

Updates Notes (2025-2026)

In an effort to keep folks updated as they join the program, this is a compilation of updates or notes we have sent out:

September 22, 2025

We received additional information from Explorica this afternoon and want to share it with to help alleviate any confusion around the amalgamated program. Here is my best attempt to answer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Why is the itinerary changing?

- Our participant numbers remain below the threshold to offer the customized trip we had originally planned. Continuing with the custom trip with lower numbers would result in significant cost increases per participant and we don't think it's fair to ask families to pay even more.
 - **After working closely with Explorica, the best solution we have found is to join another group departing June 29 on a 9-day trip.** This keeps costs reasonable while still offering our participants an incredible and immersive experience in Japan.
-

How does the new trip compare to the original plan?

- **Length:** New trip is **9 days**, the original was **11 days** (only a 2-day difference).
 - **Focus:** Our custom trip had more free/exchange time; the new one has more structured experiential learning (e.g., visiting Hiroshima, participating in tea ceremony).
 - **Transportation:** The new itinerary includes two additional bullet train trips (Tokyo–Kanazawa and Kyoto–Hiroshima).
 - **Highlights retained:** Most of the favourite stops from 2023 are still included (e.g. Tokyo, Kyoto, cultural visits, shrines, temples, markets).
 - **New additions:** Kanazawa (rich in samurai history, less touristy), Hiroshima (Peace Park, Museum, Atomic Dome), and The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo.
-

What is the new itinerary?

Day 1 – Overnight Flight to Tokyo

Travel to Japan (Tokyo).

Day 2 – Konnichiwa Tokyo

Meet tour director, check into hotel.

Day 3 – Tokyo

- Guided sightseeing
- Senso-ji Temple
- Meiji Shrine
- Harajuku District
- Shibuya Crossing
- Akihabara Electric Town

Day 4 – Tokyo

- Tokyo Tower
- Diver City Tokyo
- National Museum of Emerging Science & Innovation
- Japanese school visit

Day 5 – Tokyo → Kanazawa

- Travel by bullet train
- Guided sightseeing
- Nagamachi Quarter & Nomura House
- Kenrokuen Park

Day 6 – Kanazawa → Kyoto

- Travel by train
- Arashiyama District
- Togetsu-kyo Bridge, Bamboo Grove, Tenryu-ji Temple

Day 7 – Kyoto → Hiroshima (day trip)

- Guided excursion
- Atomic Dome, Peace Memorial Park & Museum
- Shukkei-en Garden
- Okonomiyaki dinner
- Return to Kyoto by bullet train

Day 8 – Kyoto

- Guided sightseeing
- Kiyomizu Temple
- Ninen Zaka
- Tea Ceremony experience
- Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion)
- Nishiki Market

Day 9 – Return Home

Travel to Osaka for flight home.

Will there be added evening activities?

- Part of what makes this program great is being able to do some activities on our own. We have an experienced team with the ability to add enriching free-time and evening activities on our own. We plan to add optional evening “side-quests” to maximize our experience in Japan. These may include orientation walks, group karaoke, mall/shrine visits, visiting Book Off (a used bookstore chain that we found super popular with the students in 2023). The nice thing is that with a smaller group, it is actually easier to manage and get around on our own using public transit.
-

What about costs?

- Current participants will see a **slight drop in price**. Keeping our student to chaperone ratio at 10:1, we were quoted \$7262 for this new itinerary. When we switch to the amalgamated trip, current participants will see a reduction to their remaining balance. Anyone that has already paid in full will receive a refund for the difference. If you also paid for travel protection, you will also receive a reduction for the shortened travel protection plan.
 - The \$200 Early Enrolment Incentive will carry over to the new itinerary and will still be in place to the end of the month. Our tour consultant is actually looking if we can extend it a bit longer for families who are still considering joining.
 - We submitted Financial Assistance Plan applications in July. We haven't heard anything back yet, but they will not be affected by the change to the new itinerary.
-

What is the Land-Only Option?

