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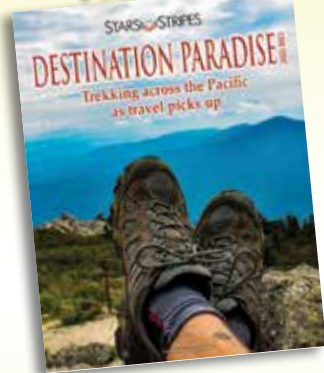
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Stars and Stripes is asking readers to write about their own piece of paradise. Yes, that means you! Our annual Destination Paradise magazine highlights must-see travel spots across the Pacific – and your bit of paradise could be included in our 2023-24 edition that hits the streets on Pacific bases in September. Submit your story and photos to [paradise@stripes.com](mailto:paradise@stripes.com) by July 24. We'll make you famous!

Check out our previous Destination Paradise mags



Take a trip through time  
at the  
**Railway  
Museum**  
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RAINY SEASON  
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**Cheap, delicious ramen near tourist-flooded Asakusa**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Asakusa is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Tokyo. A walk under the iconic Thunder Gate, through Nakamise Street and around the Sumida River, offers you a taste of traditional and modern Japan.

Because the area is full of tourists, you might expect that getting a meal here might break the bank. But, stop in a Ramen Menmaru near Sensoji Temple for lunch so reasonable that you might think the cashier made a mistake.

Searching for something to eat while walking around Asakusa one day, I was surprised to see a sign that read “Ramen 350 yen.” A bowl of ramen for 350 yen, or about \$3 USD, is unheard of. Ramen will usually set you back about 700 yen to 1,000 yen (\$5.25 – \$7.25) in Japan. So, the



**Ramen Menmaru**

**HOURS:** Thu - Tue, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**LOCATION:** 2-15-2 Asakusa, Taito-ku, Tokyo  
(a 40-minute train ride from Hardy Barracks)

**WEBSITE:** <https://tabelog.com/tokyo/A1311/A131102/13077349/>



**WEBSITE**

fact that ramen at a highly crowded tourist attraction costs only half or less than the regur price was a shock that required further investigation.

Ramen Menmaru’s extensive menu includes photos of their offerings, so don’t be shy. The restaurant’s regular ramen bowl starts at 350 yen. A large bowl starts at 470 yen, ramen and boiled egg for 470 yen, ramen with three slices of pork belly for 520 yen, and five gyoza dumplings are 210 yen. All very cheap!

I bought a ticket for a large bowl of ramen for 470 yen (\$3.50) and

made my way to a seat at the counter, which can accommodate 8 people. There are also tables for six outside the joint.

Although you might not know the name of ramen dishes in kanji, you can buy a ticket by checking the photos of dishes with the menu board and pressing the number on the ticket machine.

I handed over my ticket to the cook behind the counter and waited for my steaming bowl of noodles to arrive. Soon, I was ready to dig into the generous serving of ramen topped with a tender slice of pork and all the fixings like bamboo

shoots, green onion and sheets of seaweed.

Against my expectation that the ramen should have a cheap flavor and poor noodles according to the cheap price, it had a really flavorful taste. I was impressed with its traditional gentle yet sophisticated flavor, which reminded me of ramen noodles I used to enjoy in the 1970s.

Adding grounded white pepper to the tasty hot broth made the flavor stand out even more. I might want this type of ramen after drinking at a party next time.

After finishing this delicious bowl, I noticed the anxious crowd waiting to get a seat and have their own deliciously cheap meal.

The tasty ramen sure will surprise you with the reasonable price and gentle flavor. Drop by Ramen Menmaru for a quick rest the next time you visit Asakusa!

