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Bathtub baby surprises Yokota family

BY SETH ROBSON,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 12, 2021

YOKOTA AIR BASE — An Air Force transportation specialist at the U.S. military's airlift hub in western Tokyo helped with a special, unexpected delivery last month.

A scream from his wife Oct. 19 summoned Staff Sgt. Kyle Thomas, 29, of Lathrop, Mo., to the bathroom of the family home in Ome, located near Yokota, where Kyle is stationed with the 730th Air Mobility Squadron.

Alexis Thomas, 29, was expecting the couple's third child

and this time her husband was on-hand to provide support. Kyle was deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, when their son, Tannen, 2 was born.

Alexis had been in labor so long with Tannen and oldest daughter Braelyn, 6, that the couple expected plenty of warning before their third

child arrived.

"We were trying to wait until the last minute to go to the hospital," Kyle said.

But 15 minutes after Alexis went for a bath, she was screaming for her husband to help deliver the baby, he

SEE BABY ON PAGE 2

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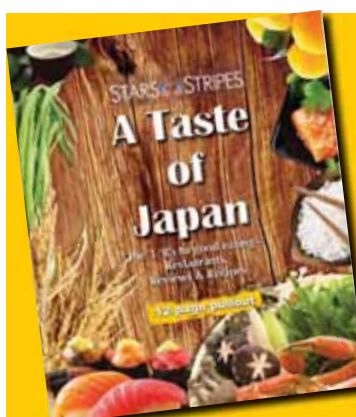
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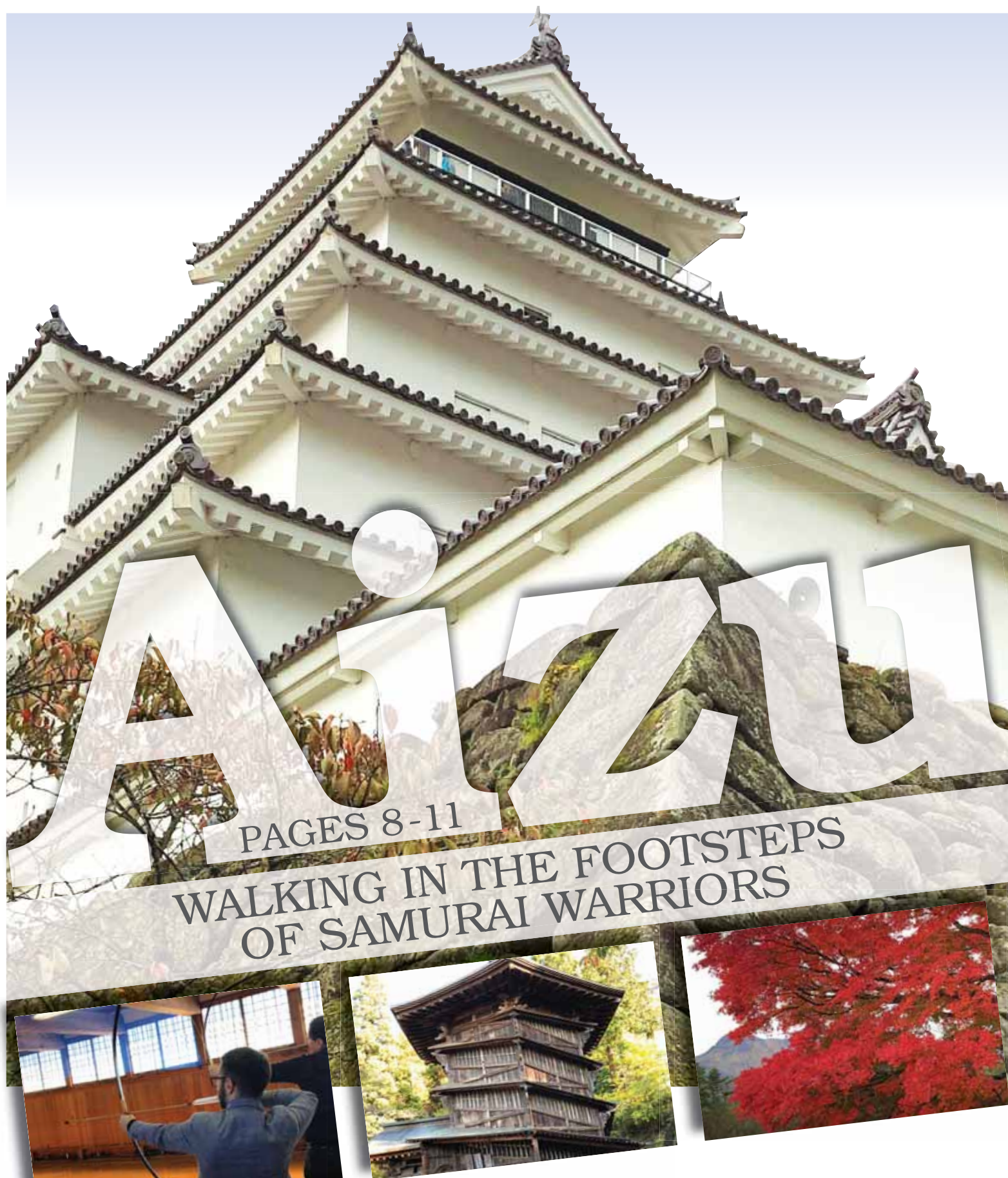


READY FOR REPTILE RAMEN NEAR IWAKUNI?

PAGE 13



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The Thomas family, from left, Tannen, Kyle, Braelyn, Alexis and, in her arms, infant Millicent at Yokota Air Base. Photo by Theron Godbold, Stars and Stripes

**"I always wanted
a home birth, but
not in a bathtub
with no midwife."**

— Alexis Thomas

BABY: Family wanted to wait till last minute

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recalled.

"I always wanted a home birth," Alexis said, "but not in a bathtub with no midwife."

The staff sergeant told his wife to push once, and he saw

the baby's head. She pushed one more time and the baby

made her entrance, he said.

"I was super nervous because there was a substantial amount

of blood," Alexis said, "but I just decided the baby was

more important and I just focused."

The youngster, named Millicent, weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces, Kyle said.

The couple cleaned up and drove to the base hospital, where surprised staff kept mother and baby overnight, he said.

Young Millicent, described by her mother as "the best baby," slept serenely in a blanket one recent evening while other kids played on a sports field at Yokota.

