

Your name Nina Halextras  
Traveling partner's name Madelyn Strider

## SanPietro Proposal Cover Page

Include this as the first page of the travel proposal

☐ Solo Traveler or ☒ Pair Travelers

Student Traveler Name, Option, & Class Level: Nina Halextras, Biology - Senior

Partner Traveler's Name, Option, & Class Level: Madelyn Strider, Biology - Senior

Country or countries proposed for travel: Japan

Trip Summary: e.g. 14 days in Spain, August 27- September 11

14 days on ground + 2 travel days, July 12-July 28

Brief overview: e.g. Coastal bicycle route from Barcelona to Girona which includes visiting Tossa de Mar, Torroella de Montgri, Cadaques, and Figueres; then 5 days of exploring Barcelona, Granada, Malaga, and Madrid.

Brief exploration of Tokyo, ascend Mt Fuji, attend Festivals in Kyoto + Osaka, snorkel + experience nature in Okinawa

### Summary of Requested funds, in USD:

CATEGORY	CATEGORY TOTAL* (not per person)
Roundtrip Airfare Average	\$ <u>3652</u>
Accommodation:	\$ <u>929</u>
Sightseeing activities:	\$ <u>625</u>
Meal/Food Estimates:	\$ <u>1034</u>
Additional travel costs: Travel between and within all cities/destinations proposed (Bus, metro, bicycle rental, trains, flights)	\$ <u><del>1110</del> 770</u>
<b>Total</b> Costs listed in US dollars.	\$ <u>7610</u>
Total	\$ <u>7010</u>
3% International Fee	\$ <u>210</u>
<b>Grand Total</b> (includes the 3% Intl. fee)	\$ <u>7.220</u>

\*Refer to your budget form for the calculated category totals to input here. This needs to be the totals you have added up in US dollars.



私たちの日本の冒険  
Our Japan Adventure

Nika Haleftiras  
Madelyn Stroder

Unique yet traditional. Vibrant but quiet. Historic and still modern. When we were searching for a place to explore, we wanted to find a place that represented all these facets. We wanted a taste of city life mixed with natural wonders. We wanted to experience a culture vastly different from our own but in a place that felt warm and inviting. Japan encompasses all these aspects. The Japanese culture is alive with rich tradition and modern whimsy. The landscape is a mix of towers and lights, mountains and beaches. Some cities are colorful and bright while some are relaxed and subversively beautiful. A Japanese adventure is the perfect opportunity to meld exploration, relaxation, and the celebration.

Both of us are seniors and this summer marks the point in our lives where we leave behind the years of schooling and transition into careers and what feels to be true adult lives. We both believe that we need to distinguish and celebrate this transition with a trip to a place where neither of us have been before and where it would just be the two of us, fending for each other and making our own decisions as to what we want to do, where we want to go, and how to get there. Traveling is a challenge and we believe that it is the perfect challenge to usher in the next phase of our lives with. We are not afraid of a challenge. In fact, we have faced many together. We have been teammates for four years. Basketball is a difficult sport that requires extreme trust in the people you are on the court with. Neither of us would have made it through all the trials and tribulations of being Caltech student-athletes without the support of each other. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses and how to work together. Finishing basketball is an incredibly momentous occasion for both of us and traveling together would be the capstone to our friendship. Traveling with a partner is about sharing a unique experience with someone else and this adventure to Japan will be something we treasure for years to come. Basketball transforms teammates into family and families are people you want to adventure with and want to create memories with.

I, Nika, have only traveled internationally once in my twenty-two years on this planet. I went to the Galapagos islands with a class from Caltech. I was never really a traveler but this trip lit a spark in me. Being somewhere totally foreign and experiencing something different from myself and my regular day-to-day ignited a passion and a desire to travel. I was so inspired by this experience that I applied for a master's program in field biology that would allow me to travel abroad to places like Zambia or Borneo or the Amazon. But, that version of travel is still within the confines of programs and specific itineraries and field schools. I want to experience travel without restriction. I decided to apply for this prize as a method of escape and practice for learning how to make decisions on my own and to take care of myself while appreciating a world that is different from mine. I am strong and willing to adapt while also challenging myself to go beyond my comfort zone and try new and unexpected things.

I, Madelyn, have traveled been traveling the world since middle school. I have traveled to China, Ecuador, Peru, and Europe with friends and family. I gained an appreciation for other cultures and a love for challenging myself by throwing myself into a culture very different from my own. My travels really opened my eyes to how similarly people see the world, despite living so differently. I grew interested in Japan through a love of anime in high school, and have wanted to experience the reality of the multifaceted Japanese culture since. Fulfilling those dreams in an adventurous and culturally-focused trip will allow me to expand my understanding of human experiences across the world and grow into a compassionate adult with a comprehensive understanding of the world.

