Mama's Fukushima Tour!

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Hi, everyone! I recently joined ‘Mama’s Fukushima Tour’ and did some reporting along the way!

You’re going to Fukushima?
Aren’t you worried about the radiation?

It’s been 8 years already. I’m sure it’s fine.

...is what I said, but...

As a mother, I need to know more about this!

Is food from Fukushima safe for children to eat?

Yum!

Off I go!

My kids won’t be exposed to too much radiation if they go there for a class trip, right?

I’ll be gone a while, ok?

Zoom!

And so, it’s off to Fukushima to learn more!

Yay, we can eat out!
How Fukushima’s Radiation Levels Compare with the Rest of the World

And so, it’s time to learn about radiation.

When I think of radiation, the image I get is like: “Scary,” “Dangerous,” “Stay Away!”

But actually...

The fact is that everyone is constantly exposed to radiation in daily life.

We heard from an expert.

Yeah, like this!

What? Really?

The average Japanese person is exposed to 2.1 millisieverts (mSv) of radiation from natural sources and 3.9 mSv of radiation from artificial sources like medical procedures each year.*

From the Earth

From Food

From Outer Space

From the Air

Radiation is radiation, so there’s no need to distinguish between radiation from natural vs. artificial sources.

Well then, what makes radiation dangerous?

The answer is that exposure to a lot of radiation poses risks to your health.

*Risks?

*World average is 2.42 mSv of radiation from natural sources and 0.60 mSv of radiation from artificial sources each year.
So, you’re probably wondering: will you be exposed to a lot of radiation in Fukushima?

The truth is that radiation levels in Fukushima barely differ from those found in major cities around the world.

I didn’t know!

Unit: Microsieverts/hour (μSv/h)

* This statement does not apply to the difficult-to-return zone

*Source: "Steps for Revitalization in Fukushima" (26th)
Incidentally, while studies have shown that exposure to more than 100 mSv increases the risk of cancer...

100-200 mSv only raises the risk of cancer by 1.08 ×, which is about the same as the risk from a high-sodium diet. Meanwhile 200-500 mSv raises the risk by 1.19 ×, which is the same as the risk from a low-exercise lifestyle.*

Wait, if we’re exposed to 2.1 mSv per year just from natural sources, then we’re bound to hit 100 mSv before too long...

When we talk about the risk from 100 mSv, we’re actually talking about exposure over a very short period of time. The effects of gradual exposure are much smaller, so the risk from background radiation is indistinguishable from other risk factors.

I’d say this is the bigger problem!

Radiation can be extra scary because it’s invisible, but if we quantify it in a way that’s visible...

I found out that the rumors about Fukushima having high radiation risk are totally overblown!

Now I can visit with peace of mind! Rice... Fresh-Picked Fruit...

Is food from Fukushima safe to eat?

Find out in Episode 2!

*Souce for Cancer Risk Data: "National Cancer Center Japan" Website
Episode 2

The Safety of Fukushima’s Food

At a Supermarket (Pre-Tour)
I’ll get some fruit!

Apples from Fukushima or somewhere else....

Fukushima products make me think of radiation...

I dunno, I guess I’ll go with something else...

Hm...

I used to make this choice in the past...

...but what I learned on my tour sure changed my mind!

As you may know we eat rice a lot, let’s talk about it first!

We went to the source: JAPAN AGURI!

Rice

It turns out that great care goes into ensuring the safety of produce grown and shipped in Fukushima.

Wow...

Ta-dah!
All of the rice that is harvested undergoes screening for radioactive material contamination.

Rice is carried past a radiation sensor...

...and the results are displayed on this monitor.

About 10 million bags of rice are screened each year!

JAPAN AGURI Staff

Hard to even imagine...

All of this...?

Of all the rice grown since 2015, not a single bag has failed the radiation screening.

That’s more than 3 years!

By the way, whether in restaurants or at the hotel, all of the Fukushima rice that we ate...

tasted GREAT!
Fruits and vegetables also undergo random sampling inspections, and we learned that all of the produce screened these days passes the inspection criteria.

Japanese standards are very strict.

The acceptable level of radioactive material in produce intended for distribution is only about 1/10 of the limits set in Europe and the USA.

According to farmers...

Radioactive material is measurable, so it’s easier to manage than microorganisms or other things that can’t be measured!

I see!

I never looked at it that way before!

Wow!

We even met farmers who have received safety certifications from international institutions!

GLOBAL G.A.P

ASIA G.A.P

Certified Farm

It wasn’t easy to get, you know.

Safety Management Plan
And so...

**Before the Tour**

I dunno, I guess I’ll go with something else...