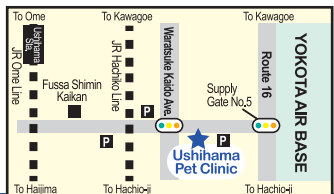
"She is so quiet and sleeps immaculately at night," Alexis said.

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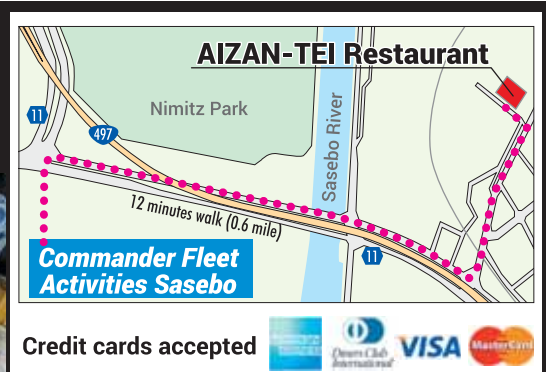
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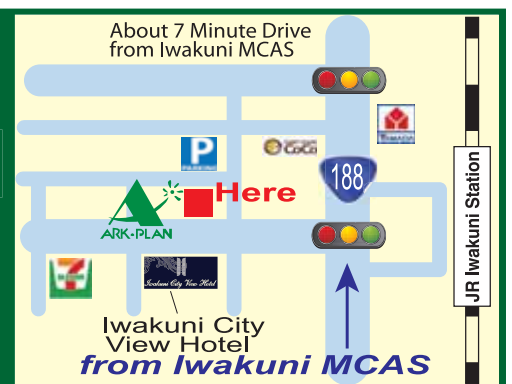
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Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez

My stress, your stress,
our stressBY HILARY VALDEZ,
STRIPE JAPAN

If you are alive, there is stress in your life, and in your family life. Some people wake up screaming. Some people can't sleep. Some people stay in bed most of the day. Every human being reacts differently to stress. And, within the family dynamic certain stressors such as arguments, fighting, lack of communication and poor negotiating (fighting) skills can add more stress to your life. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered every aspect of our lives from health, work, education and exercise. The American Psychological Association warns that in the long-term, the negative mental health effects of the coronavirus will be serious and long-lasting.

Pandemic or not, stress does not stop and it's also affecting our children especially in their relationships with members of their family: "Even though children know when their parents are stressed and admit that it directly affects them, parents are grossly underestimating the impact that their stress is having on their children," psychologist Katherine C. Nordal, PhD said. Knowing what the triggers are, how to manage stress in a healthy manner are important skills parents must teach their children, Nordal added.

In a survey conducted by Harris Interactive, results showed parents underestimated how much stress their children experience and the impact their own stress had on them. Raising a family is rewarding and demanding even in healthy, social, and economic climates. Setting an example for your children on the right way to tolerate uncertainty and build resilience is not an easy task, so it's okay to say, "I don't know...yet," to children.



The American Psychological Association found that 73% of parents reported family responsibilities as a significant source of stress and an overwhelming two-third of those surveyed thought their own stress had little to no impact on their kids. While we know now this is not true, one good first step is to increase communication.

Talk about it. If you notice that your children are looking worried or stressed, ask them what's on their mind. Welcome their questions. With the confusion of COVID-19 and so many other issues affecting today's youth, kids are bound to have questions. Starting a conversation is helpful to better understand and address feelings of stress amongst members of the family unit.

Chores are an opportunity to set the emotional tone and have a conversation about stress and the virus. Focus on what you're doing to stay safe. An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you, and others around you, are taking. Ask your kids to tell you anything they heard about the virus, and how they feel.

If you are struggling to cope with today's life events, don't act like a turtle and withdraw. Family Advocacy Program services are available at every military installation where families are assigned. Trained professionals offer a range of services and programs, including skill building for healthy relationships, communications, conflict resolution, and support for expecting parents, to name a few services. FAP's priority is safety for individuals and families in the military community encouraging violence-free relationships, nurturing parenting, and building on individual and family strengths.

Instant Insights: We are all in this together; one family.

Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. He is an experienced Mental Health professional and Resiliency Trainer. Valdez is a former Marine and has worked with the military most of his career and most recently worked at Camp Zama as a Master Resiliency Trainer. Valdez now has a private practice and publishes books on social and psychological issues. His books are available on Amazon and for Kindle. Learn more about Valdez and contact him at www.hilaryvaldez.com or at InstantInsights@hotmail.com

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Sunken WWII-era ships rise from sea near Iwo Jima

BY JONATHAN SNYDER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 11, 2021

Volcanic activity beneath Iwo Jima, site of a defining World War II battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sunken naval vessels to the surface.

Two dozen World War II-era ships in the water just off the island's black-sand beaches were photographed from above and reported Oct. 18 by the All-Nippon News Network. Although the ships have resurfaced previously, according to reports, a video posted online by the network brought fresh attention to the ghost fleet.

The network also reported that an undersea eruption near Iwo Jima – known as Iwo To in Japan – created a new island a half-mile square nearby. It's the third small island to appear there since 1900. They eventually wash away.

Reports differ as to who owned the ships. The U.S. Navy sank them to create a breakwater to shield an artificial harbor where other vessels unloaded troops and supplies, according to an Oct. 23 report by the Weather Channel.

Other reports indicate Imperial Japan sank the vessels for the same purpose prior to the cataclysmic battle in February and March 1945. "The ships were used by Japan to prepare for an invasion of U.S. troops," the newspaper USA Today reported Oct. 22.

"Iwo Jima has been rising steadily over the years and is now over 50 feet above sea level," the report said.

A spokesman for the Naval



Volcanic activity beneath Iwo Jima, site of a defining World War II battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sunken naval vessels to the surface. Photos by Heather Johnson, U.S. Marine Corps

History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C., said its underwater archeology team has little information on the ships, even after contacting their Japanese counterparts.

Iwo Jima has been rising for years due to volcanic activity beneath it, an official with the volcanological department of the Japan Meteorological Agency told Stars and Stripes by phone on Oct. 27. The island has risen about three feet a year since 2014, the official said.

He said the agency started collecting data that year, and the island likely rose at the

same pace in previous years.

Iwo Jima lies in the western Pacific about 760 miles south of Tokyo.

