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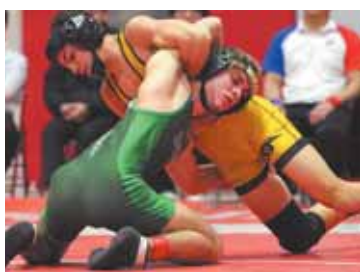
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# Kadena, Edgren bounce back with team triumphs

BY DAVE ORNAUER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 31, 2024

Tuesday’s heartbreak became Wednesday’s joy for Kadena’s and Robert D. Edgren’s wrestling teams.

A day after coming up four points behind island-rival Kubasaki in the individual-free-style tournament team standings, the Panthers routed the Dragons 41-18 to capture their seventh Far East Division I Tournament title and their first since 2010.

Meanwhile, the Eagles won their 12th Division II Far East team title, surprising favored Christian Academy Japan 35-25 in their dual-meet final. The win made longtime Edgren coach Justin Edmonds the leader in DODEA-Pacific coaching titles with 14.

Freshman Joey Phillips was especially happy with Edgren’s team title. The day before, Phillips was leading defending champion Hugo Miyamoto of St. Mary’s 8-2 in the 107-pound final and he and Edmonds thought Phillips had clinched a technical fall.

Instead, the bout was allowed to continue and Miyamoto pinned Phillips.

“I’m very happy and proud of my team for pulling through,” Phillips said. “I’m disappointed with my loss yesterday, but we fought back. And I’m also proud to be a part of coach Edmonds’ team. He’s pulled me through injury and pain just to get me here to Far East.” Phillips pinned Leaf Tai of the Knights, one of four wins by pinfall for the Eagles, along with Anthony Mulhall (114), Haruki Jones (121) and Nikolas Hawkins (160). Edmonds at season’s beginning said he didn’t even want to be coaching, but “the guys asked me to come back, so I came along for the ride. They did all the work,” Edmonds said. He has coached all



Edgren’s Nikolas Hawkins pins CAJ’s Xavier Van Dam at 160 pounds. Photo by TeAnna Reimers, Special to Stripes

Edgren’s wrestling winners and guided teams to a Far East D-II girls soccer and cheerleading title.

In the D-I final, Kadena continued its pattern of winning dual meets against Kubasaki; during the regular-season, the Panthers won all six duals against the Dragons, with Jan. 31 victory making it seven.

Coming in second by four points, 86-82, to Kubasaki “didn’t set well with us,” said Joey Wood, the Panthers’ third year coach.

Heavyweight Nathaniel Macias in the meet’s second bout surprised Far East champion Anthony Finegan of Kubasaki, which Wood said “set the tone” for the rest of the dual meet.

“That hyped the team up,” Wood said. “We had hoped we would take both (dual meet and freestyle team) titles. But coming home with one, it feels good ending it like this.”

Kadena’s Cedric Ferguson (107), Peyton Allen (133), Joseph Oh (145), Tre Shears (189) and two-time Far East Outstanding Wrestler Jeremiah Drummer each won by pin to lead the way for the Panthers.

Drummer is just the third wrestler in tournament history to earn Outstanding Wrestler honors in back-to-back years, the other two being Zolboo Enkhbayar of Brent International in 2003 and 2004 and Hunter Lane of Daegu in 2017 and 2018.

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# Cobras slither past Trojans to break title drought

BY DAVE ORNAUER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 31, 2024

YOKOTA AIR BASE – For years, decades even, E.J. King's girls basketball teams always seemed to come up short in Far East Division II Tournaments.

Maliwan Schinker, Moa Best and Miu Best ended the Cobras' 27-year title drought on Jan. 31. Moa Best hit a foul shot with 10 seconds left and King held off Zama for a 29-28 victory at Yokota High School.

"That clutch one. It only takes one and she did it," the Bests' father and Cobras coach McKinzy Best said of Moa's free throw. "The team rallied around each other and played their hearts out." They had good reason. In addition to losing last year's final to Christian Academy Japan, many of the players on the Cobras also came in second to Yokota in four sets in the Far East D-II volleyball final in October – something Schinker said she remembers well.

"It was definitely a big moment for all of us after coming up short these past two years," said Schinker, who was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"All the girls who played volleyball felt relieved after winning because we

didn't get the outcome we wanted during volleyball season. It felt great to win with my team and to come out as champions and it was an amazing way to end off my senior basketball season."

The Cobras finished their season 22-0, winners of both their fourth Far East D-II title and the Western Japan Athletic Association tournament earlier this month. "To go unbeaten and win the championship; that's a tribute to how hard the kids worked," McKinzy Best said.

The final was as close a call as they had all season.

"Zama's a great team," the elder Best said. "They gave us all we could handle and then some. But we persevered. We battled back and forth. I wouldn't have it any other way."

The Trojans, seeking their first D-II title since 2019, finished 12-7, and long-time Zama coach and athletics director Veronica Jones said: "I couldn't have been more proud if we had won the banner. They're probably the best team I ever coached." Moa Best finished with 13 points and Miu 10. For Zama, Deborah McClendon had 11 points and Lindsey So 10.

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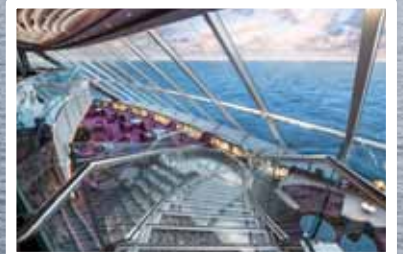
King's Katelyn Mapa and Zama's Isabella Rivera Munoz tangle for the ball. Photos by Emma Grazak, Special to Stripes



Zama's Kierstyn Aumua and Deborah McClendon tangle with E.J. King's Maliwan Schinker for the ball.

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Kinnick's Jaelin White faces up against Kadena's Jayden Allen and Cory Tripp. Photo by Kilana Allen, Special to Stripes



Kadena's Allen goes up to shoot over Kinnick's Vance Lewis. Photo by Adrienne Barawid, Special to Stripes

# Red Devils edge Panthers just before buzzer

BY DAVE ORNAUER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 31, 2024

KADENA AIR BASE – Nile C. Kinnick's boys basketball team had enough of coming up short in big games and tournament finals, coach Robert Stovall said.

Kennedy Hamilton did something about it in dramatic fashion on Jan. 31. The senior sank a bank shot from the right side with two seconds left, boosting the Red Devils to an 83-82 victory over host Kadena in the Far East Division I Tournament final.

"We had just put him back in the game,"

Stovall said of re-entering Hamilton in the closing seconds. "Somehow, he got the ball and put it up."

With the victory, the Red Devils closed their season 20-5, including four wins in five games at Far East. It's Kinnick's second Far East Division I title overall and their first since 2018, also on Okinawa.

Kinnick's performance in the tournament also ensured it defeated every team it played during the season at least once.

"It's been a great season," Stovall said. "We avenged every loss we had, but the

thing is, we were so evenly matched, St. Mary's, Kadena and us."

Kinnick burst in front by 17 points in the first half, but the Panthers stormed back to tie it 42-42 at halftime. The game see-sawed from there, with the Panthers leading by four points after three quarters, and it stayed tight all the way to the closing seconds.

DeShaun Nixon hit one of two foul shots to put the Panthers ahead 82-81 with 7.5 seconds left. Xavier Wright shot from the left side, but it was slapped out of bounds by Kadena. The next inbound pass

went to Hamilton, who sank his game-winning shot.

"They made a great shot, a buzzer beater; you couldn't ask for a better game, except for Kadena to win," said coach Antiwon Tucker, whose Panthers were seeking their 10th D-I title and first since 2010. "They're (Kinnick) a great team, always tough to play."

