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CIR's Corner

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Hello everyone! "CIR's Corner" is my monthly article about international exchange and cultures around the world. I will introduce a variety of interesting international topics.

This Month's Topic: Beating the Heat

Japanese summers are very hot, and due to climate change, even Hokkaido is getting hotter. Therefore, Japan has many ways to beat the heat. There are cold foods such as noodles and snow cones, drinks to replenish minerals such as barley tea and sports drinks, and cooling items such as portable fans, neck coolers, and underwear that is cool to the touch and wicks away sweat.

But how about other countries? This month, I'm going to introduce some ways people around the world stay cool in summer.

The United States of America

The United States is a vast country, so the climate varies by location. Generally, the further south you go, the hotter it gets.



The view of Mount Rainier from Lake Washington. I swam here often.

My hometown, Seattle, Washington, is in the northern part of the US. The average summer high temperature is 25°C, so it is quite comfortable. Most people don't even have air conditioners. However, weeklong heatwaves tend to hit the area every summer. On really hot days, people flock to lakes and rivers. Most

of the lakes and rivers in the state are fed by melting snow from the Cascade Mountains, so they are very cold! Even when the air temperature rises to 32°C, there are some parts of the water that are as low as 15°C. A sudden cannonball into the cold water could result in cold shock. In addition, there is a risk of getting hypothermia, even in summer. I remember at [summer camp](#), some girls got hypothermia from swimming in the river too long. Cold water feels good on a hot day, but swim in moderation.



The fruit of a saguaro cactus. I heard they taste like strawberries.

The state of Arizona, in the Southwestern US, is around 60 to 70% desert, so it experiences the hottest summers in the country. The average high temperature is 40°C. Nowadays people use air conditioners to stay cool, but the Indigenous Peoples of the area used to make their homes out of sundried mud bricks called *adobe*. The thick walls blocked the harsh rays of the sun, so the inside maintained a cool temperature throughout the day. They also ate the fruit of the saguaro cactus. Syrup and jam made from the fruit were full of moisture and were an

important source of nutrients during the hot and dry summer. Even in harsh climates, people found ways to live off the land and beat the heat.

The Southeastern US is hot and humid like Japan. I've spent a few summers in Florida, and for a girl who was not accustomed to such a climate, it was like hell on earth! I tried not to go outside during the day at all.

Australia

I asked [ALT Anthony Tartan](#) about how they beat the heat in Australia.



Anthony enjoying the beach in Australia

Australian summers are much longer than summers in Japan, usually starting in September and stretching through to May. In Anthony's hometown, Brisbane, it is during these eight months that you can go swimming at the beach. Many Australians have swimming pools in their yards, so it is easy to find a friend or relative to spend a day with and cool down in their pool.

A lot of Australians wear minimal clothing while in their homes. Wearing singlets, shorts, and going barefoot help to keep cool. But not only at home! It's also common to see people wearing singlets and rubber shoes enjoying the outdoors.

Often people use towels to cover sofas and chairs to protect them from sweat.

Air conditioning is big in Australia. All classrooms and many homes have large units to cool their houses, resulting in higher electricity costs for the household over the year. Shopping centers are also popular for young people to spend their time and cool down during summer holidays and breaks.

And finally, Australia is notorious for having high UV levels. Children are not allowed to play outdoors during school lunch breaks if they aren't wearing hats. There are

many campaigns to protect people from the dangers of skin cancer and UV-related skin and health conditions. Anthony's parents get checked twice a year for skin cancer.

China

In China, people drink a bitter herbal tea called *liangcha*. It is said to cool down the body.

Also, on the hottest days of summer, people head to clinics to get *sanfutie*. *Sanfutie* are medicated patches containing Chinese medicinal herbs that are applied to the back. The herbs help warm the body. It is said that receiving this treatment while the body is strong during the summer will help fight off colds and illnesses in the winter.

Korea

Samgye-tang is a hot soup eaten in Korea on the hottest days of summer. A whole young chicken is stuffed with ginseng, herbs, rice, walnuts, jujube, and garlic, and stewed for many hours. The hot soup promotes sweating and cooling of the body. Also, the ginseng and garlic help restore stamina lost on hot days.



Spain

People in Spain have soup too, but theirs is a cold one called *gazpacho*. It is made from pureed tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, garlic, olive oil, wine vinegar, dry bread, water, and salt. When the heat makes you lose your appetite, it's a great way to get nutrients. It's like a drinkable salad!

Spanish people also take a break in the afternoon called *siesta*. From 2 PM to 5 PM, shops and businesses close. People used to nap during this time, but nowadays most people just rest at home. They can avoid the sun during the hottest part of the day, and go back to work feeling refreshed.☆

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