The meteorological agency tracks volcanic activity around the island, including reports of water columns along its coast, the official said.

How the island rises is unclear but it may be due to magma accumulating beneath the island and forcing it to rise, the official said.

Iwo Jima is used by U.S. Navy pilots based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to qualify for carrier landings prior to shipping out aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, homeported at Yokosuka Naval Base.

"Carrier Air Wing 5 continually monitors events that could impact training and readiness and works closely with the Government of Japan to always remain ready to operate as part of the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed Carrier Strike Group," Lt. Cmdr. Joe Keiley, Task Force 70 spokesman, told Stars and Stripes by email Oct. 25.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the volcanic activity, the rising island and hulks on the beach do not affect its operations at Iwo Jima, a ministry spokeswoman said on Nov. 1.

Japan's Self-Defense Forces hold disaster relief and flight training on

the island, the spokeswoman said.

"We have been observing closely for any effects it may have on the Self-Defense Force facility and will continue to monitor the situation," she said.

The Navy and Japanese government have been looking for an airfield other than the one at Iwo Jima, where bad weather and logistics challenges sometimes mean the Navy's landing practice must be relocated.

The Japanese government is developing a Self-Defense Force facility on Kagoshima prefecture's Mageshima island in western Japan to relocate the Navy's landing practice. The ministry has acquired most of the land but when it will be available for use is unclear, according to the spokeswoman.

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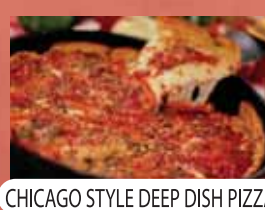
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Left: Added to Tokyo's Sunshine City in February 2021, the Bandai Namco Gashapon Department Store boasts the largest collection of capsule toy game machines in the world. Right: Sunshine City, also known as Sunshine 60, is a shopping and entertainment center in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, that can keep visitors occupied all day. Photos by Akifumi Ishikawa, Stars and Stripes

'Haunted' Tokyo skyscraper offers world's largest capsule toy stop, more

BY ERICA EARL,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 11, 2021

The looming, gray, 60-story skyscraper stands in juxtaposition to its name, Sunshine City. But while the building may look like a villain's lair from a comic book, it is a shopping and entertainment center that can keep visitors occupied all day.

Sunshine City, also known as Sunshine 60, is a mixed-use building in Ikebukuro, Tokyo. It's perfect for visiting during rainy days.

Popular destinations inside Sunshine City are the Pokémon Center, which recently reopened after a hiatus during Tokyo's state of emergency; and Sky Circus, an observatory deck on the top floor that includes virtual reality exhibits, such as a virtual ride on a swing coaster over Ikebukuro. Sunshine City is also home to an aquarium and a planetarium.

Entry is 1,200 yen, or about \$11. Each VR experience costs

500 yen, or \$4.

Another popular destination inside the center is the newly opened Bandai Namco Gashapon Department Store. Added to the shopping complex in February, the store boasts the largest collection of capsule toy game machines in the world, more than 3,000.

The gashapon store was validated as the world's largest by Guinness World Records in March, and at more than 13,000 square feet, it's a massive neon wonderland.

Gashapon is a traditional Japanese vending machine arcade game in which players get a surprise toy inside a plastic egg. The blind nature of the game is a big part of the fun for many collectors; they insert coins with the hope of getting a certain item, but the exact toy they receive is dispensed at random.

The Bandai Namco Gashapon Department Store features machines from Japanese classics like Pokémon, Sailor Moon and Super Mario, along with familiar



DIRECTIONS: About a 12-minute walk from Ikebukuro Station. Google Plus code: PPH9+HR Toshima City, Tokyo

TIMES: Most Sunshine City shops are open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

COSTS: Admission to the building is free. Admission to Pokémon shop and training center is also free. Sky Circus Observatory is 1,200 yen. Aquarium is 2,400 yen for adults and 1,200 yen for most children.

FOOD: More than a dozen restaurants on site.

INFORMATION: Online: sunshinecity.jp/en/



Japanese treasures like realistic replicas of Gundam and foods. Each machine will set players back 300 to 800 yen per play.

Sunshine City also offers popular clothing, toy and beauty stores like Axes Femme, 3 Coins, Thank You Mart, Etude House,

Sanrio, the Disney Store and a Studio Ghibli store.

Restaurants include popular chains like Italian Tomato, Curry House Coco Ichiban, Café Miami Garden and Godiva. Pikachu Sweets, a café attached to the Pokémon Center, is still

temporarily closed, but when it reopens visitors there may find treats shaped like beloved characters.

Sunshine City may be a fun place with a bright moniker, but dark lore follows it. The skyscraper is built on the former grounds of Sugamo Prison, which once held around 2,000 people suspected of war crimes during World War II, according to the National WWII Museum of New Orleans.

Several people were executed by hanging at Sugamo, including Prime Minister Hideko Tojo. The prison closed in 1962 and was demolished in 1971.

Sunshine City is often included on lists of Tokyo's most haunted places because of its past, making it a popular destination for paranormal enthusiasts.

Whether or not you see the ghost of a guard or a prisoner as some visitors claim, the stark building does have a sense of eeriness due to its architecture, despite its name and the fun-filled offerings inside.

