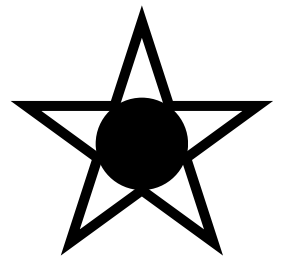


ASAHIKAWA INFO



September 2024 , Volume 334

Upcoming Events

Upcoming events and activities in Asahikawa and around Hokkaido

Events by the Asahikawa International Center

FUN Friday



Fun Fridays



Interesting activities such as quizzes, discussions, songs, games, handicrafts and much more, all in English! Come meet new people, relax and relate on Fun Friday!

Registration Open: 9/20/2024 (Friday)

Please register **on the registration open date** by scanning the QR Code or contacting our center: (0166)25-7491

Dates: Oct. 11th & 25th, Nov. 8th & 22nd, Dec. 13th & 27th

Times: 13:00pm-14:00pm ~Afternoon~ 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
18:30-20:30pm ~Evening~ 2nd Friday of the month

Location: Asahikawa International Center, Common Meeting Room (1)
(Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome)

Charge: ¥1,500 for 3 months (**Free for volunteer leaders**)

Friendship Party : Multicultural Exchange



Meet both the local and international residents of Asahikawa! Communication will be primarily in Japanese and English, but other languages are also welcome!

Registration Open: 9/20/2024 (Friday)

Please register **on the registration open date** by scanning the QR Code or contacting our center: (0166)25-7491

Dates: 10/5 (Saturday)

Times: 13:30-15:00

Location: Asahikawa International Center, Lounge
(Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome)



Guide



Events in Asahikawa



Events by Asahikawa International Center

Inside this issue...

- 01 Upcoming Events
- 03 Life in Asahikawa
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- 06..... A Baby Boomer Learns English
- 10..... Asahikawa Eats

Check out our website and social media for information regarding the center or any upcoming events!



For further information or to register for events, contact:

Asahikawa International Committee (AIC)(ISHIBE Satoko)
or Coordinator for International Relations (CIR)
(MABILANGAN John)

Address: Asahikawa International Center Feeeal 7F,
1-jo-dori 8-chome, Asahikawa 070-0031

Tel: (0166) 25-7491

Fax: (0166) 23-4924

Email: cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.lg.jp

Website:<http://asahikawaic.jp/en/>



Upcoming Events

Upcoming events and activities in Asahikawa and around Hokkaido

Sapporo Autumn Fest さっぽろオータムフェスト

Food and ingredients from all over Hokkaido come to Odori Park for the month of September!

Event Details

Date: 9/6 (Fri)~9/29(Sun)

Time: 10:00~20:30

Location: Odori Park, Sapporo

Scan the QR Code for details (in Japanese)



Japanese Conversation with Locals

旭川市民との日本語会話

Practice your Japanese and get some learning tips from native speakers!

Event Details

Date: 9/7 (Sat)

Time: 15:00- 16:00 (arrive 15 min before start)

Location: Asahikawa International Center

Feeaal 7F 1-Jodori 8-Chome

For Registration: 0166-25-7491

旭



Hakodate Gourmet Circus

はこだてグルメサーカス

Food and ingredients from all over Japan and the world can be found right at Hakodate's Gourmet Circus.

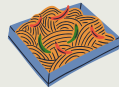
Event Details

Date: 9/7 (Sat)~9/8(Sun)

Time: 10:00~17:00 (concludes at 16:00 on 9/8)

Location: Hakodate Station Area

Scan the QR Code for details (in Japanese)



Blessings of the North: Tabemarche Food Festival

北の恵み：食ベマルシェ

Taste the flavors of northern Hokkaido through Asahikawa's renown Tabemarche Food Festival!

