



Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms

INTERN HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms!

This handbook is designed to introduce arriving interns to the local area of Wazuka, Obubu as a company, its activities and your role as an intern. Arriving in Japan, being in a foreign country, and working with a language barrier can be daunting– but have no fear, Obubu is here! Once you get settled in and unpack your luggage, enjoy a cup of tea and you will see just how friendly and hospitable the Japanese can be. If you have any trouble during your stay, please do not hesitate to ask one of the staff members for help. They will assist you in any way they can and are more than willing to help.

THE OBUBU FAMILY



AKIHIRO "AKKY" KITA

President / Head Farmer



Akihiro "Akky" Kita is our president and head farmer. His desire to make this tea available to the general public is the foundation of Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms. In college, Akky took up a part-time job as a farmhand in Wazuka, and fell in love with the tea he was drinking on the farm. He made the decision then to leave college and devote his time to mastering the art of tea farming.

YASUHARU "MATSU" MATSUMOTO

Vice-President / Office Manager

Yasuharu "Matsu" Matsumoto spends much of his time connecting with Obubu's customers in Japan and focusing on management of the business. Together with Akky, the visionary pair seek to transform the tea farming industry in Japan. Matsu is also the driving force behind Obubu's push to overseas markets. He travels the world teaching people about Japanese tea with events such as the Euro Tour.





SIMONA ZAVADCKYTE

International Department Lead

After earning her Master's in Japanese Studies, with a focus on Politics and International Relations, Simona came all the way from Lithuania to learn about Japanese tea. Enchanted with Obubu and its ideals, she now aims to spread Japanese tea culture around the world. Simona now looks after all of our international programs, from wholesale, tea tours, to the internship program.

KAYO TAKEUCHI

Domestic Operations Lead

A mother of two, an avid reader, a social media savant and a great cook. After falling in love with the tea in Wazuka, Kayo moved her family to the area to work with Obubu as the Head of Operations. Kayo is the "Obubu mama" for the interns, periodically whipping up udon or soba lunch for everyone in the office. But her favorite food of all is Thai food!



MOMO TANIGUCHI

Administrative and Shipping Lead

Bioengineer turned tea farmer, Momo takes care of shipping and communications for Obubu's domestic department. She boasts a collection of 100s of manga that you can find all over the Obubu house. She loves cats, peaches and all things tea -- but not as much as her husband Yohei. That's right, it's an office romance!

YOHEI "GENIUS" YAMASAKI

IT and Systems Lead

Yohei takes care of all things technical, designing and maintaining all of Obubu's IT systems, from website databases to shipment and stock management. He's always researching and learning new things: from video camera techniques to human pressure points. If you can't find him behind a computer screen, you'll find him in front of a mic at the karaoke bar. Sing on, Yohei!



OBUBU'S ACTIVITIES

While Obubu is a relatively small company of only six permanent staff members, we perform a broad range of activities that include, but are not limited to:

Tea Farming & Production

The majority of Obubu's teas are made by our president and lead farmer Akky-san, who has devoted his life to making delicious tea, and spends most of his time on the tea farm. Interns and staff members come to help with planting, weeding, mulching, and harvesting during the busy Spring harvest season from March-October.

Tea Sales

Unlike many tea farms in Japan, Obubu offers its tea directly to tea lovers. Our tea is available for retail and wholesale, both domestically and internationally.

Tea Club

To build a connection between tea lovers and tea farmers, Obubu runs a Tea Club with more than 600 members, who all receive packages of tea throughout the year during our seasonal harvests.

Tea Tours

Having realised that tea is not only a commodity, but also culture and experience, Obubu invites visitors to see our tea farms and taste our teas.

Outreach & Education

Being a social agricultural venture, Obubu runs and contributes to a number of education and outreach programs, such as the International Internship Program, University of Tea, Teatopia Festival, and International Tea Farms Alliance.

OFFICE SCHEDULE

Work Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10.00am – 6.00pm.

Interns are entitled to one hour lunch break at any time of their choosing.

Intern Meeting

Mondays

10.00am – 11.00am.

Interns discuss with Matsu-san and Simona what they have been working on, and what they will do next.

Friday Clean-up

Fridays

1.00pm – 2.00pm

Interns and staff do a larger cleaning or organizing projects of the Obubu house and office space.

Quick Clean-up

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9.30am – 10.00am

Interns and staff do quick clean-up of the Obubu house and office space.

Tea Lounge

Wednesdays

3.00pm – 5.00pm.

Matsu-san will teach any topic of the intern's choosing, related to tea.

Weekends

Saturdays & Sundays

Interns are not required to work in the office during the weekends. However, events and festivals occasionally do fall on the weekend. Interns are expected to attend these events as representatives of Obubu. They are a great way to get involved in the local community, and are lots of fun!

OBUBU'S EXPECTATIONS

Obubu's Internship Program aims to provide interns with the opportunity to learn about tea and engage with Japanese culture through local activities.