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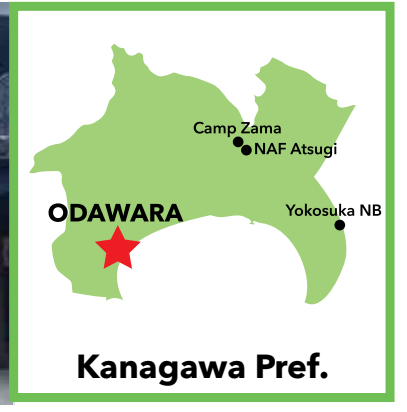
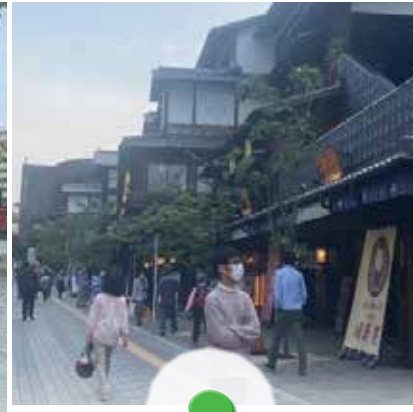
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**Sasebo 1000-1900**

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**Odawara Castle**  
**LOCATION:** 6-1 Jonai, Odawara City, Kanagawa Prefecture  
**CASTLE TOWER:** High schoolers and older - 510 yen, elementary and middle schoolers - 200 yen.  
**SAMURAIKAN:** High schoolers and older - 200 yen, elementary and middle schoolers - 60 yen.  
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**TEL:** 0465-23-1373



# Odawarajo



## Majestic castle offers superb day trip destination in Kanto Plain

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

**S**elected as one of Japan's most majestic castles, Odawarajo is a great day trip destination from bases in

the Kanto Plain. From Camp Zama or NAF Atsugi, it is only a 40-minute drive away.

Originally founded about 550 years ago, the Odawara Castle has been a landmark of the western Kanto area with its 5.5-mile-long circumference, four-story

tower, dozens of turrets, moats and stone walls.

The current four-story castle tower is a concrete reproduction of the original. Enter the tower to check out the castle's history in exhibits featuring facts and figures, details on its founder and

feudal lords and battles fought.

The castle's grounds include a vast flower garden spread along stone walls, a classical teahouse and a couple of museums housed in traditional buildings, which display historical armor, swords and facts and figures of Ninja

warriors.

Odawara Castle is a nice way to spend the day outside. There are a variety of restaurants, ice cream parlors and souvenir shops around the castle, too!

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The PTO of Shirley Lanham Elementary School at Atsugi received a \$250 NEX Gift Card as the prize recipient of the Stars and Stripes Pacific's Month of the Military Child 2023 promotion. Shirley Lanham Elementary School had 100% submission during this year's Month of the Military Child promotion.

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The main floor of Railway Museum, where a historical EF55-type electric locomotive is displayed on the center stage. The stage revolves with a whistle at noon and 3 p.m.

A British-made 150-type steam locomotive – the first locomotive ran in Japan in 1872. The train is designated as an important national cultural asset.



### Drive simulator

You can try drive simulators for five different trains. The simulator in photo is that of JR Keihin Tohoku line.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Considered a sanctuary for railfans of all ages, The Railway Museum, or Tetsudo Hakubutsukan, attracts more than 1 million visitors a year.

Just an hour train ride from Yokota Air Base, the museum offers a great one-day trip for airmen and their families.

I visited the museum, founded in 2007 in Omiya, Saitama Prefecture, to learn what attracts so many to visit.

When I got off a “new shuttle” monorail at the Tetsudo Hakubutsukan Mae Station, the modern-looking station was directly connected to the three-story museum.

Upon my entrance, I saw hundreds of

visitors, mostly young parents and their children.

According to the brochure, the main floor holds 36 historical trains and their equipment, including the first steam locomotive in Japan, which ran between Tokyo and Yokohama in 1872. Up until then, I had only read of this train in schoolbooks.

Besides the steam locomotive, an elegant-looking imperial train and various rapid expresses were on display. I was able to get into the different cars to give them a look. This included the first model of the bullet train.