Event Details

Date: 9/14 (Sat)~9/16 (Mon)

Time: 10:00~18:00

(concludes at 17:00 on 9/16)

Location: Asahikawa Station, Heiwa-Dori Shopping Street, 7-Jo Ryoku-Do

Scan the QR Code for details (in Japanese)



旭



September 2024 Calendar EVENTS IN ASAHIKAWA

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6 Start of Sapporo Autumn Fest	7 Japanese Conversation with Locals
8	9	10	11	12	13 FUN FRIDAY	14 Blessings of the North: Tabemarche Food Festival
15 Blessings of the North: Tabemarche Food Festival	16 Holiday	17	18	19	20 Registration Open 1) Fall Fun Friday 2) Fall Friendship Party	21
22	23 Holiday	24	25	26	27 FUN FRIDAY	28
29 End of Sapporo Autumn Fest	30					

Life in Asahikawa

Staying Fit Through City Gymnasiums

Written by John Mabilangan

Throughout the city, Asahikawa offers a wide range of community centers and gymnasiums accessible to the public. These facilities provide various sports activities, including badminton, volleyball, jogging courses, and race tracks, all at affordable rates. You can enjoy your exercise routine while engaging with the local community.



Gymnasiums Downtown and Surrounding Areas

Facility (Address & Contact)	Available Sports	Website QR Code
Facility: Dohoku Arcs Taisetsu Arena Address: Kagura 4 jo 7 chome 1-52 Phone: 0166-61-9952	Badminton, mini-volleyball, futsal, basketball, jogging	
Facility: Taisei Civic Center Gymnasium Address: 6-jodori 14-chome-64 Phone: 0166-23-7785	Badminton and ping-pong	
Facility: Recruit & Staffing Gymnasium (Asahikawa Municipal Gymnasium) Address: Hanasakicho 5-chome Phone: 0166-54-5411	Badminton, ping-pong, volleyball, soft-volleyball, mini-volleyball, gymnastics, and other recreational martial arts	
Facility: Chikabumi Civic Fureai Center Gymnasium Address: Chikabumicho 15-chome Phone: 0166-55-320	Swimming, badminton, volleyball, mini-volleyball, basketball.. etc. (multi-purpose gymnasium)	

Certain facilities charge a usage fee ranging from ¥150 to ¥750 for day use, depending on the season and activity. However, many of these facilities offer multi-use tickets for frequent visitors, which are generally more cost-effective than single-day tickets. Additionally, some facilities provide equipment rentals at affordable prices.

To access a comprehensive list of facilities in Asahikawa or for more information regarding sports facilities, please access the website below or the department in charge. (Japanese).

Sports Promotion Division, Asahikawa Sports and Tourism Department.

Website: <https://www.city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp/kurashi/329/338/347/d053991.html>

Phone: 0166-23-1944

Address: 6-jodori 10-chome (3rd City Hall Office)



An Ode to Food

Part 1: The Sweet & Salty Combinations of the US

Written by Jovana Maksimović



Left: Chicken & Waffles. Top Right: Caramel & Cheddar Cheese Popcorn.
Bottom Left: Chicago-style Hot Dogs

Many expats that I crossed paths with often miss specific products, candy or chocolates, cookies, salad dressing, chips or things from fast food chains. Meanwhile, I grimace and wonder why they miss it. Growing up in the US, you would think I would crave heaps of products. However, as a rule of thumb, my father once advised me that anything with high fructose corn syrup, added sugar, or concentrate was not good for my health. To further enforce this rule, very few sugary food items were purchased when we went grocery shopping. When my brother and I wanted something sweet, we made desserts with our mother. If we needed meat or cheese, it was from the butcher or cheese shop, respectively. If my parents needed to thicken a sauce for a meal, they used flour instead of industrial thickeners. Soup and mashed potatoes were from scratch, not from a bag.

My parents, who were once cooks professionally, could have written an entire book of rules I found strange growing up. Have a bowl of soup before your meal because it's good for the intestines. Beverages (mainly water) should be drunk before or after meals to prevent the stomach from getting too full. Eat your green vegetables as they help with digestion and lower constipation. Always pick whole fruit over juice because the fruit still has fibre. However much my brother and I disliked certain foods, we weren't allowed to leave the table until we finished eating. If, by some miracle, we were allowed to leave, that same meal waited for us later.

