

Rainbow

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According to the Japan National Tourism Organization, more than 19.73 million foreign tourists visited Japan in 2015, a 47.1% increase on the previous record high achieved in 2014. This year, even more tourists are expected.

Along with these figures, the items that foreign tourists purchase in Japan have been attracting attention recently after “bakugai (爆買い)” was chosen as the Buzzword of the Year for 2015. Roughly translated, “bakugai” means “explosive purchasing,” and refers to the huge shopping sprees that many visitors in Japan treat themselves to. Among the more popular items are rice cookers, “washlet” toilet seats, nappies, *randsoseru* (children’s school backpacks), and 12 pharmaceutical products, known as “the twelve god drugs,” which have featured in Chinese online media stories about essential items that must be bought when one visits Japan.

Here at Rainbow Plaza, we asked about 40 people – including visitors to our counter, participants in the Japanese Chatting Salon (held twice monthly in the City Hall North Annex building), and Japanese persons living overseas – to complete a survey on their favourite souvenirs from Japan. Aside from the famous or typically Japanese souvenirs, a few of their answers surprised us. Perhaps our foreign readers will be able to make use of this list the next time they travel back home.

Food

One popular and reasonably-priced souvenir suggestion was the edible variety. Some people gave broad answers such as **snacks** and **chocolate**. Others gave more specific answers (the nationality of the person who made each suggestion is in parentheses). One person (China) recommended **Meiji Chocolates**, another (Australia) suggested **Kit-Kats** because they come in so many flavours. An American said the many **Pocky** varieties were perfect to hand out to friends and family. Evidently, Japan seems to be known for the variety of flavours that snacks come in. A Japanese resident in Canada gave the following opinion: “People enjoy the delicate flavours and textures of Japanese snacks. When I gave them **Gaufre** from Kobe, they really loved the crispiness.” Obviously, it’s not just traditional sweets that go down well, but Japan’s “western-style” sweets too. Among the more traditional ones are the colourful little sugar lollies known as **konpeito**, (US resident in Hong Kong), and **hard candies** (France).

Several branded products famous in Fukuoka also rated a mention. These included **Hiyoko** and **Ichiran Ramen** (South Korea), **Hakata Tōrimon** (USA, China, Vietnam), **Hakata-no-Hito** and **Menbei** (Thailand). **Mentaiko** (seasoned cod roe) and **Amaō strawberries**, also popular Fukuoka treats, were mentioned by many people too, but it might be difficult to take these products overseas. “**Hakata-no-Hito** are particularly popular among local sweets. The wrapping is (Continued on page 5)

National Holidays for
March &
April

March 20 (Sun.) *Shunbun-no-hi* (春分の日) Vernal Equinox Day
April 29 (Fri.) *Showa-no-hi* (昭和の日) Showa Day

Rainbow Plaza will be closed on
April 19 (Tue)



FUKUOKA & the WORLD

News Here & There

Sakagura-biraki –

the Season for Tasty New Sake



Shinshu, or “new sake,” usually refers to sake made from rice harvested in a particular year, which is used to brew a drink ready for the spring. This freshly made sake is available from winter through to spring. *Sakagura* refers to the warehouses in which sake is brewed and stored. Many of these *sakagura* open their doors from January to March to allow sake enthusiasts to enjoy the flavours of the season. The warehouses are not normally open to visitors, so this time of year is a chance for people to see the brewing process as it happens, hear what the chief brewer has to say, and engage in other interesting experiences that would not normally be available. The *sakagura* also have special events allowing participants to taste-test their specialty drinks – not just the *Shinshu*. The *Sakagura-biraki* season is your best chance to enjoy all things sake.

*Don't drink and drive. Please use public transport.

Ayasugi Brewery... Began operating in Tenjin, Fukuoka, in 1793. Uses groundwater from the Chikugo River drainage basin. Date: 10:00-16:00, 19 Mar. (Sat.)

Address: 1-12-37 Shiobaru, Minami-ku, Fukuoka City
Phone: 092-541-3908

Access: 15 min. walk from Ohashi Station on the Nishitetsu Omuta Line. 7 min. walk from Takeshita Station on the JR Kagoshima Main Line.

Wakatakeya Brewery... Established in 1699, offers warehouse cuisine in the 200-year-old main building.

