International Sister City Newsletter No. 38 – October 2026/English Edition

Nasushiobara & Linz

10 Years of Sister City Relations

Linz Mayor's Visit to Nasushiobara





This year, 2026, marks the 10th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Linz and Nasushiobara. To celebrate this milestone, as reported in the 37th edition of this newsletter, a special reception was held in May to welcome the youth delegation from Linz and Mr. Salm-Reifferscheidt, who laid the foundation for our cities' exchange. Following this event, Mr. Dietmar Prammer, the Mayor of Linz, visited Nasushiobara in August.

Mayor Prammer shared that after being unable to attend the Expo in Japan last year due to prior commitments, he was determined to visit in 2026 so that we could celebrate this anniversary together. As this was his first trip to Japan, he and his partner, Ms. Anna Shtyn, also took time to travel around the country following their stay in Nasushiobara.



On August 4th, Mayor Prammer paid a courtesy call on Mayor Watanabe. Joined by the Head of the City Council, the Vice-Mayor, the Superintendent of the Board of Education, and the Chairman of the Nasushiobara International Association, they enjoyed a warm and lively conversation. In addition to meeting city officials, Mayor Prammer visited the Former Aoki Family Villa – a landmark symbolizing the friendship between Linz and Nasushiobara – as well as the Nasunogahara Museum, before spending the night at a traditional local inn. As suggested by Ms. Shtyn, who loves sweets, they also sampled some local soft-serve ice cream, which received enthusiastic praise from both of them!



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Bringing you the latest updates on Linz, international exchange events,

and Nasushiobara's international community every Tuesday!

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Austria's 'Obon'? November's Autumn Day of Tradition and Prayer

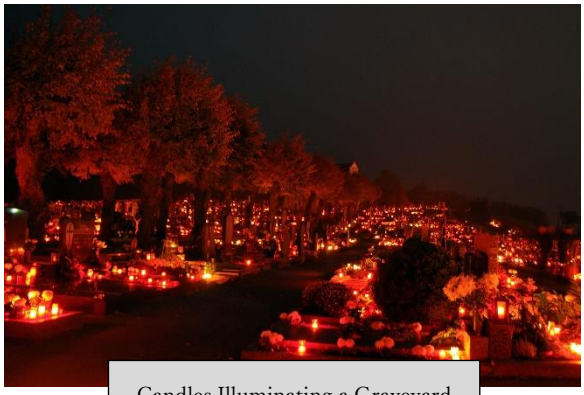
Hello everyone! As autumn has arrived, it marks one whole year since I became Nasushiobara's Coordinator for International Relations. Although it has been more than twelve months, it feels like time has passed in the blink of an eye. In last October's edition of this newsletter, I introduced the popular event of "Weinwandern" to you. This year, I am writing about a tradition that could be described as Austria's "Obon."



Striezel

In Austria, we call November 1st "Allerheiligen" and November 2nd "Allerseelen." As with many Austrian traditions, the origin of these two days lies in Christianity. In accordance with its English name, November 1st, or All Saints' Day, is a day to remember all the saints recognized by the Catholic Church. In Austria, it is a tradition for godparents to present their godchildren with a "Striezel", which is a sweet braided bread, on this day. It is said that this tradition started in the 19th century, when local housewives gifted "Striezel" to neighborhood children to ask for prayers for their deceased family members.

"Allerseelen" translates to All Souls' Day. It is a day to remember and pray for everyone who has passed away. On November 2nd, many people visit their family graves and light candles. When I was young, our house was right next to a graveyard, and I still remember the beautiful red lights of hundreds of candles illuminating the dark after nightfall. It was truly a wonderful sight.



Candles Illuminating a Graveyard

Austria Quiz

Which of the following do Austrians traditionally eat on November 1st ?

A: Chocolate Cake

B: Pasta

C: Cutlet

D: Bread

(Answer on page 4)





Report on CIR Activities

Austrian Cooking Class



On August 22nd, I held an Austrian cooking class as part of Nasushiobara International Association's monthly "Exchange Salon". On the menu this time were "Kaspressknödel" and Austrian-style potato salad. "Kaspressknödel" are a traditional type of dumpling made from bread and cheese, that are especially popular as soup garnish at ski huts. However, because this cooking class was held in the middle of summer, we decided to serve them together with a refreshing side of Austrian-style potato salad infused with vinegar and raw onion.

Culture Seminar for Middle-Schoolers from Niiza



On September 14th, 15th, and 25th, students from three middle schools in Niiza City, Saitama Prefecture, visited Nasushiobara. Niiza and Nasushiobara share a sister city partnership, and to get to know our city better, the students took part in various workshops, including cheese-making. To showcase Nasushiobara's active international community, I hosted an Austria-themed quiz competition, and we had a lot of fun making and enjoying traditional Austrian "Linzer Augen" cookies together.

World Festival 2026



This year's "World Festival," organized by the Nasushiobara International Association, was held on September 26th at Nasu Garden Outlet. Featuring performances from various cultures and a variety of international foods, this event offers a wonderful space for local Japanese and international residents to connect. At this year's Austria stall, I promoted Linz and sold "Linzer Augen" cookies. Thanks to everyone's support, they completely sold out in just a couple of hours! Thank you so much to everyone who stopped by. I am already looking forward to next year's World Festival!

Things CIR Rena finds curious about Japan



Seasonal Limited-Edition Items

As soon as midnight struck on September 1st, autumn limited-edition items appeared on supermarket shelves, and TV commercials for chain restaurants' special seasonal menus began to air. As the month progressed, “Tsukimi”-themed dishes, sweet potato–flavored treats, and pumpkin spice lattes popped up everywhere.

Do you get excited for these seasonal items? I always find myself intrigued and end up buying them! Why, you might ask? Mostly because this kind of fun is something I’ve only ever experienced in Japan. In Austria, seasonal products like these aren't really a thing. Of course, since certain fruits and vegetables can't be preserved, local restaurants will sometimes offer special dishes featuring seasonal ingredients – like asparagus or chanterelles – during harvest season. However, unlike in Japan, the menus at chain restaurants rarely change.

Furthermore, the variety of flavors for chocolates and sweets in supermarkets stays mostly the same year-round. When a holiday like Christmas approaches, the packaging might change to match the theme, but the treats inside remain unchanged.



Holiday-Themed Packaging

Coming from Austria, the concept of limited-edition items was entirely new to me. When I first arrived in Japan, I bought a delicious chocolate bar at a convenience store, not realizing it was a seasonal item. When I returned a week later to buy it again, I was thoroughly confused when I couldn't find it. Now, however, I’ve come to love this tradition and look forward to seeing what new menu items each season brings.

On that note, Nasushiobara City is gearing up to bring limited-edition “Linzer Augen” jam cookies to local cafés and patisseries this coming Christmas season. Keep an eye out for an official announcement as we get closer to December!

Quiz Answer：D

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