The Land-Only Option allows participants to join the Discover Japan Language & Culture Program tour **without airfare included**. This option gives families the flexibility to stay behind in Japan after the tour to continue traveling on their own. Because of the complexities of international travel, this is only an option if an adult is traveling with the student before and after the tour. Our program leaders cannot facilitate or supervise participants flying on different itineraries.

- **Cost:** \$4,583 (covers all program activities in Japan). Participants choosing this option are responsible for all costs outside the scheduled itinerary (airfare, transportation, meals, lodging before/after the tour, etc.).

- **Flights:** Participants must book their own flights to and from Japan.
 - **Arrival:** You must arrive before the official start of the tour to meet the group at the hotel in Japan.
-

What if my family prefers to cancel?

Families who wish to cancel may do so under Explorica's standard policies:

- Cancellation fees may apply however, if you purchased insurance with the CFAR (Cancel For Any Reason) waiver, you will also be eligible for a 75% refund of cancellation fee.
-

How are chaperones affected?

- Our chaperone coverage is based on student numbers. We will send a minimum of two chaperones with the students and if needed cover the additional chaperone cost with operational reserves and or out of our own pocket.
-

Where will flights depart from?

Flights will not be booked until closer to departure. Because we're joining another group, we cannot request a specific departure airport for the full group at this time.

As previously mentioned, we will be hosting a participant/parent meeting on Oct. 4 at 12:30pm in our classroom (ED 318) if you would like to join us to discuss the changes. Thank you for your patience as we navigate this adjustment and continue to build an amazing experience!

September 20, 2025

Thank you for your interest and support in the Discover Japan Language and Culture Program (DJLCP). We're excited to see more families joining since last week, but I want to provide an important update on our travel plans and share some upcoming activities for our class.

Travel Program Update

While we are seeing more interest in the program, our participant numbers remain below the threshold needed to offer the customized trip we had originally planned. Continuing with a

customized trip at current numbers would result in a significant cost increase for each participant. Travel costs have already risen since our 2023 program, and we don't think it's fair to ask families to pay more.

In 2023, we had 46 participants and even had to turn families away because the bus was full. That success made us hopeful for the same this year. While numbers are lower than expected, we've been working diligently with Explorica to find the best solution to still provide an amazing immersive experience.

The best option is to join another group departing June 29 on a 9-day trip. Although we won't be able to offer everything in our previous itinerary, we're still visiting Tokyo and Kyoto, and this new trip offers some exciting opportunities, including:

- Visiting Kanazawa, a culturally rich area that's outside some of the major tourism destinations that are getting overwhelmed in Japan
- A special trip to Hiroshima, including the Peace Park and Museum—often requested but usually too costly due to bullet train travel. This will be a poignant and deeply meaningful experience.

We'll continue to work hard to add evening activities to maximize our time in Japan. Major details should be confirmed by October 4.



“京都 にも 行きましょう!! Let's Go to Kyoto, too!!” – Sep. 27

As part of our Saturday September 27 class, we will be going on a short field trip to Kyoto... Okay, not quite yet, but just one building over, the U of R's Fifth Parallel Art Gallery is hosting an exhibit titled “Let's Go to Kyoto, too!!.” Professor Robert Truszkowski created ART290JP: The Art of Kyoto where the students and their professor spent 2 weeks visiting Japan and exploring the arts and culture there.

This art show represents the students' final projects – their “response to Kyoto” assignment. Professor Truszkowski is the head of the Visual Arts department and has agreed to open the gallery for us to view his student's work. I had an opportunity to check it out on Wednesday and I think there's a little something for everyone in this exhibit – traditional, modern, video, nature, paint, textiles, photography, mixed medium, etc.

