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JAPAN

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MAJESTIC Secrets of Japan's iconic Mt. Fuji MOUNTAIN

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Halloween photo contest winners

We loved all of your spooky and fun costumes for this year's Halloween photo contest! Many Stripes readers sent their submissions and many more voted for their favorites. This year, Misty Gonzales from Yokosuka NB won the \$40 prize for Best Costume; James Simons from NAF Atsugi is taking home \$20 for the Best Pet Costume and Peter Matel from Misawa AB won the \$40 Special Prize. Check out their submissions as well as some other honorable mentions below. And, don't forget to follow us at [Facebook.com/StripesPacific](https://www.facebook.com/StripesPacific) for more great contests like this!

Winners


Peter Matel - Misawa

SPECIAL PRIZE


Misty Gonzales - Yokosuka

BEST COSTUME


James Simons - Atsugi

BEST PETS


Nicole Briney - Misawa



Tabitha Stegall - Yokota



Tiffany Davis-shaw - Yokosuka



Hallie Shields - Sasebo

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The plant-based Chicken Chunk Burger with tandoori sauce and a side of fries from the Vegetarian Butcher.

Vegetarian Butcher offers delicious plant-based options around the globe

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 18, 2022

Living in Tokyo on a vegetarian diet means finding restaurants that serve filling, satisfying meat-free meals can be a challenge.

Uncannily, a meat-eater friend let me in on a place he likes to eat in Nishi-Ikebukuro that sells entirely plant-based food, so I had to give it a try.

The Vegetarian Butcher is a plant-based brand from the Netherlands that launched in 2010 and now has stores and restaurants globally.

Its Ikebukuro location can seat 20 to 25 customers and offers an English menu.

Popular items that the restaurant offers are a variety of mock-meat burgers like the Holy Cow, the Chickened Out and varieties of mock-fish sandwiches. Burgers come with a drink and a side option of fries, broccoli or carrots.

Other items include vegan chicken nuggets and bratwurst. The Vegetarian Butcher also offers various pastas, including minced Bolognese, pepperoncino with mushrooms, and cabbage pasta carbonara style.

Drink options include organic black and royal milk teas, tropical



The Vegetarian Butcher is a plant-based brand from the Netherlands that launched in 2010 and now has stores and restaurants globally.

mango juice, blood orange juice, sparkling water, Coca-Cola and ginger ale.

I ordered the plant-based Chicken Chunk burger with tandoori sauce, a side of fries and a ginger ale for 1,690 yen, or about \$11.80. The burger came topped with lettuce, onions and tomato; I added jalapenos and a vegan cheddar cheese. I liked the slight spiciness of the tandoori sauce and it tasted healthy, so I felt great afterward.

For dessert, the butcher serves cheesecake, tiramisu and apple sherbet.

Customers can also purchase plant-based meats by the gram, just like at a regular butcher, either inside a store in the restaurant or

Things to know

LOCATION: Basement, 3 Chome-29-9
Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima City, Tokyo

DIRECTIONS: A 7-minute walk from Ikebukuro Station via the west, or central exits

TIMES: 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday and Wednesday through Saturday.

PRICE: Most entrees cost less than \$12.

INFORMATION:

Online: <https://www.thevegetarian-butcher-jap.com>



online.

agee.kelly@stripes.com

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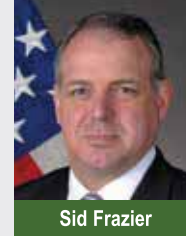
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Sid Frazier

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Guide to Japan's popular munchies



File photos

Nikomi: Pork or beef offal stew with vegetables such as carrots and radish in a miso-based soup. We usually sample it with shichimi spice powder (mixed with Japanese chili pepper, ground sansho and hemp seed), which gives it a little kick.

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Eat like a local, and try one of hundreds of options of tsumami dishes you'll find at many restaurants around Japan.
takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Yakitori: Despite literally meaning "grilled chicken," yakitori is used as the general term for all skewered and grilled items. They include negima (a skewer of small pieces of chicken thigh), sasami (a skewer of minced chicken) and butabara (a skewer of pork rib). When you order one, you usually can choose to have them grilled with salt or soy-sauce based broth (tare).



Tofu: There are several variations. Hiyayakko, chilled tofu with grated ginger, green onion and bonito flakes, is known as a great tsumami to cool you down on the hot summer night. Yudofu, warmed tofu with mustard, green onion and sour soy sauce, is great to sample with warm sake on a cold night.



Sashimi: This is one of the most popular tsumami dishes consisting of sliced fish, usually tuna, yellowtail, squid, horse mackerel or salmon. We usually sample them by dipping in soy sauce with wasabi.



Edamame: Boiled or steamed green soybean pods usually served with salt. We push the beans out of pods when we sample one. This tsumami dish can go along with virtually any type of liquor and is considered as a standard starter for any party.



Shiokara: Salted and fermented squid guts. It has a chewy texture and a fishy and salty taste. The squid is thinly sliced so you can eat just a little bit at a time.



Potato salad: Most izakaya offer this, but how it's prepared varies by izakaya. The biggest difference between Japanese and American potato salads is the mayonnaise. Japanese mayonnaise is tangier and saltier than the standard U.S. mayo used in American potato salad.



Oden: Japanese hotpot with assorted ingredients like daikon, tofu or fish cakes. Especially good during wintertime.

Unique tsumami dishes (or maybe weird-looking)

You may consider them weird, but they pair well with traditional Japanese liquors (sake and shochu). Don't hesitate to try one when they are available!

Karasumi: Dried mullet roe.

Uni: Sea urchin.

Konowata: Salted sea-cucumber guts. It is traditionally considered as one of the three "unusual" delicacies, along with karasumi and uni, with its strange and exotic flavors.

Basashi: Thin slices of raw horse meat.

Namero: Made by placing miso, Japanese sake, green onions, a perilla leaf, and ginger on top of raw fish and mincing them together with a knife until it becomes sticky.

Shuto: Salted and fermented bonito intestine.



Uni



Basashi



Karasumi

Don't drink
and drive

Head to Ueno for mouthwatering grilled beef tongue

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Gyutan, or grilled beef tongue, is originally known as a local delicacy of Sendai City in Miyagi Prefecture. Its unique tender-yet-crispy texture has been a fascination of locals and tourists alike. You can find beef tongue at many restaurants and is a great meal when you want to splurge to celebrate a special occasion.

Beyond the nice texture, gyutan is also considered a healthy dish since it's not oily nor is it heavy. The balanced, delicate meat is also a perfect munchie to accompany beer or sake at the izakaya.

