

Our Tokyo for Kid(s) 2015



Paul and Janita O'Neill



This will be our fourth trip to Japan. This time we are taking our ten year old granddaughter Abby on her first trip to Tokyo.

We have all spent many months working on a "kid friendly" itinerary and we think we will have enough of a balance between what Abby wants to do and what we would like her to do!

For starters, we have rented an apartment in Shinagawa, just a stone's throw from the station. As with most Tokyo lodgings, it looks extremely small! But it has two beds, a bathroom, small kitchen and a washing machine. To top it off there is a 7 Eleven under the building, so all will be fine.

Japanese Rail (JR) has a 3 day rail ticket for the Kanto Region around Tokyo, so we'll grab one of those each when we arrive in Narita to give us the opportunity to see some of central Honshu. The rest of the time we plan to spend in Tokyo to take in Tokyo Disney Sea, Kidzania and a few other kid friendly attractions.

Abby is a keen (read fanatical) gymnast, so we expect to see her doing handstands all over Tokyo and central Honshu!

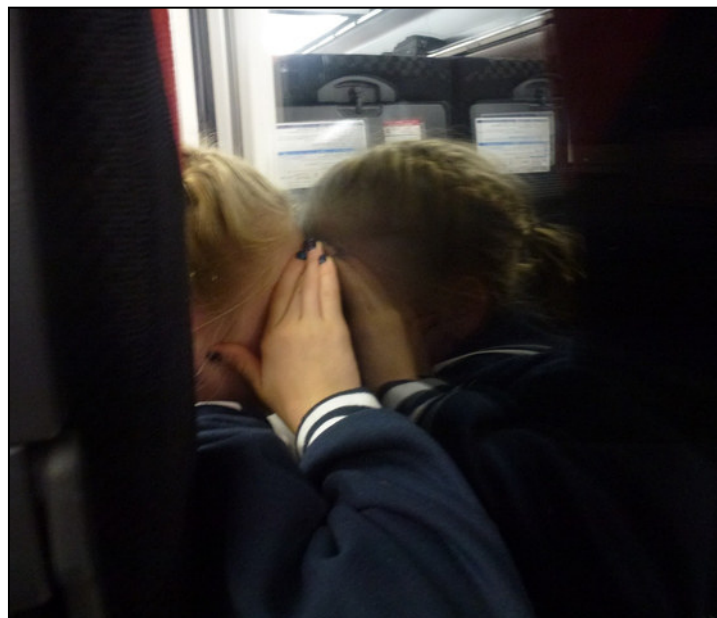
1 May 2015, Home.

Despite all our good intentions, we didn't manage to write a single blog during this trip. Why? We were simply having way too much FUN!

With the exception of two specific "kid" attractions and a visit to Mt Fuji, this trip was largely one of re-visiting places we had been to before. The FUN element was totally down to our granddaughter, Abby. From the moment she jumped into her seat on the plane, to our early morning return, she was full-on.

Visits to Tokyo DisneySea and Kidzania were, of course, her favourites, but she was more than happy to explore the city, the trains, shrines and temples as well.





We wish we had been able to capture her expression when we arrived at Shinagawa station at around 10:00pm on the first night of our trip. Sheer terror would probably sum it up. The station was extremely crowded with streams of dark-suited business people rushing in all directions. Her next shock was the size of our apartment which was just a two minute walk from the station. She had been warned that it was small, but the fact that Paul could almost touch both walls with his outstretched arms, left her gasping.

By the next morning we had settled in well, managing not to step on each other during the night.

We had pre-paid our tickets to DisneySea, which meant we were in no rush, which was a good thing because we had to negotiate several line changes to get there. Abby adjusted quickly to the train system, even dealing with the incredible push of people in the stations. By the time we got to the Disney Resort she was jumping about like her little brother, "jumping" Jack. Very un-cool!







Rides and attractions were very crowded, with over an hour's wait being common. However, there was plenty to do in between rides with shops galore and characters, both the Disney ones and the Japanese visitors, roaming about. Japanese of all ages love to dress up and a visit to Disneyland seems to provide the ideal opportunity to go all out! Groups of friends and families don often bizarre outfits and run about giggling like six year olds. The worst of all are 20 something girls!

Abby finished the day with her own special Disney outfit!