Travelling will provide us with the ability to grow in our communications skills, in our confidence and creativity, and to learn more about ourselves and each other. This trip will usher us into post-graduation life. Whether its medical school, graduate school, a teaching position, or careers we haven't even thought of, we would be thrilled to embark on this Japanese adventure.



SanPietro Partner Essay for Pair Travelers  
Madelyn Stroder (about Nika Haleftiras)

I want to travel with Nika because she has been a fantastic friend since the beginning of college, and I want to share the incredible experience of international travel with her, before we are separated by physical distance and differing work schedules. We've both been through a lot, and always been there for each other. Freshman year she was mistaken for my mom by the receptionist at the urgent care when my shoulder was dislocated, because she was taking such good care of me. She's the type of person who will show up with cookies, just when you need a pick-me-up.

I have seen Nika show amazing mental and emotional strength over four years, and the one that struck me the most - as something I don't think I could manage - was during freshman year, when her father died unexpected of a heart attack. At the funeral, she was incredibly supportive of her family, and was clearly putting them and their needs above her own. She is very selfless and incredibly kind. Even when she's going through things that make me tear up while just thinking about, she can keep a cool head and make the best of any situation. I've admired this and wanted to learn from this. I also know these traits will help her cope with any unexpected issues that come up in our travel. She (and I) have done extensive research and will be able to come up with an alternate plan on the fly if needed for many unanticipated situations.

She's also the reliable type of friend that will call me out if I'm starting to stress out about something too much, which is an incredibly valuable trait to have in a friend, and in a travel partner. Likewise, Nika is incredibly responsible, and has been a Captain on the basketball team for two years, on top doing a lot with the student athletic administrative leadership, which has made her a great communicator. She is also very good at planning, and is great with details. All of these skills will translate well into traveling, and pair well with my strengths (I, too, like to have things very well planned out in advance).

As our personalities are somewhat similar, we may have some challenges to overcome while traveling together. The challenge that came to mind was that she wakes up early, which combined with my bad habits of talking and occasionally kicking/throwing things in my sleep, some tension could arise. However, we are both experts at communicating with each other, and are both plenty willing to compromise if needed. The only other potential challenge that came to mind was our difference in food preferences. I tend to favor the weirdest foods I can find, just to try them, but Nika tends to favor foods she knows. However, after discussing where we wanted to eat at each place and what foods we each wanted to try, I am thrilled that Nika is really taking this as an opportunity to leap outside her comfort zone and truly experience everything Japan has to offer, in cuisine, culture, and more. I don't anticipate any major problems cropping up. Any minor disagreements will be easily fixed - we know each other very well by now.

Our tenure on the basketball team together has been central to our friendship. As we have finished our final season, we know we've formed a lifelong friendship. Yet, this summer is the last time we are certain to have time to share eye-opening experiences, without work or more school, or other commitments tying us down. The trip would be both a celebration of our time at Caltech, and a promise to continue to grow and learn and stay in touch as we travel separate paths further into adulthood. There is no one with whom I would rather share the experience of traveling to Japan.



Partner Essay- Traveling with Madelyn

Madelyn and I met in April 2015 at Prefrosh Weekend. I had glued myself to the other basketball recruits and we were heading to the gym for some pick-up scrimmaging. Out of the blue, this girl who was significantly shorter than me appears and informs us that she too is a basketball recruit. Not really having ever met someone shorter than me (I stand at a very proud 5 foot-nothing) I was slightly confused but her bright smile and enthusiasm put me at ease. That began a four year long relationship as friends and most importantly, as teammates. It is easy to be friends with someone. It is five times harder to be someone's teammates. A teammate is a person who you go through struggles with, who you have to carry sometimes and trust enough to pick you up when you fall. Your teammate is your family. Madelyn is family. We have stood together through extreme stress and heartache and confusion. She's called me out when I've needed it and I've done the same for her. And the blessing of a teammate is that when things get tough or heads get hot, at the end of the day, you know they are not going anywhere. Our coach always tells us that your teammate is someone you should trust enough to go into battle with- I would take Madelyn with me into that battle.

Madelyn has been one of the biggest inspirations for me. Through no fault of her own, she will always be at a disadvantage. But she has never let her diminutive size or ties stop her. College basketball is hard enough but, with her size, she has known from the very beginning her minutes were always going to be limited. Yet she was there, every day, working just as hard as the rest of us. She was always the loudest person on the bench and the person with the biggest smile and best encouragements. Her resilience amazes me. People will always look down on her because of things she cannot control, but she rises above and beyond everyone's expectations and will continue to do so.

