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Community Publication



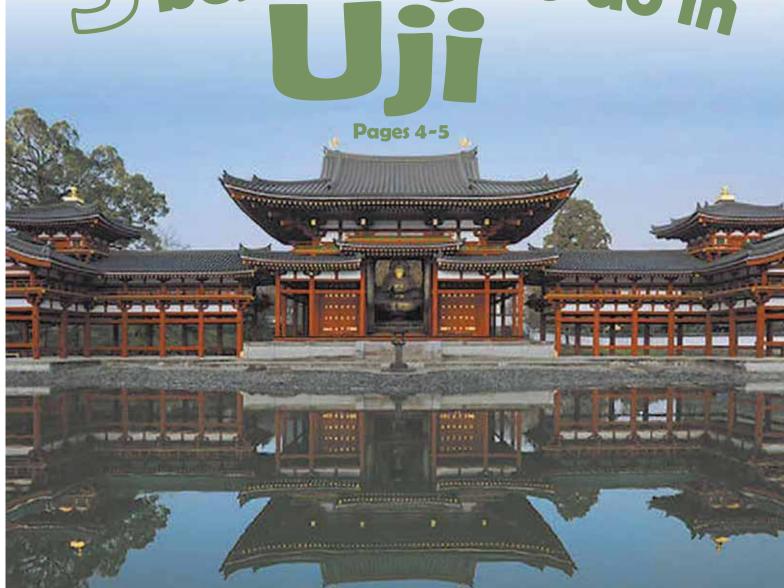
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Japan opens borders to SOFA relatives

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE & HANA KUSUMOTO, STARS AND STRIPES Published: July 22, 2022

TOKYO – Japan is permitting more family members to visit their relatives with the U.S. military even as COVID-19 case numbers exceed previous pandemic records.

The country in March began accepting visa applications for first-degree relatives of long-term residents including the U.S. military population in Japan. First-degree relatives include only immediate family members. The order was extended

The visa application requires time and paperwork.

Relatives planning to visit a U.S. military family in Japan must first apply to the nearest Japanese consulate for a







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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

temporary visa between six and 12 weeks prior to their planned departure date, according to an update from a III Marine Expeditionary Force spokeswoman. Temporary visas are valid for three months.

SOFA members - Defense Department civilians and service members covered by the status of forces agreement in Japan – who are sponsoring guests must provide several documents, according to Sgt. Savannah Mesimer. They include an invitation

letter, proof of relationship, a photo ID like a driver's license or passport and a military ID

or permanent change of station orders.

"Requirements to obtain the temporary visa may vary depending upon the location of the consulate in which the application process is started," Mesimer said.

The SOFA member must also provide an invitation letter addressed to the Japanese ambassador or consul-general. The invitation must include the address where the visitor will stay.

SOFA members should send all required materials to their relative applying for a visa, who in turn must provide them to the Japanese embassy or consulate for their location, Mesimer wrote.

Japan will approve or deny the visa application on a caseby-case basis, she said. Applicants can expect a response generally within about a week.

Templates, application forms and information on Japanese embassies and consulates can be found at www. $us.emb\hbox{-} japan.go.jp/j/down\hbox{-}$ load/SOFA.pdf.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:

STARS STRIPES.

Travelers bound to Japan are still required to take a COVID-19 test with a nega-

tive result within 72 hours of travel and show proof upon arrival.

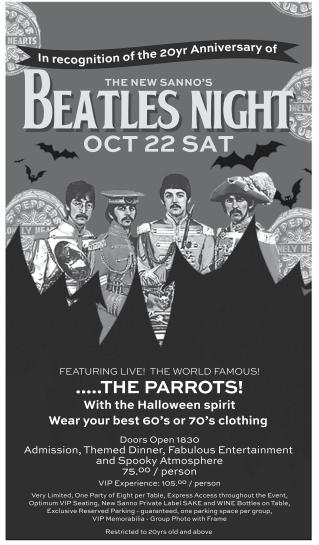
According to Japanese media reports, Tokyo's new cases decreased by 751 from a week before to 30,842 on Aug. 2. For the week ending July 30, the number of cases per 100,000 residents on Okinawa more than doubled the national average at 2,263.59, Asahi News reported.

burke.matt@stripes.com Twitter: @MatthewMBurke1 kusumoto.hana@stripes.com











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Experience Nagasaki's art of knife making

STORY AND PHOTOS BY YASHIRA M. RODRÍGUEZ SIERRA, STRIPES JAPAN

mura City in Nagasaki Prefecture is known for centuries of blacksmithing tradition. It was after the Battle of Dannoura 800 years ago, when Yukiyasu Naminohira of the Heike Clan settled in the region in 1474. Naminohira brought with him the technique of knife and metal utensil production that has been passed down from generation to generation to this day.

