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**100TH
ISSUE**

SPECIAL

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C  **NNNECT** **AJET**

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

With the final sun setting on 2020, I am hoping that people won't push the past 12 months too deep into their memories and try to instantly forget the year that was. We shouldn't forget how Australia came together to fight the bushfires, the people of Hong Kong fighting for their democratic rights, and the world-wide Black Lives Matter protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd.

With the sun rising in 2021, I hope people don't forget the reflective time we spent inside, how inequalities in our societies were widened by this pandemic, and how powerful disinformation can be in the spread of fear and how it can tear people apart. However, I am extremely hopeful that 2021 will be a year of progression worldwide.

With these struggles still weighing heavy on us, we deserve something a little celebratory. January sees us release the **100th** issue of **CONNECT**! For our hundredth issue we have the Three R's of winter vacation to keep you body busy and mind occupied so you won't even miss traveling. Our staff have written recipes to warm you, reviews for your to peruse, and recreation ideas for how to spend your winter vacation. Our first issue was published on [September, 2011](#) with some font choices that could only be described as ~funky~. In these past one hundred issues there have been hours upon hours of volunteer time poured into writing, editing, and designing the final polished product you see every month. It's been a pleasure to oversee the team so far over the last six months!

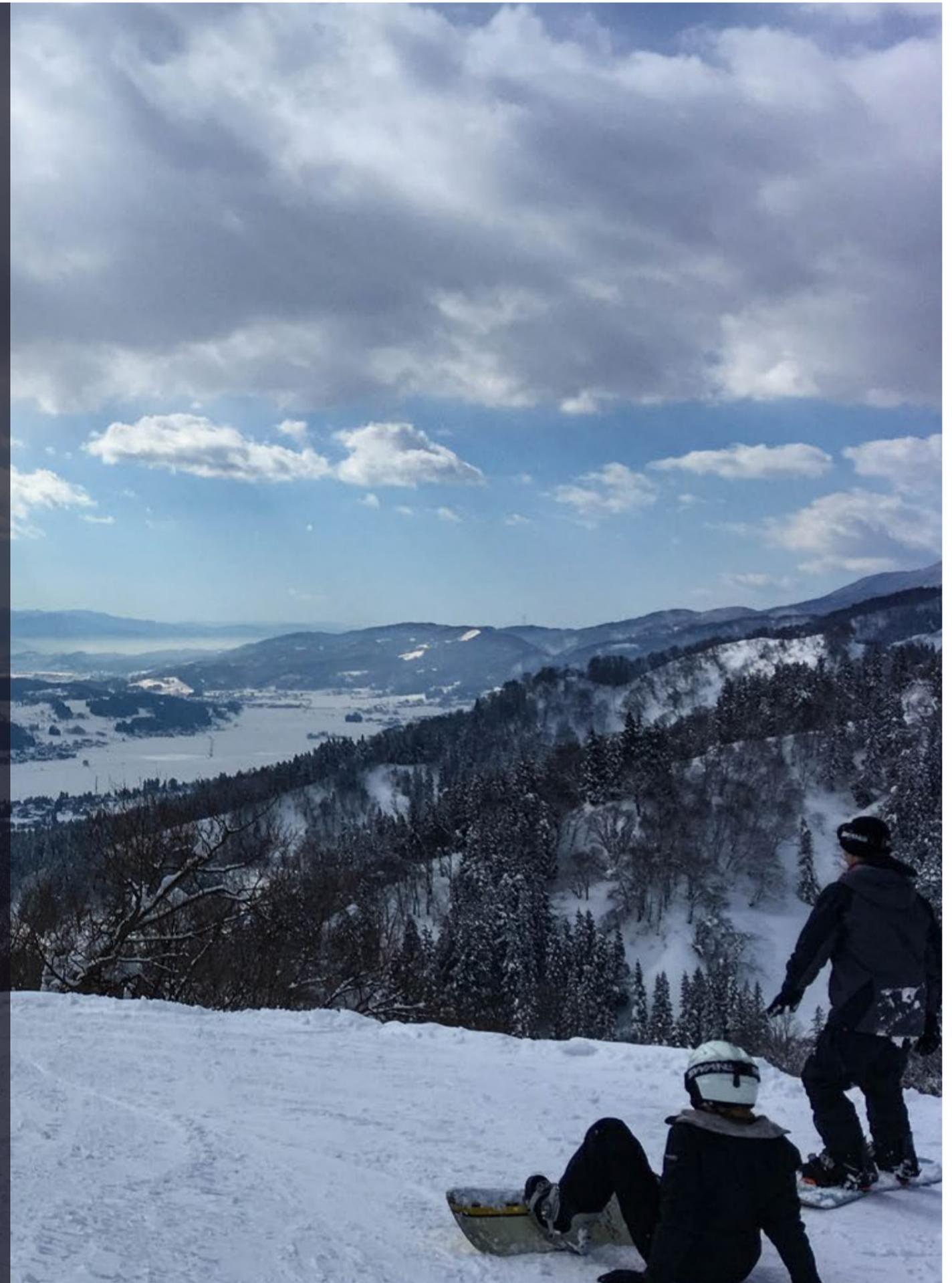
I couldn't have done it without someone in particular, our Assistant Editor, Damien. Damien previously held the position of Copy Editor and I was stoked to see his hat in the ring for the position last year. We were able to pull off a rare Kiwi take-over of the magazine's head editing team. *Sorry, not sorry, to the team for making colloquial New Zealand jokes during our monthly team meetings.* He has been the brains behind improving the way we streamline our processes and refine the visual aspects of **CONNECT**. I am super grateful for his keen eye and I hope we will be able to continue making **CONNECT** the best magazine for English speakers who are just as fascinated with Japan as we are.

My top picks for the January are: Cameron our Community Section Editor wrote a cheeky satirical piece for all your recreational travel needs in "Go 2 Campaign: A Surreal Experience", Alice our Culture Section Editor wrote a review on the book 'Sacred Cesium Ground' which tells the story of a man who saved a herd of cows in protest after the 2011 Fukushima disaster in "A Cow's Eye View", Damien our Assistant Head Editor wrote a review of an anime that had a refreshing change of pace in "Taisō Zamurai", and Meg our Head Design wrote a recipe for taco soup, when Meg mentioned she would be writing this other staff members seemed quite fond of it too, check it out in "Taco Soup".

We will all be able to hug again soon. On behalf of **CONNECT** I wish you a prosperous and healthy 2021!

Alice R.

Alice Ridley
Head Editor



RECIPES

**Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice:
Super easy vegan and gluten-free chickpea burgers**

Shannon Stocker

Lion's Head Soup

Laura Yi

**Taco, not Tako:
There is no octopus in this soup.**

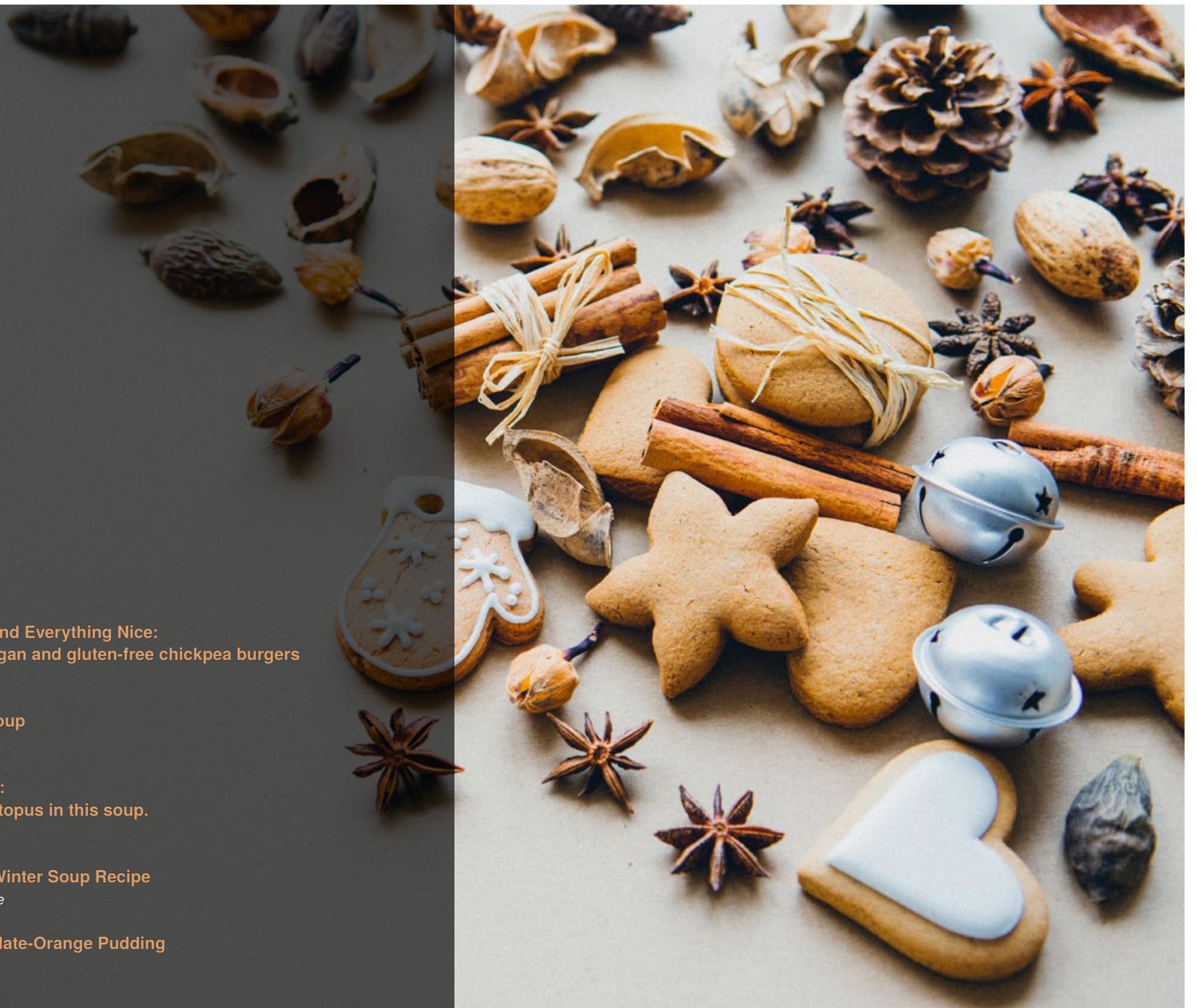
Meg Luedtke

Souper Easy Winter Soup Recipe

Ashley De La Haye

Festive Chocolate-Orange Pudding

Day Bulger

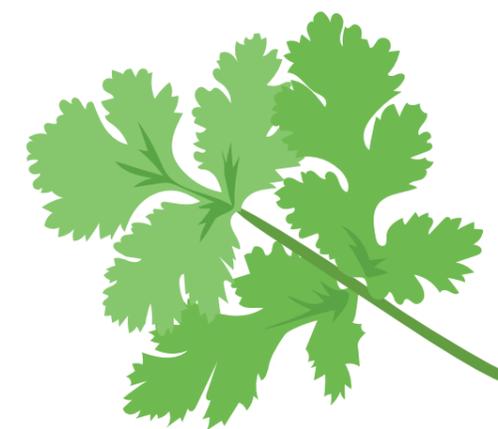


Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice

Super easy vegan and gluten-free chickpea burgers

Shannon Stocker (Hyōgo)

