



David Weber <weberdavid@gmail.com>

Birthday

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To: David Weber <david.weber@aksamit.ch>

Hi David!

Good to hear you had a great summer :) I didn't stay much in Switzerland this summer, but I heard it was nice here, even though not as hot as last year.

Ok, now to answer your questions:

1. First, happy birthday to your daughter!! The plan with the grilled lamb and different dips sounds delicious. I haven't prepared tzatziki or melitzanosalata that often, so I don't have a specific favourite recipe, but I can give you some tips that I know from my mum and/or greek recipe sites:

- **Tzatziki**

One important thing is to make sure it's not too runny. For that, you need to use strained yogurt (which is similar to quark in consistency) and not just regular greek yogurt. If you have a turkish shop around you, you will find it there for sure, otherwise I think I've seen [this](#) brand (Total by FAGE) in some coop stores. Besides the yogurt, another thing that could help with the consistency is to remove the seeds from the cucumbers, then grate them and then squeeze them to remove as much liquid as possible.

- **Melitzanosalata**

The only tips I know concern baking the aubergines: I've read that you should cut the stems of the aubergines and bake them without any oil at 200°C for about an hour (Or, you can also probably wrap them in aluminium foil and grill them, for extra smokey flavour). Then, you can cover them with a plastic bag or plastic wrap to let them 'sweat' while cooling down, and then proceed with peeling them and shredding them.

These are my tips, I hope they help :)

2. Unfortunately I won't be in Barcelona in October :(

3. About Japan...aahhh difficult question. Lots of great things to see and visit :)

For a first taste of Japan, Tokyo and Kansai (the prefecture where Kyoto is located) should be a good start. I think if I only had 6 days, I would probably spend 2-3 on Tokyo and the rest in Kansai (mostly Kyoto, but also with short trips to Osaka and Nara). If you get the JR pass (see below), you could even make a day trip to Hiroshima and the nearby island of Miyajima, which is very beautiful.

For such a short time and if you plan to travel around a bit, perhaps it would be worth considering buying the [Japan rail pass](#) for 7 days. It seems a bit expensive, but it allows you to travel by Shinkansen (the super fast Japanese bullet trains, which can save you a looooot of time) as much as you want, so even if you just use it to travel from Tokyo to Kyoto and back by Shinkansen and also from Tokyo station to Nara airport by the JR train, you pretty much have compensated the cost. But of course whether it's worth it or not depends on how much you want to travel. If you just end up staying in Tokyo and around, it's not really worth it, as you cannot use it with any private rail companies.

[Hyperdia](#) is a website that helps with calculating the various traveling costs with different means of transportation, so that could be helpful in deciding whether you need the pass or not. Some things worth noting about the JR pass is that it's only available to foreign tourists, it can only be purchased abroad and before your trip (but of course you decide when its validity period starts) and it can only be used for JR trains (make sure you read the scope of validity in the website I provided to see what it includes).

The transportation system of Japan is a bit complicated, so if you have any questions that I might be able to answer, let me know. Or you can check out [this website](#), which is an awesome and comprehensive guide about Japan,

containing pretty much everything you need to know to plan your trip.

A few highlights I could recommend are (you can find a lot of recommendations in the website I mentioned before):

- **Tokyo area**

1. I would recommend taking the monorail leading to Odaiba, even just for the monorail trip. Odaiba is a funny place, some people love it, others hate it (I personally like it for the unique views it offers and because something crazy always seems to be happening there), but the monorail trip is really great. Just make sure to get a place in the very front of the monorail (even if you have to wait a bit longer, I think it's worth it).
2. You can go to the Government building to get a nice view of the city for free.
3. If you have some time, you can visit Kamakura for some impressive temples and impressive budda statues.
4. The sushi at the fish market is really worth trying, for breakfast or lunch.
5. Of course, you shouldn't miss Shibuya with the Hachiko dog statue (the most famous meeting spot of Japan) and the famous Shibuya crossing (very fun to watch from above) and Shinjuku area. In Shinjuku, I would also recommend grabbing a beer at the golden gai district in the evening.

- **Kyoto**

1. Fushimi inari! One of my favorite places in Japan. Definitely shouldn't miss.
2. The most famous temples are Kiyomizudera and Kinkakuji, both worth visiting :)
3. You can also go to Arashiyama, to see the famous bamboo groves and maybe visit the monkey park offering a great view of Kyoto
4. Definitely take a walk in the Gion district.

- **Osaka**

1. The dotonbori street and general namba area are definitely worth visiting by night.

Well, that's all for now! This turned out to be pretty huge, but I had a lot of tips it seems :D

If you have any more questions, just let me know.

Enjoy the birthday tomorrow and best wishes to your daughter :)

Cheers,

Nadia

p.s. By the way, I saw Diana today for lunch and we were both wondering what happened to that money from FoodCASE that we were informed of :D Do you have any updates on that?

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