It looks like we may even get the chance to visit with one of the student artists who went and hear about what she experienced in Japan. Our students may not fully understand all the nuances yet, but it's their first taste of the



experience to come and we hope our time in Japan will be as enjoyable and deeply meaningful. Part of wanting to have our classes at the U of R included our desire to be able to make these connections, to show the students opportunities that exist in post-secondary, and that there are programs like this that could get you to Japan again if you look for them.



Trip Participant & Parent Meeting – Oct. 4

Time: 12:30 – 1:30 PM

Location: ED 318 (Our classroom at the University of Regina)

We'll review the updated travel plan and answer questions at this meeting. I sincerely apologize that we can't move forward with the exact trip we first promoted, but I truly believe this revised itinerary will also be epic, memorable, and transformative!



Youth Culture Club: T-Shirt Workshop – Oct. 4

Time: 1:30 – 3:00 PM (Note the earlier start time!)

Location: ED 318 (Our classroom at the University of Regina)

We are excited to launch a new Youth Culture Club, in partnership with the Queen City Japanese School and the Regina Japanese Culture Club Inc. This monthly program will bring together DJLCP students and youth from the local Japanese-Canadian community for unique cultural activities.

We're kicking off the first one with a T-shirt Design Workshop. Ms. Eriko Parker, principal of Queen City Japanese School will be joining our regular classroom to talk about Japanese motifs and design. Afterwards, students will use Canva to create their own t-shirt designs which we will then bring to life with a sublimation printer.

Important Notes:

- Please arrive a bit early as we're starting at 1:30. (If you're attending the 12:30 PM trip meeting, you're already set!)
- Bring a laptop if possible to create your design.
- There is a \$10 cost for most participants, but we will be covering it for DJLCP students (as long as you're signed up for the class or trip)
- Please fill out this [form](#) to let us know if you'll attend.



September 11, 2025

We're excitedly looking forward to meeting everyone on Saturday for the start of our Japanese Language and Culture Class. Just a quick update that our classroom has been changed to ED 318. It's not uncommon for the classrooms to shift around a bit early in the semester as they find homes for all the different language classes. Either way, we will still have our ambassadors in place at the meeting point to help direct the students to the classroom.

If you have friends or family who might be interested in participating in the class, they're welcome to come give it a try. We're still hoping for more students to join before the end of September.



Forms & Documents

We've prepared a set of [important documents](#) and forms to get us started. Bringing these completed will speed things up the first day, but printed copies will be available if needed. We'll review some of these in more detail at an upcoming parent meeting.

- Tips & Tricks – A checklist of items and actions to help students stay on track as we move closer to our Japan trip. Please keep this in a safe spot and check off tasks as you complete them.
 - Registration Form – While you may have already filled out forms for Explorica, we also need one specific to DJLCP as we'll be working closely with you and your children.
 - Behavioural Contract – Outlines the expectations that will ensure a positive experience for everyone.
 - Media Release – Allows us to share photos and updates from class and during our trip.
-



Fees

- \$200 class fee – due on the first day of class for those enrolled in the Language & Culture course.
- \$90 gratuities fee (for trip gratuities) – required from those enrolled on the trip.

Payments can be made in person or via e-transfer to info@discoverjapansk.ca (please include the participant's name in the memo line to assist us in tracking payment).



Class Logistics

- Location: ED 318, Education Building, University of Regina (3737 Wascana Parkway)
- Schedule: Saturdays, 1:45 PM – 4:45 PM (starting Sept. 13).
 - Dates are confirmed through December 6, 2025.
 - Additional cultural evenings/events will be announced.
 - Second semester dates will be provided in the new year.

First Day (Sept. 13):

- Meet at the main entrance of the Centre for Kinesiology, Health & Sport. [Click here for a map!](#)
- One of our ambassadors (wearing a “festival,” “dragon,” or “firefighter” happi coat) will be at the main doors at 1:30 PM to greet you and guide you to the classroom on the

5th floor. Look for us wearing one of these:



- Lot 6 is recommended parking as it is free on weekends. **Please Note: parking enforcement still applies to accessible stalls, time-limited zones, and underground parking.**

What to Bring:

- Binder, paper for notes, and writing utensils.