My parents explained that if ever we were in a country with curious food choices, we should be able to eat them. Guess who adores eating natto? This one does.

I genuinely enjoyed the taste of my parents' cooking, and I was a strange child who often craved vegetables. I ate everything under the sun, not because it was always tasty but because I liked the mouthfeel. Beyond my home life, most candies had a strange texture, much like soft melted plastic that stuck to the roof of my mouth. Over-processed food had so much sugar, salt, or both that I

felt it scratch at my throat when I had too much. In certain restaurants, the excess of artificial MSG was so common that I knew its flavour profile. My own rule to my parents' mental book of nutritional regulations was: if something needs to have a lot of additional MSG, it isn't cooked well and not worth eating.

When I think of American food, sweet and salty foods combined come to mind. It isn't unusual to have sweet cranberry sauce on the Thanksgiving turkey or fried chicken with sweet peach cobbler and coleslaw salad as joint side dishes. Once, out of curiosity, I tried a burger whose buns were doughnuts; not one doughnut cut in half, but two whole doughnuts with a meat patty and toppings between them. Of course I had junk food with friends, but it was never compulsive. It was easy to avoid when almost everything about my home life was fresh produce and home-cooked meals. Again, if it were good, I wouldn't need something overly sweet to balance out the overly salt, or vice-versa.

However, that isn't to say that all the food I had access to in the US was garbage. There are hidden regional gems worth tasting and learning to make, like New England's crab cakes and clam chowder, or Southern soul food and gumbo. Hot dogs and bagels vary regionally and can have both fibrous and pickled toppings. Tangy key lime pie from the Florida Keys gets my taste buds singing just thinking about a slice. Mac and cheese from scratch is heavenly when prepared with a good mix of cheeses. Speaking of cheese, Chicago may be well-known for its deep-dish pizza, but the caramel and cheddar cheese popcorn is what I miss from the Windy City.

In the US, I also had the chance to experience everything else. Many of my friends and their parents were first-generation immigrants who invited me to try their home cooking. I was exposed to quesadillas, enchiladas, and molé thanks to a friend whose family was from Mexico. A close friend across the alley always had Puerto Rican rice and skirt steak when her family had get-togethers. Another friend from Korea often served me a bowl of rice with kimchi, which I have adored ever since middle school. A Polish friend of mine was interested in Japanese food, so we often had udon, ramen, katsu curry, and many other products from the Japanese supermarket and its restaurants. Strawberry Pocky was my preferred snack throughout my high school years. Later, as a young adult, I dove into ceviche, looked out for delicious, creamy hummus with crispy falafel and sought out the best taro root bubble tea in and around Chinatown.

As I had mentioned, there are not many foods that I miss from the US. The primary reason is that I learnt to make what I was craving. However, there is one chain of cafés in the US whose food still gets my appetite going to this day. It is Native Foods Café, which excels at vegan food. I know. How ironic to see a Serb in a vegan café. But that was where I went when I had the itch for veggies and plant-based protein. It was addictive in the best possible way. Since vegan food comes from plant-based sources, the traditional cooking methods that use fat, meat and dairy for sauces are out the window. This café made brilliant dishes that remained light, filling and flavourful. Had I stayed in the US, I would have happily become something close to a vegan. I would have been something closer to a pescatarian seeing as I love fish, honey and my vintage leather jacket.

A Baby Boomer Learns English

Episode 5: Getting Acquainted with Neighbors (1991)

Written by Noriaki Gentsu



With Jutta at The Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen, Hannover (1992)

(Continued from Episode 4)

Introduction

In the spring of 1991, I moved to an apartment in Lehrte, a small town near Hannover (the capital city of the German state, Lower Saxony) where I was fortunate to integrate in an authentic German community where I would live until I moved back to Japan in 1996. I will reflect on the things I learned from such a new environment.

Movements (1990-1991)

Towards the end of 1990, a new building for our development center, a base for my main mission, was completed. I wrapped up our temporary office in Osterode and started working in a new office in Peine. Unable to decide where to live next, I drove 110km to and from the new office every workday. What made it challenging was the exceptionally heavy snowfall that winter.