Intern activities are largely self-directed with support and guidance from staff when needed. It is important that the interns work together on larger projects whilst also pursuing their own individual goals. If you have any specialist skills (such as web design, photography, film editing, translation etc.) discuss them with the staff members to find appropriate projects to put them to use. Obubu will do its best to offer support and suggestions for how you can use your skills effectively.

Please bear in mind that while most of an intern's duties are within the office, your assistance will be needed in the tea fields during harvesting season (see 'Seasonal Changes' section for details).

Internship

Most of intern activities are project based. Stay organised with Asana to manage your tasks. If you are unable to finish a task before the end of your internship make sure you have passed it onto another intern. Keep in contact with prospective interns regularly and respond in a timely manner. Keep handbooks and all other information up-to-date.

Social Media

Manage social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Youtube, and share with followers about Obubu's activities, events, new developments, etc.

Obubu's Website

Create engaging content and keep in touch with our followers through regular blogs posts and updates.

Tea Tours

Host presentations and accompany our guests to the tea fields and lunch. Be informative and friendly to help them enjoy their time here.

Events

Seasonal Tea Picking. Every year Obubu organises Tea Picking & Rolling Events, which occur once every main tea harvesting season- spring, summer and autumn.

Chagenkyo Matsuri (Teatopia Festival). Takes place over 2 days in November. The itinerary includes tea ceremonies, performances, tea exhibitions and tea farm tours. The best thing is that the festival is held in our very own town of Wazuka!

Welcoming Guests

Obubu has many guests throughout the week. Interns have to be prepared to politely welcome guests, introduce themselves and serve tea.

Tea Farming

Key months for tea farming activities are March, May – July, September – October, during which you are expected to help in the tea fields. Activities can involve tea planting, weeding, pruning, mulching, harvesting and other horticultural tasks.

SEASONAL CHANGES

In general Japan is a rainy and very humid country, characterised by four distinct seasons:

Spring (March – May)

One of the most pleasant times to be in Japan, the weather is warm and rainfall is at its lowest. Spring is the season to see Japan's beautiful cherry blossoms.

Summer (June – August)

Summer begins in June with an intense rainy period, which leaves the surrounding fields a brilliant, vibrant green! In August temperatures can reach around 100°F/30°C with high levels of humidity. But it pays off once you see beautiful fireflies.

Autumn (September – November)

Autumn has a refreshing and enjoyable weather climate following the summer months. The foliage begins to turn against a dry and mild climate. Throughout Summer and Fall typhoons are a regular occurrence. Don't miss the beautiful change of colours.

Winter (December – February)

Winter is the driest time of year. December to February has very short days with the sun setting at 5pm and temperatures around 40°F/4°C. It rarely snows, but if you are lucky you might see white painted tea fields.

ACCOMMODATIONS

PAYMENT

Rent – 18,000 ¥/ month

Rent can be paid via paypal or in cash.

If you arrive or depart half way through a month, a rate of 600¥/day will be charged from when you arrive until the first of the next month or from the first of the month until you depart.

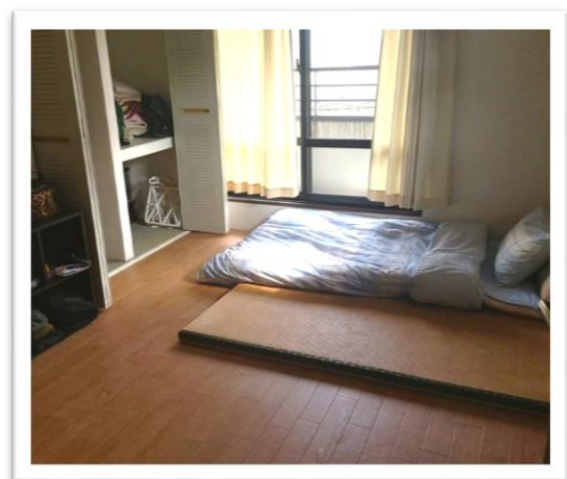
Rent is all-inclusive of:

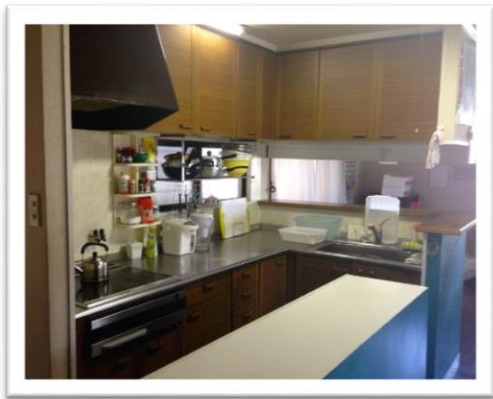
- ☐ Electricity
- ☐ Hot water
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Air conditioning
- ☐ Heating
- ☐ Bed Linen, futon and pillow