To try this delicacy, I visited Negishi, a popular restaurant chain with locations all over the Kanto Plain. The Ueno location is the one my wife and I frequent when we enjoy the area museums and concert hall. Negishi serves up a tasty beef tongue and oxtail soup at great prices and our meals there wrap up our busy day in Ueno nicely.

Negishi is right across JR Ueno Station at the entrance of the vast Ameyoko shopping area. Look for the Delicious Plaza building and you'll find the Negishi Uenoekimae-ten has two restaurants, one on the B1 floor and one on the second floor. We usually go to the B1 location because it is less crowded



and the wooden interior with dim lighting lets us enjoy our meal in a calm and relaxing atmosphere.

Once seated, my go-to is the Negishi Set for 2,050 yen (\$15). This set comes with well-seasoned and grilled portions of beef tongue with a side of oxtail soup, ground

yamato yam, steamed barley and rice, and miso-flavored pickles.

To begin, I top my rice bowl with the yam and enjoy the distinct flavors each bite of meat provides. My favorite is the crisp, tender beef tongue, which pairs well with the texture of the rice and freshness of

the yam.

The oxtail soup is clear, light and is not over seasoned to allow the main ingredient to remain the star of the



NEGISHI

HOURS: 10:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.

LOCATION: 6-14-7 [Delicious Plaza B1] Ueno, Taito-ku, Tokyo

URL: <https://www.negishi.co.jp/US/index.html>

TEL: 03-3834-7320



show. The taste of the oxtail and the broth are mild yet profound and it is a perfect addition to the set meal.

I also never forget to get a free refill of barley and rice to have with the miso pickles as a palate cleanser.

Negishi has other locations, so check their website to find one close to you.

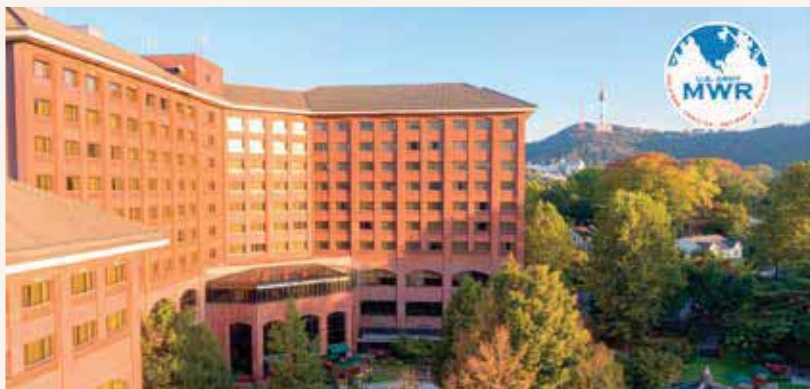
Though beef tongue might intimidate those who've never tried it, I recommend giving it a shot at Negishi. The sets here give you an opportunity to sample the delicacy while ensuring you have a full meal with the other meats and dishes. Bon appetite!

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Antcicada's Cricket Ramen in Tokyo

Would you try the world's first bug-based ramen?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RIKA HOFFMAN,
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

Every summer, announced by the shrill shrieks of cicadas, Japanese school-children emerge, nets in hand, to take part in the pastime of bug hunting. Of course, it's more of an academic study (a catch-and-release situation — if the insect is lucky) than a culinary expedition. But these days, with the growing interest in sustainable, insect-based cuisine, bug “hunting” takes on new meaning.

It's nothing new per se; Japan has a history of consuming insects. Inago no tsukudani, rice grasshoppers glazed in a sweet soy sauce mixture, was a common snack just a couple of generations ago.

Now the trend toward sustainability has seen bugs making a comeback, from Muji's insect snack packs to fine dining insect cuisine, like the type pioneered by the Tokyo restaurant, Antcicada.

Offering both an insect-centric tasting course and a visually tamer cricket ramen, Antcicada opened in 2020 with the aim to provide an eating experience that will “broaden your perspectives and values.” Made with 160 domestic crickets disguised in the form of an innocuous golden broth, Antcicada's cricket ramen is the gateway to more adventurous eats.

Inside the restaurant sit shelves of glass jars at varying stages of fermentation, with curious labels like “silkworm cocoon sauce” and some — even curiously — unlabelled, with obscure contents. On another lower shelf are two plastic

tanks of live crickets—one of which was spotted making a run for it, thwarting its fate of being made into a crunchy topping.

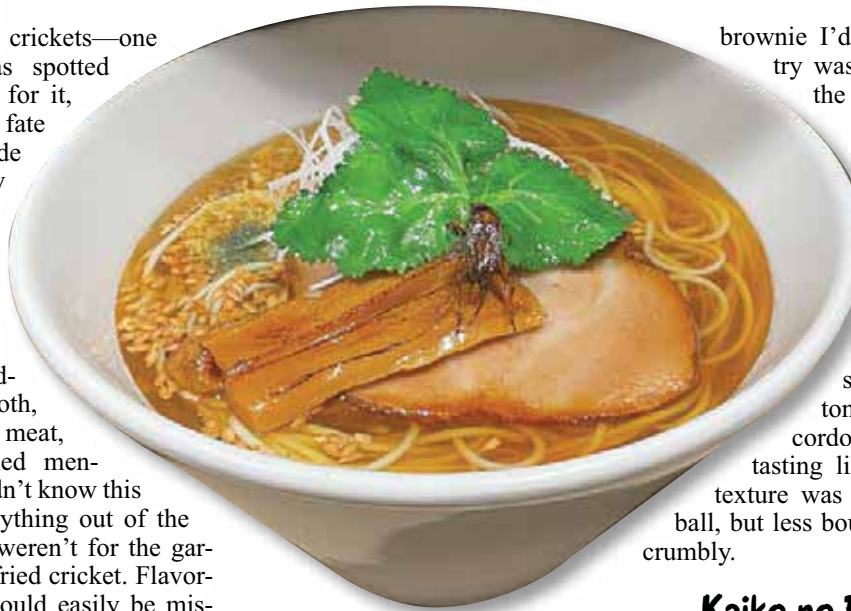
Cricket Ramen

With a golden-brown broth, pink slices of meat, and well-grilled menma, you wouldn't know this ramen was anything out of the ordinary if it weren't for the garnish: a large, fried cricket. Flavor-wise, too, it could easily be mistaken for a seafood ramen—like shrimp or niboshi; bright-tasting, with a slight yuzu fragrance.

Living up to its name, every component of Antcicada's cricket ramen features the insect, from the dashi broth to the soy sauce base, and even the noodles,

which are flecked with specks of powdered Futahoshi crickets from Tokushima. A blend of two types of crickets are used for the broth—Futahoshi crickets and European crickets—about 160 crickets per bowl, according to Antcicada's staff, who brought out a hefty aluminum bowl of the spent dashi ingredients (92% crickets and 8% shiitake and kombu, in case you were wondering).