The Tanushimaru Spring Festival will be held simultaneously, allowing visitors to see the sake, *shōchu*, wine and soy sauce warehouses. A free shuttle bus will run between the 9 venues, where festival-goers can shop for drinks, taste-test, enter a raffle, listen to music, walk around the countryside, and enjoy traditional restaurants.

Time/Dates: 10:00-16:00, 19 (Sat.) & 20 (Sun.) March

Address: 706 Tanushimaru-machi, Kurume City
Phone: 0943-72-2175

Access: 10 min. walk from Tanushimaru Station on the JR Kyudai Main Line. Take bus route 20 from Nishitetsu Kurume Station and alight at Tanushimaru Central bus stop (roughly 40 min. trip). 5 min. walk.

For more information about *nihonshu* or brewers, visit the Fukuoka Sake Brewers Association website.

<http://www.fukuoka-sake.org/index.html>



The Latest Statistics of Fukuoka City

【Area: 343.38 km² (as of Jul. 1st, '15)】 【Population (Sep.1 '15) : 1,531,919 (Households: 766,413)】 【Registered Foreigners (Dec. '15) : 29,883 (Households: 20,828)】 【Consumer Price Index (Nov. '15) : 104.1 (100 as of '10)】 【Foreign Trade (million ¥, Nov. '15) : Exports - (Hakata Port - 134,156 / Fukuoka International Airport - 83,276), Imports - (Hakata Port - 88,399 / International Airport - 36,415)】

APRIL AT HAKATAZA – SUPER KABUKI II “ONE PIECE”

With cumulative sales of more than 320 million copies, the nationally popular manga series One Piece has been made into a Kabuki drama.

Starring in this grand spectacle is Ichikawa Ennosuke IV, known for his rich powers of expression and the unrivaled individuality which enables him to perform in anything from period dramas to modern ones. This unprecedented production will be the second from Super Kabuki II.

The protagonist Luffy, who aims to become King of the Pirates, along with his friends, the Straw Hat Pirates, set out on an adventure to find the treasured One Piece. This production is based on the Battle of Marineford from the original series. Luffy must prepare himself for a fight to the death in order to save his brother Ace.

More than 100,000 people watched the production during its October-November showing in Tokyo. Don't miss out on this special event! See below for details on ticket reservations.

Phone: 092-263-5555, Hakataza Ticket Window: Hakataza Level 2 Square (open 10:00-18:00 every day)

Online: <http://hakataza.e-tix.jp/pc/hakataza.html>

Also available through ticket agencies and travel agents



A Seats ¥18,000 Special B Seats ¥13,000
B Seats ¥9,800 C Seats ¥5,000

Dates: Sat., 2 April – Tues., 26 April

Venue: Hakataza, 2-1 Shimokawa-batamachi, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City

Phone: 092-263-5555

Access: Connected to Exit 7 of Nakasuka-wabata Subway Station

Details: <http://www.hakataza.co.jp/lineup/h28-4/index.php>

Kyushu National Museum

The Great Terracotta Army of China's First Emperor

Exhibition period:

15 March (Tue.) - 12 June (Sun.)

Hours: 9:30 to 17:00

(last admission 16:30)

Closed: Mondays & 22 March

(open 21 March & 2 May)

Location: 4-7-2 Ishizaka, Dazaifu

Entrance fee:

Adults: 1,600 yen (1,400 yen)

University students and High school students: 1,000 yen (800 yen)

Elementary/junior high school students: 600 yen (400 yen)

*() is for advance tickets and group (more than 20 people) tickets

For more details visit:

http://www.kyuhaku.com/exhibition/exhibition_next.html



Terracotta Army

(Clockwise from left) General, foot soldier, army officer, standing archer, kneeling archer Qin dynasty 300 BC Collection of Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum (c) Cultural Relics Bureau of Shaanxi; Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Center; Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum

JOIN THE DONTAKU PARADE

The Hakata Machiya Furusato-kan is looking for people to join the Dontaku Parade. This festival is open for anyone to participate in. Indeed, this is what makes it so enjoyable. Whether you're a tourist, a resident, Japanese or foreign, you too can join the parade.

There will be a practice session on the day of the parade. Clothing rental is also available.

