

INTERN HANDBOOK

2019

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms!

This handbook is designed to provide you with information about our company, the town of Wazuka and your role as an intern while you are here. Living in a foreign country and facing language barriers 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 / Founder / Lead Farmer



Akihiro “Akky” Kita is our president and head farmer. Kyoto Obubu Tea Farms was founded on his desire to bring delicious tea to the world. 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 then made the decision to leave college and devote his time to mastering the art of tea farming.

YASUHARU “MATSU” MATSUMOTO

Vice-President / Founder / Business Development Lead



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 and Hiro, the visionary trio 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 World Tea Tour.

HIROKAZU “HIRO” MATSUMOTO

Founder / Events and Operations Lead

“Hiro” founded Obubu with Matsu and Akky and together the three of them are determined to share the magic of Japanese tea around the world. Hiro will be a primary point of contact for interns and will work closely with interns in activities such as tea tours. You will often find that guests to Obubu frequently comment that Hiro is the best part of their trip to Japan as he is always making people laugh!

SIMONA ZAVADCKYTE

International Department and Education 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. Kayo moved her family to Wazuka to work for 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. Fun fact: She loves spicy food!

GEORGE GUTTRIDGE-SMITH

Vice Manager - International Division

George loves tea from around the world and the stories and cultures that go with them. Some of his favourite teas are Black Teas and White Teas from Yunnan in China and also Japanese Shincha. He is originally from the UK but he hates football. He loves making bad jokes and drinking tea! George helps with the intern management and will join you in the tea fields from time to time!

MOE 'MOE-CHAN' NAKASHIMA

Vice Events Manager

Originally from Hyogo prefecture, Moe-chan has a passion for spreading knowledge and exposure to Japanese tea through tea tourism. Her interest for Japanese tea began while visiting a small tea farm trying to sell single origin tea. After learning about the difficulties faced by farmers selling single origin tea, she decided to join Obubu and help educate and spread knowledge about Japanese teas.

OBUBU'S ACTIVITIES

While Obubu is a relatively small company, 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 in the fields. Interns and staff members help with planting, weeding, mulching, and harvesting during the busy harvest seasons from March-October.

Tea Sales

Unlike many tea farms in Japan, Obubu offers its tea directly to the consumer, no middleman involved. Our tea is available for retail and wholesale, both domestically and internationally.

Tea Club

In order to build a connection between tea lovers and tea farmers, Obubu started a Tea Club that now has more than 800 members. They receive packages of tea throughout the year during our peak seasons. The monthly box supports the local Japanese tea industry here in Wazuka. Members can attend subscriber events, receive discounts and after maintaining a yearlong membership, they can also become an honorary owner of a tea field.

Tea Tours

Having realised that tea is not only a commodity but also a culture, Obubu welcomes guests to visit our tea farms and taste our teas. Tea Tours are largely run by Interns but always hosted by a Staff member.

Outreach & Education

Obubu runs and contributes to a number of education and outreach programs, such as the International Internship Program, Japanese Tea Master Course, Teatopia Festival, and the Global Japanese Tea Association, enabling people to learn more about Japanese tea and culture.

There are three main types of working days here at Obubu.

1) Tea Tour Days -

The tea tours run Monday through Saturday from 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM and short tours run from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM with Interns starting at 9:00 AM to prepare for all tea tours and around 30 minutes at the end to clean up.

2) Farming Days -

Farming can consist of harvesting/weeding/general help in the fields or factory. The start times of this type of day can vary depending on the weather. During the summer months the start is early, sometimes 6:00 AM, to escape the heat of the day but will finish much earlier as well. But in the Autumn you can expect a later start from 7:30 AM until 12:00 PM or even starting in the afternoon after lunch around 1:00 PM and working until 5:00 PM.