With so many “invisible” ingredients worked into the different components of the dish, Antcicada's cricket ramen is a palatable and accessible entrypoint to the world



brownie I'd been keen to try was no longer on the menu.

The silk sausage was among the most intriguing on the menu, and came out from the kitchen smelling astonishingly like cordon bleu — and tasting like it too. The texture was akin to a fish ball, but less bouncy and more crumbly.

Kaiko no Funcha (Insect Dung Tea)

This one might be hard to wrap your head around: a type of tea made from the dried poop of moth larvae. Originating as an accident—a Chinese legend says moths broke into and devoured a supply of tea leaves, leaving only droppings behind—this tea supposedly aids in digestive health.

Antcicada's kaiko no funcha tasting set came with two types of chilled tea: one from a Chinese kaiko and another from a breed in Yamanashi prefecture. The staff brought out tupperware of the



droppings for us to sniff and, no unpleasant odors detected, we proceeded to sip the tea. The Chinese kaiko no funcha had a strong flavor, similar to rooibos tea, and a lingering aftertaste, while the Yamanashi variety was quite mild and smooth; both had an unexpectedly sweet fragrance.

Both times I've dined at Antcicada I've been impressed by its efforts to educate, and how it leads with genuine transparency. While it'd be easy to play up the shock factor of insect cuisine, doing so would not be a step towards normalizing this sustainable alternative to meat.

Antcicada is a safe space where diners can nurture new associations with “challenging” textures and flavors, observing our own preconceived biases about eating insects. Its open kitchen concept and the show-and-tell of ingredients from its staff bolsters the sense of transparency at Antcicada, taking the fear and discomfort out of an experience that might be the first for many, in the hopes that it might be the first of many.

Silk Sausage

While cricket ramen might be what Antcicada is known for, the rest of their à la carte menu is more experimental, featuring items like cricket beer and tsukudani. They swap out items every now and again, which I found out on my last visit when, to my dismay, the tagame (giant water bug) choco



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Speakin'
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Subarashii
akibare
desu!

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI
STRIPE JAPAN

As autumn continues, the cold high-pressure system covering the Kanto Plain and other regions facing the Pacific Ocean brings us nice, clear weather. It's a great time for us to hike, take a walk at the park or along the sea-coast for some autumnal colors.

It's a wonderful, clear autumn day!
= Subarashii akibare desu!

- subarashii= wonderful
- akibare = clear autumn weather
- .. desu = it is ..



VIDEO LESSON

Explore Miyagase Lakeside Park near Atsugi

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPE JAPAN

Nestled within the Tanazawa mountain range, you'll find Miyagase Lakeside Park, a popular spot for autumn leaf viewing near NAF Atsugi.

The man-made lake is only a 45-minute drive from the base and has a trail which makes for good walking or a fresh run. This lake serves as a reservoir which provides drinking water to Tokyo and Yokohama City. Dogs on leashes are allowed to visit this park as well, so don't forget to bring your furry friend.

I visited in early November and the mountain showed early signs of fall. My wife and I enjoyed a brisk walk around the spacious park with a 315-meter long and a 23-meter high suspension bridge with a nice view of the surrounding area.

So, if you're on Atsugi or Camp Zama, make plans to head out and enjoy one of Japan's most colorful season at Miyagase Lakeside Park. The peak autumn colors are projected for late November.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

Things to know

LOCATION: 940-4 Miyagase, Kiyokawa Village, Aiko-gun, Kanagawa Prefecture

URL: <https://www.miyagase.or.jp>

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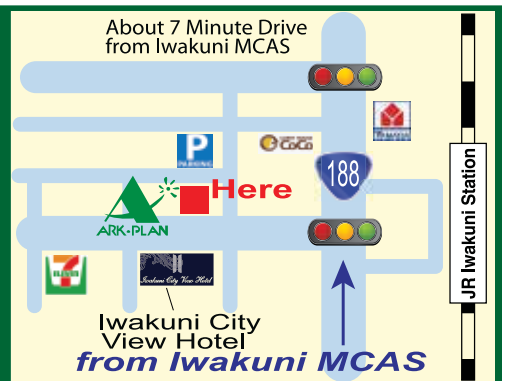
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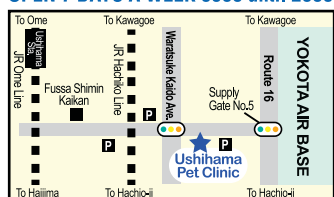


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MAJESTIC MOUNT FUJI

Secrets of Japan

LIVE JAPAN

Boasting the greatest height of domestic single peak mountains in the country, Mount Fuji is loved as a sightseeing attraction representative of Japan throughout the world. In fact, over 300,000 mountaineers flock to it every year.

In addition to being registered as a World Cultural Heritage in 2013, recent years have once more seen various features in the media seeking to express the allure of the mountain, further calling attention to it.

Now, we will reveal 17 of Mount Fuji's unknown secrets, conquering the peak of this majestic symbol of Japan!

1 What is 'Red Fuji'?



"Red Fuji" is a phenomenon that occurs during sunrise and sunset when the mountain shines in bright red.

Usually, Mount Fuji impresses with the contrast of the blue mountain range's peak being covered in white snow. Under certain conditions, it changes its appearance to a

crimson color of sublime beauty.

The time between late summer and early autumn brings several factors together that make this possible, including clear air and altostratus clouds that reflect the red light.

A rare phenomenon, "Red Fuji" is a seasonal word. Because the snow on Mt. Fuji's peak begins to melt and exposes the reddish at the beginning of summer, the tinged sunlight emphasizes this and the mountain appears vividly red.

The ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai's famous work called "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (gaif kaisei) of the "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji" series is the reason why the "Red Fuji" became so famous.

Gaifū means southerly breeze; with the cirrocumulus clouds floating in the scenery of a blue sky, the drawing of the revered mountain's crimson-dyed appearance boasts a spectacular impact.

2 Mossie, Japan's very own Nessie in lake Motosu

In the 1970s, an unidentified mysterious animal (UMA) later named "Mossie" was sighted in Yamanashi Prefecture's Lake Motosu, and it caused a huge stir at the time.

Mossie is said to be 30 meters (about 98 feet) in length, with a few humps on its back and a crocodile-like rugged body. Like Nessie, however, the real identity of this UMA remains enshrouded in mystery down to this day.

Nevertheless, there are many theories. One of the most well-accepted one is that it was probably an enormous sturgeon that was released into Lake Motosu during the time of its alleged sighting.