Since finding these burgers on the [Running on Real Food](#) blog back in January, I've made some variation of them almost every week of this year. They're super easy, requiring only one bowl, one hob and a frying pan. At 20 minutes from ingredients to plate, they're perfect for those sleepy weekday nights. Check out my favourite adaptation of the recipe [here!](#)



Ingredients:

Patty

400g chickpeas, drained, well-rinsed and roughly mashed

1 small red onion, diced

1 small courgette, grated and squeezed of excess water

3 tbsp dried coriander

3 tbsp red wine vinegar

2 tbsp sriracha sauce (or alternative hot sauce)

2 tbsp natural crunchy peanut butter

1 tsp honey or brown sugar (optional)

1 tsp parsley

1 tsp cumin

1 tsp garlic powder

2 tsp black pepper

½ tsp sea salt

100 g gluten free oats or panko breadcrumbs

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Sauce

4tbsp vegan mayonnaise

2 tsp sriracha (or to taste)

½ tsp lemon juice

½ tsp sea salt

Extras

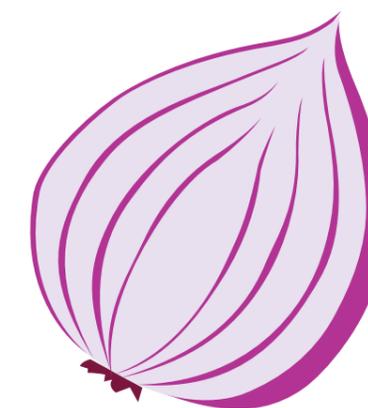
4 burger buns (I prefer brioche ones)

½ lettuce

1 large tomato

4 tsp chilli jam / chilli chutney

Servings: 4





Directions:

1. Drain and rinse the chickpeas, then place them in a bowl and mash them with a fork.
2. Pop the chickpeas into a large bowl with all the other patty ingredients. Use your hands to mix well.
3. Form 4 large patties.
4. Oil a frying or griddle pan and put on the hob on medium heat. Add the patties and cook for 4-5 minutes on each side.
5. While they are cooking, combine the sauce ingredients and spread onto the burger buns. Add the extras onto the bun before serving the patties on top.

To shake things up a bit, I like to test out different sauces and extras every now and again! A good dollop of *gochujang* mayonnaise or a *tzatziki* are really tasty options. If you try any new variations, please email your suggestions to me at connect.fashion@ajet.net, I'd love to try them out!

*Shannon Stocker is an incoming Assistant Language Teacher on the JET Programme and the Fashion & Beauty Editor for **CONNECT**. She's currently spending her time in Liverpool, UK eagerly googling everything to do in Kōbe City and obsessing over what to pack.*



Lion's Head Soup

Disclaimer: No lions were harmed in the making of this soup

Lara Yi (Incoming JET)

Lion's Head Soup (狮子头/shizi tou) is a traditional Chinese dish that can be dated back to the Sui Dynasty. The dish consists of large pork meatballs stewed with vegetables and is named after the likeness of a Chinese guardian lion's head (the meatball) and its mane (the vegetables). As the lunar new year quickly approaches, consider adding this soup to the celebratory menu!

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

750ml chicken broth

90g lotus root/bamboo shoots

6 napa/Chinese cabbage leaves

1 small ginger

2 stalks green onion

100ml water

1 egg white

600g pork belly/ground pork with a 60:40 meat:fat ratio

1/2 teaspoon salt

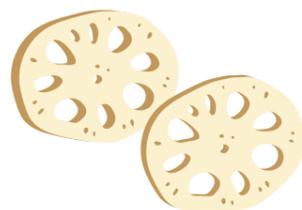
1/4 teaspoon sugar

1 tablespoon Japanese cooking sake

1/2 teaspoon white pepper powder

2 teaspoons cornstarch

6 pieces of baby bok choy





Directions:

1. Prepare chicken broth and keep warm while preparing meatballs.
2. Finely dice lotus root and set aside.
3. Cut each cabbage leaf in half, horizontally (separating stems from leaves).
4. Cut two horizontal slices of ginger and set aside. In a small bowl, grate green onions and remaining piece of ginger. Add 100ml water and set aside.
5. Separate egg and set aside egg white.
6. Finely dice pork belly and roughly chop until texture is sticky and resembles ground pork. Skip this step if using pre-ground pork.
7. Transfer pork into a large bowl. Add salt, sugar, cooking wine, egg white, white pepper powder, and cornstarch to the bowl. Mix together by hand in one direction.
8. Add lotus root and mix again in the same direction.
9. Slowly add mixture of green onion, ginger, and water from Step 4. Mix again in the same direction until the texture is sticky.
10. In a large stew pot, place napa cabbage stems from Step 3 along the bottom of the pot. The meatballs will rest on top of these stems to prevent them from sticking to the bottom of the pot.
11. Divide pork mixture into six parts, forming into balls.
12. Place meatballs onto napa cabbage stems and cover each meatball with a napa cabbage leaf.
13. Slowly add boiling chicken broth to the pot and avoid directly pouring onto meatballs.
14. Add the two ginger slices from Step 3 to the pot.
15. Once the whole pot is brought to a boil, cover and simmer for two hours.
16. After 2 hours, remove leaves and ginger from the pot. Add baby bok choy and cook for one minute.
17. Serve in six separate bowls—enjoy!

*Lara Yi is an incoming ALT from the USA and the current Language Section Editor for **CONNECT**. She spends her free time learning Japanese, trying recipes from Antoni's cookbook, and tending to her Animal Crossing island.*



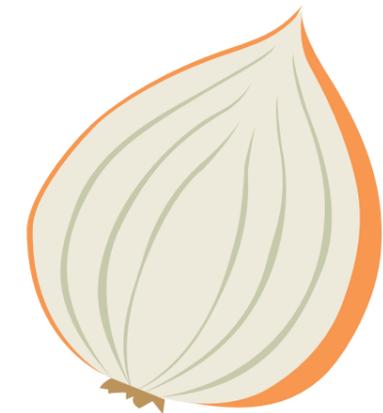
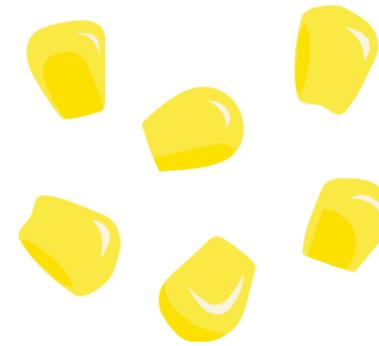
Taco Soup

Taco, not Tako.

There is no octopus in this soup.

Meg Luedtke (Fukui)

Tacos and soup were two foods I never expected to ever go together, but it quickly became one of my favorite cold weather meals after my step-mother introduced it to me many years ago. It's actually a borderline addiction, considering how often I make it. It's a simple but flavorful meal, with the potential for lots of customization, allowing you to make it perfect for your personal tastes!



Servings: 5

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil

~500 grams of lean ground beef

1/2 yellow onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 (8 ounce) jar of salsa

14 ounces of water (1 and 3/4 cups)

1 beef broth bouillon cube

1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce

1 packet of taco seasoning*

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

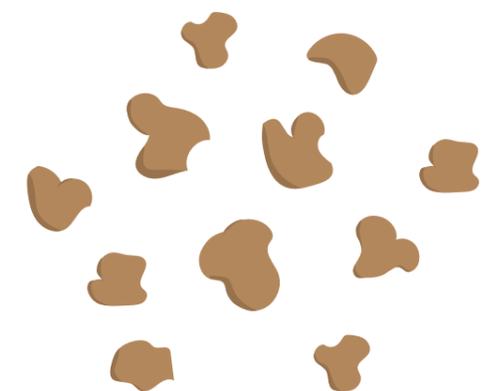
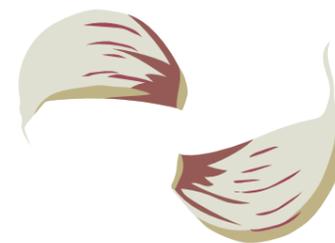
1 cup frozen corn

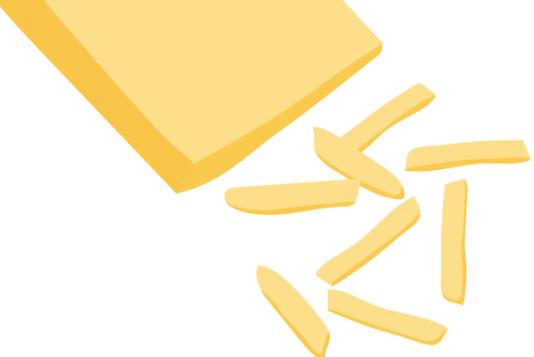
Shredded cheese

Additional ingredients of your preference**

*If you don't have taco seasoning you can make your own using 1 tablespoon of chili powder, 1 teaspoon of ground cumin, 3/4 teaspoon of ground paprika, and 1/4 teaspoon of dried oregano

**You can add other ingredients such as black or pinto beans, jalapenos, diced tomatoes, sour cream, tortilla chips, etc. But the above are the primary ingredients I use.

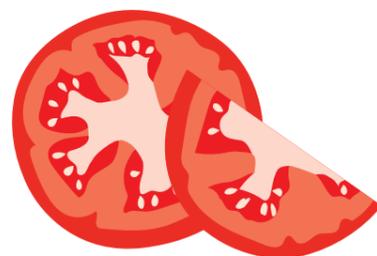




Directions:

1. On one stove top, put water in a large pot. Bring water to a light boil and add a beef broth bouillon cube. Let water and bouillon simmer and dissolve while working on other things.
2. On another stove top, heat a large pan over medium-high heat, drizzle lightly with oil.
3. Once the oil has heated up, add ground beef to the large pan, brown the meat, and season. After seasoning, add chopped onion, stirring occasionally until caramelized. Add garlic and saute 1 minute longer.
4. Drain excess fat from beef mixture.
5. Add your ground beef into the beef broth. Stir in salsa, tomato sauce, and extra seasonings with salt and pepper to taste. Cover pot with lid and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Add in corn and let simmer for another 10 minutes.
7. Serve into bowls and add cheese as well as any other desired toppings for a tasty meal to keep you warm this winter!

