

Homestay Programme Report -

Eduards Teteris (Latvia)

During my homestay programme, I stayed with a Japanese family consisting of four people: the parents and two sons, one aged 13 and the other 16. From the very beginning, the experience felt welcoming and comfortable. I was able to communicate with the family in English, which made everything much easier and more enjoyable.

The family picked me up from the university and drove me to their home. After arriving, they showed me my room, which was a traditional Japanese-style bedroom with a futon and an air conditioner. As a European, this was very interesting for me, as it was quite different from what I am used to.

That evening, we had dinner together and ate okonomiyaki, which was really delicious. During dinner, I mostly talked with the mother, as the father had not arrived home yet. When the father arrived later, I spoke with him as well, and we discussed the plans for the next day. On both days, I also experienced a traditional Japanese bath built inside the house, which was another very interesting cultural difference for me.

On Saturday morning, we had breakfast and then went to the airplane museum located at the Hamamatsu air base. After that, we ate ramen, which was also very delicious. Later, we visited the Hattasan Sonei-ji Temple. In the afternoon, we went to an arcade inside a shopping mall, where the younger brother showed me a circle-tapping rhythm game. I found it very interesting, especially because I did not know that arcade games in Japan have such a big culture, where players can create their own profiles and track their scores over time. We also played an Initial D arcade game together with the father, which I really enjoyed because I like the Initial D anime.



Afterwards, we bought supplies for dinner and returned home. In the evening, the family set up a PlayStation 5 with a steering wheel, and we played Gran Turismo. We then had dinner, ate temaki and karage, drank a little sake, and talked together, which was a very nice and relaxing experience.

The next morning, I went for a walk with the mother, which allowed me to see the local area where they live. Later, we had lunch, and the mother kindly bought chopsticks and tabi socks as gifts for me, my family, and my girlfriend, which I really appreciated. During the day, we played more Gran Turismo, this time using a VR headset, which was amazing and something I enjoyed very much. I also had the chance to try electric drums, which was another fun and memorable experience.

Overall, I really liked the homestay programme and would describe my experience as excellent. I am very grateful to the Shimizu family for hosting me and making my stay so enjoyable and memorable.