Dual Credit Opportunity

DJLCP is a Saskatchewan Ministry of Education-approved Dual Credit program. Students who successfully complete the Language & Culture Class will earn Japanese 10L (DC) as an elective credit toward high school graduation requirements.

- Upon completion, students will receive a letter and certificate to present to their school administration.
- The credit will appear on transcripts with a grade of SG (Standing Granted), which does not affect high school averages.

We're looking forward to an incredible start to the program. Please be sure to:

- Complete the Registration, Behavioural Contract, and Media Release forms,
- Pay the class fee and gratuities (if applicable),
- Bring your student prepared for class on September 13, and

- Please feel free to share information about this program. It's not too late to join the class and the \$200 early enrollment incentive for the trip is available until the end of the month. Please visit our website at www.discoverjapansk.ca or email us at info@discoverjapansk.ca for more information.

Thank you for your support—we can't wait to begin this journey together!

September 6, 2025

The first week of school is in the books, and we are excited to launch our Japanese Language & Culture Classes on Saturday, September 13! Thank you in advance for your patience as we settle into our classroom at the University of Regina, get to know one another, and establish our routines.



Forms & Documents

We've prepared a set of [important documents](#) and forms to get us started. Bringing these completed will speed things up the first day, but printed copies will be available if needed. We'll review some of these in more detail at an upcoming parent meeting.

- Tips & Tricks – A checklist of items and actions to help students stay on track as we move closer to our Japan trip. Please keep this in a safe spot and check off tasks as you complete them.
- Registration Form – While you may have already filled out forms for Explorica, we also need one specific to DJLCP as we'll be working closely with you and your children.
- Behavioural Contract – Outlines the expectations that will ensure a positive experience for everyone.
- Media Release – Allows us to share photos and updates from class and during our trip.



Fees

- \$200 class fee – due on the first day of class for those enrolled in the Language & Culture course.
\$90 gratuities fee (for trip gratuities) – required from all participants enrolled on the trip..

Payments can be made in person or via e-transfer to info@discoverjapansk.ca (please include the participant's name in the memo line to assist us in tracking payment).



Class Logistics

- Location: ED 558, Education Building, University of Regina (3737 Wascana Parkway)
- Schedule: Saturdays, 1:45 PM – 4:45 PM (starting Sept. 13).
 - Dates are confirmed through December 6, 2025 (We will receive further dates closer to the new year.
 - Additional cultural evenings/events will be announced.
 - Second semester dates will be provided in the new year.

The First Day (Sept. 13):

- Meet at the main entrance of the Centre for Kinesiology, Health & Sport. [Click here for a map!](#)
- One of our ambassadors (wearing a “festival,” “dragon,” or “firefighter” happi coat) will be at the main doors at 1:30 PM to greet you and guide you to the classroom on the 5th floor. Look for us wearing one of these:



- Lot 6 is recommended parking as it is free on weekends. **Please Note: parking enforcement still applies to accessible stalls, time-limited zones, and underground parking.**

What to Bring:

- Binder, paper for notes, and writing utensils.



Dual Credit Opportunity

DJLCP is a Saskatchewan Ministry of Education-approved Dual Credit program. Students who successfully complete the Language & Culture Class will earn Japanese 10L (DC) as an elective credit toward high school graduation requirements.

- Upon completion, students will receive a letter and certificate to present to their school administration.
 - The credit will appear on transcripts with a grade of SG (Standing Granted), which does not affect high school averages.
-

We're looking forward to an incredible start to the program. Please be sure to:

- Complete the Registration, Behavioural Contract, and Media Release forms,
- Pay the class fee and gratuities (if applicable),
- Bring your student prepared for class on September 13, and
- Please feel free to share information about this program. It's not too late to join the class and the \$200 early enrollment incentive is available until the end of the month. Please visit our website at www.discoverjapansk.ca or email us at info@discoverjapansk.ca for more information.

