

Youth Exchange Program in the Field of Food with the State of Hawaii

FY2025 Report

**Hawaii Program June 1 – 8, 2025
Fukuoka Program August 16 – 23, 2025**

**Executive Committee for Youth Exchange Program in the Field of Food
International Relations Division, International Affairs Bureau,
Policy Planning and Regional Development Department, Fukuoka Prefectural Government**

Youth Exchange Program in the Field of Food with the State of Hawaii – Overview

1. Purpose and Objectives

In 1981, Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawaii entered into a sisterhood agreement, the first of its kind for both regions, and have deepened their friendship in a variety of fields. In this program, by mutually sending students from Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawaii to engage in exchange in the field of food, we aim to nurture young people who will play an active role in the world in the future, promote mutual cultural understanding, and further develop exchange between the sister states of Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawaii.

2. Overview

(1) Participants

- Six students majoring in food, cooking, nutrition, etc. at universities or vocational schools in Fukuoka Prefecture
- Six students from the University of Hawaii at Kapiolani (KCC) in Hawaii (KCC has one of the top 20 culinary departments in the U.S. and has produced many world-renowned chefs.)

(2) Program Content

Students majoring in food-related fields from Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawaii will be sent to each other's regions to learn about regional food culture, and a competition will be held for Japanese and U.S. students to jointly create recipes that utilize local ingredients.

Orientation

May 10(Sat), 2025

For participants from Fukuoka Prefecture, an overview of the relationship between Hawaii and Fukuoka and an explanation of the general situation in Hawaii were provided, along with a lecture on overseas work experience, and information regarding Fukuoka Prefecture's agricultural, forestry, and fishery products and travel preparations.

Hawaii Program

June 1(Sun) -
June 8(Sun), 2025

After learning about Hawaii's food culture through cooking classes at the University of Hawaii at Kapiolani and visits to local food sources, participants devised a recipe that utilizes local ingredients from Hawaii and Fukuoka Prefecture. The participants cooked dishes based on the recipes they devised and competed in a competition.

Fukuoka Program

August 16(Sat) -
August 23(Sat), 2025

After learning about Fukuoka's food culture through classes at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery college and visits to local food sources, participants devised a recipe utilizing local ingredients from Fukuoka Prefecture. The participants cooked dishes based on the recipes they devised and competed in a competition.

(3) Entry Qualifications

- ① Students studying food-related fields (cooking, nutrition, etc.) at universities, vocational schools, etc. in Fukuoka Prefecture.
- ② Must be able to cover necessary expenses during the program.
- ③ Those who have an interest in international exchange.
- ④ Willingness to actively communicate with Hawaii students and other involved parties in English throughout the program.
- ⑤ The applicant must be in good physical and mental health and be able to participate in the pre-orientation, the outbound program, and all the days of the inbound program.

(4) Organizer

Executive Committee for Youth Exchange Program in the Field of Food with the State of Hawaii

Participating Students

FUKUOKA



Fukuoka Women's
University
Department of Food and
Health Sciences,
International College of Arts
and Science

SAKAI Natsuki



Kyushu Sangyo University
Global Food Business
Program,
Department of Business and
Marketing,
Faculty of Commerce

YANAGI Mikuni



Nakamura Culinary and
Confectionery College
2-year Culinary Course

OGAWA Shoya



Kyushu Women's
University
Department of Nutrition
Sciences,
College of Domestic Science

NODA Ayane



Nakamura Culinary and
Confectionery College
2-year Culinary Course

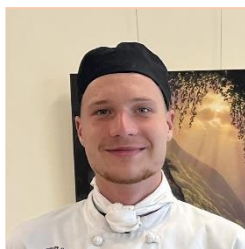
GOTO Gaku



Nakamura Culinary and
Confectionery College
2-year Culinary Course

NISHIDA Naotaro

HAWAII



Nojus Davidivicius



Joseph Dreksler



Fanny Lin



Dawn Romero



Jerwin Sagun

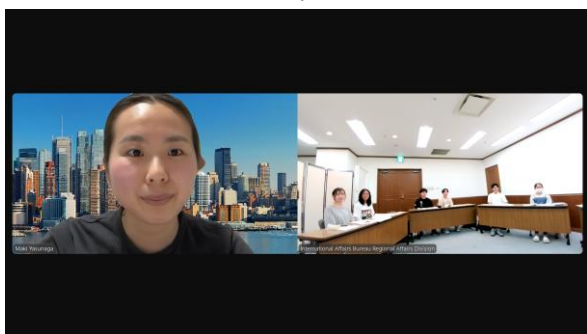


Daniel Tada

Agenda

- 1 Program Outline Explanation 10:00~10:05
by Mr. KURIKI Tomoaki, officer of the India, Europe and the USA Section, International Relations Division, International Affairs Bureau, Fukuoka Prefectural Government
 - 2 Greetings from the Organizer 10:05~10:10
by Mr. HIRAYAMA Hirofumi, Director of International Relations Division, International Affairs Bureau, Fukuoka Prefectural Government
 - 3 Self-introductions 10:10~10:30
 - 4 Overseas Work Experience Talk 10:30~11:20 *Online
by Ms. YASUNAGA Maki from BentOn
 - 5 History of Exchange between Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawaii 11:30~11:50
by Mr. HAMA Yuya, Section Head of the India, Europe and the USA Section, International Relations Division, International Affairs Bureau, Fukuoka Prefectural Government
- (Lunch Break) & LOCALS
- 6 About Fukuoka Foods 13:00~13:15
by Mr. KURIKI Tomoaki, officer of the India, Europe and the USA Section, International Relations Division, International Affairs Bureau, Fukuoka Prefectural Government
 - 7 Detailed explanation of the program, advance preparation for the trip, etc. 13:25~15:00
by Mr. KURIKI Tomoaki, officer of the India, Europe and the USA Section, International Relations Division, International Affairs Bureau, Fukuoka Prefectural Government