In spring 1991, I moved to a new apartment building in Lehrte. It was ideally located 26 km to Hannover Langenhagen Airport and 20 km from our Peine office. The building was a seven-story structure that housed an authentic

German community of about 30 households with a variety of people. It was the perfect environment to brush up my German.

Furthermore, there was a personal connection between me and the owners, an elderly couple, who were moving to a nursing facility in Lindau. The kind couple had left all their furniture in excellent condition for me.

Meeting Jutta Kühnau (1991)

One spring afternoon in 1991, shortly after I moved into the apartment, a lady was waiting for the elevator in the entrance when she spoke to me in English with a strong German accent. She asked if I was from Japan and if I could speak with her grandson some time, Oliver, who was very interested in Japan. Her name was Jutta (pronounced like “YOO-tah”). That was the beginning of our friendship.

As I think back, that was a key moment when I met someone I could trust and rely on while living in a foreign country and community.

Summer Party (1991)

Sometime later, Jutta strongly recommended me to join a summer party for the building. One weekend afternoon in June 1991, many tenants of our apartment building in Lehrte were all busy preparing for the party (called a "Hausfest" in German) which was held at the backyard that evening.

The party began around 6 p.m. and went on with beers and spiced grilled meats; people sat around several tables scattered on the backyard lawn. It was the perfect opportunity to use my German. Moving from table to table, I answered mostly the same questions: about Japan, my family, what I did in Japan and what I was doing in Germany.

I tried to find a common ground with people from my father's generation by telling them stories about his army experience. I told them that my father was in the army but did not fight in the front lines because of an illness found during his training period. Once I shared my father's story, other people from the party began sharing their own wartime stories.

When people finished their meals, the party went on with only beers and talking. They gave me "Schnapps", a German alcoholic spirit, which they said would warm up our stomach to accept more cold beer. Only a few people including myself sat there until 2 a.m. I would later hear that it lasted until 4 in the morning. They said they would only call it a party if they stayed up past midnight. How different from Japan!

At the end of the day, I learned a few things while I was there:

Firstly, socializing in parties only needs a limited number of expressions and topics. Locals come to me generally asking the same kind of questions: about family, hobbies, work, funny stories and Japan. I would ask them the same in return, which made us closer by extending our conversation.

Secondly, speaking the local language means to pay respect to the country you visit and a

key to get respect from the local people in return. This is what can help separate you from a tourist.

Thirdly, remembering the names of the people I meet can make us closer to each other. It was hard, but I made efforts doing so. One thing I did before business meetings was to remember them using business cards I received from them.

With every summer party there, I got acquainted with new neighbors and further developed our relationship.

Learning from Jutta (1991)

My neighbor and friend Jutta lived on the 5th floor. One day she invited me for supper and served me with a dish she called "armes Brot," which means "bread for the poor" in German. She knew I was expecting something warm. She taught me the German standard of daily meals: "Eat breakfast like a king, eat lunch like a noble, eat supper like a beggar." This explanation clarified my question about why German breakfasts are so hearty, a question that had puzzled me for a whole year since my first days in Osterode am Harz at Pension Börgener.

However, I must say the supper Jutta served me was great: a slice of German rye bread which was a bit sour and hard with a thick spread of fresh butter, topped with sliced cheese and high-quality ham. She used a knife and fork to elegantly eat it bit by bit, and there was a fresh coffee to complement the bread. She said, "Oh, I can't live without this coffee!" as she looked me smiling.

She knew I preferred "Brötchen," a small round bread roll. She taught me how to use a knife to cut it horizontally at the equator, creating an opening like a crevasse where butter and ham could be added.

Sometimes during the evening, she would tell me more personal stories like:

When she was living in Leipzig, she was married to a doctor. After the end of the war, she escaped to West Germany with their

infant daughter, Sylvia. When she was in the forest and stopped by Soviet soldiers at the border line. There, she pleaded for them to let her go, and the kind soldier did so. She didn't tell me if she was alone or with her husband then.