As of 1991, the knives produced by Naminohira at Matsubara Forge are recognized as a traditional art of Nagasaki Prefecture.

I was interested in seeing these metal masters in action, so I headed to Shu Matsubara to visit the workshop of Kama Kogyo Tanaka, who is the fourth generation of blacksmith. Tanaka and his apprentice son craft knives and run a retail shop.

These knives made in Omura stand out for their unique details that can be seen on the metal's surface. To achieve those great details, Tanaka and his family's forging technique is based on the Japanese proverb "Ju nin to iro" which translates in "Ten people have ten different preferences." In other words, each knife has a one-of-a-kind pattern style. With the help of my tour guide, Tanaka explained that the knives created in his workshop do not rust easily, are very sharp, lightweight and easy to hold.

It was nice that Tanaka let us to experience this art. We were allowed to flatten the piece of metal with the help of a very old machine that functions without electricity. The fire used to forge the metal reaches temperatures of up to 1300 degrees Celsius, which makes this job a very dangerous one. During the demonstration in Tanaka's workshop, it was remarkable that skill, discipline and safety standards are very important in this trade. We concluded our tour with a stop at Tanaka's shop.

Experience the art of knives

Shu Matsubara

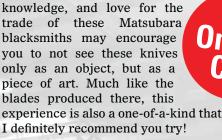
Address: 371 Matsubarahonmachi, Omura-city, Nagasaki Pref

The shop is housed inside a cabin and displays a wide variety of knives crafted by Tanaka available for purchase. Here visitors can get their hands on Japanese paper knives, kitchen knives, farm tools and more. You can also ask for custom engraving on

Website

At the end of the visit, it was evident that the effort,

the blade.



Yashira M. Rodríguez Sierra is originally from Caguas, Puerto Rico. She is assigned to Sasebo Naval Base. Rodríguez enjoys nature and moving to Japan was a dream come true. Before joining the Navy she was an artist and journalist.



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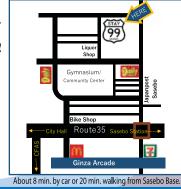
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best things to do in Uji, Jap

Phoenix Hall, as seen on the 10-yen coin.

in Kyoto Pref.

BY WESTPLAN, LIVE JAPAN

ji, Japan is a famous city near Kyoto renowned for its beautiful scenery, the Uji River, and Uji Tea. It also has ties to The Tale of Genji, a classic in Japanese literature. Especially for green tea lovers, Uji is definitely worth visiting. Conveniently,

See the national treasures of Byodoin Temple

At the top of our list of things to do in Uji is Byodoin Temple, a 10-minute walk from JR Uji Station. Byodoin Temple was the center of Uji in the latter half of the Heian Period. It flourished as an aristocratic villa around 1000 AD.

It was originally the villa of Minamoto no Toru, the person on whom Hikaru Genji, the main character of The Tale of Genji, was based. However, in 1052, it was taken over by the Emperor's advisor, Fujiwara no Michinaga, and his son Yorimichi. He turned it into a temple, known as Byodoin.

The following year, in 1053, the Phoenix Hall, a national treasure, was completed. The beautiful statue of Amida Buddha (Amida Nyorai), sculpted by Jocho, the Heian period's greatest Buddhist priest, is enshrined inside the hall. The buildings of Byodoin Temple were said to embody the Buddhist Pure Land of Sukhavati. Today, they look just as impressive as they did when they were first built.

Visitors can enter Phoenix Hall between 9:30AM to 4:10PM on a first-come, first-served basis at a capacity of 20 people at a time. We recommended purchasing your admission ticket (300 yen) before heading to the other spots.

A staff member will guide you inside. Beautiful, historical artifacts decorate the hall, including the 2.8-meter high Amida Buddha (Amida Nyorai), the Pure Land image behind the statue, and the Praying Bodhisattva (Buddhist Saints) on Clouds.

Byodoin Museum Hoshokan also has many great treasures to see. Get a close-up look at the Phoenix Statue, a national treasure, and the 26 Praying Bodhisattva on Clouds through the glass. The Bodhisattvas on Clouds each have different musical instruments and their own unique expressions and poses. There is also a colorful CG exhibit showing the phoenix hall at the time of its construction.