○ Overseas Work Experience Talk



Speaker: Ms. YASUNAGA Maki

Ms. Maki Yasunaga, a registered dietitian, is the general manager of a bento box lunch company in New York. Her experience selling Japanese bento boxes in New York while in college led her to join the Kubara Honke Group, and she has worked in the company's overseas operations ever since.

With a passion for spreading healthy Japanese food around the world, Maki's experience in overcoming various challenges provided great inspiration and hints for students who are considering taking on challenges overseas.



◀BentOn's "Daily bento"

BentOn in New York City, where Maki works, sells and delivers healthy, well-balanced boxed lunches to busy New Yorkers. The company meets the need for nutritious meals at a reasonable price and without the hassle of making them by hand.

Orientation

Saturday, May 10, 2025, 10:00-15:00
Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation
3rd Floor Conference Room

○The History of Exchange between Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawaii



Lecture by Mr. Hama, Section Head

◀The International Affairs Bureau of Fukuoka Prefectural Government gave a presentation on the history of exchange between the two regions. Participants learned about the history of overseas migration, Hawaii's notable figures who have roots in Fukuoka Prefecture, and recent exchange projects between the two region.

○Lunch Experience with Prefectural Ingredients



Lunch with prefectural ingredients at &LOCALS

◀Lunch at &LOCALS, which uses ingredients produced in the prefecture. Participants enjoyed a Japanese set meal with mentaiko (cod roe), a specialty of Fukuoka, and used it as a reference for menu planning.

○ Detailed explanation of the program, advance preparation for the trip



Travel guide and introduction to prefectural ingredients

◀Fukuoka Prefecture's specialty products, "Yame Tea", "Fukuoka Ariake Nori", and "Soy Sauce", which is characterized by its sweetness, were introduced, which would be the key ingredients for the competition in Hawaii. The production methods and characteristics of each product, as well as their relationship to the environment, were explained to the participants to deepen their understanding of the agricultural, forestry, and marine products from the prefecture.

◀In addition, basic information about Hawaii, things to keep in mind for the Hawaii program, and prior study before the trip were explained.

Hawaii Program

Schedule

June 1 (Sun) – June 8 (Sun), 2025

June 1 (Sun)	Depart Fukuoka Arrive Honolulu Visit local supermarkets (Foodland, Nijiya, Down to Earth)
June 2 (Mon)	Icebreaking, lecture on Hawaiian culture Lecture by Chef Wade Ueoka of MW Restaurant Discussion for recipe development
June 3 (Tue)	Makapu'u Point hiking Visit Tradition Coffee Roasters Ingredient shopping for competition
June 4 (Wed)	Poke demonstration Poke mini - competition Ingredient shopping for competition
June 5 (Thu)	Competition preparation Competition
June 6 (Fri)	Visit Kāko'o 'Ōiwi
June 7 (Sat)	Visit KCC Farmer's Market Visit Alii Fish Market Depart Honolulu
June 8 (Sun)	Arrive Fukuoka

Lecture by Chefs



Lecture on Luau by Chef Alan at KCC



Lecture by Chef Wade



Tour of MW Restaurant's Kitchen

On June 2, Fukuoka students arrived at KCC and received a traditional Hawaiian welcome, followed by a lecture on Luau (celebratory meal) by Chef Alan.

Afterward, they visited MW Restaurant, run by Chef Wade Ueoka, who also supervises in-flight meals for Hawaiian Airlines. They received a lecture on Chef's past experiences and anecdotes about in-flight meal supervision, and had lunch.



Icebreaking session

Hawaii Program

Tradition Coffee Roasters

On June 3, participants visited Tradition Coffee Roasters to observe the coffee roasting process and attend a lecture on coffee. Participants learned about the profound world of coffee, including the manufacturing process, taste differences based on bean roasting, scoring, and aroma.



Participants receiving explanations about the roasting process



Explanations while looking at coffee bean samples

Poke Demonstration, Mini-Competition



Demonstration session

On June 4, Chef Alan gave a lecture and demonstration on Poke. He explained the history of Poke, its ingredients, and Hawaiian-style seasonings, and demonstrated how to make three types of Poke.

Afterward, each team created their own version of Poke and participated in a mini-competition. The judging panel included Chef Christopher S.F. Garnier from KCC and Chef Robin Abad from the Poke shop "Alii Fish Market."



Team working together to make Poke



Poke made by each team



Commemorative photo with judges

Hawaii Program

Kāko'o 'Ōiwi

On June 6th, participants visited Kāko'o 'Ōiwi, a vast wetland taro cultivation area, where the community is working to restore and maintain a sustainable ecosystem.