In his final game for Kinnick, Vance Lewis led the Red Devils with 32 points and was named tourney Most Valuable Player. Jaden Patsel paced the Panthers (20-3) with 22.

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Yokota's Jai Bailey, the tournament MVP, shoots against Perry's Jahiion Francois and B.J. Hill.



Perry's Sam Kasperski comes down with a rebound in front of Yokota's Braedan Raybon.

# Yokota downs Perry to defend title

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ORNAUER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 31, 2024

CAMP ZAMA – Braedan Raybon watched nine senior teammates cruise last year to Yokota's third Far East Boys Division II Basketball Tournament title and told himself he hoped his turn would come in 2024.

Now a senior himself, Raybon caught fire in the third period of Jan. 31's D-II final against Matthew C. Perry. He had eight of his 15 points in the quarter, helping the Panthers pull away for a 70-47 triumph and their second straight small-schools tournament title.

"I dreamed of doing the same thing," Raybon said. "I went from being a swing

player with bad knees onto the varsity ... I saw the opportunity and I took it."

Sergio Giddens added 23 points and tournament Most Valuable Player Jai Bailey added 14 for Yokota.

It was the second straight D-II title for the Panthers, who also won back-to-back championships in 2015 and 2016. That goes with the Division I crowns Yokota won when it was classified a large school in 1976 and 2006.

And the mastermind behind Yokota's two straight titles wasn't even supposed to be coaching the Panthers this season. Dan Galvin had said last Feb. 1 that he was stepping down, but changed his mind as

the season approached.

"I've learned never to say never again," Galvin said, only half jokingly.

The Panthers finished 18-11 and won the final by almost the same margin as the last time the Samurai and Yokota played each other, 72-48 on Jan. 13. Perry finished 17-8.

"They really put it together in the last couple of weeks," Galvin said, citing players such as Bailey, three-year starting guard Royce Canta, Raybon and others. "Royce has been the glue for us. Sergio has been big for us and Jai has been great for us all season."

B.J. Hill had 12 of his 17 points in the

first quarter and the Samurai broke out of the gate quickly, taking a 6-0 lead. But the Panthers stormed back and kept it close through the rest of the first half, in which there were eight lead changes.

Then Raybon happened. Yokota outscored Perry 20-8 in the third period and the game was never close again. Jahiion Francois finished with 16 points for the Samurai.

"We brought back many of our players and we had a good 1-2 punch in Hill and Francois," Samurai coach Daniel Burns said. "Unfortunately, we ran out of gas. But I'm proud of them."

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Air Force Staff Sgt. James Kennedy pets Maria, a therapy dog, at the USO on Yokota Air Base on Jan. 25.



Maria, a therapy dog.

# LIFTING SPIRITS

## Dog that survived Hurricane Maria provides emotional support at Yokota

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 29, 2024

**YOKOTA AIR BASE** — A furry friend has been lifting spirits every week at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo.

Maria, an 8-year-old lab terrier mix and a rescue dog, is the first certified therapy dog at a USO in Japan, Josephine Grenier, USO Yokota's operations specialist, told Stars and Stripes on Jan. 18.

"Maria's job is to come in and volunteer her time to boost the morale of our Yokota community," she said.

As a therapy dog, Maria spends 5-7 p.m. each Thursday at USO in Yokota's Yujo Community Center. Visitors may pet and play with Maria and treats are welcome, too.

Maria, who started visiting the

USO in August, attracts up to 15 people per visit, Grenier said.

"When you're overseas, for at least single airmen, we're not really allowed to have dogs, cats or pets with us in our dorms," Staff Sgt. James Kennedy, a videographer for American Forces Network Tokyo, said at the USO. "So, for someone to bring their pet and let us interact and play with is a pretty big morale boost for me."

Maria's human, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Kristen Yarber, a radio DJ and video broadcaster for AFN, adopted her in 2017.

Maria was a "satos" — Puerto Rican slang for a street dog — Yarber recently told Stars and Stripes. She survived two major hurricanes that hit the island in 2017. One of the storms, Hurricane Maria, is how the dog got her name.

Pregnant and homeless, Maria

was rescued by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, which took her to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Norfolk, Va., where Maria gave birth, and her puppies were soon adopted.

Maria remained in the shelter, unwanted, underweight, anemic and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, Yarber said.

"She was in like a glass box when I saw her for the first time," she said. "They brought her out and she jumped on me, and they were like, she never does that. I told them that I had been deployed as providing humanitarian assistance to those islands and they were like, 'This has to be your dog.'"

It was October, Dog Adoption

Month, and Yarber took Maria home for \$25. "I realized that when I was around her my anxiety was so low, any time I saw her I just got really happy," she said. "So, I decided to get her registered as a therapy dog in 2020."

A therapy dog does not require special training like a service dog and is sometimes confused with emotional support animals.

Therapy dogs provide support to other people, while an emotional support animal provides support to its owner, according to servicedogcertifications.org, an unofficial website where owners can register their dogs.

The simple act of petting animals releases an automatic relaxation response, according to the

University of California of Los Angeles Health website.

Petting promotes mental health by stimulating the release of serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin, hormones that can play a part in elevating moods, the website states. It also lowers anxiety and helps people relax, providing comfort and reducing loneliness.

For physical health, the act lowers blood pressure, improves cardiovascular health and diminishes overall physical pain, according to the site.

Maria appears to hit all those boxes for her admirers.

"She is such a sweet dog, and she loves getting all the pets she can get," Kennedy said. "She's a great dog and I want to keep coming back so I can say hello to her." agee.kelly@stripes.com @KellyA\_Stripes

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# Rules for riding e-scooters in Japan

BY SHOJI KUDAKA,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**W**ith the recent uptick of violations and accidents involving e-scooters in Japan, I realized it might be time to catch up on the rules and regulations of using these vehicles.

E-scooters, or “Dendo kickboards,” have become increasingly popular in Japan. Big cities like Tokyo and Osaka have electric scooter stations, making them easy to rent with a simple phone app and no oversight. The use of these scooters has grown and now other tourist destinations like Okinawa are also seeing a rise of users whizzing around the island.

E-scooters are an attractive option not only because they’re convenient, but also because, thanks to a new law in 2023, you don’t need a driver’s license to operate them, but you must be 16 years old. Despite the relaxing of the law, it is important to note that since the law took effect in July 2023, there has been an increase in accidents involving these electric-powered devices.

According to a report from Jidoutenlab, a website dedicated to self-driving cars, violations in Japan involving e-scooters increased to a whopping 2,021 in the first three months of dropping the driver’s license rule. Traffic signal negligence, failure to stop and stop sign violations were among the most common violations.

If you are familiar with the traffic situation in Japan, the number would make sense. Reckless e-scooter operators crisscrossing the busy intersections with pedestrian and vehicle traffic creates a dangerous situation. Paired with alcohol consumption, it’s a recipe for a potentially fatal disaster.

As e-scooters become a more accessible and more convenient way to get around, it is important you follow the rules of the road. Here is what you need to know to ensure a safe ride for you and those around you!



File photo

12.4 mph), a driver’s license is required. Please make sure you check the maximum speed of your e-scooter before riding it.

## 3 No riding on sidewalks

E-scooters are compact, so it is tempting to ride them on sidewalks and pedestrian paths. However, in most cases, it is illegal to do this. Most e-scooters should only be operated on the roadways by keeping left or in the bike lane. According to National Police Agency (NPA), e-scooters with a max speed of 6 km/h and below can go in paths designated for pedestrians and bicycles while giving the right of way to pedestrians and sticking to the area closest to traffic while on the path.

Lane violations can result in a jail time of up to three months or a fine of up to 50,000 yen.

