

Yusuhara a Home from Home: 3. Winter Confusion

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I don't know what I expected winter to be like in Yusuhara but it certainly wasn't this. Upon arrival a few months ago I was told tales of harsh winters with uninhabitable temperatures, a seemingly endless volume of snow and a living situation that would be less than ideal due to its vulnerability to the cold. Being from the UK I was familiar with the cold, but never have I experienced situations like this. Gone were the common facilities I was accustomed to, insulation, central heating and double glazing to name a few.

Preparation was key to my success through winter. I prepared myself through the research of "winter survival techniques" online and made a battle plan. I got myself an electric heater, *kotatsu*, heated carpet and plenty of blankets. I was ready.

However, to my surprise I've barely even touched my *kotatsu* or heated carpet, the cold temperatures have not been anywhere what I was expecting - although my heater has had plenty of use. The days have been pleasant and somewhat comfortable, the nights not so much but that is easily solved with more blankets. There have even been days where the temperature has been in the double digits.

A surprise to be sure, but a welcome one. Everyday in Yusuhara brings new and exciting things for me to experience and enjoy. The winter weather is no exception!



The Shimanto River in mid December. The riverside is not so cold as I expected, at least so far.