3) Inside Days -

An inside day can vary from tea packing to office work to being able to work on personal projects. It is a day which, unsurprisingly from the name, is spent inside. It could also include working alongside a staff member for a specific task, such as product photographing with Kayo-San. But also includes the opportunity to pursue projects whilst at Obubu. These days typically start at 9:00 AM and finish at approximately 5:00 PM with a lunch break during the day.

Working day responsibilities will be organized so that all interns will be able to experience each of the aspects of the tea business.

OBUBU'S EXPECTATIONS

Obubu's Internship Program aims to provide interns with the opportunity to learn about tea and 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 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

A staff member will host the tea tour while Interns will present the tea tours and accompany our guests to the tea fields and to lunch. Be informative and friendly to help them enjoy their time here.

Events

Seasonal Tea Picking. Every year, Obubu organises Tea Picking & Rolling Events. These occur during the main tea harvesting season- (spring, summer and autumn).

The Chagenkyo Matsuri (Teatopia Festival) is a two-day festival that takes place in November. The itinerary includes tea ceremonies, performances, tea exhibitions and tea farm tours. The festival is held in our very own town of Wazuka!

Welcoming Guests

Obubu has many guests throughout the week. Interns should politely welcome guests, introduce themselves and serve tea.

Tea Farming

Key months for tea farming activities are March, May – July, September – October/November, 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 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 beautiful colours during this time. Throughout summer and fall, typhoons are a regular occurrence.

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 snow covered 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 6 bedrooms of varying sizes, which are for intern use. Bedding is provided which consists of futons complete with pillows, sheets and duvets for the winter.

Kitchen

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

Bathroom

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

Lounge

Area

The lounge area consists of tatami flooring, a low table and a piano. This is where interns often spend their time after office hours. Guests and visitors are sometimes invited to this area, so it needs to be kept neat and clean.

Office

Staff members and interns share the office space. Interns are provided with a desk space and a chair. This is also the place where we hold tea tours and welcome guests, therefore 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 while here.



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 8:45am-6pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 9am-3pm

22min walk from Obubu House. Post office ATM accepts most foreign cards and is located at the entrance of the building.

Miyakou

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

25min from Obubu House, Miyakou is a home goods store. This is a great place 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.

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 and expected for day-to-day operations.

Working hours vary but are typically during the day from 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 not expected that you know how to act in every 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 have 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 encourages 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 or fellow interns, the individual 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.

What to pack for Obubu?

Are you working on your packing checklist for your stay at Obubu Tea farms? We offer this guideline to plan what to bring for your 85 day stay in Wazuka.

Required items

- Personal laptop
- Farming clothing

Working in the tea fields is fun and can get a bit messy. We suggest you pack old clothing and items you don't mind getting dirty.

- Jeans or leggings
- T-shirts
- Hiking boots or safety shoes: make sure (1) you don't mind getting them muddy, (2) water resistant, and (3) comfortable. If you're buying new shoes, break them in before coming here.
- Sun hat (especially during hotter months)
- Rain jacket or ponchos
- Rain boots
- Rain pants
- Work gloves
- Insect repellent

We also suggest to pack the following:

- House slippers: Japanese households often wear slippers indoors and remove shoes at the front
- Body & face towels
- Hygiene products such as shampoo, bodywash, etc. (none are provided, but can be purchased at a local store)
- Backpack
- Water bottle
- Tools you may need to develop for your personal project (camera, tripod, etc)

Fun to bring / do

Obubu is a place to share tea and where many cultures converge. Therefore, it will be great for you to share a little about your culture.

These are some things that Interns have done in the past:

- Show games people play at home
- Show traditional clothes from their countries
- Show the tea culture at home
- Show local tea from home
- Show sweets / typical snacks from home
- Show local spices

Clothing by season

Winter

The key to surviving winter is to layer up! A good rule of thumb – base layer (thermal) + shirt/pants + Puffy jacket + outer shell (if raining). Often, it will be cold outside but most places in Japan will have indoor heating. Plan to remove and put on your layers easily.

