

Ver. 48 | May 2022

WISH TIMES

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WHY WISH?

~Conversations in the
Kitchen with Jodie~

Writer: Selina

When I first got accepted into Waseda University, I didn't have in mind where I'd live in Japan. I was dead set on living alone from the beginning. My mind changed after I started looking into the dormitories offered by Waseda.

When I came across WISH, two things particularly appealed to me. One, its emphasis on diversity, with students from varied backgrounds and cultures. Two, its implementation of SI programs, which is unique to only this dormitory. Upon reading this, I was pretty much determined to apply for WISH. Since I'd be going to a foreign country alone for the first time, it was in my best interest to join a dormitory, where I could immediately meet new people and develop lasting friendships. Living in WISH is like joining a tight-knit family that shares their love and support for one another. Through the SI programs offered here at WISH, I also am able to work on a better version of myself.

Although it has now only been a few weeks living here, I can say with confidence that I made the best choice by coming to WISH. I can say that because I've met a spectacular human being, who has reaffirmed the very reason why I chose to live at WISH. This person is Jodie.

I first met Jodie when she greeted me in the community kitchen. Though Jodie was my first encounter with a fellow resident from the dorm other than my roommates, I was surprised at how quickly I bonded with her through late-night chats in the kitchen and get-togethers outside of the dorm. She's a foreign student, just like me, who came to Japan from Switzerland to study because she likes the country's culture and people. She chose to live in WISH because she wanted to meet more people and challenge herself. She also wanted to apply the skills she learned from her vocational training to help people with their mental health. The environment at WISH also enables her to join mini-events, a great opportunity for residents to mix and mingle.

In Jodie's words, WISH is a "pot-au-feu," a dish that's an assortment of vegetables and meat. It's a mix of different kinds of people who come together to share their knowledge and experiences. By putting myself into this "pot-au-feu," I look forward to meeting even more people from across the world and discovering new things about myself.

How To Beat 自炊 (Jisui) At Your Own Pace

Writer: Amm

Have you ever thought that cooking is hard, boring and complicated? Well, I have. Cooking to me was as hard as solving maths problems, and I SUCKED at maths. I've always watched my mom cook since I was little, and I would ALWAYS avoid cooking as much as possible. It was to the point that I would even consider boiling instant noodles is a difficult task. My mom, on the other hand, was a great cook. To be concise, her cooking was complicated (at least to me). She would have these recipe folders which she'll whip out of nowhere and start her magical bibbidi babbidi boo, and voila, a perfectly seasoned dish appears on the table. Of course, she would cook simple dishes like fried rice too, but it was just too much for my itty bitty brain to contemplate.

I started cooking seriously during my first year of middle school due to a school project for home economics. Yes, the said fried rice was chosen as my menu. No, it was not easy to cook at all. Why? Because as a Southeast Asian, your mother never tells you the exact measurements of each ingredient. They'll just use their third eye for the task. Their "FEELING", and that just leaves you to figure it out for yourself. You'll have to crack out your nonexistent third eye which was entirely impossible. Fortunately, it was a group project, and my friends helped me to complete the task. But that was it. I stopped cooking right after the group project ended. Welp, who would have thought that I would regret the decision of not learning from my mom hahaha. I have now spent a year and a half away from my family and my home country. I miss my mom's food, and I also miss my home country's food dearly. I guess this is the time that I reveal it and say "YES, I now can cook". I am proud to say that I am now able to cook my mom's so-called complicated dishes. How? My third eye popped out. No, I'm just kidding. It didn't. I had to learn it the hard way which is to experiment like a mad scientist in the lab. Nah, that's a lie too. It was simply just me accepting the fact that cooking is just like following a simple formula.

Apparently, cooking is not as difficult as I thought it was. The only thing you would need to do is practice. Just like any other thing, as long as you practice, you'll get better. But how do you practice? Well, you just have to start with easier menus. As simple as that. Simple right? Right?? I mean, you probably still think it's hard and complicated, so I'm just gonna illustrate this more specifically. Please collaborate with me and visualise a table.

Now, that table contains two slices of bread. Now there's a slice of ham, and a slice of cheese. Please move the slice of ham and the slice of cheese on top of each other, and top them off on a slice of bread. Finally, put the other slice of bread on top. Congratulations! You've now just made a sandwich. Easy right? Cooking isn't as hard as you thought now huh? Well fundamentally, if you follow the steps one by one, you'll be able to cook anything. Just like how you made the sandwich. BUT it is also important to take it slowly and get used to cooking first before adding any more steps that you're unfamiliar with. For example, if you know how to cook egg fried rice, the next step is to try adding meat or vegetables. Or if you're not confident enough yet, try getting used to the ingredients that you are using. For instance, if you are a noodle lover, try cooking different kinds of dishes with the noodle. Change the soup base, change the ingredients you pair it with, change whatever you need, but keep the noodle. You'll find out after many tries whether it matches a certain kind of flavour or not. You'll also realize the specific time to take the noodles out of the boiling water with your "third eye". Do you know why? Because you'll get lazier at timing your food with a timer, and you'll end up just eyeballing it. However, always start with a small number of ingredients.

Next, I'll be sharing some quick and easy recipes that I learned after coming to Japan. First, you'll need 醤油 (shoyu), Lao Gan Ma chilli oil (can be bought from Nakano Broadway-underground floor) and a type of meat preferably pork or beef (also preferably cut into slices or small chunks). All forms of meat are acceptable as long as you can eat them.