Whenever I was invited to her birthday parties at a restaurant in Burgdorf, a small town near Lehrte, I would meet some of her friends. I didn't ask them for details, but I had the impression that they had either escaped from the East together or had settled in the same community after their escape. Being with them, I felt an exclusive, unique, and united atmosphere.

One afternoon on her birthday, when I briefly greeted her, she was completely absorbed in calling her friends who had sent her birthday cards. She used a pencil to dial, poking it into each hole of the rotary dial to protect her freshly manicured red nails. I asked her, "Are you calling everyone who sent you a card? I'll make sure to send a card in return next time." She replied, "You need to take care of your friendships regularly, just like how you water your flowers."

Her advised touched me, and I have made it my practice to keep in touch with the friends I made, if not all of them. This practice brings a small but significant joy in my retired life in such a remote village.

Another time, she told me how much she enjoyed her life in Spain after her husband's retirement. Knowing I learned Spanish a little, she would speak in Spanish during our conversations such as "Muchas gracias" and "De nada", meaning "Thank you very much" and "You're welcome", respectively. She would often look back at their beautiful days in Spain.

More importantly, she often said to me, "Make a lot of beautiful memories with your wife and family. You can live with memories when you get older and alone." I nodded and said, "Yes, of course!" Even to this day I take her advice seriously.

As mentioned, my life in Lehrte had a good start. Jutta taught me things. My life would further carry on in Germany and Europe not only involving my family, Jutta's family, and her friends but also develop my thoughts on the region's culture and history.

To be continued...



Marks from top left for Hannover Airport, Burgdorf, Lehrte, Peine and Osterode am Harz. (Source: Google Maps)



New Town Hall (Hannover)



Jutta's room (left) and her supper arrangement (right)



When Jutta took me to a wedding of a neighborhood couple (1991)

Asahikawa Eats

旭川グルメ

A series of local restaurants and cafes to try in Asahikawa**

By John Daniel Mabilangan

Rendez-Vous Diner

ランデブーダイナー

Location: 4-jo-dori 11-chome-2330-2 Makita Building, Asahikawa

Price: ¥

Genre: Western

Notes: Rendez-Vous Diner is a nice local restaurant several blocks from city hall. This restaurant had a very homie feel with a very distinct 80s~90s vibe atmosphere. They had a wide variety of dishes; specializing in pastas and curry. The hamburger rice curry was just the right amount of spiciness and all their curry dishes had the option of adding additional toppings for customization.



Musashi no Mori Coffee

むさしの森珈琲

Location: 7-jo-dori 18-chome 92-10 , Asahikawa

Price: ¥ ¥

Genre: Cafe, casual meals

Notes: Several blocks from Yojou Station (四条駅) is Musashi no Mori Coffee. This cafe is known for its customizable Japanese-style pancakes which come with a variety of toppings you can freely add to match your preference. Although they are known for their pancakes, their cakes are just as delicious. The matcha chiffon cake was simple and creamy and goes well with a nice cup of coffee or tea.

Bep Viet Lê Phuong

レフウオンのベトナム料理

Location: Miyamaeshita-dori 7 chome 3897

Ekimae Building , Asahikawa

Price: ¥

Genre: Vietnamese

Notes: Right across from Aeon Mall is the Ekimae Building, which houses the Bep Viet Le Phuong Vietnamese Restaurant. As the only Vietnamese restaurant downtown, it is currently the sole place in the city where one can experience Vietnamese cuisine. The restaurant offers several well-known Vietnamese dishes but for first-timers, the chicken pho is an excellent choice. Their chicken pho is overflowing with flavor and makes a refreshing lunch.



Horumon Asahikichi

ホルモン朝吉

Location: Kamui 4-jo 10-chome 3-5, Asahikawa

Price: ¥ ¥

Genre: Japanese BBQ;

Notes: Horumon Asakichi is a short drive from downtown. The rustic yet simple style of the restaurant makes you feel right at home. It offers high-quality meats at very reasonable prices. In addition to its wide variety of meats, the restaurant features a plethora of side dishes, from kimchi to homemade spicy soup. Due to its popularity among locals, there is often a wait to dine.

