

# Exchange Students from the Hakodate Campus of Hokkaido University of Education Report on Hakodate: “Fun at the Port of Hakodate!”

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Hello everyone! We're Donghyun Bang from Korea, Shao Liqin, Ye Zi and Zhao Shuo from China, Rosalind Harris and Susannah Lai from Australia and Brendan Martinez from the USA. Not pictured is Torey Norman from Australia, who also helped us with the report. Currently, we're all having fun studying as exchange students in the Hakodate campus of Hokkaido University of Education. Today, our team went to the Hakodate Bay Area to visit the famous "Akarenga" and go around the harbor with "Blue Moon Cruises". Also participating, although not appearing in the photos, was Torey Norman from Australia.

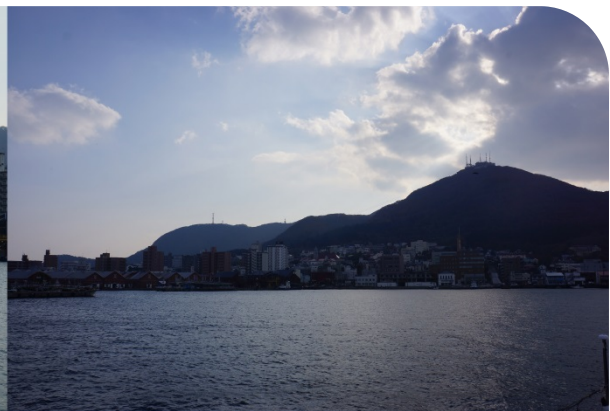


In 1859, the port city of Hakodate became one of the first ports in Japan opened to international trade. To fully appreciate the feelings of the first foreign sailors entering this beautiful and majestic harbour for the first time, we boarded the "Blue Moon" cruise boat to take us around the harbour. The name "Blue Moon" comes from the way the white boat resembles the moon on the sea.



We went on the cruise in the afternoon, and were amazed at how different and attractive the city of Hakodate looks from the sea. The cruise runs every 30 minutes on the hour and half hour, so you can choose when you want to go. If you go during the daytime, you can see the full view of the city in all its beauty, as well as coming close to Hakodate's seagulls and even dolphins if you're lucky. However, if you want to experience a romantic atmosphere, it's best to go during the sunset or to see the city lights at night-time.

**Enjoying the cruise on the boat**



As you can see in the photographs above, during the Blue Moon cruise, you can enjoy the view of beautiful ocean vistas and the view of Hakodate city from the sea. It's a great way to enjoy the bracing and refreshing sea breeze while still experiencing the charm of the city.

There are 2 levels on the boat; on the first floor is a small lounge and cafe, where you can have a coffee while watching the view of the harbour, or take photos with the adorable teddy bear there! There's even a stamp on the boat for anyone who's collecting them, so be sure to get it while you're there.

On the second level, it's an open deck, so you can feel the sea breeze and enjoy the view of Hakodate directly. Don't worry if you get tired while up on deck either, because there are convenient benches to use there as well!



**Inside the ship, at the café.  
Isn't the teddy bear cute?**



**Views of the Kanemori Red Brick Warehouses  
in the Hakodate Bay Area**

After the cruise was over and we disembarked, we headed to "Akarenga". Since it was only across the road, it was really convenient! "Akarenga" is a shopping mall that is inside some beautiful old renovated warehouses on the harbourside. Basically, it's a shopping paradise where you can buy many weird and wonderful things. You can even buy souvenirs!

Not only is Akarenga a shopper's paradise, it's also a great place for photos! The distinctive red bricks, and the great view of Mount Hakodate make this an ideal play for any photographer. It's beautiful year around, but for us, it was great to see the difference that all the seasons had on its appearance, each as beautiful as the last.

As for Akarenga itself, it's not an exaggeration to say they will sell anything. As we walked around we all kept asking "What is this?" and "You can buy something like that here?!". Some of us felt like we'd fallen into wonderland; a strange place that once you'd entered you'd never be able to leave!

One of the most interesting things we found being sold there were the DVDs and merchandise of a short movie set in Hakodate, "Ika-R", starring invading alien squid and a defending robotic Goryoukaku Tower. We found it amazing that they had merchandise of the characters and it's really amazing that they were being sold in all kinds of shops!

Akarenga also has cake shops, so if you get hungry, you don't need to go far at all. It really is convenient!



**A variety of shops in Akarenga**



**The cheesecake shop, Snaffles!  
Those cakes are really good...**

Naturally, delicious food is almost a way of life here, so there is plenty to be found in Akarenga. In particular, we want to introduce Hakodate's famous and very popular cheesecake. "Snaffles" is a shop that specializes in 'Western Style' cheesecakes, which are extremely popular in Hakodate.

They have samples you can taste if you're apprehensive, or if you just want to get an extra piece of delicious cheesecake to build your anticipation. The cakes are a soufflé style, and are super soft and creamy, just melting in your mouth!

They are all made fresh every day from the local produce, and Hakodate is not famous for its dairy products without reason! They have a plain cheesecake flavour, and a chocolate flavour, both of which are simply delicious.

Still on our cheesecake bent, there are many other cake-shops selling different variations of cheesecake, all of which are delicious. For example, the long-time family owned "Petit Merveille" have a cheesecake called "Meru Cheese" that we also heartily recommend.

As this cake uses many different kinds of cheese, it's richer than the cheesecake from Snaffles, but it's still creamy and melts in your mouth, this time with a perfect balance of sweetness and the sourness of cheese.

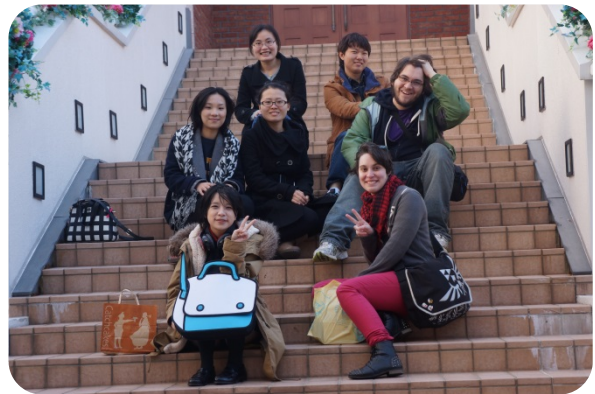
If we were to compare them, Snaffles is ideal for children, whereas those with an adult taste might prefer Petit Merveille. Either way, they are both delicious and should definitely be eaten! There's no such thing as too much cheesecake!



**Buying Petit Merveille Cheesecakes!**



**Checking out the view from the bridge**



**Stella Maris Church (Wedding Hall)**

On the left, the bridge shown connects two of the buildings that make up Akarenga. On the other side, there are many shops selling a wide variety of music box designs.

While wandering around the area and enjoying the beautiful scenery, we also discovered various romantic places, such as the Stella Maris Church, shown above, which serves as a wedding hall. Such a beautiful place must have seen many happy weddings. Even if we aren't getting married, we took a photo of our team here, and add good wishes to anyone that does get married!



In conclusion, after enjoying the cruise, delicious food and beautiful scenery, we can say that the whole area is very beautiful and enjoyable and it's definitely a great place to visit. Our team's investigation had only one undisputed conclusion; when visiting Hakodate, one should not miss Akarenga and the Hakodate Bay Area!