I believe Madelyn and I will be excellent travel buddies. First, Madelyn is a more experienced traveler than I am. She has been all over the world and done some pretty cool adventures both with family and with friends. Madelyn and I have traveled together before for basketball trips. We are good companions and have fun being in these different places. We have shared rooms and I will have to admit that Madelyn is not the world's best sleep partner. She kicks and sometimes throws pillows in her sleep. Luckily, many of the places we wish to stay does not require us to share a bed so I think my shins will be safe. Having spent more time with her and our team than any other person at Caltech, I know the triggers of stress for Madelyn. I know that she can get stressed when plans don't go as expected or when she gets overwhelmed, but I also know how to calm her down and talk her off the ledge. Often, a simple reminder to snap out of it works but sometimes a good hug or a push through works as well. Sometimes, I've found that her stress helps me calm myself so I can help her and we can figure our situation out. This could be extremely useful when it comes to navigating the hecticness of Japanese public transportation. Madelyn is adventurous and that's something I've been pushing myself to be more of. She eats weirder things than I do and she will jump at the chance to do some crazy things. This trip for me is an opportunity to try new things and to push myself and I truly believe that Madelyn is the perfect person to do that with. She will push me and help me open up to experiencing the world the way I have always wanted to but have not had enough courage to do so.



Traveling solo ☐  
 Traveling as a pair ☒

Your name Nika Halperin  
 Traveling partner's name Madeira Stricker

## SanPietro Summer Travel Prize Budget

List all costs in US dollars unless otherwise stated.

### Dates of proposed travel

Arrival date: July 13 from/to (airports): (e.g. LAX-Sydney) SAN/DEN - HND  
 Departure date: July 28 from/to (airports): ITM/KIX - SAN/SFO

Total # of days on the ground (not including arrival and departure days): 14

Country/Countries of proposed travel: Japan

Roundtrip Airfare: List three outbound and return airfares ranging in price from low to high, including taxes, from different sources.	Solo/1st Traveler		2nd traveler		Total Cost (if traveling as a pair)	Number of stops or nonstop	Airline
Airfare 1	493	803	861	1356	3503	1/2 2/2	Air. JAL
Airfare 2	448	818	950	1372	3638	2/2 2/2	United-AAL Delta
Airfare 3	504	982	1041	1288	3815	2/2 2/2	Am. JAL
Average* of the 3 airfares:	* 1366		2286		3652	*Use this amount to add to the TRIP TOTAL requested.	

Additional Travel Costs	Solo/1st Traveler	2nd traveler	Total cost in local currency	Total Cost in US dollars
Travel within city (bus, subway, etc.)	\$117.54	\$117.54	26120	235
Travel between cities/destinations e.g. train fare, bus fare (no car rental)	\$174.51	\$174.51	38780	\$349
Additional Airfare (not the roundtrip airfare listed above, but between cities or countries)	\$93	\$93	20568	\$186
Other Travel Costs	# of days	Cost per person in local currency	Total Requesting for the Category in USD	
Accommodation	15	49474.83	\$ 929	
Meals	16	53852.46	\$ 1034	
Sightseeing activities (museums, guided day tours, etc.)	15	34075.47	\$ 625	

Current exchange rate:		USD \$1 = 110.58 yen
Source:	Bank of America	
Date:	2/10/19	

**\*\*TRIP TOTAL requested in US Dollars:**

**\*\*Make sure to add the airfare average total, the total cost of additional travel in USD, and the total for the other travel costs requested (all in US dollars).**



## SanPietro Cost Breakdown

<b>Tokyo</b>			<b>2 days/1 night</b>
Accommodation	\$50	2 nights in Hotel Houshi Kaikan/Capsule Hotel Transit Shinjuku Stay	
Meals	\$100	Price of meals + slightly more expensive meals because Tokyo	
Local travel (buses, taxis, subway)	\$25	Monorail	
Inter city travel (bus, rail, air)	\$39	Train to Mt. Fuji	
Activities	\$140.00	Robot Restaurant, Tokyo National Museum+ other attractions	
<b>Total for Location:</b>	\$354		
<b>Mt. Fuji</b>			<b>3days/2 nights</b>
Accommodation	\$108	Capsule Inn Fujisan averaged with MT. Fuji	
Meals	\$134	Price(ish) plus emergency funds for	
Local travel	\$65	Bus to 5th Station Rountrip, Omni Bus for	
Inter city travel (bus, rail, air)	\$248	Travel to Kyoto	
Activities	\$109.00	Trail 'Donation', Music Forest, Onsen, 3 Cave visits, Emergency mountain funds	
<b>Total for Location:</b>	\$664		
<b>Kyoto</b>			<b>4 days/3 nights</b>
Accommodation	\$160	Most likely Grand Japaning Hotel Kyoto Shijo Omiya	
Meals	\$232	~\$10/person breakfast, \$12/lunch,	
Local travel (buses, taxis, subway)	\$21	5 Buses	
Inter city travel (bus, rail, air)	\$0		
Activities	\$35.00	Monkey Park, Golden Temple, Shrine Admission Fees	
<b>Total for Location:</b>	\$448		