LAYOUT

Bedroom

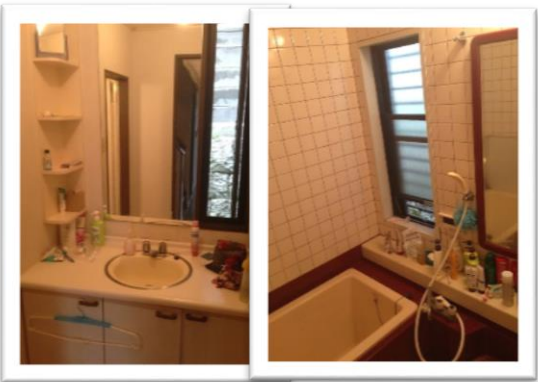
The Obubu House has 5 bedrooms of varying sizes, 4 of which are for intern use. Bedding is provided as futons complete with pillows, sheets and duvets for the winter. There may be occasions of guests and visitors staying at Obubu House in which you may have to share a room with another intern.





Kitchen

Our shared kitchen has a stove, a fridge, a microwave, a rice cooker, a toaster and a washing machine. Interns will be allocated a cupboard and space in a shared fridge/freezer.



Bathroom

A bathroom with a western style toilet is available on both the lower and upper level. A shower room and bathtub is situated on the lower level. Guests and visitors may use the bathroom on the lower floor, so it has to be kept clean.



Lounge Area

Lounge area with a tatami flooring, low table, sofa and a piano is where interns often spend their time after office hours. Guests and visitors are sometimes invited to this area, so it has to be kept neat and clean



Office

Staff members and interns share the office space. Interns are provided with desk space and a chair. This is also the place where we hold tea tours and accept guest, so professional behaviour is expected.

WAZUKA GUIDE

Most places in Wazuka are within walking distance. There are also two bicycles that can be used by the interns. We have created our very own map of the local area highlighting all of the main destinations that you may wish to visit in Wazuka.

WAZUKA 和束町





Nakatsuji

Opening hours: Mon-Sat until 7pm

The grocery store is 12min walk from the Obubu House. Stocked with fruit and vegetables, bread, milk, fish and meat you will be able to find most of your food items here.



Post Office

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

22min walk from Obubu House. Post office ATM accepts most foreign cards and is located at the entrance of the building. Opening hours Mon-Fri 8:45am-6pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 9am-3pm



Miyakou

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 7:30am-7pm, Sun 10am-6pm

25min from Obubu House, Miyakou is a home goods store. This is a place to come to stock up on toiletries, laundry detergent and snacks.



Lawson

Opening hours: 24 hours every day

30min walk from Obubu House, Lawson is a convenience store attached to the gas station. There is also a seating area where you can sit down to enjoy your bento or drink.



Ecchan

Opening hours: Mon, Wed-Sun 5pm -9pm

A 15min walk from Obubu, Ecchan is an Okonomiyaki restaurant, for when you feel like going out.



Take no Ko

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am-5pm. Sat-Sun 8:30am-4:30pm

Just a quick 2min walk from Obubu, this the restaurant that we go to during the tea tours. Serving green tea noodles and other Japanese dishes. Next to Takenoko there is also a small shop where you can buy some basic vegetables and snacks. In the same area there is sometimes a Takoyaki stall if you fancy a traditional snack!

CODE OF CONDUCT

Obubu's Head Office serves as both the office and living environment for the company and its interns. As such proper behaviour and conduct is essential for the day-to-day operations of all personnel and Obubu.

Working hours are typically 10:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday with side events occasionally scheduled on the weekends. Interns are to prepare for the possibility of attending these events and will be expected to do so if asked by Obubu.

As you may be aware, Japanese culture is classified as "High Context" and is riddled with formalities. It is expected that you may not know how to act in a formal situation, however strive to keep a formal figure and appearance, follow the staff's lead and directions, and keep an open mind and watchful eye. Your actions reflect on Obubu and it is therefore part of your job as an intern to maintain and increase Obubu's reputation as a leading Japanese tea company. Failure to adhere to instructions, harming Obubu's reputation, or causing disturbances during events (both public and private) will result in disciplinary actions or expulsion from the internship program.

There is a possibility of you sharing a room with another intern should the circumstances arise in which we must house extra guests. In this event, respectable behaviour, courtesy, and flexibility are expected from the interns and are to be adhered to.

The Obubu Internship Program does not just focus on tea, but also intercultural exchange and social interactions. Obubu wishes for its interns to engage in cross-cultural understanding and for the interns to learn from one another.

Any disputes are to be first settled between the conflicting parties if possible. If the parties are unable to resolve their dispute, it is to be discussed with Matsumoto-san, the VP of Obubu, and settled through a democratic process. In the extreme event that an intern is found to be disruptive to Obubu, the staff, and fellow interns, they will be asked to leave Obubu.

Actions such as theft, fighting, intentional destruction of property, insulting fellow staff and employees, or consistent disruptive behaviour are forbidden and bear the consequence of expulsion from the internship program. The final decision rests with Yasuharu Matsumoto and Akihiro Kita, the Vice President and President of the company, respectively.