

Edited and issued bimonthly by FUKUOKA CITY INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
Fukuoka City International Center 4-1 Tenyamachi, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City
TEL: 092-262-1799 <http://www.fcif.or.jp>

FCIC Office is open on weekdays 8:45~18:00



公益財団法人
福岡よかトピア国際交流財団
Fukuoka City International Foundation



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



Happy New Year! According to the Chinese zodiac, 2021 is the year of the cow.

Since the spring of 2020, many people have been unable to travel back to their home country or meet friends as in the past due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when many still feel concerned about the future, it's a good idea to take steps to eat nourishing food and keep yourself warm so that you don't catch a cold during the winter! Let's make 2021 a great year.

Fukuoka, which is home to numerous delicious foods, is famous for hotpot cuisine, and the city is considered the birthplace of dishes known as *motsu-nabe* and *mizutaki*, which have become popular nationwide. Eating hotpot dishes to warm up during the winter is a great way to boost your immune system.



2021

Warm yourself up with Hakata hotpot and noodle dishes!

Motsu-nabe

Motsu-nabe is prepared by boiling beef giblets with plenty of cabbage and Chinese leeks. The dish, which usually contains flavorful spices like garlic and red pepper, is a popular choice when you want to energize yourself. Different shops serve it with different soup flavors, including soy sauce, miso, and salt, and many people add *champon* noodles after they've finished eating the giblets, vegetables, and other ingredients.

The giblets in the dish are rich in vitamins and collagen, which makes it particularly popular among women. Supermarkets and other stores often sell sets with all the ingredients you'll need, so you can even make it at home! Eat lots of vegetables and giblets to boost your stamina!



Mizutaki

Mizutaki, or unthickened stew, is made by stewing big chunks of chicken meat with vegetables, tofu, and other ingredients. As a rule, pieces of bone-in chicken meat are stewed in water to which no seasonings have been added, which provides the basis for the dish's name in Japanese, which means literally "boiled in water." It's typical to dip ingredients in ponzu sauce once the dish is fully cooked, and to add udon noodles or rice once you've eaten the ingredients to make *zōsui*, a porridge containing rice and vegetables. The big chunks of chicken in *mizutaki* are rich in collagen, and it's said that you can expect to see skin-beautifying effects the day after you enjoy the dish. Healthy and beauty-enhancing, *mizutaki* is a hit with women. You can buy soup for preparing *mizutaki* at supermarkets and other stores, so it's easy to prepare and enjoy at home.



Noodles Udon & Ramen

When it comes to noodle dishes, Fukuoka is most closely associated with Hakata ramen, but in fact, the city is also known for its udon noodles. A survey that asked people in Fukuoka whether they prefer ramen or udon found that most expressed a preference for udon; while the association of Fukuoka with ramen is well established nationwide, most locals actually prefer udon.



One theory holds that udon was invented in Fukuoka, and you'll find plenty of udon shops in the city. Fukuoka udon noodles are characteristically soft and lack firmness, and the most popular topping in Fukuoka—burdock root tempura (*gobōten*)—is considerably less popular elsewhere. There's nothing like burdock root tempura udon on a cold winter's day!

Ramen in Fukuoka means Hakata *tonkotsu* (pig bone) ramen. The dish has become extremely popular overseas in recent years, but in Fukuoka, you can enjoy the dish where it was invented. There's quite a bit of variety; you could pay anywhere from less than 500 yen to more than 1,000 yen. Be sure to find a ramen shop that suits your taste while you're living in Fukuoka.



Photos provided by Fukuoka City

Events and holidays in January and February

Monday, January 11: Coming-of-age Day (public holiday)
 Wednesday, February 3: Setsubun Day
 Thursday, February 11: National Foundation Day (public holiday)
 Sunday, February 14: Valentine's Day
 Tuesday, February 23: Emperor's Birthday (public holiday)

Hakata-ben series *Sūsū suru*

The winter season has come, but this year, we've got to ventilate indoor spaces due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This article introduces one Hakata-ben expression that you're likely to hear when doing so.

"*Sūsū suru*"

The first time you hear this expression, you might find yourself wondering, "What's 'sū' mean?" *Sūsū* is a local word signifying the feeling of cold created by wind blowing through a gap, or a general sense of feeling chilled. Have you ever heard someone refer to the feeling in their nose when they chew mint-flavored gum as "*Sūtto suru*"? Some people repeat the *sū* sound several times, saying "*sūsūsū*" instead of "*sūsū suru*."