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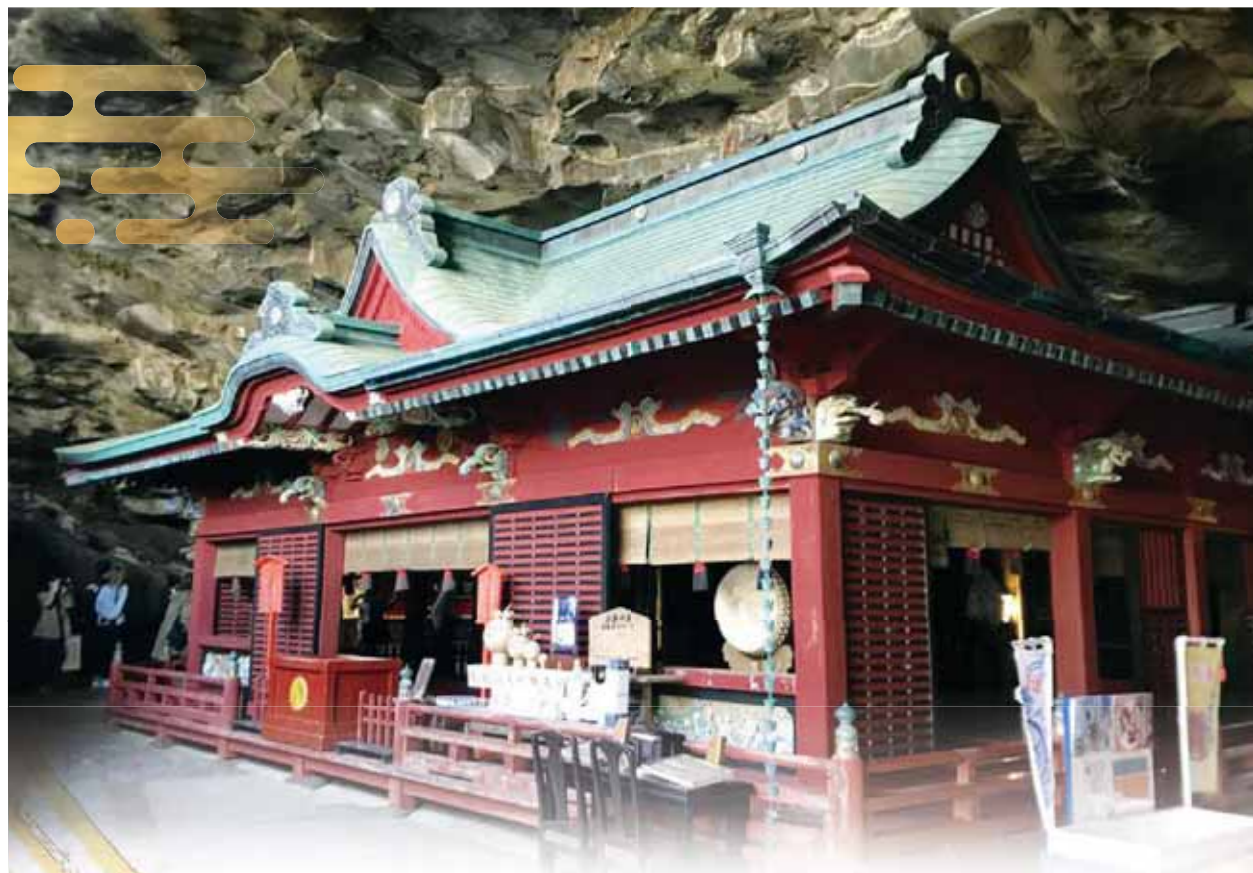
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LOCATION: 3232 Miyaaura, Nichinan City, Miyazaki Prefecture. The shrine is about a 25-mile drive from Miyazaki City. From the parking lot it's about a 10-minute walk to the shrine entrance.

HOURS: Open daily, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ADMISSION: Entry is free.

FOOD: Several coffee bars near the shrine.

TEL: 0987-29-1001

URL: udojingu.com



Royal birthplace

Mythical origin story of Japan's first emperor starts in Miyazaki Prefecture

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 4, 2021

Huge waves crash onto jagged rocks below Udo Shrine, the mythical birthplace of the father of Japan's first emperor, on the east coast of the country's southern island of Kyushu.

Legend has it that Emperor Jimmu, a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu and the storm god Susanoo, founded Japan in 660 B.C. His accession is marked each year as National Foundation Day on Feb. 11.

Udo Shrine, near Nichinan City, is supposed to be where the sea goddess Toyotama-hime gave birth to Jimmu's father, Ugayafukiaezu, in a birth-hut made of the feathers of a cormorant.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
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The shrine is popular with young couples hoping for easy childbirth and a happy marriage.

Getting to the shrine involves a hike over several hundred yards from a parking lot through a pedestrian tunnel and down stone steps. There are a few coffee and souvenir shops along the way if you want to rest.

Visitors enter the shrine through an impressive red gateway that sits high above a rocky shoreline.

A cliffside path is decorated with rabbit statues. The creatures are messengers of the gods, according to a local Shinto priest.

A wooden bridge along the path is said to lead into the spirit world. Those who have done evil deeds cannot cross, according to the priest.

From there it's a steep descent down more stone steps to a bluff overlooking the surf. Visitors can purchase clay balls and attempt to toss them into a rope circle on top of a rock below for good luck.

Nearby, you may enter the main shrine, built inside a cavern.

The shrine includes a Chinese-style building decorated with mythical animals such as the Kirin, a deer-like creature supposed to only appear during times of world peace, and which features on a popular beer brand.

At the back of the cave water drips from the ochichi iwa, or "breast stone," that is supposed to have fed Emperor Jimmu's father when his grandmother returned to the sea.

A gift shop at the cave entrance sells a variety of souvenirs including plenty of pendants with images of rabbits.



A Kirin, a mythical creature said to appear only during times of world peace, decorates a building at Udo Shrine in Miyazaki prefecture, Japan.



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The staple Hattori-zen meal includes sashimi, sushi, savory egg and dengaku roasted dishes.



OBI HATTORI-TEI

LOCATION: 4-3-19 Obi, Nichinan, Miyazaki 889-2535. Follow the street that runs past Obi Castle's Ote-mon Gate for about 150 yards. Hattori-tei is on the opposite side of the street from the castle.

HOURS: Open daily, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; reservations required for dinner hours.

PRICES: Lunch, including dessert, will cost about \$20.

DRESS: Casual

TEL: 098-725-3822



Eat like a samurai at Obi Hattori-tei

Gazing out at the Japanese-style garden and surrounding countryside from Obi Hattori-tei, it's easy to imagine you're at a samurai feast.

The restaurant operates in a wooden building more than a century old that was once home to a prominent family in Nichinan City, Miyazaki prefecture, on Japan's southern island of Kyushu.

It's only a short walk from Obi Castle, said to have been built of 51,000 stones and which flourished from 1588 until Japan's Meiji era, 280 years later.

Obi Castle Town, where Hattori-tei is located, was designated one of Japan's "Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings" in 1977.

There are numerous old wooden homes that visitors

can check out along with the castle's famous Ote-mon Gate, rebuilt in 1978.

Hattori-tei is a short walk from the gate, past an empty moat and along a street that has retained its Edo-period atmosphere with old-style buildings and verdant gardens.

Some of the homes are open to tourists. For 620 yen (about \$5.45) you can check out four of them, including a former samurai residence and a teahouse with a view of an ancient battlefield.

