



Cafes Everywhere – Michael Henderson

Do you often go to cafes? I think they're one of my favorite places to be. I love the sounds, smells, and atmosphere (雰囲気). I always feel really calm in cafes, and can focus hard on my work. When I worked at Starbucks, I liked working in the evenings because it was slow, and I could enjoy being in a café space while working. Even in Japan I will often be at Starbucks studying, and trying new menu items that aren't sold in America (the menus are quite different!).

While there are Starbucks both in Japan and America, I think the general vibe (雰囲気) of cafes are a little different. Japanese cafes are often clean (きれい) and chic (おしゃれ), while American cafes are often rustic and artsy/artistic. In Japan, I think people often go to cafes to hang out with friends, while in America, most cafes are filled with people studying for long hours. American cafes usually have large spaces with tables so people in groups can work together. Of course, I still see people studying in Japan, and I see people eating with their friends in America. However, when I first came to Japan, I was surprised at how different the café and coffee shop culture is!

Seattle is famous for coffee, so there are plenty of cafes everywhere. It's definitely the best part about it. In Japan, there are many cafes too which I like going to, and my absolute favorite café in Japan (and maybe the world) is 竹の熊 in 南小国. It was so calming, beautiful, and uniquely Japanese. I don't think I would ever find a similar café in America. If you are ever close to 南小国, I strongly recommend you visit. You won't regret it!



Back to School – Katelyn Sondereker

For most children in America, September means going back to school after a loooong (almost two and a half months!) summer vacation. Because students have been away from school for so long, there is a lot to do to prepare (準備する) for the next school year.

For example, elementary school students will get a new teacher and new classmates. The teacher will usually give parents a "Back to School" shopping list, and parents will go to the store to buy all of the school supplies (学校用品) their child needs for the beginning of the school year. Of course, the list will have things like pencils and pens and scissors, but sometimes it will also have more expensive things like special kinds of calculators (電卓).

Unlike most kids (who don't like school), I always enjoyed going back to school shopping with my mom in August! I could buy a new backpack and lunchbox, as well as new clothes and pretty school supplies. To this day, seeing "Back to School" signs in the store in August and September makes me feel very nostalgic (懐かしい). I think part of it is because the new school year made me feel excited for a new beginning and a fresh start.

I think it is important to remember that you can always have a fresh start. Sometimes, we feel like we are stuck (出られない) and unable to move, but even if we feel that way, it isn't always true. No matter where you are in life, just being alive means you have so many opportunities. You can always take a deep

breath, make a list of what you need, and begin again.



Kate waiting for the school bus when she was in kindergarten (幼稚園).



Pumpkin Patches



Have you ever heard of a pumpkin patch?

They are farms (農場) that sell a lot of pumpkins during autumn. Families will go and pick out (選ぶ) pumpkins to take home. Pumpkin patches often have other activities such as hayrides, (a tractor (トラクター) pulls a wagon (ワゴン) with people sitting on hay (干し草)), petting zoos, and photo spots. Sometimes there will be food and drinks such as hot apple cider available.

Kids going
on a hayride