Thank you for your support—we can't wait to begin this journey together!

September 1, 2025

Program Update

We're very excited about the students who have already signed up, and we know from past experience that participation often grows as we start the class and move into the new school year. We typically see a spike in enrolments in September, and our hope is to continue with the program as planned.

In the meantime, we are keeping a close eye on numbers and will be doing another push to schools this month to share information and encourage more participants. Should enrollment not reach the threshold needed for our fully customized tour, we do have a loose contingency plan in place which would likely involve switching to a 9-day tour amalgamated with another group, with travel happening over the Easter break. That said, our strong preference—and what I remain hopeful for—is to move ahead with the customized DJLCP tour. The \$200 enrollment incentive is available until the end of September, so please help us spread the word amongst your inner circles of colleagues, family, and friends.

Early Enrolment, Financial Assistance Program & Tip Donation

Please check your Explorica accounts to ensure you received the \$200 early enrollment. Let us know if it hasn't been applied and we can help get that sorted out.

Applications for the FAP through Explorica were submitted in July for anyone who self-declared and was enrolled by June 30. We haven't heard anything back yet but are hopeful to access the maximum grant available.

We were honoured to be selected as the August recipients of Rising Sun Ramen's philanthropic tip donation program. Over lunch hours during the work week, Topsy Samurai holds a pop-up ramen lunch and donates all tips collected to worthy causes in the city. Thanks to their staff and the generosity of their patrons, we received \$841.70 for the program!

Japanese Language and Culture Class

I'm happy to report that we're again joining forces with Queen City Japanese School and the Multilingual Association of Regina to host classes at the University of Regina. This partnership allows us greater opportunities to connect with the Japanese-Canadian community through youth & university classes as well as opportunity to easily connect with visiting Japanese students. I'm also hoping this will be an opportunity for our students to become familiar with the U of R campus and the opportunities available at university.

Classes are slated to begin Sept. 13, at 1:45 pm - 4:45 pm and will run most Saturdays through to the end of May and a preliminary schedule will be up on our google calendar as soon as possible. We don't have our classroom assignment yet so we will be communicating that out as soon as we have it (but there are often adjustments within the first days and weeks of classes as they find the best place for all of the different language classes).

We know that Saturdays may be an issue for some families but we really do feel that this location and ability to connect with Japanese families will provide the best opportunities for the students and I'm really hoping most of our students will be able to make it work. I also know that regular life often gets in the way of best laid plans and other learning opportunities such as travel, time with family, and sport or cultural events may sometimes need to take priority. While we are unable to offer a virtual or streaming option for the course, we will host the class on Google Classroom and endeavor to include supplemental material with course assignments so that even if a student has to occasionally miss a class, they should be able to complete and catch up on their work. Successful completion of the course will result in students receiving Japanese 10L as a credit towards their high school graduation requirements.

We are also planning to host 5-6 cultural events throughout the semester where all members of the program will be invited to attend even if they are not enrolled in the class. We encourage everyone to attend, experience some Japanese culture, and get to know the whole team who will be traveling to Japan with us.

August 30, 2025

ありがとう うございました

The Discover Japan Language & Culture Program
extends its deepest gratitude to Rising Sun Pop-Up &
Catering for selecting us as the beneficiary of their
August philanthropic tip donation program.

Thanks to their dedicated staff and the
generosity of their patrons, we are
honoured to receive a donation of \$841.70!

We sincerely appreciate everyone who contributed!
Your gift helps support opportunities for youth studying
Japanese language, promotes cultural exchange
initiatives, and opens doors for students to grow in
meaningful and transformative ways.