In addition, those on e-scooters should yield to elderly and handicapped pedestrians. Slow down when passing school buses and watch out for small children or others debarking the bus. A violation of these rules could lead to up to one year of jail time or a fine of up to 300,000 yen.

## 4 No drinking and driving

Just like getting behind the wheel of a car, drinking and driving an e-scooter is a big no-no. Since the rule change in July, there have been several cases of DUI involving e-scooters. Violation of this rule can result in up to five years’ jail time or a fine of up to one million yen.



## 5 Wear a helmet

Although wearing a helmet is not an obligation, there are severe consequences to consider if you decide not to. In fact, several accidents have occurred on e-scooters where riders not wearing helmets were seriously or fatally injured.



On base, helmets are required for motorcycles, mopeds, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), minibikes or any other similarly designed motor vehicles, according to USFJ regulation issued in 2015.

Yokota Air Base Instruction issued in 2016 says “All SOFA status personnel are required to wear proper PPE regardless of whether they are on or off base.”

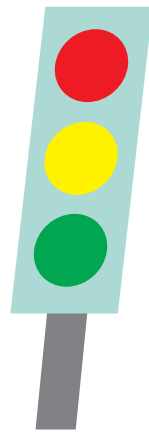
PPE stands for personal protective equipment.

For non-SOFA and locals, as far as the Japanese law is concerned, wearing a helmet is “doryoku gimu,” which means riders are “obligated to make an effort” to wear one.

## 6 Always follow traffic signals

Just like when you are driving a car or riding a bike, you need to follow traffic signals. Failure to do so is subject to up to three months of jail time or a fine of up to 50,000 yen.

First, make sure you keep left staying with the flow of traffic when on a roadway. To make a right turn, as you would on a bicycle, you must follow the pedestrian crossing or flow of traffic. In other words, you go through the intersection staying on the left, then stop at the other side of the intersection. When the traffic light turns green to your right side, you can continue in your way towards the right. It’s a little confusing, but if you’ve ridden a bike in Japan or if you have seen other e-scooter riders and cyclists, you should be able to get the gist.



## 7 No tandem riding

Riding an e-scooter in tandem is prohibited. Violation of this rule is subject to a fine of up to 50,000 yen. This goes for children as well, which means you can’t ride an e-scooter with your kids.

## 8 No parking zone

Like bikes and vehicles, you cannot park e-scooters in random spots. Look for designated parking areas. Avoid parking in or around intersections, crosswalks, tunnels, railway gates, rail tracks, bus stops etc. Make sure you are at least 5 meters away from crosswalks and intersections. Keep a distance of 10 meters from bus stops, streetcar stops, railway gates, and traffic safety zones. Parking on steep slopes also needs to be avoided.

If you park on the side of the road where the path is not used for pedestrians, do so parallel to the traffic, along the left end of the path outside the traffic’s left lane. If the path (the side of the road) is used for pedestrians, on the other hand, make sure there is a room of 0.75 m at least to the left side of your e-scooter (for pedestrians). If you don’t have a room of 0.75 m to your left, avoid parking there.

If the road (traffic) has two parallel lines or a pair of a line and a dotted line running along its left end, avoid parking there because the side of the road is designated for pedestrians.

Parking violations can result in a fine of up to 150,000 yen.

## 9 Don’t text or talk and ride

Smartphone use while operating an e-scooter is prohibited. Violators face up to one year of jail time or a fine of up to 300,000 yen.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



## 1 Age limits

You need to be at least 16 years old to ride an e-scooter. Violating this age limit is subject to a fine of up to six months or a fine of up to 100,000 yen. This goes for both drivers and the company or individuals renting out the e-scooter.

## 2 Some e-scooters do require a driver’s license

If your e-scooter can drive faster than 20 km/h (approx.

\* Based on info published by the National Police Agency (NPA)  
<https://www.npa.go.jp/bureau/traffic/anzen/tokuteikogata.html>



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## Yokosuka's 'lover's shrines' promise to grant Valentine's wishes

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPE JAPAN

It's that time again to grab that box of chocolates and surprise your sweetheart for Valentine's Day. Lucky for you if you live near Yokosuka Naval Base, there is a power spot where couples and singles go to wish for love or marriage.

Uraga is a hair-pin shaped narrow bay that shields ships from heavy wind and high tide, offering an ideal port to any type of ship. You sure will enjoy great views of the blue bay, fishing and cargo ships berthed in the port on one side and mountains on the other, as you stroll along the bay-side.

There are two traditional Shin-to shrines facing each other with a quarter mile of bay separating them. Known as the Lover's Shrines, they are both called "Kano Jinja" (literally "shrine of wishes-come-true"), and are distinguished from each other by the location - Nishi Kano Shrine (west shrine) and Higashi Kano Shrine (east shrine).

It is a popular attraction for those looking for love and the shrines have a unique tradition to lock in the wish. At Nishi Kano Shrine, visitors purchase a magatama (comma-shaped bead) then place it inside an omamori-bukuro (amulet case) only sold at Higashi Kano Shrine across the bay. Completing this task is said to bring luck, love and a wedding, if that is your wish.

I visited both shrines recently—but not for myself, as I am a married man, you know! A co-worker of mine wanted to visit for their own wish.

Nishi Kano Shrine, built in

### Higashi Kano Jinja (east Kano shrine)

**LOCATION:** 2-21-25 Higashi Uraga, Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Pref.

**ADMISSION:** Free  
**TEL:** 046-841-5300



### Nishi Kano Jinja (west Kano shrine)

**LOCATION:** 1-1-13 Nishi Uraga, Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Pref.

**ADMISSION:** Free  
**TEL:** 046-841-0179



1842, was our first stop. The bead here was 500 yen (or about \$3.50). We then headed via orange ferry boat to the Higashi Kano Shrine. This short cruise is an enjoyable way to look out over the bay and appreciate the port and ships docked there.

The east shrine, compared to its counterpart, is brighter and has a more open atmosphere with its tall shrine building and light green roof.

We walked up the stone stairs and as we faced the shrine, made a wish for my coworker. With another 500 yen, I bought the coveted amulet case to secure my coworker's wish.

The bead from the West Shrine fit in the cute amulet case perfectly. It sure will make her wish come true! As it is tiny and cute, this lucky charm can be a great souvenir for friends or family members.

Visit alone or with your sweetheart or with a friend (or coworker) who needs a little help in the love department. Whether or not my coworker's luck changed after that visit is yet to be seen, but it was still fun to visit and wish for her future happiness. Maybe you'll have better luck and the Lover's Shrines will make your Valentine's wish sure will come true.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



## Speakin' Japanese

### Talking romance on Valentine's Day

Pronunciation key: "A" is short (like "ah"); "E" is short (like "get"); "I" is short (like "it"); "O" is long (like "old"); "U" is long (like "tube"); and "AI" is a long "I" (like "hike"). Most words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but "OU" is a long "O" with emphasis on that syllable.

Valentine's Day is considered to be a great chance for women to confess their love in Japan. They give chocolates (often homemade) to men on the day to express their love. But don't for a second think that all the women who are presenting you a chocolate are in love with you! You need to know there is a custom of women giving "giri-choko" (obligation chocolate) to their male friends, supervisors or colleagues to show their friendship. Men are supposed to give return gifts (usually candy) to the women who gifted them chocolates on White Day (Mar. 14). Enjoy the day and try to avoid thinking every woman who gives you chocolate loves you.

