncomplicated visuals in an uneasy setting, the Japanese manage to scare us senseless. The music is usually mellow and sometimes innocent-sounding (i.e. childish piano tunes). Consequently, strong visuals (i.e. lady in white) are used with little or no music to make the audience feel extremely uncomfortable. There is nothing more intimidating than silence after all.



Last thing you'd expect in a dark, damp place?

Japanese horror movies leave imprints on your mind long after you seen them. Every horror movie is a discovery which is bound to have you at the edge of your seat cringing. While technology and special effects have taken precedent in the Western genre, it is the authenticity of classic J-horror films that leave us with pure terror and satisfaction.

NOTABLE HORROR FILMMAKERS & DIRECTORS

Hideo Nakata

It all started out with *Ringu* in 1998 (aka *The Ring*), when filmmaker Hideo Nakata decided to do an adaptation from a novel of the same name by Koji Suzuki. The movie's most terrifying scene where a vengeful ghost called Sadako comes crawling out of a television set has become a trademark in the horror genre.



Takashi Shimizu

Ju-On is directed by Takashi Shimizu and revolves around a curse created by a housewife named Kayako Saeki, who is murdered by her husband Takeo. She and her dead son Toshio, also killed by his father Takeo, invoke terror to those who visit the house/murder site. The most significant character in the film is most definitely the little boy Toshio, who is both menacing and enticing. His grunt and his black eyes are way too dark for a boy his age.

Kei Horei

Director Kei Horei directed *Shibuya Kaidan* aka *The Locker* (2004). In it, a group of teenagers decide to try their luck using a magical coin locker at Shibuya station, which according to legend, will bring about eternal love and happiness to young couples who use it. Their little experiment goes out of hand when members of the group start dying in bizarre ways. The highlight of the film is Sachiko: imagine a toddler running around with thick black hair creeping down all the way to her knees. If that doesn't scare you then I don't know what will.



JAPANESE GORE GENRE

Although most Japanese horror movies make use of graphic details, gore is considered a sub-genre of horror. Horror usually encircles supernatural themes while gore explores the more grotesque and sadistic side of human nature. Violence, bloodshed and the human body are the essence of gore. Scripts and plots are usually rather simple while visuals are taken to the extremes. Even though some perpetrators in gore flicks are fuelled by vengeance or justice, sadism and masochism are greatly explored.

Classic Gore Flicks

Battle Royale (2000) explores the theme of survival of the fittest. A class of teenagers are placed on an unknown island, given various weapons and are left to fight against one another for survival while audiences in Japan watch this gory version of *Survivor*.

Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan (1959) is about a lady named Oiwa who returns in spirit form to avenge the death of her and her infant son, both killed by her husband. Some claim the gore aspect to be unrealistic, but it's still gruesome nonetheless, and is probably the apogee of the erotic-grotesque genre.





Cheat Sheet

#9 Sumo Wrestling by Liszt

ETYMOLOGY

Once a dance for a bountiful harvest!

The origins of Sumo were said to be a form of ritual dedicated to the gods with prayers for a bountiful harvest and were performed together with sacred dancing and dramas within the precincts of the shrines.

Early sumo was a rough-and-tumble affair combining elements of boxing and wrestling with few or no holds barred. In the Nara Period (8th Century), rules were formulated and techniques developed so that it came to resemble the sumo of today.



RULES

The winner of a sumo bout is either:

1. The first rikishi (sumo wrestler) to force his opponent to step out of the ring (dohyo) or force his opponent to put one toe or his heel over the straw bales marking the circle.
2. The first rikishi to force his opponent to touch the ground with any part of his body - his knee or even the tip of his finger or his top-knot - other than the bottom of his feet.

Striking with fists, hair pulling, eye gouging, choking and kicking in the stomach or chest are prohibited. As there are no weight limits as in boxing or western wrestling it is possible for a rikishi to find himself pitted against an opponent twice his own weight.

Matches often last only a few seconds, but they can occasionally last for several minutes.

RANK

Ranking in sumo accounts for absolutely everything. It affects when you get up in the morning, how much you get to eat, how much freedom you will have, and how you are treated in your stable.