Along with the historical trains, Tokyo and Niigata station platforms from the 1950s were partially recreated with original electronic signboards, time tables, stairways and ticket gates. The dim light gave off a nostalgic feel, which took me back to my younger

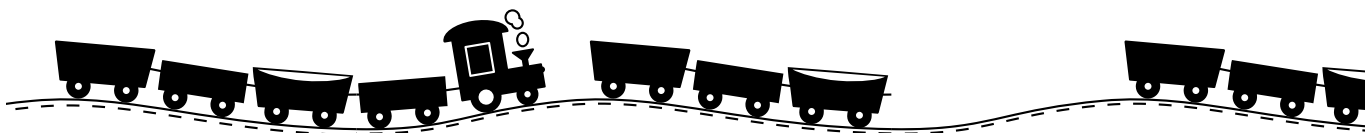
days, waiting for a train on a snowy evening.

There were plenty of volunteers just waiting for visitors to approach with questions. One such volunteer tossed me a gold-braided conductor hat, and snapped a picture of me in front of an EF55-type electric locomotive.

The second floor provides a nice overview of the main floor, as well as a multi-purpose hall, a gallery balcony, cafeteria, museum shop and a room where you can learn about the basic science behind what makes trains go.

The diorama hall is one of the largest in Japan and has a nearly one-mile-long railway. Various model trains run through the model towns and mountains. During a diorama show, members of the audience can choose their favorite train and have the staffer run it during day or night.

# Take a trip to at The Railway





High schoolers from China taking a close look at the third-class carriage of OHA 31-type passenger car.



Recreated platform of Niigata Station in the 1950s.



Railway fans of all ages looking around the history zone on the main floor.

# Through time Railway Museum

## Tetsudo Hakubutsukan (Railway Museum)

**OPEN:** Wed. - Mon., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** 3-47 Onaricho, Omiya-ku, Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture  
**ADMISSION:** 1,230 yen, Elementary/middle/high school students: 510 yen, preschoolers (ages 3 - 5): 210 yen  
**URL:** <https://www.railway-museum.jp/>  
**TEL:** 048-651-0088

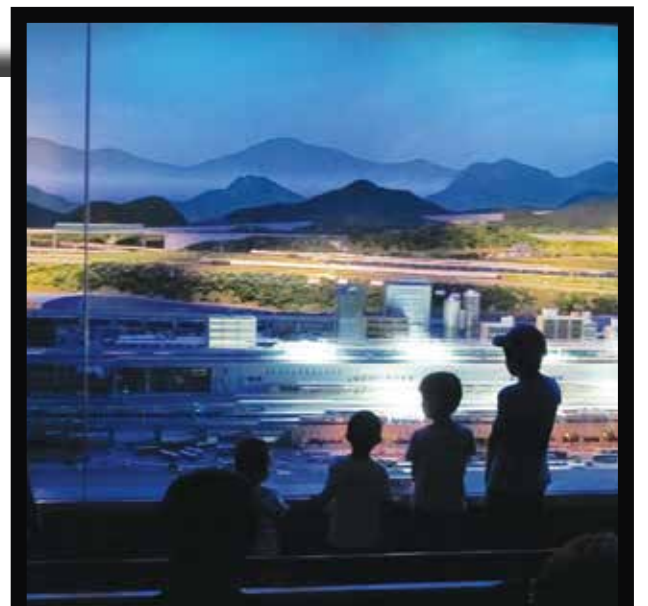


You can download mobile apps at <https://www.railway-museum.jp/app/> that allow searching for displayed trains and attractions by name or map location.

There are also free one-hour guided tours offered at 10:15 a.m. and 1 p.m. every day. English-speaking volunteers are available, so you can use the tour to look more efficiently and to get a better understanding of the museum.

Nostalgic scenes, along with historical trains brought me back to my past, while the various simulators, diorama models and other amusement made me excited just like a kid. I'd say The Railway Museum is a great attraction for visitors of all ages.

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



## Diorama

A nearly one-mile-long railway is laid out in the 200-square meter diorama. The museum showcases nearly 100 model trains from their collection and staffers run them at the request of the visitors.



# Soaking in Japan's rainy season traditions



BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Constant gray skies and gloomy showers can only mean one thing in the so-called Land of the Rising Sun: The rainy season.

