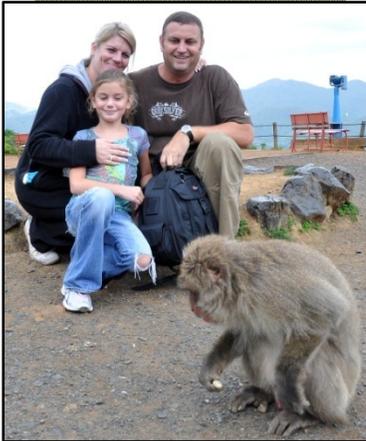


Kyoto Time



Special Interest Articles:

- She Eats Sushi
- Oh Deer
- Precision desserts

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Monkeying Around



High in the mountains Northwest of Kyoto lays the Monkey Park that can only be accessed by foot. The trail starts down at the river and winds up the mountain through switchbacks to the top where you find the monkey shrine. It is a 1000 vertical foot hike and will take about an hour to reach the park.

We saw the first monkey about half way up and I took out the camera to take a picture to find out that he really did not like paparazzi. He charged me and gave a nice love tap to me leg with a hiss and a growl to close the deal. At this point we knew that the monkeys might not be so friendly so we put up our defenses.

Entering the main area there were about 50 monkeys gathered around with 3 park workers and only a couple of other people. The monkeys really had no interest in you until you had food.

To feed them you had to go into a cages room and give them food through the wire because you would be pounced on and mobbed if you were outside with food. At this point you are in a cage and the monkeys are in control like an opposite universe. You buy small cups of fruit and try to give it to the little monkeys because the big ones are so dominant.

For me this was an opportunity to capture

some wonderful images of them and with no food they pretended like I was not there. With the forest in the background it was a very serene place even with all the monkeys screeching and chasing each other. But for Maddie and Lisa it was all about making new friends and learning their names that workers know by heart.

To reach out and shake hands with these wild people like animals is a exciting experience that makes someone realize how cool nature is. The park was a very beautiful place and a tribute to the town below which the earth friendly Kyoto Accord was named after.



She Eats Sushi by the Sea Shore



Mr. Sushi our master sushi chef in a small fishing village on the coast of Japan.

If you are in Japan and you like sushi at one point you will need to try going to a traditional sushi bar. Now this place would not be in the middle of Tokyo with a big sign and menus in English. No not this place, this place is a small town on the coast near a fishing village and there is no sign, maybe just a door.

You would go inside and take a seat with wooden blocks on the wall showing the Japanese symbols of the fish available that day. And the only fish available would not be from a freezer in the back but out on display, maybe only a couple of fish caught that morning. There might also be some tanks where live treats like shrimp or conk would be.

Then you would try to cross the language barrier

and point to what you are ordering not really sure of what kind of fish it is but the one thing you do know is that it is the freshest possible sushi you will ever eat. It would taste like nothing you have had before because the sushi chef has spent his life to properly prepare and cut the fish giving it a taste all its own.

This is the experience we tried in a small town about

100 miles from Tokyo on the southern coast of Japan in a town call Izu-Inatori where there's a sleepy fishing port and a train station. The sushi itself is not at all as you would experience in the states but of a more traditional nature. It is for the person who really enjoys fish because they do not have rolls with sauces and they do not cook anything either.



High Speed Options

In Japan there is always a better more efficient or faster way to achieve something such as going



.from one island to another. While sitting there watching a ship travel across the sea out of the corner of my eye I spotted this high speed hydrofoil jamming its way across the water. Compared to the ship the craft seemed to be going a hundred miles per hour riding about the choppy surface to give a smooth

ride.

It seemed that everywhere we went in Japan there was always some kind of infrastructure to move people from point A to point B in a very fast manner. I guess when you have over a 130 million people in an area the size of California you have to think outside the box.

Oh Deer



We read an article about a place where there were over 1,000 wild deer in a large park that you could feed so we decided to make the trip to Nara about an hour outside of Osaka, Japan.

So we took an express train to the Nara station that took about 45 minutes and exited to the park not really sure of what we would find. At the station we saw a man pulling a wooden deer so we knew we were close. The park entrance was about 2 blocks from away with a couple of deer standing close by. The deer were not interested until we stopped at a lady with a small cart and bought some deer cookies.

Like they had some kind of radar the deer started coming from all directions intent on making you lose your cookies. At times

you could be surrounded by 7 or 8 deer pressing you for food with their horns pushing up in your face.

For Maddie this was an experience that she will never forget. She was all smiles the entire time we were at the park. Most of the time she was double trouble with cookies in both hands feeding two deer at a time.

Lisa after a while started



to get paranoid of the deer after one ate a whole in a bag she was carrying after smelling some crackers in it.

While standing there watching Maddie a group of Japanese high school students came up to me and asked to practice their English they were learning in school. I obliged them and made small conversation answering dumb questions like where do you live or how old are you. It was all good and upon completion they wanted me to sign a form as proof they did the work for their school – so I did. Well some other Japanese around saw a super tall white dude giving a signature and I was about to achieve my 5 minutes of fame as I stood there giving autographs to everyone who have no idea that I'm just Scott.



"Looks like the buck stops here."

Precision Deserts



"A tasty treat on display at a dessert shop in upscale Tokyo."

The Japanese seem to have a passion to create the perfect dessert. Everywhere you go there are French style pastry shops with teams of chefs making edible artwork. At the lower levels of most large department stores you will find an entire floor of dessert shops all of them with the craziest sweets you have ever seen.

The main passion seems to be with strawberry shortcake with berries so red they make the ones here look brown. The cakes come in all sorts of styles and range from \$15 dollars to \$150.

There are several competitions every year to make the ultimate strawberry shortcake and

the players take this as serious as the World Series.

But enough with the shortcake because I'm not Japanese and I found desserts I believe to be much more tasty and satisfying. Stuff like tennis

ball size cream puffs - so fresh you would eat them until you felt sick or the ultimate twinkie, a large roll filled with cream and custard. Mochi ice cream balls made inside of puff pastries were also quite a special treat.



Populated

The Tokyo metropolitan area is the most populated place on earth with over

34 million people. The New York area ranks second but Tokyo takes

the cake with also the most population density as well.



"An endless sea of people walking down the street."



It is easy to see how populated it is by going to any major intersection during rush hour and to just stand there with a sea of people moving by. The crossings around the Shinjuku train station are the most crowded with the train station the busiest anywhere in the world with trains coming and going every minute of the day.