

Hello! My Name Is Nate Parkinson. I am 15 years old, and a Life Scout (almost an Eagle Scout) in Boy Scout Troop 621 in Orwigsburg, Pa. For over two and a half weeks this past summer, I had the incredible opportunity to go to the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree in Kirara-Hama, Japan. I was in Troop 6, which contained scouts from The Northeast Region and West Coast in the U.S.A.

I was a youth leader during the Jamboree. My title was ASPL, or Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. What this means is that I was second in charge of all youth within our troop. Our troop consisted of scouts from the east and west coast, totaling 36 boys and 4 adults. I was elected to the position by the adult leaders because of my rank, accomplishments, and dedication to scouting. The experiences and skills that I developed over in Japan have helped me so much to be a better leader and scout.

In preparation for my trip to Japan, I attended a meeting each month over the past year with other scouts in my troop from the Northeast Region of the U.S. These scouts came from Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts. We all met in one central location to prep for the Jamboree and to get to know each other better.

The trip to get to the Jamboree was very long. I had to take three flights to get there. On the way over, I had a 2 hour plane ride, then I hopped on another plane for 5 hours to Los Angeles Airport (LAX). This is when we finally met the other half of our troop, the "LA kids". All scouts and leaders from the U.S. met in Los Angeles. From there, we all flew as a group to Japan. The plane ride from LAX to Tokyo was 10 hours long. Once we got to Tokyo, we took a few hour bus ride touring Tokyo on our way to our hotel.

While in Japan, we toured sites in Tokyo for four days before the Jamboree began. Each night we slept in a hotel. We got to indulge in delicious Japanese cuisine while touring. The first place we went to was a restaurant where we had tasty fish and chicken, prepared using Japanese cooking methods. The next day, we had an opportunity to shop for souvenirs throughout Tokyo. Later that day, we went to visit the temples and shrines that were located around Japan. On the third day of touring, we got to go to an amusement park, as well as go around and visit an arcade and buy food from vendors.

At the Jamboree site, all the scouts attending the Jamboree were broken into 3 hubs: Northern, Eastern, and Western. There were also 5 sub camps within the hubs. I was in the Northern Hub, sub camp Chokai. Each hub had a designated boys' and girls' shower area, and bathroom area.

While at the Jamboree, we left the site some days to tour other parts of Japan, too. We visited Hiroshima a day before the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Atomic bomb being dropped. We also toured naturally occurring caves, Yamaguchi, and a man-made forest. During the Jamboree we had special areas where we could do activities and crafts run by scouts from over 150 countries that attended. All scouts were assigned to attend certain areas based on their hub and sub camp. Also, there were areas we could learn about foreign cuisine, religion, culture and customs, as well as just meet new people. During the afternoon, when we had free time. Most of us went around and traded our patches and neckerchiefs, and made new friends. We could also go to the super market that was on the site and buy an ice cream, soda, snacks, and so much more.

The accommodations were great. We were given BSA tents with cots to live in and sleep on for the 16 days we were at the jamboree. Each tent housed two scouts and all of their gear. We were also provided four canopies at our site for our cooking areas.

The temperature averaged 96°F each day. The showers were usually cold, but in the heat, it felt amazing!

At the Jamboree, there were scouts representing over 150 countries. In total there were over 35,000 scouts at the jamboree from around the world.

We cooked our own meals at our campsite. Everything was provided, we got a protein item and some YoKurt (a delicious drink that's like a yogurt), and an option of milk, too. Every morning, since I was ASPL, I got up bright and early to wake up the scouts chosen to go get the food for their patrol from the center of the hub (or Commissary).

Dinner was the meal where everything was the best! We got to cook our food and modify the recipes, too. By the middle of the jamboree, we didn't even need some of the food items we were given because we had left food over from previous meals. So, we started to get creative with it, and made really delicious food for breakfast, using eggs and other leftovers for "everything omelets", and sides, such as salads and potatoes at dinner.

I have been in scouting since I was a Tiger Cub at 6 years old. The Jamboree was the greatest trip I have done within my scouting career. This event was truly a "once in a lifetime" experience, that I will never forget! The skills I learned during the jamboree will always positively affect my ability to lead in scouts, and in life in the future.