It starts to fall on Okinawa in late May followed by mainland Japan and Kyushu Island in early June. Cold northerly and warm southerly air masses collide to create 45 to 50 days of a continuous dreary weather front of clouds dropping anything from drizzle to torrential downpours.

But there's no reason to let the bad weather get you down. Look on the bright side.

The rainy season is cheerily referred to as "tsuyu," or plum rain, in Japan, as it coincides with the seasonal ripening of this luscious fruit. And with southern to central temperatures in the mid to high 70s (the high 60s farther north), Japan offers more seasonal outdoor activities than you can shake an umbrella at.

Keep in mind, for future trip planning, that Hokkaido is not affected by the rainy season and is a good option when trying to avoid the droplets and stifling humidity.

The rainy season doesn't mean long weekends with only video games or TV, as it does not actually rain every day. (For example, the average number of rainy days in June is only 12 in the Kanto Plain, according to Japan Meteorological Agency.)

Expect this season to give the surrounding areas a different look. The rain makes old temples, gardens and traditional houses seem all the more elegant. And, if you live off base, you may notice small ghost-like dolls made of cloth or tissue hanging from the eaves or on the windows of homes in your neighborhood.

Often children, and even some adults, make these little "teruteru bozu," or sunshine monks, to ward off bad weather for the next day when a fieldtrip or other outdoor event is planned.

Why not make your own teruteru bozu?

Also, don't miss the opportunity to take in the beauty of seasonal foliage.

With plenty of water falling amid the early summer warmth, several pretty flowers are also in bloom this time of year. Both hydrangeas ("ajisai") and irises ("shobu") are in full bloom in mainland Japan, while irises and shell ginger ("gettou") are in bloom on Okinawa. Flowering shell ginger heralds the rainy season on the southern islands; hydrangeas embody the season on the mainland.

The hydrangea's original colors can vary from white, pink, violet and blue, and they gradually shift to different colors. Some change from pink to purple, and others from blue to violet or fade in intensity throughout the course of the four- to six-week season.

Peak flower viewing season on Okinawa is mid-May to the end of June, while it runs from mid-June to early July on the mainland.

In Japan's central regions firefly viewing, or "hotaru gari," (literally firefly hunting) is another favorite rainy season pastime. Lightning bugs are active at riverside, ponds, bushes or rice fields in the humid evenings, right after it rains on windless nights without moonlight.

Countless slowly moving tiny lights filling the air and drifting from one leaf to another make a spectacular sight. But don't catch them, as the endangered bug's life lasts only seven to 10 days. Like fireworks festivals in Japan,

"yukata" (summer kimono) and an "uchiwa" (fan) are appropriate attire for this traditional pastime.

On Okinawa, rainy season usually begins just after the Golden Week holidays that take place around late April to the first week of May, and that means dragon boat races galore. Dragon boat races are held in fishing communities throughout Okinawa. These "hari" are also known as "kaijin-sai" (unjami) or fishermen festivals; they are a way to give thanks to the sea god and pray for safe and prosperous fishing.

Memorial services on Okinawa Memorial Day (June 23) is another important event during the rainy season. Okinawans commemorate the end of the Battle of Okinawa during a big memorial service for the war dead at Itoman Peace Memorial Park every year.

So take up your umbrella and enjoy the rainy season outdoors. By walking in the rain, perhaps while singing, you just might discover attractions that are only available during this time of year.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

## Have a ghost of a good day

"Teruteru bozu," literally, sunshine monks, are small traditional handmade dolls made of white paper or cloth. Hanging them on the eaves, according to local lore, wards off rain and attracts good weather. Children often make them when they want the next day to be sunny. They are a common sight in Japan on rainy days.

You can make teruteru bozu very easily. Try it and see how it works this rainy season.

### Materials

2 pieces of tissue paper, and some strings

### Procedure

1. Crumple one tissue paper into a ball.
2. Place crumpled tissue paper in the center of the other tissue paper.
3. Wrap the second tissue around the ball.
4. Tighten the tissue around the ball by twisting it to form the head.
5. Tie a string and hang. If you like, you can draw a face on your teruteru bozu.