\*total cost = the number of days x daily cost



## SanPietro Cost Breakdown

<b>Okinawa</b>		
<b>5 days/4 nights</b>		
Accommodation	\$181	Okinara Sora House
Meals	\$230	~\$10/person breakfast, \$12/lunch,
Local travel (buses, taxis, subway)	\$60	Naha Bus Fares + Post-snorkel taxi fees
Inter city travel (bus, rail, air)	\$222	Airfare to/from Okinawa, travel from Kyoto to H
Activities	\$236.00	OkinawaWorld (Guyosendo cave), Blue Cave
<b>Total for Location:</b>	<b>\$929</b>	

\*total cost = the number of days x daily cost

<b>Osaka</b>		
<b>6 days/5 nights</b>		
Accommodation	\$391	AZ Hostel + Laundry and storage fees + ryokan stay
Meals	\$287	Simillar price ranges for meals. Lots of street
Local travel (buses, taxis, subway)	\$65	Buses from airport to hotel area, bus around city (mostly everything is walkable)
Inter city travel (bus, rail, air)	\$27	Travel to Nara
Activities	\$99.00	Osaka Castle, Science Museum, Nara Park
<b>Total for Location:</b>	<b>\$869</b>	

\*total cost = the number of days x daily cost



## Itemized Cost Breakd

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Day	City	Item	Code	Cost (US)	Cost (Yen)	Codes
1	Tokyo	Flight (SAN-HND)	Air1	498.34	55106.4372	Air1
1	Tokyo	Flight (DEN-HND)	Air1	947.34	104756.8572	Air2
1	Tokyo	In-Flight Food	M	20	2211.6	M
1	Tokyo	Travel to Tokyo Night life	T-In	25.2	2800	Acc
1	Tokyo	Robot Restaurant	SS	110	12163.8	SS
1	Tokyo	Dinner	M	36	3980.88	T-B
1	Tokyo	Accommodations - 1 nights	Acc	50	5529	T-In
1	Tokyo	If stay in capsule + need storage	Acc	14	1548.12	
3	Tokyo	Breakfast	M	20	2211.6	
3	Tokyo	Lunch	M	24	2653.92	
3	Tokyo	Additional Attractions	SS	30	3317.4	
3	Tokyo	Travel to Mt. Fuji	T-B	39.06	4340	
3	Mt Fuji	Unlimited Omni Bus Pass	T-In	27	3000	
3	Mt Fuji	Kawaguchiko Music Forest Admission	SS	27	3000	
3	Mt Fuji	Cave Admission	SS	18	2000	
3	Mt Fuji	Onsen Visit	SS	21.6	2400	
3	Mt Fuji	Dinner	M	32	3538.56	
3	Mt Fuji	Accommodation- (higher of the two options)	Acc	90	9952.2	
3	Mt Fuji	Amenities + Shower Costs + Baggage Storage	Acc	18	2000	
4	Mt Fuji	Breakfast + Preparation (Snacks/water)	M	26	2875.08	
4	Mt Fuji	Bus to 5th Station (Round Trip)	T-In	37.8	4200	
4	Mt Fuji	Lunch (buy in advance)	M	24	2653.92	
4	Mt Fuji	Trail Donation	SS	18	2000	
4	Mt Fuji	Emergency Funds for bathroom/water/in case we get sick	SS	24	2653.92	
4	Mt Fuji	Dinner	M	32	3538.56	
5	Mt Fuji	Breakfast	M	20	2211.6	
5	Kyoto	Travel to Kyoto via bullet train	T-B	248.22	27580	
5	Kyoto	Lunch	M	22	2432.76	
5	Kyoto	Dinner (at the street party)	M	32	3538.56	
5	Kyoto	Hotel Stay- Grand Japaning Hotel Kyoto Shijo Omiya	Acc	160	17692.8	
6	Kyoto	Breakfast	M	20	2211.6	
6	Kyoto	Bus from market to Philosopher's Path	T-In	4.14	460	
6	Kyoto	Lunch at Nishiki Market- about \$20/person	M	40	4423.2	
6	Kyoto	Dinner in Gion (\$17/person)	M	34	3759.72	
6	Kyoto	Additional Attractions along Philosopher's Path	SS	15	1658.7	
7	Kyoto	Breakfast	M	20	2211.6	
7	Kyoto	Travel Hotel to Monkey Park via bus	T-In	4.14	460	
7	Kyoto	Monkey Park Admission	SS	9	1000	