After receiving explanations about the facilities and the process of steaming taro, they experienced pulling weeds in the taro fields.



Participants receiving explanations about the facilities



Ceremony before entering the sacred area



Weeding

Competition Preparation

For the competition, teams brainstormed ideas, sourced ingredients, and conducted trial production.



Team discussion



Ingredient sourcing at the supermarket



Creating presentation materials



Trial production by teams

Hawaii Program – Cooking Competition

■ Date: June 5, 2025, 14:00 - 16:30

■ Venue: Kapiolani Community College (KCC), University of Hawaii

■ Judges: Chef Wade Ueoka of MW Restaurant, Chef ITO Shotaro of the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu

■ Guidelines (excerpt):

- Each team consists of 2 students from Fukuoka and 2 students from KCC, totaling 4 members.
- Create 2 side dishes for in-flight meals (limited to cold dishes). One of the dishes should be vegetarian.
- Notes for creating in-flight meals (do not make dishes too complex, do not use overly expensive ingredients, use common ingredients/seasonings that appeal to many people, etc.).

Menu of Each Team

<Team Ichiban>

Sakai, Goto, Joseph, Dawn



▶Cucumber/Pineapple Jubilee(Soy sauce & Plum)

Main ingredients: Cucumber, pineapple, pickled plum, soy sauce, etc.

★Judge's Comments

Great idea. The saltiness of the soy sauce is strong. Need to unify the shapes of the ingredients.

▶Cucumber/Pineapple Jubilee (Yuzu)

Main ingredients: Cucumber, pineapple, yuzu, etc.

★Judge's Comments

Good balance of flavor and aroma. When served as an in-flight meal, the liquid must not mix with the main dish, such as Loco Moco.



<Team Ohana>

Yanagi, Nishida, Fanny, Jerwin



▶Lomi Lomi Tomato

Main ingredients: Tomato, onion, corn, lime, soy sauce, etc.

★Judge's Comments

Good appearance and flavor balance. Could try using salted koji.

▶Hawaiian Styled Shira-ae

Main ingredients: Tofu, spinach, pineapple, matcha, etc.

★Judge's Comments

A new dish with a good appearance. Wonderful dish to serve at a restaurant. The process is too complicated for an in-flight meal.



<Team Shaka>

Noda, Ogawa, Daniel, Nojus



▶Hawaiian Harusame

Main ingredients: Pineapple, spam, glass noodles, soy sauce, etc.

★Judge's Comments

The spam gives it a Hawaiian feel, and the glass noodles give it an Asian feel. Good aroma of nori.

▶Matcha Gnocchi

Main ingredients: Matcha, cucumber, tomato, flour, egg, etc.

★Judge's Comments

Could try adding matcha to mayonnaise. The process is too complicated for an in-flight meal.



Hawaii Program

Competition



Presentation by Team Ichiban



Presentation by Team Ohana



Presentation by Team Shaka



Commemorative photo with judges

We were also honored by the presence of Chef Roy Yamaguchi, a world-renowned chef and iconic figure from Hawaii.

Other



KCC students guiding us through the culinary class kitchen



Everyone working together to prepare lunch at the beach



At Chef Roy Yamaguchi's restaurant



At Makapu'u Point

Fukuoka Program

Schedule

August 16 (Sat) – August 23 (Sat), 2025

August 16 (Sat)	Arrive Fukuoka
August 17 (Sun)	Free day
August 18 (Mon)	Lecture at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery college “Food Culture of Japan and FUKUOKA” by Principal NAKAMURA Tetsu Cooking class at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery college "Chikuzen-ni, grilled fish, clear soup, rice" by Associate Professor YAMAGATA Ryo Confectionery Experience at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery college "Fruit Daifuku, Dorayaki" by Instructor OGA Tomoko
August 19 (Tue)	Lecture and Demonstration by Chef YAMASHITA Taishi of TTOAHISU Visit to Takahashi Shoten (seaweed making experience) Visit to Cha no Bunkakan (matcha grinding experience)
August 20 (Wed)	Visit to Ito Saisai Lecture, cooking experience, and lunch by chef SUEYASU Takuro of Sabataro
August 21 (Thu)	Competition preparation (ingredient shopping, trial production)
August 22 (Fri)	Competition preparation Competition
August 23 (Sat)	Yukata dressing experience, visit Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine Depart Fukuoka

Lecture and Cooking Experience at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery college



Lecture session

On August 18, at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery college, Principal NAKAMURA gave a lecture on "Japanese and Fukuoka Food Culture", and Associate Professor YAMAGATA gave a cooking class on Fukuoka's local dishes such as "Chikuzen-ni". Instructor OGA led a Japanese confectionery making experience. Participants deepened their understanding of Japanese and Fukuoka food culture.



Japanese confectionery making experience



Cooking class session

Fukuoka Program

TTOAHISU

On August 19, participants visited TTOAHISU, a Michelin three-star restaurant that promotes Japanese French cuisine to the world. Chef and Owner YAMASHITA Taishi talked about his experiences and philosophy as a chef, which was a valuable learning experience for students considering a future career in the food industry. They were also allowed into the kitchen for a close-up demonstration.