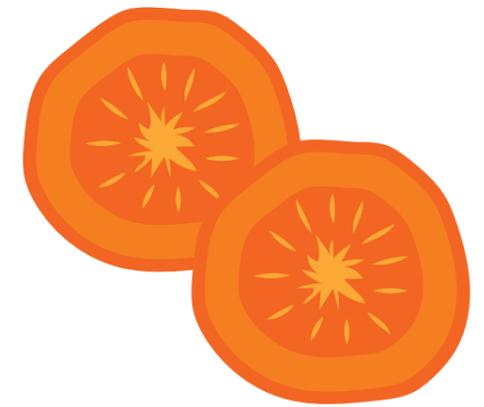
*Meg Luedtke is a Fukui Assistant Language Teacher from America and the current Head Designer for **CONNECT**. She spends most of her free time exploring (or at least the areas she can for now) and taking photos, reading manga, or playing games (dying over and over again in her most recent addiction, Hades).*



SOUPER EASY WINTER SOUP RECIPE

Ashley De La Haye (Hyōgo)

There's nothing quite like a hot bowl of soup to warm your soul on a long winter night. Being placed in the depths of Hokkaidō last year, many evenings were spent slowly making my way through a pan of this chunky soup, huddled in front of my kerosene stove. This recipe can be made completely vegetarian or vegan if you have vegetable stock powder. If you're feeling really hungry, try adding some snapped-up spaghetti to the soup to satisfy that carb craving.

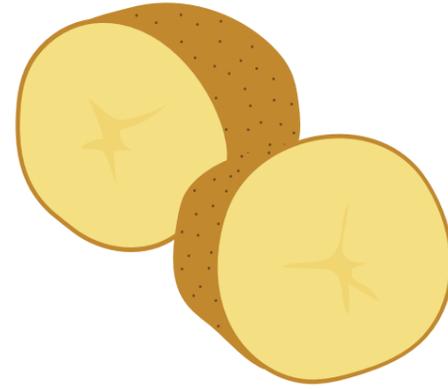


INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon of olive oil
1 onion, diced
4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 carrot
2 potatoes
Salt, pepper and chili flakes to taste

1 1/2 stock cubes (you can use vegetarian/
vegan ones if you can get your hands on some!)
Handful of quinoa
Handful of split red lentils

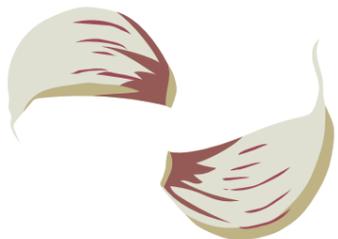




DIRECTIONS:

1. First add the oil to a hot pan and brown the onions and garlic together, adding salt and pepper to taste.
2. Cut the carrots and potatoes into large chunks, then add to a pan of water and bring to the boil.
3. Add the quinoa and lentils to the pan of water and boil until all ingredients are cooked through.
4. Add the stock cubes to the pan and transfer the garlic and onions into the soup.
5. Stir through until the stock is completely dissolved, adding salt, pepper, and chilli flakes to taste.

Ashley is a second-year ALT who transferred this year from Hokkaidō to the much warmer Kōbe City in Hyōgo Prefecture. She enjoys all things music, food and drinking and is currently eating her body weight in chocolate on the lead-up to Christmas.

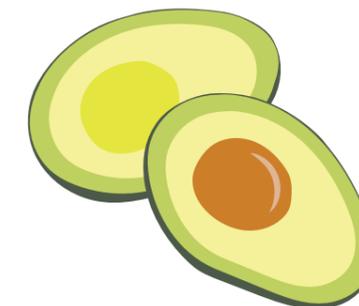


Festive Chocolate-Orange Pudding

Day Bulger (Gunma)

Searching all over for a fun and unique holiday recipe? Well, look no further! This chocolatey treasure not only looks (and tastes) like Christmas incarnate, but it's also totally vegan and easy to make in Japan and beyond! Your guests will never believe that the mastermind behind its rich and creamy texture is none other than the humble avocado!

This chocolate pudding tastes great all on its own, but if you're looking to take your festive game to the next level, grab a bag of oranges and make your own serving bowls! This recipe whips up in about 30 minutes and is easily customizable to suit your holiday cravings. Feel free to put your own little spin on it while enjoying some dainty, avocado magic over the holidays.



Ingredients:

For the Pudding:

- 1 large, ripe avocado
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the Festive Garnish:

- several medium-sized oranges (at least one for each person)
- several mint leaves (optional)

Servings: 3-4 people (can be doubled or tripled according to your guest list)





Directions:

Step 1: Prep the Orange Bowls

Cut the top off of each of the oranges. You can slice them off horizontally, or you can be really fancy and cut them off in a zigzag pattern. Scoop out the middle of the oranges (being careful not to poke any holes in them), and transfer the contents to a separate bowl. Squeeze out as much juice as you can from the orange contents and set aside. Rinse off the outsides of the orange bowls and dry with a paper towel.

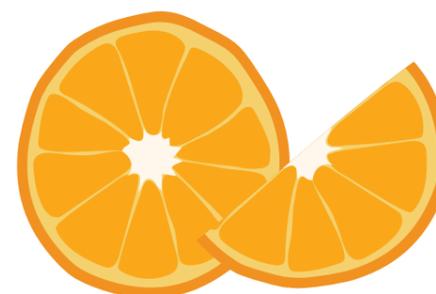
Step 2: Prep the Chocolate-Orange Pudding

Place the four pudding ingredients together in a blender (a Magic Bullet blender is the perfect size for this job). Add about four tablespoons of the freshly-squeezed orange juice. Blend the ingredients together. The pudding will thicken up very quickly, so add more orange juice to thin it out as needed.

Step 3: Serve and Enjoy!

Spoon the chocolate-orange pudding from the blender into each orange bowl. Put each bowl on a plate. Garnish with fresh mint leaves. If not serving right away, cover them with plastic wrap and place them in the refrigerator. Enjoy!

*Day is a second-year Canadian JET and copy editor for **CONNECT** who currently resides in Annaka, Gunma. She adores cooking up tasty treats and is always on the lookout for new, plant-based recipes. In her spare time, she enjoys playing music, studying Japanese, and playing video games to her heart's content.*



REVIEWS

An Evening of Kagura Online

Rachel Fagundes

Don't Forget YAMAP

Alice Ridley

An A-MANZA-ing Getaway

Derek Hurst

A Cow's Eye View

Alice French

Tōkyō's Top Bakeries

Kayla Fransis

A Nice Flippin' Change of Pace

Damien Levi

NETFLIX

An Evening of Kagura Online

Rachel Fagundes (Okayama) “What is *kagura* and where can I see it?” is a question you probably haven’t been asking yourself this month—or ever—but **boy**, have you been missing out.

Kagura is a fabulous and thrilling folk art in which masked dancers perform wondrous tales from Japanese mythology involving malevolent spider demons, noble samurai, drunk dragons, magical swords, vengeful princesses, fox weddings, and more.

Different regions of Japan have cultivated unique performance styles, costumes, and stories in their kagura traditions. Hiroshima Prefecture in particular has been very keen to preserve their local kagura style and show off this splendid performing art to the rest of the world.

Thus, “An Evening of Kagura” was developed to make kagura accessible to English-speaking audiences. At weekly events held at Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum and Hiroshima YMCA, kagura troupes from around the prefecture would perform their most popular act while a translation of the dialogue was projected on a nearby wall. These performances were always preceded by a short video about the history of kagura in English and followed by a Q&A session with the performers.

These events were extremely well organized, and were probably the most fun and accessible way to experience kagura as a casual viewer.

Katsuragi-zan performed by the Yachiyo Kagura Troupe

Unfortunately, coronavirus has made holding these types of events in person dangerous for everyone involved, so “An Evening of Kagura” was suspended back in February of 2020. However, you apparently cannot keep a Vengeful Spider Demon down. “An Evening of Kagura” has adapted to the times and switched to an online format.

“An Evening of Kagura” now sends a film crew out to record troupes performing at their local shrines and community centers, then uploads the video (with English subtitles) and a following Q&A session onto YouTube. Some performances are even live streamed onto YouTube rather than filmed in advance, allowing viewers to submit their questions to the Q&A session in real time. They will be uploading new content through mid-February (autumn and winter are the traditional kagura festival months) and I highly recommend checking them out.

You can find Hiroshima Kagura’s YouTube channel [here](#). All videos titled “An Evening of Kagura Online” or “Winter Kagura Festival” have English subtitles.

You can also follow “An Evening of Kagura” on [Facebook](#) for more updates or check out their website [here](#) for information about Hiroshima’s different kagura troupes and story summaries of their performances.

For even more articles about kagura around Japan and interviews with kagura performers, stay tuned to **CONNECT**’s entertainment section in the upcoming months!

Schedule of Upcoming Performances:

*All performances can be found on [YouTube](#) shortly after recording.

January 9, 2021
Kuwatatenshi Kagura Troupe (Akitakata City)
Katsuragi-yama (Mt Katsuragi, home of the Earth-Spider)

January 17, 2021 (Livestream)
Tenjin Kagura Troupe (Akitakata City)
Takiyasha-hime (Princess Takiyasha)

January 24, 2021
Takai Kagura Troupe (Hiroshima City)
Tsuchigumo (The Earth-Spider)

February 6, 2021
Yoshida Kagura Troupe (Akitakata City)
Takiyasha-hime (Princess Takiyasha)

February 13, 2021
Yachiyo Kagura Troupe (Akitakata City)
Katsuragi-yama (Mt Katsuragi, home of the Earth-Spider)

February 14, 2021
Uegochi Kagura Troupe (Akitakata City)
Momijigari (Maple Viewing)



Rachel Fagundes is the Entertainment editor of [CONNECT] and a fourth-year JET in rural Okayama. She likes Japanese festivals, science fiction novels, and sassy cats.