## Itemized Cost Breakd

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7	Kyoto	Travel Monkey Park to Golden Temple (2 buses)	T-In	8.28	920
7	Kyoto	Travel Golden Temple to Hotel	T-In	4.14	460
7	Kyoto	Lunch	M	24	2653.92
7	Kyoto	Additional Attractions	SS	8	884.64
7	Kyoto	Dinner + Karaoke Bar	M	40	4423.2
8	Okinawa	Breakfast	M	10	1105.8
8	Okinawa	Travel from Kyoto to KIX	T-B	35.1	3900
8	Okinawa	Flight to Okinawa	Air2	98	10836.84
8	Okinawa	OkinawaWorld	SS	22.32	2480
8	Okinawa	Lunch + Dinner	M	50	5529
8	Okinawa	Naha Bus	T-In	10.98	1220
8	Okinawa	Accommodation- Okinawa Sora House	Acc	181	20014.98
9	Okinawa	Breakfast	M	10	1105.8
9	Okinawa	Okinawa Blue Cave Snorkeling	SS	72	8000
9	Okinawa	Naha Bus	T-In	10.98	1220
9	Okinawa	Possible Taxi Fare	T-In	27	3000
9	Okinawa	Lunch + Dinner	M	40	4423.2
9	Okinawa	Laundry Fees	Acc	4.5	500
10	Okinawa	Breakfast	M	20	2211.6
10	Okinawa	Okinawa Bus Tour	SS	99	11000
10	Okinawa	Aquarium Admission	SS	33.3	3700
10	Okinawa	Dinner	M	40	4423.2
10	Okinawa	Breakfast	M	10	1105.8
11	Okinawa	Naha Bus	T-In	10.98	1220
11	Okinawa	Hiji Waterfall National Park	SS	9	1000
11	Okinawa	Lunch	M	20	2211.6
11	Okinawa	Dinner	M	30	3317.4
12	Osaka	Breakfast	M	10	1105.8
12	Osaka	Flight OKA to KIX	Air2	88	9731.04
12	Osaka	Lunch	M	24	2653.92
12	Osaka	Additional Attractions	SS	16	1769.28
12	Osaka	Dinner	M	32	3538.56
12	Osaka	Kansai Airport Limousine Bus	T-In	27.9	3100
12	Osaka	Bus to Shinsekai	T-In	9.9	1100
12	Osaka	But to Dontobori	T-In	2.7	300
12	Osaka	Accommodation- AZ Hostel	Acc	208	23000.64
12	Osaka	Hostel Baggage Storage	Acc	54	6000
12	Osaka	Train to Hostel	T-In	3.24	360
13	Osaka	Osaka Castle Admission	SS	10.8	1200



## Itemized Cost Breakd

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13 Osaka	Lunch	M	24	2653.92	
13 Osaka	Additional Attractions	SS	20	2211.6	
13 Osaka	Dinner	M	32	3538.56	
14 Osaka	Science Museum Admission	SS	7.2	800	
14 Osaka	Lunch	M	22	2432.76	
14 Osaka	Dinner from Street Vendors	M	34	3759.72	
14 Osaka	Additional Attractions	SS	20	2211.6	
15 Osaka	Travel to Nara Park	T-B	26.64	2960	
15 Osaka	Nara Park Temple	SS	10.8	1200	
15 Osaka	Feed the Deer	SS	2.7	300	
15 Osaka	Lunch	M	22	2432.76	
15 Osaka	Park Shrines	SS	10.8	1200	
15 Osaka	Dinner	M	32	3538.56	
15 Osaka	Ryokan Stay	Acc	124	13711.92	
16 Osaka	Breakfast	M	20	2211.6	
16 Osaka	Flight (Madelyn)	Air1	1510	166975.8	
16 Osaka	Flight (Nika)	Air1	977	108036.66	
16 Osaka	Lunch + Plane Snacks	M	26	2875.08	
16 Osaka	Travel to Airports	T-In	20.7	2300	
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7194.8</b>	<b>796149.1544</b>	
	Total/person		3597.4		



## Japan

**Dates:** July 12 - July 28

**Travel Days:** 3

**Days on Ground:** 14

### Calendar

<u>Sun</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tues</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thurs</u>	<u>Fri</u>	<u>Sat</u>
					12 Travel <b>USA</b> To <b>Tokyo</b>	13 Land in <b>Tokyo</b>
14 <b>Tokyo</b> (morning) Travel + explore <b>Mt. Fuji</b> (afternoon)	15 <b>Mt. Fuji</b>	16 Travel Day- <b>Mt. Fuji</b> to <b>Kyoto</b>	17 <b>Kyoto</b> - Gion Matsuri Festival	18 <b>Kyoto</b>	19 Travel Day- <b>Kyoto</b> to Osaka (train) to <b>Okinawa</b> (flight)	20 <b>Okinawa</b>
21 <b>Okinawa</b>	22 <b>Okinawa</b>	23 <b>Okinawa</b> to <b>Osaka</b>	24 <b>Osaka</b> Festival Day 1	25 <b>Osaka</b> - Tenjin Matsuri (Day 2)	26 <b>Nara</b> - Day Trip (train)	27 <b>Osaka</b>
28 Travel Day - <b>Osaka</b> to <b>USA</b>						

