



## 2015 International Festival—16 Years of Exchange!

By **KARLEE KEYSER** November 2015

Fall is finally here! That means delicious seasonal food, beautiful autumn leaves, and the annual International Festival that's held in Peace Memorial Park inside and around the International Conference Center Hiroshima (ICCH) building! This is the second year I will participate in this 16-year-strong festival, and I can assure you there are lots of interesting things to eat, learn about, and experience through hands-on workshops. This post is to share my insight on the goings-on, and encourage you to go see everything for yourself on **Sunday, Nov. 15, from 10 AM – 4 PM.**

The photo at the top of this page is of me and a participant at my event area in 2014. Each year, the International Festival is a way for Hiroshima City residents to learn about different citizen groups that are involved in exchange and cooperation abroad. There are several dozen groups that volunteer to staff a booth about their activities or to lead a workshop of their own design. This year, we have workshops in Chinese rope braiding, *yuzen* and *katazome* fabric dyeing, and *ikebana* flower arrangement.

In addition to workshops, there are also areas just for plain fun! For example, I will be staffing a coloring table for Northwest Native American art-inspired designs. Also on the 1<sup>st</sup> basement level of the Conference Center will be four craft areas staffed by local expats originating from Barbados, Canada, China, and the U.S. These areas are all friendly to children and adult visitors alike, so feel free to come by and relax for a while! ☺

For some hands-on events such as a kimono-wearing experience, English tour guide seminar, and the aforementioned *ikebana* workshop, reservations must be made ahead-of time. If you're interested in one or more of these events, call the International Relations & Cooperation Division of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation at 082-242-8879 or email us at [internat@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp](mailto:internat@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp) to reserve a spot. The staff generally speak English, so no need to be shy!

Another important thing to mention are the *yatai*, or food booths. Just in front of the Conference Center on the grass-filled area alongside Peace Boulevard are a couple dozen different food vendors—almost all of which offer a different country's cuisine! Last year, there were booths specializing in Korean, Chinese, Indian, Thai, American, and several other cuisines, almost all at cheaper prices than you regularly find at festivals.

In short, the International Festival has it all—food, fun, and invaluable opportunities to connect with Japanese and expats alike. Come enjoy! ^^



2015 International Festival Facebook: <https://facebook.com/international.festival.hiroshima>

Webpage: <http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/ircd/info/oshirase-naiyou257%28kyouryokunohi%202015%29.html>