Stepping inside a stone wall, diners remove their shoes and enter Hattori-tei, which includes a pair of wooden halls arranged in an "L" shape around a garden of more than 3,500 square feet.

The garden, filled with shrubbery that looks like it could be the work of Edward Scissorhands, sits atop a sloping hillside giving diners an impressive view of the surrounding green countryside.

There's also some impressive Japanese traditional art hanging inside.

The staple Hattori-zen meal (1,650 yen) includes sashimi, sushi, savory egg and dengaku roasted dishes. Cake-sets and other desserts are available.

The restaurant has an English-language menu. It doesn't take credit cards but provides free Wi-Fi.

It's the perfect place to refresh your energy while exploring the castle and town.

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Tsurugajo Castle

Editor's Note: The following recounts a trip our Stripes Japan writer took fall 2019 in collaboration with the ANA Strategic Research Institute and Kyodo News Digital. Today, we are living in uncertain times, so please plan ahead if, and when, you decide to travel. Follow safety guidelines set by your base and always remember to practice proper hand-washing and social distancing.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

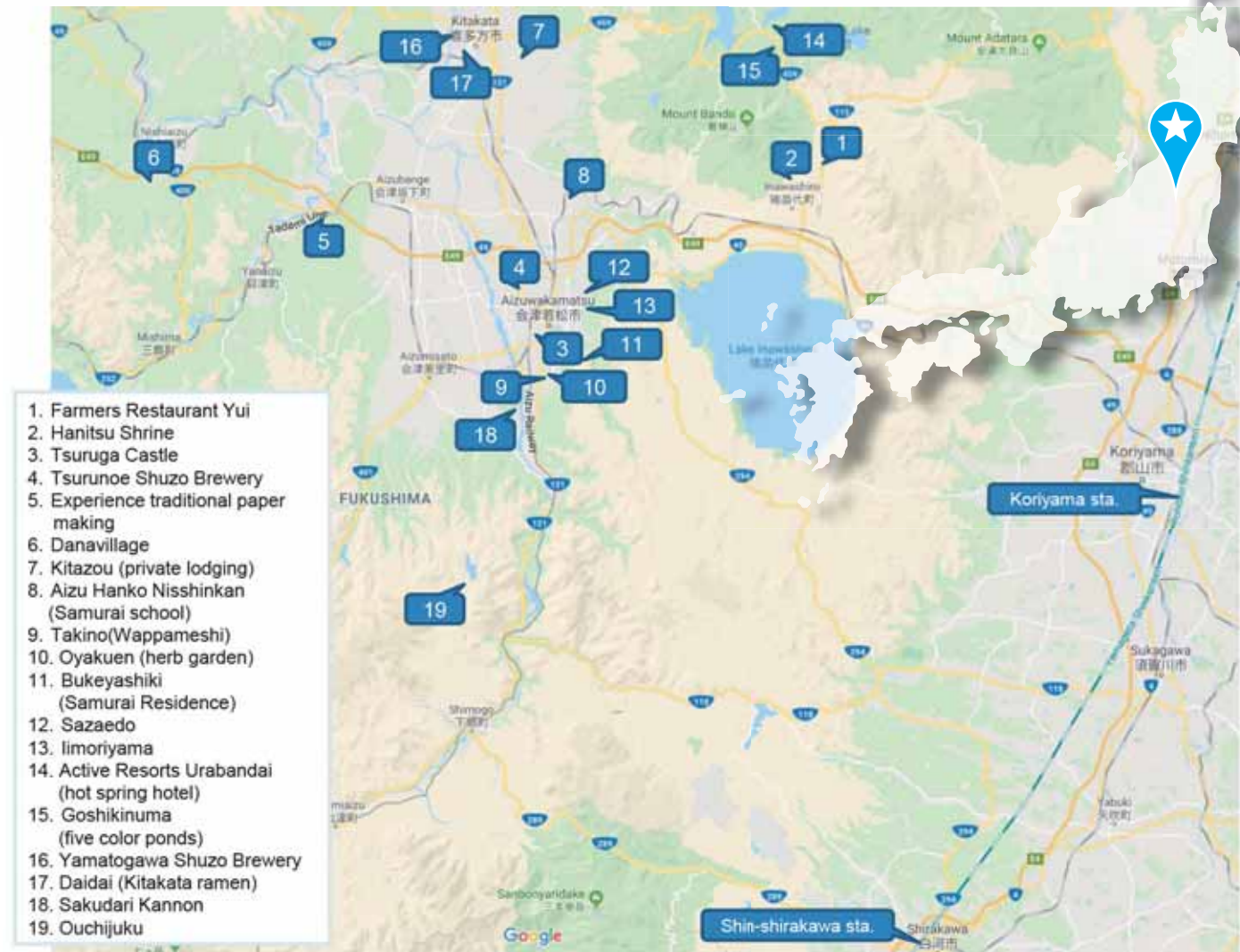
Aizu, Japan, in Fukushima Prefecture's western side, is a wonderful region. Not only does it boast beautiful mountains, lakes and ponds, but it also has a unique samurai heritage, incredible temples and shrines and is known for its classical sake breweries.

I was invited to participate in an intensive three-day crash course on everything Aizu has to offer by Aizuwakamatsu City, so I packed my bag and headed out with six other reporters of the foreign media.

Though the region's scenic sights like Mount Bandai, Goshikinuma (five-color ponds) and interesting architecture surrounded by gorgeous autumn leaves dazzled us, by the end of my time there, it was the warm-hearted people of Aizu, the rich heritage and samurai tradition which has left me with a lasting impression.

According to our tour guides, the residents of Aizu are known for their discipline and perseverance, virtues dating back to their local samurai descendants.

Throughout the Edo period (1603-1868), the Aizu clan devoted their service to the Shogunate, as a relative of the Shogun was assigned as a lord to



them. When pro-Imperial nationalists attempted to overthrow the Shogunate in the mid-19th century, the Aizu clan entered a heavy battle against the modern troops of the Imperial Forces. In the end, their town they fought to protect was destroyed and the clan surrendered.

This history is one marked by bloodshed, sadness and loss.