**"Watashino chokoreeto wo uketotte kudasai."** = Please accept my chocolate.

("watashino" = my, "chokoreeto" = chocolate, "uketotte" = accept, "kudasai" = please)

**"Kokorowo komete tukuri mashita."** = I made it with the greatest of care.

("kokorowo komete" = with the greatest of care, "tsukuri mashita" = made)

**"Arigato gozaimasu."** = Thank you so much.

**"Sukidesu."** = I love (like) you.

**"Aishitemasu."** = I love you.

**"Watashimo desu."** = I do, too.

**"Tsukiatte itadake masenka?"** = Will you go out with me?

("tsukiatte" = go together, "itadake masenka?" = will you ... please?)

**"Deeto ni ikimasenka?"** = Let's go on a date, shall we?

("deeto" = date, "ikimasenka?" = Let's go, shall we?)

**"Shokuji ni ikimasenka?"** = Let's go out for dinner, shall we?

("shokuji" = meal/dinner)

**"Kireina akai bara wo doozo."** = Here's a beautiful red rose.

("kireina" = beautiful, "akai" = red, "bara" = rose, "doozo" = go ahead/please)

**"Chokoreeto wa osuki desuka?"** = Do you like chocolate?

("osuki desuka?" = do you like...?)

**"Kekkon shite itadake masenka?"** = Would you please marry me?

("kekkon" = marriage, "shite" = do)

**"Anata wo shiawase ni shimasu."** = I will make you happy.

("anata" = you, "shiawase" = happy, "shimasu" = make/do)

**"Yorokonde."** = With my pleasure.

**"Sumimasen. Okotowari shimasu."** = I'm sorry, but I have to refuse.

("sumimasen" = I'm sorry; "okotowari shimasu" = refuse)

**"Chokoreeto wo ikutsu morai mashita ka?"** =

How many chocolates did you get?

("ikutsu" = how many, "morai mashita" = have received)

**"Itsutsu morai mashita."** = I got five.

("itsutsu" = five of, "hitotsu" = one of, "futatsu" = two of, "mittsu" = three of, "yottsu" = four of, "muttsu" = six of, "nanatsu" = seven of, "yattsu" = eight of, "kokonotsu" = nine of, "jukko" = ten of, "hyakko" = a hundred of)

**"Giri-choko wo takusan moraimashita."** = I received many obligation chocolates.

("giri-choko" = obligation chocolates, "takusan" = many)

**"Howaitodee ni kyandii wo okaeshi shimasu."**

= I will present them with candies on White Day for return.

("howaitodee" = White Day, "kyandii" = candy, "okaeshi shimasu" = will present ... for return)

**WHEN ON OKINAWA,** you can also say it in "Uchinaanguchi" (island dialect) like this:

**"Kanasandoo."** = I love you.

**"Valentine Yaakutoo, isshoni Gohan Kamiigai ichunnaa"** = It's Valentine's Day today. Let's go out for dinner, shall we?

**"Majun narannaa?"** = Would you please marry me?

**"Yaa nukutoo shiawaseni sabii sa"** = I will make you happy.

**"Yorokonde onegee sabira"** = With my pleasure

**"Guburee yashiga naibiransaaya"** = I am sorry, but I have to refuse.

**"Chocolate suki yaibinnaa?"** = Do you like chocolate?

**"Nifeedeebiru."** = Thank you so much.

– Shoji Kudaka and

Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Okinawa

## Valentine's Day events

Feb. 10-12

### 10th National Tirolean Chocolate Stacking Championship

Impress your Valentine with a test of strength and might at this challenging and fun event. In this timed competition, you stack as many Tirol chocolates for a chance to win 1,000 Tirol chocolates.

**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Final round: 3:30 p.m. on the park's Sun Plaza stage

**ADDRESS:** Yomiuriland Theme Park, 4015-1 Yanokuchi, Inagi City, Tokyo, 206-8725

**FEES:** 100 yen to enter competition. Park admission required.



WEBSITE

Weekends and holidays only  
through Feb. 25

### Take a romantic night stroll at Hana Biyori

Enjoy the stars and the lights with your Valentine at the picturesque gardens next door to Yomiuriland. Illuminated trees and over 1,000 bamboo lights will set the scene for a fantastic evening.

**TIME:** 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**ADDRESS:** 4015-1 Yanokuchi, Inagi,

Tokyo 206-8566 (Look for special parking and entrance to Hana Biyori)

**FEES:** From 4 p.m., 900 yen for adults (junior high and above), 500 yen for children ages 3 to elementary school age.



WEBSITE



1

Enoshima Island, Fujisawa



*I chose it because we found Enoshima on our very first trip to Japan 2 and a half years ago, there's a folktale about a beautiful maiden who an evil dragon falls in love with, the dragon renounces his evil deeds and professes his love to the maiden and that was how the island was formed! We found an amazing place to see the sunset over Mt. Fuji and I knew I had to propose there!"*

*Chance and Sarah / 20s / American couple*

Chance and Sarah have been making a bit of a name for themselves in Japan travel communities online due to their stunning photos and thirst for adventure. You can really see their love of travel through their posts, as well as their love for each other! The pair love traveling in general, but Chance told us Japan was extra-special for them: "I felt I had to do it in Japan, Japan stole our hearts ever since we first came here". Chance said his heart was originally stolen by Sarah, but then once again by Japan itself! He said it "just felt right" to do it in the land that swept them both off their feet. Is that romantic or what? They spent their honeymoon in Japan, and explored far and wide – including a beautiful trip to Hokkaido to see the autumn leaves! The (currently) purple haired couple have their own YouTube channel, it's great to watch them going along on their adventures around the world!



Photos courtesy of [www.youtube.com/sarahandchanceworldwide](https://www.youtube.com/sarahandchanceworldwide)

2

Keisei Rose Garden, Chiba



# Top 6 Amazing proposals



Going on holiday is always an exciting time, and you have beautiful memories and an urge to come back. So what makes a trip to Japan any more special? Well, how about a proposal?

2

Keisei Rose Garden, Chiba



*My husband proposed to me in Keisei Rose Garden (京成バラ園) because he knows that I love roses most of all flowers. This garden is filled with thousands of roses in all kinds and colors, and it's a very romantic spot. We go back to this rose garden every year from now on, on the same day that he proposed to me, to celebrate that proposal among all of the roses."*

*Stephanie / 20s-30s / Swedish and Japanese couple*

Stephanie told us that her now husband proposed to her in May 2018. It sounds like they visited at the absolute perfect time – the sun was shining and they were surrounded by a beautiful array of different colored roses, all in full bloom. Forget the romantic gesture of a single red rose, and give your loved one a whole garden instead! With such beautiful sights to be found in the park, it's no wonder they go back every year. And to top it off, they had their wedding in the Landmark Tower at Yokohama's Royal Park Hotel. The festivities took place on the 66th floor, where there is a stunning view over Yokohama. Stephanie said the wedding was "one of the best days in my life ever, because I got to celebrate my wedding with my husband in this beautiful spot with this amazing view."

Photo courtesy of Live Japan

3

Kyoto



*I was shocked and moved to tears, he was nervous but I knew he was serious. Our first trip together as a couple was on our second trip to Japan – we ended up getting married!"*

*Charmaine / 30s / American and Japanese couple*

Charmaine told us that in this case it was not at all planned out, but completely purely on gut feeling. Sometimes when you know, you know! Kyoto Station is one of those in which there is much more to do than you might think. Whether you're feeling a little lovey-dovey from all the strolling around in the traditional areas, or you're simply lost in each other's eyes at one of the great restaurants there, a proposal is not totally out of the ordinary! Charmaine has been to Japan in spring and summer now so far, and she wants to try and complete the season by visiting in winter next.





BY CASSANDRA LORD,  
LIVE JAPAN

come back with love to the world? That's exactly what the following six couples did, and we're happy to be able to share their reasons and memories with you too. Who knows, perhaps these stories will spark you to do the same...?

