

After my last few camping experiences in the spring, I said I would never go camping in the summer. Some friends have asked me to join them on camping trips but I have refused. "I'd be happy to go again when the weather is cool," I told them. But this week, I gave in and went on a camping trip in Taki-cho with a bunch of ALTs. It was a campsite near Gokatsuraike and we went together with a group of students from Matsusaka Shogyo High School for English camp.

There were about 10 ALTs at the camp and probably about 35 students. The students were split into small groups and each group was assigned one or two ALTs to be their leaders for the overnight camp. We did "icebreaker" games, games that are aimed at letting people get to know each other, and played some games from the ALTs home countries in the afternoon on the first day. We were really lucky that Monday was such a cool day, because the large room stayed very comfortable, even without air conditioning.

That night, everyone met for a barbeque dinner. The students in all of the groups worked hard to set up and clean up everything so that the ALTs didn't have to do anything. We were being served lots of food by the students and I ended up eating too much! It was fun to sit and talk together with the students over a meal rather than just doing classroom-type activities. After dinner we watched performances of plays that each group had written and practiced all through the term. After that, when it was dark, there were fireworks and bonfires outside, where we sang songs and toasted marshmallows over the fire.

On the last day we did a scavenger hunt, when students looked around the camp for many different clues, had to answer questions and get back to the start of the game to win a prize. Finally, we did some quiz show games and the camp was over. That morning, we had eaten breakfast in a restaurant run by the students from Ohka High School in Taki.

It was a really fun camp. It is always fun to meet new students and see what school life is like at other schools around Mie. The students were so excited to meet the new ALTs, to ask us questions and play games together with us. On Saturday night, a lot of students stayed up late talking and playing games with the ALTs, which surprised me. I thought that they would want to talk only with their friends in their own cabins. The students from both schools, Matsusaka Shogyo and Ohka High School showed me something about school life and the students at different schools. The cooking students in the morning were very serious. They came to the camp very early to make us a delicious breakfast and we really appreciated it. At the same time, the students from Matsusaka Shogyo were very good at English. Some of them didn't speak or understand so easily, but they made up for it in enthusiasm. It was a really nice time, and I'm glad that I broke my no-camp-in-the-summer rule for it!