During the battles in 1868, young warriors of the Byakkotai group high above on a hill, saw black smoke rising from their castle. Misconceiving it as a sign Aizu had fallen, these

teenaged-warriors committed mass suicide. The fire was rising from the town and not from the castle. Later, the wife and daughters of the Saigo Family also killed themselves in an act of loyalty to the samurai clan just as enemies were about to converge and capture them.

These stories are part of the lives, a common fighting spirit generation.

On our sites related to the region's different landscapes and the area and the town.

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Below is experienced and delicate takiguchi.taka

DAY 1

8:30 a.m. - Tour starts at Tokyo Station



I, along with six other reporters from faraway lands like Denmark, France, Italy, Spain and Mexico, gathered ahead of our 8:56 a.m. Shinkansen boarding time. I was lucky to sit next to the Danish and French journalists, and as the train quickly passed the cityscape

which gave into rolling hills and greenery, we became quick friends eagerly anticipating our forthcoming explorations in Fukushima's western region.

10:13 a.m. - JR Koriyama Station

Within an hour and 40 minutes, we found ourselves at Koriyama Station in Fukushima Prefecture. Our tour guides led us to a chartered bus and away we went. As we headed to our first stop on the tour, our guides briefed us on Aizu's rich history.



11:30 a.m. - Lunch at soba joint Yui

After a busy morning of commuting to Tokyo Station and then traveling to Fukushima, I had worked up quite the appetite. Aizu is famous for its superb soba (buckwheat) noodles and our first stop was for lunch at Yui, a popular soba joint. Located at the foot of Mount Bandai, Yui is run by local farmers serving up fresh and high-quality ingredients in all their dishes. I ordered their signature noodle dish, Yuinomura soba, in a set for 1,500 yen. Soba noodles were served up in a bamboo basket, along with a bowl of chicken in hot broth, seasonal vegetables and pickles. The dark gray soba noodles had a great aroma, and the sweet flavors burst in my mouth the more I chewed. Though the broth was not as salty, the potatoes, mushrooms, radishes, beans and other veggies were a welcome and hearty addition.

LOCATION: 93 Shinmurakita, Inawashiro Town
HOURS: Wed - Mon, 11 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
TEL: 0242-23-7747



1 p.m. - Hanitsu Shrine

After lunch, we visited Hanitsu Shrine, a Shinto shrine established in 1675 according to Aizu clan lord Hoshina Masayuki's wishes after his death in 1672. The classical stone bridge, white torii gate and stone-paved approach were surrounded by trees with bright autumn leaves. As we ascended the stairway to the main shrine, I found myself taken back by the beauty of this small wooden shrine with its autumnal backdrop. Although the original shrine structure was as majestic and beautiful as that of Nikko Toshogu, the battles of 1868 destroyed it and the current building dates to 1880.

LOCATION: 3 Miyayama, Inawashiro Town, Yama-gun
FACEBOOK: hanitsujinja
TEL: 0242-62-2160



2 p.m. - Tsurugajo Castle

Our next stop was a landmark of the region, Tsurugajo Castle, built some 600 years ago. This white castle is known for having unique red tiles, the only castle in Japan to have them. Tsurugajo Castle also has a majestic tower and everything one would expect from a castle: lush grounds, stone walls and plenty of moats. The interior of this castle is a museum with various displays throughout its five stories. Here I learned about the castle's history, area lords and battles within and around it against Imperialism. There's also an observatory for a great view of Aizuwakamatsu.

LOCATION: 1-1 Outemachi, Aizuwakamatsu City
HOURS: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
ADMISSION: adult: 410 yen, ages 6-14: 150 yen
URL: www.tsurugajo.com
TEL: 0242-27-4005

3:30 p.m. - Tsurunoe Shuzo Brewery

Tsurunoe Shuzo Brewery, dating back to 1794, is one of the oldest breweries in the region and was our next stop on this long journey. Its sake brand, "Aizu Chujo," was a gold prize winner in the 2019 Annual Japan Sake Awards. Yuri Hayashi, a brewer and daughter of the 7th chief brewer, explained that Aizu is blessed with three important factors in high-quality sake brewing – high-grade rice, pure water and a cold winter. "In this region, we brew sake only during the cold season when the air is purest, and that enables sake in Aizu to be full-bodied with a particular rich and sweet flavor, so they go along with sweet and salty local foods," Hayashi said. We had a chance to sample several of the sakes brewed here and found them rich, fresh and smooth with a slight sweetness and lingering dryness.

LOCATION: 2-46 Nanukamachi, Aizuwakamatsu City
HOURS: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
URL: www.tsurunoe.com
TEL: 0242-27-0139



6 p.m. - Traditional papermaking



To wrap up our Day 1 activities, we headed to try our hand at making traditional Japanese washi paper. Aizu is known for its washi, which has been around for hundreds of years. In the craft shop housed in an old local wooden house, an instructor explained to us of the washi making process - peeling the bark off from mulberry tree, drying it in air, cleaning the bark after boiling, beating the boiled bark to soften, mixing it with glue and water in a bucket, then finally scooping the fibrous mixture into a rectangle board and pressing down to expel excess moisture.

8:30 p.m. - Kitazo private lodging facility

After a full day of activities and getting acquainted, we arrived at Kitazo, a private lodging facility housed within the private home of a local farmer. This is quite an experience, where visitors are able to meet with and spend a night or two with a local Aizu farmer. The grounds had many large tile-roofed wooden buildings and warehouses. The rooms had tatami floors, wooden walls, shoji screens and we had to lay out our futon bedding ourselves before going to sleep. The owners, The Minagawas, prepared dinner for their guests consisting of pickled mountain vegetables, boiled soybeans, boiled freshwater fish with soy sauce, steamed Fukushima rice and the local festive soup, Kozuyu, a soy sauce-based soup of seasonal vegetables, and Welsh onions and pickles. Later, over glasses of local sake we discussed Aizu and the 2011 earthquake. "Aizu people are industrious, resilient and kind, and that, I believe, is a legacy of samurai warriors," the farmer said. According to Minagawa, Aizu is located far west over high mountains from the nuclear power plant on the coast and was hardly affected by the disaster.