- Puffy jacket
- Thermals (long sleeves, leggings)
- Sweatshirts, flannel jackets or similar since rural housing doesn't have central heating)
- Wool socks
- Beanies, scarves, gloves

Spring

Because Wazuka is in the mountains, the weather will be nice and moderate during the day but chilly at night. Be prepared to go from hot to wearing a light/medium jacket during the evenings.

- Light jackets
- Rain jacket

Summer

The summers in Japan are hot and humid with a rainy period (June). It is important to be prepared for the heat but protect yourself from heavy rains (typhoon season).

- Bug spray
- Sun hat
- Long sleeves to shield from the sun
- Rain jacket
- Sunscreen
- Sweat towel or bandana to wipe away sweat in the field.

Safety Precautions

We want to learn as much as possible but safety takes priority. Please be careful!

Farming

Farming is an integral part of the tea production process and the internship.

- The tea fields may be really steep so please watch your footing. Hiking boots or other proper footwear will go a long way for preventing slips and falls.
- Please take care when operating the harvest/trimming machines. Follow Akky-san's lead and pay attention to your footing.
- [SUMMER] The warmer weather in Summer brings ticks. If you are farming, please check your body for any unusual hitchhikers. Obubu has a tick removal kit, but proper insect repellent will help prevent tick bites. Link to useful information about tick management from US CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html>.
- Other general wildlife to be aware of: Hornet's nests, snakes.

Factory

Our Sencha factory has many different machines with many moving parts.

- Be aware of which machines are currently in use and how they are used. A lot of this information will be learned as part of the tea tours but don't hesitate to ask questions about how any of the machines work.
- If you are on tea processing, make sure to sweep around the machines periodically. Loose tea/dust will fall onto the factory floor and sweeping will prevent some slips and falls.
- Wear tight fitting clothing, tie up hair, roll up sleeves, and make sure to wear the factory cros. Clothing/hair can easily be caught in the moving parts of the machines. Having the proper attire goes a long way in preventing accidents.

Intern House

Some basic precautions to take in the Intern house:

- Please make sure to turn off the gas stove and oven after each use.
- The water faucets are slightly different in Japan and even between the intern house and tea room. Please make sure the water isn't left running after use.
- Please turn off the water to the washing machine after use to prevent kitchen flooding in the event of a burst pipe.
- Please refill water boilers after use so that they don't continue to boil dry, causing a fire hazard.

Earthquake response - Drop, Cover, Hold on!

In MOST situations, you will reduce your chance of injury if you:



DROP where you are, onto your hands and knees. This position protects you from being knocked down and also allows you to stay low and crawl to shelter if nearby.



COVER your head and neck with one arm and hand

- If a sturdy table or desk is nearby, crawl underneath it for shelter
- If no shelter is nearby, crawl next to an interior wall (away from windows)
- Stay on your knees; bend over to protect vital organs



HOLD ON until shaking stops

- Under shelter: hold on to it with one hand; be ready to move with your shelter if it shifts
- No shelter: hold on to your head and neck with both arms and hands.

Additional information:

<https://www.earthquakecountry.org/step5/>

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1527865427503-bbf6d7e61340e203c4607677cb83a69d/Earthquake_May2018.pdf

Monsoon/Landslides - The rainy season (Tsuyu) in Wazuka is typically from June to July.

- Avoid dangerous situations by planning ahead and looking at the weather forecast. Don't go out if heavy/prolonged downpour is expected.
- Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.
- Roadbeds may be washed out under floodwaters. Never drive through flooded roadways.
- Be especially cautious at night. Flood dangers are much more difficult to see in the dark.
- When in doubt, wait it out, or find a safer route.

Landslides may occur during heavy rainfall. Areas that are generally prone to landslide hazards:

- On existing old landslides.
- On or at the base of slopes.
- In or at the base of minor drainage hollows.
- At the base or top of an old fill slope.
- At the base or top of a steep cut slope.

Additional information:

<https://www.monsoonsafety.org/safety-prep/>

https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/landslide-hazards/science/landslide-preparedness?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects