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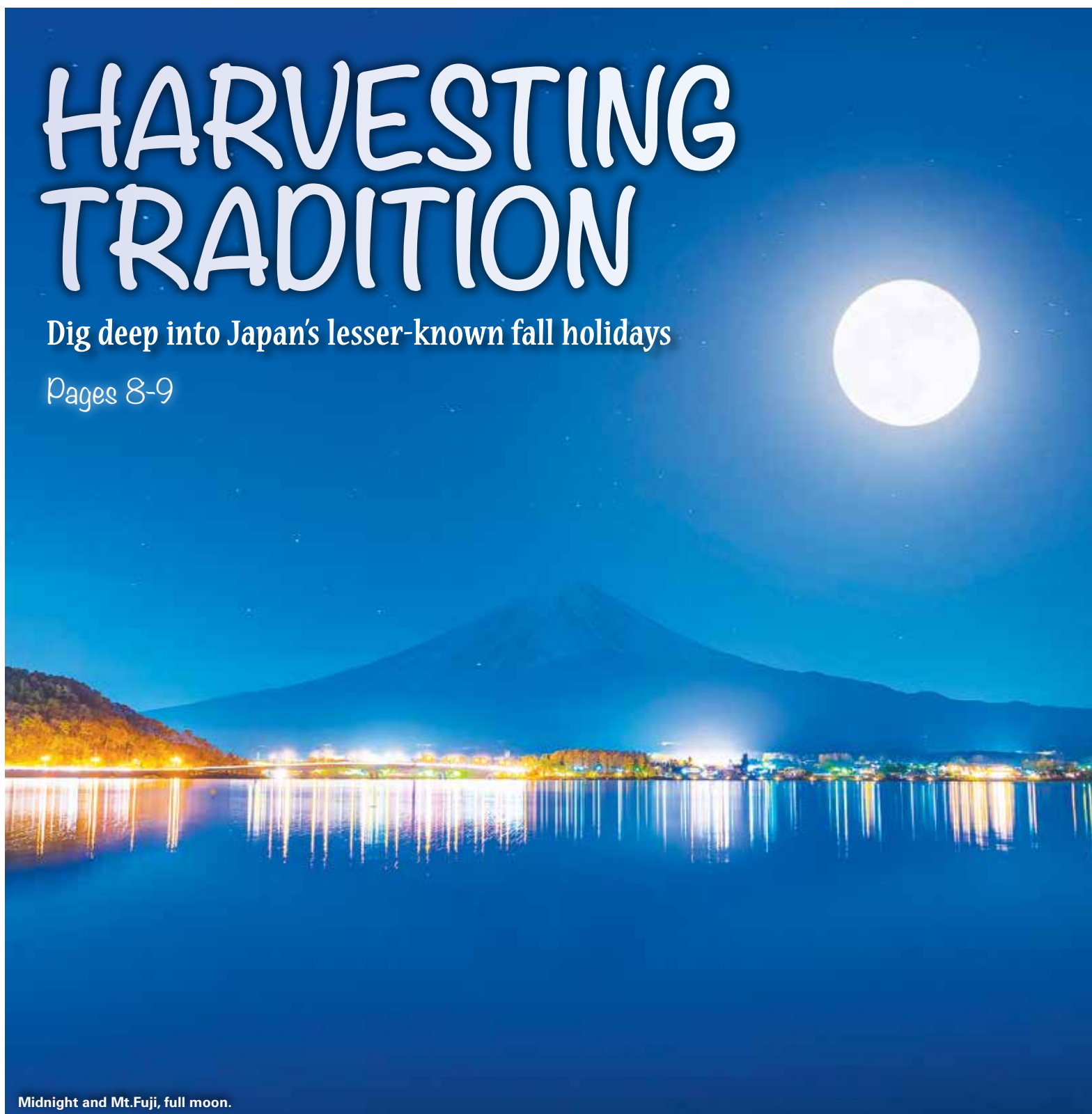
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Midnight and Mt. Fuji, full moon.

Barbecues help Yokota's new airmen get through quarantine

BY SETH ROBSON,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: September 4, 2020

YOKOTA AIR BASE — Some summer barbecues at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo are a little out of the ordinary this year.

The events for newly arrived airmen are choreographed affairs where the guests of honor don masks and keep their distance from the folks cooking their food.

U.S. personnel arriving in Japan must spend 14 days in quarantine, which the military calls "restriction of movement" or ROM, that's designed to stop them spreading the coronavirus to others at their new home.

To make sure the experience doesn't feel like a short stint in jail, the Air Force has come up with all sorts of things to amuse quarantined single airmen, including fortnightly barbecues.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
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Volunteers dish out comfort food to quarantined service members at Yokota Air Base.
Photo by Theron Godbold, Stars and Stripes



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BARBECUES: Fresh air, sunshine, morale on menu

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Staff Sgt. Valesia Williams, 30, of Washington, D.C., was one of a few quarantined airmen chomping burgers Sept. 4 in a yard about 20 yards from where meat sizzled on grills and party music blared from a speaker outside a tower block on Yokota.

The aerospace ground-equipment airman, who arrived in Japan after 18 months at Osan Air Base, South Korea, said she was surprised when someone knocked on her door to invite her to lunch after five days in quarantine.

"It was nice to hear there was somewhere for us to go and get food and go outside and see what's going on," Williams said. "Being able to see the base and look around is really good."

The time alone hasn't been too hard, she said, adding that the two-bedroom apartment where she is staying is bigger than her digs at Osan. During the time alone she's been studying Japanese and itching to get out and explore Japan and taste local food such as ramen and sushi.

Master Sgt. Christopher Smith, 43, of Rochester, Minn., was at the barbecue representing the Yokota First Sergeants Council.

"I'm here to check on these airmen who are in ROM," he said. "I'm seeing how their mental state is and making sure they're being taken care of by their units."

Yokota community support organizer Debbie Stevens, 60, of Wyoming, said the barbecues are just one of the things the Air Force is doing to support airmen in quarantine.

Barbecues help people with physical, spiritual, relational and emotional wellness,



A volunteer prepares food. Photo by Theron Godbold, Stars and Stripes

according to the Air Force veteran and licensed clinical social worker.

"They take care of so many things in one session and they're fun," Stevens said. "We can get them outside ... get them some fresh air and sunshine, get them a homecooked meal. For some of them, just to be able to get out into the daylight is huge."

The barbecues, which last about 90 minutes and include a performance by members of the Air Force Band of the Pacific-Asia, have been going since late May and have fed about 150 quarantined airmen so far.

"We keep it short and sweet because we

are trying to make sure we exercise all the proper safety measures," Stevens said.

Other support for quarantined airmen includes deliveries of letters from schoolkids, a game involving chopsticks and beans, more homecooked food and a bag of Japanese treats, she said.

A few airmen who have had birthdays in quarantine received cakes baked by Stevens.

"Having been an airman myself in rather austere settings, I think they have got it pretty sweet," she said. "It is not so much the setting as it is the human contact."

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Cpl. Madison Green greets Layla, a beagle.



Dr. (Capt.) Mary McLean examines Roxy, a shepherd mix, as Green assists.

Trust key to Zama veterinary team's success

STORY AND PHOTOS BY WINIFRED BROWN,
U.S. ARMY

CAMP ZAMA – Staff at the Camp Zama Veterinary Treatment Facility have always worked diligently to gain the trust of their clients, and today under COVID-19 restrictions, those efforts are paying off.

"I trust them," said Carolina Chong, shortly after handing over her two dogs' leashes to Cpl. Madison Green, an animal care specialist, so they could go in for their appointments without her Aug. 25.

The facility's waiting and exam rooms are too small to accommodate proper social distancing under COVID-19 restrictions, so staff members check in pets at the curb and bring them in without their owners, said Dr. (Capt.) Mary McLean, the officer in charge of the facility.

McLean said she understands why some owners may have reservations about separating from their pets, but the facility's team does everything possible to make patients feel comfortable.

"We utilize low-stress handling techniques, have a wide variety of special treats to offer, and have been known to just sit on the floor and cuddle with a dog for a few minutes until we gain their trust," McLean said.

Chong said she felt no anxiety letting Layla, an 8-year-old beagle, and Roxy, a 7-year-old shepherd mix, go in without her because they have been visiting the clinic for about a year and have bonded with staff members.

"Layla absolutely loves it here," Chong said. "She comes in and she tries to jump out of the car. They've just been great. You can tell that the staff really love the pets."

Not all pets, however, are happy to visit veterinarians, and Luna, a 5-year-old Lab mix, is one of them.

Josie Salcedo, Luna's owner, said Luna's behavior has nothing to do with the clinic itself—she just gets anxious.

"Every time we come it's an ordeal, but [the staff are] always really good with her ... and just giving her as much love as they can while she's here," Salcedo said. "They make her as comfortable as possible."

Maryn Nakasone, a veterinary technician, did exactly that with Luna during her visit, petting her and spending time with her, which allowed the dog to calm down.

McLean said the clinic has remained open throughout the pandemic, but for safety reasons, personnel made evolving adjustments to some services based on staff and equipment availability.

"When a majority of our staff was forced to work from home, we began offering telemedicine appointments when appropriate," McLean said. "Because our patients can't tell us what's wrong, veterinarians rely heavily on a physical exam, so veterinary telemedicine may have more limitations than our human counterparts."

The best way to accommodate physical exams was the curbside check-ins and pet-only visits inside the building, McLean said, and they have worked well.

The clinic is a part of Public Health Activity – Japan, which falls under Public Health Command – Pacific and Regional Health Command – Pacific, McLean said. The clinic's primary mission is to provide full-service veterinary care to Military Working Dogs across all branches of the

Department of Defense.

Usually, however, MWDs are a healthy population, so for the team to keep their veterinary skills sharp, the facility relies on military pet owners to trust them to care for their animals, McLean said.

"The more experience we can gain from treating a variety of ill animals, the better prepared we will be to care for our MWDs if they become sick or injured," McLean said.

The facility offers a variety of services, including routine preventative care through annual exams and vaccinations, health certificate exams, quarantine exams, laboratory services, surgery, radiology, acupuncture and dental care, McLean said.

Personnel see pets by appointment only on a space-available basis, McLean said, and since the clinic operates through non-appropriated funds, or revenue other than taxes, clients must pay standardized fees so the clinic can operate.

Three soldiers and three civilians staff the facility, McLean said, and two staff members, including herself, are veterinarians. The other, Dr. Isao Yoshikawa, is a Japanese local national.

"Dr. Yoshikawa has been a huge help finding specialists to refer some of our patients to," McLean said. "Most commonly we make referrals to oncologists for chemotherapy or radiation therapy, or cardiologists for an echocardiogram if a heart abnormality is heard."

While the facility mostly treats dogs and cats, occasionally they will see a rabbit or exotic pet, McLean said.

"Veterinarians are trained to treat all species, but our clinic does not always

carry the gold-standard equipment and medications some species require," McLean said. "We will always try to help, but may have to refer some pets to one of the better equipped, more specialized veterinarians in the community."

The team also includes military food inspectors who are responsible for ensuring a safe and wholesome food supply by performing inspections of food vendors, such as commissaries, child care centers and dining facilities, McLean said.

Although the main offices are on Camp Zama, personnel also provide support to Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Sagami General Depot, Sagami Family Housing Area, and Camp Fuji, McLean said.

Gloria Maxwell, who has been visiting the clinic for three years with her 13-year-old Shih Tzu named Puaiki, said if she has any reservations about letting her dog go inside without her, it's only because she would like to be there for educational reasons.

"The staff has been really, really great," Maxwell said. "Dr. Mary [McLean] is great; she really cares for the fur babies."

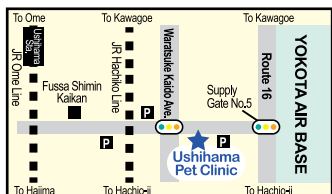
McLean said she particularly enjoys working at the clinic because of the connections staff members get to make with members of the community from every unit on base.

"From the joys of a new puppy to a heartbreaking diagnosis, we have to be ready to help our clients through a variety of emotions," McLean said. "Every day offers unique challenges, and I love watching the soldiers and civilian staff work together as team to accomplish our unique mission."

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Speakin' Japanese

Autumn audibles

Autumn has arrived! Here are some useful words and phrases that might come in handy when getting into the spirit of the season.

"Suzushiku natte kimashita." = It has gotten cool.
(*"suzushiku"* = cool; *"natte kimashita"* = has gotten)

"Aki ga totemo suki desu." = I really like autumn.
(*"aki"* = autumn; *"totemo suki desu"* = really like)

"Tsukimi ga shitai desu." = I want to go moon watching.
(*"tsukimi"* = moon watching; *"shitai desu"* = want to)

"Aki no mangetsu ga ichiban kirei desu." = The autumn full moon is the most beautiful.

(*"mangetsu"* = full moon;

"ichiban" = most [literally, No. 1]; *"kirei"* = beautiful)

"Aki no mushi no koe ga kikoemasu." = I hear the song of autumn insects.

(*"mushi"* = insect; *"koe"* = song [voice])

"Octoobaa Festival ni ikimasho." = Let's go to the October festival.
(*"ni ikimasho"* = let's go)

"Koyo ga tanoshimi desu." = I am looking forward to seeing the red leaves.

(*"koyo"* = red leaves; *"ga tanoshimi desu"* = be looking forward to)

"Sanma ga oishii kisetsu desu." = Local mackerel are delicious this time of year.

(*"sanma"* = local mackerel, *"kisetsu"* = time of year [season])

• AUTUMN FOODS

"sanma" = local mackerel

"shiitake" = shiitake mushrooms

"shinmai" = the year's new rice

"budo" = grapes

"kuri" = chestnuts

• OLD JAPANESE SAYING

"Aki nasu wa yome ni kuwaseruna." = Don't let your wife eat autumn eggplant.

(This saying has two meanings. It means that autumn eggplant is too good to share with your wife. Another meaning is that autumn eggplant has less seeds so, it is bad luck for those trying to have babies.)

– Stripes Japan

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.



Check it out



Impressive shrine sits on godly island near Iwakuni

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

One of Japan's three most scenic attractions, the must-see Miyajima Island is just 40-minute drive from MCAS Iwakuni.

The red-colored Itsukushima Shrine and its large torii gate built on the shore of the island are very beautiful and attract more than 4 million tourists every year.

Although most of the shrine is closed to the public, you can walk around its main deck, along the main altar and noh performance stage. And, when it is at low tide, you can walk along the sea floor right up to the gate for a close look. It's amazing that such a gigantic gate stands firmly by its own weight with four supporting pillars.

According to legend, because the island had been worshiped as a god for

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centuries, the shrine could not be erected on the island. And to this day, there are no cemeteries on the island because no one is allowed to die there. Nor are folks allowed to be born there. When either time comes, it must be done on the mainland.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com





The quirky romance of shouting your love from a hill surrounded by cabbage fields and mountains.



BELOVED WIFE'S HILL

Shout your love in cabbage fields

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALINE LABORDE, JAPAN TRAVEL

Tsumagoi (love for wife) town was given that name due to the story of Yamato Takeru who stood on Mount Azuma, Gunma Pref., and cried out for his departed wife. However in Japanese culture, men feel embarrassed expressing love and appreciation. The fact that Valentine's Day, a day where women are the ones giving gifts to the men could not say any louder that men feel embarrassed showing affection. However, Aisai No Oka (愛妻の丘), tries to cultivate marriage by gathering husbands every fall for the event 'Shout Your Love From the Middle of a Cabbage Patch' Day.



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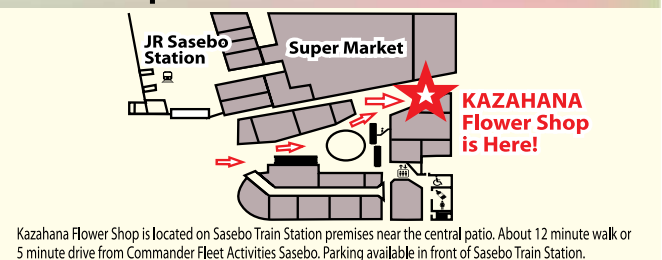
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Omamori, Ema, and Omikuji

Why Japanese lucky charms are amazing!

BY NAO,
LIVE JAPAN

Nowadays, Japanese temples and shrines are widely known by travelers from all over the world, so many people have an idea of what they are like.

But what about a colorful tiny drawstring-bag-looking stuff that are found for sale there? Or pentagon-ish shaped boards hanging together? Or, a paper that some visitors tie up onto a string? Have you got any ideas about what they are?

In this article, you'll find the meanings of these characteristic religious charms, when and how they came into existence, and how the Japanese today take them.



① Hukuro mamori ② Suzu mamori ③ Omamori ya

OMAMORI: About Japan's traditional talismans

These colorful tiny drawstring-bag-looking items are called omamori (written with the Japanese character for "protection").

BRIEF HISTORY OF OMAMORI

The idea of talisman already existed in Japan 14,000 -1000 BCE. Then it became the shape of "omamori", in the Heian era, about 1000 years ago.

Back then, temples and shrines had growing power and influence. So, the people called "Oshi", who belonged to and working for temples/shrines, traveled all over Japan to acquire more believers. However, although people wanted to visit the introduced temple/shrine, in many cases, it was impossible to do as there was little choice as a means of transportation.

Therefore, omamori was born. It gave the people, who lived far away from the temple/shrine where the spirit of omamori belonged to, peace and protection.

THE KINDS OF OMAMORI

- **HUKURO MAMORI:** A bag type.

- **OMAMORIYA:** An arrow type, most commonly called "Hama-ya". Hama means "to beat evil spirits".
- **OFUDA, MAMORI FUDA:** A wooden type. Also, what is inside of hukuro mamori is this ofuda. It's always wrapped with a white paper as it is believed that the paper protects ofuda's power and cleanness.
- **SUZU MAMORI:** A bell type. It is believed that the clear sound of this Japanese tiny bell scares away evil spirits, hence it protects you.
- **OTHER:** A temple/shrine sometimes has its unique mamori, generally using what it's deeply connected, its symbol, etc. For example, Mikami shrine in Kyoto that symbolizes 'hair' has a small Japanese comb-shaped omamori.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Basically, omamori is what protects you. However, some of omamori are for a specific purpose.

COMMON TYPES OF JAPANESE OMAMORI

- **GENERAL:** To support you to live peacefully and healthily.

- **HADAMAMORI:** To protect you both physically and mentally. You need to carry it with you all the time. In the past, people sew it onto their hada-gi (underwear), so it is called hadamamori. It is said if something as bad as hurt you happens, hadamamori will sacrifice itself to save you, so it gets cracked or broke.
- **YAKU YOKE:** To protect you from evil spirits, bad people/accidents/etc.
- **YAKU = sufferings, yoke = to avoid.**
- **KENKO (HEALTH) MAMORI:** To protect your body from disease, injury, etc.
- **SHIGOTO (WORK) MAMORI:** To support you to get a nice job, to succeed in your job/project, etc
- **RENAI (ROMANCE) JOJU:** To support you to fulfil your love.
- **EN MUSUBI (WORK, ROMANCE, ETC.):** To support you to connect with others. It is generally believed to help you with matchmaking. However, it can also lead you to good friends or even a nice company as 'en' in Japanese means connection, chance, and any sort of relationship.
- **KIN UN (FINANCE):** To enhance your luck with money.
- **GAKUGYO MAMORI, GAKUGYO JOJU, GOKAKU KIGAN (STUDY):** To support you to achieve the learning target or to pass the exam.
- **KOTSU ANZEN MAMORI (TRANSPORTATION SAFETY):** To protect you from accidents during transportation. The most common use of this omamori is to keep it on a vehicle you drive.
- **ANZAN (EASY DELIVERY):** To support you to deliver a baby with no trouble.
- **PET MAMORI:** To support your pet to live healthily.

WHERE CAN YOU GET AN OMAMORI?

You can get them at Jimusho (at a temple)/Shamusho (at a shrine)/Juyosho, which are stands selling a variety of amulets and other items.

It is important to know that while omamori may be cute in appearance, they are religious

→ items and not something that you ‘buy’ per se. Omamori is given by Hotoke (Buddha) or Kami (Shinto deities). Hence, the money you pass to staff is not a payment but a dedication.



HOWTOTAKE CARE OF OMAMORI?

Supposing you acquire a hukuro mamori, you should always have it on you, ideally; this can be seen as similar to a St. Christopher’s medallion or similar. However, if it is a bit difficult, you can keep it at home at a place that’s bright and clean. Also, if it’s possible, you should put it somewhere higher than level with your eyes.

Ofuda and Omamori ya are to keep at home. For these kinds of omamori, it is essential to put them at a bright and clean place that’s higher than level with your eye.

Another important thing to remember is that ofuda is ideally placed facing a bright direction, which is to the south or the east. As for Omamori ya, keep it close to Ofuda if you possess one, and never put arrowhead up to the sky, which is believed to belong to Kami.

OMAMORI ETIQUETTE

Is it okay to open the bag?

