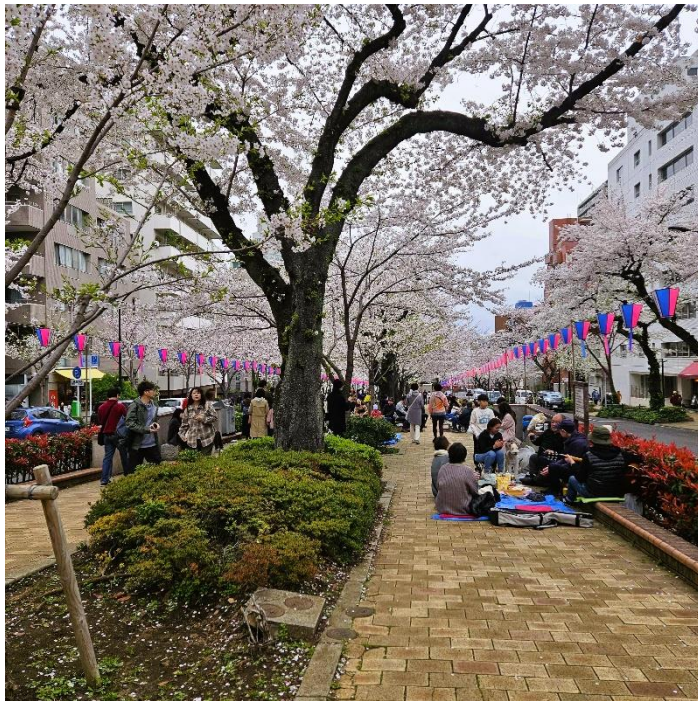


My Study Abroad Experience in Japan

SOAS University of London

Kim

In what feels like an instant, almost a year has passed since the beginning of my study abroad experience. I can say without hesitation that it has been the best year of my life and, frankly, I do not want it to end.



Compared to other cities in Japan, Tokyo has a reputation for being somewhat cold and difficult to make friends, but my experience has been the polar opposite. The people I met here have been friendly and welcoming; always willing to share their culture and interests and curious to learn about mine. The friends I made have taken me to their favourite places, shared their

favourite foods and drinks, brought me to *hanami* picnics and summer festivals, and I am eternally grateful for the precious memories I have been able to make thanks to their kindness.

During my time here, I also developed an interest in architectural photography, which has taken me to many corners of Tokyo and beyond. Experiencing the atmosphere of various unique buildings has been a joy, as has talking to the people who visit and work in them about their lives—I will leave Japan with as many treasured stories as I will photos.

The classes at Ochanomizu University have strengthened my Japanese knowledge, and being able to actively use Japanese on a daily basis has been hugely helpful in enabling me to communicate more easily. One of the highlights was having the opportunity to create a website in Japanese where

I introduced my favourite places in Tokyo, as I could share my recommendations whilst rediscovering my childhood hobby of web design.

Before I came to Japan, I disliked change and was hesitant to try new things, but I have made an effort to be more adventurous, and this has been deeply rewarding. I discovered that I love foods I previously thought I would never be able to eat, such as octopus and squid, and have enjoyed travelling around the country despite previously finding travel stressful. I hope



to retain this spirit of adventure when I return to my home country and continue to try new things as often as I can.

Even though I have been here a full year, there is so much more I feel I have yet to discover. Before my year abroad, I had no idea what I wanted to do after I graduate, but I have since decided that I hope to come back to Japan at the soonest possible opportunity. I feel truly grateful to have had the chance to study here.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff at the Centre for International Education and the International Affairs Division for always taking care of the students, to my academic advisor for taking the time to read my monthly reports, to the passionate teachers for their lessons, to the management staff at the dormitories, and to my dear friends for always treating me with kindness. It is thanks to this support that I have been able to complete my year abroad successfully.