Both individual and group applications are welcome.

Dates: 4 May 2016 (Wed., public holiday) *Will go ahead in the event of rain

Fee plans:

2,000 yen (includes *happi* coat rental, *shamoji* rice paddles, *tenugui* cloth)

3,500 yen (includes *happi* coat, *shamoji* rice paddles, *tenugui* cloth)

*Junior high school students and below must be accompanied by their legal guardian. Participation is free. (*Shamoji* provided.)

No. Participants: 100 *Applications will not be accepted after this number is reached

How to Apply: Email or fax the following details to Hakata Machiya Furusato-kan

-Name of participants

-Address and contact details (mobile phone number) of one participant to receive correspondence on behalf of the group

-Email address (PC) or fax number

-Fee plan (2,000 yen or 3,500 yen)

Hakata Machiya Furusato-kan
(6-10 Reisenmachi, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City)

Email: machiya.okamura@top-crea.jp

Fax: 092-281-7762



Girls' Festival - Hinamatsuri

The Hinamatsuri is known as an annual event to pray for the healthy growth of girls, but it was not celebrated in its current form until the Edo Period. Originally a practice to ward off negative spirits in roughly 3rd Century China, it was brought back to Japan by a diplomatic delegation to become a Misogi purification ritual. In the Heian Period (794-1185) it became a custom of the Imperial Court, and in the Muromachi Period (1338-1573) the date was fixed to 3 March. The bright and colourful girls' festival that we know today did not spread amongst the general populace until the Edo Period (1603-1868).

The Hina Dolls which symbolize the Hinamatsuri are meant to represent a wedding from the Heian Period. They are put out after the beginning of spring, and are supposed to be packed up on the day after the Hinamatsuri has finished. It is often said that not putting the dolls away quickly will delay the date a girl is chosen as a bride. This myth came about at the beginning of the Showa Period. Since the Edo Period, the dolls have come to symbolize a family's wealth and have become more bright and colourful. The displays have gone from one tier, to two or three tiers, all the way up to seven tiers. These days, with many people living in smaller houses, more compact displays are popular.

Several foods are specially prepared and eaten for this day, including *hishi-mochi* (a rhombus-shaped rice cake), *hina-arare* (small grilled rice pellets made especially for the girls' festival), *shirozake* (a sweet white sake, or *amazake*), *hama-guri-jiru* (a clear soup made with clams), and *chirashi-zushi* (sushi rice with a variety of ingredients sprinkled on top). Each of these is said to bring good fortune, and each is made differently according to the region.

Hinamatsuri is celebrated across Fukuoka around this time of year, and is an excellent chance to experience Japanese culture, not just for women but for men as well.

Yanagawa Hinamatsuri

Hinamatsuri is celebrated in a unique way in Yanagawa: relatives of newborn girls sew *sagemon* decorations stitch by stitch, to be hung on each side of the *hina* display in the hope that they will bring about healthy growth and happiness.

Several events are held over the period, including the *hinameguri* boat and the *Ohinasama* river parade.

Dates: 11 Feb. (Thurs.) – 3 Apr. (Sun.)

*Depending on the conditions of the waterways, boat operation times and event schedules are subject to change. Please confirm beforehand.

Location: Yanagawa City, Fukuoka Prefecture

Access: 48 min. on the express train to Yanagawa Station from Nishitetsu Fukuoka (Tenjin) Station.

Inquiries: Yanagawa City Tourism Association Phone: 0944-74-0891



Iizuka Hina-no-matsuri

A variety of decorations will be set up in different areas. One will include a scroll-like display, the largest in Japan, at the home of the former coal king of Kyushu, Ito Den'emon. There will also be "a display of the hinamatsuri and dolls from around the world" at Iizuka City Historical Museum, and events around the city including at the shopping arcade.

Dates: 6 Feb. (Sat.) – 28 Mar. (Mon.)

*Dates differ at each facility. Please confirm beforehand.

Location: Iizuka City, Fukuoka Prefecture

Access: 10 min. walk from Shin-Iizuka Station on the JR Fukuohu Yutaka Line.

