

『How to Survive the Summer Heat in Japan』

『暑さを乗り切る』

Are you all managing to stay strong in the intense heat? Since Miyazaki is often referred to as “The Sunny Side of Japan,” as you might expect, it’s certainly hot here in the summer. Since ancient times, Japanese people have used a wide variety of techniques and equipment to cool down and make it through the summer heat. In this month’s Living in Miyazaki, we will introduce a few of these items and techniques.

Uchimizu

Sometimes, you might see people scattering water on the ground around residential areas. This is *uchimizu*, a traditional Japanese way of cooling places down. As the water evaporates, it pulls the heat from the ground and cools down the surrounding area. Plus, if the ground is damp, it doesn’t get as warm as it does if it’s dry. However, it’s important to note that this method does not work if it is done during the warm daylight hours – for *uchimizu* to be effective, it should be done in the morning or evening. It’s a natural way of cooling down that does not require electricity!



Have an arsenal of cooling items handy!

If there’s one thing that’s definitely worth having with you while you’re in “the Sunny Side of Japan,” it’s an *uchiwa* – a hand-held fan that allows you to make your own cooling breeze. Traditionally, they are made of paper or cloth fixed to a bamboo frame, but in more modern times you also see plastic-framed *uchiwa*. They are often given out for free at festivals and events. Similar to *uchiwa*, a *sensu* (folding fan) is definitely an essential item to help you enjoy the Japanese summer. Their compact, folding design is particularly convenient. In more recent years, mini portable electric fans have also become popular – you often see people walking around with them in their hands, or sometimes even hanging round their shoulders.



Cool down by listening to the sound of fūrin



Fūrin are small, bell-shaped wind chimes. They were brought to Japan along with Buddhism, and were originally used to ward off evil spirits. Nowadays, Japanese people love the sound of the *fūrin* as a symbol of summer, and so they often hang them from the edge of the eaves. As the wind blows, they make a pleasant jingling sound, and just hearing it makes you feel cooler! They can be made of various materials, such as

metal or ceramics, but the glass ones have a particularly light, gentle sound, and a cooling appearance.

We hope this article helps you cool down a little! Be careful, though – in the summer heat, staying indoors all the time with the air conditioning on can be bad for your health. Make sure to get outside, eat some delicious unagi (eel), a traditional summer dish in Japan, and make it through summer in style!

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