KAGURA



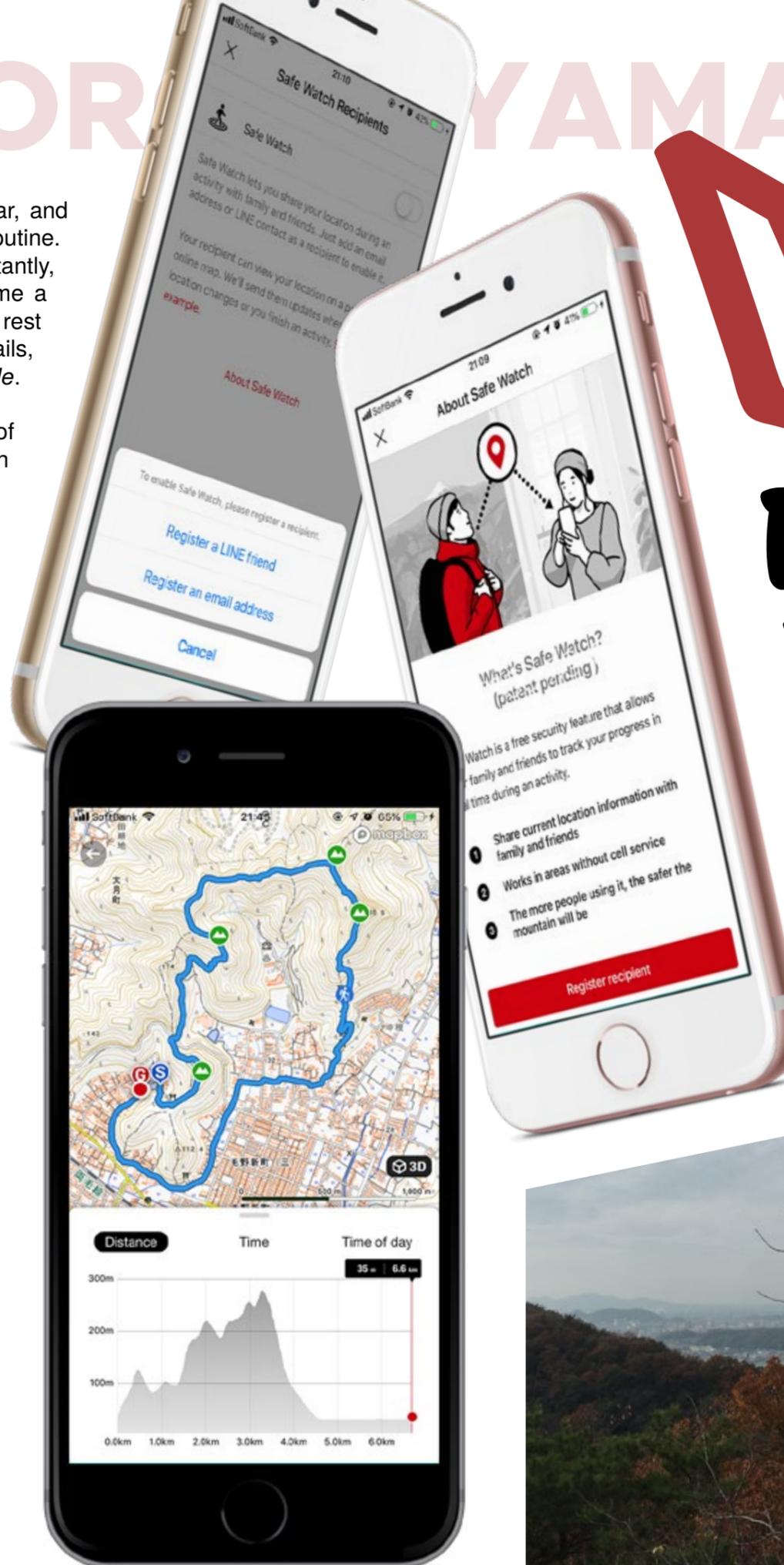
Momijigari performed by the Uegochi Kagura Troupe

DONT FOR YAMAP

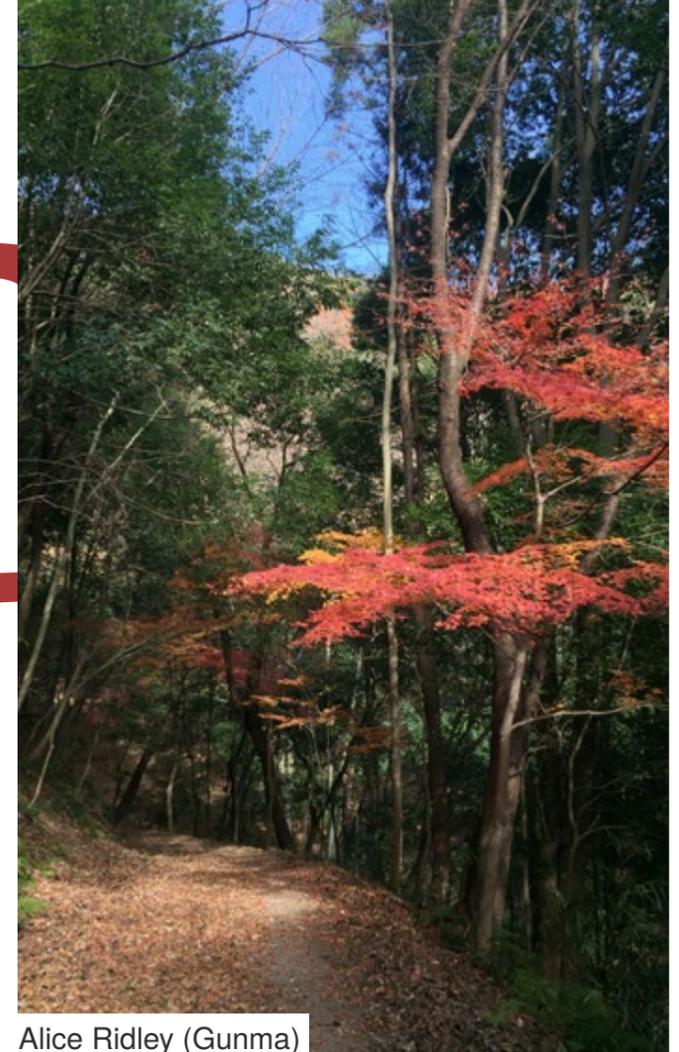
Health has been on many people's minds this year, and due to this, I have tried to fit more hiking into my routine. This year, hiking has kept me sane and, more importantly, socially distanced from others. It also has given me a sense of mental and physical challenge when the rest of my life has slowed down. I want to explore new trails, but the states of Japanese websites are *questionable*.

The admin of finding the trails would take up a lot of my beloved mountain time. I was having three main issues: finding the trails, finding trailheads, and signage on trails being very old and sometimes completely unreadable. Google Maps information can be patchy, so I got the most information from taking photos of trail guidance on arrival. When I would reach a fork on the trail, I'd be on my own. I have also *completely* gone off track before and had to blindly retrace my steps and find the trail again. Not recommended.

I found a solution to this time-consuming activity after a quick Google. I found a Japan-based application called YAMAP—a social trekking GPS application available free for [Apple](#) and [Android](#). I think that the social aspect of this app can be quite neat as it tells you how many users you've passed during your trek. Other users can also upload their trekking journals, which is helpful for future adventures.



Don't Forget YAMAP



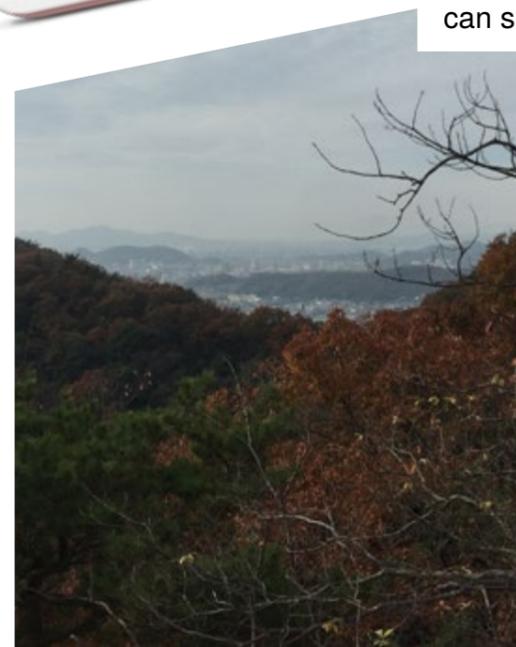
Alice Ridley (Gunma)

The app is summarised like this: “YAMAP does not require a mobile signal to track and log your outdoor activity. Our detailed outdoor maps provide information you need like elevation, parking and trailhead locations. YAMAP lets you build an online outdoor journal easily so you can share your love of the outdoors!”(1). The features I liked about this app were that it helps you find mountains in your area and download up to five maps (more if you purchase the premium version), it shows parking and water sources available nearby, and at the end of your trek you are able to see the visualization of the summits you tackled. It has everything you need in one place and more features that I haven't even explored yet! Another feature of the premium version is safe watch where you can share your location to friends and family.

Before heading out on your trek, make sure you've downloaded the TEPCO radiation map, told a friend where you are going, packed a sustaining lunch, and downloaded your favourite music or podcasts (My favourite podcasts can be found [here](#). I recommend putting your phone on flight mode so your battery and your mind can enjoy the experience to the fullest.

Alice Ridley is the Head Editor of **CONNECT**. She soon will be returning to her home of New Zealand and, like most, isn't sure what 2021 will bring. She hopes to relocate to Tainan, the cultural capital of Taiwan, to study Chinese. She likes podcasts, mountains, and quiet art galleries.

Sources: (1) [Play store](#)



AN A- MANZA -ING -LE



Derek Hurst (Nagano)

GET AWAY

Nestled high in the mountains that straddle Nagano and Gunma prefectures lies the unique, hot spring village of Manza Onsen. Often overshadowed by its more famed neighbor, Kutatsu, Manza offers the kind of rugged yet refined experience that few other resort towns in Japan can truly match.

The most singular aspect of Manza would have to be its otherworldly surroundings. At 1800 m above sea level, it is the second-highest hot spring resort in Japan. It is a comparatively sleepy place, comprising several large hotels, a modest ski resort, and a slew of souvenir shops—and, because the town is technically located within the boundaries of scenic Jōshin'etsu-kōgen National Park, development has been restricted for decades, leaving a relatively untouched and pristine area free of the unsightly high-rises and boisterous neon signs characteristic of most Japanese hot spring villages.

The overpowering smell of sulfur quickly takes up residence within the nostrils; yet, after spending a few days luxuriating in the waters and hiking the surrounding area, the acrid aroma will become familiar and, remarkably, even enjoyable. The waters themselves are colored a milky blue and are fairly acidic, which lend themselves well to unwinding after a long, cold day on the slopes. However, those with overly sensitive skin may experience irritation after repeated bathing. One need not fear, though—the water is perfectly safe and is considered to be some of the most medicinal in the region, long having been lauded as the perfect natural treatment of everything from rheumatoid arthritis to psoriasis.