Rikishi start sumo in the maezumo (pre-sumo) division. If they win enough bouts, they start off in the Jonokuchi division. If they keep winning, they will eventually make it to Jūryō rank.

From thereon, he's considered a "professional" rikishi, who's allowed to wear a silk mawashi (belt) in tournaments. If one keeps on winning, he will progress to the Makkuchi, Komusubi and Sekiwake ranks. To become an Ōzeki, a rikishi must get about 33 wins in 3 tournaments. To make it to the highest rank - Yokozuna - he must get at least 27 wins in 2 tournaments. Yokozunas can never be demoted, but if one starts to lose, however, he will be forced to retire.

すもう
su mo u



LIFESTYLE

If you think sumo wrestlers are just fatties in diapers, you are sadly mistaken. Trainings (keiko) for the lower ranked rikishi (from Jonokuchi to Makushita) start training as early as 4:30am, with stretching, followed by actual practice bouts. At 8:00am, the young wrestlers go to the kitchen to help prepare breakfast, and the Sekitori (Jūryō and Makkuchi) start practice, which lasts until noon. There is no formal teaching of holds or manoeuvres; rather, the rikishi learn these themselves by watching their seniors and practising endlessly.

After the practice, the wrestlers then take a bath, with the higher-ranked ones going first. At around 11:00am the rikishi take their breakfast, with the higher-ranked wrestlers going first again, sometimes only leaving scraps for the younger rikishi to finish up. Once the meal is over, wrestlers will lie down for afternoon naps, which help them get bigger.



Sumo is a sport steeped in tradition and ceremony.



My lard is hard!

DIET

Sumo wrestlers eat only two meals a day: breakfast (around 11:00am) and dinner (around 6:00pm). Now, I bet you're all wondering what these guys must be eating to get sooo huge!

The main meal of the day consists of a dish called Chanko-nabe which includes stews, Chinese food, sashimi and deep-fried food. Stews are the most common dishes, though in recent years, curry rice and hamburgers have been included. Chanko-nabe is eaten with rice and washed down with bottles of beer.



Chanko-nabe - a sumo's staple!



Rikishi means 'Man of strength'



I SURVIVED A JAPANESE GAME SHOW

The show follows a group of Americans who leave the US for Japan where they compete in a Japanese-style game show. The winner takes home US \$250,000.

X FACTOR: The fact that non-Japanese individuals are made to do crazy stuff on a Japanese game show is quite a thrilling prospect because anything can go wrong.



COMPILED BY JULIAN ABRAHAM CHUA

JAPAN'S WHACKIEST Game Shows



TAKESHI'S CASTLE

This classic Japanese game show enjoys a cult status throughout the world. Each show involves around 100 people who have to get through a number of different obstacles, including being chased through a labyrinth and walking across a narrow bridge with balls hurled at them. The contestants who make it through would then have to battle actor Takeshi Kitano to win one million yen.

X FACTOR: The ridiculous obstacle courses are interesting, but with a hundred contestants trying to overcome them, the main draw is how they fail, which inevitably gets you breaking into laughter.



HUMAN TETRIS

The contestants have to stand on a track with a wall coming towards them. The wall has an odd-shaped hole that the contestant has to get through, otherwise they get pushed into a pool of hot water.

X FACTOR: Extreme comedic elements made the show popular, especially when contestants are faced with odd shapes that seem totally impossible to go through. Their reaction to the shapes and how they try to squeeze themselves through are a hit with viewers.



If you've ever watched a Japanese game show, then you'd know how crazy it can get! You'll see everything from contestants rubbing their butts against hot tailpipes to agreeing to be locked, naked, in an apartment for an indeterminate amount of time, left only to subsist on prizes culled from magazine competitions. It is quite paradoxical to think that the Japanese - who sometimes have a rather rigid perspective on life - spend their evenings watching game shows that make the western versions look like your boring news on television.

The popularity of these "crazy" shows is due to the fact that the Japanese are conservative, quiet and stressed. To them, appearing on the game shows and watching them at home is an outlet for escapism. Here's a quick synopsis of some of the classics.

