

NIPPON NEWS

10 Day Tour of Japan | March 2023 | Heather and Blayze

Blayze's Impressions

After a stop at Osaka castle, we went to a very popular shopping centre called Shinsaibashi-Suji. I thought that this place would be more of a place to take photos, but it was fun to walk around the shops and, see everything. We bought a ticket for a place called "Mameshiba Cafe" and it is what it sounds like. A cafe with Japanese shiba inu dogs, we were told to come back in around 30 minutes. So we went to a restaurant where we both bought a sandwich because the shiba cafe didn't serve food, most likely because the dogs would bother everybody for the food. Then we went back to the cafe because it was time to meet the shibas.

We needed to take off our shoes and watch a safety video which told us what to do and what not to do. We stepped over a gate to stop the shiba inus from running into the busy streets of Osaka, and sat down. After a few minutes a white shiba inu called Tsurumame sat next to us. We scratched it for a few minutes until it started to growl a tiny bit, so I took my hand away with the thought that it didn't want to be scratched anymore but it still kept growling - we think it was just snoring. It kept on laying there and snoring with its eyes closed, eventually I tried saying hello to a red shiba, but when I tried to pat it they scooped over a bit to avoid my hand. These dogs are very independent and usually pick one human, and stay with that one. These dogs actually act a lot like cats. This cafe was an amazing experience and I recommend going for shiba lovers in the area.

Osaka

A day I thought would be not so exciting has been very enjoyable. Firstly we went to Osaka Castle. This castle was started in 1583 by a Hideyoshi Toyotomi. At the time of its construction it was the largest and strongest in all of Japan. It was destroyed and rebuilt a number of times. It was even struck by lightning once. We only had an hour to explore the place and Blayze decided he wanted to climb to the observation deck. I knew I could not make it in a timely manner, so he went with another of the tour group — Stephen. I wandered the lower levels and admired some of the exhibits. It is a shame we did not have more time to dedicate to this great place.





The next stop — Shinsaibashi-suji — was a large, very popular shopping district. I did not think that I would enjoy it, but that was not so. It was seething with people, and the advertising via large signs was fabulous! It was like the way the old English shops have signs outside their establishment, these Japanese shops had the “big crab, the big oyster, the big octopus” etc. We spent most of our two hours enjoying a special treat that was on Blayze’s see Japan list. He has told you about that. We also dined in at a restaurant, once again navigating the menu with aplomb.

A half hour drive took us to Nara, a very old settlement that has many temples. It is regarded as a small place — only about 300,00! We entered one complex that has an adjacent park with many wandering deer. One is supposed to buy rice crackers and feed them. However we discovered to our slight concern that they were not very patient. Whilst Blayze was trying to undo his pile of crackers the deer kept biting at us. They are a little rude actually. According to our guide they are regarded by the Buddhists as messengers of the gods. When one came up behind me and tried to steal my ice-cream it got short shift — messenger or not!!

I am writing the last part of the missive on our 4 hour journey to our overnight stop. I hoped the scenery would be interesting but we slept and missed most of it. As a result the time went quickly. The hotel we are in is very fancy. The nicest of our stay so far. I went down to dinner in the in-house restaurant but Blayze decided he had had enough for the day. I secreted out a doggy bag of tempura for him anyway. A great day.

Tomorrow is our last adventure for this trip.