LOCATION: Onumako, Kumaguramachi, Shingo Kitakata
OWNER: Kenichi Minagawa
TEL: 0241-24-4488



SEE DAY2 ON PAGE 10

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hiho@stripes.com

DAY 2



9:30 a.m. - Nisshinkan

We awoke to a delicious and nutritious farmer's breakfast of steamed rice and various mountain vegetables, then left the lodging for Nisshinkan, once considered the top samurai school in the country. The school dates back to 1803, and though this school no longer teaches future samurai, it is preserved as a piece of Aizu's history. Despite its age, I was impressed with how the pristine garden and grounds reminded me of a modern university campus. Our tour guide took us in for a closer look at the classrooms, a shrine for Confucius in the center of the building, and even a demo of traditional archery.

LOCATION: 10 Takatsukayama, Minamikoya, Kawahigashimachi, Aizuwakamatsu City
HOURS: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
ADMISSION: adults 620 yen, high schoolers: 500 yen, elementary schoolers: 450 yen
URL: nisshinkan.jp
TEL: 0242-75-2525

11:30 a.m. - Oyakuen (traditional herb garden)

Our next stop on the second day was to Oyakuen, a traditional Japanese garden. Developed in the late 17th century, this picturesque garden with a large pond and teahouse, was a place for the Aizu Clan to grow medicinal herbs to help locals combat sickness and disease. We ended our time there at the gift shop with a sampling of various herb teas cultivated in the garden.

LOCATION: 8-1 Hanaharumachi, Aizuwakamatsu City
HOURS: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
ADMISSION: Adults: 330 yen, high schoolers: 270 yen, middle and elementary schoolers: 160 yen
URL: www.tsurugajo.com/oyakuen/index.htm
TEL: 0242-27-2472



12:40 p.m. - Takino: local wappamaeshi dish

After all that strolling and practicing archery, it was, at last, time for lunch. So, we tried Takino, a local restaurant serving up wappameshi, a local dish consisting of steamed rice and salmon, mushrooms, crab, egg and other ingredients that are steamed in a circular wood container. I sampled "salmon wappameshi" for 1,500 yen. The complicated flavor of salmon and mountain vegetables was paired nicely with the flaky texture of the steamed rice. It was really delicious.

LOCATION: 5-31 Sakaemachi, Aizuwakamatsu City
URL: www.takino.jp
TEL: 0242-25-0808



1:45 p.m. - Aizu Bukeyashiki (samurai residence)

After lunch, our next destination was Aizu Bukeyashi, a museum park where several historical buildings of the Aizu Clan were restored and exhibited. Touring a restored residence of a high-ranking samurai family made me a little bit emotional, as this was the site where the samurai family relatives committed ritual suicide just before the enemy broke into their residence in 1868. Despite this dark history, the grounds are interesting and well-preserved and show what life was like for high-ranking samurai.

LOCATION: Innai-1 Higashiyama-machi, Ishiyama, Aizuwakamatsu City
HOURS: Sat - Wed, (Apr - Nov) 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., (Dec - Mar) 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
ADMISSION: Adults: 850 yen, middle and high schoolers: 550 yen and elementary schoolers: 450 yen
URL: www.bukeyashiki.com
TEL: 0242-28-2525



3:15 p.m. - Mount Iimoriyama and Sazaedo

Our last attraction for the day was Mt. Iimoriyama, one of the most sacred locations for Aizu locals. We walked up a steep road and stairs for around 15 minutes before we reached torii gates leading to Sazaedo, a temple building dating to 1796 with three stories and a double-helix wooden structure. We went into the temple and climbed up and down on the wooden slope while checking out each drawing of different Bodhisattva enshrined at the 33 stations within the building. Here, you'll find the 19 tombs of teenage samurai who committed ritual suicide after misinterpreting a smoke signal as one indicating their castle had been conquered by enemy forces.

LOCATION: 155 Yawata Takizawa, Ikki-machi, Aizuwakamatsu City
HOURS: Apr - Nov, 8:15 a.m. – sun-set, Dec - Mar, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
ADMISSION: adult: 400 yen, students (age 16 or older): 300 yen, students (age 7-15): 200 yen
• Sazaedo: **URL:** www.sazaedo.jp **TEL:** 0242-22-3163
• Iimoriyama: **URL:** www.iimoriyama.jp **TEL:** 0242-22-5818



5:45 p.m. - Active Resorts Urabandai

It was finally time to rest and our bus took us to our hotel for the night, Active Resorts Urabandai. This large, modern hotel is behind Mount Bandai and features clean rooms and on-site hot springs, or onsen. As soon as I unpacked my bag in my room, I made a beeline straight to the outdoor onsen for a soak surrounded by chilly mountain air. After, the hotel served up a dinner featuring tastes of the local region, which we enjoyed while going over the day's activities.

INFO: An 8-minute walk from Goshiki Numa ponds, this modern hotel facility offers a great hotel facility to tour around the ponds, along with the Morohashi Museum of Art. It has a tea lounge, izakaya pub, and indoor and outdoor hot spring baths. Both western and Japanese-style guest rooms are available.
LOCATION: 1093-309 Kengamine, Hibara, Kitashiobara-mura, Yama-gun
URL: <https://www.daiwaresort.jp/urabandai/index.html>
TEL: 0241-32-3111



Videos of Aizu Tour ▶▶▶



Aizu – home to tasty local dishes



Aizu Papermaking Experience



Experience the rich tradition of sake brewing in Fukushima's Aizu region



Historical sites of samurai heritage in Aizu, Fukushima



Aizu – home to unique-shaped traditional architecture



Ouchijuku – traditional post town in Fukushima



Autumn foliage in Aizu region

DAY 3



9:15 a.m. - Goshiki Numa (five color ponds)

After a relaxing morning soak and all-you-can-eat breakfast at the hotel, we headed toward Goshiki Numa (five color ponds), home to over 30 ponds and marshes. The volcanic substance in the water makes the ponds change colors depending on the season, weather, temperature and time of day. Here we took a stroll around the Bentennuma Pond and enjoyed the fantastic landscape and view of Mount Bandai. If you're lucky, like me, you might spot a large white carp in the water with a red heart-shaped mark on its scales. Locals believe spotting this particular carp will bring you happiness.

