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Trinity Student Reminisces on Study Abroad in Japan

April Holder '27 details her journeys in Japan



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SUMMARY

April Holder '27 recalls her summer study abroad during the Trinity in Japan program. She had a transformative and immersive experience that helped her gain new insights.

It's a quiet summer evening in the small Japanese coastal town of Minamisanriku, and April Holder '27 smells the rich, savory aroma of tsukemen, a ramen dish, coming from her host family's kitchen. As she helps set the table for dinner, she reflects on the past few weeks.

Staying with her host family was just one stop for Holder during the Trinity in Japan program, a six-week immersive experience that focuses on contemporary Japanese politics, society, and production systems. Holder, a marketing major and strategic communications minor, was drawn to the program because of her academic background. She was also enticed by the opportunity to travel outside the United States, something she had never done before.

Holder remembers the anticipation she experienced leading up to the trip. "I was pretty nervous," she says. "I was unsure what awaited me." Her worries quickly subsided after her first few days in Tokyo.

During her first week in the city, Holder attended classes followed by group excursions to museums, cultural sites, shrines, and more. She appreciated how these visits allowed her to build on what she

learned in the classroom. “I had taken an operations management class at Trinity, so it was interesting to see how production systems play out in the Japanese market and context,” she says.



Outside these scheduled activities, Holder was able to explore everything the third-largest city in the world, with 33 million people, had to offer. She enjoyed tasty eats from ramen shops, creating her own juice concoctions at 7/11 convenience stores, singing karaoke with her friends, and exploring different shopping districts.



The latter half of the program took students all across the country, allowing Holder to explore Hiroshima, Osaka, Kyoto, Sapporo, and Minamisanriku. She loved getting to know the histories and stories of every place she visited, but the little town facing the Pacific Ocean holds a special place in her heart.

Located on the coastline of the Miyagi Prefecture, Minamisanriku was one of the towns hit by the 2011 tsunami that devastated the region. The beautiful coastal town has been rebuilt since then, demonstrating its resilience after the tragedy. The lush greenery and scenic views of the Pacific Ocean make Minamisanriku a once-in-a-lifetime destination.



It was here that Holder met her host family, a mother, father, and two young girls. Her experience with them is when she truly felt immersed in Japan. “They truly made us feel welcome,” Holder says, “It was as if we had known them forever, not like we were just strangers.”

Holder set out to find an immersive and transformative experience during her abroad program, and she accomplished just that.

“I really learned a lot about myself. I’ve discovered that I am much more independent and flexible than I thought, and I feel I’ve gained so much knowledge and experience,” she says. “As soon as people hear that you have studied abroad, that’s what they want to talk about. In fact, I talked about my experience in an interview for a marketing company I had the other week. I think it’s a really great connection point and experience I get to build on.”

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