Usage:

"*Kono heya sūsū suru*" ("The wind in this room is making it cold.")
 "*Kyō wa sūsū suru ne*" ("Today it's windy and cold.")

Be sure to try using the expression "*sūsū suru*" during this winter season! We'll have another Hakata-ben expression for you next time!

Setsubun Festivals

February 2nd is setsubun, the traditional end of winter. The word setsubun in Japanese originally had the meaning of "dividing the seasons." Under the traditional calendar, the first day of spring was New Year's Day, and setsubun fell on New Year's Eve.

Why do people throw beans on Setsubun Day?

Reflecting the widespread belief that people were particularly susceptible to catching a cold when the seasons changed, setsubun was the occasion for a ceremony, known as Tsuina, in which people wearing demon masks were chased with a bow and arrow to symbolize the driving out of misfortune and bad luck. That ceremony is considered to have been the origin of the bean-throwing ritual.



Did you know?



The beans used in the bean-throwing ritual must be roasted. That's because it would be considered bad luck if any raw beans that went uncollected were to sprout.

This year, the annual Setsubun Festivals held at Shinto shrines and other locations may end up being canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Why not buy some beans yourself and drive misfortune from your home by staging your own bean-throwing ritual?

NOTICE

Notice of temporary closure of the Fukuoka City Museum

The Fukuoka City Museum, which marked the 30th anniversary of its opening last October, will be closed through March for renovations. The museum continues to make various resources available online, so please enjoy those until the end of March.

TAX RETURN

In Japan, income tax is based on a self-assessment system. In the final tax return, each taxpayer settles totally the income amount earned for a calendar year and calculates the tax amount to be paid with respect to the total amount of income, and then files his/her income tax return. If you are required to file a tax return for 2020, submit your application between February 16th and March 15th.

Please refer to the following website:

<https://www.nta.go.jp/taxes/shiraberu/shinkoku/kakutei.htm>

Fish that have different names as they grow?!

Have you ever heard the word shusseuo? It's not the name of a fish, but rather refers to fish whose names change depending on their size. In Japan, the names of some fish also vary by region.

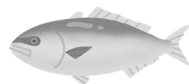
A representative example is the buri, or yellowtail, which in Fukuoka is often used in rice cake soup. This article introduces the various names used to refer to the yellowtail.

Mojako (fry) → wakashi (length of 10 to 30 cm) → inada (30 to 60 cm) → hamachi (60 to 80 cm) → buri (80+ cm)

Fish whose names change as they grow are known as shusseuo. The sequence of names shown above is used in the Kansai region, but the Kanto region and Kyushu use different names:

Kanto: Wakashi → inada → warasa → buri

Kyushu: Wakanago → yazu → hamachi → mejiro or koburi → buri



How to make Hakata rice cake soup (Hakata Zoni)

Rice cake soup, or zōni, is an essential part of New Year's dining, but the ingredients and soup flavor vary by region. Buri (yellowtail) is a fixture in Hakata rice cake soup. Below is an easy way to prepare this delicious dish!

Ingredients (serves about two)

Slices of yellowtail (2)
 Katsuona (a leafy vegetable) (1/4 leaf)
 Boiled fish paste (2 slices)
 Round pieces of mochi (2 pieces)
 As desired: Carrots, shiitake mushrooms, taro

Seasonings

Lightly flavored soy sauce (1 teaspoon)
 Sweet sake (1 teaspoon)
 Soup stock (1 pouch)
 Water (400 to 500 mL)



Directions

1. Cut the katsuona leaf to a width of 3 cm and boil.
2. Sprinkle salt on the yellowtail and pour boiling water over it.
3. Pour water into pan and bring to a boil. Add the soup stock and other seasonings.
4. Grill the mochi or boil it until it softens. Add the ingredients to the soup and seasonings and heat. Pour into bowls and serve.