Sturgeons don't usually grow to the size of the reported UMA, but the conjecture is that being released into Lake Motosu gave it a unique growth environment, allowing it to reach the size purported in the claims.

3 Mt. Fuji was the first ski site in Japan

Skiing is a representative sport of the winter season, and many today still flock to ski resorts when winter rolls around to have a bit of fun in the snow. Bet you didn't know that Mt. Fuji was actually the site of the very first bout of ski activity in Japan!

Back in 1911, when Austrian soldiers, Major Theodor Edler von Lerch - known as the father of skiing in Japan - and Egon

Edler von Kratzer skied down from the 9th stage of Mt. Fuji, it marked the start of the sport in Japan.

There's still a plaque on the 5th stage of Mt. Fuji commemorating this event down to this day! Here's another trivia for you: The first two Japanese to successfully ski downhill from the Fuji mountaintop were Kōki Takei and Hajime Katsuda in the year 1935.

4 The top 3 things Japanese want to dream of!

"1. Fuji, 2. hawk, 3. eggplant" is the top three of things to dream of during the first night of the new year.

If Mount Fuji, a hawk, or an eggplant appears in the first dream of the first night of the New Year, it is said to be an auspicious omen.

There are only speculations about the origin of this, but one explanation states that these three words sound similar to other good things; Fuji sounds like buji (be in good health), taka (hawk) sounds like takai (to succeed), and nasu (eggplant) sounds like nasu (the fulfillment of a wish).



5 Where are those famous Fuji pictures taken?



Kawaguchiko



Yamanakako

If you want to photograph Mount Fuji's scenery, you cannot ignore the Fuji Five Lakes! At the lakes Kawaguchiko, Saiko, Yamanakako, Shojiko, and Motosuko, formed when the cave-ins of the mountain's eruptions were filled with water, various pictures of sceneries can be taken, from lake shores to Mount Fuji.

Among them, Kawaguchiko and Yamanakako are famous as locations that numerous photographers visit, regardless of whether they're professionals or amateurs. If

you are especially lucky, you can encounter both the rare Red Fuji and Upside-down Fuji at once!

This world-famous view of Mount Fuji can be seen at Arakurayama Sengen Park in the city of Fujiyoshida, Yamanashi Prefecture. With the sublime slope in the background, the scenery of Ch reit Pagoda, a piece of sublime Japanese architecture, makes for a magnificent view.

The seasonal cherry blossoms and autumn leaves make it that much more beautiful still;

6 Diamond Fuji and Pearl Fuji

Mount Fuji has various different appearances that change with time span and season. Apart from the Red Fuji, there are other rare sceneries of the mountain with curious names.

In the hours of both sunset and sunrise, there is a moment the view of the sun perfectly dancing on Mount Fuji's summit. This looks just like a diamond and is thus called "Diamond Fuji." The

sun right over the mountain shines dazzlingly in a blazing light; this graceful scenery is a true masterpiece of nature!

The full moon sitting on Mt. Fuji's summit is called Pearl Fuji. Compared to the sparkling of the blazing light of Diamond Fuji's sun, Pearl Fuji's soft light of the moon is of a gentle radiance - just like a pearl. This wondrous scenery that can be observed once a month truly leaves one stunned by its sheer beauty.



Diamond Fuji



Pearl Fuji

MOUNTAIN

n's iconic Mt. Fuji



Photos courtesy of Live Japan

this is one of the landscapes that are truly representative of Japan.

The Shiraito Falls in Shizuoka Prefecture's Fujinomiya City. The water that pours down the rock cliff as if it was fine white threads is, with the exception of a part of the main falls, mainly spring water from Mount Fuji.

Tender green in spring, the beauty of colorful foliage in autumn, the refreshing breeze of the water in summer, and even in winter, the waterfall stays at a temperature of 12 degrees and does not freeze.



7 Counting the climb to the top of Mount Fuji

Mount Fuji's altitude is 3,776 meters, but the unit that is often used to outline the mountain paths, dividing the climb into 10 steps up to the peak, is called "Station."

The starting point is the First Station and Murayamasengen Shrine's torii, the Fifth Station is the middle, and the Tenth Station is the top. In Fuji belief, the Fifth Station is the human realm and the Sixth Station is the heavenly realm; there lies the border between "heaven" and "earth."

Today, Mount Fuji climbers point

upwards from the Fifth Station: from there, they will have to continue on their own two feet with their own strength.

By the way, the Japanese word for "Station" is gō and appears in the shaku-kan system as a unit of volume, used to weighing rice.

There are various opinions as to why gō is used for Mount Fuji's climbing trails, it is said that it comes from 10 g making one sh, and a pile of rice that weighs one sh resembles the revered mountain.

8 Is it true that Mount Fuji has a front and backside?

Mount Fuji seen from Suruga Bay in the central part of Shizuoka Prefecture is called "Front Fuji," while the version seen from the Fuji Five Lakes is called "Back Fuji."

Historically speaking, there seems to have been the general perception that the southern foot of the mountain was the "front," while the northern foot was the "back."

The location where Fuji stands spans both Shizuoka and Yamanashi Prefecture;

especially the portion seen from the Yamanashi side is called "Back Fuji." However, the people of Yamanashi insist that "This is the front!" So the expression "Back Fuji" is rarely used.

There is constant discussion surrounding Mt. Fuji as to whether the view from the Yamanashi or the Shizuoka side is more beautiful and the two prefectures are eternal rivals!

9 Mount Fuji originally was called 'Immortal mountain!'

Currently, the way Mount Fuji is written in Japanese (富士山), it means Prosperous Mountain. But a popular theory says the name was originally written to mean Peerless Mountain (不二山) since it is a mountain that is like no other in Japan.

Another theory claims that because snow never disappears from the summit, the name originally meant Inexhaustible Mountain (不尽山).

And yet another theory suggests that the elixir for immortality mentioned in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter was concocted at the peak of Mt. Fuji, so the mountain's name was originally Immortal Mountain (不死山).

Japanese children know this ancient book as the Tale of Princess Kaguya, a story about a beautiful princess born inside bamboo. She is courted by nobles and gives each of them an impossibly difficult task and, in the end, even refuses a proposal from the emperor before returning to the moon during the harvest moon in mid-autumn.

While the general tale of Kaguya ends here, the original text of the Tale of the Bamboo Cutter sees her give both a letter and the elixir of life to the emperor.

However, he said that "Without Princess Kaguya, I do not wish to live forever," and burned both the letter and the elixir on top of the tallest mountain.

Even though the princess' thoughts were not able to reach the emperor, this mountain became known as "the mountain that does

not even fall in battle" and was a popular place among samurai of later centuries.