Asahikawa Eats

旭川グルメ

A series of local restaurants and cafes to try in Asahikawa**

By John Daniel Mabilangan

Mabuhay Philippines Asahikawa マブハイフィリピンあさひかわ

Location: Chuwa 4-jo 6-chome 1-15, Asahikawa

Price: ¥ ¥

Genre: Filipino

Notes: Mabuhay Philippines Asahikawa is a Filipino restaurant and karaoke bar in Chuwa that serves authentic Filipino dishes, from sinigang (tamarind soup) to dinuguan (pork blood stew). They offer a buffet once a week for ¥2,000, which lasts for 60 minutes and allows you to sample a variety of classic Filipino dishes at one set price.



Claps Diner

クラップスダイナー

Location: Minami 6-jo-dori 17-chome 2-ban 2-go

Price: ¥

Genre: Hamburgers

Notes: This burger restaurant is a short walk from downtown and offers juicy burgers at a great price! Claps Diner truly has a strong American atmosphere with a classic diner menu. Not only can you build your own burger, but there are also side options like waffles and chili fries, as well as an American-style banana split sundae for a complete American experience.

Fire Burg

ファイヤーバーグ 旭川宮前店

Location: Miyamae 1-jo 4-chome 12 chome 3897

Ekimae Building, Asahikawa

Price: ¥ ¥

Genre: Hamburger steak

Notes: Not too far from Miyamae Park is Fire Burg, which offers a wide selection of juicy hamburger steaks, as well as fried chicken and Sapporo zangi. Similar to Bikkuri Donkey, Fire Burg provides various size options for their hamburger steaks, along with a generous choice of sides and other options, all at a reasonable price!



VII Cafe

VII カフェ

Location: 3-jo-dori 7-421, Asahikawa

Price: ¥ ¥

Genre: Cat Cafe;

Notes: This cat cafe is hidden in an alley-way at the middle of downtown. In addition its kind feline employees, the cafe has a delicious assortment of food and drinks to enjoy. One of their signature menu items are its parfaits that is filled with fruits to the brim. The fresh berries, ice cream, whipped cream, and cake make an excellent combination to satiate the strongest of sweet cravings.

AIC BULLETIN BOARD



Need Assistance?

If you ever find yourself in need of assistance, know that the Hokkaido Foreign Resident Support Center is there for you! They are able to provide you with consultation services in various languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Russian, Indonesian, Thai, Nepalese, Burmese) on residence procedures, employment, medical care, welfare, childbirth, childcare, education, and more for FREE! Call them at **0116-200-9595** or go to: www.hiecc.or.jp/soudan

Come to the Asahikawa International Lounge! We have...

a free cultural exchange lounge and study space



library with book and DVD rentals



The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free Wi-Fi available for public use. If you reside in Asahikawa, registration for a user card is required. Please feel free to come by anytime, as well as check out some of the other services and activities available at the Asahikawa International Center!

Spread the Word!

Contribute to the AIC newsletter and share any interesting information you may have with other readers. You may write on any topic including: items to buy/shell, offers for culture/language exchange, or write an essay about your life in Asahikawa or your hometown. The article should not be profit-related! Please send your submissions to us at the AIC.

The AIC offers many services to make your life in Asahikawa more enjoyable. Here are just a few:

Volunteer Guide: Volunteers are registered to help translate and interpret.

Event Volunteer: The AIC plans many exciting events throughout the year, such as Friendship Parties.

Homestay: Families are registered to welcome you into their homes for an overnight stay or just an afternoon visit.

Why not become a volunteer and help plan these events?



Asahikawa International Committee
 Asahikawa International Center Feeeal Asahikawa 7F, 1-jo-dori 8-chome, Asahikawa 070-0031
 TEL: (0166)25-7491 FAX: (0166)23-4924
 E-mail: cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp

Follow us on social media for latest updates and upcoming events!

X (formerly twitter)



Facebook



Instagram



The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AIC or the City of Asahikawa.