No. To be precise, this bag is just a thing to protect the omamori. What omamori really has is fuda (a holy wooden piece) inside of it. And, as all fuda are blessed by hotoke/kami, it is believed that to remove it from the bag or to see it directly is disrespectful towards hotoke/kami.

Is it okay to throw it away when it gets old/dirty or when I don’t need it anymore?

No. You can’t just bin it. The Japanese believe that items such as this must be returned to hotoke/kami, as they filled omamori with sacred power.

There are several ways to give omamori back to hotoke/kami.

- 1) Simply bring it back to where you got it. All temples/shrines have a place to gather omamori that are no longer needed. You can leave your omamori there with some osaisen (money to dedicate to hotoke/kami) to show your appreciation.
- 2) Send omamori back to where you got it. If it is difficult for you to come back to Japan, it is worth checking if the temple/shrine accepts returning omamori via post.
- 3) Ask a temple/shrine nearby. If there are temples/shrines near to you, you might want to ask if they are the same denomination (Buddhism) or sharing the same Kami (Shintoism). If so, they may be able to take care of your omamori



- on behalf of where you originally acquired it.
- 4) Burn it at home. It might sound a bit barbaric. But, first of all, all the omamori brought back to the temple/shrine are to be burned. So, it might make sense to do it at home when you can’t reach the temple/shrine.

To burn what you have cherished/appreciated is a Japanese religious ritual that can send the item to the top sacred place, akin to heaven in Christianity.

Thus, as a ritual, you must wrap your omamori with a pinch of salt in a clean white paper before putting omamori into a fire. (Salt is believed it can purify evil spirits.)

Is it okay to have many omamori?

Yes. You might come across someone who advises you not to have two or more omamori mostly because, considering omamori is a shared spirit by hotoke/kami, they would fight each other. But the predominant belief is that both hotoke and kami possess a merciful heart and will watch over you as long as you are respectful.

Having said that, you might want to consider whether you are getting more omamori than you can take care of properly.

What do the Japanese think of omamori?

Although it is said that most Japanese people are not overly religious, many of them still have omamori. In fact, they often obtain omamori on New Year’s day when they make the first visit to a temple/shrine, or when they feel they have something out of hand so they need help from hotoke/kami.

It is also common to give omamori to people they care about, especially on the occasion of a life event. For example, parents give their children a “Gokaku Kigan” omamori when they sit for a university entrance exam.

EMA: Japanese prayer boards

Visit most any temple or shrine and you’ll see an area ‘decorated’ with colorful wooden boards. These are ema, Japanese wishing board.

People dedicate ema when they have a wish or when their wish has come true. The E in ema means ‘picture’, so it’s always got a picture on it. There are not only pentagon-shaped ema but also square-shaped one or other sorts depending on the area or temples/shrines.

BRIEF HISTORY OF EMA

In ancient times, people dedicated a live horse to kami when their wish came true. However, not all people were rich enough to prepare an actual horse, and shrines weren’t able to look after all the horses that were brought in. Therefore, this custom gradually changed from a live horse to clay figures of horses and wooden horses, then to a board with a picture of a horse.

And, this is why this wishing board is called ‘ema’ (e=picture, ma=horse).

Nowadays, the picture on the board varies, and you can see the personality of the temple/shrine from the sorts of ema they offer.

HOWTO WRITE ON AN EMA

First of all, you might wonder, does your wish have to be written in Japanese? The answer is no. If you write it from your heart, hotoke/kami will understand even though you write it in your own language.

There is not a rule when you write ema apart from to be polite and respectful. It is preferable to write your full name, address, and birthday plus year, so hotoke/kami can know whose wish it is. However, most people only use their name or initials for safety reasons.

Is it okay to bring them back to home?

Yes, on condition that you haven’t written your wish on it. Treat it the same as omamori: keep somewhere clean, bright, and higher than your eye level.

Do the Japanese write ema?

Yes. Especially before a university/school entrance exam, many students will go to a shrine that has kami of studying as their symbol and write their wish on an ema. Adults also go to a temple/shrine to dedicate ema when they have something they want to achieve.

Japan's autumn tra

Gleaning the reasons for ringing in t

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

In the Land of the Rising Sun, September marks the waxing of autumn and the traditional harvest season in which local customs such as “tsukimi” (moon viewing), “inekari” (rice harvesting) and “Higan” memorial services take place throughout Japan.

These can be ideal opportunities to learn something about the local culture and maybe even experience a side of Japan that some modern Japanese miss out on these days. With that in mind, here are some basics to get you started:

Inekari (rice harvesting)

It's no surprise that in Japan – where more than 7.8 million tons of rice was produced in 2019, alone – much ado is made about harvesting this prized staple food. Its cultivation was once even considered sacred, involving invocations of an “inadama,” or rice spirit. When the grains began maturing in the fall, for example, green sheaves were offered to this deity whose generosity was celebrated at season's end.

A reflection of this practice can still be found in some traditional performing arts today; and “Inekari,” or rice harvesting, remains a traditional event in farming regions where harvest festivals are held annually. A few farms even allow visitors to join the time-honored tradition of harvesting rice.

Rice harvesting can be done manually with sickles, mechanically with a harvester or by using a combination of both. Regardless of the method, a number of guidelines are followed to preserve quality.

“We need to harvest rice at the right time with the right moisture content,” explains Shigeru Oyama, a rice farmer in Ibaraki Prefecture. “After threshing, we have to clean and dry the grain immediately.”

While most rice is harvested between September and October throughout Japan, Okinawa's warm temperatures afford two harvests a year.

In addition to harvesting 1,920 tons of rice from late May to early September 2018, the island's farmers also harvested a second, 282-ton crop between late October 2018 and early February of this year, according to data of Okinawa Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Division.

Ishigaki Island is famed for its rice. It produces about 1,300 tons of annually – about 60 percent of all the rice grown in Okinawa Prefecture – due to its fertile soil and temperate climate which allow some fields to produce three crops annually. In the true spirit Japanese rice cultivation, Ishigaki is also famed for its many “hounensai,” or harvest, festivals that occur island-wide– especially from late July to early September.



Tsukimi (moon viewing)

Tsukimi is a long-held custom observed on the 15th night of eighth month (“jugo-ya”) and the 13th night of the ninth month (“jusan-ya”) of Japan's old lunar calendar. This year, the dates fall on Oct. 1 and Oct. 29, respectively. On these evenings, many take in the splendor of the Harvest Moon (and the less-famous “Hunters' Moon” in October) in all its awesome, orangish glory from their homes or yards.

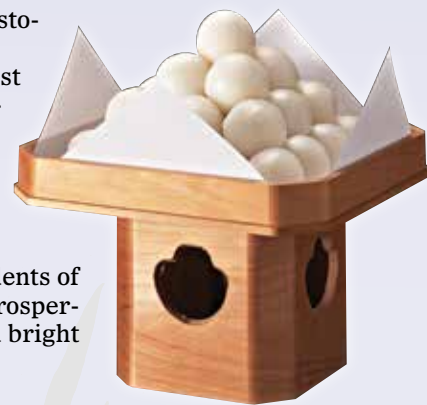
Traditionally, tsukimi ranks with “yukimi” (snow viewing) and “hanami” (cherry-blossom viewing) as one of the three most favored settings for declarations of love and poetic outpourings of the soul.