Lecture by Chef YAMASHITA



Demonstration by Chef YAMASHITA

Seaweed Making and Matcha Grinding Experience

Participants visited "Takahashi Shoten" in Yanagawa City, a region famous for producing some of Fukuoka Prefecture's highest quality seaweed, and experienced making seaweed.

Afterward, they visited "Cha no Bunkakan" and experienced grinding matcha with a stone mill, then drank the freshly whisked matcha.

They learned about the charm of Fukuoka's proud agricultural, forestry, and fishery products.



Seaweed making experience



Matcha grinding experience with a stone mill



Drinking freshly ground matcha

Fukuoka Program

Sabataro

Participants visited "Sabataro", a Japanese restaurant in Fukuoka City that serves local cuisine and clay pot rice.

Participants learned about the owner's philosophy of prioritizing local ingredients and consuming local produce, as well as experiencing how to fillet mackerel. They also learned about the owner's dedication to conveying the charm of the region, which provided insight into what it means to be a chef.



Participants learning how to fillet mackerel
*center: Sabataro Owner SUEYASU Takuro



Participants learning how to fillet mackerel



Participants asking questions to the owner

Competition Preparation

Teams discussed recipes, sourced ingredients, and conducted trial production.

They prepared for the competition as a team, communicating in English.



Preparing for presentation



Cooking in progress

Fukuoka Program – Cooking Competition

■Date: August 9, 2025, 13:20 – 15:20

■Venue: Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College 2nd Restaurant Hall

■Judges: Principal NAKAMURA Tetsu of Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery school, Chef Wade Ueoka of MW Restaurant

■Guidelines (excerpt):

- Each team consists of 2 students from Fukuoka and 2 students from KCC, totaling 4 members.
- Create 2 side dishes for in-flight meals, inspired by dishes that would be served on Hawaiian Airlines flights from Fukuoka to Honolulu.
- Include elements that convey the charm of Fukuoka's food. Use some Fukuoka Prefecture ingredients.
- Notes for creating in-flight meals: do not make dishes too complex, do not use overly expensive ingredients, use common ingredients/seasonings that appeal to many people, etc.

Menu of Each Team

*Underlined items are Fukuoka Prefecture ingredients

<Team Ichiban>

Sakai, Goto, Joseph, Dawn



◀Vegetable Poke with Japanese Plum Sauce

Main ingredients: Cucumber, pineapple, pickled plum, soy sauce, dashi, etc.

▶Cucumber Pineapple Sunset Salad

Main ingredients: Cucumber, pineapple, yuzu, onion, ginger, etc.



★Judge's Comments

Overall, it's carefully made. Good texture and appearance. It would be good to promote Fukuoka ingredients more.

<Team Ohana>

Yanagi, Nishida, Fanny, Jerwin



◀Lomi Lomi Tomato

Main ingredients: Tomato, corn, onion, soy sauce, lemon juice, salted koji, seaweed, etc.



▶Fukuoka Inspired Namul

Main ingredients: Spinach, carrot, bean sprouts, wood ear mushroom, green onion, sesame, soy sauce, seaweed, etc.



★Judge's Comments

Good appearance. The namul has good flavor and uses Fukuoka ingredients well.

<Team Shaka>

Noda, Ogawa, Daniel, Nojus



◀Potato Salad with Yuzu Kosho

Main ingredients: Potato, cucumber, carrot, spam, yuzu kosho, green nori, etc.

▶Hawaiian Bean Sprout Salad

Main ingredients: Bean sprouts, cabbage, green nori, pineapple, salted kelp, yuzu, etc.



★Judge's Comments

The potato salad uses Fukuoka ingredients and flavors well. The bean sprout salad would be suited for a restaurant.

Competition



Presentation and Judging



Participants receiving medals from judges

Chef Wade Ueoka of MW Restaurant, who also served as a judge for the Hawaii program, commented that he felt the growth of all teams from the Hawaii program.



Group photo with the competition attendees

Winning Recipe Adopted for In-flight Meal

With the cooperation of Hawaiian Airlines, Team Shaka's winning recipe, "Yuzu Koshō Potato Salad," was featured as an in-flight meal side dish on Hawaiian Airlines flights from Fukuoka to Honolulu for a limited time (November 1 - 19).



Yuzu Koshō Potato Salad adopted for in-flight meal after necessary adjustments to ingredients and seasoning

Yuzu Koshō Potato Salad created by students from Fukuoka and Hawai'i

Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawai'i continue to strengthen ties through a variety of exchange programs under a sister state partnership. As part of a youth culinary exchange program launched in 2023, students from both Fukuoka and Hawai'i teamed up and competed to create a side dish for Hawaiian Airlines' in-flight menu, featuring local ingredients from Fukuoka.

Please enjoy the winning side dish from the competition: Potato Salad with Yuzu Koshō, presented alongside our signature Loco Moco.



Introduction card distributed with in-flight meal

Fukuoka Women's University
Department of Food and Health Sciences,
International College of Arts and Science

SAKAI Natsuki



~After the Hawaii Program~

(Reason for Application) Through visits to about 10 countries, I have deeply experienced the food cultures of various countries around the world and realized the great power of food. Furthermore, while studying nutrition, I learned about the significant impact food has on our health and lives. From these experiences, a dream was born to "make the world richer through food," and I decided to apply for this program, believing it is important to acquire culinary techniques and recipe development skills for that purpose.

