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Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation
— newsletter editing volunteers

Online Shopping Woes

Have you ever made purchases via the Internet? Online shopping is increasing because of its ease and convenience of use. With this increase also comes the increase in various scams being reported.

◇What can you do to avoid scams?

Be aware of suspicious websites

Check for the following: phone number is only point of contact, incomplete address, unnatural URL, and extreme discounts.

Don't make decisions based solely on what is written on websites

The contents are written by individuals at the request of the vendor, so be sure to verify the information thoroughly.

Check the policy for cancellation and returns before ordering

Sometimes there are complicated cancellation policies. For example, you may purchase a single item without realizing it is part of a recurring payment plan, and may be asked to pay additional fees in order to cancel.

Check the payment method

Make sure the seller has multiple payment methods, such as credit card payment or cash on delivery, as well as pre-pay.

When paying in advance, be sure to confirm that the site operator and the account holder are the same. (Be careful when transferring funds to a personal account.)

When entering your credit card number, ensure that the transmission is encrypted.



◇What to do if you think you've been the victim of a scam

Even if you have already paid, you can consult with the following:

Himeji City Consumer Affairs Center: 079-221-2110

Office Hours: weekday AM9:00-PM5:00

Understanding Diversity in Sexuality —SDGs we can commit to—

One of the goals of Himeji is to make society a place everyone can live their own lives and stay true to themselves. "Himeji city Partnership Oath System" has been in effect since April 2022.

Eligibility

- Both parties must be unwed adults
- At least one of the parties must have an address in Himeji
- Couples cannot be close relatives, as prohibited by civil law

How to receive the Oath Certificate

1. Make an appointment

Appointments must be made at least a week in advance of the desired day of oath, either by phone or email.

TEL: 079-221-2376 Email: jinkenkeihatsu@city.himeji.lg.jp

Time: 9:00AM-4:00PM on weekdays, excluding 12:00noon – 1:00PM and national holidays

2. Oath

Both individuals must be present with required documents.

Place: Himeji City Hall, 4-1 Yasuda, Himeji city

Required documents

- Copy of Resident Register or Certificate of Items Stated in the Resident Register of each person.
- Family Register of each person issued within the previous 3 months

*Required documents vary depending on the nationality of the person. For more information, inquire with the Human Rights Awareness Department (*Jinken-keihatsu ka*).

• Identification

1 Photo ID, such as passport, driver's license or residence card, or, if not using photo ID, 2 or more forms of identification, such as health insurance card, pension book and employee identification card.

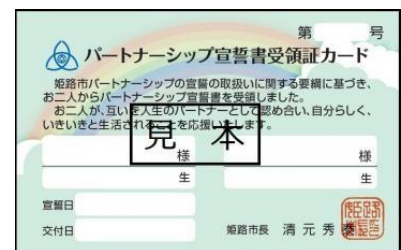
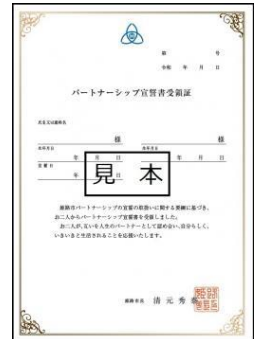
3. Sign and submit

The partnership oath /confirmation paper must be verified, signed and submitted by both partners.

4. Receive the oath certificate

Place: Resident Services Department, *Jumin madoguchi* -center, on the 1st floor in Himeji City Hall

*The certificate is issued on the date written. One of the couples must pick up the certificate. If you wish your certificate to be delivered by mail, stamps must be submitted on your day of oath.



The Oath System doesn't have any legal standing outside of Himeji city, as it simply identifies two people as a couple and is not civil law. However, it is possible to be treated equal to that of heterosexual couples when receiving services from companies and municipalities.

Ex. Ability to be a beneficiary of life insurance and to apply for public housing as a family etc.

Additionally, it is also easier for couples who participate in the Oath System to be recognized as such, as opposed to those who don't.

Aiming for a City Free of Sexuality and Gender-based Discrimination

Are you familiar with the term LGBT?

L stands for lesbian, which refers to women who are romantically interested in women

G stands for gay, which refers to men who are romantically interested in men

B stands for bisexual, which refers to those who are romantically interested in both men and women

T stands for transgender, which refers to those whose mental and biological sex don't match

As you can see, sexuality differs from person to person. I'd like you to reflect on yourself. Do you say offensive things such as, "because you're a boy..." or "act like a girl" and hurt others without realizing it? It's not for you to judge how others are. Forget stereotypes and respect individuals' personality. It's important to respect others and embrace diversity.

If you are going through a hard time due to gender identity or bullying related to it, feel free to talk to the counseling center below:

Human Rights Special Counseling

Date: 1:00PM – 4:00PM on the first Thursday of the month

Place: 4th floor of Egret Himeji

Inquire at: Human Rights Awareness Center, Human Rights Promotion Department, Resident Services Department, Himeji City Hall (*Jinken-keihatsu* center)

Tel: 079-282-9801 FAX: 079-282-9820

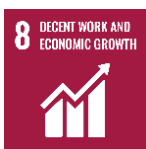


★There is also a place called “Soraniji Himeji”, where you can interact with LGBT people, people in need and people who suffer from mental illness.

It's open from 11:00AM to 9:00PM, and closed on Wednesdays. There is a 300 yen per day charge.

Address: 3, Nikaimachi, Himeji city Tel: 050-3746-4571 <https://soranijihimeji.wordpress.com/>

Let's get to know SDGs!



8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

Provide everyone with decent work and appropriate wage. Raise productivity and grow economy.



9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Develop infrastructure and make the world a safe and comfortable place to live in for everyone. With that being the base, develop industries and technologies which everyone can join, and are eco-friendly.