3

Station

ervous, followed by happy us and a bit shaky. Japan was le back in 2017 and this was ven climbed mt fuji!"

maine / 20s / Australian couple

ase, the proposal spot was letely spontaneous and based es that's just the way to go –

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Photos courtesy of Charmaine

4

Suga Shrine, Tokyo

I proposed there for a few reasons, we had been to Japan prior and she always wants to go back, so it'll have a bigger meaning each time we go back. She fell in love with the movie [Your Name] the first time we watched it, she's watched it countless others since and as the giant climax of the movie, it obviously stands out in your mind."

Bryan / 20s-30s / American couple

Bryan saw our article that pointed out the real Tokyo spots featured in the hit movie, Your Name, and told us that he proposed to his now wife in one of the spots! Of course, we had to reach out to him to hear more. He told us that his wife is a huge fan of the movie, so they went to visit the iconic red-handled staircase.

Bryan told us that he had wanted to propose on the staircase itself, but there were a few too many people taking pictures, so he walked down to the foot of the stairs. "I stopped to "tie my shoe", she walked another step or two, and when she turned around I was down on one knee with the ring out. I didn't even get to actually ask because she started crying and asking if I was serious." In the end, she of course said yes, and one year and three weeks later, they're heading back to Japan as a married couple!

Photo courtesy of Suptar, Shutterstock.com

5

Hakuba Snow Field

My husband Peter proposed on the snow field in Hakuba at sunset while it was snowing. He said he always wanted to propose in the snow and knew japan would be perfect as it's my favorite country."

Kristy and Peter / 20s / Australian couple

Hakuba is an area a few hours from Tokyo, known mostly for its incredible skiing. And of course, where there's skiing, there's snow! Peter chose this winter wonderland to propose to his wife Kristy to make their trip all the more special. Kristy told us that she was in absolute shock, and was really impressed by her now husband's choice. They've been happily married for five years, and intend to come back to Japan to celebrate the anniversary along with their two young daughters. A romantic getaway can now be a secret passed down to the next generation – celebrating as a family sounds like the perfect way to do it. Although Hokkaido usually comes to mind when people think of snow in Japan, there are plenty of spots elsewhere that really don't get enough attention. If you want to have a magical time among the falling snowflakes, perhaps Hakuba is the place to go.

Photo courtesy of Kristy

6

Mount Fuji

I believe he (Tom - my fiancé) decided on this spot because it was an important moment to him. He has been wanting to summit Fuji for the last 10 years and he never had the chance to. We also made the hike a family trip so my daughter was present (her name is Chantrell, she is 10). And usually climbing Fuji is a once in a lifetime event. After he proposed he joked that a proposal couldn't be more romantic than that."

Tammy and Tom / 30s-40s / Canadian couple

The top of Mount Fuji is romantic indeed! Choosing a one-in-a-lifetime event as the stage for your proposal shows just how important the proposal was to Tom. Tammy told us that she was originally in such a state of shock that she blurted out "no"! All that hiking must have gone to her head. Of course, she shortly rectified her shocked mistake and told him yes, then shared a kiss and a hug at the summit. She also told us that it was pretty darn cold at the top! She felt bad for her daughter and they even made a makeshift shelter out of their hiking backpacks to stay warm for a spell! Despite the chill though, all three of them thoroughly enjoyed their trip, and hope to be able to come back to Japan once a year. We hope they can too!

Every one of these proposal stories is absolutely beautiful, and we're so glad they were able to make these magical memories in Japan in their own special way. Whether it's a classic like Mount Fuji, or somewhere that is special only to you, there are so many ways to start a life together. Even if you don't plan on proposing any time soon, we hope the stories these guys have shared will shine a little light on your day!

Photos courtesy of Live Japan



# VALENTINE'S DAY

How a fake American holiday became an even faker Japanese one

BY KOICHI,  
TOFUGU.COM

**C**hristmas is over. Now it's time to take a look at another holiday that's isn't quite the same in Japan: Valentine's Day.

As with all Western holidays that have made their way over to Japan, almost all of the changes and "traditions" have been created by commercial organizations, looking to build swimming pools of 500 yen coins. In fact, only during one week before Valentine's Day, chocolate companies make half of their annual sales. That's a lot of money, and a lot of chocolate.

Then again, in America (and other places too), we give a lot of chocolate as well. So, what makes Japan different?

## ONLY GIRLS GIVE CHOCOLATE

Back in the 1950's, a company advertised Valentine's Day chocolates to non-Japanese living in Japan at the time. Then, Japanese companies wanted to get on board too, and started advertising Valentine's Day chocolates as well. During this period there was quite a bit of "Westernization" where people wanted to adopt more Western / American traditions. Because of this, Valentine's Day in Japan did fairly well.

But there was one problem...

It seems that at some point someone messed up a translation and ended up telling the Japanese people that Valentine's Day was an opportunity for women to express their love to men. Because of this, even to this day it's mostly women giving chocolates to men (don't worry, men get their turn too, eventually).

## WHO IS RECEIVING THE CHOCOLATE?

It gets more complicated, though. Because it's not nice to make people feel left out on Valentine's day (especially in, say, the office), there are different kinds of chocolates girls give out now, depending on who they're giving it to.



File photos

## GIRI-CHOCOLATE

Giri-Chocolate means "obligatory chocolate." This kind of chocolate refers to the chocolate you have to give to people (who aren't really people you love). These could be people like bosses, coworkers, male friends, etc. Even sadder still, there's also something called "Cho-Giri-Chocolate" (Ultra-obligatory-chocolate), which is given to unpopular people you really don't want to give chocolates to.

In order to tell these chocolates apart from other (less obligatory) chocolates, these chocolates tend to be pretty run-of-the-mill, and not super expensive. Things don't start getting crazy until we get to Honmei-Chocolates.

## HONMEI-CHOCOLATE

Honmei-Chocolate means "favorite chocolate." This kind of chocolate is the kind of chocolate you give to the one you want to express your love to. These chocolates tend to be more expensive or possibly even home made. Basically, it has to be obvious that these are honmei and not giri, so they have to be on a completely different level (Way to go chocolate companies! Ka-ching! ¥¥¥¥).

## TOMO-CHOCOLATE

Tomo-choco just means "friend chocolates," and refers to chocolates you give to your female friends (as a female). Simple as that.

## GETTING THE GUYS TO GIVE

Guys don't give anything on Valentine's Day in Japan, but they do have their own day one month later where they're expected to return the favor. That day is known as "White Day" (or, if you're old enough to remember, "Marshmallow Day"), and it also sounds pretty expensive.

Everyone enjoy their Valentine's Day... and to all you girls out there: I'm waiting for my cho-giri-choco from you.



File photo

BY HASHI,  
TOFUGU.COM

**I**f you're a dude and you think you're safe from Valentine's Day. Hold up, you're not out of the woods quite yet; well, at least if you're in Japan.

For most of us in the West, Valentine's Day ends on February 15, but in Japan it's not quite over until March 15. March 14 – exactly one month after Valentine's Day – is White Day in Japan.

## Valentine's Day in Japan

Unlike Western traditions where gift exchanges between loved ones are mutual,

Japanese Valentine's Day is all about men getting presents. Sorry ladies, but you're out of luck on Valentine's Day if you want to celebrate it Japanese-style. Women have to wait for White Day before they can get any gifts.

## What is White Day?

If Valentine's Day in Japan is all about the guys, White Day is all about the ladies. White Day is a chance for all the men who received gifts on Valentine's Day to return the favor to the ladies in their lives.