BATSU GAME

The rules of Batsu games are simple, but amazingly tough - if you laugh, you get punished. A new edition of this show is made every year, and as of 2009 there are 6 Batsu games. The most famous edition is one that takes place at a high school.

X FACTOR: The highlights of the shows are not the punishments, but rather how challenging it is to not laugh at something funny. Most of the time contestants are "forced" to laugh and it can be quite hilarious to see how contestants stop themselves from laughing.





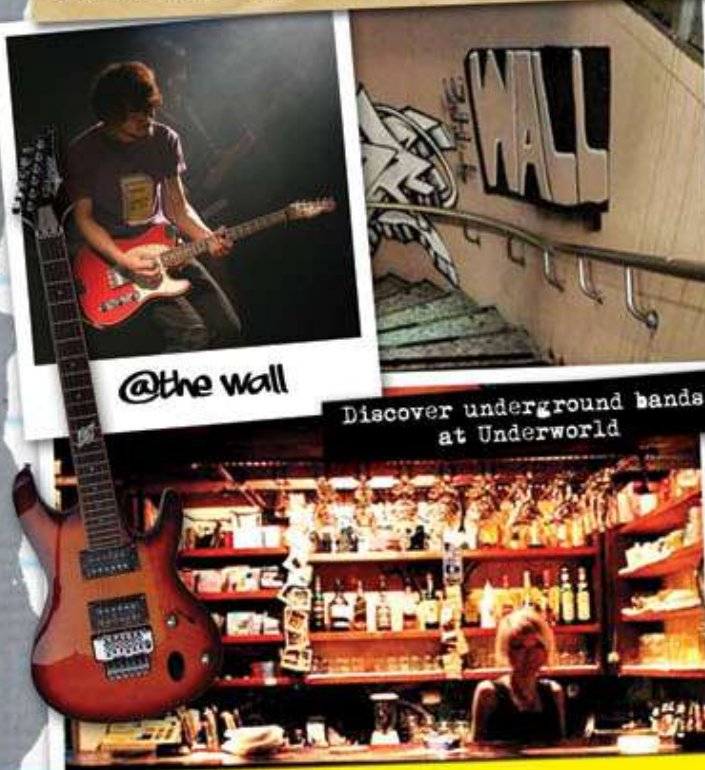
If you've enjoyed watching recent Taiwanese movies like *Secret* or *An Revoir Taipei* and want to experience the city's vibrant heartbeat, all you have to do is grab a cheapie ticket to Taipei, and explore the city from the ground up.

A trip to the "scooter capital of the world" reveals more than meets the eye, if you're willing to go beyond the usual tourist spots. From the weird to the wonderful, here are some things worth checking out.

taipei hangouts

night life

Taipei is as busy in the day as it is at night, with a plethora of things to do once the sun goes down.



CLUBBING

Taipei has a host of clubs that cater to every budget, crowd and theme. Karaoke pubs are a favourite entertainment for the locals, but those who are more used to dancing to DJ beats can head to some of these clubs.

Luxy
5F, 197 Zhong Xiao E Rd | www.luxy-taipei.com
The most famous club in Taipei, it draws a very wide range of crowds with its live acts, who've included Black Eyed Peas, DJ Jazzy Jeff and Tiësto.

Room 18/18 Lover
B1, 22 SongShou Rd | www.room18.com.tw
This venue has made a name drawing the young, beautiful and wealthy, with a dance floor that vibrates to hip-hop.

LIVEHOUSES

Taiwan is awash with domestic singer-songwriters, bands and pop idols, and a great place to catch them perform before they hit it big is at a livehouse, which Taipei has a fair share of. These live music venues feature artists - new and established, local and foreign - who perform original music.

Each livehouse has a cover charge that varies according to the bands, with performances starting from 9.30pm, and closing at around 11.30pm (so that you can catch the last train to your hotel). The lineup changes frequently so it's best to check before you go. Here are a few excellent livehouses.

The Wall
B1, 200 Roosevelt Rd | www.thewall.com.tw
A legend in the livehouse scene, this 600-capacity venue has been host to many great local bands, as well as popular international acts.