So, for the sacrificial ritual, ahem, I meant the cooking part, you'll have to heat up your pan on medium heat (中火), add a tablespoon of Lao Gan Ma chilli oil and add around 200 to 300grams of meat. Then, stir-fry the meat until it's almost cooked and add shoyu to taste (start from 1/2 teaspoon). Slowly add little by little and taste while cooking. Turn off the fire when your meat is fully cooked, and voila, you just made a dish that goes well with every single carb you can find on this planet. You can eat this with rice or you can also eat this with noodles, pasta and even toast depending on your preference. By all means, you can also experiment and add more ingredients or adjust the amount of the ingredients.

Furthermore, did you know that if you mix KEWPIE mayonnaise and Shin Ramyun's flavouring powder from a ratio of 3 to 1, you'll create a creamy spicy sauce that you can dip your nachos in? You can also spread it on a toast, add some shredded cheese, bake it in the toaster oven until the cheese gets a beautiful toasty colour, and you'll get your specialized cheesy Shim Ramyun toast. Now, you're probably wondering why I would even have a Shin Ramyun's flavouring powder lying around in my room right? That is because I ate the noodles together with the Lao Gan Ma chilli oil meat dish (someone please bestow upon this dish a name). I mean, it matches together well haha.

Fun fact: Did you know that the dish Krapao is a name of a herb? Krapao is the Thai term for Holy Basil. So, the dish Krapao is actually from this herb; therefore, any stir-fry from chicken, pork, beef and even seafood with this herb can be considered a Krapao. Also, we don't usually put onions in Krapao as it would clash with the aroma of the holy basil.

For those who would like to try a dish from my motherland country, Thailand, here's an easy recipe for you.



The recipe I would like to introduce to you is the Massaman curry. Although this may not be a complete self-made dish, to all those who are craving Thai food, you can try this recipe. To all WISH residents, you may have heard of KALDI which is in Marui (OIOI). The store has a small carton of massaman curry (brand: Roi Thai). Now all you only need left are chicken drums, potatoes and onions. First, finely chop your onions (1/2 an onion), and cut your potatoes (2 medium-sized potatoes) into bite-sized pieces. Pour the Massaman curry into a pot and heat it up on medium heat (中火). Add your chicken and stir around, close the pot with a lid for 10 minutes. Then, add your chopped onions and potatoes. Cover with the lid again and cook for 15 minutes, and that's it. This could account for up to a 2 person serving with rice, so bon appétit!

P.s. For all the stingy people like me, please don't throw away your spring onion's roots. You can place them in a glass of water, and they will live their entire remaining lives slaving away providing you with more fruition of their flesh. Enjoy!

I hope you enjoyed my little introduction to the path to 自炊.

The difference between how I viewed WISH as an outsider and as a resident

Writer: Kokone / Translator: Chrisanne

Waseda International Student House, commonly known as WISH, is my home away from home. After travelling to Tokyo from my hometown in Hiroshima, I finally got used to the bustling train stations and the bright Tokyo lights that overshadowed the stars in the sky. I wondered what kind of thoughts I had when I first entered WISH, and how I felt after living there. With my eyes closed, I recall the cherry blossoms of last year... (Movie recollections often begin like this...)

“Strict,” is one of the many impressions I had of WISH before I became a resident. Even as an adult, you will be expelled from WISH if you are found drinking in the dormitory, or if you are found bringing in outsiders. Although I was stunned to learn these rules at first, I grew to understand that these policies are made to prioritize the health and safety of the WISH residents. I thought that the rules also help nurture WISH residents into students of exemplary character, making them good representatives of Waseda students.

I was thrilled to share a unit room with four other residents, but I was also nervous at the thought of living with a senior. Growing up as an only child, I was worried that I might cause inconveniences to others because of my particular way of living. At times, I also did worry about whether I will get tired of living with people.

Although living in a communal living environment, I could also easily have my privacy when I wanted to be alone. I could just simply go into my room and take a break from my surroundings. If anything, I felt more secure knowing that there are always someone around me.

Perhaps one of the most surprising things I realized about WISH is the bias in faculties. First, most WISH residents entered Waseda University through recommendations from designated schools. As someone who entered the same way as most of the residents, I often thought that it is unusual to meet someone who had to overcome the battle of taking the general entrance examination till February.

In terms of faculties, many residents study in the School of Political Science and the School of International Liberal Studies. On the other hand, it seems rare to find students from the Waseda Tokorozawa campus. I am not sure if this applies to the 3rd to the 6th floor, but I think there are also only a few science majors. At least, the fingers on my hand are enough to finish counting the residents from the Nishi Waseda campus.

As the term, “International” in WISH (Waseda International Student House) suggests, WISH has a large number of Japanese students who grew up overseas as well as international students. Within a unit room, one might hear residents mixing both Japanese and English. A new resident I spoke with recently told me that he was shocked to see that English is mainly spoken in the kitchen. Since that day, I wonder if he has been able to use the kitchen comfortably.



On a different note, the SI program in WISH might be something you have never experienced before! During the SI programs, you will have the chance to get to know different lines of work, and I often attend sessions where alumni introduce their current careers. I believe that there are only a limited number of jobs you can experience in your lifetime, so attending the SI programs makes me feel like I am living vicariously through each alumni's life! Through the SI programs, I realized that it is cool to be a member of society who works toward the world I long for. Similarly, I hope that the SI programs will inspire you to push yourself to become someone you want to be!

[Conclusion]

I could not imagine a lifestyle without a view of Fuji-san from the kitchen, nor one without the sounds of “Itterashai” or “Okaeri.” Looking back after a year, I am deeply grateful to be here in WISH.

As I enter my second year of living in WISH, I pondered my goals here. Now that I am a Jr. RA, I want to make WISH even more loved by everyone. How will I feel when I look up at the cherry blossoms next year? I hope I will be able to meet a better version of myself then.

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