Ice-cold response not typical.  
Photo courtesy of Tofugu

White Day and Valentine's Day have a lot of similarities. Both aren't necessarily romantic holidays – you can give gifts to anybody of the opposite sex, even if your relationship is strictly platonic. Friends and co-workers exchange gifts on both days.

And on both days, chocolate is the gift of choice, but there's a bit more nuance to it

than buying a box of See's and being done with it. You can buy different types of chocolate for the different people in your life: your friends get different chocolates than your co-workers who get different chocolates than your significant other.

## The origins of White Day

Cynically enough, White Day is strictly a celebration manufactured by the candy industry (unlike true holidays rooted in years of tradition, like Pocky Day). In 1978, the National Confectionery Industry Association tried to boost sales, and decided that a new holiday was the best way to do it.

Originally it was called Marshmallow Day and was all about marshmallows, not chocolate. People liked the idea of the new holiday, but weren't too keen on the marshmallows. The preferred candy changed from marshmallows to chocolate, but the color scheme stayed the same – hence the name "White Day," and why white chocolate remains a popular White Day gift, even today.

## White Day outside of Japan

White Day is definitely a uniquely

Japanese invention, but it's spread to some other Asian countries, including South Korea and China.

South Korea even has yet another Valentine's-Day-related holiday: the aptly named day for single people, Black Day. People in Korea celebrate being single by burying their sorrows with a noodle dish with black bean sauce called jajangmyeon.

(No doubt, Black Day is just a ploy by the powerful Korean noodle industry.)

So for those of you in Japan, I hope you have a happy White Day; those of us elsewhere in the world will just have to buy our own chocolate.



Jajangmyeon  
Photo courtesy of 아침꿀물





# You're the chopsticks to my sushi!

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALLIE WHALEN,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**D**o you love sushi? Or Valentine's Day? How about Sushi Valentines?! We are currently living in the land of sushi and Japan goes crazy for Valentine's Day. It's hard not to go overboard when you see all of the cute stuff in the store! The kids and I love choosing just the right Valentines for friends, but this year all of my searches kept coming up short. We never found quite the right thing so I decided to get on Canva and create my own. Naturally I thought of you all and I knew I wanted to make a blog post out of it in case you love giving cute, homemade Valentines, too!

● As long as you have access to a printer and you can save the image, then you can make this Valentines card for all of your special people. You can keep it simple or make it fancy. You can even have your kids throw them together the night before the school party (I know I'm not alone here!)



## Craft easy, kawaii Japan-themed Valentines

● I love that these Valentines make it easy to surprise your loved ones with a homemade card! (Who doesn't like getting a special homemade Valentine?!) If you want to add to your Valentine's Day celebration you could also grab a platter of sushi from your favorite take out place and then attach this card to it. If you really want to bring things full circle, check out the Michelin Guide to pairing sushi with wine. Grabbing a bottle of Chablis or Riesling to go with the sushi would make for a perfect evening at home.

### Here are the basic supplies you'll need

- Thick Craft Paper or Cardstock
- Chopsticks
- Valentine's Stickers
- Washi Tape
- Take Out Food Containers (Optional)

### These sushi-themed Valentines are good for

- Kids
- School parties
- Friends
- Family
- Neighbors
- Surprising your forever-Valentine!

● This Valentine is also great if your kids go to a candy-free school or if you want to avoid extra candy. But if you want to use cute washi tape and attach this Valentine to a box of chocolates I don't think anyone will be upset about it! If you're scrambling to figure out Valentines this year, I'm sure you even have some disposable chopsticks laying around the house. I think my favorite thing about this is how easy it is to customize it for whatever you have! You can really make it your own from the color of paper to the type of chopsticks you use.



Print the image! ▶



Instagram



Blog



● If you choose to use these sushi-themed Valentines this year please tag me on Instagram so I can see how you personalize them!

Allie Whalen is a culinary artist and amateur photographer with a love for the outdoors. She shares her experiences online where she writes about simple and holistic ways to take care of yourself and the world around you. She is a military spouse based in beautiful Okinawa near Camp Hansen. Allie and her family enjoy the rugged, tranquil life on the northern parts of the island. You can find Allie's blog at <https://www.alliemwhalen.com>, where she chronicles her adventures in learning and living by the sea.

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VIEW VIDEO



# EPICUREAN ELEVATION

## Executive chef cooking up something new at New Sanno

STRIPES JAPAN

**A**s if you needed another excuse to visit the New Sanno, the U.S. military hotel in Tokyo's Hiroo District now has a new executive chef cooking up new, exciting things.

Kevin Connell has 36 years of culinary experience in kitchens in Tokyo, Toronto, Puerto Rico and all over the U.S. Connell was named Executive Chef at the New Sanno in August and is planning new concepts for the hotel's many restaurants, including Wellington's, The Emporium and Sunday brunch.

We caught up with Connell and picked his brain about all things culinary and what is in the works for those visiting the New Sanno in 2024.

### Q&A with Kevin Connell

#### Where did you study culinary arts?

I graduated from Scottsdale Culinary Institute in 1996 but worked as a chef in many cities including Tokyo, Seattle, Portland, Las Vegas, Toronto, NYC, San Juan PR and Santa Clara. These have included restaurants, hotels, convention centers, universities and stadiums, fairly well-rounded in style and volume.

#### What inspired you to become a chef?

I wish I had a glamorous answer, but truthfully I got hired as a dishwasher at 17 and worked my way up. I loved the stress, the heat, the danger. Being a chef was the same type of adrenaline rush as being a musician on stage, and as a young chef, my ego loved it. As I matured, it became much more about mentoring and inspiring young chefs, creating new concepts and seeing plans and people develop to their full potential. Also have to give a nod to my parents, while they would never take credit, they both cook excellently and we ate well.

#### Can you share a memorable food experience or meal that influenced your cooking style?

Wow, so many, impossible to narrow down. But a couple that shocked me was at Verjus in San Francisco, taking a fun wine bottle shop concept and adding some of the most innovative and ingredient driven dishes. Another is the stalwart Gramercy Tavern, which I think serves the best burger in NYC from such a famous kitchen. Lastly, the many farm-to-fork restaurants in Portland really inspired me to look at food seasonally and take the approach of "less is more" on the plate when using ingredients are at their peak.

#### Do you have a signature dish or cooking technique that you're particularly proud of?

I make a mean "Sunday Gravy." I think I excel at refining the Italian American classics of my youth. I used to be into molecular cuisine and modern plantings, but I find myself reverting back to simpler preparations and concentrating on flavors. If there is one skill, I'm most proud of, it is wine pairings, I did a lot at Tokyo American Club. Being passionate about wine and the experience of sharing wine and food with friends, that's the best.

#### Is this your first time living in Japan?

I lived here previously in 2006-2010, working as Executive Chef for Tokyo American Club and did some private consulting. I met my wife in 2005 and followed her to Japan. With my previous knowledge of the country being food, electronics, cars and Godzilla based, I quickly fell in love with the real Japan and decided to make it home.

#### Why the New Sanno?

The New Sanno represents a harmonious friendship of the US and Japan, much like my marriage! I was initially attracted to the amount of restaurant outlets in relation to the boutique size of the hotel, making me believe we can offer a more personalized service to our guests. Being someone that still struggles with language, working in a familiar business setting means I can concentrate more on the next level and contribute more. Also, my father is a veteran, so serving the mission in my own way makes me proud. I like to think that by connecting troops to the foods of home makes them feel comfort and happiness. It's a privilege.