(Goals before participation and actual activities) My goal before participation was to understand how local ingredients are utilized in recipe development, and the differences in food culture and nutritional perspectives between Japan and Hawaii, especially how environmental considerations such as local production for local consumption and reducing food mileage are reflected in cooking. In practice, I was able to acquire the skill of developing recipes using local ingredients and learn about Hawaii's food culture through conversations with Hawaiian students and actual visits to restaurants.

(Chef's lectures, observations, and cultural experiences) Chef's lectures provided an opportunity to become interested in the connections and backgrounds of culture. I also re-realized the joy of learning about culture through food. At the supermarket, I noticed cultural differences such as the existence of vegan menus and vegetables being sold by weight. Through cultural experiences such as a welcome ceremony at KCC, watching hula dances at beaches, restaurants, and squares, and digging taro, I was able to experience the goodness of Hawaii.

(Team efforts) In brainstorming menu ideas, I felt that my own ideas and perspectives contributed to the team's menu creation. During the cooking process, I realized my lack of skill and technique. I want to improve my skills to contribute more to the team.

(Impression of Hawaii) Hawaii felt like a multicultural society, with many Japanese signs and restaurants. It was also very comfortable with low humidity. Surrounded by beautiful seas, I could spend every day in a special landscape and felt like a resort.

(Overall learning from the Hawaii program) Through the program, I learned the joy of cooking with ingenuity. Furthermore, I experienced the joy of working with teammates toward a common goal and realized the importance of interacting with first-class cuisine and culture locally, which significantly broadened my horizons.

~After the Fukuoka Program~

What impressed me most in this program was the lectures by top chefs. The stories of their aspirations and how they overcame difficulties to succeed as chefs were universally valuable, extending beyond cooking to all fields, and were a significant learning experience for me. What was particularly impressive was the demonstration after the lecture. The moment when their philosophy and aspirations materialized into technique and actions, it had a power and impact beyond words, and I re-realized the wonder of having big dreams. Although I used to have big dreams but often hesitated and couldn't take action, this experience made me confident that "if you have strong beliefs, passion, and effort, your dreams will come true." This led to a shift in my mindset to set short-term goals and challenge them step by step, and I felt personal growth.

Furthermore, I learned a lot from the team competition. I was able to contribute by incorporating team members' ideas into my own, creating dishes, and applying my experience in sensory evaluation to understand taste differences. However, I regret that I was somewhat passive and could have been more proactive. Nevertheless, the process of working together with multinational teammates to create a dish through ingredient sourcing, trial production, and revisions was a great achievement, and this reflection made me want to be more proactive in the future, which is a growth for me.

Throughout the entire program, I re-realized the greatness of food. Food brings happiness and richness to people and has the power to connect people across countries and cultures. Along with the pride of being involved in such a noble thing, I also deeply felt the lack of language skills and specialized knowledge. Therefore, I will continue to build on short-term goals, and moving forward, I want to pursue my dream of "creating a society where people worldwide can live happily through the power of food" by taking concrete steps.

Kyushu Sangyo University
Global Food Business Program,
Department of Business and Marketing, Faculty of Commerce

YANAGI Mikuni



~After the Hawaii Program~

I applied for this program because I wanted to learn about the fusion of food cultures through Hawaii's food culture, and to broaden my perspective by interacting with students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds through food.

Previously, I participated in a university festival in Thailand and sold Japanese food. At that time, I struggled because Japanese food did not suit local tastes. From this experience, I learned the importance of understanding and respecting taste differences in different cultures and then adjusting.

With this background, I wanted to learn how "taste matching" is done in the multicultural society of Hawaii, and the learning experience there was very meaningful. What impressed me most was Chef Alan's lecture on Poke. Poke has various flavors, from traditional to Chinese and Korean, and I felt that the unique characteristics of Hawaiian food culture were condensed in this dish, which was the most stimulating experience.

My goal before the program was to contribute to the team by demonstrating my curiosity as a university student and actively communicating, as my technical skills were not as good as those of current culinary students at KCC. However, this was much more difficult than I imagined, and I struggled to convey the processes and intentions during the competition. Nevertheless, thanks to the KCC students who listened to my broken English, I was able to communicate somehow through body language and words.

It was difficult to brainstorm and embody food ideas in a language-challenged environment, but the sense of accomplishment when the dishes were completed was immense.

What I felt most during this program was that "food has the power to connect people across language and cultural barriers." The fact that students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds could build deep relationships was, I believe, because we cooked together toward the same goal and ate delicious food together. I am grateful for KCC for providing such a valuable learning experience. In the Japan program in August, I will do my best to support the KCC students so that they can have a good experience.

~After the Fukuoka Program~

In the Fukuoka program, we further deepened our relationships by spending not only program hours but also dinner times and free time together. During this time, I had many opportunities to introduce Fukuoka's food to Hawaiian students and realizing that I could convey its charm to them and see them happy was a great joy for me. Also, I thought I understood Fukuoka's food as a local, but through the observations and lectures, I re-learned its profundity and realized that it has charm that can be appreciated by people overseas. From this experience, I strongly feel that I want to be involved in a job that conveys the charm of Fukuoka's food to many people in the future. My goal is to become an entity that can play a role in connecting people through food.

