

PLAZA NEWSLETTER (March, 2024)

The lobby of the International Center is decorated for Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. The traditional costume 'ao dai' can be tried on and have the photographs taken. Many Vietnamese people are coming to see the decoration and take photos.

The Plaza received 43 consultations in January. We share some of them with advice from us.

※Some content has been edited so that individual are not identified.

Q : A friend of mine is planning to marry a Thai. But she is worried about living in Japan and wants to come beforehand to see if she can live in the country. Can you tell us about a visa application?

A : Thailand is a visa waiver country for Japan and is therefore exempt from obtaining a visa for stays of 14 days or less. If you intend to stay for more than 15 days, you must obtain a 'short-stay visa'. It is for stays of up to 90 days for the purpose of sightseeing, visiting friends or relatives, not for remunerated activities.

Q : I want to get a driving license. Are there any driving schools where many Vietnamese go? Can I take the license test in Vietnamese?

A : Some driving schools have Vietnamese staff and we provided information on this. If they don't understand something, Vietnamese staff can translate in Vietnamese. In Kumamoto, you can also take the driving test in Vietnamese.

Q : I am a foreign resident. I had a child in my country at the end of last year. I have applied for residency status for my child but have not yet received the visa. Can I check the progress?

A : We checked with our administrative lawyer and he said that basically we have to wait. If you are concerned, you can make enquiries using your application number. Ask at the place where you applied or at the Kumamoto Immigration Office. However, when asked, they often tell you nothing about the specific screening process in progress.

The standard processing time for visa applications is generally set at one to three months, and results are often available within this period. However, some cases may take longer than this.

If you have any problems, please contact the Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for foreign residents.

Girls' Festival

The Girls' Festival is an event held on March 3, the "Peach Festival" to pray for the healthy growth of girls. The reason why it came to be called "Peach Festival" is because peach blossoms bloom around March 3 on the lunar calendar and peaches were believed to ward off evil spirits.

On "Peach Festival", HINA dolls are decorated with the family's wish that no misfortune will befall their children and that they will be blessed with happiness in life. These customs spread throughout the country and became established as "Peach Festival" and "Girls' Festival".



For the Girls' Festival, we prepare some specific foods.

Hamaguri no Osui-mono (clear soup of clam)

Clam shells were originally used in games such as shell-matching, as only a pair of shells fit together perfectly and is associated with a married couple who would remain together for the rest of their lives.



Hishimochi (diamond-shaped rice cake)

The hishi (water chestnut) plant spreads and flourishes on the surface of the water, and the hishi shape has long been a symbol of growth and prosperity. The hishimochi of Momo-no-Sekku (Peach Festival) is a wish for the healthy growth of girls and their prosperous lives.



Hina-arare (cubic rice crackers)

It is said that "hina-arare" originated when hishimochi rice cakes were crushed and baked to make them easier to eat outside.

Chirashizushi (sushi rice in a box or bowl with a variety of ingredients sprinkled on top)

"Nare-zushi (sushi fermented with fish and veg)" used to be served at festive occasions, but it gradually changed to "Bara-zushi (less colorful version of Chirashizushi)" and then to "Chirashizushi", which is more colorful, seems to have come to be favored. For colorful ingredients, following wishes are expressed... Shrimp: to live long until your waist bends, lotus root: to be able to see far, and beans: to be healthy and work hard.



Amazake (sweet fermented rice drink)

In the old days, there was a custom of drinking white sake (unrefined sake) to ward off evil spirits. For the modern Dolls' Festival celebrated for children, white amazake, which does not contain alcohol, has been substituted. It is nutritious, easy to digest, sweet, easy to drink, and gentle.

Orugatta Soudan

In Japan, the new school year begins in April. Do you have any problems, questions or concerns before your children start school or move on to the next grade? Don't understand the letters from kindergarten or school? Don't know what to prepare? Worried about child's language? Education experts are invited, so let's find out everything you are not sure! Reservations are required for participation.

Date & Time: Sunday, March 10, 10:30-12:00

At: Small conference room (Japanese style)

5F, Kumamoto City International Center

For: Children aged 5-8

and their parents/guardians

Fee: Free of charge

Apply: QR code or Email (soudan@kumamoto-if.or.jp)



For foreigners' Kimono dressing & Tea ceremony experience

Have you ever tried on Kimono? Have you tested Matcha? You can experience both on Wed, March 20 at Kumamoto City International Center! You can go out of the center in Kimono for up to 2 hours for a walk and photo shooting!

The cost is JPY 500 per person.

Reservation will be taken from Tuesday, March 5 via email or telephone.

Date: Wednesday, March 20

Email: koza@kumamoto-if.or.jp

phone: 096-359-2121



Information on Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents

The Plaza offers professional consultations including legal affairs, residence status issues, job hunting, housing and life affairs support in multiple languages. Consultants who speak English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish and Nepali are available at the Plaza as the schedule below.

March Schedule

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 01 ·Spanish Consultation ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·English Consultation | 02 | 03 ·Vietnamese Consultation ·Life Consultation in Chinese |
| 04 | 05 ·Chinese Consultation | 06 ·Immigrational Consultation ·Vietnamese Consultation ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·German Consultation | 07 ·Korean Consultation | 08 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·English Consultation | 09 | 10 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·Educational Consultation |
| 11 Closed | 12 ·Chinese Consultation | 13 ·Mental Health Counseling ·Tagalog Consultation ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·German Consultation | 14 ·Korean Consultation | 15 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·English Consultation | 16 ·Free Legal Consultation ·Life Consultation in Chinese | 17 ·Immigrational Consultation ·Vietnamese Consultation ·Nepal Consultation |
| 18 | 19 ·Chinese Consultation | 20 Spring Equinox Day(shunbun no hi) ·Housing Consultation ·Vietnamese Consultation ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·German Consultation | 21 ·Korean Consultation | 22 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·English Consultation | 23 | 24 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·Educational Consultation |
| 25 Closed | 26 ·Chinese Consultation | 27 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·German Consultation ·One-stop Consultation Service for International Students | 28 ·Korean Consultation (-15:00) | 29 ·Life Consultation in Chinese ·English Consultation | 30 | 31 ·Life Consultation in Chinese |
| 01 | 02 | note:Consultations 1:00p.m~5:00p.m(apart from the ones below) ·Life Consultation in Chinese 1:00pm ~ 6:00pm ·Immigrational Consultation 1:00pm~4:00pm ·Free Legal Consultation 2:00pm~4:00pm (Reservation required) ·One-stop Consultation Service for International Students 1:00pm~4:00pm ·Mental Health Counseling 3:30pm~5:30pm ·Educational Consultation 10:00am~3:00pm | | | | |

※Consultation service could be cancelled due to consultant's personal reasons. Please e-mail or call us beforehand to check if the consultant is available.

Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents' Facebook

We regularly update information useful to you.

Follow us and be one of the first one to be informed!



Plaza's FB

We are offering variety of information useful to your life. Please check us!



Our website



Our Life affairs guidance

Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents

Location: 2nd floor of Kumamoto City International Center

Address: 4-18 Hanabata-Cho, Chuo-Ku, Kumamoto City, 860-0806

Tel: 096-359-4995

E-mail: soudan@kumamoto-if.or.jp

Opening hours: Between 10 am and 6 pm

Closed on second and fourth Mondays and between December 29 and January 3

★If second or fourth Monday is a national holiday, the plaza will be closed the following day instead.

