

Report

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1 Why I chose to study abroad in Hokkaido

When I was at university I majored in Japanese. In the first term of my 4th year I was lucky enough to get the chance to participate in the Asian international exchange activities organized by Hokusei Gakuen University in Hokkaido. Although it was only for a very short, one-week period, I was impressed with Hokkaido's beautiful scenery and sensed the enthusiasm of the students in Hokkaido. Through Chinese cuisine and traditional folkdances, we were able to introduce some of the appeal of Chinese culture. At the same time, our Japanese friends accompanied us on a sightseeing trip to Otaru and together we enjoyed a whirlpool spa and hand-rolled sushi. Ever since then I have had very strong connections with Hokkaido. After graduating, I wanted to go abroad to study and decided to return to Hokkaido, and so I applied to enter Hokkaido University.

2 What I found good about studying abroad in Hokkaido

Firstly, Hokkaido is an ideal place to study. Compared to cities like Tokyo or Osaka, it is not so crowded and has a more relaxed atmosphere in which you can enjoy the natural environment. The Japanese students in our research laboratory are so passionate about what they do. Whenever I have a problem with Japanese or with my life, everyone is so patient in helping me to deal with it.

Next, Hokkaido is an excellent place for sightseeing. For example, in winter there's the Snow Festival, and in summer there are firework displays, the lavender in Furano and the nighttime views in Hakodate. I experienced the Japanese culture and natural scenery at first hand.

3 What I felt was inconvenient

Generally, life in Hokkaido is quite convenient. However, during the cold season there is lots of snow and the roads freeze making it difficult to walk. I was born in northeastern China and so I'm used to the snow and cold, but there's a huge amount of snow that falls in Hokkaido and the snow and ice that accumulates over the winter does not melt easily. Walking speed is slower than in the other seasons, meaning you have to leave the house earlier to give yourself plenty of time.

4 Hokkaido PR, or a message to everyone

Mention Hokkaido and maybe people think of fields of lavender as far as the eye can see, and the location of the movie *If You Are the One*. Of course, those landscapes are very beautiful. You really should find time in your busy study schedule to invite friends and go and see the great outdoors that's so close by. Maybe, if you set foot in an unfamiliar place, you will discover something totally different to the image you had of life studying abroad. If you encounter hardships, don't give up easily. All overseas student life starts with just one suitcase. After 6 months or a year, look back to when you first arrived and you'll realize those hardships were so insignificant. The experience of studying abroad is not just about your future studies; it is also precious experience for when you gain employment, and may lead to wonderful memories that will remain for years to come.