

TOPICS

A comparison between drinking alcohol in Japan and the U.S.A.

日本とアメリカ・お酒の飲み方比較



Why do Japanese people start with a beer?

In foreign countries, most people just order the alcohol that they want to drink. On the other hand, when Japanese people drink in groups, it is usually decided to start with a beer. Japanese beer is delicious, the price is cheap, and it is relatively low in alcohol, so it is suitable as a starting drink. It is common to order “Saisho-wa-biiru”, (meaning beer as the starter) along with everyone else. However, recently, young Japanese people do not follow this custom. Perhaps more and more people want to move away from the idea of 'everyone doing the same thing'.

Expressions

- On the other hand 一方、それに比べて
- relatively low in alcohol 比較的アルコール度が低い
- suitable 適している
- it is common to ~ ~するのが普通である
- along with everyone else 皆と一緒に
- however しかしながら
- move away from the idea ~
~という考え方に反発する

On the way home from work

It has long been customary for Japanese businessmen and women to drink with their colleagues and bosses for a long time after work although young Japanese people seem to not be like that so much.

In the United States, when people drink with their colleagues on the way home from work, in most cases they are finished within an hour or so. They enjoy a quick 'Happy Hour' until about six o'clock and then immediately return home.

Expressions

- colleagues and bosses 同僚や上司たち
- customary 習慣になっている
- on the way home from work 帰宅する途中
- in most cases 多くの場合
- within an hour or so 1時間以内くらいで
- immediately すぐに

How strict is drinking in the U.S.?

In America, the law strictly prohibits anyone from drinking under the age of 21. People who are drunk are treated more severely than in Japan, and drinking outdoors is prohibited. If there are empty cans and bottles of liquor rolling around the street in the United States, it may be a sign that the area is a little dangerous. For entrance to pubs and purchasing alcohol, presenting their ID is required, you will never be served without it, although in Japan, the drinking age is 20 years old, but often college students under 20 years old are allowed to drink.

Expressions

- strictly prohibit anyone from drinking under the age of 21
21歳以下は飲酒厳禁
- treated more severely than in Japan
日本よりも厳しい目で見られる
- presenting their ID is required
身分証明書の提示がもとめられる
- allowed to drink お酒を飲むことをゆるされる

Considering others' empty glasses often happens in Japan:

Unlike in Japan, people do not consider the empty glasses of those around you in the United States. It would be better not to pour other people's drinks because people drink at their own pace and when their glass is empty, the only person who considers their next drink is perhaps the bar-staff.

Expressions

- Unlike ~ ~とは違って
- better not pour other people's drinks
他人にお酌をしない方がよい
- drink at their own pace 自分のペースで飲む

日本はなぜ「とりあえずビール」なのか？



◆広まった理由

昭和30年代以降、高度経済成長時代から「初めの1杯はビール」という習慣になりました。次のような理由が考えられます。

1. お燗をする手間がなく、すぐ出てくる
(最初の1杯がすぐ出てこないといけない)
2. アルコール度数が低い
(ビールはアルコール度数が4~5%程度と低く、軽く飲みやすいので、初めの1杯にぴったり)
3. どんな食べ物にも合いやすい
(炭酸とホップの苦みが消化を増進させて食事をおいしくする)
4. 値段の心配もない
(ワインや日本酒だとこうはいきません)

◆お酌するのは日本だけ：



隣の人のグラスが空になると、お酌をしないと無作法だと思われる日本と違い、海外ではお酌はしません。他人のグラスに注ぐのは余計な御世話だと思われるのでしない方がいいです。自分のペースで飲み、空になったグラスにお酒をつぐのは飲んでいる本人でなければお店の人です。

また、海外では飲む時は飲み、食べるときは食べる、と分かれていて、お腹がすいていれば自分の食べる分を頼んで、料理が来たら一気に食べるスタイル。つまみを楽しみ、周りの人のグラスを気遣う日本の飲み方とは違います。

◆最近が変わってきた！

「最初はビール！」の習慣は、実は変わりつつあります。若い世代がアルコールをあまり飲まなくなったのに加え、右へならえの「集団行動の和」に対して抵抗を感じている人が増えたためです。最初の1杯はチューハイ、ワイン、サワーなど、自分の好きなドリンクを選ぶケースも多くなりました。

また、昔は仕事帰りに上司が飲み会に誘うと、本当は苦手でも部下は断れませんでした。今は「アルハラ(alcohol harassment)」として無理強いしたことになるので要注意です。