In the competition, I was able to make dishes more suitable for in-flight meals by being mindful of simplifying the process, based on the feedback I received last time. Also, by learning cooking terms in English based on last time's reflection, I was able to exchange ideas with team members more smoothly than before. During trial production, when we Japanese unquestioningly thought "we use this ingredient in this way," Hawaiian students broadened their ideas by tasting it from scratch, and I learned about innovative ideas and new ways of utilizing ingredients from their approach.

And what I felt most important was that "food is about enjoying." As Chef YAMASHITA of TTOAHISU also mentioned, food is not only delicious but also enjoyable, and I realized this throughout the program. I want to further deepen my thoughts on how to make food, which is essential for human life, not only for sustenance but also for everyone to enjoy.

This program provided me with many encounters and valuable learning experiences. The two weeks, which felt incredibly short, broadened my perspective, and I am grateful for the encounters and experiences, and I want to continue my exploration of food in the future.

Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College 2-year Culinary Course

OGAWA Shoya



~After the Hawaii Program~

The reason I applied for this program was to expand my horizons and contribute to my growth as a chef by learning about food in Hawaii, a foreign land that cannot be experienced in school, together with local students. I particularly expected to experience the different backgrounds and values of food in Hawaii, a place where diverse cultures intersect.

My goals before participating were to "absorb tastes, techniques, and ideas that can only be learned locally" and "actively communicate my opinions." In the actual program, I made sure to actively ask questions and exchange ideas, and always took notes during lectures and observations to maintain a learning attitude.

In the chef's lecture, I learned about the background and history of Poke and Hawaiian food culture, which deepened my understanding of the dishes themselves. During observations, I visited taro fields, farmers markets, and local supermarkets, and experienced the background of ingredients and their connection to the region.

In the team competition, I mainly played a role in summarizing discussions and refining ideas. While I contributed by utilizing my strengths in cooking techniques, I still faced challenges in detailed communication in English. I regret that I didn't learn even a single English word beforehand. Therefore, I want to ensure smooth communication for the competition in August.

My impression of Hawaii was "a place of diversity and warmth." I felt that people from different cultures coexist and respect each other, and I aspire to be someone who connects people through food.

The biggest lesson I learned from this program is that "cooking is not just about technique, but also about cherishing feelings and background." I hope to apply this learning to my cooking in the future and become a chef who can deliver inspiration and comfort to many people.

~After the Fukuoka Program~

I applied for this program to expand my horizons and contribute to my growth as a chef by learning about cooking in different cultures. I also aimed to re-learn Fukuoka's food culture and people's way of thinking, and to share it with the world.

In the Fukuoka-Hawaii exchange program, I learned a lot about the charm of Fukuoka's food culture, which is familiar yet rarely deeply explored. With the aim of understanding Fukuoka's ingredients and cooking backgrounds, and the role of chefs rooted in the region, in the Japanese cuisine lectures, I learned about the meaning and ingenuity of cooking methods in local cuisine. Also, visiting Ito Saisai, the region where Yame tea is produced, and the region where Ariake seaweed is produced, I learned how Fukuoka's unique ingredients are grown and re-realized the charm of the region's food.

In the team competition, I was mainly responsible for recipe development, cooking, and plating. I tried to be efficient and contribute to the overall workflow. However, when it came to exercising leadership and actively expressing opinions, I struggled to summarize opinions, and communication in English remained a challenge. Nevertheless, through the process of working with teammates to create a dish, I learned the importance of collaboration in cooking.

Fukuoka, my hometown, re-emerged as a place with many unnoticed aspects but also endless new discoveries. The combination of traditional local cuisine and the flexibility to incorporate new food cultures, along with its diversity, is a great charm of Fukuoka.

What I learned from this program is that "cooking reflects the culture of the region and the feelings of the people." In the future, I will cherish my learning in Fukuoka, rediscover the charm of my hometown, and strive to become a chef who connects people worldwide through food.

Kyushu Women's University
Department of Nutrition Sciences,
College of Domestic Science

NODA Ayane



~After the Hawaii Program~

I am deeply interested in food culture and find it fascinating to gain new perspectives through cross-cultural exchange. In particular, I felt that there is value in learning through direct visits and experiences in the local area, and I hoped to participate in this program. My goal was to understand the commonalities and differences in food culture between Hawaii and Fukuoka.

During the local visit, I actively asked questions and exchanged opinions about traditional ingredients and cultural food differences with Hawaiian students. Even outside the program, I made an effort to explore different cultures with my own eyes and senses when I was in town. The knowledge and experiences gained through lectures and observations by chefs, as well as cultural experiences, were invaluable and cannot be obtained through tourism alone. In particular, the experience in the taro fields significantly broadened my perspective.

In the team competitions, including Poke and in-flight meal production, I felt the difficulty of summarizing opinions among members from different cultural backgrounds, but I also found it interesting how diverse ideas emerged from these differences. As a nutrition major, I was able to offer different perspectives compared to the cooking majors. Especially during in-flight meal production, I contributed by proposing feasible menus from the perspective of mass production and developing menus that fused Fukuoka and Hawaiian food. However, I also realized my lack of skill in cooking, as I often relied on other team members for technical assistance.

Although Japanese cultural influences were evident in Hawaiian culture, it was fascinating to see how it had evolved uniquely through fusion with local culture, rather than remaining unchanged. The same applies to food culture, where differences within commonalities led to the discovery of new cultural values.