Riverside Live House
177 Sining S. Rd | www.riverside.com.tw
Spread across 2 levels, it's located in the youth district of Ximending and features mainstream and indie artists.

Underworld
B1F, 25 Shida Rd | www.underworld-taipei.blogspot.com
A dark underground venue in the student-rich area that has seen its fair share of underground bands from Taiwan and abroad.



Indie bands at Riverside



party the night away at luxy!

BAR HOPPING

Those looking for a cheaper night out with friends can head to some of Taipei's watering holes, including:

Indian Beerhouse
192 BaDe Rd
This quirky bar is decorated with a dinosaur theme - right down to the washbasins. The drinks are reasonable, and food choices include rabbit, deep-fried bee pupae and stir-fried crickets.

Taiwan Beer Bar
85 BaDe Road | www.nv.com.tw/346beer
This is THE place to go if you want freshly-brewed Taiwan Beer straight from the brewery. This airy space is one of a few outdoor venues in Taipei, and the beer is the cheapest in town (1 mug-NT\$90/\$3.90)

out and about

By day, Taipei visitors are spoiled for shopping and dining choices, but here are a few quirky themed things to do.

THEMED DINING

Taipei has an oddball sense of humour and a long-standing obsession with food, so restaurants these days compete with quirky themes.

Modern Toilet Restaurant
7 XinSheng N Rd | www.moderntoilet.com.tw
As its name suggests, it's a restaurant where you sit on toilet bowls and dine on bathtub tables. Even the dishes are served in miniature toilet fixtures.

Mr J II
250 Wuxing St | www.mrj-tw.com
Jay Chou fans will love this restaurant, which is not only opened by the entertainer himself, but it's based on his 'Secret' movie, and features waiters in school uniforms and an antique piano from the movie.

Hello Kitty Sweets
90 Da'An Rd | www.sanrio.com.tw
Fans of the franchise will revel in this pink parlour, which is filled with Kitty paraphernalia, as well as desserts that feature the feline. A giant Kitty statue adorns the entrance of this Sanrio-licensed cafe.

Cafe Dog & Cats
129 Fuhua Rd
Taipei has quite a number of restaurants that feature cats roaming freely within the premises while patrons dine away - Taipei is home to the world's first cat cafe. Cafe Dog & Cats actually has both cats and a dog that diners can play with.



TAIWAN MINIATURE MUSEUM



cheap freshly brewed beer = love

Tasty Bees at Indian Beerhouse

rawr!!!

Sweet treats at Hello Kitty Sweets

Jay Chou's own restaurant!

Cafe Dog & Cats

QUIRKY MUSEUMS

You've seen the National Museum and the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall, but here are some off-the-radar museums worth visiting.

Taiwan Storyland
B2, 50 Zhongxiao W Rd | eng.taiwanstoryland.com.tw
Storyland is a nostalgic recreation of a yesteryear town, replete with mom-and-pop stores and old-styled restaurants that whisk you back to Taiwan circa 1960.

Miniatures Museum of Taiwan
B1, 96 Jian Guo N Rd | www.amot.com.tw
The first museum to feature miniatures in 2 formats: a 'doll house' and a room with cut-away views. Ranked second in the world, the museum boasts over 200 miniature items.

Fire Safety Museum
37 Chenggong Rd Sec 2 | english.tcfid.taipei.gov.tw
A free museum about dealing with disasters, where else can you experience a fire, typhoon and earthquake simulation? Raincoats and boots are supplied.





CULTURE

WRITTEN BY NAWIRA BAIG PHOTOS BY EUGENE SOH!

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

CULTURE= FOOD, FASHION AND FUN?

What do you get when you think of the Land of the Rising Sun? Do you conjure up images of beautiful androgynous J-Pop artists or poised geishas? Maybe it's the cuisine- for its high regard of lean, delicate pieces-synonymous with all things natural, evident also in Japanese beauty secrets. Whatever it might be - Yohji Yamamoto or Osamu Tezuka - this East Asian nation, has much to boast. We're all rather acquainted with the variety of entertainment and lifestyle trends Japan boasts. But do you adopt your culture trends like you pick your sushi? Well, if you do, it might be about time to rethink your impulsive choices because not everything that's neatly wrapped up in that sushi roll, tastes pleasant.