Byodoin Temple's museum shop includes a lineup of original goods featuring designs of Phoenix Hall, the Phoenix Statue, and the Bodhisattva on Clouds. There are so many souvenirs to choose from! The Origami Sets and Handkerchiefs are decorated with patterns of the pillars and beams of Phoenix Hall. The towels are also decorated with images of Phoenix Hall.

Measures against Coronavirus:

Staff required to wear masks and use hand sanitizer. Visitors also recommended to use masks and sanitizer. Partitions and acrylic plates are installed at reception area, and coin trays are used for money exchange. Museum building is well-ventilated, handrails are regularly disinfected, and temperature checks are conducted before entering Phoenix Hall.

Byodoin

Address: 116, Ujirenge, Uji-shi, Kyoto, 611-0021

Nearest Station: Uji Station (JR Nara Line), 10 minutes on foot

Phone: 0774-21-2861



Origami Set (350 yen), Handkerchief (850 yen each), Towel (1,700 yen)



Experience zazen at Koshoji

Koshoji was the first Soto Zen temple founded by Dogen Zenji in Fukakusa in 1233. Koshoji is about a 13-minute walk from Byodoin Temple across the Uji River.

Zazen meditation should among your list of things to do in Japan, and you can do it here in Uji, too! In addition to regular Sunday meditations, you can also practice zazen meditation with a monk and learn more about Zen's teachings. If you are new to zazen, there are easy-to-understand lectures that even foreign visitors can enjoy. Lectures are about 60-90 minutes long, but if you're short on time, you can experience it for 10 to 20 minutes on your own.

You can also try the Sutra Copying Experience. Attain peace of mind as you slowly draw the brush strokes one by one.

Oshoin is a large, welcoming tatami room with tables and chairs on the veranda. Here, you can enjoy matcha green tea and sweets in silence. Look out over the beautiful garden as you listen to the murmuring of water and the chirping of birds.

The approach leading to the temple from the road along the Uji River is called Kotozaka. It gets its name from the sound of the water flowing, which resembles the sound of a Japanese koto. Kotozaka is exceptionally beautiful in the spring with its cherry blossoms, and in the fall with its colorful foliage. Many visitors come to see the seasonal sights!

Measures against Coronavirus:

Alcohol disinfectant installed at entrance. Visitors required to wear masks and use sanitizer.

Koshoji Temple

Address: 27-1 Uji Yamada, Uji City, Kyoto 611-0021

Access: 20 minutes walk from JR Uji Station, 13 minutes walk from Keihan Uji Station

Phone: 0774-21-2040

Hours: Open from dawn to sunset (around 5 a.m. - 5 p.m.), Open

daily

Admission: 500 yen; 1,000 yen for zazen experience (reservation required); 1,000 yen for sutra-copying experience



-ile photo

Asahi Gozen, 1,750 yen (excluding tax)

Enjoy everything Uji tea at Fukujuen

Tea is on any list of things to do in Uji, ar to dip into matcha culture! When you leave go down Kotozaka to Fukujuen Uji Tea Facto long-established Uji matcha tea shop, found Tea Factory, you can experience, learn about tional Uji tea culture.

There are a variety of shops and museums voriginal Uji tea and tea supplies, including a you can try different kinds of Uji teas, Fukuju can enjoy dishes and sweets made with Uji tei, a thatched-roof tea house specializing in

First, head to the Fukuju Saryo on the 2nd can enjoy seasonal dishes and sweets made photo shows the special set menu, Asahi Goze is the main dish. The warm tea soba, manju kake, seasonal vegetables, gyokuro rice balla all dishes made using Uji tea.

You can also partake in the popular stone ing experience (1,200 yen, tax not included). to grind tencha, the raw ingredient matcha is

Grind the matcha counterclockwise at a sper rotation for about 15 minutes. Turn the and evenly and do not apply too much force. Fe tea with your freshly ground matcha, and enj

There are about 25 different experiences, making, tea hand-rolling, teacup making, caf a course on matcha etiquette.

Measures against Coronavirus:

Alcohol disinfectant installed at entrance. Partiplates installed at cash register. Use of masks a required. Reduced capacity at restaurants to installed seats.

Fukujuen Uji Tea Factory

Address: 10 Uji Yamada, Uji City, Kyoto 611-002
Access: 15 min walk from JR Uji Station, 8 min w
Uji Station

Hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.(Fukuju Saryo L.O. 4 p.m **Fee:** Stone-mill Matcha Making Experience: 1,20

material costs; tax not included)

Closed: Mondays (the following day in case of p



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an's green tea capital

Uji is just a 20-minute train ride away from JR Kyoto Station.

