MEET OUR HOST FAMILY

We've hosted off and on since 2011. If my memory is correct, I believe we've hosted 10 students from many different countries: Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Japan, Switzerland and the Congo. The rewarding experience is getting to share our household and culture with these students and watching their English improve during their stay with us. I've also enjoyed our own children getting to know our international students and staying in touch with some of them over the years. We started hosting because we had an extra room in our house and thought it would be a fun experience for our kids to help broaden their worldview. We enjoy taking them hiking and showing them sights around Kitsap county and Seattle.

One student came on our family vacation to Utah and Nevada. One of our students lived with us almost two years and we also got to know her brother and sister over the years. One time, their father came over from the Congo and, although we didn't speak the same language, we enjoyed a meal together and some laughter around a campfire. It was an honor to meet him. One time we hosted two students and they did not get along very well. They just had different personalities and that was difficult at times.

Check in with students about how they are doing...are they feeling homesick, do they need clarification about any house rules or other general questions. Sometimes students are quiet but they might have questions and are too afraid to ask. Some advice for homestay students, get involved during your time at OC! Even if it's through virtual clubs and activities, these activities will help improve your English skills and help to make friends and stay busy.

Homestay Q & A
Q: Our student is staying at a designated quarantine facility due to isolation for COVID-19. How do we calculate homestay fee refund?
A: The refund will be calculated on a case by case basis, but at a weekly rate only. If a student stays at a quarantine facility for 7 nights due to isolation for COVID-19, prorated nightly rate x 7 nights will be either refunded or applied to the next month's homestay fee. If it is less than 7 nights, there will be no refund. If it is more than 14 nights but less than 21 nights, then the refund is for 14 nights. Please contact Hideko to discuss further.
MEET OUR HOMESTAY STUDENT

Hello, everyone! I'm Meari Takiguchi from Miyagi prefecture, Japan. I came to Olympic College in Spring 2019 right after graduating from high school. When I came here, I struggled with a lot of things because of my English level, culture differences, and other factors. It's been almost two years since I started studying abroad, which is the same period of staying with my current host family! I am so grateful that I can spend some of my life with this host family (I call them my second BEAR family!) We live in Port Orchard, so my host family used to take me to the ferry terminal for me to take a ferry to the college in Bremerton every time. It was sometimes tough for me and probably for them as well. I would like to thank them for their everyday duty!

Not only that, but they took me to many different places where I've never been. We all love to go camping, so we went to different places even outside of Washington state and I met new people at each place, talked to them, and had a wonderful time. Last summer, we even went to Hawaii which is my host father’s place of birth. That was my first time I went to Hawaii, and of course, my family in Japan was jealous of me a lot. These days, my host mother has been cooking HEALTHIER food (she always makes healthy and delicious food!) without any animal products. It is hard for me to stop all of them right now, but I'm learning from her what makes my body and what to eat! I guess when I go back to Japan, I'll be healthier than before.

I had been thorough a lot of difficulties in order to keep studying here all by myself. I don't know how many times I cried at night. But I can definitely say I have grown physically, emotionally, mentally strong. That is not just because of my efforts, but thanks to my precious bear family here, I am who I am today. I am so glad to meet them and people I've met here in the US. Don't give up! All your experiences help you grow as a person even subconsciously.

Global Recipe

Chikuzen-ni

Ingredients
- Chicken thigh (100g)
- Dried shiitake mushrooms (2-3)
- Some water for shiitake (100-150ml)
- Konnyaku (150g)
- Taro (100g)
- Bamboo shoot (100g)
- Carrot (60g)
- Burdock (50g)
- Lotus root (50g)
- Vinegar (1 tbsp)
- Vegetable oil (1 tbsp)
- Mirin (2 tbsp)
- Soy sauce (2 tbsp)
- Sake (1 tbsp)
- Sugar (1 tbsp)

Directions
1. First, peel the burdock, taro, carrot, and lotus root. Then cut the burdock, taro, lotus root, and bamboo shoots coarsely (An easy way to cut for you is recommended).
2. Put the burdock into water for 10-15 min.
3. Put the dried shiitake mushrooms back in water (100-150ml) with the cap facing down until the water color changes. Later use this water. Then, cut the shiitake into four pieces.
4. Cut the konnyaku into bite-sized pieces with a spoon or hands.
5. Cut the carrot coarsely, or cut it into round slices then cut it out with a plum and pine shape (to make it pretty for the New Year!).
6. Cut the taro with some water in the microwave for 2-3 min.
7. Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces.
8. Cut the vegetable oil and the chicken in a pan and heat it over medium heat.
9. When the color changed, put the other ingredients (shiitake, konnyaku, taro, bamboo shoot, carrot, burdock, and lotus root).
10. Add the water of shiitake (from process 1), mirin, soy sauce, sake, and sugar. When boiling, cover it with a lid and simmer on medium heat for 15 min.
11. Add some dashi or water if needed. Ready to eat!!!