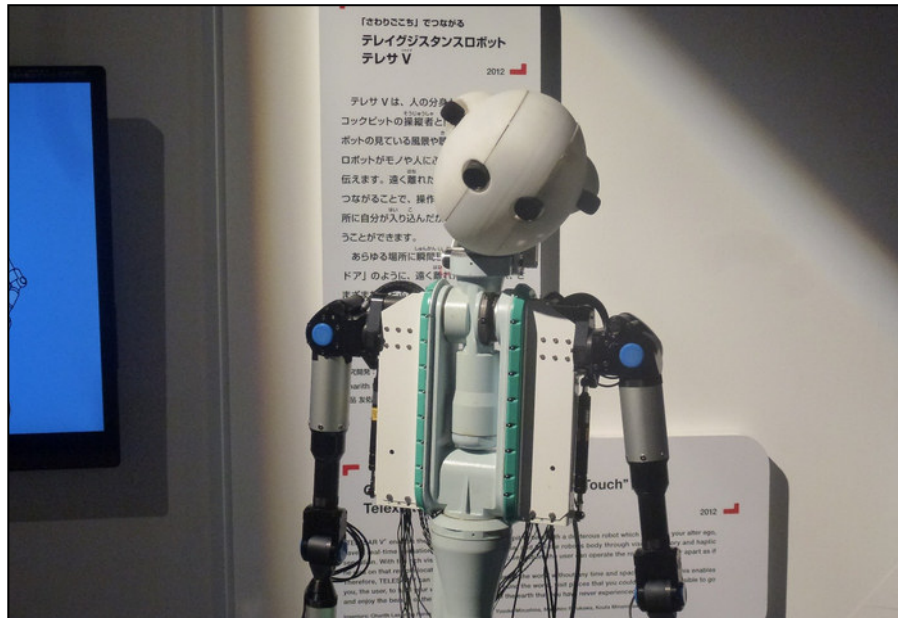






Our plans for the next four days revolved around the JR Kanto Pass. This three-day pass allowed us to travel throughout the central Honshu area on the JR East network. At \$83 for adults and \$42 for children, the Kanto Pass was fantastic value. One day trip to Nikko on the Shinkansen would have cost us \$120 return each, half-price for Abby.

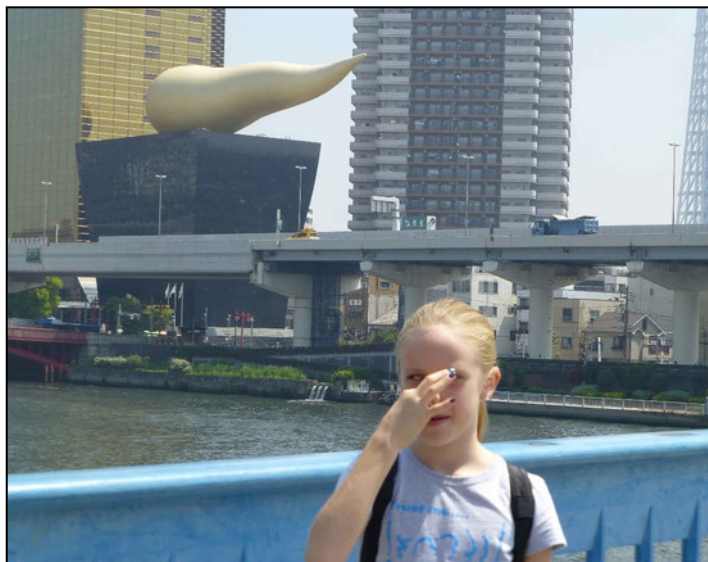
We split our time between two days in Tokyo and two day trips, one to Mt Fuji and one to the temples of Nikko, using one of our three Kanto Pass days for free travel around Tokyo on JR lines. For the metro trains we used the Suica pre-paid card.





On our Tokyo days we hit the usual tourist sites, Asakusa , Harajuku, the Ginza (by night), Akihabara, the Imperial Palace, the Museum of Technology and Innovation and our personal favourite, The Big Poo, which is actually the company logo of the Asahi Brewing Company.











On our last day we visited Kidzania, an attraction that Abby had found on the internet. Kidzania is a kid-sized city where children sign up for jobs that they would like to try out. They earn money which can later be spent at the Kidzania Store. The day we visited was supposed to be a day when activities were provided in English. As it turned out, most of the activities Abby had chosen weren't in English. She adjusted quickly and managed to experience work in a hospital, a veterinary surgery, a photo studio and a TV studio.

This is the first time we have travelled with children since we took our own kids around Europe in a campervan in 1987-88. Like her father, uncle and aunt, Abby was a great travelling companion. We had a great time and we know she did!