Most of the hotels are of the more traditional variety in terms of décor, yet provide a highly satisfying and memorable stay. One of the Manza mainstays are, in fact, the delectable dinner buffets offered at some of the hotels, which, until COVID-19, were one of the primary draws for tourists. Now on indefinite hold because of the virus, once the pandemic elapses, hotels assure us that the delicious all-you-can-eats will quickly be back on the proverbial menu.

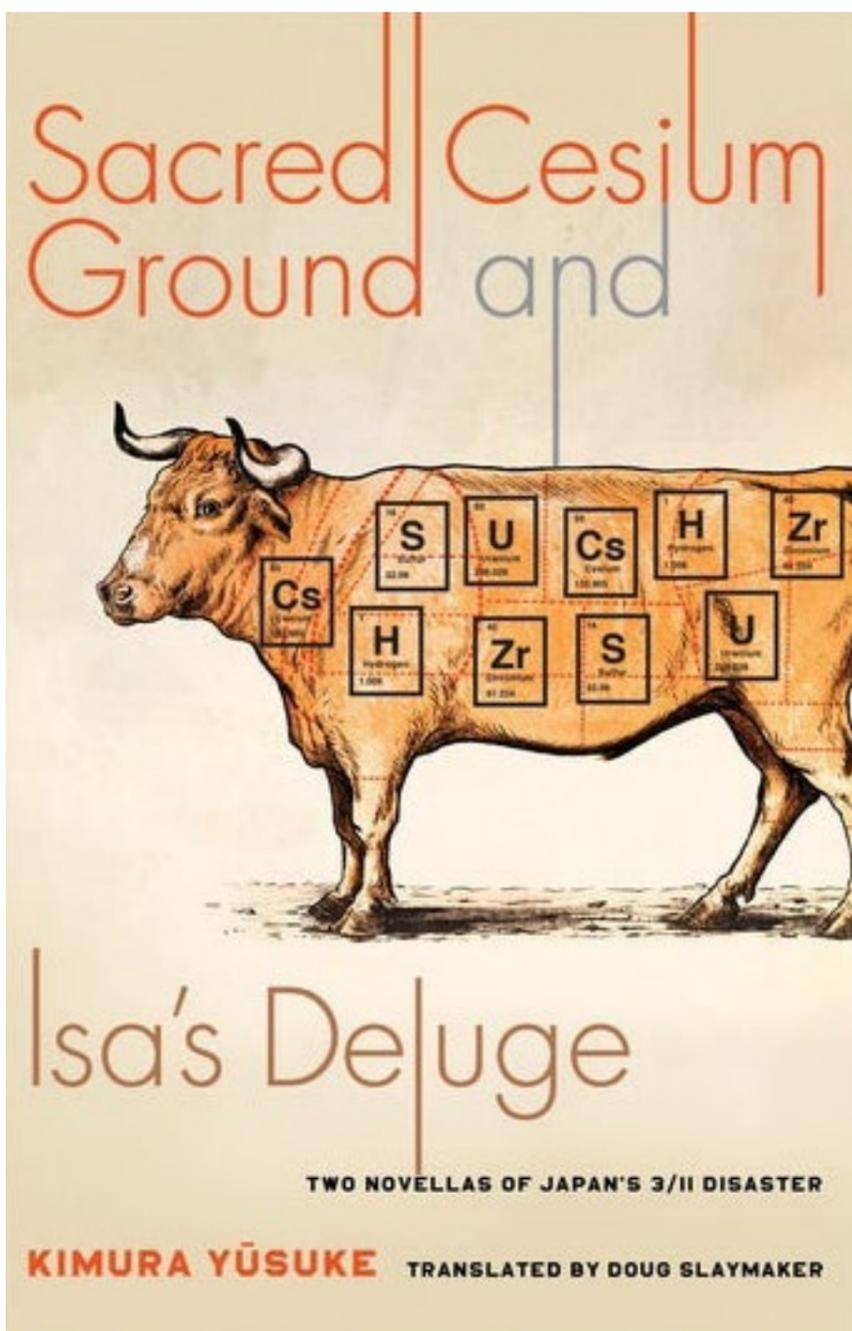
Manza Onsen may lack some of the flash and bluster of larger resorts, but it more than makes up for its lack of concrete and *conbini* with another kind of energy—a primal energy that revitalizes the soul and calls to mind the romanticism of old Japan combined with the natural aesthetic of the alpine resorts of Tuscany and Switzerland. Whether it be a simple, weekend jaunt or an extended getaway from the big city, Manza Onsen is sure to provide an unforgettable and, most importantly, relaxing stay in the high mountains; that is, as long as you promise to leave your worries behind you.

*Derek Hurst has lived in Nagano Prefecture for almost ten years and enjoys both winter and summer getaways to far-flung and isolated resort towns, ski resorts, and mountain huts. He edits the Business Section at **CONNECT Magazine**.*



A Cow's Eye View

'Sacred Cesium Ground' by Kimura Yusuke



Alice French (Yamagata)

Political protests come in many forms. Boycotts, sit-ins, marches, flashmobs, the list goes on. For Yoshizawa Masami, of Namie Town, Fukushima Prefecture, political protest comes in the form of raising cows. He is the proprietor of *Kibō no Bokujō* (The Ranch of Hope), where he keeps around 300 cows, all of whom were abandoned by local farmers following the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent nuclear disaster of Mar. 11, 2011 (otherwise known as 3/11). In the aftermath of the explosion of the Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, the national government ordered all livestock in the surrounding area to be killed, as the animals were considered to be contaminated by the radioactive fallout. In defiance of this order, to this day, Yoshizawa continues to raise his cattle on the Ranch of Hope, situated just 14km from the power plant, in the hope that they will be a living reminder of the suffering that the rural Tōhoku region has experienced as a result of 3/11, and proof of what he considers to be the insufficiency of the government's financial support for the farmers affected.

In 2014, author Kimura Yusuke visited Yoshizawa's Ranch of Hope as a volunteer. His 2016 novella, '聖地Cs' ('Sacred Cesium Ground'), is a semi-fictional account of his time there. It follows the story of a young Tokyoite, Nishino, during her couple of days' volunteering at a ranch called the "Fortress of Hope." In between feeding the cows and shovelling a *lot* of what she refers to as "mudshit", Nishino learns about the hardships that the people of Tōhoku have been

subjected to at the hands of Japan's central government from the ranch's owner, Sendo. He asserts that Tōhoku residents have been treated like "disposable people," their lives sacrificed to meet the needs of those living in the financial metropolis of Tōkyō (all of the power produced by Fukushima Daiichi before the disaster was fed directly back to Tōkyō). By the end of her volunteering stint, city girl Nishino, who was initially horrified by the cows on the "Fortress of Hope," finds an affinity with the animals, and ends up reluctant to return to her monotonous Tōkyō lifestyle.

'Sacred Cesium Ground' is an excellent read, not only because it provides a rare and refreshing account of the 3/11 disaster as told by the farmers who were directly affected, which is invaluable within a narrative that is too often dominated by central government voices. The novella also offers a thought-provoking critique of the power structures in Japanese society. It is a story of dichotomies: collective versus individual, Tōkyō versus Tōhoku, animals versus humans, dirty versus clean. Within the confines of the "Fortress of Hope," ordinary power balances are reversed. Tōhoku takes centre stage; animals' needs are prioritised over humans'; the contaminated, radioactive grounds are regarded as "sacred." Kimura thus suggests that 3/11, although a tragedy for the Tōhoku region, in fact, offers a promising opportunity to reevaluate the distribution of power in modern Japan. Although borne out of disaster, 'Sacred Cesium Ground' is, just like the ranch itself, ultimately a story of hope.

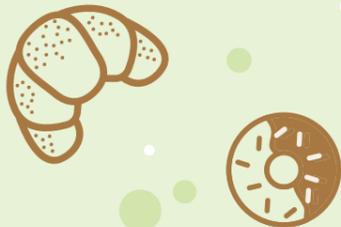
The English version of '聖地Cs,' translated by Doug Slaymaker, is available on [Amazon](#).

Alice French is a second-year CIR from Cambridge, England, based at the Prefectural Office in Yamagata. When she is not singing in the shower or taking pictures of sunsets for Instagram, she can be found hiking or skiing on one of Yamagata's many mountains.

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| boron 5 B 10.811 | carbon 6 C 12.011 | nitrogen 7 N 14.007 | oxygen 8 O 15.999 |
| aluminium 13 Al 26.982 | silicon 14 Si 28.086 | phosphorus 15 P 30.974 | sulfur 16 S 32.065 |
| gallium 31 Ga 69.723 | germanium 32 Ge 72.64 | arsenic 33 As 74.922 | selenium 34 Se 78.96 |
| indium 49 In 114.82 | tin 50 Sn 118.71 | antimony 51 Sb 121.76 | tellurium 52 Te 127.60 |
| thallium 81 Tl 204.38 | lead 82 Pb 207.2 | bismuth 83 Bi 208.98 | polonium 84 Po (209) |

Tōkyō's Top Bakeries

Kayla Francis
(Tōkyō)



Tōkyō is home to hundreds of bakeries. In a city famous for thousands of restaurants and 304 Michelin stars, it can be hard to know where to go. Of course, the chances of walking into a great place are high, but with so much choice available, very few places warrant a return back. That's why we at **CONNECT** have done all the hard work for you. Here are the top three bakeries you can't leave Tōkyō without visiting.

Boul'ange - Shibuya

Boul'ange is a chain of bakeries in Tōkyō, so you don't have to go to the one in Shibuya. However, what makes this place special is convenience. Being close to the station, it's the perfect rest stop if you want something small. Upstairs, it has 60 seats, and there is even a toaster oven by the checkouts, making it perfect for takeaways. Boul'ange also wins for its seasonal menu items. They tend to have something new out on a regular basis, so you always want to come back and try the new items.



Kayla is a second-year Tōkyō JET from London, UK. When she's not working, she can be found eating her way through Tōkyō, trying out new classes, reading, and cooking. She keeps track of all her eating and cooking on Instagram: [@kayla64a](#) and has a [blog](#)



Nata de Cristiano - Yoyogi Kōen

Come here for one thing and one thing only. The pastéis de nata (custard tarts) here are probably one of the best outside of Portugal. Famous for their soft, crispy pastry, slightly warm, rich custard that's caramelised on top and speckled with little pieces of sea salt, this tiny shop will have you coming back on a regular basis. The staff are consistently making tarts, so you can guarantee that, when you arrive, they will be fresh. There are no seats; however, just around the corner is Cafe Rostro, a charming cafe with outdoor seating, excellent coffee, and even coffee-flavoured soft serve, or, with Yoyogi Park closeby, these tarts will make you very popular at any picnic.



