



Sake lovers

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„Chrëscht-këndchen“ comes

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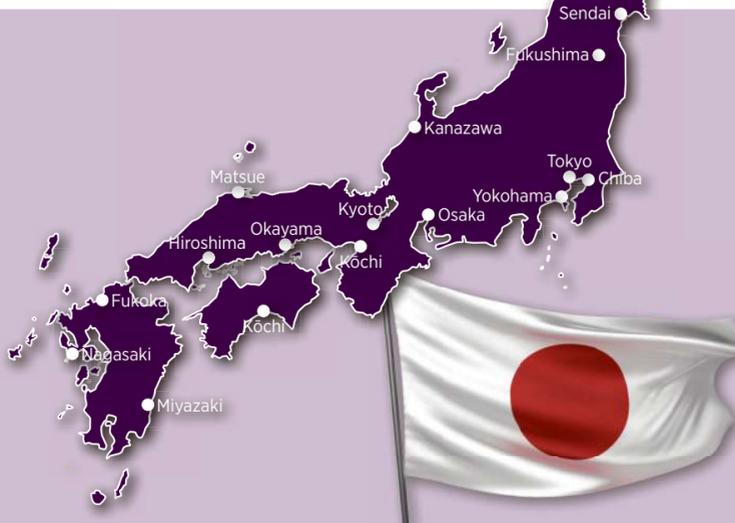


Community of the rising sun

More than 500 Japanese nationals live in Luxembourg

Why Japan?

➤ The Japanese community in Luxembourg has a lot to celebrate these days. Whereas back home, national holiday - also known as the Emperor's Birthday - is scheduled for tomorrow, Christmas Eve approaches in the Grand Duchy and preparations for this largely occupy news and daily life. The Japanese community is quite discrete in Luxembourg. Meanwhile, the Grand Duchy has a strong and long lasting relationship with Japan. The financial center hosts five Japanese banks and the next Luxembourg for Finance Asia Tour will take place in Tokyo. A delegation will assist to a financial seminar in Tokyo on Thursday, 15 January 2015, in close cooperation with the Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry (ALFI). Japan thus remains an important partner for our country on the financial and economical level, but cultural ties are also strong.



About Japan

CAPITAL Tokyo
NATIONAL LANGUAGE Japanese
REGIONAL LANGUAGES Aynu itak, Ryukyuan languages, Eastern Japanese, Western Japanese
POPULATION 126,4 million
GDP 3,9 billion euros (2013, World Bank)
GOVERNMENT Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy

In Luxembourg

POPULATION 449 (Statec)
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When sake meets wine

The Japanese Ladies' Association of Luxembourg promotes both Japanese and European culture



Makiko and other JLA members wish to welcome more non-Japanese members

Photos: François Aussems

LUXEMBOURG
CATHERINE KURZAWA

Her agenda is quite full. Between her family life and her Chairwoman position at the Japanese Ladies' Association of Luxembourg (JLA), Makiko Witolla Hayashi has a lot of errands to run and contacts to manage. The association has about 150 members. Most of them are Japanese nationals, but around 30 people are non-Japanese. "We are open for all people", Makiko says. JLA organizes a lot of activities and tries to promote both Japanese and European culture. "For instance, we organize sake tastings with Italian food. From starters to dessert, we put sake in every dish", she explains. The result is very interesting, so it seems.

JLA also promotes Japanese lifestyle with many classes: members can learn for instance how to make typical flower arrangements "Ikebana", how to write in Japanese, how to cook sweet dishes or sushi but also how to use Japanese methods for fingernail beauty

Connecting cultures

In addition to French classes, JLA also provides information about occidental culture to Japanese expats. "So, around Christmas time, we focus on Christmas markets and all events relating to them because in Japan we don't celebrate Christmas the same way than here". Actually, Christmas seems to be celebrated in Japan the same way

than we celebrate New Year's Eve in Luxembourg. The Japanese community is very interested in local culture "There is for instance an interest to visit the vineyards", adds Makiko. Sometimes, the association organizes tours in the Moselle region, where members can discover the art of wine making.

The Japanese language is also promoted. JLA hosts a chorus that features many concerts all year long. For children, a Japanese Supplementary School exists in Luxembourg but is supported by another organization. Twice a week, children learn the Japanese language and writing based on Japanese national education programs. The school year starts in April with a special ceremony. Most of the Japanese children study at International School of Luxembourg. They learn English and later French and German.