We're not just talking taste buds here. It goes way up in the human anatomy because culture (like it or not) has its impact on our mental health. There has been much hype about the cool aspects of Asian culture, from manga and anime, to cosplay. Let's not forget the schoolgirl uniform fetish. But we can't deny health is a major lifestyle concern apart from entertainment and food. Why else would we be concerned about our weight? While it's true that culture helps create a sense of identity, certain aspects of it might be detrimental to our development if consumed to oblivion. We subscribe to whole cultures on impulse when we focus on the good and neglect the bad.

You'd probably prefer watching a trailer of Paranormal Activity Tokyo Night on Youtube than another moral education lesson...until I tell you that this IS a horror flick. And you're the scream queen. No, it's no Halloween, it's reality, honey.



THE DOWNSIDE OF CULTURE A.K.A OUR BLIND SIDE

Behind all the glitz and glamour, lies a darker story. Renowned for its high regard for honour, Japan's history is filled with acts of sacrifice.

Honour and duty go hand in hand. If honour was lost, especially in the context of battles in which the samurai was obliged to protect and glorify his nation, the only other honourable act to undertake was death. According to Bushido (the Japanese code of

conduct), this was to maintain and uphold the dignity of his nation, family and himself. Nothing was considered more shameful than admitting defeat.

Acts of taking one's own life included *seppuku* (belly-slitting which is followed by disembowelling) and *kamikaze*.

With a history of stoicism and heroism, Japan today has one of the highest suicide

rates in the world. According to UN statistics, suicide rates in Japan are double that of the US, despite the latter bearing a larger population size. The World Health Organisation reports a suicide rate of 36.5 and 14.1 for males and females per 100,000, respectively. That was Japan, approximately 10 years ago. And suicide is still on its rise.

It's a scary truth - the loss of talent and human capital. Is it due to culture?

CULTURE OF DEPRESSION OR CULTURAL TREND?

It all boils down to social attitudes. In a stoic culture that highly values honour, mental health concerns are not fully addressed, ironic in a country that develops its technology at lightning speed. While suicide might seem like a commendable act, mental illnesses are shunned as they demonstrate weakness. Although not all suicides are concerned with a form of mental illness, evidence from suicide cases points to depression as a prime motive.

But many youths around Japan are adopting cultures blindly, taking in the negative aspects and behaviour of modern culture without discretion. Suicide in Japan is no longer an honourable act, as it seems like it has evolved into a trend to get back at society. An act of sacrifice that was once conducted for the sake of society has now become an act against society. With

pressures from school (exams and bullying), the youth are out to rebel against the adults who they believe are the culprits behind their pain and suffering.

Many young people are victims of labelling. Their parents and teachers might criticise them for being stupid or weak: characteristics which are a far cry from traditional Japanese virtues, like those upheld by their samurai ancestors. These newer generations suffer in confusion when the walls surrounding success, in a country with a history of structure and progression, erodes. They are no longer promised the security of a better future as economic woes and homelessness are rampant, and thus, they feel they work and struggle for practically nothing. For some, it seems the sun is not shining quite so brightly in the Land of the Rising Sun these days.

Young people and the older generation have very little in common, especially when it comes to communication among the two groups. Communication these days comes in the form of the television and the internet.

As many youths withdraw from their society, evident in *hikikomori* (total isolation, where they live in their bedrooms 24/7 glued to their computers and shun any outside contact, including their parents), they feel a smaller sense of belonging and a lack of purpose. In hopes of escaping the bleak reality, these young people would rather be comforted by a screen than a human face.

Yet many of the media materials being screened contain negative underlying messages, that if not analysed carefully, can lead to adverse consequences.

CULTURE MEANS COOL?

Is the younger generation seeing suicidal behaviour as a trend to copy? You might think it has nothing to do with you, but social pressure breeds indiscriminate behaviour. Many young people in Japan feel they are at their breaking point. Often, just one trigger and it could set off an entire series of acts of rage. There's no denying that young people are always out to prove themselves. And advertising feeds on this vulnerability, especially with media materials like Pie-San's book "How to Kill Yourself: 5 Easy Steps" and the controversial film, *Suicide Circle*.