This is the story of how the "Immortal Mountain" became the "Mountain Abounding with Warriors," which is what today's Mount Fuji means.

Other names carry meanings such as "only one in existence" (不二山) or "everlasting energy" (不尽山).

Both of those words portray the thought of worshipping Mount Fuji.

Of course, these are just hypotheses that can't be verified, but it's certainly interesting to know how Mt. Fuji can mean so many different things to different people!

Since ancient times, Mount

Fuji has been a symbol of faith for Japanese people; a symbol of admiration. This beautifully formed shape of grandeur leaves a deep impression on the onlooker, filling one's heart with sublime bliss.

How to enjoy Mount Fuji, how to express Mount Fuji – Japanese people agonized over these questions, giving birth to legends and beliefs manifold.

By all means, please savor the stunningly beautiful Mount Fuji to your heart's content, surrounded by lush nature, colored by Japan's four ever-changing seasons!

10 Mount Fuji's peak

To think that Mt. Fuji is even found in places like this!

When one's hairline creates an M-shape on the forehead it is referred to as "Fuji's peak" in Japanese.

In English, this is known as widow's peak. It is one of the factors of beauty and can be seen on the foreheads of many women depicted in ukiyo-e and Japanese paintings.



11 'Dokkoisho' is said to have originated from Mt. Fuji

"Dokkoisho" is something like the Japanese version of "heave-ho". This is a phrase many Japanese say when making some effort to stand up from a seated or lowered position, and there is a theory going around that the phrase originated from Mt. Fuji.

The mountain has a long history of being a central religious site for the Japanese, and pilgrims were thought to have chanted the phrase "Rokkon Sh j" as they made their

way up to the peak of this sacred mountain as part of their pilgrimage.

Rokkon refers to the six sense organs of humans – eyes, nose, ears, tongue, body, and mind. The phrase Rokkon Sh j literally means to purify the six sense organs, and when spoken with an accent, it sounds like Dokkoisho, becoming the basis of this theory.

SEE FUJI ON PAGE 10

FUJI: Centuries of wonder

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

12 This rare Mount Fuji doesn't appear often!



When Mount Fuji is reflected upside-down on the calm, waveless waters of alake, you see “Upside-down Fuji.” This can be seen on days with clear air and without any wind, allowing us to enjoy various different sceneries that change with the season. This is the upside-down image that is printed on the back of 1,000-yen bills!

13 You can have a wedding at Mount Fuji?!

At Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha, wedding ceremonies can be held at the main hall on days without festivals or events. The vermilion-lacquered precincts are beautiful; cherry blossoms and wisteria bloom at the lush Asama shrine that is also a popular sightseeing destination.

The wedding ceremony itself is

engulfed in traditional court music as the ancient ceremonial rites are performed; blessed words are not only cast upon friends and family but also on the many tourists that visit the Asama shrine.

Should there be such a ceremony as you visit the shrine yourself, let yourself be engulfed by the warm atmosphere and share the happiness of the couple.

14 An active volcano comprised of three volcanoes

Mt. Fuji is a popular place that many mountaineers try to tackle during the summer climbing season, giving the impression that it's completely safe and harmless. But, wait! Did you know that Mt. Fuji is actually still considered an active volcano?

In fact, while it looks like a single mountain, Mount Fuji is made up of three successive volcanoes. At the base of Mount Fuji the Komitake volcano, the first eruptions of which may have occurred some 600,000 years ago. Around 100,000 years ago, the Ko-Fuji (Older Fuji) Volcano was superimposed on it, and on top of this, the Shin-Fuji (Younger Fuji) Volcano formed around 10,000 years ago, forming the mountain we know today.



Because the last time Mt. Fuji erupted was more than 300 years ago, for a while it was classified as a dormant volcano. Sometime around the 1960s, however, the Meteorological Office changed the definition of an active volcano to all volcanoes that have ever been recorded to erupt before.

Ever since then, Mt. Fuji has been classified as an active volcano. In 2003, the Coordinating Committee for Prediction of Volcano Eruptions redefined an active volcano as a volcano that has erupted before within the last 10,000 years and is still showing signs of fumarolic activity.

Mt. Fuji continues to be classified as an active volcano under this new definition as well.

15 Is Mount Fuji on private land? Who owns it?

“Who does Mount Fuji belong to?” is a question that most Japanese would answer with “Everyone.” However, a part of it – from 3,360m to the top – is actually private land!

Mt. Fuji strides across Shizuoka Prefecture and Yamanashi Prefecture, so debates about who actually owns the place come up from time to time.

Many naturally assume as a Mount Fuji fact that such an iconic mountain would be owned by the state. But the truth is, from the 8th stage and upwards, Mt. Fuji is the private territory of Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha, which owns more than 1,300 temples around the island nation.

Tokugawa Ieyasu, the shogun of the Edo period who won the Battle of Sekigahara, constructed around 30 buildings such as the main hall as an expression of gratitude; it is said that in 1606, he donated the area from Mount Fuji's Eighth Station upward to become Fujisan Hongū

Sengen Taisha's shrine grounds.

Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha has its origins in worshiping Asama no Okami to calm the eruptions of Mount Fuji, so the land from the Eighth Station became the sacred area of the rear shrine.

Asama no Okami spread along with the Fuji belief throughout the country, now counting 1,300 affiliated shrines. Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha is the head shrine of all Asama shrines in Japan.

For a period of time in 1871, the Meiji government did in fact nationalize Mt. Fuji. After World War II, government-owned sites from around the country were returned to the temples and shrines they originally belonged to, but the mountain-top of Mt. Fuji remained nationalized.

Sengen Taisha took the country to court and won a judgment recognizing them as the rightful owner in 1974. In the year 2004, the land was officially returned to Sengen Taisha.

16 The first woman to climb disguised as a man

Nowadays, Mt. Fuji is an enjoyable mountain climbing site for both men and women, but did you know that women were prohibited from this activity until 1872?

Specifically for Mt. Fuji, women were only allowed up to the 2nd stage.

Back then, pilgrims would journey up Mt. Fuji for seclusion training, and having women around apparently interfered with the training, hence the prohibition.

Therefore, when Tatsu Takayama, a

woman who really wanted to climb Mt. Fuji made her climb, she had to clip her hair short and dress up as a man to do so – a show of her steely determination.

In 1833, Tatsu and five other men reached the summit without incident, and that's why she's said to be the first woman to climb Mt. Fuji.

After this, Tatsu became an advocate for gender equality and worked towards lifting the prohibition on women climbing Mt. Fuji.

