



Hello Okaya

Okaya Culture Promotion Group Okaya Int'l Center
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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Center with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insights into Japanese culture. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or feedback you might have.

Autumn Colors Are Here!

Izuhaya Shrine

Izuhaya Shrine lies near the upper reaches of Okaya's Yokokawa River and is surrounded by pristine nature. Every autumn this shrine hosts a Momiji (Autumn leaves) Festival where guests can lose themselves amongst the 150 different types of trees and their stunning red, yellow, and orange foliage. The festival runs from October 25th until November 7th. Once the sun sets, the trees are illuminated with lanterns and guests can enjoy tea and other refreshments provided by local residents. You won't want to miss it!



Toriidaira Yamabiko Park

Yamabiko Park is set up in the hills above Okaya, giving guests a panoramic view of Lake Suwa and, on a clear day, the Yatsugatake Mountains. There are also many different activities for children, including a jumbo slide, animal spring riders, novelty bicycles, and battery powered mini-cars. For people looking to get outside and be active, you can use the park's summer bobsled, rent bicycles, or play mallet golf. You can also rent out one of the several barbeque areas, so why not head up to the park to enjoy the autumn leaves and some good food with your family or friends!



HOW TO ENJOY AUTUMN

- ★Enjoy the shifting reds and yellows of the foliage as you take a walk underneath the leaves.
- ★Take a drive through the mountains and see how the colors change around you.
- ★Eat out at a restaurant or cafe where you can view the colors as you enjoy your meal.
- ★View the season's colors as you relax in an onsen.
- ★See how the fallen leaves dye the ground in vibrant shades of red and yellow.
- ★Take home a particularly beautiful leaf and use it as a bookmark.

Trees That Change Color

Trees with leaves that have a shorter lifespan (deciduous trees) will turn colors during autumn and then fall off during the winter months. Trees with leaves with a longer lifespan (non-deciduous or evergreen trees) do not change colors and do not lose their leaves during the winter.

Trees in the local area that change color:

Japanese maple, ginkgo, beech, cherry, and white birch trees

Trees that do not:

Pine, cedar, and cypress trees

Driver's Licensing

In order to drive a car in Japan, you will need a driver's license. If you applied for an international driver's license in your home country before coming to Japan, you can use it for one year after your arrival date. Before the validity period on your international license expires, you should apply for a Japanese license.

Foreign Driver's Licenses

★Driver's licenses from Switzerland, Germany, France, Taiwan, Belgium, Slovenia, and Monaco can be used as is for one year upon arrival in Japan. However, you must carry with you a Japanese translation of your license at all times. Translations can be acquired from consular services in your own country or from the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) in Japan.

Changing to a Japanese License

<Requirements>

- ★You must have had your foreign license for more than three months
- ★Your foreign driver's license must still be valid

<Where to go>

There are two locations within Nagano Prefecture where you can change a foreign license to a Japanese license: the Hokushin Driver's Licensing Center in Nagano City and the Chuushin Driver's Licensing Center in Shiojiri. All residents of Okaya and of the greater Suwa area should go to the Shiojiri center.

<Required Documents>

- ★Foreign driver's license
- ★Translation of foreign license into Japanese (Must be obtained from an embassy, consulate, or from JAF)
- ★Passport
- ★Proof of residence (Juminhyo じゅうみんひょう 住民票)
- ★A 2.5 by 3 cm photo

Note: Translations of foreign licenses can be obtained through JAF for 3900 yen. If you are applying via mail, an additional 290 yen charge will be applied.

Should all of your documents be deemed acceptable, you will be able to take the aptitude test, written test, and the practical driving skills test that same day.

If you have a license obtained in one of the following countries, you are exempt from the written and practical driving exams. You only need to take the aptitude check test.

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, or the states of Washington and Maryland in the United States.

<Aptitude Check>

- ★Eyesight test (Both eyes must be no more than a total deviation of 0.7 from the norm, and an individual eye must not be more than 0.3 from the norm. Corrective eyewear is allowed, but will be noted on your license.)
- ★Color test (Differentiating between red, yellow, and green)

<Written Exam>

You must sit a written exam to prove your knowledge of Japanese driving laws. You must score 7 out of 10 in order to pass. All questions are true or false.

※In addition to Japanese, the written exam is available in English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, and Persian.

<Practical Driving Exam>

If you pass the aptitude test and the written test, you will move on to the practical driving exam. Both automatic and manual cars are available for testing, but if you take the test in an automatic car, your license will only allow you to drive automatic vehicles. If you pass the exam in a manual transmission car, you will be covered for both manual and automatic vehicles.



If your address has changed

You must update your license when your address changes. Take your license and a form of identification that shows your new address (your residence card) to the main police station in your city or to a licensing center to update your address.

Shaken (Vehicle Inspection)

You must have your car inspected by a certified mechanic once a set period of time elapses, typically every two years.

Please contact your closest District Land Transport Bureau (*rikuunkyoku* りくうんきょく 陸運局)

- ★If you buy, sell, decommission or scrap a car
- ★If the registered owner changes address
- ★If the registered owner's name changes

Proof of Parking Space

When you register your car, you must provide a "Proof of Parking Space" to show that you have a space to store your vehicle. Please apply at your local police station.

Car Insurance

It is required by law that every car be insured with mandatory vehicle liability insurance. There is also additional voluntary insurance to protect against injury, etc. We recommend everyone takes out the additional voluntary insurance to protect themselves in case of an accident.

~ Easy Japanese Recipe ~

Eggplant is one of autumn's many delicious seasonal vegetables. Read our easy Japanese eggplant recipe below!

Ingredients:

10 eggplants	400cc water*	4 tbsp sugar*
1 pack of peppers	1 tbsp of dashi*	80cc mirin*
Cooking oil	100cc soy sauce*	Sesame seeds for garnish

Method:

- 1) Peel the skin from the eggplants in strips, leaving alternating stripes of the skin intact. Use a toothpick to make holes all over the surface of the eggplant, making it easier to cook.
- 2) Add the cooking oil to a pan and turn the stove on to medium heat. Pan fry the eggplant and peppers for about 3 minutes, turning occasionally.
- 3) Place the eggplant and peppers on a paper towel. While the oil is being absorbed, add all of the asterisked ingredients to a pot and place the mixture over medium heat. Add the eggplant and peppers to the mixture and simmer for about 15 minutes. Cut the heat and set aside until ready for serving.
- 4) Place eggplant in a dish and garnish with sesame seeds.



Japanese Classes Have Started!

The International Center hosts free Japanese classes twice a week. We host a morning class for people who are free during the day, and an evening class for those people who have work or school during the daytime. Please drop on by if you are looking to improve your Japanese

Morning Class

Day: Wednesdays **Time:** 9:30am~11:00am **Place:** International Center(Old City Hall) 1st Floor

Dates	10/11	10/18	10/25	11/8	11/15	11/22	11/29	12/6	12/13	12/20
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Evening Class

Day: Monday **Time:** 19:00pm~20:30pm **Place:** ILF Culture Plaza (3rd floor)

	10/16	10/23	10/30	11/6	11/13	11/20	11/27	12/4	12/11	12/18
Classroom	# 3 Kenkyu shitsu	# 3 Kenkyu shitsu	# 2 Kaigi shitsu	# 3 Kenkyu shitsu	# 3 Kenkyu shitsu	# 2 Kaigi shitsu	# 2 Kaigi shitsu	# 2 Kaigi shitsu	# 2 Kaigi shitsu	# 2 Kaigi shitsu