Suicide clubs used to be common among the older citizens, but the internet has made it a trend among techno-savvy youths. Internet suicide pacts are aplenty these days, made easy with the advancement of technology. When you're in complete isolation as a *hikikomori*, being part of such a group helps give you some sense of belonging. Many shudder at the thought of trendifying suicidal behaviour among teens. You might think, why make light of a real and serious mental and emotional torment? After all, not everyone at this fragile stage in their

lives understand the fine line between aesthetics and ethics.

However, such independent film houses (many of which do not share the profit-making motives of their larger counterparts) create productions with a purpose. After all, media is a means of communication. This creative industry is both a boon and bane. It could lead to anorexia, materialism and even suicide but it could also result in a social movement, if not revolution. What many young people fail to consider, is the motive behind the media's agenda. Films like *Suicide Circle* are a crude reflection of society, in hopes of enlightening the Japanese government and society of the serious danger that's emerging amongst its younger generation.

On the downside, vulnerable young people feel like they are able to relate to these fictional depictions as these messages serve as a reminder of their hopelessness. So they act on it, resorting to various means to escape the bleak future. In this case, the truth is no stranger than fiction.



TAKE THE GOOD, DITCH THE BAD

Death - whether intentional or as a consequence, like in the form of *karoshi* (overworking that results in death), is irreversible. The point is that we are no warriors except in the daily acts of living and giving. Culture changes with time but certain values remain, or at least, struggle to thrive. It is imperative that we take the good out of it and abandon the negative

traits that only deter progress because certain things should remain as lessons in our history textbooks and not a part of our present lives. I think it's time to quit complaining that you're not being granted the amount of freedom you deserve. For starters, you have the independence and liberty to pick the trends to follow, wisely. I mean, you wouldn't shop for something

that wasn't worth your money, would you? So why skim on other important lifestyle choices? I strongly believe that nothing should be decided upon without awareness, because it cripples growth. This lives on in the Japanese proverb 'Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.' Following blindly has never been trendy. And change only starts with you.

DEMONS AND SUCH

Text and Illustrations by Fateen Syafawani

妖怪

Three words: Popular, well-liked and all-around awesome. This youkai (popularised by the Nine-Tailed Fox of Naruto) by nature, is a trickster and holds the ability to shape-shift, to possess a regular human and to literally breathe fire. In its extremely long life, it sprouts tails one after the other, it's said that a nine-tailed fox is at the pinnacle of its powers.

Popular characters: Uzumaki Naruto's Bijuu from Naruto, Yakumo Ran from Touhou.

KYUUBI NO KITSUNE

Cats are cute, often mischievous, adventurous and most importantly, well-loved by the human race. However, these demon cats are the restless spirits of felines tortured to death and are more than willing to take a meaty bite out of your shoulder or burn you whole while you're sleeping. Treat your cat nicely, especially if you notice that it sprouted a second tail overnight.

Popular characters: Nii Yugito's Bijuu from Naruto, Kirara from Inuyasha and Chen from Touhou.

NEKOMATA

People say this youkai was the spirit of someone who died in the snow, wandering about on snowy nights. Her almost translucent, pale-white skin blends into the winter scene and she leaves no tracks in the snow. Like all youkai, this particular one is deadly: if you male readers see her, make sure you're drop-dead gorgeous, or you'll be frozen to death. If you're... well, below average, you're bound to turn into the next Ice Age exhibition. Some legends say this youkai absorbs the life-force of men through a kiss which causes an instant deep-freeze. As for females, you're safe. She's only interested in men.

Popular Characters: Froslass from Pokemon, Shirayuki Mizore from Rosario + Vampire and Rukia's Sode no Shirayuki from Bleach.

YUKI ONNA

Youkai are the demons of Japan, and are as old as Japanese culture itself. They don't die, some breathe fire, and others are the cutest cats you've ever seen (only you don't know they're longing to take a good chunk of your flesh). Because of their uniqueness and prominence in Japanese culture, a basic understanding of youkai is a must for all Japanophiles. All you have to do is name your fandom and that character has a high chance of being based off a Youkai, but the question is this - do you really know all there is about your favourite character's inner demons?