If you actually want it to rain the next day, lore has it that you should hang the doll upside down.

## Rainy season in 2023

Here is the forecasted rainy season by the Meteorology Agency.

### Rainy season dates

Okinawa: May 18 - June 21  
Sasebo: May 29 - July 19  
Iwakuni: May 29 - July 19  
Kanto: June 8 - July 19  
Misawa: June 15 - July 28



Teruteru bozu File photos



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# Stripes Sports Trivia

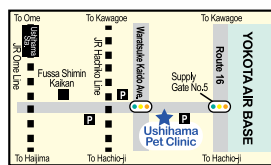
A member of MLB's 3,000 hit club, Ichiro has more total hits in his career than Pete Rose, if you include his time playing in Japan. The longtime Mariners outfielder racked up 1,278 of his 4,300+ hits while playing for which Nippon Professional Baseball team in Japan?

## Answer

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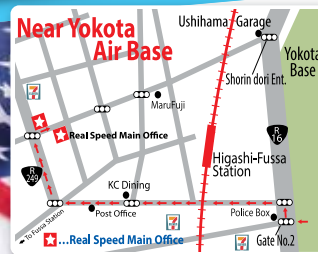
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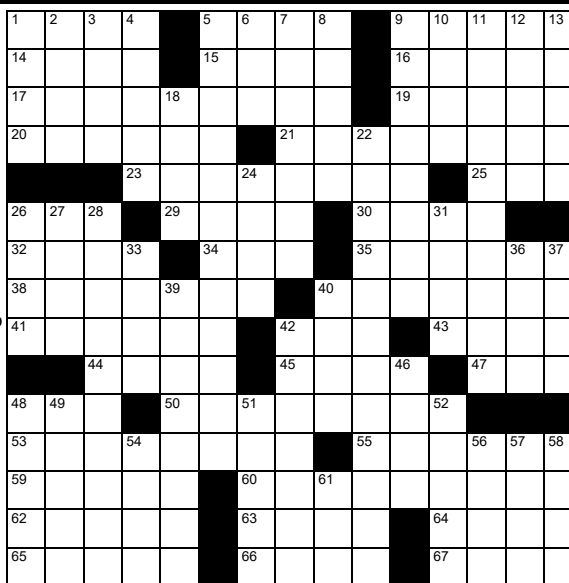
Sat. & Holiday Close at 5pm (Closed Sun.)

## The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- Makes a scene?
- Bratty talk
- Flat-bottomed rowboat
- Inn's offering
- Jacob, to Esau
- \_\_\_ sanctum
- Fancy enamel-work
- Religious doctrine
- Summertime top
- Brain part
- Like some copper
- You-here link
- Machinist's letters
- Texas flag feature
- Pillow
- Word before beer or canal
- Wish otherwise
- Well-behaved
- Deodorant type
- Ulna locale
- Drunk, slangily
- Slammer
- Proton's place
- Wagon tongue
- Skin eruption
- SFO posting
- Feathered scarf
- Whistle blowers?
- Surpass
- Comedian's asset
- Chilled
- Like articles in The Onion
- Search through
- Disneyland transport
- "Gladiator" setting
- Looks after
- Drought-ridden
- Patella's place



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### DOWN

- Garden wedding feature
- Pepsi or RC
- Workshop item
- Maggie who played Minerva
- "Star Wars" soldier
- Beard on grain
- Heartfelt
- Curl one's lip
- Escape route, for some
- Door opener
- Bring into favor
- Thigh bone
- Bowling unit
- Salty septet
- 7 minutes for EMS, say
- Stake driver
- Seafood item
- Holiday carol
- Crowning ceremony

- Pet's pest
- Shopper's bag
- Meadowlands pace
- Jane Austen heroine
- First-string players
- Trepidation
- Whip up
- Inheritor
- Hike
- Weight measure
- Pugilist's pair
- Smug grin
- Desert Storm missile
- Coin anagram
- Dogtag album
- Singing club
- Roof goop

### Answers to Previous Crossword:

D	I	T	C	H	A	R	T	S	E	D	G	E	
U	N	S	A	Y	V	E	I	L	R	O	O	D	
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## DID YOU KNOW?

