

I was fortunate enough to stay with the Nishikawa family over the course of a weekend in December 2025. I had been a bit nervous prior to the homestay due to being unsure about how we would go about communicating, as I lack confidence in my own Japanese speaking skills; however, they were very kind to me and understanding that I wanted to improve my own speaking skills, and would slow down or speak in simpler terms when needed. Likewise, I conveyed some English to them for new vocabulary they might not have been familiar with before.

For the first night, they took me to a local Izakaya in Hamamatsu that was known to the regulars in the area, where I got to try various local delicacies, and where we could properly introduce ourselves to each other and our background; mine as a native of Toronto, Ontario, in East Canada, and theirs as natives of Hamamatsu in Shizuoka Prefecture.

The first day was mainly related to exploring Hamamatsu itself, as I was able to visit some local markets in the more rural parts of Hamamatsu, as well as visit some shrines and temples in the area. The Nishikawas were very well versed and interested in South Asian culture; as such, they had taken me to a South Indian restaurant in Hamamatsu to try regional food, which I was surprised to see in Hamamatsu. As a Bengali-Canadian, I explained my experiences as a first-generation immigrant to them and what I was familiar with from my heritage. I gifted them some traditional Bengali condiments I had received from my Grandmother in Bangladesh, who made them, known as “Achar” in Bengali, a type of pickled condiment, typically made from mangos and brined in oil, but can be made from various other fruits and vegetables as well. For dinner, I received the chance to prepare homestyle “Chanko Nabe” for the first time with them. I learned the ins and outs of homestyle Japanese cooking, with the various ingredients and techniques that go with it, and got to enjoy a very delicious meal while conversing and learning more about each other.



On the second and last day, the Nishikawas planned a trip to Shizuoka City for me, where we visited the “Yaizu Fish Market” together. I was graced with being able to try authentic Japanese Sushi for the first time there, along with seeing all the local fish being sold there, which was caught in the area. Afterwards, we toured around the city, visiting various shops and sightseeing in Shizuoka itself, before finally ending the homestay program where they dropped me back home.

I had a wonderful time, and being able to experience the average everyday life of a Japanese family made me feel very at home despite the barriers in language and culture, and I was able to garner a connection that normally would be impossible without this Homestay Program. I would recommend anyone studying at

Shizuoka University to please give it a try, as I am certain they would gain a priceless experience and memory that will last them forever.