

Adventures in Japan, Part 3; Hiroshima and Miyajima

We arrived at Hiroshima station bang on time, the efficiency of the Japanese Bullet trains is amazing. It arrives exactly on the dot, stops at the station for exactly two minutes then moves on, regardless of whether everyone is on or off! Being in the train as it travels up to 180mph is similar to being on an Aeroplane as it hurtles down the runway. It's smooth, but you're aware of the speed. We travelled nearly the distance of London to Aberdeen on our journey from Tokyo to Hiroshima, in only 4 hours!!

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Our first evening in Hiroshima and we went on the search of food. Not just any food either, we were on a mission to find Okonomi-mura, Hiroshima's traditional dish, a mix between an omelette and a pancake. It is served in many places around Tokyo but we'd read the best place was to try it was in

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a particular area of Hiroshima, named after the dish. It's like a 4 storey warehouse full of tiny little restaurants all serving the same dish. Stools are placed around a hot plate, you pick your fillings and the chefs cook one for you. They start with batter, then lots of cabbage, spices, the fillings, squash it down and then out a fried egg on top. Doesn't sound too appetising, but it was hands down the best holiday meal we've ever had, anywhere. And best of all, it was dirt cheap- like less than a tenner each, but the portion so large, I could barely finish mine!

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Okonomimura in Hiroshima

After an incredible meal, we vowed we'd be back tomorrow to the lovely ladies who ran

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the restaurant that we were in, and we went on the hunt for some Japanese whiskey, which we found in a nearby whiskey bar.



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Japanese whiskey bar

Next morning dawned sunny and after another yummy Japanese breakfast, we met our tour group in reception ready for a day on nearby Miyajima Island. We travelled to the Island via tram and Ferry and our first sight of The Itsukushima Shrine, one of Japan's most pictured sites I'd imagine, was exciting!

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Travelling to Miyajima Island

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Itsukushima Shrine

We had a tour through the Shrine and then

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were left to enjoy free time on the the island. We chose to stay on the island and make our way back on our own, allowing us more time to explore. We used the cable car to get to the top of Mt Misen, and the views from the top were spectacular. We could see the 'Japanese Med' including lots of little islands and beaches. We felt on top of the world.

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On top of the world

From the observatory you have the option to climb a little higher, up to a shrine and temple at the top, on a well laid path. We went for it, surprised first of all when the path went downhill, but it sure enough it made up for it – the last Km was pretty steep!

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Mt Misen

After more wonderful views, we headed back down via cable car to ground level, and enjoyed a wander around the shops. There was a pretty 5 storey Pagoda which looked lovely in the sunlight surrounded by cherry trees.

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Miyajima Island

The local delicacies were barbecued oysters
and Momiji cake, both of which we tried on

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the island and really enjoyed.



Food on Miyajima

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That evening we enjoyed another meal at the same place as the night before, much to the delight of the owners who, despite limited English/Japanese on our part, managed to have a conversation about our trip and where we lived, marriage and even our occupations. We were introduced to the locals and the rest, as they say is Sake....!

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Compeigo, cheers

Next morning, and a slightly sake fuzzed head, not going to lie, and we were up and on our group tour of the Hiroshima Peace Mu-

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seum. We saw the A Bomb memorial, the remains of a building that was destroyed in the atomic bomb, along with a hard hitting but extremely moving exhibition. We also had the absolute pleasure and privilege to have a session with the only English speaking survivor of the bomb, 79 yr old Keiko, who has dedicated her life to spread her story and promote peace. An incredible woman and we feel honoured to have met and spent time with her.

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A bomb dome

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Keiko, a survivor of the world's first atomic bomb

We found the whole experience truly incredible but most of all we were moved nearly to tears as Keiko described the day of the attack like it was only yesterday.

After a couple of hours in the museum we had a picnic lunch under the blossom on the river bank. A lovely way to finish our time at Hiroshima. Next stop Kyoto via the bullet train.

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Hiroshima cherry blossom

Until next time

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