### Day 1 +2: Travel from SAN/DEN to Haneda Airport (Tokyo)

Nika will be leaving from San Diego and Madelyn will be leaving from Denver. Flights from SAN are approximately 18-20 hours long, leave early morning to midday and arrive in the evening in Tokyo with one or two stop. Flights from DEN are approximately 18-20 hours, with a few of them joining with the LAX flight in Los Angeles. This way we would do the longest and hardest leg of the flight together and arrive at the same time. Depending on when we both land, we would like to explore the nightlife. We can take the Yamanote Line to Tokyo's Robot Restaurant. It is a light and dance show filled with multi-colored robots and food to spare. We want to experience some of the crazy culture of Tokyo and how best to do it than with robots. As for accomodations, we would want to stay somewhere within a mile of a train station. There are many options and, as Tokyo is very busy, rooms get booked quickly. One option would be the Hotel Houshi Kaikan near Tokyo Station. We could get a twin room with a shared bathroom (\$49 for 1 night) which leaves us a place to store our belongings without having to pay extra if



we stay in a capsule hotel like Capsule Hotel Transit Shinjuku which has storage lockers (\$46 for one night for single female capsules) .

### **Day 3: Tokyo + Travel and Explore Mt. Fuji (Day 1 on the Ground)**

Depending on when we wake up and how our jet lag is feeling, we would take the morning to explore around Tokyo. We aren't the worlds biggest fans of the hustle and bustle of city-life so a brief evening and morning cover what we want to get from Tokyo. Again, depending on when we get up and how we are feeling we could visit Harajuku, which a huge center for fashion and cosplay. It's a good place to stop for lunch. Harajuku is part of the Shibuya district which is home to one of the largest and busiest crosswalks right outside of Shibuya Station. Other places we could explore include Ueno Park, the Tokyo National Museum, or the Imperial Palace. Since the royals still live here, a tour can only be granted by application two months in advance so we could try to see if we can get a spot there. After checking out of our hostel, we will take the train from any of the Tokyo lines (Yamanote, Narita, Saikyo) and then take a bus to Kawaguchiko Station which is the hub of Mt. Fuji. The entire trip will take 2- 2.5 hours so we will have an afternoon to spend in Mt. Fuji. We will use our unlimited Omni Bus pass that will take us to various places around the lakes. We want to visit the Kawaguchiko Music Forest and Museum, which is a small theme park centered around automatic musical instruments. It also has beautiful gardens. We also can visit the three main caves- the Bat Cave, the Wind Cave, and the Ice Cave- for a variety of different scenes (and also bats). Lastly, we would like to end the day visiting an onsen, or a hot springs bath. This is traditional aspect of Japanese culture and, with tired legs, a much needed relaxation period. There are multiple onsens available around Lake Kawaguchiko. Hotel Mifujien has an onsen open to the public from 1pm-8pm which would be a great way to end the day. We can take the Omni bus back to our hostel. Depending on when we book, there are a couple of options for where to stay. The Mt. Fuji Hostel Michael's is one option- there is a twin room with bunk beds and a shared bathroom for pretty cheap (\$70) for two nights. This gives us one option for where to store our stuff when we climb the mountain. Another option is the Capsule Inn Fujisan which is less room and more expensive (\$90) plus baggage storage. Either way, we want to be around Kawaguchiko Station.

### **Day 4: Climbing Mt. Fuji**

Mount Fuji is an all day event. After a hearty breakfast, we get on a bus from Kawaguchiko Station that takes us the one hour ride to the 5th Station, which is where the climbing starts. We will be on the Yoshida trail which takes 5-8 hours up and 3-5 hours down. The entire hike to the summit is 2000 meters. There are emergency places for water and food but we will have packed snacks and water and bring the things that are necessary for a hike of that magnitude. Both of us are athletic and the trail will be full of people which helps with motivation and should anything go wrong. Once we have completed our adventure, we will take the same bus back from the 5th station, eat some dinner, and fall asleep.