Here, we will introduce World Cultural Heritage sites, Uji tea shops, and temples where you can experience zazen and sutra copying. All of the places introduced here are well-equipped with measures against coronavirus so that you can feel at ease during your visit.



Uji Tea Factory

d this is the spot Koshoji Temple, ory. Fukujuen is a ed in 1790. At Uji , and enjoy tradi-

where you can buy workshop where Saryo, where you ea, and Gyokuro-Uji Gyokuro tea. d floor. Here, you with Uji tea. The en, where tea soba buns, matcha ans, and pickles are

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or yen (mende







Check out Japan's oldest existing shrine

After eating, head to Ujigami Shrine, another world heritage site in Uji. Exactly when the shrine was built remains unknown.

However, in the Heian Period, Ujigami Shrine and Uji Shrine seem to also have gone by the names Uji Chinjugami, Rikyu Myojin, and Rikyu Shrine.

The main shrine, built in the Heian Period, is the oldest existing shrine in Japan. It's characterized by three inner shrine structures housed inside the shrine. The worship hall is a residential building featuring Shinden-zukuri architecture and is also the oldest shrine building and a national treasure.

The colorful Goshuin, or temple seal books, are the most popular gifts from Ujigami Shrine. There are 25 different patterns, including limited-edition seasonal designs such as flowers and autumn leaves, and a two-page spread with Japanese poems.

Because the shrine is a power spot for academics, there are many colorful amulets for academic achievement. There are also pastel-colored rabbit omikuji (fortunes), and kimonopatterned wish dolls based on The Tale of Genji. There are so many charms to choose from!

Measures against Coronavirus:

Staff required to wear masks; alcohol disinfectant installed.

Ujigami-jinja Shrine

Address: 59, Ujiyamada, Uji-shi, Kyoto, 611-0021

Nearest Station: Uji Station (JR Nara Line), 8 minutes on foot

Phone: 0774-21-4634



Nama-cha Matcha Jelly Uji Honten Limited (990 yen, tax included)



Marvelous matcha sweets

Nakamura Tokichi Honten is a 15-minute walk from Ujigami Shrine and located in a traditional Japanese building along Uji Station Shopping Street. A large black-and-white curtain with the Maruto symbol marks the entrance.

This long-established tea shop, founded in 1854, is named after the first Tokichi Nakamura, and is the essence of Kyoto's Uji no Sato tea. Long ago, the original tea house was lined with various famous teas and souvenirs, and tea leaves were sold by the measure.

Today, it has been renovated into a cafe that also sells matcha sweets, and is crowded with visitors every day.

Nama-cha Matcha Jelly is a must-try treat, only available at Uji Honten. It is served in a bamboo bowl. Packed with plump matcha jelly, chewy dango, sweet azuki beans, and mellow matcha ice cream, this is a dessert you won't want to miss out on!

The Maruto Parfait is another delicious treat that showcases the bright green color and refreshing aroma of matcha, also served in a bamboo bowl.

Inside is a matcha castella cake and a mildly-sweet parfait cream that pair perfectly well together. It includes crispy brown rice puffs, berries, lemon jam, shiratama, and Dainagon azuki beans. The bottom is filled with matcha jelly and softserve ice cream

The combination of high-quality matcha and layers of flavors makes this parfait one of the most exciting treats in the shop!

There are many kinds of Uji teas, but Nakamura teas are only available here. This original brand was born in 1994 to commemorate the 1200th anniversary of when Emperor Kanmu moved the capital to Heiankyo in 794. It gets its unique and profound taste from a blend of seven types of carefully selected tea leaves. These delicious, special teas also make perfect souvenirs

Measures against Coronavirus:

Shop and facilities regularly cleaned and disinfected; disinfectant solution available and partitions installed; all staff required to wear masks, wash hands, use sanitizer, gargle, and take temperature; may refuse entry to customers in poor health; all customers required to wear masks and take their temperature.

Nakamura Tokichi

Address: 10 Uji Ichiban, Uji City, Kyoto 611-0021

Access: 1 minute walk from JR Uji Station; 10 minute walk from

Keihan Uji Station Phone: 0774-22-7800

Hours: Weekdays: Tea Shop 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Cafe 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (L.O. 4:30 p.m.), Saturdays, Sundays, holidays: Tea Shop 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Cafe 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (L.O. 4:30 p.m.) *Varies by season

Open daily



Maruto Match's Parfait Uji Honten Limited (1,430 yen, tax included)

From the left: Nakamura Tea bulk bag, can, individual tea bags



Inside the
Phoenix Hall of
Byodoin Temple,
This Glorious
Feast For the Eyes
Awaits!



