

## Kyoto Summer Program 2024 Reflection

Jaden Martinez

I'm Jaden Martinez and I participated in the KICL Summer Program of 2024. This three-week program was in Kyoto, Japan and hosted by the college, Kyoto Institute of Culture and Arts.

During my time there I had enjoyed myself immensely as traveling to Japan has been a dream of mine since I was a child. I have always been interested Japanese culture, practices, and their history so being given this opportunity to study and sightsee in Kyoto meant a lot. I had the opportunity to meet people from around the globe through the program and I was able to experience first-hand Japanese practices and culture through the activities provided through the school, my homestay, and sightseeing on my own.

Through the school activities I was able to participate in tatami making, making Japanese Washyoku, and tea ceremonies all of which I found to be very traditional and deeply resonates to traditional Japanese culture. Being able to stay with a homestay family for three weeks had allowed me to expand my knowledge of Japanese and even become accustomed to everyday activities in a Japanese household.

My favorite experience through the homestay was getting to know the family I resided with. I enjoyed my dinners with them and even going out for an outing was enjoyable for me. When it came to sightseeing on my own, I enjoyed it immensely. I took every opportunity I had to visit shrines and temples that I even purchased a red stamp booklet to collect stamps from each shrine and temple.

I, however, spent a lot of time shopping in the Shijo district as well since shopping is one of my favorite hobbies. I find Japanese fashion to be quite cute and refreshing from what I'm used to back home, so I bought as much clothes as possible during my trip. Though my favorite part about my entire time in Japan would be wearing a yukata. I always wanted to purchase and wear a yukata or a kimono and was my only goal when I went to Japan. When I was able to wear one, it was one of my most favorite nights in

Japan and I was glad I made the purchase I did and even found it to be comfortable than I originally thought.

Despite my time in Japan being short, I enjoyed every second of it and grateful for the wonderful experience I had. I am glad that I was able to experience a new culture and practice their customs, and even more glad I met some wonderful people during my trip.