Dr.Nishiyama's Column Tick-borne diseases



There are many kinds of ticks in the natural world. Some of them transmit pathogens of fatal diseases. Originally, such infectious agents are carried by wild animal hosts. The ticks which suck the blood of infected animal in turn transmit the pathogen to humans. Entering into the woods in warm seasons by farm work or hiking, we are at the risk to be bitten by the ticks lurking in the grasses. To avoid the bites of ticks, one has to wear long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, and long boots. The use of bug-repellent is recommended.

As ticks are tiny in size, one can hardly know their presence on the body, until they become sufficiently big after sucking blood. The best way is to take a bath shortly after returning home to look for stings in the neck, arm-pits, groin and the back of knees. Ticks attached firmly to the skin sucking the blood, and trying to remove them by nail all the more leaves the mouth of ticks in the skin. That facilitates the infection of pathogen from the ticks. At a clinic, the mouth of ticks can be eradicated by use of special tweezers.

The victim bitten by the ticks usually feel nothing. Ticks suck the blood even

for long days, while they transmit the infectious pathogen. After several days of latent period. The patient may develop fever, skin rash, and falls into sometimes fatal diseases.

Well-known diseases transmitted by ticks are Rocky Mountain spotted fever, relapsing fever, tularemia, and Q-fever. Also, the following three diseases have attracted attention recent years.

SFTS: Severe Fever and Thrombocytopenia Syndrome of viral infection. 1 to 2 weeks after the tick-bites, one develops fever and headache, and diarrhea just like influenza. Characteristic skin lesions then appear. Some show liver dysfunction. Examination shows reduced count of white blood cells and platelets. The patient will show the central nerve symptoms like seizure or consciousness disturbance, and eventually die. Diagnosis can be made by PCR or antibody tests for the virus. So far, there have been no effective remedies, but anti-Ebola virus agent Avigan has only recently been introduced into clinical trials.

Scrub Typhus (Tsutsugamushi disease) of Rickettsial infection. One or two

weeks after the bites of larval ticks, one develops high fever, headache, nausea, and lymphnode swelling. The tick-sting is found in the skin, as a red swelling with a black cap in the center. Reduced white blood cell and platelet count is noted. Doxycycline is used without delay when this disease is suspected. If the proper treatment is delayed, the patient will fall into respiratory and hepatic failure, and fatal DIC (disseminated intravascular coagulation).

Lyme disease of bacterial infection. This disease caused by tick-bites has a long chronic course of years. And the symptoms range from skin, eyes, or heart. Shortly after the tick-bites, or long after a month, a large characteristic skin lesion (red ring) appears. Later, muscle, joint problems and various neurological symptoms become obvious. Doxycycline is the treatment of choice. If a physician hears that the patient with unknown fever and skin rash walked in the field or mountains, then the physician notices and thinks of tick-carried diseases.

Exemption and payment postponement programs for National Pension contributions

People aged 20 to 59 who live in Japan are required to join and pay into Japan's public pension program. If you find it difficult to continue making payments because you've lost your job or your income has fallen, be sure to take advantage of the exemption program instead of simply not paying.

Pension insurance isn't just something you receive in the future. If you leave your premiums unpaid, you may not be eligible to receive a disability pension in the event you suffer disability due to illness or an accident.

• Temporary special exemptions

If you find it difficult to pay your premiums because your income has fallen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you can apply for a temporary special exemption from premium payment by filing a written statement of your income.



To qualify for this exemption, you must satisfy the following two conditions:

Your income must have fallen during or after February 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your anticipated 2020 income*1 based on your income during and after February 2020 must fall under a certain level as defined by the program.

*1: Calculated by converting your lowest monthly income during or after February 2020 to an annual (12-month) equivalent.

*There's a similar program specifically for students.

For more information, please contact the National Pension Plan desk at your village, town, ward, or city office, or your local National Pension Office.

You can download the application and income statement from the Japan Pension Service website (<http://www.nenkin.go.jp>)

Bringing MEAT Products into Japan is prohibited !

It's illegal to import most meat products into Japan.

Please refrain from illegally bringing meat and other livestock products from overseas into Japan. Doing so is punishable by up to three years in prison or a fine of up to 3 million yen (for corporations, up to 50 million yen). This includes meat products sent by international mail or shipping services.



Countries around the world are currently experiencing virulent livestock disease outbreaks such as foot-and-mouth disease and African swine fever. Should these diseases reach Japan, they could not only cause great harm to Japan's livestock industry, but also adversely impact socioeconomic activities in the affected region.