#### What plans do you have for the New Sanno menus?

Well, not sure how much I can divulge yet, but there are some exciting changes coming to The New Sanno. The first half of 2024 will see some new concepts, new banquet menus and a re-energized staff. We will be looking to strike a balance between some of the classic Sanno favorites, while stepping toward some food and décor that you would find happening in the US now. Many of the current concepts have been around for 20-plus years, and while we can certainly respect that, the hotel needs to be a place for all levels of guests, regardless of age or rank.

#### What's the most challenging aspect of being a chef?

Wow, where do I begin. For me, it's a double-edged sword between time management (of myself and staff) and communication. Yes, the act of cooking for throngs of people can be challenging, but that's overcome with math. Ensuring you have the proper staff deployed at the right time is crucial. Communicating ideas that are at times still theoretical or way in the future, not everyone subscribes to the insanity at first, but they all come around.

#### Any underrated ingredients you love working with?

Colatura di Alici, it's an Italian fish sauce, much more refined and less salty than the Southeast Asian fish sauces, in my opinion (though I love those, too). I also enjoy using dried vegetable powders for a power blast of a particular flavor, like a dried tomato powder can give you instant umami, vegetal, and acidic bump to a subtle dish.

#### Do you draw inspiration from Japanese food and/or cooking techniques?

Absolutely. The power of subtle flavors using the freshest ingredients, yet every flavor has its place in the dish. Learning restraint as a chef is a valuable lesson.

#### Do you have a favorite kitchen tool or gadget that you can't live without?

Using the correct knife for the job at hand is crucial. I also really enjoy the Japanese mandoline and highly recommend having one in any level of kitchen. A quality blender is also a valuable tool.

#### Are there any particular regions or cuisines you'd like to explore further in your cooking?

I'm very interested in fermentation of vegetables, grains, legumes, etc. The different flavors that can exist at different stages with different sugar/starch content is fascinating. So, by default, I'm interested in areas without year-round growing, where preserving meats, dairy, grains and vegetables are a way of life. As juxtaposition, I'm also really keen on the bright flavors and cooking methods in Israeli and Lebanese cuisines. To me, one of the most fascinating and underappreciated continents for food is Africa. I mean WOW! What diversity, flavors and methods! I could talk about these cuisines all day and how they unceremoniously influenced so many other cuisines that get attention.

#### Do you have any food sustainability or sourcing practices you prioritize in your cooking?

Absolutely. I'm working with vendors now on how we can improve this both locally and with our prime vendor. The biggest way I can impact now is with food waste, and seasonality. Product utilization and menu engineering is just as important as sourcing from a certain distance. All play a role.

#### What's the most rewarding aspect of being a chef for you?

Mentoring young staff and seeing results either immediate or long term. To this day, there are chefs back in the US who would come to work for me at the drop of a hat. That's not because I'm some sort of amazing chef, but I care about my staff, I'm loyal and I always give them praise. At the end of the day, we are nothing without our brigade, much like the military.

#### What's your guilty pleasure food when you're not in the kitchen?

Well, truthfully, it's pizza, kind of cliché for a native New Yorker (and don't get me started on bagels). But, here in Japan, the level of "snack" food is amazing and a quick stop at 7-Eleven can yield magic (Nana Chickie!!). I'm also a perpetual kid, so a bowl of junk cereal is quite the siren song.

#### Are there any upcoming projects or events you're excited about?

Honestly, I'm just so excited for the new restaurant concepts coming next year at The New Sanno. Sharing with everyone will be tremendous. Plus, we are getting all the rooms remodeled, new carpets all over, including the ballroom, better service equipment. It's a great time at the hotel, and it's all for the service members and families.





Banana bread and carrot cake.

# Homemade American treats at Kyle's Good Finds

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JEREMY STILLWAGNER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 25, 2024

**K**yle's Good Finds, a small American-owned bakery in the Nakano city area of Tokyo, might remind you of your favorite mom-and-pop shop that always has the best baked goods. The 10-minute walk to the bakery, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, from Nakano Station's north exit will take you past a variety of cafes, restaurants and convenience stores. When you arrive outside Kyle's Good Finds, a menu in the window lists a tempting variety of cakes, pies, brownies and cookies.

Baked goods are available in whole or by the slice. Of the items I sampled, the carrot cake and brownie were the best. The carrot cake was nice and moist, and the icing complemented the cake's flavor

nicely. The brownie was rich and quite chocolatey. It's definitely on my list of the top five brownies I've ever had. I would have preferred a little more banana taste in the banana bread. It wasn't on the same level as the cake and brownie, but I still recommend giving it a try.

The prices are another benefit of stopping by. The three items I tried cost me about 880 yen, which is a little under \$7. For a full pie, cake or other larger items, expect to pay between 1,900 and 4,900 yen. You can also place orders in advance on the bakery's website. I recommend purchasing your items to go. The two very small tables inside will seat four uncomfortably, and the sales counter is a small space where, when a line forms, customers must enter one at a

time so they don't have to squeeze past one another.

stillwagner.jeremy@stripes.com

@JeremyS\_Stripes

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:  
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## Things to know

**LOCATION:** 2-7-10, 1F, Arai, Nakano city, Tokyo

**HOURS:** Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

**PRICES:** For a full pie, cake or other larger items, expect to pay between 1,900 and 4,900 yen. Some items are also available by the piece.

**DRESS:** Casual

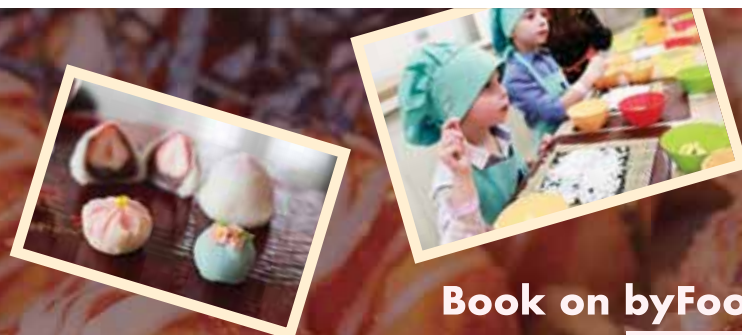
**DIRECTIONS:** About a 10-minute walk for Nakano Station's north exit.

**PHONE:** 03-3385-8993



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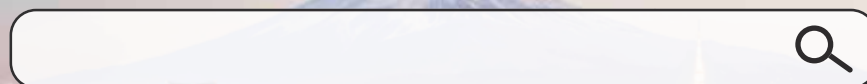


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# Japan to celebrate emperor's birthday Feb. 23

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES OKINAWA

While Americans celebrate the first President's birthday on Feb. 20, a few days later Japan will also be celebrating their own emperor's birthday on Feb. 23 as one of the 16 Japanese national holidays. Employees in Japan will have the day off and government offices will be closed on this day so plan ahead if you have official business.

Since former Emperor Akihito renounced on April 30 and the crown prince Naruhito was enthroned as the 126th Emperor of Japan in 2019, this will be the fifth time to celebrate the newly enthroned emperor.

Called "Tenno Tanjobi," the people of Japan celebrate the birthday of reigning emperor

every year. Emperor Naruhito was born in 1960, and 2020 marked the first year where Feb. 23 will be a holiday for years to come.

Although the current designations of emperor's birthdays as national holidays was only legislated in 1948, the celebrating their emperor has been a custom since the ancient ages.

Birthdays of former emperors are no longer celebrated today except for the birthdays of the Meiji Emperor and the Showa Emperor. Today, the country observes Bun-ka-no-hi (Culture Day) on Nov. 3, the Meiji Emperor's birthday, and Showa Day on Apr. 29, the Showa Emperor's birthday.