Nakamura Tokichi is the Traditional, Deliciously Fragrant Uji Matcha Tea Brand

As you can see, there are plenty of unique things to do in Uji, Japan, including two world heritage sites!

Experience the deliciousness of Japan's famous Uji tea. Some experiences may require advanced reservations, so please check in advance and be mindful of the time as you plan your visit to each spot.

Courtesy photos



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Goldfish to parade through streets of Yanai

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

ust 45-minutes from MCAS Iwakuni, Yanai Town will host Kingvo Chochin Matsuri (goldfish lantern festival) on Aug. 13.

During the festival, locals will parade through the streets in traditional festive attire while energetically shouting "rasseraa" and pushing large goldfish-figured lantern floats made of paper mache, beautifully painted and lit up from inside.

The paper maché floats are painted and lit up from the inside. The streets are also beautifully lit up with about 4,000 goldfish-figured lanterns until Aug. 31.

You will find lots of great Japanese food including yakisoba, yakitori, okonomiyaki, shaved ice, cold beer and soft drinks. People can also enjoy games, including kingyo-sukui (goldfish scooping) and shateki, a shooting game.

The goldfish lantern is known as one of the Yanai's popular traditional crafts. It is local tradition for parents to make the

Goldfish Lantern Festival

DATE: Aug. 13 **HOURS:** 3:30 - 7 p.m.

LOCATION: Retro Street (in front of JR Yanai Station), Yanai City

ADMISSION: Free TEL: 0820-22-2111





WEBSITE

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Yanai Goldfish Lantern **Festival Events**

3:30 - 3:50 p.m. Brass band performance

4:00 - 4:15 p.m. Opening ceremony

3:50 - 6:45 p.m. Goldfish lantern floats parade

6:45 - 7:00 p.m. Closing ceremony

bamboo and paper lanterns for their children to participate in the festival.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Stripes Sports Trivia

Utah Jazz legend, and fan of the short-shorts, John Stockton is the NBA's all-time leader in career assists with 15.806. Jason Kidd is second with 12,091, while six-foot-eight, 250 lb. LeBron James is currently No. 11 with 8,208. Only one active player currently sits in the top 10. Who is he?

Answer

Chris Paul





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n Japan, we follow both the Western calendar interchangeably with the "Gengo" calendar. Gengo is the name of the Imperial era for the Japanese calendar. 2019 was Heisei 31 in Japan. On April 1st, 2019, Japan revealed the new era name as the emperor would abdicate the throne to his son at the end of April. Beginning May 1st, 2019, the new era was named "Reiwa," which according to the Japanese consulate means "beautiful harmony." In records and history, 2019 was associated as both Heisei 31 and Reiwa 1. The current year 2022 is Reiwa 4.

Kanji of the week



Yama/san (mountain)

Language Lesson

Large/big - short/small

Ookii - Chiisai



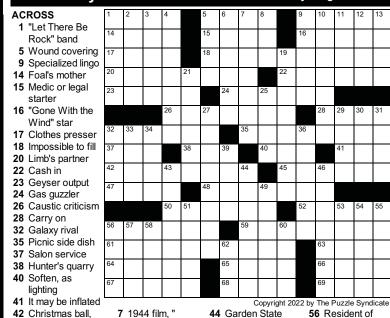
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7 1944 film ' and Old Lace"

47 More or 48 Head wreath

45 Dwell on

50 Flatware finisher

52 Send payment

56 Waikiki welcomes

59 "Honest Abe", for one

61 Heartbroken

63 Pull one over on

64 Anoint, old-style

65 Barbie, for one

66 Tree of life site

67 Blanc et al.

68 Standards org.

69 Count (on)

DOWN

1 Out of place 2 Insertion mark

3 Pilotless plane

4 Part of a peso 5 Washer cycle **6** Tropic of

8 Call to Little

Bo-Peep 9 Visitor from afar

10 Library patrons

11 Cutting remark 12 Eye flirtatiously

13 "It's us against

19 A million million 21 Slim Shady

25 Cape of Hope

27 Program airing

29 Nautical adverb 30 Badgers

31 Rare bills

32 One to worship 33 Fiery heap

34 Brooding

mothers 36 Start, as a

voyage 39 Gut feeling?