Inquiries: Iizuka Tourism Association Phone: 0948-22-3511

Hina-no-Sato Yame Bonbori Festival

The Yame Region, in the south of Fukuoka Prefecture, has a thriving traditional crafts scene, including washi paper and wax. From the Edo Period to around 1960, unusual *hina* dolls in square boxes, called *hakobina*, were made in this town. At various locations around town these *hakobina* will be on display along with other *hina* ornaments such as those brought by princesses from the Tokugawa Shogun family at the times of their weddings. There will also be other events happening during the festival, including: *jūnihitoe* (traditional and elegant twelve-layered kimono worn by women of the Imperial Court in the Heian Period) and *sokutai* (male equivalent of *jūnihitoe*) weddings, an *Ohinasama* parade, and *Ohinasama Kuyosai* (a memorial service for *hina* dolls).

Dates: 14 Feb. (Sun.) – 13 Mar. (Sun.)

*Dates differ at each facility. Please confirm beforehand.

Location: Yame City, Fukuoka Prefecture

Access: Catch a Horikawa Bus service from Hainuzuka Station on the JR Kagoshima Main line. 10 min. walk from Fukushima bus stop.

Inquiries: Yame City Commerce and Tourism Department Phone: 0943-23-1192

Japan Life Q&A

Q: I graduated from a Japanese university last year. I've never had to pay the Residence Tax before. Will I have to start paying it now?

A: Anyone whose income exceeds a certain amount is required to pay the Residence Tax. The amount you must pay each year is determined from your income during the previous calendar year, and, as such, you will only start paying the tax in the calendar year following the year in which you begin working. The tax is paid to the municipality in which you are a registered resident on 1 January. If you change your address during any particular year, you will still be required to pay the tax to the previous municipality. Of course, the new municipality will not require you to pay the tax until the following calendar year. Depending on your employer, the Residence Tax may be automatically deducted from your monthly salary, or you may have to pay the tax directly yourself. In the latter case, you can expect to receive notification of the amount of tax you are required to pay around June each year. It is possible to pay a whole year's worth of the tax in one go, or, alternatively, you may pay the amount in four instalments. Payment of the tax can be made at financial institutions, as well as convenience stores, etc. (with some exceptions).

It may take some time to become accustomed to the tax system once you start working, but it is important to know that by not paying taxes you may be required to pay overdue fees, and this may even affect future visa applications. Of course, taxation is the collective burden we must all endure for the improvement of our living environment – so don't forget to pay!

Japanese Language Proficiency Test

Test Date: July 3 (Sun), 2016

Application period: March 29 (Tue) - April 28 (Thu)

For more information: <http://info.jees-jlpt.jp/>

To advertise in **Rainbow**

Please contact 092-733-2220
rainbow03@rainbowfia.or.jp

Japanese Chatting Salon

Time	1st & 3rd Thursday of every month 13:30-17:00
Day	March 3 & 17 April 7 & 21
Fee	Free
Venue	Fukuoka City International Foundation
Address	Conference Room, Fukuoka City Hall North Annex Level 5, 1-10-1 Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka City
Contact	Fukuoka Foreign Student Support Association (Rainbow Plaza, IMS) Tel: 092-733-2220 Fax: 092-733-2215 Email: attaka@rainbowfia.or.jp URL: http://attaka-fukuoka.jp

Japanese Language Class

Time	Tuesday 10:00-12:00
Day	March 1, 8, 22 April 5, 12, 26
Fee	5,000 yen/6 months
Venue	IMS 8F, Rainbow Plaza
Address	1-7-11 Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka City
Contact	Tel & Fax: 092-662-7690, 090-8621-8503 Email: chiisanainfo@gmail.com http://www.facebook.com/123.chiisana Ms. Teruyo Noguchi Chiisana Kokusai Koryu No Kai

Municipal Housing Information

Forms are available at ward offices etc.

✓ Fukuoka City

Inquiry: 092-271-2561

www.nicety.or.jp/ (in Japanese)

✓ Fukuoka Prefecture

Application Period:

Feb. 29 (Mon.) - Mar. 8 (Tue.)

