

## 「2024年度ウィーン大学スプリングスクール派遣報告書」

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As an international student in Vienna, I was amazed by how important cafes are in daily life. Before coming here, I had heard that Viennese cafes were places where people gathered after going to the opera or concerts. But after spending time in the city, I realized that cafes are much more than that—they are a big part of everyday life.

Everywhere I went, from famous old coffeehouses to small cafes and even sausage stands on the street, I saw people sitting together, talking, and enjoying their time. Cafes in Vienna are not just for drinking coffee—they are places where people meet and connect.

One day, I asked a local student what Viennese people do on Sundays since most stores and restaurants are closed. He told me that many people spend time with family or friends, often going to a cafe to relax. I wanted to see this for myself, so on Sunday, I walked near St. Stephen's Cathedral with a friend. I was surprised to see that the cafes were full of people, creating a lively and warm atmosphere.

This was very different from Japan, where cafes are not really a place for family gatherings on Sundays. Since most shops in Japan stay open, people have more things to do, and cafes are usually visited alone or with friends. But in Vienna, because Sundays are quieter, cafes naturally become a place for people to spend time together.



The picture I took on Sunday by a cafe

In addition to this, most shops in Vienna close much earlier than in Japan. For example, supermarkets in Japan usually stay open until around 9:00 PM, and convenience stores are open 24 hours. It's not just grocery stores—many businesses in Japan operate for long hours, and employees often become exhausted. I think this is very convenient, but at the same time, the working culture in Japan feels overwhelming. Spending time in Vienna made me realize that it's okay to slow down and take more time for ourselves.

### How It Changed Me

I usually have an optimistic personality and am not easily afraid of new challenges. However, before this trip, I felt unusually nervous and anxious. It had been about eight years since I returned to Japan from New Zealand, and this was my first time

traveling abroad since then. The thought of boarding a plane on my own, without my family's support, and navigating an unfamiliar country where the language wasn't English made me feel more anxious than I expected. Overcoming this fear and stepping out of my comfort zone was my biggest goal for this experience.

Studying in Vienna became a major turning point in my life. Before going, I worried about the language barrier and unfamiliar environment, but by taking on this challenge, I was able to achieve my goal of breaking out of my shell. After returning to Japan, I had no regrets—if anything, I wondered why I hadn't taken this step sooner. This experience made me seriously consider studying abroad for a longer period. It also inspired me to travel more and explore different countries firsthand, comparing their cultures with Japan's, discovering both their strengths and weaknesses, and learning from these experiences.

Additionally, living in Vienna helped me regain my English-speaking skills, which had weakened after living in Japan for so long. When I was in New Zealand, I tended to use English in a passive and reserved way. This time, I made a conscious effort to engage with professors' assistants, local university students, and museum staff. As a result, I became more comfortable in casual conversations, though I still struggled with academic discussions and expressing my thoughts in depth. This made me realize the need to improve my specialized English skills, which is another reason I am now considering a longer-term study abroad experience.