17 The first non-Japanese to climb Mt. Fuji?

Regular visitors to Mt. Fuji will probably know about the Rutherford Alcock memorial plaque near Fujinomiya City's Murayamasengen Shrine Information Center.

Sir Alcock was the first British ambassador in Japan. He reached Mt. Fuji's summit in 1860 together with his pet dog and

100 guards and is said to be the first non-Japanese to climb Mt. Fuji to the top.

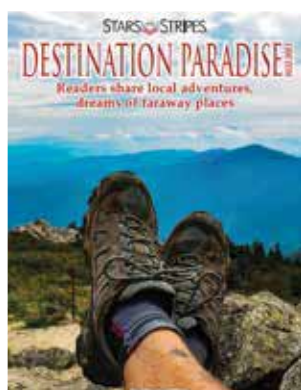
This experience was recorded in one of the books he later wrote, The Capital of the Tycoon. The first non-Japanese woman to reach Mt. Fuji's peak was Lady Fanny Parkes in the year 1867.

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STARS AND STRIPES



Eared cedar boards, iconic of architect Kengo Kuma's designs, are used outside and inside of each separately built restroom. Photos by Akifumi Ishikawa, Stars and Stripes



The new public restroom at Nanago Dori Park, near Hatagaya Station in Tokyo, is shaped like an igloo and operated by voice command.



New public toilets at Yoyogi Fukamachi Mini Park are transparent. There, you'll find users nervously opening the doors to see how the bathrooms work.



Toilet-seekers in Tokyo flush with fresh options

BY HANA KUSUMOTO,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 10, 2022

Restrooms in Japan are widely known for being clean and high-tech, with bidets, heated toilet seats and even the recorded sound of flushing water so others won't hear you doing your business.

But some public facilities are known to be dirty, dark and unpleasant to use.

In the popular Shibuya ward in central Tokyo, a group is working to turn public restrooms into works of art that are pleasant places to visit and accessible to any user.

The nonprofit Nippon Foundation, a philanthropic organization with projects at home and around the world, noticed that despite the reputed cleanliness of Japanese toilets, public facilities are often avoided. With the help of 16 prominent Japanese architects and designers, the group began a project — called The Tokyo Toilet — to redesign 17 public restrooms in Shibuya in an effort to improve their image.

The facilities are also cleaned more often than usual and are equipped for ostomates and wheelchair users. And all have at least one toilet available for any gender to use.

The bathrooms have unique designs and some even look like art-work. Some have transparent walls and others are mushroom shaped or painted bright red.

The restrooms at Haru-no-Ogawa Community Park and Yoyogi Fukamachi Mini Park near Yoyogi-Koen Station are transparent.

There, you'll find users nervously opening the doors to see how the bathrooms work.

The exterior glass walls use special technology that turns them opaque when the door is locked from inside.

Architect Shigeru Ban explained on the Tokyo Toilet website that the transparent walls allow users to check the restroom's cleanliness and whether anyone is inside before entering, which also is good for safety and crime prevention. At night, the bathrooms light up to become additional lighting in the park.

Another architect Kengo Kuma, who helped design the Japan National Stadium in Tokyo for the 2020 Summer Olympics, designed the restrooms in Nabeshima Shoto Park.

Eared cedar boards, iconic of Kuma's designs, are used outside and inside of each separately built bathroom, which together resemble a village full of greenery inside the park. Each accommodates different needs, such as for families, dressing and grooming or wheelchair users; they are not gender-specific.

A restroom at Nanago Dori Park, minutes away by foot from Hatagaya Station, is shaped like

an igloo. It also has unique functions. It operates by voice command, in Japanese and English, allowing people to use the facility without physically touching the doors or toilet levers.

Kazuo Sato, an executive creative director for advertising agency TBWA Hakuhodo, explained on the website that he found out that

users in Europe and the U.S. avoid touching the inside of bathrooms by stepping on levers to flush the toilets and opening bathroom doors with toilet paper.

He said he began exploring the idea of a touchless restroom before the COVID-19 pandemic but it "accelerated the acceptance of this unique user experience in terms of 'toilet being contactless,'" he stated on the project's website.

Users first need to scan in a QR code with their mobile device to open the door. Then they need to say, "Hi, toilet" and wait for a beep to give a voice command, such as "flush the toilet" or "start the bidet."

Several microphones are mounted inside the bathrooms, but when I tried it, it was unable to hear my voice command and kept asking to repeat. Luckily, it understood my command to open and close the bathroom door, so I did not get locked in the bathroom.

Although the project is ongoing, there are plenty of restrooms to see. Many are near major tourist spots in Shibuya and Harajuku. Remembering where they are may help when you need to use bathrooms while on an outing, but you may also make a walking trip out of visiting each one.

Thirteen of the 17 restrooms have been completed, and four more are expected to open by the end of this year in the Sasazuka, Hatagaya, Sendagaya and Yoyogi areas of Shibuya ward.

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View Video

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LOCATION: Scattered throughout Shibuya ward, including areas near Shibuya, Ebisu and Harajuku stations.

DIRECTIONS: Maps of the restrooms can be found online at tokyotoilet.jp/en.

HOURS: Available anytime.

COSTS: Free

INFORMATION: Online: <https://www.tokyotoilet.jp/en>



Website

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Akita

10

Top

things to do



JAPAN TRAVEL

Akita prefecture is located in Northwest Tohoku, stretching along the coast facing the Sea of Japan.

The name may sound familiar to dog lovers, but Akita has much more going for it besides its association with the famous dog breed. Beneath the surface, Akita promises a range of discoveries to delight visitors to the region.

From the ancient customs of the Namahage beasts to the old samurai town of Kakunodate, Akita's culture is diverse. For festival fans, Akita can promise some true highlights – witness the giant bamboo pole lanterns of the Kanto festival in summer, or the 'kamakura' snow igloos of Yokote during the colder months.

Here are the top 10 things to do in Akita, in no particular order:

Courtesy photos

Akita Pref.
Tokyo



1 Kakunodate Samurai District

Explore traditional samurai architecture in the ancient samurai district of Kakunodate, where you'll follow long, wide roads banked by tall weeping trees – popular in the cherry blossom season.

Popular stops include the Aoyagi Samurai Manor – which is perhaps the most well preserved across Japan.

The estate features the Main House, an Armory, several galleries, the Akita Folk Museum, the Samurai Tool Museum and a beautiful garden connecting everything together.

As well as well-maintained premises, a range of interactive activities will be sure to make your visit a memorable one. Try handling a samurai sword, wearing a helmet and even lifting a traditional Kago carriage used in the Edo period.

Along the road, you can also drop by the Denshokan Museum, which exhibits traditional crafts and even allows you to witness demonstrations by master craftsmen. Here you can see Kaba-zaiku – craftwork that uses the bark of wild cherry trees to create distinctive patterns unique to this area of Japan.