Gentile - Meguro

Of all the bakeries, this is the one I find myself coming to the most. Despite being in Meguro and only a walk away from Nakameguro Station, this bakery is seemingly in the middle of nowhere as it is hidden amongst apartments and a busy road. This place does crispy French bread very, very well. For a European-inspired bakery, it is more on the affordable side compared to other Tōkyō bakeries. It's so popular that there is often a small queue outside at peak times. Come here for the fougasse bread! My favourite is the olive and tomato. The cheesy pizza-inspired breads are also very good. My go-to is the Gorgonzola and honey one. The bakery is located close to Meguro River, so I highly recommend stopping there afterwards.



TAISŌ ZAMURAI



Our cast quickly balloons out with an amusing array of side-characters who all have stylish and exciting designs: Jō's mother-in-law; the mama at a snack bar, Ayu; a ganguro girl working at the bar, Birgbird; a semi-sentient bird from South America; and Britney, a flamboyant acupuncturist.

The story is nothing crazy; it's easy to follow with a couple of twists and turns but is ultimately a slow burn of Jō getting himself back to competing condition. It's a refreshing change from anime that are throwing a new huge story twist at you every three episodes, making the things convoluted.

It was *Taisō Zamurai's* art style that initially grabbed my attention when I was browsing through the seasonal anime releases a few months back. With its bright colours, rounded lines and dynamic poses, it stands out as a work from the MAPPA animation studio.

MAPPA has been busy the last few years, pushing out several really popular works like *Yuri on Ice*, *Banana Fish*, *Dororo*, *Sarazanmai*, *The God of High School* and *Dorohedoro*. I have to give props to them for managing what's arguably the fan-favourite anime of the last season *Jujutsu Kaisen*, and the final season of *Shingeki no Kyojin (Attack on Titan)* without sacrificing the quality of animation in *Taisō Zamurai*.

Taisō Zamurai is sweet simplicity, a fact that has drawn some criticism from viewers who were expecting a focus on gymnastics that you would expect from a sports anime. In my opinion, at its core, this anime is a story about family and how they can be unconventional and how that's okay. Get into it!

A NICE FLIPPIN' CHANGE OF PACE

Damien Levi (Tōkyō)

How do you feel about an anime where the main character is a single father raising his adorable daughter? What if I added in the fact that he's also training to be an Olympic athlete? Not sold quite yet, huh? Okay, it's also the year 2002, with a ballet dancing ninja, a snack bar mama and a semi-sentient exotic bird.

That's *Taisō Zamurai (The Gymnastics Samurai)* in a nutshell.

In a time where anime is oversaturated with *isekai* (different world) shows full of harems, there are few anime other than the shōnen big hitters that are catching my attention. *Taisō Zamurai* has been a nice respite in the past anime season, offering a relaxed slice of life story with a few quirks.

The story centres around Aragaki Jōtarō, an aging former-Olympic medalist stuck in a slump and raising his daughter Rei alone after his wife's passing. Meanwhile, he's also trying to get back into fighting shape for the 2004 Olympic Games when a mysterious ninja, Leo, and a young rival, Minamino, enter their lives.



Damien is the Assistant Editor for **CONNECT** Magazine and a Māori New Zealander in Tōkyō teaching English. He's slowly working his way through his gaming and tv/film back-catalogues through the winter months. Catch him over on Instagram [@damienlevi](#) for shenanigans.

RECREATIONS

Cutting Imaginary Tofu

Clare Braganza

Reclaiming My Connection with Skating

Rhema Baquero

Hiking Through History

Natalie Andrews

Give a Story Life This Year

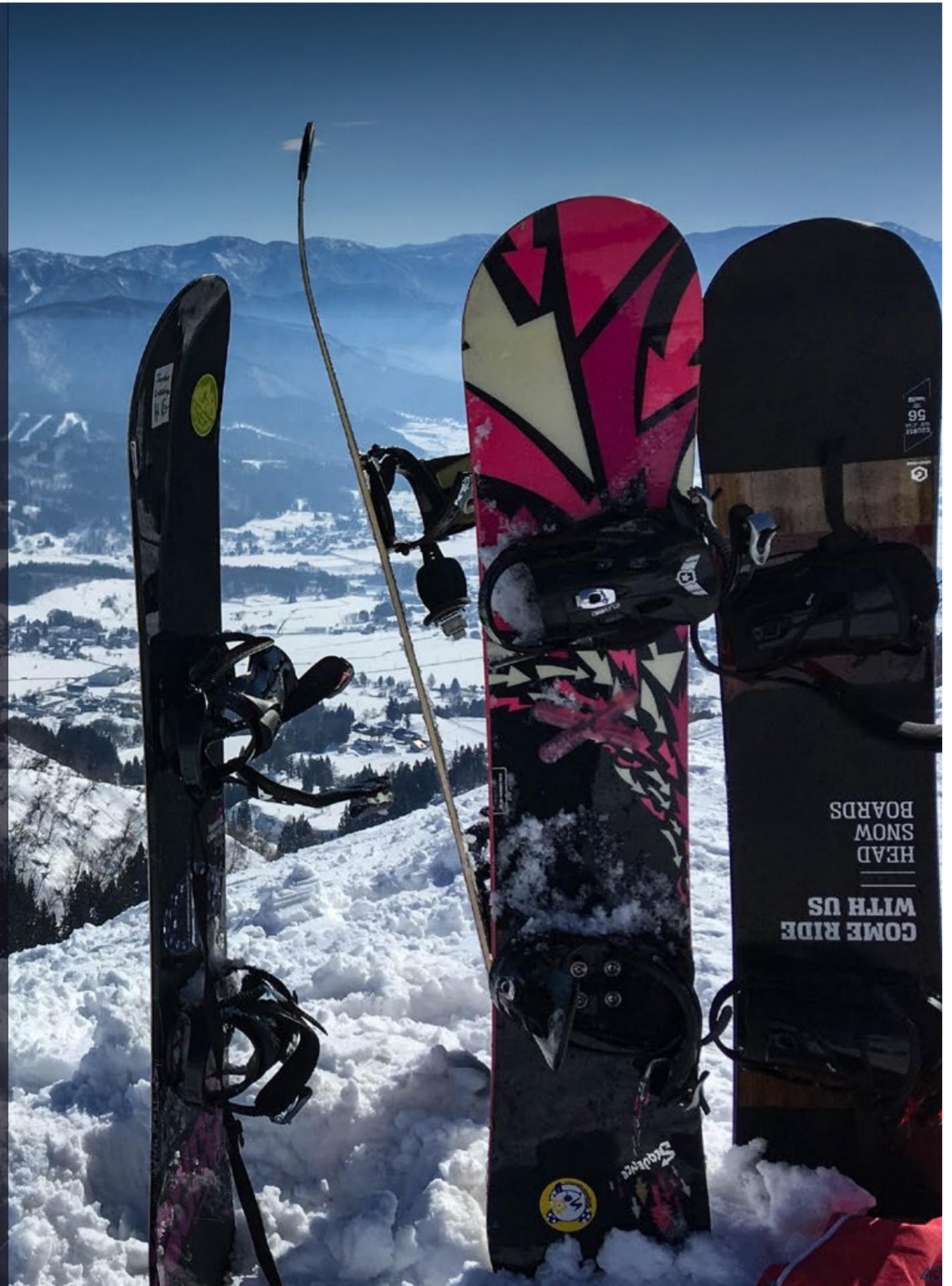
Dianne Yett

Togei: Learning Ceramics in Japan

Jessica Craven

Go 2 Campaign: A Surreal Experience

Cameron Peagler



CUTTING IMAGINARY TOFU

Clare Braganza (Fukushima)

Ever tried dancing in a kimono?

The skirt only allows for small steps, and when you add a folding fan in one hand and a surprisingly heavy parasol in the other, suddenly it's all you can do to remember which foot to slide forwards first. The masters, of course, make this multitasking look effortless. This is Nihon Buyō, a traditional form of Japanese dance.

Hailing from the Meiji Era when Japan was keen on establishing its traditional arts, Nihon Buyō is a mix of *geisha* aesthetics and *kabuki* dance forms. Dancers, both male and female, wear different styles of kimono in winter and *yukata* in summer, along with white *tabi* socks that have a split toe. In fact, the first challenge of a

Nihon Buyō lesson is getting dressed. Many hidden ties keep the kimono in place, and the knot must be crossed in the 'lucky' way. Everything has meaning, from the edge of the folding fan—which signifies eternity—to the angle of your body in respect to your outstretched arms.

Nihon Buyō consists of slow, controlled movements. As someone who used to street dance, I thought this would make it easy. How wrong I was! This dance is the ultimate thigh workout. You have to bend your knees and sit deep in your stance, using your core to keep your upper body straight. The best way to achieve this: pretend to sit on a chair, with your back flat against a wall. Now hold that as you move forwards, one step, two, sliding your feet forwards no further than shoulder-width apart.

Skilled dancers make this look effortless, but my legs always shake by the end of class. To make it worse, the fan in your hand shouldn't move up and down as you dance—you move around the fan. So when your arms point downwards, you bend your knees lower, and when you sweep your fan down and up, you have to get your body beneath it. The aesthetic looks elegant and effortless, but in reality the dancers must have cores of steel.

But the dance is not purely physical. A lot of the traditional songs have a narrative. So far, I have performed a dance around a summer evening in Kyōto—featuring cutting tōfu and fanning myself on a riverbank—and a boat trip beneath Mt. Fuji. The fan acts as your trusty prop, representing a

mountain when you open it above your head, or a lotus flower unfolding in your hands. It even becomes a punting stick as you push your boat across the lake. My teacher always stresses the importance of this narrative. As you dance, you have to imagine the scenes so deeply that the audience can see that lake, that riverbank, and the tōfu you cut with your hands. When skilled dancers perform, it really is a work of art.

As for me, I'll probably never look truly effortless, but I can now understand the deeper cultural meaning behind a lot of Japanese symbolism and customs—something which regularly impresses my Japanese coworkers. If you want to learn a traditional Japanese art and get the bonus of a thigh workout, look no further than Nihon Buyō.

Clare is a second-year JET in the inaka of Fukushima, but she's originally from England. When not editing **CONNECT's** Wellness section, she spends her days reading fantasy books, writing stories, and hiking up random mountains in northern Japan. You can follow her travels [here](#).