**Product of Fukushima**

**After the Tour**

Product of Fukushima!

These were really good during the tour, so I’ll buy some more!

Learning about the food safety measures that are in place really changed my way of thinking.

I used to think that “Supporting Recovery” meant sending money or supplies...

But now I think that gaining knowledge is also a form of support!

I want to teach my kids not to run away from things that they don’t know or don’t understand. I’ll be sure to always tell them, “Why don’t you find out for yourself? Then you’ll know, and you can decide what to do with that knowledge on your own.”

Don’t miss the final episode of my fact-finding mission report, which introduces the people we met in Fukushima.
The People Mama Met in Fukushima

We also visited Kato Farm and spoke with rice farmers!

These are the places that we visited during “Mama’s Fukushima Tour!”

Here, we explored the town and heard the stories of those affected by the disaster!

According to the other moms on the tour, these are the destinations that give a good sense of the “Present-Day Fukushima.”

Before the tour...
Things are so hard, with all the damage from the earthquake and tsunami...

Oh my...
Times are tough because of the bad rumors...

...this is the kind of story that I was expecting to hear, but actually...
I'm hoping to make the orchard into something like a theme park!

Orchard Farmer

I'm going to Paris to sell my rice balls!

Rice Farmer

I want to make the organic wine of everyone's dreams!

Sake Brewer

They're all so positive!

Farmer/Vintner
All of the people we met were bright, cheerful and very positive!

HAHAHA

So bright!!

The proprietor of a café in the town of Namie who was affected by the disaster...

The town of Namie went through some tough times after the disaster, but it really brought the townspeople together!

I want to support the younger generation as they build a new Namie...

A woman involved in recovery efforts for the town of Namie...

Pretty soon, all of the railway lines will be up and running again!

And a fishing harbor!

And a roadside service station!

We recently got an supermarket here, and it gets really busy sometimes...

Their desire to keep on moving forward proved stronger than any feelings of depression that they might have felt in the wake of the disaster!

It was very encouraging for me to hear them talk about their dreams for the future and to see their wonderful smiles!

I’ve got to do my very best too!

Inspired!!

*Railways Recovered all lines in March 2020.*
Bonuses

Fun things we did on our Fukushima Vacation Fact-Finding Mission.

This rice is fantastic (and the rice balls too)!

No matter where we went, the rice was always delicious!

Words cannot describe these apples and grapes...!

The parfait piled high with fruit was also sublime.

Such rich flavor!!

They say it’s usually a 1-2 hour wait!

This hot spring feels so good...

Local pastries as souvenirs for the kids!

I wish I had bought more...

I wish I could hold my liquor better...

The wine and sake were also really good!

Not used to alcohol, she was only able to try a few drops...

Cream Box

More!

More!

More!

Yotsuwari Bread (just a little)

Fizz

The natural sparkling water from Okuaizu was also wonderful!

The tiny bubbles made it very refreshing!!
Let’s Go to the

1. Marusei Orchards
50-1 Aza Morimae, Hirano, Iizaka-machi, Fukushima City, Fukushima Prefecture
☎ +81 (0)24-541-4465

Full of fresh and delicious fruit, this orchard is like a theme park and brings smiles to the faces of all who visit! The parfaits at the adjoining “Forest Garden” café are also highly recommended!

2. Tsuchiyu Hot Spring
Tsuchiyu Hot Spring Tourism Association (Specified Non-Profit Organization)
22-1 Aza Shitanomachi, Tsuchiyu Onsen-machi, Fukushima City, Fukushima Prefecture
☎ +81 (0)24-595-2217

Home to 17 hot-spring inns, including 13 ryokan inns with hot springs available for day trippers, as well as two public bath houses, Tsuchiyu Hot Spring is a place where you can enjoy a carefree day of soaking in a hot spring! This resort town is also famous as one of the three major birthplaces of Japanese kokeshi dolls.
Places Mama Visited on Her Tour!!

3. Fukushima Farmers’ Dream Wine
181-1 Aza Shiroishi, Kohata, Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture
📞 +81 (0)243-24-8170
Located amongst the mountain villages of the Abukuma Highlands, this craft winery brews original wine with flavor that's extraordinary!

4. Niida-Honke Brewery
139 Aza Takayashiki, Kanezawa, Tamura-machi, Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture
📞 +81 (0)24-955-2222
In business since 1711, this brewery is committed to brewing sake the wholly organic way, using pesticide-free rice and natural spring water. The brewery also makes sweets using malted rice left over from the brewing process and the “Sweets Day” event that they hold on the first of each month is definitely worth checking out!
復興庁
Reconstruction Agency
新たなステージ 復興・創生へ
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