Photo by © Akita Tourism Federation

6 Nyuto Onsen

Located in the Towada-Hachimantai National Park in Akita Prefecture, everything about Nyuto Onsen oozes style and sophistication. Beautifully set within a peaceful mountain valley covered with acres of virgin beech forest, this is one place where you can find real seclusion and an escape from the often suffocating pace of city life.

Interestingly enough, the name Nyuto Onsen actually refers to a conglomerate of seven different spas located around the same mountain.

Although all of them are relatively close to each other, you will either need your own transport or be prepared to walk several kilometers if you wish to see more than one of them.



2 Ando Jozo Brewery

This traditional brewery has been making miso and soy sauce for hundreds of years in the southern part of Kakunodate.

Traditional techniques honed through the ages, as well as taking inspiration from Ibaraki's Hitachi region, have made Ando Jozo a regional favorite.

Visitors can enjoy touring the historical premises as well tasting the miso/soy sauce samples.



7 Akita Festival Center

Akita's Kanto Festival, held annually every August, is a daunting spectacle and one of Tohoku's best.

Kanto refers to the giant bamboo poles decorated with bamboo lanterns. They are hoisted up high along the parade routes by dexterous dancers performing all manner of techniques – no small feat when you consider the largest weigh up to 50 kg.

Find out for yourself at Akita's Festival Center – handily open all year round. As well as learning a plethora of information about kanto and other local festivals, those who book in advance can try out the art of kanto themselves, under the instruction of a trained supervisor.

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3 Oga Namahage Museum

The Namahage are a traditional folklore symbol for the Oga region of Akita. While visually demonic-like in appearance, they are considered messengers of the mountain gods.

February's Namahage Sando Festival sees a kagura-like performance take place at Shinzan Shrine, whilst the New Year sees them visit local villages in a tradition that continues to this day.

Throughout the rest of the year, the Namahage Museum in central Oga is the best place to witness and learn all about this local custom – and even try on the costumes for yourself.

The neighboring Oga Mayama Denshokan offers the chance to observe a live reenactment of the New Year custom. Well worth the entry to see the drama unfold!

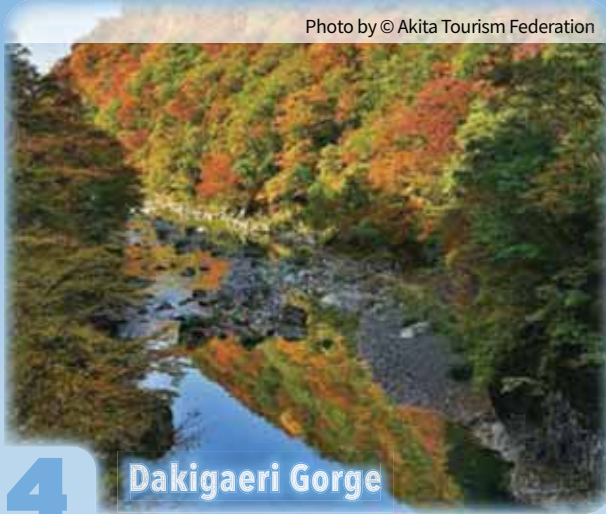


Photo by © Akita Tourism Federation

4 Dakigaeri Gorge

Dakigaeri Gorge offers majestic scenery to those who make the effort to visit this area a little further out of Kakunodate.

Follow the old logging trail through tunnels and across bridges as it hugs the cliffs edge, high above an iridescent blue river.

Autumn is the busiest season but the rest of the warmer-weather months provide fantastic views with very few crowds.



Photo by © Akita Tourism Federation

5 Tazawako Lake

Lake Tazawa in Akita is a stunning example of the natural beauty of northern Japan. With a rich history and variety of activities for tourists, whether you like hiking, swimming, boating, eating, or even just a relaxing stay at a hot springs inn, Lake Tazawa has all of that and much more.

Surrounding the lake is beautiful mountain scenery, and the relaxing atmosphere will help you wind down the second you arrive.



8 Kubota Castle

Located at Senshu Park, Kubota Castle was built when the Satake clan, back in 1600, was forced to move north following defeat at the Battle of Sekigahara.

From the top floor of the castle, you can see the Akita downtown and central business district areas, all the way out to the Oga peninsula and the ocean beyond.

The castle grounds offer great scenery year around, especially during the cherry blossom bloom in Spring. In summer, lotus flowers dominate the surrounding moat.



9 Akita Dog Museum

Learn about the Akita dog through the photos, information and exhibits at the Akita Dog Museum.

The museum was founded by the Akita Dog Preservation Society, which aims to breed and maintain the pure full blooded Akita dog amidst widespread cross breeding.

The Akita dog is designated as a Japanese Natural Treasure and the museum was constructed on the 50th anniversary of the Society's foundation.

One of the most famous Akita dogs is perhaps Hachiko, whose memorial statue near Shibuya Crossing continually draws crowds.



10 Akita gourmet highlights

A trip to Akita prefecture is not all about sightseeing, with the region home to many local dishes well-known across Japan.

Kiritanpo are pounded-rice skewers, which go great with miso and are often served in a hotpot, alongside mai-take mushroom and Hinai chicken. This breed of chicken is native to Akita and tastes great in any number of dishes, including yakitori.

Inaniwa udon is a thin and chewy variant of this well-known noodle and considered one of the top 3 for udon brands across Japan.

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Todoroki Ravine Park in Setagaya, Tokyo, is known for its bamboo trees and other greenery.

Bucolic escape from busy Tokyo hidden in popular city ward

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JUAN KING,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 18, 2022

A 20-minute train ride from central Tokyo, the secluded Todoroki Valley in the southern part of Setagaya ward is a peaceful marvel away from the bustling city.

Todoroki Ravine Park stretches a little more than half a mile. My family and I walked it in over 30 minutes, including sightseeing stops.

The Yazawa River runs through the ravine on its way to the larger Tama River. Small waterfalls roll off the steep sides of the valley, making it even more picturesque.

A modest number of visitors were on the path, making for an easy stroll along the trail paved with wooden planks and stone. Old and young alike were visiting, some there for a little exercise. On a walkway just 2 feet wide along a drop of about 8 feet into the ravine, we squeezed past other walkers passing in the opposite direction.

Buddhist statues line the path to a small bridge we crossed to reach the Fudo-no-Taki waterfall. Two dragon heads protruding from a stone wall had water spouting from their mouths. Farther along a long, stone stairway we arrived at the Todoroki Fudosan Temple.