**U**kiyo-e, literally translated to "paintings of the floating world," dates back to the Edo Period (1603-1867) uses woodblock prints and paintings to capture portraits of kabuki actors, sumo wrestlers, travel scenes and landscapes. The art was simple and produced at a relatively low cost, allowing for it to be purchased and appreciated by many.

## Kanji of the week

# 親

Oya (parent)

## Language Lesson

I understand.

---

Wakari mashita.

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6		7	4					9

**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:

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

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# Yokosuka Museum of Art's beautiful works spread to exterior during Japan's rainy season

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

As Japan heads into rainy season and the steamy, wet climate that comes along with it, it's easy to forget that this time of year is also host to beautiful flowers, too.

A walk through your neighborhood or local park will give you the opportunity to see the many irises, lotus and hydrangeas which only come out in the summer rain. Though not as famous as Japan's spring blooms, the summer's modest and elegant beauties live with dreary weather with their vivid hues.

One great escape from the rain is the Yokosuka Museum of Art where you'll not only find over 5,000 impressive works of art inside, but Mother Nature's contribution outdoors on the museum grounds. The museum is tucked away up on a hill in the Kannonzaki Prefectural Park and is about a short 20-minute drive from Yokosuka Naval Base.

The museum building itself is also a sight to see as it has a unique neo-futuristic feel with glass panels, white walls, bridges and small round windows. Thanks to its



## Yokosuka Museum of Art

**LOCATION:** 4-1 Kamoji, Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture

**WEBSITE:** <https://www.yokosuka-moa.jp/en/>

• Museum is home to well-known Italian restaurant Acquamare. **WEBSITE**



location, the museum offers excellent views of Tokyo Bay and has a romantic rooftop garden to enjoy the peaceful area.

After enjoying works by 19th and 20th century Japanese artists, step outside for the best hydrangea viewing spots in Yokosuka City. In 2007, when the museum opened, the staff started to plant hydrangeas to line the path in the garden, a museum official said.

If you worked up an appetite browsing art and enjoying the garden, stop by Acquamare, the museum's Italian restaurant with great food made with local ingredients at great prices.

Don't let the rain get you down! Plan for your escape to enjoy some art, flowers and tasty Italian at Yokosuka Museum of Art soon.

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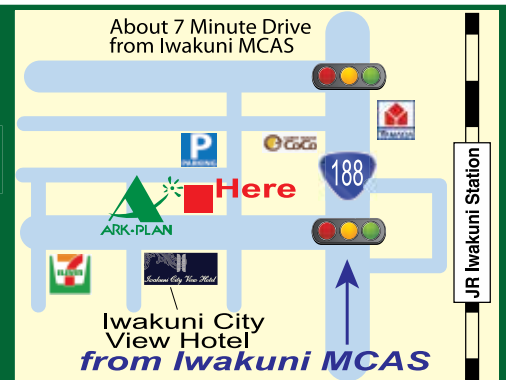
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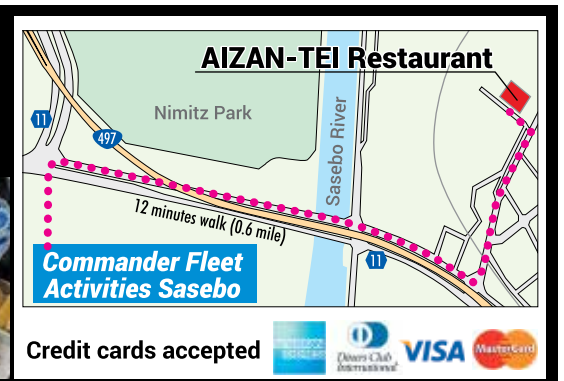
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