Rhema Baquero (Kōbe)

Frosty winds bit my face and snow crept its way into my boots, but despite my disdain for the cold, the thrill of shooting down the mountain in Hokkaido during my first time snowboarding is one of my favorite memories in Japan. Looking for that same rush this year, I am revisiting my favorite recreation throughout college: skating.

On long nights that stretched into mornings, I loved speeding down gigantic hills and garage ramps on my black and white spotted skateboard. After being stuck in the house this year, I needed an activity that would allow me to safely enjoy the open air. If you feel the same, skating has a relatively easy bar of entry, so you can enjoy it too after these few stepstings.

GET YOUR EQUIPMENT

Just like in the West, skating can be expensive. Vintage skates can go for ¥20,000 on Instagram, and buying a deck at a skate shop will cost a lot. If you are not going to fully immerse in either form, Amazon.jp has decent options for less than a ¥10,000.

WATCH SOME YOUTUBE

If you used to blade back in those skating rink days, I'll bet you'll find your feet again after a few moments. To be on the safe side, go to Millennial University, AKAaka YouTube, to check out videos on starting and stopping. Also, look up a few tricks to set a learning goal and keep working towards them. My ollie is *ruuuusty*, so I am working on that.

Know where you can ride
The laws about skating on the sidewalks or roads in Japan are fuzzy. Even when I ask Japanese skaters, I never get a clear answer. To be safe, search for skate-parks or regular parks with bike paths and open spaces. Chances are, if Japanese people are also rolling, you should be OK too.

(Safely) Find a Community
Recently, I rode my board at my friend's Roll Out --- a series of socially-distanced outings where residents mount bikes, lace on skates and hop on their boards to coast around Osaka Castle. About a month later, I switched to inline blades for the first time in 15 years and took the hills just like I used too. It was a wonderful opportunity to see friends while exercising.



Baquero before Osaka Castle holding her blue Spitfire with the light up wheels.

Being on wheels again has brought me so much joy during quarantine. When I am coasting the cement, working with physics and gravity, I feel like I am flying. I feel like I am free. And that is a feeling we could all use in 2020.

Rhema Baquero is a third-year Assistant Language TeacherALT placed in the great port city of Kōbe. She can often be found in a coffee shop either reading, writing, drawing, or studying Japanese. After playing rugby in university and graduate school, she was excited to finally attend the Rugby World Cup in 2019.

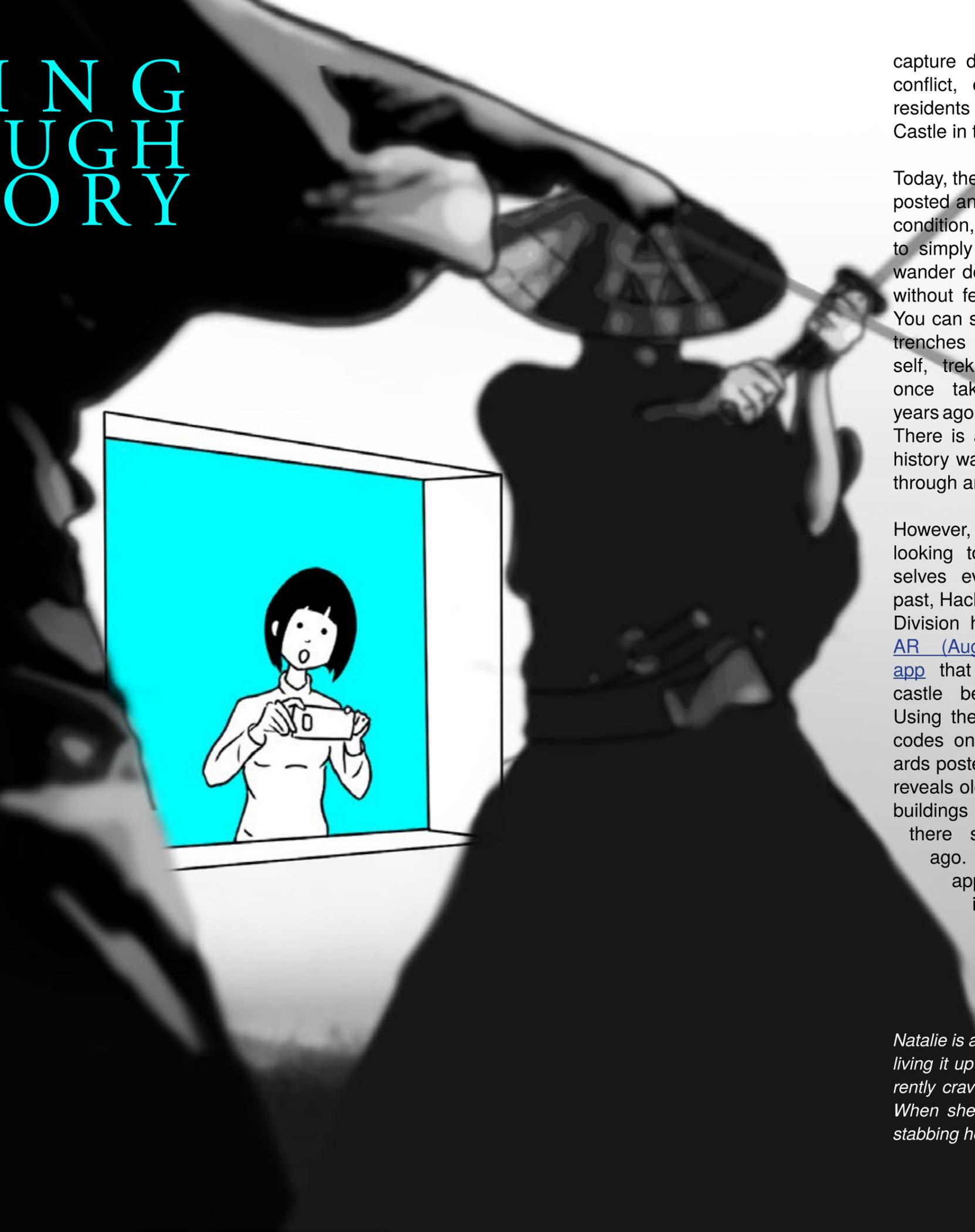


HIKING THROUGH HISTORY

Natalie Andrews (Tōkyō)

There's nothing quite like exploring the grounds of Japan's historical castles, from abandoned ruins to those preserved so they look as if they are still caught in the century they were built in. Takiyama Castle in Hachiōji is a place caught somewhere in between—the main buildings are no longer standing, but the moats, earthworks, and bridges surrounding the castle ruins are still well-maintained, making for an excellent hike for the visitor who ventures off the concrete path.

Even if you are not a castle aficionado, you may have heard of the Takiyama Castle ruins, which was selected for the [“Continued Top 100 Castles in Japan”](#) list in 2017. Built by Ōishi Sadashige in 1521, the site can be found on a 160 m high hilltop in Hachiōji's Metropolitan Takiyama Natural Park. It is lauded for being an incredibly intricate mountaintop castle with earthworks dating back to the Sengoku Period (1467-1615). Thanks to its impregnable defences,



capture during this time of conflict, enduring until its residents moved to Hachiōji Castle in the late 1500s.

Today, the grounds are sign-posted and kept in excellent condition, making it easy to simply grab a map and wander down the side trails without fear of getting lost. You can slide down into the trenches and baileys yourself, trekking down paths once taken hundreds of years ago by invading forces. There is a whole wealth of history waiting to be walked through and experienced.

However, for anyone who's looking to immerse themselves even more in the past, Hachiōji City's Tourism Division has developed an [AR \(Augmented Reality\) app](#) that reconstructs the castle before your eyes. Using the app to scan QR codes on information placards posted in certain areas reveals old fortifications and buildings that proudly stood there some 400 years ago. Not only that, this app also projects the image of samurai

soldiers in how they might have guarded or attacked the castle back in the 1500s, allowing one to understand just how the place remained impenetrable.

With or without the AR app, the ruins are a fascinating place to explore and are beautiful in all seasons. Summer paints it a vivid green, autumn decorates it with a riot of rich reds and golds, and winter makes it chill and stark. With over 5000 cherry blossom trees covering its slopes, Takiyama Castle is also one of the most famous *hanami* spots in the city come spring. Conditions permitting, a visit during April may be well worth your time.

Interested in knowing what other Japanese castles there are to explore? Here is the initial list of [Japan's Top 100 Castles](#), and here is a [comprehensive list of castles that AR apps have been made for!](#)

*Natalie is a second-year ALT and copy editor of **CONNECT** who's living it up (safely) in Tōkyō. Originally from Australia, she's currently craving a summery January instead of snow and clouds! When she's not at work, you can find her reading, writing, or stabbing herself with knitting needles trying to learn a new hobby.*

Dianne Yett (Gunma)

If you are someone that likes stories—reading them, listening to them, playing them, watching them, role-playing in them—and you’ve ever wondered if, maybe, you’d like to tell a story of your own, then boy have I got the winning idea for you:

You should write a novel.

If you’re apprehensive to the idea of putting a whole story to paper or keyboard, in your own words (egad!), that’s OK. Here are some resources that might give you a good kick in the pants:

NOVEL-WRITING AND PLANNING PROGRAMS

Is Microsoft Office starting to catch wind that maybe you *aren’t* a college student anymore and that you don’t “need” that word processor that you’ve fudged your way into owning for free? Try these programs!

1 SCRIVENER

2

CAMPFIRE BLAZE

I. SCRIVENER

is a pretty solid novel-writing program that gives you extra tools in addition to a word-processor for hashing out your plot, such as a corkboard feature that you can use to outline your plot points and better organize your ideas. You can try it out for free for 30 days of use, meaning you can use it, take a break, and come back to it for as long as those 30 days will last you!

2. CAMPFIRE BLAZE

is a new program by Campfire Technologies that, unlike the basic and pro versions of Campfire, includes a word-processor (go figure, right?) along with the bells and whistles of a fantastic novel-planning and worldbuilding program. Although Blaze is still a work in progress, it has a lot of great features

to offer, including customizable character sheets, a wiki-style encyclopedia to develop the lore and background info of your storyworld, a newly improved timeline, and tons of other neat features that can really help you flesh out your novel. Best of all: you can use the program at a limited capacity for free, or you can choose from a range of flexible payment options for the full version.