This is also considered a time to wish for a rich harvest and prosperity for the coming year. It's customary to set out “tsukimi dango,” or moon-viewing dumplings, taro, soybeans, chestnuts, persimmons and other round-shaped seasonal foods, along with sake and sprigs of “susuki” grass on a portable table. The table is placed on a porch or in a corridor from which the moon is viewed.

There are a number of other customs that may be observed depending on where you are. As a kind of pre-harvest-fest activity, for example, the sprigs of susuki grass represent rice and are sometimes hung from the eaves of a home to ward off illness after an evening of moon viewing.

One old custom, slightly reminiscent of trick or treating in the States, encourages children to go around the neighborhood “stealing” the dumplings and other offerings on the tables. The stolen offerings are considered to have been accepted by the moon, thus the more stolen, the better.

In Okinawa, the light of the Harvest Moon was once used to divine households' fortunes for the coming year in some areas. Locals would make rice cakes with sweet beans called “fuchagi,” offer them to the moon, then climb a nearby hill to survey their village by moonlight. It was said that residents of homes that appeared dark would be prosperous, while those whose houses appeared bright would be less fortunate.



Photos courtesy of Kujukuri Shinko LLC

Traditions

the season

Higan (memorial)

There is a saying in Japan that, “No heat or cold lasts over the equinox.” The autumnal and spring equinoxes are considered the border, and thus the end, of the respective hot and cold seasons. In Japan’s Buddhist tradition, these times also represent passing from one realm to the next.

Higan (literally, “other shore”) is a seven-day Buddhist memorial service held on the equinoxes (three days before and after). The concept can be likened to Memorial Day in the United States, in that it is a special time set aside to remember friends and family who have died.

Both the Vernal Equinox (Mar. 20) and Autumnal Equinox (Sept. 22) have been observed as holidays for more than 1,000 years in Japan. Originally, the Higan ceremony called on devout Buddhists to visit temples and offer prayers for the souls of the dead. Records indicate Higan was widely observed as far back as the 9th century A.D. when the equinoxes became religious holidays and the emperor called on

Buddhist monks to read scriptures for these rites.

Today, people visit family tombs in temples or common cemeteries to offer prayers for deceased family members and friends. Sweet rice-gluten balls, or “ohagi,” are commonly eaten during these periods. (The name ohagi comes from autumn flower “hagi,” or bush clover.)

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Harvest the rice

Try your hand at harvesting rice near Yokota Air Base. Olive Park Tokyo in Higashi Murayama City offers a rice harvesting event in Kitayama Park’s rice field. From Sept. 15 to Nov. 15, from 10 a.m. to noon. Admission is 4,400 yen (\$40) for adult and 3,500 yen for elementary schoolers, and 3,000 yen for ages 2 – 6. The participants can take 100 grams of harvested rice home. For details and reservations, visit: <https://www.tokyo-olive.com/> (Japanese)



Under the moon

Best spots in mainland Japan

Sankeien garden “Harvest Moon Night Viewing”

This famous moon-viewing spot and well-known Japanese garden in Yokohama City hosts this event annually. Garden buildings, such as a three-storied pagoda, are beautifully illuminated and traditional Japanese music and dance is performed at “Domyoji,” an old temple hall. Sept. 30 – Oct. 4 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Admission is 200 to 700 yen (\$2-\$7). For more details, call 045-621-0634 or visit: www.sankeien.or.jp/en

Osawanoike in Kyoto

“Osawanoike Kangetu-no-yube” Moon Viewing has been held on the oldest artificial pond in traditional Japanese temple garden in Kyoto since the Saga Emperor conducted one on a wooden boat about 1,100 years ago. Today, it is known as one of the three most famous moon-viewing events in Japan. Enjoy the traditional autumn event on a classical dragon-shaped Japanese boat on the beautiful pond. This year, the event is simplified and conducted for only three days, Oct. 1 -3, due to the Covid-19. Admission to the event site is 300 to 500 yen. Reservation is required if you go aboard a boat with additional charge of 1,000 yen. For reservation or more information, visit www.daikakuji.or.jp/ or call Daikakuji Temple at 075-871-0071.



Photo courtesy of www.daikakuji.or.jp/

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Autumnal Equinox

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jusan-ya
(Hunters' Moon)

Jugo-ya
(Harvest Moon)

Over-wrapped!

How to limit plastic waste while in Japan

BY LUCIO MAURIZI,
LIVE JAPAN

For newcomers to Japan, one of the biggest surprises may be the sheer amount of unnecessary packaging – particularly with plastics. While some Japanese retailers have recently taken proactive steps to encourage consumers to use eco-friendly reusable bags, these approaches have not yet been more widely adopted or imposed by the government.

However, as the Tokyo 2020 Olympics approach, eco-conscious

discussions have to some extent been reignited, with Environment Minister Yoshiaki Harada saying at a press conference in June 2019 that his ministry plans to introduce legislation curtailing the use of single-use plastic bags that are currently offered for free. Despite this positive step, Japan continues to be one of the largest producers of plastic waste per capita in the world.

So if during your trip to Japan you find yourself being bombarded with excess packaging, here are some key phrases and tips on how you can cope!



Pristine fruit, packaged impeccably to avoid bumps and bruises. Photo by JudeAnd / Shutterstock.com

Background: Why is Japan infatuated with plastic and packaging?



The simple answer is that Japan is a very detail-oriented society that values quality, presentation, and customer satisfaction. One of the results of this is that attention to packaging is paramount. To stores and their staff, wrapping the product with a good package shows the care they have for the customer. A well-wrapped item will not only be beautiful and well-presented, but there is a practical aspect: it will also be protected and in pristine condition.

To achieve these levels, though, a relatively large amount of packaging material is needed. Similarly, in order to guarantee a comfortable transport of your purchase (or for convenience when you purchase multiple items as gifts), you'll often be given or offered multiple bags.

Of course, all of us like comfort, and no one would complain about amazing customer service and care, but, if you're environment-conscious and want to be able to do your part and avoid waste while visiting Japan, it will help to know what to expect from Japanese stores, and how to ask to avoid unnecessary usage of plastic and paper.



Saying
« NO »
to unnecessary packaging:
General phrase for all situations



Regardless of the store you visit, once they are about to hand you a bag, or pack your purchase you can say “*Iranai desu* (I don't need it),” referring to both bagging and wrapping (or either one of them).

To make things even easier for yourself, there is also a common gesture that means “no” or “I don't need it.” Make an X with your arms (or open hands if you want the gesture to look softer) and you'll be all set.

Now that you know the basics, let's take a look at some specific situations you're likely to find yourself in and what phrases can be used.



Saying
« NO »
to unnecessary plastic:
At convenience stores



Convenience stores are something of a godsend for many foreign tourists, as they offer practically all of the basic necessities, from snacks and prepared meals to things like SD cards and power banks. And for the most part they are open 24/7 and happy to serve. Their service also shines in the way they treat patrons. The attitude of the staff will always be polite and helpful, and they will make sure you have enough bags for whatever you need, or don't need, or didn't even think you may have wanted.