Inquiry: 092-781-8029

www.lsf.jp/ (in Japanese)

Rainbow Plaza FREE COUNSELING

	Legal Counseling (1st & 3rd Saturday of every month)	Personal (Psychological) Counseling (Mon. Thur. & Sat.)	Counseling on Immigration, Residency and Nationality (2nd Sunday of Every Month)	Health Consultation (Every Wednesday) ※
Date	Mar. 5 & 19 Apr. 2 & 16	Mon. 10:00am - 6:00pm Thur. 10:00am - 1:00pm Sat. 2:00pm - 7:00pm	Mar. 13 Apr. 10	Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 Apr. 6, 13, 20 & 27
Time	10:30am - 1:30pm 45 minutes/person		1:00pm - 4:00pm (Reception until 3:30pm)	5:00pm - 7:00pm
Appointment	Required	Required	NOT Required	NOT Required
Language	Japanese An interpreter is available upon request.	Japanese, English	Japanese, English, Chinese	Japanese, English

※ On rare occasions, the doctor may cancel a consultation session on short notice. No medical treatments or prescriptions provided.
For more information, call 092-733-2220.

Your Privacy is guaranteed.

(Continued from page 1)

typically Japanese with an East-meets-West feel to it. From about 10 years ago, my teenage girls have been requesting them every time I return from Japan.” (USA)

“**Hiyoko** look cute. And my family really loved the **Hiyoko Sablé**.” (South Korea)

“**Pietro Original Dressing** is highly rated on Amazon America. I took it back once and got a request for more. The healthier, low-salt varieties are a particular hit.” (USA)

Though it’s now available nationwide, people from Fukuoka would be proud to hear that a local company like Pietro is getting good reviews like this.

Japanese tea (Canada, Thailand, UK, etc.) also appears to be a perennial choice. Bottled Japanese teas available overseas tend to be quite sweet, so taking home some of the authentic stuff will probably go down well. A lot of our survey respondents also mentioned **teabags, matcha, and tea leaves**.

Sake, or **Nihonshu** (China, South Korea, UK, etc.), is also a popular souvenir choice, along with **umeshu**, or **plum wine** (South Korea), and **shōchu**, a distilled beverage usually made from rice, sweet potato or wheat (UK, South Korea). “Japanese **whiskey** (Australia) is also well known abroad.” Perhaps this is down to the fact that Japanese whiskey has won awards at international whiskey competitions in the UK.

Ramen is another popular choice, including **instant ramen** (Nepal, South Korea), **cup noodles** (the Philippines), and packaged **fresh ramen** (Taiwan). Originally from China, having undergone changes in Japan, ramen is now a popular Japanese dish both at home and abroad. Another Japanese dish with foreign origins is curry. Many South Korean respondents to our survey shared an opinion like this: “If you’re getting souvenirs – get **curry**. Japanese curry just tastes better.” Packaged curry pouches comes in quite a number of varieties, so it might be worth taking a few home and letting your friends choose.

Another South Korean respondent mentioned “**instant miso soup, salmon flakes, and ramen**. A lot of people I know have either lived in Japan or travelled here, so they tend to request particular foods they have eaten before.” Perhaps because of the proximity to Fukuoka, many South Koreans have visited, and many of our respondents – evidently connoisseurs – suggested branded products such as **Ichiran** (ramen), **Funwari Meijin** (rice snacks covered in *kinako* powder), and **Horoyoi** (an alcoholic drink), as well as **takoyaki pans** as gifts. Perhaps surprisingly, **sesame oil** was another recommendation. Korea is better known for its sesame oil... perhaps it has a different flavour?

One interesting survey response mentioned **raw honey** (China). After searching online, we found that because it hasn’t been heated, this honey’s nutritional value is supposedly uncompromised. Though it is not widely available, some people online seem to know a lot about it. Some of our Chinese respondents also listed **health foods** such as **enzyme supplements**. Perhaps these make popular gifts in China, given that it is known for its traditional medicines.

Here are a few more responses.

“**Senbei** and **okaki** (both rice snacks), which can be bought at **Mochikichi**, etc. – especially the ones that come in tins – are a good souvenir. Vegetarians can eat them, and they’re a healthy snack.” (USA)

“Chocolate and senbei tins are very pretty. If you buy one for someone they’ll be twice as happy – happy to receive the tin and happy again for its contents.” (USA)

“**Western-style sweets** that come in gift boxes.” (Taiwan)

For people who enjoy cooking, here are a few souvenir tips.