## Rare opportunity

To celebrate the birthday of the reigning emperor, the public is invited to partake in the rare opportunity to see the emperor and inner

Photo courtesy of  
The Prime Minister's Official Residence

## Japan's national holidays associated with Emperor's Birthday

**Feb. 23 - Emperor's Birthday - Emperor Naruhito (current emperor's Birthday)**  
**Apr. 29 - Showa Day - Showa Emperor (Emperor Hirohito 1901- 89)'s Birthday**  
**Nov. 3 - Culture Day - Meiji Emperor (Emperor Mutsuhito 1852-1912)'s Birthday**

garden of the Imperial Palace.

For the occasion, around 30,000 gather to greet the Emperor, Empress and other members of the Imperial Family as they take their place on a balcony to receive the congratulations. This is one of only two chances each year where

citizens are allowed to enter the inner garden; the other is Jan. 2.

During the appearance, the Emperor will often say a few words of gratitude while the visitors wave miniature Japanese flags and shout out birthday salutations.

[takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com](mailto:takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com)

## Ex-emperor's birthday still celebrated

Like the birthday of Japan's current Emperor Naruhito (Feb. 23), April 29 was originally celebrated as the birthday of his grandfather, Emperor Hirohito. He reigned before, after and – most notably – during World War II. After his death in 1989, he was renamed Emperor Showa, and Japan's parliament kept his birthday as a national holiday.

His birthday, along with Constitution Memorial Day (May 3), Greenery Day (May 4) and Children's Day (May 5), form the string of holidays that comprise Golden Week.

The Showa Era is the longest and most dramatic reign of an emperor in Japan's history. Emperor Showa was the longest living emperor. He died at age 87 after reigning for 63 years. In fact, the Showa Era literally covers some of modern Japan's brightest and darkest hours.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

## GSA in Japan

GSA Global Supply® is now storing and delivering approximately 750 high-demand National Stock Number (NSN) items formerly stored in and shipped from the continental United States. The change reduces delivery time to a few days from weeks or months.

Customers can order using GSA websites (GSA Global Supply or GSA Advantage!®) or via existing customer logistics platforms (e.g., GCSS-Army). GSA's systems recognize the items stocked in Japan and fulfill orders locally. Other items will ship from the mainland. An electronic catalog is available.



Sid Frazier

The program does not replace existing retail stores managed by GSA in Japan. For more information, please contact your local Customer Service Director Sid Frazier at [sidney.frazier@gsa.gov](mailto:sidney.frazier@gsa.gov).

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## Keiō Mogusaen Plum Fest



### Enjoy the best of the blossoms at hilltop garden

BY KIM,  
JAPAN TRAVEL

Keiō Mogusaen is a garden with a history dating back to the early 18th century, and it's a popular spot in Tokyo to celebrate the best of plum blossom season. The garden grounds are home to somewhere around 500 plum trees, and their hilltop location means that visitors can also get some great views out over the

surrounding area on their visit.

When the blossoms are looking their best, a festival is held to celebrate their beauty – you can expect it to run from early February until early March based on previous years, but do note that depending on weather conditions there can be fluctuations to the exact dates. There is an admission fee of 500 JPY for adults and 100 JPY for children to access the garden.

### GETTING THERE

Keiō Mogusaen can be reached in an easy 10 minutes on foot from Mogusaen Station, which is served by the Keio Line.



Website



# Stripes Sports Trivia

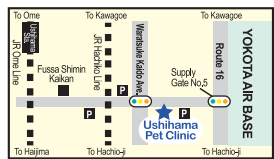
Since becoming the Milwaukee Brewers in 1970, the franchise has made just one World Series appearance. In 1982, the American League champs fell in Game 7 to the St. Louis Cardinals. That season, Robin Yount won the AL MVP award. Yount currently sits 2nd on the Brewers' all-time home runs list. Who is the only player ahead of him?

**Answer**

Ryan Braun

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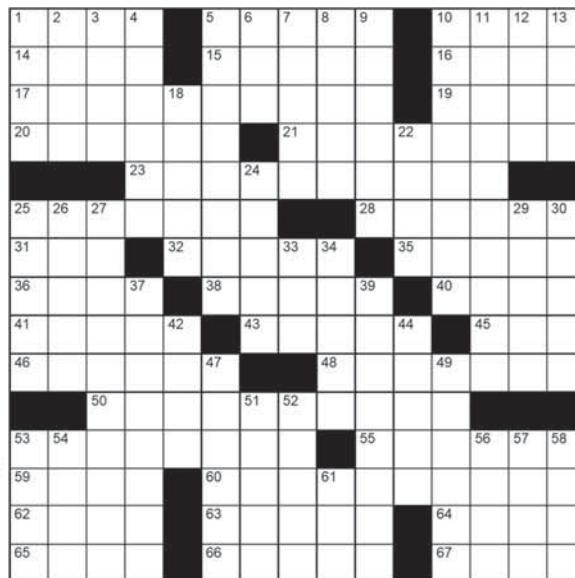
Sat. & Holiday Close at 5pm (Closed Sun.)

## The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- 1 Skylab org.
- 5 Lively dance
- 10 Norse under-world dog
- 14 Is under the weather
- 15 Rolled sandwiches
- 16 Here, in Honduras
- 17 Financial document
- 19 Phoenix team
- 20 Also
- 21 Step over the line?
- 23 Confidence
- 25 Christmas drink
- 28 Give a Valium to, e.g.
- 31 Miracle response
- 32 "The \_\_\_ of Kilimanjaro"
- 35 Meryl's "Silkwood" role
- 36 Happy as a \_\_\_
- 38 Cary's "To Catch a Thief" co-star
- 40 Fluff
- 41 Part of BLM
- 43 Scent
- 45 Hide-hair connector
- 46 Rouse
- 48 Like Tabasco sauce
- 50 2004 Tom Cruise flick
- 53 One of a hockey pair
- 55 Abuse oneself
- 59 Use a stopwatch
- 60 Savvy, in a way
- 62 "Misery" actor James
- 63 Trowel wielder
- 64 "Baseball Tonight" channel
- 65 Improve
- 66 "\_\_\_ we all?"
- 67 Calendar units



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### DOWN

- 1 Vintners' valley
- 2 Puts on TV
- 3 Snaillike
- 4 Gauge
- 5 Sign of an injury
- 6 Rainbow shape
- 7 Coffee bar serving
- 8 San Antonio team
- 9 Portfolio listings
- 10 The "it" in "Step on it!"
- 11 Pale greenish-blue
- 12 Baseball stat
- 13 Fail to notice
- 18 They're entered in court
- 22 Pursue
- 24 Fauna partner
- 25 Wailing and Berlin
- 26 Hang around for
- 27 Male in the armed forces
- 29 Saxophone range

- 30 Diary note
- 33 Tolstoy title word
- 34 Sniper's aid
- 37 Lantern liquid
- 39 Newly arising
- 42 Be a poor loser
- 44 Not together
- 47 HDTV choice
- 49 Cleared of snow
- 51 Perfume

- 52 Brief and to the point
- 53 Longing
- 54 Italian farewell
- 56 Traveler's document
- 57 Catch sight of
- 58 Microscope piece
- 61 Period of time

Answers to Previous Crossword:



**DID YOU KNOW?**

With about 434,000 families, Sato is the most popular family name in Japan, followed by Suzuki (384,000), Takahashi (319,000) and Tanaka (299,000). So, if you work with Japanese, you likely have one or more coworkers with one of these names. The most popular first names for newborns are Haruto (boy) and Hana (girl), according to a 2017 survey by Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Company.

**Kanji of the week**

町

Machi/cho (town)

## Language Lesson

Hold on, please.

**Omachi kudasai.**

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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

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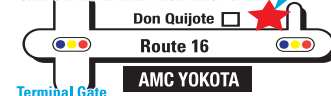


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