Common situations and polite ways to address them

1. Staff will usually pack items in several bags, even when one slightly larger one would do the trick. Before they start packing, you can ask: “*Hitotsu no fukuro ni matomette moraemasuka* (Could you please put everything in one bag?).” They will surely oblige.

2. When buying food, such as a bento lunch box or prepared pasta, you'll likely be given plastic cutlery or chopsticks – or sometimes both.

Useful approach: If you're planning on eating in your hotel room, you're probably not going to need cutlery anyway. Depending on your circumstances, you might want the cutlery and/or chopsticks, but not the bag – or you might want only the meal.

If you do need some cutlery, chances are you won't need as many items as they are going to give you.

In this case you could say:

- “*iranai desu.*”
- *Hashi* = chopsticks
- *Fo-ku* = fork
- *Naifu* = knife
- *Spoon* = spoon
- *Fukuro* = bag

If you just want your purchase and don't need a bag or any cutlery, you could say: “*Sono mama de kudasai* (As it is, please).”

3. Furthermore, should you buy drinks, along with cold and hot food, you'll likely be asked if you want these items to be bagged separately: “*Fukuro owake shimasuka?*”

Should you not want the items to be bagged separately, you could respond with: “*Issho de daijoubu desu* (Everything together is ok).”





Saying
« NO »
to unnecessary plastic:
At cafés



→ In convenience stores you can get coffee and other drinks, but often these will also come with plastic. Meanwhile, at cafes you can often get drinks in a mug. Even if a paper or plastic cup is offered instead, a plastic straw, plastic muddler, and things like single-serving creamer and sugar will be automatically placed on your tray – or included in a takeout bag.

Common situations and polite ways to address them

When visiting a café drinks are often served in paper or plastic cups. Depending on the café, though, if you're planning on sitting and enjoying your drink within the café, they will give you the same beverage in a glass, or ceramic mug.

When you order, tell them: “*Koko de nomimasu (I'll drink here).*” or “*Mug cup de dekimasu ka? (Can you put this in a mug please?)*”

Sometimes, though, the drink (especially coffee) will come in a plastic cup and a straw, or a paper cup no matter what. There's really no way around it, but you can use our magic formula “*iranai desu*” for anything we don't need (straw, or muddler).



Saying
« NO »
to unnecessary plastic:
At souvenir shop



You'll most likely end up in small or big souvenir shops looking for mementos for yourself and presents for your friends and family back home.

Sometimes you'll opt for traditional items, other times for local food-stuff and sweets. Regardless, these stores will often bag each item you buy in a separate bag, not to mention that they will overly wrap with paper an already wrapped item to improve its presentation.

How to avoid waste and be polite in the process

You may not need 6 bags for six items (maybe you won't need bags at all if you have your own).

In these cases, you can once again say: “*Sono mama de daijoubu desu*” or “*Sono mama ii desu (It's ok as it is)*”. Or the ever-present “*iranai desu (I don't need it).*”



Saying
« NO »
to unnecessary plastic:
At stationery shop



Stationery shops in Japan can be an attraction in their own right. Amazing brushes, pencils, pens, stickers or all kinds, not to mention notebooks, parchments or traditional Japanese paper virtually non-existent outside of the country. You would love visiting a nice stationery shop and chances are you're going to buy something functional – and adorable!

Phrases to kindly let the clerk know you won't be needing too much packaging

In these stores they also wrap everything many times over. Small items like pencils, erasers, markers are individually bagged and then placed in yet another bag along the other items.

However, these items can be easily stored in your purse, or whatever other bag you're carrying - and not require an excess of new bags. To avoid too much waste, you can refer to some of the phrases we used before: “*Sono mama de daijoubu desu*” or “*Sono mama ii desu (It's ok as it is)*”. Or the ever-present “*iranai desu (I don't need it).*”

When customers choose not to use bags after paying, the staff will mark each un-bagged item with a sticker, saving you from carrying a number of bags around (and helping you do your part for the environment in the process).

Saying
« NO »
to unnecessary plastic:
On rainy days



Japan is big on trying to avoid anything that could bother people. Among these things, there's also the issue of wet dripping umbrellas in stores. We can all agree that walking on a wet indoor floor can be annoying, and even dangerous.

One of the solutions many stores adopt is that of offering plastic bags meant to wrap the head of your umbrella so not to have it drip inside.

1. There's usually a waste receptacle for the used plastic covers. While Japanese typically do not re-use them, you can choose to do so - and in most likely others would be none the wiser.



2. The very same stores tend to have umbrella racks right by the entrance. Some of them are even equipped with locks. (Umbrella theft in Japan is surprisingly high.)

3. Alternatively, you can bring your own reusable cover (most umbrellas come with it).



Items to consider
packing for Japan

As alluded to above, there are certain preventative measures you can pack for or purchase once in Japan.

1. Portable umbrella with cover; poncho
And especially during rainy season, these can help make your trip so much more comfortable.

2. Eco-bag, day pack, backpack
You can simply place your purchases in these and make them much easier to carry around than bundles of plastic bags!

3. Reusable chopsticks
Not only do they make fantastic souvenirs, but if you have your own set of chopsticks for when you're on the go, you won't need to rely on disposable chopsticks when getting food at a convenience store or takeout.

4. Water bottle
Japan does not have public water taps in as many locations as in other countries, however you can fill up a water bottle at your hotel and bring it around with you, instead of relying on vending machines and plastic bottles at stores.

5. Get a furoshiki wrap
Furoshiki are traditional Japanese wrapping cloths that come in a plethora of different sizes, colors and designs. You can wrap souvenirs and other purchases in these and make them part of a gift to friends and family.

And here you have it. Following these few tips, you will still be able to enjoy the amazing attention to detail and to customers that Japan offers, but you won't have to feel like you're not doing your part for our planet.

MELON PAN

byFood

Why are people crazy about this melon-shaped bread?

Editor's note: These are uncertain times and this article mentions places to try melon pan in Tokyo, which is currently off-limits. There are plenty of melon pan options at your local convenience store and supermarket to try in the meantime. Use the locations mentioned here for future planning. And, always remember to practice proper hand-washing and social distancing.

BY KELLIANETHACH,
BYFOOD

When it comes to Japanese desserts, most people know about matcha-flavored foods or wagashi (traditional Japanese sweets) such as taiyaki or ichigo daifuku. Generally, people in the West usually use bread in sandwiches for lunch, rather than eating it as a dessert. But in

Japan, bread is life, with bakeries housing a variety of sweet buns filled with custard, chocolate cream, and anko (sweet bean paste).

Bread is essential in Japanese food culture due to how portable and tasty it is. The melon bun (melon pan in Japanese) is an extremely popular type of bread that can be found in convenience stores, bakeries, and even in specialty melon pan shops. Among all the Japanese snacks out there, melon pan is one of the most iconic.

What is melon pan (Melon bread)?

Melon pan is a sweet Japanese bread that is known for its soft and fluffy interior and cookie-like crust. Its signature look is the patterned grid on top and it comes in a huge range of flavors, from chocolate chip to matcha to strawberry. We cover more of the delicious flavors available later in this blog post.



Photo by Janin, Flickr

Why is it called melon pan?

