

Adrian Takes the trains

For people from overseas, a majority experience difficulties getting around. Today, I would like to ask Adrian Wong from Australia on the pros and cons of trains in Japan, and the differences between trains in Australia and Japan.



Adrian's favorite spot is the Meguro River during the Cherry Blossom season.

Q. When you first came to Japan, what were some of the difficulties you encountered with trains? Who did you ask for help? How did you solve the problem?

A. First of all, I had no idea where to buy the tickets. Also it was difficult to find the price for the station I wanted to go to. In Sydney, they clearly show you which platform goes to what stations, so it wasn't hard at all. However, in Japan, they don't have many of those route tables. I still get lost sometimes when I am traveling to new stations. If I'm confused, I will either ask the train staff or search online.

Point: we have prepaid cards such as (Suica) and (Pasma) in Japan. It is very easy to purchase them at most stations' ticket machines before boarding the trains. You can ride on all the trains, regardless of the train company. This saves you time from going through the trouble of buying the tickets.

Q2. Are there any differences between Australia's and Japan's trains? Do you have females-only carriages in Australia? Japanese people sleep on the trains; how about in Australia? (*Females-only carriages: It was first introduced into Japan's public transport system in 1912, in order to protect women from sexual harassment and violence)

A2. We don't have females-only carriages in Australia. The trains in Sydney are separated into two levels instead of one. Instead of having a lot of standing space, we have a lot more seats. The seats are also movable, so you could chat with your friends or family with them facing you. There are also people in Australia who sleep on the trains. We also eat food and a lot of people talk on their phones on the trains.

Point 2: We also have priority seating, designated for people with disabilities, elders, and pregnant women. Also, you cannot use your mobile phones in that area. The best way is to turn off your phone because there might be a passenger with a pacemaker. In Australia, you can eat on the train, but in Japan, it is considered taboo to eat or drink on board.

Adrian says you can watch TV in Japan's trains without sound, but be careful not to miss your stop.

Do you feel like boarding the train now? Let's get on one and travel around this weekend. Thank you very much, Adrian.