“There’s a bit of a Japanese food boom going on, so a lot of people tell me they want to cook something Japanese, and ask

how to make dashi (soup stock). They’re happy when I give them **dashi packs**.” (USA) And a person from France, a country said to be quite familiar with Japan, also mentioned dashi as a souvenir.

“**Yuzu-koshō** (a spicy, hot condiment made from yuzu rind, chili, and salt) was a hit on a recent trip back home. It’s fine for vegetarians, and everyone seemed to like it. At first they thought it was wasabi, but then decided they actually preferred yuzu-koshō... so much so that they were asking me where they could buy it.” (USA)

(Continued on page 6)

Language Volunteers Wanted

The Lions Club International Convention will be held in Fukuoka in late June this year. Roughly 10,000 participants from around the world are expected to attend. We are looking for language volunteers over 18 years old (including foreigners who can speak conversational Japanese) to help out at the convention. Please inquire at the Lions Club International Convention Host Committee Office for an application form, application requirements and other details. Application is accepted by 31 March.

For more information: <http://lions99-fukuoka.jp/index.php>

Inquiry: Lions Club International Convention Host Committee Office

Ph: 092-407-8199 email: lc99intcnv@iaa.itkeeper.ne.jp

Dr. Nishiyama’s Health Column Vol. 24

LAUGHING, SMILING and HEALTH



It has long been believed, perhaps all over the world, that fortune will come to a merry family. More than 20 years ago, some immunologists found that people’s immune status was influenced by their emotions. This was thought to be an interaction between the mind and body. Last year, several studies were conducted to verify this phenomenon.

In the reputable journal TIME, December 2015 issue, the results of the above studies are briefly referenced. In summary: 1) In patients with negative feelings, a greater incidence of adverse effects is proven in medical procedures. 2) Anger leads to a higher risk of heart attack. 3) Happy moods in general were associated with less inflammation. 4) Those who viewed aging negatively had a greater chance of getting Alzheimer’s disease. The studies did not, however, guarantee greater longevity for men or women, no matter how cheerful they may be. At least there seems to be some evidence of the mitigation of suffering and diseases.

Diseases themselves often put people out of humor. How and where should we find something to make us laugh or smile? It’s no easy feat to change the character of a person, whether they have a positive or negative attitude to their daily life.

Sometimes we come across people who are both cheerful and physically healthy. Often this is in spite of them having had an unbelievable physical crisis in the past. How do they maintain their cheerful smiles? Is their cheerfulness the source of their power to overcome misfortune, or is it proof of them having surmounted an obstacle?

Whatever the answer may be, we can learn from their way of thinking. At first, it may be a challenge. Trying to put a smile on your own face may in itself be a difficult task. But a cheerful smile is contagious, and it won’t be long until a truly sincere smile shows through. A vicious circle of mind-body interaction should be replaced with a good one.

David's Katakana English German

Normally this brief article covers katakana words with English origins. But there are plenty of katakana words that come from other languages too. Let's have a look at Japanese words of German origin. Some of these, as far as I can tell (I don't speak German), keep their original German meanings. For example: テーマ (tēma, from Thema, meaning "theme"), and レントゲン (rentogen, meaning "x-ray"), after Wilhelm Röntgen, who discovered x-radiation (or "Röntgen radiation").

But in the same way that katakana words of English origin are often corrupted in Japanese, so too are many originally German words:

アルバイト, or arubaito, means "part-time job" in Japanese, while "Arbeit" simply means "work." ゲレンデ, or gerende, refers to ski slopes. If you're booking accommodation at a Japanese ski resort, you might notice hotel reviews with comments such as "two minute walk from the ゲレンデ." Apparently "Gelände" just means "ground" or "terrain."

カルテ, or karute, is a word you'll most certainly hear when you visit a doctor in Japan. It refers to each patient's file of medical records, but the original German "Karte" means "map" or "card."

ゼッケン, or zekken, is the word used for the numbered bibs worn by marathon runners and other athletes. It is not used to mean "bib" as in the one a baby wears when eating. A quick search online suggests the word comes from German "Zeichen" ("symbol" or "sign").

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"I buy **takana** (pickled leaf mustard) and yuzu-koshō when I come to Fukuoka." (US resident in another prefecture)

Yuzu powder and **shichimi-tōgarashi** (seven flavour chili pepper) (France) also made a mention. These spices are great when you just want to add a little something to an otherwise regular dish.