A different rhythm of life

Most of Japanese nationals have chosen to live in Luxembourg because of their job. The financial center for instance hosts five Japanese banks. Living in the Grand Duchy is very different from life in Japan. Whereas shop opening hours seem very short in comparison with those in the main Japanese cities, Japanese products are quite hard to find. So once a month, JLA orders products from shops located in the neighbouring countries.

The weather is also tough for Japanese, says Makiko: "We always see the sky in Japan, except during the rainy season. In Luxembourg weeks may pass without the sun

or the blue sky appearing". But in general, adds Makiko, life in Luxembourg is quite good. She personally enjoys the calm "especially when you have children" but also the cleanliness of the streets. She also likes the warm and cozy atmosphere in the city. "It's also easier for us to live here because almost 50% of people here in Luxembourg are foreigners", she adds on. A situation creating ties between foreigners.

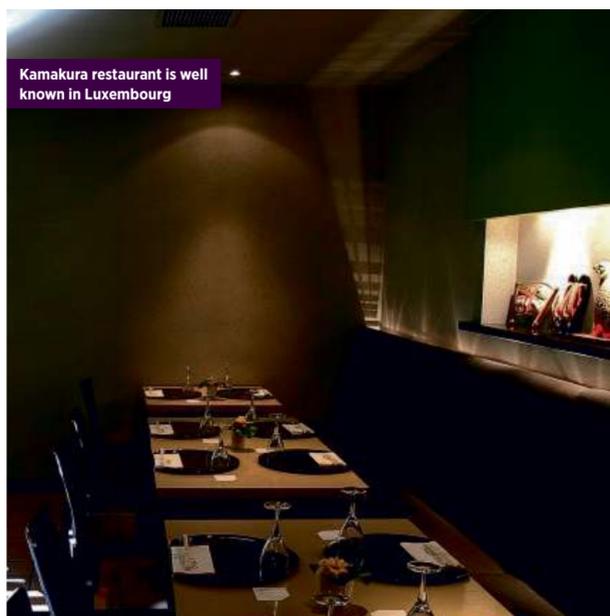
➔ www.jlaluxembourg.org



ABOUT JLA

150 members

Makiko Witolla Hayashi founded the Japanese Ladies' Association Luxembourg back in 2012. Today the association has about 150 members and aims to welcome more non-Japanese member.



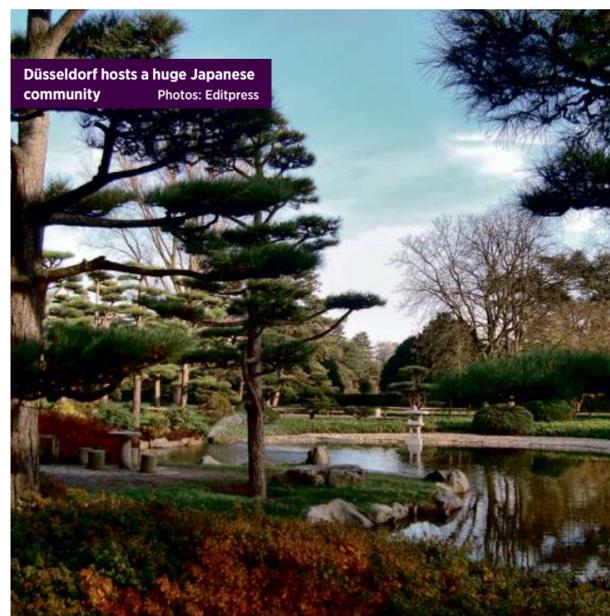
Kamakura restaurant is well known in Luxembourg

MEETING JAPANESE PEOPLE IN LUXEMBOURG

The Japanese community doesn't have a specific meeting spot in the city. You will find some Japanese nationals at JLA activities and events such as the Ikebana classes, the French classes, the Japanese free-talk meetings, the sushi classes or the "Kamishibai" (storytelling in a theatre-style frame).

Luxembourg also hosts plenty of Japanese cuisine restaurants but most of them aren't run by Japanese expats. Sushi may be the best known Japanese dish. But the Japanese cuisine features a lot of marvelously delicious different ones. Restaurant "Kamakura" located in the Grand-quarter in Luxembourg City features traditional Japanese cooking. If you want to taste traditional "Ramen", Raku-an in Kirchberg is a great place.