August 22, 2025

We will be available throughout the day at the Regina and Fujioka Friendship Committee booth at “I Love Regina Day” from 9am - 3pm tomorrow. You are welcome to stop in and say hi or ask questions about the program! We will be in booth #42, east of the Cenotaph.



August 8, 2025

We have confirmed the main class dates for the first half of the class. We will run most Saturday afternoons from 1:30-4:45 pm at the University of Regina. Confirmed dates are:

- September 13, 20, 27
- October 4, 18, 25
- November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
- December 6

July 15, 2025

We partnered with Harvard Media Auctions to do some radio advertisements to promote the program. There are four \$200 gift certificates up for grabs that can be applied to the class or the travel experience. Check out [Harvard Media Auctions](#) to grab yours by 6pm on August 18.

June 8, 2025

We filmed a video version of the information session for anyone that wasn't able to attend the in-person sessions, or who are just hearing about the program now. [Check it out here!](#)

You are welcome to share the video with anyone you feel may be interested in the program and are welcome to reach out if they have any further questions.

We would like to have an idea of participant numbers before class registration in September, so we encourage everyone to apply sooner than later. To enroll in the travel portion of the program, you can visit <https://www.explorica.ca/DJLCP-2026> to sign up. Remember to use voucher code: **Can2026** at sign-up to save \$200 off the cost of the travel experience.

May 19, 2025

We're excited to share some wonderful news with you! The March 2025 edition of the [Fujioka International Association Newsletter \(Issue No. 48\)](#) was recently released and our friends in Fujioka forwarded us a copy because our amazing 2024 DJLCP students and crew are featured on the front cover and again on page 3!

Here's a brief translation of the relevant sections of the newsletter:

"In 2024, high school students from Regina and surrounding areas traveled to Fujioka City, participating in a vibrant cultural exchange with local students.

The exchange came to life April 1, 2024 at Mikabo Mirai Hall, where:

- *Fujioka students emceed the event in English and presented on local specialties and scientific research, including the native Yaritanago fish.*
- *DJLCP students shared Indigenous dances, stories, and elements of Canadian culture.*
- *Groups engaged in hands-on cultural experiences like kimono dressing, traditional games, uchiwa fan painting, and sampling Japanese sweets."*

A Lasting Impression!

When this newsletter was circulated among residents in Fujioka, the response was immediate and heartwarming—many families began contacting the Fujioka International Association asking when the next exchange would take place and how they and their children could be involved.

That's a powerful testament to the incredible ambassadorial role of our program and how our students represented Saskatchewan—and Canada—with warmth, openness, and respect. Their efforts to build real bridges between our communities continue to inspire others to connect across cultures.

May 14, 2025

Upcoming information sessions:

- May 20, 2025, 12:130pm - Student Information Session - Bert Fox Community High School
- May 21, 2025, 6:30pm - Parent/Guardian Information Session - Bert Fox Community High School
- May 31, 2025, 11:00am - Information Session - Glen Elm Library (Room GE-1) - Regina

May 12, 2025

Registration is open for those who would like to begin signing up for the summer travel experience. We will have some student information sessions at Bert Fox Community High School on May 13 and May 20 at 12:30 pm and a Parent Information Meeting at 6:30 pm on May 21.

If you are based out of Regina, we will be hosting some information sessions in the coming weeks. Please complete the following [Google Form](#) to receive updates.

January 25, 2025

We have fielded a few inquiries about our next program to Japan. Our next program is slated to begin in September 2025. We are investigating some new opportunities for the 2025-2026 program which could include spreading the course over the school year and travelling in July. We are also working on partnering with a new tour agency for the overseas component. These changes bring new opportunities and challenges for the program, but we are hoping they provide us with an even better experience and value for our students.

In the meantime, if you are interested in being part of our 2025-2026 program, we invite you to complete this [Google Form](#) where we are collecting names and contact information. When we launch the next program, we'll reach out and you'll be the first to know!