

Yusuhara Sunshine Times #5 My Trip to Osaka!

On the weekend of Vernal Equinox Day (March 20th), I decided to drive all the way from Yusuhara Town to Osaka. The five-hour trip from Shikoku to Honshu, using the Japanese expressway, was an arduous one, but it was well worth it. Osaka is my favorite city that I've visited in Japan. In this article, I will describe the three best places I went to in Osaka.

The first best place I went to in Osaka was Osaka Aquarium. It's the best aquarium I've ever been to! In the aquarium, I saw sea otters, puffins, sea lions, penguins, dolphins, seals, and more! The two most interesting animals I saw were the Japanese giant spider crabs and whale sharks! The Japanese giant spider crabs were spooky. I had never seen crabs that big! The whale sharks were the biggest animals I saw in the aquarium. I'm impressed that the aquarium can hold two of them. Besides the animals, I was impressed by the quality of the exhibits. In Osaka Aquarium is a faithful recreation of the Coral Reefs in Cairns, Australia. The aquarium's director made it an important point that all animals should be in habitats that resemble their natural ones. Osaka Aquarium is not just one of the most visually stunning aquariums I've been to, but also one of the most ethically-managed. I think everyone should go there at least once.

The second best place I went to was Umeda Sky Building. The design of the building is very interesting! It's actually two buildings. The 39th and 40th floors of each are connected by a bridge structure with a hole. The architect, Hiroshi Hara, noted that this design resembles a launch tower for a rocket ship. The view from the top of the building was stunning, offering a 360-degree view of Osaka's cityscape at around 170 meters from the ground. I managed to get a wonderful picture of the sun setting in the distance.

Next to Osaka Castle is the third best place I went to. It was a museum for anime figures called the "Kaiyodo Figure Museum". As a big anime fan and figure collector, I loved it! It had figures of many different styles and sizes. It explained the history of anime figures in Japan, which began with the production of model figures in the 70s and expanded with the adopted use of polyvinyl chloride in the 90s. I saw figures based off a lot of my favorite anime series, like *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, *Gurren Lagann*, *Gundam*, and even *Haruhi Suzumiya*! If you love anime like I do, Kaiyodo Figure Museum, next to Osaka Castle, is the place to go!

These are my three favorite places I went to in Osaka. I also went to the historic Osaka Castle, the bustling Dotonbori, and the otaku haven Denden Town. Next time I visit Osaka, I want to watch a baseball game at the Kyocera Dome, go to USJ and Tennoji Zoo, and travel an hour west to see Himeji Castle. Maybe, I can take the bullet train and go to Kyoto too!

Osaka is my favorite city in Japan. I like it more than Tokyo! Osaka is clean, safe, and convenient. There's so much to see, and the metro system makes it easy to go anywhere! If I had to complain about anything, the car traffic was difficult. But, in the future, I want to go again. I recommend that everyone goes to Osaka at least once, and I especially recommend my three favorite places there: Osaka Aquarium, Umeda Sky Building, and Kaiyodo Figure Museum!

- Carter Frost, Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) at Yusuhara Gakuen



It's Dotonbori!