Watch your money with this one; its shape-shifting abilities allow it to disguise simple items like leaves into money in order to obtain food and wine, its favourite drink. Some legends say it disguised itself into an ancient tea kettle, which a poor wife sold in order to feed her children. Note that the youkai has abnormally large testicles, and is usually seen at Japanese restaurant entrances.

Popular characters: Gaara's Bijuu from Naruto, Totoro from Tonari no Totoro (like, duh) and Kachi from Inuyasha.



TANUKI

Let's put it this way: they're green-skinned, water goblins you do NOT want to get into a fight with, or be their next plaything. Kappa, being water demons, rule the riverbanks, seas, lakes and just about any body of water you can find. They are extremely strong when angered and will either challenge you to a sumo match (you won't win this even if you're a black belt) or remove a person's intestines by sneaking up on an isolated swimmer and punching a fist through his... never mind.

Popular characters: Sanbi from Naruto, Mayor from Anakawa Under the Bridge, Nitori from Touhou and Golduck from Pokemon.

KAPPA



Despite their scary appearances, some of these youkai have at least some history co-existing with humanity and in some cases even forming marriages with them. Knowing more about them will surely add a dimension to your average demons, whether they're immortalised in anime or sitting in front of restaurant entrances. One word of caution—don't bother them and they won't bother you.

STRESS

RELIEF

FEELING STRESSED AND YOU WANNA 'BATTLE IT OUT' WITH SOMEONE IN A RING? TRY SUMO WRESTLING - ON A TABLE. YOU CAN EVEN DO THIS IN CLASS. JUST DON'T MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE IF YOU'RE IN A LECTURE. CHOOSE YOUR WRESTLER, FACE YOUR OPPONENT AND BOTH OF YOU TAP THE TABLE (NOT THE RING) TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT - WATCH THE WRESTLERS FIGHT TO STAY ON THEIR FEET WITH THE VIBRATION! THE WINNER IS THE LAST MAN STANDING OR THE ONE STILL IN THE RING...

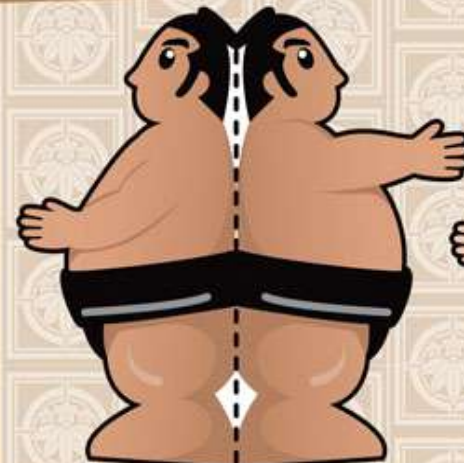
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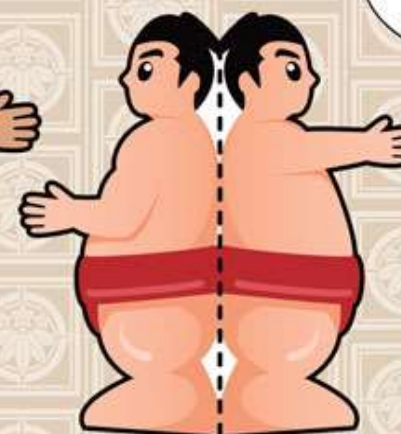
KNOWN AS KAMIZUMO, THIS IS A TRADITIONAL GAME IN JAPAN!

READ MORE ABOUT SUMO WRESTLING ON PAGE 18!

MUSASHIMARU



WAKANO HANA



WRESTLER



Cut out the wrestler along the outline - you should own a pair of scissors by now.



Fold in half. You can modify your wrestler to make it more sturdy to win. It's not cheating, really...



Place the wrestlers on the ring, each behind the white lines. Start tapping until one falls over or out of the ring!

RING

Cut along the bold lines and fold along the edges of the square. Use tape or glue to fix the white tabs in place. Since you're moving your wrestlers by tapping near this 'ring', print it on thick paper unless you're a cheapskate.

