

Full of Charms Unique to Hokkaido

Mention Hokkaido and the first things that come to mind are a land of snow and the natural environment, but Hokkaido also has many famous universities with excellent research environments and achievements, like Hokkaido University and Otaru University of Commerce. Study and research environments are of the highest standard, and produced the winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2010.

Every year, Hokkaido is chosen as the place in Japan people most want to live, and its appeal is in more than just the snow. Large cities and many small and medium-sized towns surrounded by the natural environment make it possible to lead a convenient life in comfort, while living in harmony with nature.

Another appeal of Hokkaido is the delicious cuisine made from a variety of fresh ingredients, such as delicacies from the land and sea. In addition, various events and festivals, such as the Snow Festival, Lilac Festival, Beer Garden, international jazz festivals and firework displays, which take advantage of the region's characteristics, are held throughout the year.

Hokkaido is particularly famous for its ski resorts, which are loved by skiers from around the world due to the top-quality powder snow that can be found there. However, the best part of Hokkaido is probably the dynamic, cool summers that bring out all the natural energy.

Preparations necessary in advance

No matter how excellent the natural and research environments are in Hokkaido, to come just with a dream and with no preparation is asking for trouble. Thorough preparation, such as actively gathering information and making plans, is necessary.

It is necessary to gather information from a variety of sources. By seeking advice from related educational institutions, international student support centers, and people who live locally (for example, Hokkaido University's Korean Student Association), it is possible to acquire a wide range of more accurate information.

During the first part of studying abroad, the language barrier is the highest hurdle. Many of the educational institutions provide various high-quality Japanese language classes, but if you can acquire a certain level of Japanese ability in Korea before you come, the time spent here will be more rewarding.

It is not as cold as in Seoul but because the heating is provided by means of a stove-type heater rather than under-floor heating, it will feel really cold. The winters are long and there is lots of snow, so advance preparation with regard to that is also necessary.

When the cost of living in Japan was higher than that of Korea, many people brought things that

they bought in Korea, but now the cost of sending those things would probably make them more expensive than if you bought them in Hokkaido. It is sometimes possible to inherit furniture or electrical appliances via international student support organizations or the Hokkaido University's Korean Student Association and such, or they can be bought cheaply from recycle shops. Finally, a bicycle is indispensable in Hokkaido.

Make sure you come to Hokkaido with a positive attitude and an open mind!