Due to its name, most people assume that the bread is filled with melon-flavored cream (which is sometimes the case), but traditionally melon bread is not made with melon flavor. Instead, melon bread has just a sugar cookie crust. The name melon pan stems from its patterned cookie topping, which resembles the skin of a melon.



Photo by George N, Flickr

Why do people love melon pan?

Why is there so much hype around melon pan? Many people believe it is just like any other sweet bread, but do not be fooled. After you try this Japanese melon bread, it will leave you craving more.

Popularized in anime, you may see the protagonist being late for school and running out of the house with a piece of melon pan in their mouth. The bread guest features in many anime and manga, such as Nichijou. This Japanese melon bread is perfect for a quick bite on your way to work or school, or just as a special treat. There have been many different flavors and variations of this beloved bread, such as ice cream, custard, chocolate and more.

Its portability, cute name, variety of flavors, and pop culture associations, make melon pan beloved across Japan.

Where to eat melon pan

1 Melon Pan Ice



Photo courtesy of Melon Pan Ice

You probably guessed it by the title, but this restaurant specializes in melon pan ice cream. What makes this different from other ice cream melon pan is the bread itself. It is cut into a cone shaped and covered with parchment paper. The ice cream and design is then placed in the middle. If you want the "Tokyo Kawaii" look, they even have Gudetama as an option for your ice cream. With two locations in the Tokyo metropolitan area, it is convenient for you foodies who want to try this Japanese snack. It is the perfect Instagram-worthy dessert!

ADDRESS: Iwase Bldg. 1-15-9 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

DIRECTION: 12-minute walk from Shibuya Station

HOURS: Monday-Sunday 11a.m. - 10 p.m.

2 Kagetsudo

Sensoji Temple, located in Asakusa, Tokyo, is one of Tokyo's most famous tourist hotspots. With traditional food and markets around the area, why not stop for a quick snack at Kagetsudo? With two locations in the area, it is easy to access when you are visiting. Established in 1945, Kagetsudo has a long history as an Asakusa favorite among locals and tourists. They never fail when it comes to providing customers with freshly baked bread. This bread is perfect to share with your travel buddy due to its jumbo size, or you can enjoy this sweet goodness all to yourself.

Spice up this jumbo bread with some ice cream! Depending on the time of year, they have seasonal flavors such as sakura or sweet potato. Best to get there early since the queue could last over an hour!

ADDRESS: 2-7-13 Asakusa, Taito City, Tokyo

1-18-11 Asakusa, Taito City, Tokyo

DIRECTION: 3-minute walk from Asakusa Station

HOURS: Monday-Sunday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Photo by Antonia Tajuelo, Flickr

3 Duca Di Camastra

If you are ever headed towards Yokohama to visit the famous ferris wheel or Chinatown, make a pit stop to Tamamachi Station (don't mix this up with Tamachi Station since both are in opposite directions). Right outside the station, there is a small bakery that you can smell from a mile away! The shops sell various types of bread and desserts, but my favorite by far is their melon pan. The melon pan is very simple, but this feature is actually its strong point. With an extra crunchy shell and creamy texture, it is quite different from the larger melon pan chains. This local mom and pop bakery is loved by many locals in the area.

ADDRESS: 1-1-1 Matsumotocho, Kanagawa-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa Pref.

DIRECTION: 1-minute walk from Tamamachi Station

HOURS: Tuesday - Sunday 8 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.



Photo by Kelliane Thach, byFood

→

Melon pan flavors to try

1 Chocolate

This beloved chocolate flavored pan has a gooey, chocolatey middle, almost reminiscent of a lava cake. Surprisingly, this flavor is easy to find anywhere, even at your nearest convenience store.

2 Ice cream

If you can't tell already, ice cream is a very popular addition to your melon pan. The ice cream adds a great contrast to the fresh bread encasing it. You can enjoy this melon pan even in the winter by pairing it with a cup of tea on the side.

3 Strawberry

This defining fruit of the winter months in Japan is a seasonal specialty loved by all. Strawberry melon pan provides the perfect balance between sweet and tangy.

4 Matcha

Matcha melon pan is perfect for those who love bread but aren't too fond of sweets. If luck is on your side, you can find matcha melon pan in cute shapes, such as a turtle, due to its bright green color.

5 Zunda

Eat this special melon pan bread without feeling guilty because it's made out of edamame! If you ever visit Sendai, home of zunda, you can easily find this melon pan at Sendai Station along with other zunda-flavored treats.

6 Milk tea

For all you milk tea lovers out there, this bread is for you. This milk tea infused melon pan has notes of the tea while still providing that crunchy, cookie-like top. Though it is uncommon, there are speciality stores that do sell it seasonally.

7 Pumpkin

Sweater weather only happens once a year, but in Japan, have it any day with pumpkin flavored melon pan. Pumpkin is used as an ingredient in many dishes in Japan so it is no surprise when it comes to melon pan.

8 Hojicha

Discover another side of Japan and step towards traditional Japanese tea with hojicha melon pan. The rich, earthy aroma of roasted green tea will be sure to capture your heart as you dig in.

9 Melon

You can't finish your melon pan journey without checking out melon-flavored melon pan. This piece of bread truly lives up to its name not only in shape, but also flavor. Biting into one of these is almost like biting into a real melon!

10 Glazed

If you are missing that original glazed donut while traveling in Japan, you can get the melon pan version! This beautiful piece of bread has a sugary glazed coating instead of your typical cookie crust. Every bite you take will still have the perfect balance of sugar and soft crumbly bread.

Now you know all about Japanese melon pan, a classic breakfast and quick snack in Japan, perfect to satisfy a sweet tooth! With a huge range of melon bread flavors to try, you'll never get bored eating this fluffy-on-the-inside, crunchy-on-the-outside treat.

byFood is a platform for food events in Tokyo, with over 80 experiences to choose from and a fantastic resource for learning about Japan's thriving food culture! What's more, byFood runs a charitable outreach program, the Food for Happiness Project, which donates 10 meals to children in Cambodia for each person who books a food event through our platform!

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*1: Source: Cable and Satellite Fact Book 2019.
*2: Service for J:COM TV standard Plus, which includes digital terrestrial television broadcasting and BS digital broadcasting. Notes: Numbers are current as of the end of April 2019 (Portions excluded). May not be useable due to circumstances related to the house or building. Company names, product names, or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of their respective holders. Includes some trademarks pending registration.
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

OMIKUJI: How to draw your fortune



Photo by nnayne, Shutterstock.com

OMIKUJI: Japanese fortune slips

Omikuji is a type of Japanese fortune that is written on a strip of paper. These days, some temples/shrines may also have English omikuji.

The list below shows the most common kinds of luck they will tell you.

MEANING OF OMIKUJI SYMBOLS

大吉 (Dai-kichi): Super lucky

吉 (Kichi): Lucky

中吉 (Chu-kichi): Lucky enough, okay

小吉 (Sho-kichi): So-so

半吉 (Han-kichi): Half-good

末吉 (Sue-kichi): It might not be your time for now, but your luck will come later (in the year)

凶 (Kyo): Bad

小凶 (Sho-kyo): Little bad

半凶 (Han-kyo): Half-bad

末凶 (Sue-kyo): Bad luck will come later (in the year)

大凶 (Dai-kyo): Very bad

WHERE TO GET (DRAW) AN OMIKUJI?