43 Parking lot covering

44 Garden State capital

46 Like most models 57 Carson's 49 Bay windows 58 Bakery fixture

51 Zaps in an OR 53 Title role for

Bea Arthur

54 Urge onward

55 Itsy-bitsy

letters

60 451, to Caesar **62** Toothpaste tube

66-across

successor

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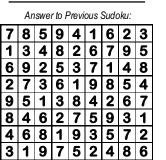
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lt's a matcha summer at Tokyo beer garden

WEBSITE (FOR RESERVATION)

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERICA EARL, STARS AND STRIPES

ith all the diversity that makes the world beautiful, there is one common ground in most countries I have lived in during summertime: beer gardens.

There is nothing like soaking

in the sun with your friends with a cool drink in hand.

Despite not being a big beer drinker (much to the chagrin of my three hops-loving sisters when we visit each other), I still enjoy checking them out. Japan is no exception, with several beer gardens cropping up now that the summer heat is here. In many districts, it is the first sighting of beer gardens since before the coronavirus pandemic.

I went to Green Tea Restaurant 1899 near Ochanomizu Station in Tokyo because their distinctive all-matcha-themed menu stood out to me from the rest. The bitter green tea is a trademark flavor of Japan, and the district of Ochanomizu literally translates to "tea water."

I'm a lover of all things matcha, so I could not wait to try the menu despite the garden being less aesthetic than some of the other ones around the city. Green Tea Restaurant 1899 is not a beer garden in the traditional sense, a literal outdoor space, as the name suggests. It does have a patio area with some greenery, but not appealing enough for me to want to sit out in the heat.

As you may be able to guess by the establishment's name, Green Tea Restaurant 1899 serves matcha items year-round, but their matcha beer garden menu ends Sept. 30.

The beer garden is 3,500 yen, or about \$25, for all-you-candrink with a two-hour time limit, which is a decent deal considering drink prices in central Tokyo. If you reserve online, the price gets knocked down to \$20. The beer garden menu is only available from 5-10 p.m. and includes

matcha-infused beer, wine, cocktails and non-alcoholic drinks.

Guests are not allowed to order more than one drink a

more than one drink at a time each (of course, I had to try).

The matcha beer blended the

The matcha beer blended the bitterness of dark beer and the bitterness of green tea better than I anticipated. The Uji green tea taste is admittedly fainter than the smell, but I'm glad I tried it as it is unique and refreshing. I was surprised to like it better than the matcha wine, a blend of the powdered tea with a house white wine which I found sour. I'm not big on sweet wines so would have been content with something drier, but the first

advance reservation, \$5-\$13 for a la carte dishes **PHONE:** 03-3251-115

GREEN TEA RESTAURANT 1899

Surugadai, Chiyoda City, Tokyo

HOURS: Daily 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

PRICE: \$20 for all-you-can drink

ADDRESS: 3-chōme-4 Kanda

taste of it made my lips pucker. It

DRESS: Casual

grew on me, however.

The restaurant also serves a hojicha beer, distinctly different because roasting the tea leaves gives them a more earthy flavor

that is a little sweeter than matcha.

My favorite of all the alcoholic

options was the sencha gin spritz, perfect for summer. Sencha is made from boiling the tea leaves whereas matcha is a powder.

The menu also includes non-alcoholic drinks such as a matcha salty dog with grapefruit and sea salt and matcha cola. The matcha cola is interesting because the green tea float part atop the cold cola is warm, making for a fun — and a little unusual— sensation when you sip it.

Food is also available for purchase a la carte, and the menu is by no means short on items to continue to satisfy your green tea fix.

Choices include matcha potato wedges, matcha Caesar salad

and matcha carp, ranging from 580 yen to 1,800 yen, or \$4-\$13, for each dish.

I had the matcha soba (700 yen, \$5), The cool noodles are a hallmark of Japanese summer fare, and the green tea flavor gave them a pleasant tanginess.

There are also a variety of matcha sweets available, such as the matcha ice cream, another Japanese summer classic, and green and black tea pound cakes.

The restaurant also has a towering matcha parfait that looks visually impressive, but I'm not a massive fan of Japanese parfaits as they tend to be all show and little substance and usually stuffed with cereal and empty space.

The cost of the pound cake, which comes with two small pieces, and ice cream combined is cheaper than the parfait (\$6.50 vs. \$10), so I recommend doing that if you want to finish with something sweet.

Reservations can be made directly on Green Tea Restaurant 1899's website.

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