

Yusuhara a Home from Home: 29. Driving in Two Countries

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Recently I was on a work-related trip to Kochi City, and it got me thinking about driving. I have been driving since I was seventeen meaning about 8 years in the U.K. and 5 here in Japan. While there are some differences it's not entirely a new experience. In fact, driving in the U.K and Japan is so similar that holders of a U.K driving license can just exchange their license for a Japanese one with no test and vice versa.

Some of the differences I've experienced tend to skew a little bit negatively towards the Japanese experience, allow me to explain. In general, the speed limit here at least in Kochi is quite low, it is almost frustratingly and uncomfortably low compared to other countries. While the U.K doesn't have an uncapped speed limit like Germany's autobahn, its limit is 70mph approx. 113kph. A noticeable difference! Although during my last trip back home this speed was somewhat terrifying at first, especially when combined with my next point: lane numbers. Here in Kochi the expressway favors a single lane with minimal opportunity for overtaking while in the U.K it ranges from 3 to 5. I think somewhere in the middle here is preferable. And finally toll costs. As I mentioned I recently was on a work trip, and I used an ETC card for the first time. It was so quick and easy to use, if only getting my own was as quick and easy. For the U.K motorway there is no cost to use just enter and exit when you please. Tolls do exist and outside of the London congestion charge it's almost exclusively reserved for significant bridges and tunnels that cross bodies of water.

I do very much enjoy driving here in Japan and Kochi, it's so peaceful and beautiful. I do however wish that sometimes it was just a bit faster!