"When I gave **furikake** (rice seasoning) to families that eat a lot of rice they were really happy." (USA) Korean respondents also mentioned furikake. Light and reasonably priced, they make for excellent souvenirs for people who love eating rice.

Everyday Items

There were plenty of non-edible souvenirs that people also mentioned on their



surveys.

"**Pharmaceuticals**" (China). The sight of tourists buying pharmaceuticals featured heavily in the news last year.

Cosmetics (Vietnam, China, Singapore) also rated well in our survey. Some respondents mentioned particular brands: "my colleagues back home asked for **DHC** and **Shiseido** products" (Thailand), and cosmetics made with soymilk including "**Moritaya** **Tamanokoshi packs**" (Thailand).

"**Cotton buds**. Both the rod part and the cotton ends are sturdy, but they still feel comfortable in the ears" (Taiwan).

"**Household electronics**. My **iPad** cost me about 30% less in Japan than it would back home. There is also a huge variety of **iPhone covers**, so if you know your friends' phone models, it's very easy to find a simple gift." (UK)

Also among classic Japanese souvenirs we must mention **manga** and **anime**, as well as **cosplay goods** (UK), **anime figurines** (Germany), and **Pokémon-themed trinkets** including **playing cards**, **folders** and **calendars** (Australia).

Another surprisingly popular choice was **stationary**.

"You can't get better stationary anywhere outside Japan. The **ballpoint pens** write really smoothly, and the ink quality is excellent. **Frixion pens**, with ink that can be rubbed out, are pretty impressive. Both regular and **coloured pencils** have soft leads, making them easy to write with. My kids' friends all begged for them to lend them out. Also, **staple-less staplers** aren't available back home, so they make for an interesting souvenir too." (Canada)

"My sister-in-law, who teaches at an elementary school, always asks for **stickers**. The children love it when they are rewarded with the individual stickers in particular." (USA)

Other suggestions were: "**Granulated bath products**. They dissolve really quickly and into vibrant colours. There's also so many types to choose from." (USA)

"**Drugstore items** like '**Kyūsoku Jikan**' (literally 'foot rest time') and **makeup**." (South Korea)

This is interesting, considering many Japanese tourists to Korea go out of their way to buy Korean cosmetics.

Incidentally, **Kyūsoku Jikan** are self-adhesive gel sheets you can put on your legs or feet to help relax them. Aside from Japanese, the product's website is

available in simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, and Korean, reflecting its popularity in China and Korea.

"**Uniqlo Heattech**. But Uniqlo is about to open in Toronto, so people may stop asking me to buy this..." (Canada)

Some more suggestions: "**Stockings**. Japanese stockings are good quality" (USA), "**Saran Wrap** (cling wrap) – because it tears off neatly" (France), "**Cat food**" (China), and "**Hokkairo**" (disposable pocket warmers) (UK).

We also had survey responses recommending traditional Japanese gifts such as **kimono**, **yukata**, **uchiwa**, **chopsticks**, **ceramics** and **Hakata dolls**. "Small traditional gifts with colourful patterns like **uchiwa** and **sensu**" (Germany), "**kokeshi dolls** and **chiyogami** (decorative paper) – for myself" (USA), "**shamoji** (rice paddles), **chopsticks**, and **saibashi** for cooking. Cheap ones from a 100 yen store are good enough" (USA). On the other hand, some people advised against particular items: "I stopped giving **tenugui** and chopsticks as souvenirs because people weren't using them" (Australia). There are plenty of items to give as gifts, so match the souvenir with the recipient's lifestyle and they're sure to be happy.

One person also said "it's pretty easy to get anything in Singapore, so it's not worth making a special trip back to Japan to buy something in particular, but either way you can count on it being ridiculously overpriced in Singapore" (Japanese resident in Singapore).

People in different countries have different tastes, and obviously the souvenirs that they will appreciate will depend on their lifestyles and how interested they are in Japanese culture. But take the time to choose a gift and it is sure to be received well. Plus you'll get a better idea of what to buy next time from their reaction. The list we have presented here is far from complete. We hope you enjoy discovering the many other available options.

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