#### **Day 5: Travel Day- Mt. Fuji to Kyoto**

This is the longest travel portion of our trip. The entire trip will take about 5 hours. We will get ourselves some breakfast and depart from Kawaguchiko Station on a bus that takes us to Tokyo Station. We want to arrive around Shijo Station in Kyoto and so will use our JR Pass to take the Tokaido-Sanyo Shinkansen, which is basically a bullet train. Depending on when we arrive in Kyoto, the Yoi-yama street party, the pre-event for the Gion Matsuri Festival, which runs from dusk until about 10pm. We can get dinner here and then check into our accommodation. For accomodation in Kyoto, we would like to stay in the area around the Festival. It is best to try to get a place nearby the Shijo Station. One example of a place to stay is the Grand Japaning Hotel Kyoto Shijo Omiya. This hotel is less than some of the hostels in the area and includes a private room that would allow us to leave our belongings in a safe area. This is festival season meaning that hotel rooms might go fast so finding a hotel/hostel in the \$150-\$200 range for all three nights is the goal.

#### **Day 6: Kyoto - Gion Matsuri Festival**

This festival honors the Yasaka Shrine. It is the largest festival in Japan and on July 17th there are huge processions. We will begin our morning by finding a nice spot nearby on the procession route (which we are staying extremely close to). The procession runs from 9am to 11:30am depending on where we find a good spot. After the parade, we will walk 15 minutes to get lunch at the Nishiki Market. Next, we will take a 30 minute train ride to the start of the Philosopher's Path. This 2 mile journey is a very easy walk with plenty of sights to see along the way. Temples and shrines line the path, some with a few hundred yen admission. The path will end in Gion, the geisha district. We will enjoy the night time here and eat some dinner. Depending on how we feel, we can either walk the 30 minutes home or take a 20 minute bus ride.

#### **Day 7: Kyoto - Monkey Park + Golden Temple**

Today we will explore the sights east of our hotel. We will take a bus ride to the Arashiyama Monkey Park. The park has an admission fee to see the monkeys and also includes a beautiful bamboo grove for us to wander around. There are various temples and shrines around the park with small admission fees as well. When we are satisfied, we will take a one hour train to Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Temple. After spending time in this area, we will catch a 30 minute train back to our hotel area and spend the evening wandering around. We might even make it to a karaoke bar.

#### **Day 8: Travel Day- Kyoto to Kansai International Airport to Okinawa**

In the morning, we will take a train from Kyoto to Osaka airport, an experience around two hours depending on when we are leaving. Flights vary from KIX to Okinawa are nonstop and about 2 hours and 15 minutes. Flights leave as early as 11am and as late as 3:30pm. If we take the earlier flight, we have time to go to Okinawa World. This is a quick bus ride from Naha



Airport and the pass would allow us to see Gyokusendo Cave as well as the Kingdom Village, which is a replica of a traditional Ryuku village. There is food and performances and would be a good place for lunch, dinner, and snacks. We can hop back on the bus and make our way to our accommodations. It's best to stay close to the Naha Bus Terminal, which gives us access to the main methods of transportation around the island. One example of a nearby accommodation is Okinawa Sora House. Here we could get an Economy twin Room with a shared bathroom. It comes with free toiletries and we can spend the extra couple of dollars on towels. They also have laundry machines for when we need to dry out our snorkeling gear.

#### **Day 9: Okinawa Snorkel Adventure**

Today we are going snorkeling at the Blue Cave. The Okinawa Blue Cave Snorkeling company has English snorkeling sessions at a variety of times. To get there, we get an unlimited Naha Bus pass. The bus line is a 30 minute walk to the snorkel site so they suggest splurging on a taxi for when we are tired from a long day. After our snorkeling adventure, we can spend the day at the beach. Zampa beach and lighthouse are extremely close and the day can be spent relaxing.

#### **Day 10: Okinawa Island Tour**

With the beaches having been explored, it is time for us to see other points of interest on the island. The Okinawa bus company runs a tour that takes island goers to five important island sights. The price of visiting each of these places on our own is higher than with the Okinawa bus. Boarding is a 15 minute walk from our hotel. The bus stops at Cape Manza, then whisks us away to a fancy buffet overlooking the ocean. It takes us next to the Churaumi Aquarium, which houses the world's largest tank full of whale sharks. Nika is an extreme aquarium enthusiast and is extremely excited for this leg of the adventure. Next, we head slightly inland to visit the Nakijin Castle Ruins. The last stop is Nago Pineapple Park. This crazy pineapple wonderland has food and drinks and rides through pineapple plantations on bright yellow pineapple trams.

#### **Day 11: Okinawa - Go Chasing Waterfalls**

We've hit beaches and ruins and parks- now it is time for waterfalls. We will take the bus line up to the Hiji Waterfall National Park area and spend the day wandering looking at waterfalls and visiting the Yamaru Wildlife Conservation Center.