Through this program, I realized that cross-cultural exchange can be an opportunity to re-examine one's own culture. Furthermore, I learned that by engaging with different cultures, one not only understands others but also deepens one's understanding of one's own culture. I hope to continue learning about food and culture from a deeper perspective, utilizing this experience in the future.

~After the Fukuoka Program~

In the Fukuoka lectures, I had many opportunities to learn about Japan's unique food culture and cooking methods, including Japanese cuisine and confectionery, which allowed me to re-examine Japanese culture that I usually took for granted. In the lecture at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College, I learned about the ingenuity of chopping methods for Chikuzen-ni and the mixing methods for Japanese confectionery through a joint cooking and lecture session with Hawaiian students. I realized that what was commonplace for me was new to people from overseas, and I experienced cultural differences. Also, when I toured Fukuoka with Hawaiian students outside the program, I re-discovered the charm of my hometown by looking at it from a "tourist" perspective.

In the team competition, I applied the feedback from the interim evaluation in Hawaii and developed a "Yuzu Kosho Potato Salad" that fused Fukuoka and Hawaiian cultures. During the trial production, I felt that I contributed by purchasing ingredients that were not in the initial plan and generating new ideas through trial and error. However, a point of regret was that I tried too many times, which led to excessive cooking time on the day of the competition. The result was that the team's recipe won, which was a great achievement, and even more than that, I realized that the cultural differences were the team's strength in the process of working together to create a dish.

Through this entire program, I re-learned to objectively examine my own culture and respect different cultures. By comparing and interacting with Hawaiian and Fukuoka cultures, I realized significant growth not only in technical skills but also in perspective. Although I aspire to be a registered dietitian in the future, I want to utilize this experience to propose food that respects the culture and regional characteristics of others, rather than just thinking about healthy meals. To achieve this, I want to continue engaging with diverse cultures and keep learning.

Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College
2-year Culinary Course

GOTO Gaku



~After the Hawaii Program~

I applied for this Program because I wanted to learn about Hawaii's traditional food and food culture, and to expand my perspective and enhance my skills and awareness as a future chef by directly experiencing food culture nurtured in an environment different from Japan.

My goal before participating was to challenge myself to speak English as much as possible and actively interact, even though I cannot speak English. At first, I often found it difficult to understand conversations and struggled, but as the program progressed, I gradually became able to convey my intentions in English, and I felt a sense of accomplishment.

During the program, I learned a lot through lectures by local chefs, visit of supermarkets and taro fields, and unique Hawaiian cultural experiences. In particular, my vague knowledge about traditional ingredients like Poke and taro deepened significantly through explanations from local people and actual cooking, which greatly changed my understanding.

In the team competition, I contributed to the cooking techniques I learned at culinary school, such as ingredient preparation and cutting. I was also able to challenge myself to make dishes I wanted to try, as my ideas were respected. However, I still felt frustrated by not being able to fully communicate in English, which is a challenge for the future.

Hawaii is rich in nature, and people are very kind. I learned about not only food culture but also differences in lifestyle and values, which was a valuable experience.

I want to use the knowledge and experiences gained from this program to the Fukuoka program in August and the final competition. With this experience as a foundation, I want to continue to grow.

~After the Fukuoka Program~

This time, I had the valuable opportunity to participate in the Program in the Field of Food with Fukuoka Prefecture and Hawaii, and the learning activities in Fukuoka. It was a learning experience to rediscover the charm of the region through traditional culture and food experiences that I rarely experience, even though I live in Fukuoka. What particularly impressed me was the process of making seaweed and the experience of grinding and whisking matcha myself. These activities, which are rarely encountered in daily life, allowed me to tangibly feel the depth of Fukuoka's traditional and food culture. I believe that realizing values I overlooked simply because I live locally was a great benefit of participating in this program.

Furthermore, I challenged myself in the program's "competition." While I have always enjoyed cooking and learning, I had never experienced cooking in a competitive setting. Participating in it, I realized the difficulty of improvising and presenting results within a limited time, and it highlighted my lack of knowledge and skills. In particular, I re-realized that there is still much to learn regarding ingredient selection and cooking methods. Through this experience, I developed a desire to further deepen my specialized knowledge and improve my practical skills.

Moreover, in addition to the activities in Fukuoka Prefecture, participating in the Hawaii program allowed me to gain broader learning. In Hawaii, I learned about its unique food culture and its historical background and diversity. Also, through the activities in Fukuoka, I re-realized the charm and potential of my local region.

Furthermore, I also experienced significant growth in language. At the beginning of the exchange, I was anxious about speaking English, and there were many situations where communication was difficult. However, by gradually increasing opportunities to speak English in daily activities, I became able to convey my thoughts in my own words and gradually deepened my bond with Hawaiian students and Fukuoka participants. The joy of communicating across language barriers was immense, and it has encouraged me to take further interest in other countries and different cultures.

This program, through experiences in Hawaii and Fukuoka, was a very fulfilling two weeks where I learned about culture, practiced language, and built relationships with people. The insights gained from understanding local traditions, understanding overseas cultures, and interacting with each other are a great asset for my future learning and career. Even after I start working in society, I want to utilize the experiences gained in this program and continue to grow with an international perspective.

Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College
2-year Culinary Course

NISHIDA Naotaro



~After the Hawaii Program~

My main objective for applying to this program was to gain communication and exchange experience with people from other countries in a completely different environment from Japan, and to use this as a stepping stone for my future overseas challenges, as I had no prior overseas experience in Hawaii.

On my first day at KCC, I regretted underestimating my English skills. I couldn't understand English at all, which was a bad start. In a short ice-breaking session after self-introductions, I tried asking KCC students questions about words pasted on my back, relying on hints, but I really didn't understand what they were saying.

At MW Restaurant, we learned about points to consider when making in-flight meals and various things about Hawaiian food culture. The meals provided were similar to Japanese flavors, but the ingenuity of using miso as a vinaigrette and two types of gelling agents for desserts to change the texture was very educational.

On the third day, we went hiking with KCC students. The malasadas from Leonard's Bakery that I ate that day were so incredibly delicious that they were the most memorable dish I had in Hawaii. During the hike, I was able to communicate with students I hadn't spoken to yet. The lunch that KCC students prepared for us that morning was also very delicious.

On the fourth day, after learning about Poke, a soul food of Hawaii, we held a Poke competition where we made and competed with original Poke. The result was a disappointing second place, but I was so happy that I was able to create something through direct discussion with KCC students, even though communication was difficult. And on the fourth day, I finally started to get used to English pronunciation and listening and was able to understand what was being said to some extent without using a translator.

In the mid-program competition for in-flight meals, which was the main event, we competed on how to make inexpensive, simple, and delicious meals. Our team, "Team Ohana," considered menus such as Lomi Lomi Salad, Matcha Shira-ae, and Namul. The menus we made still have much room for improvement, and I thought we needed to try many more ideas. The main competition is in Japan in August, so I want to come up with many ideas from now on.

In addition, I also went to a coffee shop to learn about different types of coffee and roasting, visited taro fields to learn about the history of taro and got muddy pulling weeds, visited the KCC Farmers' Market to eat local fruits, and ate very delicious Poke at a Poke shop. These are all things that I could never experience in Japan, and they made a huge impact on my life.

My goal for this program was to communicate with the local people, and I found myself making efforts to convey what I wanted to say, and everyone responded to that effort, which allowed me to have many experiences and exchanges.

~After the Fukuoka Program~

Through this program, I was able to strengthen my resolve to take on challenges overseas. Following the Hawaii program in June, we had various experiences with Hawaiian students in Fukuoka, and it was a very educational experience for us, even for those of us living in Fukuoka.

On the first day, at Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College, where I am currently enrolled, in addition to the principal's lecture, we experienced making Japanese food and wagashi. During the experience, because we were in a familiar environment, we were able to lead the practical training. In the wagashi class, it was very interesting to experience kneading red bean paste in a copper pot and baking dorayaki on a specialized hot plate, all for the first time.

However, there was a problem here. I still couldn't understand English, and there were many times when I couldn't understand what the Hawaiian students were saying. However, what has changed since June is that even if I don't understand what they are saying, I can convey what I want to say in my own words. I was happy that this was a step forward.

On the second day, we visited TTOAHISU, a restaurant, and had a valuable experience and talk. After that, we experienced making seaweed in Yanagawa, my hometown, and grinding tea in Yame. It was good to have experiences that I had never done before, even though they were so familiar.

What impressed me most in this program was the experience at "Sabataro," from filleting mackerel and preparing it to three pieces, to the subsequent meal, it was the best mackerel I've ever had in my life. I am very grateful for having such valuable experiences in Hawaii and again this time.

Through this Hawaii-Fukuoka exchange program, I believe I had a valuable experience in my life. I believe I have largely achieved my goal of using this as a steppingstone for overseas challenges. I also made connections with Hawaiian students and plan to stay in touch with them. Thank you very much.

In Closing

This program, which began in FY2023, was held again this year with a Hawaii program in June and a Fukuoka program in August. In the Hawaii program, students attended chef lectures, visited local food sources, and participated in cooking activities. Although Fukuoka students initially faced language barriers, they gradually became more comfortable and actively communicated with Hawaiian students using gestures, showing daily growth in their ability to express their opinions without hesitation. In the Fukuoka program, students from both regions learned about the appeal of Fukuoka Prefecture's ingredients and the professional attitudes towards their work through traditional cooking classes, visits to local food sources, and exchanges with leading culinary professionals. In the recipe development competition by mixed Fukuoka and Hawaii teams, the theme was in-flight side dishes. Despite the various constraints unique to in-flight meals, participants created dishes full of creativity and ingenuity, achieving a great sense of accomplishment. Through this program, participants fostered cross-cultural understanding and teamwork and heightened their awareness for future international activities. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Kapiolani Community College, Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College, and many other related parties for their cooperation.

Thank you to everyone who helped us in the program

★Kapiolani Community College (KCC), University of Hawaii

Hawaii

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Fukuoka

Nakamura Culinary and Confectionery College, TTOAHISU, Takahashi Shoten, Cha no Bunkakan, Sabataro, Hawaiian Airlines, Ms. Maki Yasunaga



Commemorative photo after the competition in Hawaii



Commemorative photo after the competition in Fukuoka



**Fukuoka Prefecture and State of Hawaii
Youth Exchange Program in the field of Food**