10. Reduced inequality

Everyone must be treated equally, regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion and economical position. Make a world where all countries have equal rights and can grow.

Let's Make *Okonomiyaki*!!

Why don't we make *okonomiyaki* (savory pancake)? It is a dish that Kansai people love to eat on cold days. Kansai-style *Okonomiyaki*, "Fluffy *Butatama*" (pork *okonomiyaki*), is easy to make – just mix and grill. Give it a try!

Ingredients (for 1 person)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • cabbage.....200g | • egg.....1 |
| • green onion.....2-3 | • vegetable oil.....1 tablespoon |
| • flour.....80g | • <i>Okonomiyaki</i> sauce...moderate amount |
| • water.....40cc | • mayonnaise.....moderate amount |
| • <i>Dashi</i> powder.....a little | • <i>Aonori</i> (green laver)...to taste |
| • sliced pork belly...50-100g | • <i>Kezuribushi</i> (dried bonito flakes)...to taste |

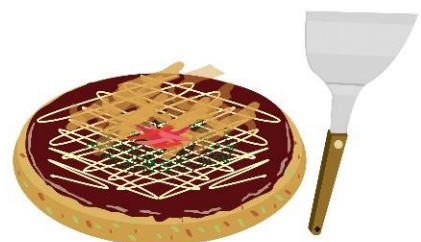


Directions

1. Chop the cabbage into 7-10 mm cubes. Cut the green onion into small pieces.
2. Put vegetables in a bowl, add flour and *dashi* powder.
3. Pour water into bowl and mix well so that no clumps of flour form.
4. Once the batter is mixed, put the egg into the bowl and mix lightly. (If you mix too much, it will not be fluffy.)
5. Add cooking oil to a frying pan and warm it over medium heat. Add the batter from step 4 and shape it into a circle. Place the sliced pork belly on top. Bake on medium heat for 5-6 minutes, until the bottom is browned.
6. When the bottom is able to slide when you shake the frying pan, turn it over. (Please be careful as the dough is soft.)
7. Reduce heat to low, cover with a lid, and simmer for 3-4 minutes until cooked through. (If you press down with a spatula, it will not be fluffy.)
8. It is ready when both sides are browned and the meat is cooked through.
Please eat it with plenty of sauce, mayonnaise, *aonori*, or *kezuribushi* (dried bonito flakes) if you like.

★These ingredients are also delicious

Red pickled ginger, *tenkasu*, beef, squid, shrimp, octopus, oyster, kimchi, melted cheese, *mochi*, corn etc. Use your favorite ingredients!





Đoàn Thị Loan /Ms. Doan Thi Loan (Vietnam)

Nguyễn Việt Anh /Ms. Nguyen Viet Anh (Vietnam)



Ms. Doan

Ms. Nguyen

Ms. Doan Thi Loan and Ms. Nguyen Viet Anh are from Thai Binh and Hung Yen—respectively, in northern Vietnam. They came to Japan in January 2021 after studying Japanese for half a year. They work at a nursing home in Himeji City and live together in a dormitory.

Q What brought you to Japan?

A Ms. Doan : I have liked Japan ever since I was a child. I often surfed the Internet and found information about Japan. I thought that the cherry blossoms and autumn leaves in Japan were beautiful. Then I wanted to work in Japan, so I had an interview at this facility where I was hired.

Ms. Nguyen : I surfed on the Internet or watched TV and got information too. I especially like festivals in Japan. I did the same as Ms. Doan and decided to work at this facility.

Q How is your life in Japan?

A We enjoy our job a lot because the residents are very kind to us. We are taught many technical terms by other nursing home staff because we require them for work. Japanese is very difficult and we're studying very hard because we plan to take the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test).

Q What do you do on your days off?

A Both of us enjoy cooking. In Japan, there are no ingredients or seasonings used in Vietnam cuisine, so we make do by using *somen* instead of pho noodles.

We like *matcha*, so we made a *matcha* cake with agar and a birthday cake using a rice cooker. We also like eating Japanese food. For example, *takoyaki*, *katsudon*, *sushi* and *sashimi*.

Q What do you want to do from now on?

A We have not travelled anywhere yet because of the pandemic of COVID-19 since we came to Japan. We would like to go to Kyoto someday and wear *kimonos*.



Summer rolls using
somen instead of pho



A cake made using a
rice cooker

Household *Butsu-dan* (Buddhist altar) – a traditional craft of Himeji

It is a small family altar where we worship our ancestors and deceased relatives.

Butsu-dan is a complex work of art, which requires excellent carpentry, Japanese lacquer skills, and the art of metalwork. In the Edo period, Japanese lacquer art developed in Himeji and it was conducive to the making of *Butsu-dan*.

What makes Himeji *Butsu-dan* unique is its comparatively large-size, pure gold foil covering, and its gorgeous appearance. It rivals Himeji castle in its beauty.



Disaster Prevention Vocabulary of This Issue

はんらん
氾濫 *Hanran* :

The swell of water overflowing
riverbanks. Flood.

はんらんちゅう い じょうほう
Ex.) 氾濫注意情報 *Hanran chui joho* :
Information concerning a flood warning.



Various natural disasters occurred in 2022 in all corners of the world. They are all thought to

be triggered by global warming.

In 2023, the Rugby World Cup is taking place in France. Let us support the event in the hope that sport will brighten up the mood of the world like the previous games in Japan did.

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These names are used with the contributors' permission. Their assistance is much appreciated.

You can read previous issues of “VIVA! ひめじ” on the website of Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation International Exchange Section.

The next issue will be available in March, 2023.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. We are also looking for translators and native speakers to assist us with translating and proofreading upcoming editions. If you are interested, please contact us at the address on the right.



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