

MT. FUJI

August 2014



We left St. George Thursday morning. We flew from SGU to SLC to LAX to HND (Haneda). We got business class from LAX to HND on Delta which was amazing as always. We landed in HND about 10pm Friday (local time). Having slept in this airport before, we already knew which benches to scope out for the best sleeping. We slept in the airport until the trains started running at 5:30am. We rode a train (Keikyu Line) to Shinagawa and transferred to the JR line and rode that to Shinjuku. In Shinjuku we had about 15 minutes to find some train we've never ridden before called a "romancecar." After about 10 minutes of running here and there we finally found the correct terminal. We bought the ticket at the kiosk and tried to go through the gate. The gate doors closed

instead of letting us through which we have come to know means we need to pay more or bought the wrong ticket. Since we were on such a tight timeline for the day we got a little stressed out, but the attendant finally found a card with some english on it that explained that another ticket just to enter the station needed to be purchased for each of us. He helped us purchase those, and then we rode the romancecar (which is actually just another train) to Gotemba. In Gotemba we caught a bus that took us to Mt. Fuji's 5th station. There are 4 different "5th" Stations on Mt. Fuji.

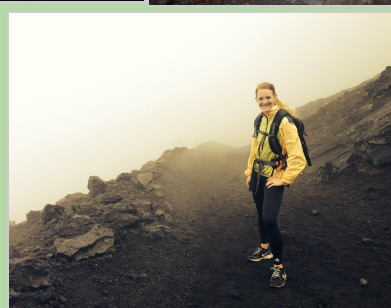
The 5th station is where the trailhead starts. We went to the Subashiri 5th station. We chose this one because it's fairly simple to get to from Gotemba, it's also a shorter/faster hike than some other trailheads to the top. We were against the clock because buses back to Gotemba stopped running early evening and we didn't want to stay in a hut on the mountain, which would be crowded and very expensive.



At the base of the trailhead they have a lot of shops and some places serving food. We ordered some Mochi wrapped in seaweed (Brett's favorite) and some soy beans.

The hike was 8.5 miles round trip, with about a mile elevation gain from the bottom to top. Everything on the internet said the hike takes about 8-13 hours round trip. We hiked as fast as we could and ended up doing the entire hike in 5:47:00. 3:54 to the top; :24 at the top; 1:29 to the bottom. It was a great day for a hike. We hiked through several layers of weather along the way to the top. The bottom was very hot and humid. Mid-way up we went through a layer of clouds

that poured rain on us. Then we got above those clouds and it was clear with a beautiful view. Then we went through another layer of clouds that just made very thick fog. The very top was bright, clear, windy, and cold with another, beautiful view. We hiked so fast that the cold at the top didn't bother us too much though. There were mountain huts about every mile on the way up that sell water, snacks, soup, air, and some even sell accommodations for the night (a spot to sleep on the floor).



We ran the entire way down. They have separate trails up and down to keep the flow of traffic moving since so many people hike this mountain.

The trail down is super steep, but was mostly just deep volcanic sand which made it easy and super fun to run down. Our knees were totally shot by the time we got to the bottom and didn't

want to bend for a couple days afterward though. Are we getting old or what?!

After we hiked we caught the bus back to Gotemba. We found a noodle house nearby the bus station and both had a bowl of suba. We never know what we are ordering when we get these, we just point to a picture of soup and hope for the best. This particular bowl wasn't my favorite (it turned out to be just noodles and broth), but was better than nothing. Brett's had fried shrimp and noodles and he loved it.

We conveniently caught a bus from Gotemba straight to the HND airport (which is much cheaper than on trains). We arrived at the airport dead tired about 9pm. HND airport has showers for about \$10 so we used those, then ate at a rotating sushi restaurant in the airport.



We headed to the gate to wait for our flight that left at 12:20am. Unfortunately being a standby, things happen where you don't make flights. This particular night Delta chose to take cargo instead of standbys. We did not get a seat on the flight and by the time we got out of customs it was about 2:30am. So we spent another night in HND's airport. In the morning, I was starving so I braved trying one of the restaurants in the airport where you pay a vending machine and then just sit down. I chose what looked like a pork rice bowl in the picture, and again, hoped for the best. I scored with my choice this time. The bowl was pork as it appeared and super delicious!

We then made our way to NRT's (Narita) airport, which is about a 1.5 - 2 hour train ride from HND (Haneda). All the flights looked full but luckily one United flight to IAH had just enough room for us. Had we not made that flight we would have been stuck another day.

We made it back to the States on Sunday. Sunday evening we flew from IAH to SLC. We made it to SLC in time for the last flight to SGU, but unfortunately it was full so we spent the night in SLC at Tiffany's Dad's house. We caught the first flight to SGU Monday Morning and we were back home and back to work within 2 hours of landing in SGU. Total money spent in Japan was 28,095 Yen (\$275). That's what we call a successful trip.