JOIN NATIONAL NOVEL WRITING MONTH IN NOVEMBER OR CAMP NANOWRIMO IN JULY

It’s never too late (or early) to learn about National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) and start planning a novel for 2021. NaNoWriMo.org is a word count-tracking website with resources to help motivate you. You do not actually post any pieces of writing on this website, but there are regions all over the world with NaNoWriMo forums and Discord servers that you can join to get connected with other aspiring writers and get writing!

If you live in Japan, definitely check out the [Asia :: Japan :: Elsewhere](#) regional NaNoWriMo forum and Discord. We are still fairly active, and we’d love to meet you!

Dianne is a second-year Assistant Language Teacher in Gunma Prefecture and a copy-editor for CONNECT who really, really, deeply enjoys creative writing and listening to American Indie music. This last November, she broke out of her preferred fantasy romance genre to write a sci-fi fantasy about an alternate reality in which magic powers the world’s technologies . . . but at a massive cost to humankind.

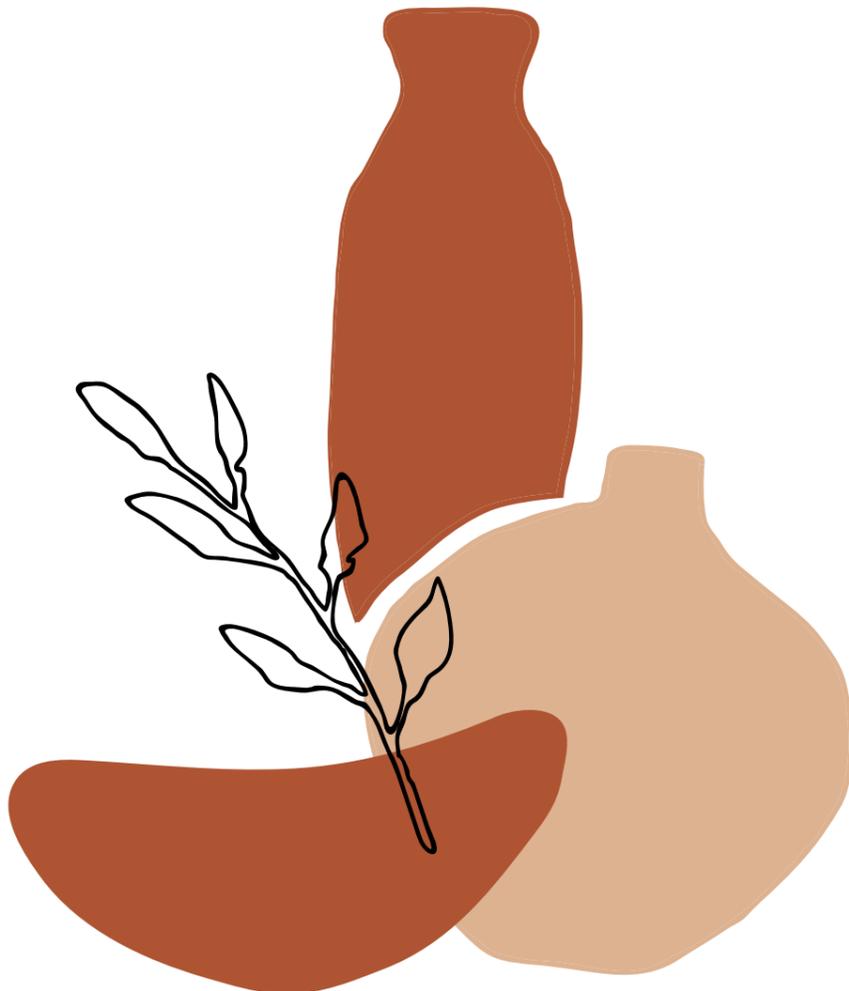
TOGETHER

A couple of years ago, I personally stumbled across an opportunity to join a ceramics group at my local community center. Japan has a long tradition of ceramics, with centuries-old techniques still being handed down to this day, so I thought there was no better place to gain proficiency in the art form than here. Despite somewhat of a language barrier, I have learned a lot through participating over the last couple of years, and it has helped give more purpose to my time in Japan. I will participate in my first group exhibition with this group in March!

If ceramics is something you would like to learn, I would encourage you to ask about opportunities at your local community center! Because it is art, after all, I really think anyone could learn ceramics in Japan simply by observing how other people make things and then giving it a try. There are ceramics circles at most local community centers in Japan, and it is very affordable to join. As with most other groups, some members may be a little surprised to see a foreigner join at first, but people are usually friendly and will get used to you. Just do your best!

By Jessica Craven (Saitama)

Of all its art forms, Japan is arguably most renowned for its crafts, with *tōgei* (or ceramics) being one of the first of these that comes to mind. Both foreign tourists and Japanese alike flock to museums or ateliers to view or purchase Japanese pottery, which is revered for its high quality. As such, **CONNECT** has published a few articles on ceramic exhibitions in the past. However, one topic we have not yet considered until now is how a foreigner can go about learning how to create ceramics in Japan.



While I don't think advanced Japanese ability is necessary to participate, I will include a few words and phrases here that could be helpful:

- 窯 ... *Kama* ... **Kiln**
- 陶器 ... *Tōki* ... **Pottery**
- 焼き物 ... *Yakimono* ... **Pottery**
- 窯で陶器を焼く ... *Kama de tōki wo yaku* ... **Bake ceramics in a kiln.**
- 陶器の皿 ... *Tōki no sara* ... **a ceramic plate**
- 磁器 ... *Jiki* ... **Porcelain, chinaware**
- 磁器の花瓶 ... *Jiki no kabin* ... **a porcelain vase**
- 粘土 ... *Nendo* ... **Clay**
- 粘土をこねる ... *Nendo wo koneru* ... **Knead clay**
- 粘土でカップを作る ... *Nendo de kappu wo tsukuru* ... **Make a cup out of clay.**
- 釉薬 ... *Yūyaku* ... **Glaze**
- 器に釉薬をかける ... *Utsuwa ni yūyaku wo kakeru* ... **Pour glaze onto a bowl.**



Jessica is a fourth-year American JET from Arkansas state now living in Saitama. She is the art section editor for **CONNECT**. On weekends she enjoys hiking in remote areas of Saitama or taking day-trips to Tokyo. When not adventuring, she can be found reading or creating her own artwork, which can be seen on her Instagram @jessica_craven_art.

GO 2 CAM- PAIGN



Cameron Peagler (Yamaguchi)

We at **CONNECT** are proud to announce our **FIRM** and **COMMITTED** partnership with the **Go 2 Campaign**. Below you will find some delights sure to sate all your travel tastes.

GO 2 YNT HOSPITAL

Looking for excitement in your next trip? Check out Yamamoto International Hospital! Traveling around and leaving catching viruses up to chance is old news! Come to our facility, where we offer a 100% guarantee you will get sick, or your money back! We have a

delightful assortment of ailments that will excite any travel enthusiast: From MRSA to VRE, we have something for everyone! Book your hospital bed now and receive a coupon for buy one, get two IVs (window beds not guaranteed). Our staff is dying to meet you!

GO 2 YOUR LOCAL COMBINI

Close your eyes. Open them. Close them again. Haha, made you blink! But really, keep your eyes opened. Remember that time you were walking to your local combini around midnight, and you got that feeling? You know, the one where you think someone is watching you, but then, you think, “Did I lock my door? . . . Of course I locked my door, it’ll be alright.” Oh wow, look at that, you got to that combini fast, good job! You hear a familiar “*Irasshaimase*” from the clerk and feel safe. Safe like a warm hand towel from your local combini. Safe like

the 24-hour convenience of your local combini. Safe like the *karaage* meat from your local combini. You stopped worrying . . . but they never stopped watching you. (This advertisement is sponsored by every local combini near you).

GO 2 JUN SENA'S BOOK EMPORIUM

Jun Sena here, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to my book emporium. Our motto is, “You can’t see these books!” But really, there aren’t any books here. Come anyways and meet The Bigu Sho and The Roku. Did I mention my neighbor Jeff will be here, too? He’s bringing a delicious, 5-bean casserole. I was going to

make some of my *obachan*’s famous onigiri, but I ran out of rice. Look, I’m going to be honest. There aren’t any books. We’re just lonely guys looking for cool friends . . . Is there anything wrong with taking an advertisement out for that? Sheesh, go judge someone else, OK? For real, though, come through—it will be a fun time!

Cameron is a former registered nurse and national fencer. He loves promoting cultural exchange through writing, volunteer work, and other facets. You can find him in his free time playing video games or reading an engaging psychology book. He aspires to become a diplomat in the future.

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From December 10th - February 28th National AJET is having a Holiday Fundraiser! JET's can volunteer to make holiday cards that will then be sold. You can make cards for any holiday you wish, or even cards for general use. All of the money that the JET's collect from selling the cards will be donated to the non-profit organization Refugee Empowerment International (REI). Our goal is to fundraise at least 25,000 yen!

To learn more about the fundraiser and how to participate, click [here](#) to access the Fundraiser Packet:

If you have any additional questions, comments, or concerns, then please email the Director of Volunteering at volunteering@ajet.net

LINK TO FUNDRAISING PAGE [HERE](#)

National AJET



Join AJET in creating and selling holiday cards in support of [Refugee Empowerment International \(REI\)](#)!

FUNDRAISING PERIOD
December 10th ~ February 28th

**REI is a non-profit organization that supports projects that provide opportunities for refugees and international displaced persons to lead an independent life.*



APPLY NOW
FOR FALL
2021



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CONTRIBUTING TO CONNECT

CONNECT is a magazine for the community in Japan, by the community in Japan. Everyone is welcome to write, no matter your experience or style! If you have an idea you want to see in these pages, reach out to our Head Editor, or any of our awesome section editors. We'll work with you to make it the best it can be and share it with our audience of thousands. Not every article needs to be an essay! We feature interviews, infographics, top-ten lists, recipes, photo spreads, travelogues, and more.

Contact the Head Editor of *CONNECT*, Alice Ridley, at connect.editor@ajet.net with your submissions, comments, and questions.

ARTICLES

Write about something you're doing. Write about something you love. Tell us a story.

SPOTLIGHT

Tell us about someone in your community who's doing something neat and noteworthy. Cooks, collectors, calligraphers — we want to hear about the inspiring people around you.

PHOTOS

Members of the JET community contributed to the photos you see in this issue. If you're an aspiring photographer and want your work published, please get in contact with the lead designer, Meg Luedtke, at visualmedia.connect@ajet.net.

COMMENTS

Let us know what you think. Interact with us on Facebook, Twitter, and issuu.com.

CONTRIBUTORS PAGE

Have an article you want to share? Join our [Contributors Page](#) on Facebook to stay connected with our team so you can share your adventures whenever story strikes!



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