#### **Day 12: Travel Day- Okinawa to Osaka**

With our nature adventure coming to a close, we will make our way back to the main island. Flights from OKA to KIX have different times, earliest being 11:50am and latest being around 3:10pm. Again, it's a two hour, nonstop flight. When we arrive in Osaka, we plan on hanging around Shinsekai and explore Dotombori, all depending on what time we land. Because we are in Osaka for the Tenjin Matsuri Festival, we want to find a hotel/hostel close to the parades and sights so we can walk places. As it is a huge festival, beds and such are going fast. One good



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example at a great location is the AZ Hostel. We would get two bunk beds and pay to have our baggage stored when we travel during different days. Breakfast is also included.

#### **Day 13: Osaka- Tenjin Matsuri Festival Day 1**

Tenjin Matsuri celebrates the Tenmangu Shrine and honors Sugawara Michizane, the god of scholarship. The festival spans two days. The first day is spent bringing the deity out of his shrine and parading him around the city. The festival ends the next day with a final procession along the water and fireworks. For day one of Tenjin Matsuri, we will see the opening rituals at the Tenmangu Shrine, a 15 minute walk from our hostel. We will then spend the rest of the day exploring the city and the festival. We can visit the Osaka Castle and Park, only about a 20 minute walk from the heart of the festivities.

#### **Day 14: Osaka- Tenjin Matsuri Festival Day 2**

The conclusion of the festival does not start until 3:30pm so we can continue to explore in the morning. Depending on the heat and our feet from walking around all day, we could go explore the Osaka Science Museum. The final procession from the tenmangu shrine begins late afternoon and ends with the procession making its way onto boats and floating down the river. The entire festival culminates with fireworks starting around 7pm and continuing for almost two hours! There are street vendors everywhere and the festival ends at 10pm.

#### **Day 15: Day Trip to Nara**

Leaving our bags stored at the hostel, we will hop on a the Yamatogi train line for an hour ride to Nara. The main attraction for Nara is Nara Park. Here wild deer roam around freely and for a few yen you can purchase special crackers to feed them. The park also is home to the Todaji Temple, the Kasuga-Taisha shrine, and more. We can hop right back on the train we got here with after we have had our fill. We also want to spend this night in a traditional ryokan. At the ryokan we would sleep on mats and relax and enjoy the beautiful architecture and traditional Japanese paper walls. A ryokan is more expensive than a hotel or hostel so we thought spending one night here would be cost effective and still give us the experience we hoped for.

#### **Day 16: Explore Around Osaka (Day 14 on the ground)**

Osaka is a big city so today we can go to the places we either were too tired to go to on the other days. Or just explore and see where the day takes us. Because we spent most of our time in this city in the areas dedicated to the festival, we most likely missed some great places to eat or visit. We will make sure this night to pack all our belongings up so we can wake up bright and early the next day.



### Day 17: Travel Day- Osaka to SAN/SGF

We will check out of our accommodations and head to the airport. Because Madelyn is starting medical school on July 29th, we need to fly her to Columbia, Missouri so she can have enough time to get settled and prepare. Nika will be flying back to San Diego. Flights have a variety of departure times but, because of the vast time difference, departing and arriving flights will be on the same day. Depending on which flight we pick, the two of us might need to fly out of different airports in Osaka because of significant cost differences between the airports. Depending on which flights we end up on, we will attempt to have breakfast together and do some possible exploring before taking respective trains/buses to the airports. Nika has more leeway when it comes to flights and can take whatever is most convenient for flying with Madelyn. Flights vary in time and range at approximately \$800+.

Revised flight for Madelyn (**leaving and arriving Sunday July 28th**):

Option 1: ITM->NRT->DFW->COU (8:00AM-2:02PM) JAL/AA \$1356

Option 2: KIK->LAX->DFW->COU (5:45PM-10:22PM) JAL/AA \$1372 (1st same as Nika)

Option 3: ITM->NRT->DFW->COU (2:35PM-10:22PM) JAL/AA \$1288

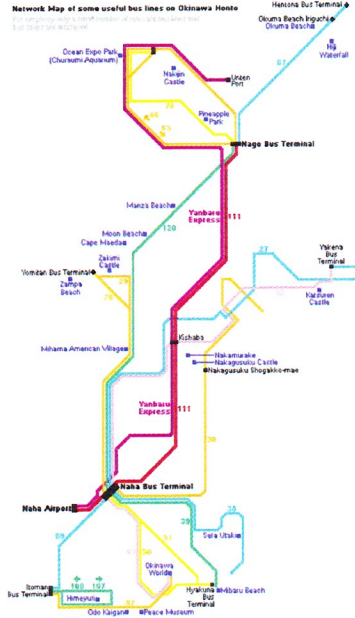
### Travel Maps

Map of Cities Traveling to





## Okinawa Map + Naha Bus Lines



## Map of Mainland Japan Cities