Before you try your luck with an omikuji, you should have something specific in mind - a hope, dream, or something else that you would like insight into.

There are typically two styles of omamori at a temple/shrine.

1) Omikuji stick version

You'll find this at the Jimusho (at a temple)/Shamusho (at a shrine)/Juyosho. If you ask staff for an omikuji, they will pass you a tubular box. Draw a stick and tell (or show) staff the number on it. Then, they give you a fortune slip with the corresponding number.

2) Omikuji paper version

You'll find a box with full of omikuji in the site of a temple/shrine, usually somewhere close to the Jimusho (at a temple)/Shamusho (at a shrine)/Juyosho. In this case, it is simple. Put a coin into Saisen-bako (a separated box attached along with the omikuji box) and draw a folded paper yourself. This will have a number on it which corresponds to a series of drawers. Then take a fortune slip from the drawer with your number on it.



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WHAT TO DO WITH OMIKUJI?

Now that you have your omikuji, have a look at it. It's said these will provide some insight into your question.

When your omikuji tells a good fortune: You should keep it.

When your omikuji tells a bad thing: You should leave it at the temple/shrine, so that hotoke/kami can take care of your omikuji and no bad thing will happen to you. This is why people tie up their fortune slips onto a string.

WHEN TO GET AN OMIKUJI?

Many people draw their fortune on New Year's day to see their fortune for the year. However, it is okay to draw an omikuji whenever you want. Just remember to say hello to hotoke/kami first before you dash straight for omikuji!

Is it okay to draw omikuji several times until I get a good one?

This is not advisable. Omikuji is a message from hotoke/kami to you. Accordingly, it can be considered disrespectful to draw omikuji again and again until you get one you like, as it equally means you are rejecting or having doubt about what they told you.

Also, even though you may have drawn a 'bad' fortune, be sure to read the whole omikuji. They always include advice from hotoke/kami as well. So, you might want to listen to their advice instead of turning a blind eye and give it another shot.

Having said that, it is okay to draw an omikuji on another day as your fortune may have changed after a while.

WHAT DO THE JAPANESE THINK OF OMIKUJI?

As stated above, many Japanese people draw omikuji on New Year's Day. However, it is more of a part of an event of visiting a temple/shrine, that gives you a special atmosphere.

In general, they don't take the result too seriously especially when it tells a bad fortune. Though, at the same time, many Japanese still have religious respect for omikuji, so they bear in mind what they are told.

You might think it is a little bit challenging to try a religious thing when visiting Japan, or might be worried about being disrespectful somehow. Temples and shrines are very inviting and welcoming to people of all backgrounds. Do not hesitate to dive into a whole new culture!

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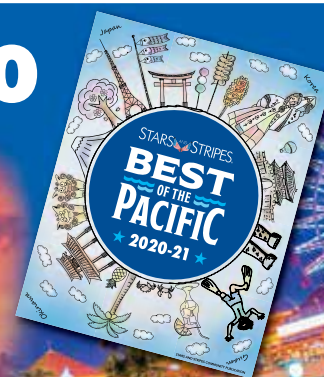


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Since 2003, three schools have had a trio of quarterbacks selected in the first round of the NFL Draft. Florida State is the only to have all three QBs still active (Jameis Winston, EJ Manuel, Christian Ponder). Of the other two schools, one currently claims two starters, while the other features a grizzled vet that was drafted back in 2004. What are the two schools?

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Kanji of the week

沼

Numa or sho (marsh)

Language Lesson

Which way is [north]?

[Kita] wa docchi desuka?

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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Impudent talk
- 5 Creditor's concern
- 9 Lowest-pitched singer
- 14 Aid and
- 15 Square feet, eg.
- 16 Worrier's risk
- 17 Sign of sorrow
- 18 Spectators' area
- 20 Island near Corsica
- 21 Overcharge, big time
- 22 Word ending a threat
- 23 Stair part
- 25 It's more than a job
- 27 First act
- 29 Tiny bit
- 31 Bakery item
- 32 Horoscope writers
- 37 Open, as a jacket
- 39 Order between "ready" and "fire"
- 40 True-blue
- 41 Shorthand-writing
- 44 It may be inflated
- 45 Words to live by
- 46 Ultimate
- 48 Gives out
- 51 Prepare, as tea
- 52 Seriously injure
- 53 "Get lost!"
- 56 Semimonthly tide
- 59 Give life to
- 61 2017-19 series, "___ with an E"
- 62 Film part
- 63 Similar (to)
- 64 Small change
- 65 Durable fabric
- 66 Lady's man, briefly
- 67 "-zoic" things

DOWN

- 1 Fill to excess
- 2 Son of Adam
- 3 Beachy cocktail
- 4 Back problem
- 5 Swordlike weapons
- 6 Trial partner
- 7 Steady guy
- 8 Sharp taste
- 9 Clear the tables
- 10 Clark Kent, to Superman
- 11 Bathroom item
- 12 Common thing?
- 13 Military command
- 19 Model stick-on
- 24 Cruise stop
- 26 Priest's helper
- 27 Creative work
- 28 Pub purchase
- 29 Group of three
- 30 Cavort
- 33 Scale deduction
- 34 Startling revelation

- 35 Tattered duds
- 36 Token taker
- 38 Soon to land
- 42 Painter's plaster
- 43 Army camp dwellings
- 47 Dennis of comics, for one
- 48 Not quite right
- 49 Knight's weapon

- 50 Gilets part
- 51 Lustrous fabric
- 54 Rugged rock
- 55 Gardener's tool
- 57 Kournikova of tennis
- 58 Guinea pigs, maybe
- 60 Ten C-notes

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

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

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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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.

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

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

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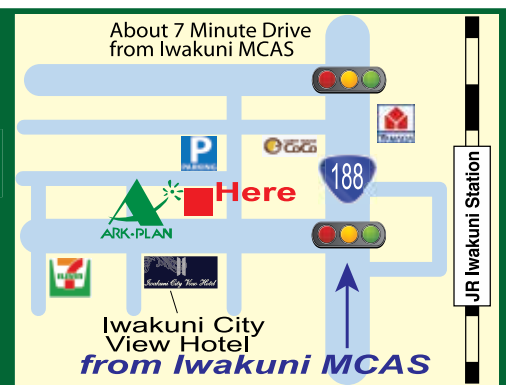
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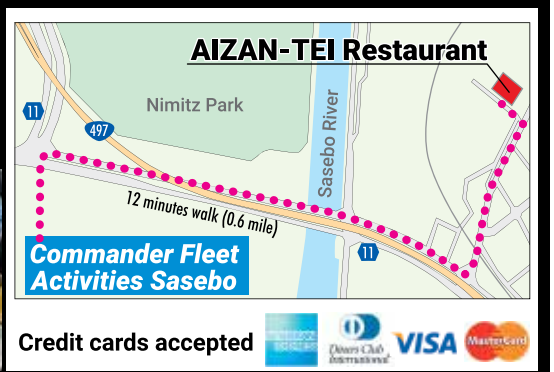
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