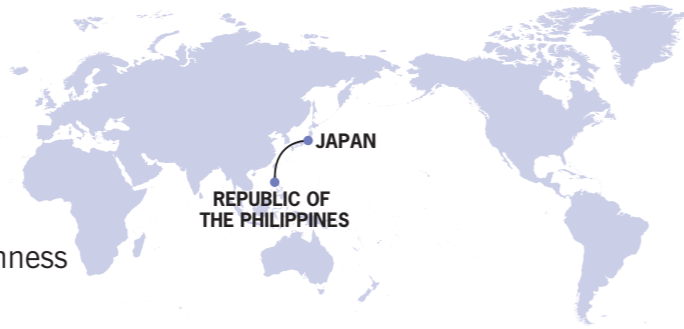


For an Enjoyable Stay in Shizuoka

Pamela Palma uses her career experience to support visitors and residents in Shizuoka, a prefecture located at the base of Mt. Fuji, long revered as symbol of material and spiritual richness



Many foreign tourists visit the hot-spring resort town of Shuzenji in Izu Peninsula, Shizuoka. There is a pleasant walking course through a bamboo grove along the river.



Pamela Palma

Born in Surigao del Sur, Philippines, Palma majored in business management at the Ateneo de Manila University. She worked at the Embassy of the United States of America in the Philippines, a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank, and University of Asia and the Pacific in the Philippines. She has worked as a CIR since 2015.



Dogashima and other sightseeing spots in western Izu offer spectacular views of Mt. Fuji over Suruga Bay.

learned that this place is far more charming than I ever could have imagined,” states Palma. Mt. Fuji, a UNESCO World Heritage site can easily be seen from Shizuoka. In fact, the southern half of the mountain is located in Shizuoka prefecture. The mountain’s conical profile is especially beautiful when viewed across the water. “It is wonderful to see Mt. Fuji on a sightseeing boat at Dogashima or Miho-no-Matsubara. When my family visited from the Philippines, they were also deeply moved by its beauty,” she says. Palma has also discovered that Shizuoka is a treasure trove of food. “Shizuoka’s traditional wasabi cultivation is registered as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. The green tea produced here is also famous. Its rich flavor is used to make the world’s most intense green tea gelato. The seafood is also delicious here. One of Shizuoka’s fishing ports has the highest tuna catch in Japan. For foreigners who are not fond of sashimi, there is also a deep-fried dish called *kakiage* made with sakura shrimp that is really nice!” Palma is full of food recommendations.

Working as a coordinator for international relations (CIR) in the Shizuoka Prefectural Government’s Multicultural Affairs Division, Palma makes full use of her career

experience to provide interpretation and translation, as well as support the prefectural government in its meeting with foreign visitors. In addition, she introduces Philippine culture during school visits and multicultural events. According to Palma, “Family ties are strong, and the neighborhood spirit of helping each other out is alive and well in the Philippines. When I talk about this, people tell me, ‘that’s how Japan used to be,’ and it makes me happy that Japanese people can have warm feelings for the Philippines.” Palma also contributes to keeping the local foreign residents of Shizuoka, including roughly 16,000 Filipinos, abreast of vital information, using both English and Tagalog. As this includes important life-saving information such as disaster preparedness, Palma plays an important role. She has also assisted at the local police college as part of a case-study program that teaches police cadets how to help foreigners who do not understand Japanese. “Sometimes, when I think the cadet understands my English a little too well, I switch to speaking Tagalog to make it more difficult,” she chuckles.

“The job of a CIR is wide-ranging, but I find it rewarding. I would like to continue doing helpful work by



Pamela recommends this delicious deep-fried dish with crispy texture called sakura shrimp *kakiage*.

strengthening ties between Japan and the Philippines, and between Shizuoka and its foreign visitors.” ✨



Palma dresses in traditional Philippine costume and shares with Japanese students the life and culture in the Philippines.

About the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme

The JET Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations, and is now one of the world’s largest international exchange programs. JET participants are placed in every region of Japan and work in one of three positions: assistant language teachers (ALTs), coordinators for international relations (CIRs), or sports exchange advisors (SEAs). In 2018, the JET Programme welcomed 5,528 participants, and currently there are more than 68,000 alumni from 73 countries living in all parts of the world.



The JET Programme official website <http://jetprogramme.org/en/>