In fact, the African swine fever virus has been found in meat products brought into Japan by travelers, and there is increasing risk that livestock pathogens will reach Japan.

On July 1, 2020, Japan introduced stricter penalties for illegally bringing meat products into the country from overseas. Those measure are being accompanied by stepped-up monitoring of attempts to bring illegal meat products into the country in luggage or via international mail, for example by increasing the number of sniffer dogs used in plant and animal health inspections. Remember: It's illegal to bring meat products into Japan, even as souvenirs or for personal consumption. Please refer to the website for more information.



HALLOWEEN Event at Fukuoka City International Center



Did you enjoy Halloween? Working with the JICA Fukuoka Desk, Fukuoka City International Foundation held a "Happy Halloween" event for children on October 30. Steps were taken to ensure the event would be fun and safe and to prevent the spread of the virus, for example by placing disinfection stations at the two entrances and dividing the space to prevent close contact.



This year, the Foundation planned a fun event that included costumes, drawing, making badges, taking photographs, and handing out candy. Let's take a look...

Executive Director Inoue joined staff members in dressing up in traditional folk clothing as well as witch, Count Dracula, nun, Super Mario, and Wally costumes, bringing smiles to the children's faces. Staff members took commemorative pictures with residents of the dorm upstairs and their family members, and everyone enjoyed a heightened level of fellowship thanks to the unusual ambience.



Children from local international kindergartens and nursery schools participated by wearing cute costumes and had a great time drawing pictures and trying on various costumes. At a time when community gatherings have been few and far between due to the pandemic, these kids' smiles signal the beginning of international exchanges in our community.

At the badge-making event at the JICA Fukuoka Desk on the fourth floor, children's eyes glittered with joy as they showed off their creations.

Seeing little kids receiving candy in their tiny, outstretched hands and children going home while peeking intently into bags of candy to see what they contained brought smiles to our faces.

This small exchange event at the Foundation turned into a great opportunity to experience the true meaning of international exchange in our community, and it will inspire our work going forward.



Let's learn foreign languages (Hindi and Indonesian) from home!

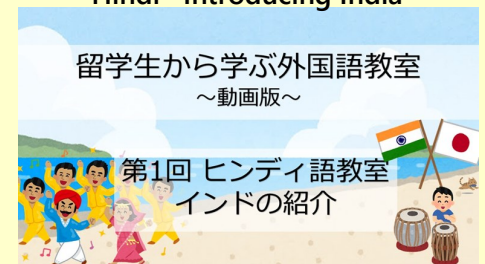


"Learning Foreign Languages from International Students" videos for Hindi and Indonesian languages are available online! You can learn foreign languages, culture and customs through the videos!

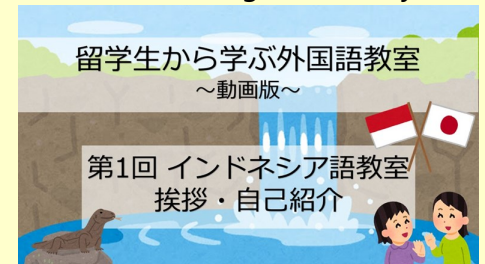
Be sure to check it out!



Hindi Introducing India



Indonesian Greeting/Introduce yourself



Specialized Counseling Services at Fukuoka City International Center

Legal Counseling

Jan.20th, Feb.6th, Feb.17th

Date and Time

1st Saturday 10:30 ~ 13:30

3rd Wednesday 13:00 ~ 16:00

(Jan.20th, Feb.6th, Feb.17)

Appointment: Required

Language: An interpreter is available upon request.

Immigration, Residency, and Nationality

Jan.10th, Feb.14th

Date and Time

2nd Sunday 13:00 ~ 16:00

(Reception until 15:30)

Appointment: Not required

Language: English & Chinese interpreters are available.

Personal (Psychological) Counseling

Date and Time

Monday 8:45 ~ 17:45

Tuesday 8:45 ~ 11:45

Thursday 8:45 ~ 12:45

Appointment: Required

Language: An English speaking professional is available.

Please visit our website at : <https://www.fcif.or.jp/en/>



Please visit our Facebook at : <https://www.facebook.com/fukuokacityinternationalcenter/>