And if you look for a more intense Japanese experience, Düsseldorf is only three hours away from Luxembourg. Almost 11.000 Japanese people live in this German city and there is even a "Japantown". There, you may find Japanese supermarkets, restaurants, travel offices but also a Japanese hair salon. Don't miss it!



Düsseldorf hosts a huge Japanese community
Photos: Editpress

Countdown to Christmas

The most important day of the year

LUXEMBOURG
CATHERINE KURZAWA

The stores close earlier only three times a year in Luxembourg: on National day's Eve (June 23), on Christmas Eve (December 24) and on New Year's Eve (December 31). So be careful next Wednesday and don't try to run for last minute shopping in town! You'll also see there are fewer busses than usually. Christmas is one of the most important celebrations in Luxembourg and people prepare it early.

For instance, most children get an advent calendar and each day, they get a cookie, a sweet or a small toy that helps them wait until the big Christmas-gift. In many homes you may encounter an "Adventskranz" or Christmas crown. Every Advent Sunday, people light one of the four candles on. The Christmas tree is also an important part of the celebration as well as a nativity scene or "crèche". The tradition says "Chrëschtkëndchen" or Jesus brings the presents to children. In other countries, Santa does, but not in Luxembourg, where "Saint Nicolas" or "Kleeschen" is the main gift bringer

A family celebration

Christmas is mostly celebrated at home with family members. Most restaurants and bars are closed on Christmas. There is no traditional menu, but they are special most of the time, with poultry, fondue, seafood, etc.

Some traditional Luxembourgish food may also be served such as "Gromperekichelcher", "Glühwäin", "Boxemännercher" and "Egg Nogg". This sweet milky drink is made of rum, cream and vanilla. In days past, people used to eat "Träipen" (a black sausage) with mashed potatoes and apple

sauce. Christmas eve is also a time for Midnight mass, even though in some villages it isn't celebrated at midnight.

Special traditions

Local tradition remains important, especially outside the city. For instance, children play Nativity scenes or "Krëppespill" in many villages. During the

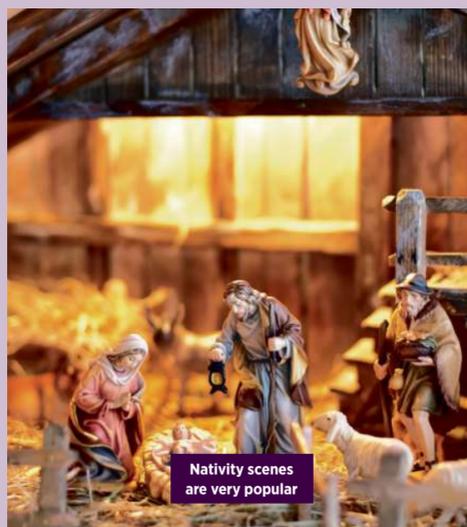
first week of January, scouts collect Christmas trees so they can burn them later, at "Buegbbrennen", celebrating the end of winter. And even if Christmas is mainly celebrated at home, special animations are featured all around the country - Christmas carols, Christmas Parades, Christmas markets etc. Be aware that Boxing Day on December 26 is a public holiday in Luxembourg. ●



Most families prepare their home for Christmas



Luxembourgish traditional drinks can be served such as „Glühwäin“



Nativity scenes are very popular



Scouts collect Christmas trees so they can burn them later at "Buegbbrennen"

MEET THE EXPATS

Most expats are back home this week. An yet, a lot is happening in the city in the days to come.

MONDAY, 22 DECEMBER

At 12.00 a.m. the Barnsley Metropolitan Brass Band will feature a short concert at the Place d'Armes stage. Listen to the sound with a glass of "Glühwein" in your hands!

TUESDAY, 23 DECEMBER

Two different concerts are scheduled at 6.00 p.m. at Place d'Armes stage. Listen to "Kosaken Chor". At the same time, "Ensemble Mida" will feature a concert at the Place de la Constitution.

WEDNESDAY, 24 DECEMBER

Everything stops earlier at Christmas Eve so this day's concert is scheduled at 2.00 p.m. at the Place d'Armes stage. Olivier Pagliarini trio feat. Paule Rodesch will perform before Christmas celebrations.