It was a calorie-burning climb up the slick, uneven stairs, though

there were guard rails to assist us. Be careful climbing up with small children. At the top you'll find a beautiful view over the valley and can take in the colorful details of the temple, which was established around 1100.

The temple includes four ancient tombs, originating in the 7th century. The pathway leading to Todoroki Valley Tunnel Tomb No. 3 is near an ice cream shop. Next to that you can sample green tea at the small tearoom called Setsugekka.

There is outdoor seating in this area, so you can rest and enjoy some

quiet time. Picnicking is also allowed in the family area there.

After a few moments of observation and photo taking, we went back down the stairway and exited through the main entrance that leads directly to Todoroki Station.

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EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
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LOCATION: 1-22-26 Todoroki, Setagaya city, Tokyo

DIRECTIONS: A few minutes' walk from Todoroki Station in Setagaya, Tokyo.

HOURS: Always open

COSTS: Free

FOOD: There is a small ice cream café and a tea shop located up near the Todoroki Fudosan Temple.

INFORMATION: 03-3704-4972



Todoroki Fudosan Temple in Tokyo's Setagaya ward was established around 1100.

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Stripes Sports Trivia

The great Jim Brown, often regarded as the best running back in football history, retired in 1966 as the league's all-time leading rusher. He was also only 30 years old and was later enshrined in the NFL Hall of Fame at age 35. He's the second youngest to ever go into The Hall. Who went in at age 34?

Answer

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Kanji of the week

手

Te (hand)

Language Lesson

How are you?

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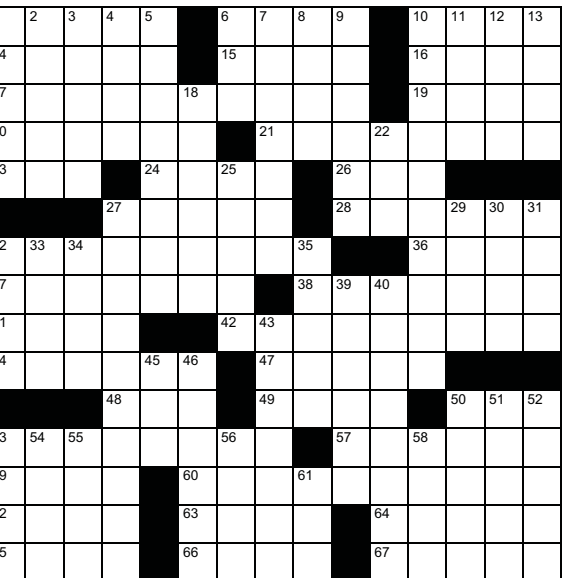
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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- Fathered
- Sleeveless top
- Santa's spot, often
- Do penance
- Revival cry
- Mixed dish
- Worn through, as carpeting
- Gravy dish
- Big bother
- Barracks residents
- OH to MA direction
- December 24 and 31
- ROFL alternative
- American frontiersman
- Playing for two
- Word in a Pee-Wee movie title
- Trapper's ware
- More raucous
- Audiophile's collection
- Twiggy digs
- Financial expert
- Wipes out
- Fluster
- Psychic's claim
- Legal title
- Presidents' Day mo.
- Fanciful yarn
- Shoot for, with "to"
- Face shape
- Gamer's device
- Puff of a joint
- To ___ his own
- Change, chemically
- Pitcher in paintings
- Patella's place
- Doo-wop song, "___ Angel"



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- Embry or Hawke
- Spiny shrub
- Aces, sometimes
- "Madam Secretary" star
- Barfly's bill
- Stockpiler
- Roman ruler
- Solemn tolls
- Prefab in a park
- Balm ingredient
- Truth twister
- A whole bunch
- Give, as time
- Forest denizen
- Get used (to)
- Any Stephen King novel
- Voice of the iPhone
- Tosses in
- Adam or Mae
- King Charles' only sister
- Person of action
- Way to pay
- Lose ground?

Answers to Previous Crossword:

D	A	B	S	O	C	C	U	R	A	S	A	P
U	T	A	H	R	O	U	S	E	V	I	N	E
M	E	S	A	A	M	B	A	S	S	A	D	O
B	A	S	M	A	T	I	P	A	T	E	N	T
O	M	G	C	O	C	A	C	O	L	A		
			U	S	E	R	C	O	N	T	R	A
C	R	I	E	D	P	R	O	S	E	P	L	Y
H	A	T	E	S	L	O	P	E	S	P	U	R
E	R	A	S	C	A	N	T	F	O	R	G	O
F	E	R	O	C	I	T	Y	C	A	N	E	
			R	O	S	E	M	A	R	Y	C	A
A	L	T	E	R	S	L	E	E	T	I	D	E
D	I	A	G	N	O	S	T	I	C	H	A	I
A	C	R	O	R	O	A	C	H	A	T	O	M
M	E	A	N	S	P	R	E	E	N	E	S	S

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

7	9	3	1	6	4	8	2	5
2	1	4	9	5	8	3	6	7
8	5	6	2	7	3	4	1	9
3	7	2	6	4	9	5	8	1
9	8	1	5	3	2	7	4	6
4	6	5	8	1	7	2	9	3
6	2	8	3	9	5	1	7	4
1	3	7	4	2	6	9	5	8
5	4	9	7	8	1	6	3	2

			2	5	8	6		3
				1			4	
3								
				5	7			
4	6	2						
			3				1	6
		4		6			7	
				4	8			
1	8		3	2				9

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THE STYLISTICS



YOKOHAMA 12.15^{thu}–16^{fri}

1st Stage Open 15:30 Start 16:30 / 2nd Stage Open 18:30 Start 19:30

TOKYO

12.18^{sun}–21^{wed}, 23^{fri}–25^{sun}

12.18, 24–25 : 1st Stage Open 15:30 Start 16:30 / 2nd Stage Open 18:30 Start 19:30
12.19–21, 23 : 1st Stage Open 16:30 Start 17:30 / 2nd Stage Open 19:30 Start 20:30

SA: ¥17,900 [incl. Christmas Plate + Glass of Champagne]

CA: ¥12,900 [incl. Choice of 1 Drink or Glass of Champagne]

JEFFERSON STARSHIP



YOKOHAMA 2023.1.12^{thu}

1st Stage Open 16:30 Start 17:30 / 2nd Stage Open 19:30 Start 20:30

TOKYO 2023.1.13^{fri}

1st Stage Open 16:30 Start 17:30 / 2nd Stage Open 19:30 Start 20:30

SA: ¥9,800 / CA: ¥9,300

SA (Service Area): Seating area with table service. CA (Casual Area): Counter service seating area (includes 1 free drink with ticket purchase).

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