LOCATION: 1093 Kengamine, Hibara, Kitashiobara-mura, Yama-gun

URL: www.urabandai-inf.com/?page_id=141

TEL: 0241-32-2850



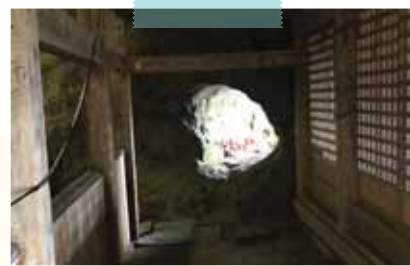
2:15 p.m. - Sakudari Kannon Temple

After lunch, we took a one-hour bus ride and 15-minute walk along an uphill path to the 21st stop of the 33 temple pilgrimage sites in the Aizu Region. This is Sakudari Kannon, a temple built on a steep mountain slope in 830 A.D. for priests training in ascetics. The structure of this nearly-1,200-year-old wooden temple has lattice work similar to Kyoto's Kiyomizu Temple. And much like that temple, Sakudari Kannon also offers a stunning view, but of the Aizu Basin, the region's rice fields and Aka river with majestic Mt. Bandai as a backdrop. Visitors today will find that the pilgrimage to this and the 32 other sites are still active even though the pilgrimage has been in existence since the first lord of the Aizu Clan.

LOCATION: 1173 Higashi-Sakudari, Oishi, Aizumisato-machi, Onumaga-gun

URL: http://aizu33.jp/cultural_assets/287/

TEL: 0242-56-4882 (Aizumisato-machi Tourist Association)



10:35 a.m. - Yamatogawa Shuzo Brewery

Our luck guaranteed thanks to the heart-marked carp, our next destination was to Yamatogawa Shuzo, a sake brewery dating all the way back to 1790. On our tour of premises, we met the brewery president, Yauemon Sato, and he gave us some insight into his brewing philosophy. From this conversation we learned the brewery has remained a self-sufficient for hundreds of years, the brewery uses local rice and spring water, and the organic byproducts from production are used as ecological fertilizer for the region's rice fields. The brewery's commitment to both sake they produce and to being ecological is shown in its success and quality of products. Yamatogawa Shuzo has also won gold awards in the annual sake convention for the past eight consecutive years.

LOCATION: 4761 Teramachi, Kitakata City

HOURS: 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

URL: www.yauemon.co.jp

TEL: 0241-22-2233



3:40 p.m. - Ouchi-juku (gate village)

Our final stop on this lively tour was Ouchi-juku, an unusual village made up of 44 traditional wooden houses with thatched roofs lined along a stone-paved road. This is considered a "gate village" as it was a connection on the way to Imaichi and Nikko in Tochigi Prefecture. Many of the thatched-roofed houses in the village have remained unchanged since their construction nearly 400 years ago. From an observatory on a hill, we had a view of the whole village and this impressive view made me think about what life was like in the time of the samurais. After, we strolled along the shops housed inside these traditional homes. I dropped by a shop and bought a bottle of local honey for a souvenir.

LOCATION: Ouchi, Shimosato-machi, Minami Aizu-gun

URL: <http://www.ouchi-juku.com/>

TEL: 0241-68-3611



12:15 p.m. - Daidai (Kitakata ramen noodle)

For lunch, we made our way to ramen shop Daidai in Kitakata City. The city is known for its tasty ramen, often counted as one of the best three ramen in the nation, and Daidai is one of the most popular joints in the city. I sampled ramen with sliced rib pork in soy-sauce flavored broth for 880 yen. My bowl of ramen arrived topped with large, thick slices of pork rib meat. The smooth stock complemented the tender meat and yellow, chewy noodles. The seasoning was not too salty and had a well-balanced flavor. After devouring a bowl of Daidai's ramen, I knew why it's one of the best!

LOCATION: 2911-5 Kitamachi, Kitakata City

HOURS: Thu - Tue, 7 a.m. - 2 p.m.

TEL: 0241-23-0606



6:20 p.m. - Tour ends at JR Shin Shirakawa Station

After a great trip full of new attractions and experiences, it was time to head home.

Takayuki Amano, a spokesman of Aizuwakamatsu City, reiterated what I already had seen in the region and its people.

"The charm of the Aizu region lays on the tasty foods, quality sake and kind, hard-working and persevering people," Amano said. "And I believe those are the legacy of our ancestors, Aizu samurai."

Another example of the perseverance is the return of foreigners after a sharp drop in numbers after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Fortunately, the number of arriving foreigners are on the rebound. Many American sailors have been visiting the city, since Aizuwakamatsu City and Yokosuka City, home of Yokosuka Naval Base, signed a friendship city agreement 17 years ago, as well, according to Amano.

"I hope more people from overseas will visit us and enjoy the natural beauty, profound history, delicious food and sake we have to offer," Amano added.

We soon arrived at the JR Shin Shirakawa Station and hopped on a 90-minute shinkansen ride back to Tokyo, and, for me, another 120-minute commuter train ride back to my home in Yokosuka.

It was a long trip, but I made some new friends and enjoyed learning about a new place I had never visited before. To have the opportunity to sit and learn from a local farmer was an experience I will always remember. Just like our tour guides mentioned, Aizu's people are the most precious legacy that Aizu samurai left for the following generations. I know will go back to see them again ... and for another glass of sake.

Travel Japan like a pro!

Japanese manners to master before your trip



BY STEVE CSORGO,
LIVE JAPAN

Accidentally offending a local – every traveler's nightmare! However, awkward situations overseas like this can be easily avoided with just a bit of light research.

So before you head out, brush up on the local etiquette with LIVE Japan's guides to good Japanese manners! From what's expected when visiting a home, to where to place your chopsticks, Japan has plenty of curious social norms that might come as a surprise! Here's a selection of the more unique points.

Etiquette when riding trains in Japan

10 important tips to know before you go



Japanese trains are so quiet! No matter how crowded they are, almost no one is talking. Instead, passengers gaze at their smartphones, listen to music, read books, or nod off.

In large cities such as Tokyo, the morning rush hour often reaches a congestion rate of 200%, resulting in a horrible sense of discomfort as passengers are crammed together like sardines. As many are forced to suffer through this on a daily basis, commuters are careful to

avoid disturbing others to ensure the trip is as painless as possible for all.

Fascinating, right? For more weird locomotive stories like this, check out our article on 10 things to keep in mind when riding the trains in Japan!



WEBSITE

Visiting a Japanese home

10 etiquette tips you should know!



Just like homes around the world, Japanese households have a certain way of doing things. Spend enough time in Japan and you'll surely find out!

While each family has its own habits, there are some golden rules on how to behave in a Japanese home that will make your visit a surefire success. Keeping these tips in mind will allow you to enjoy yourself while showing your appreciation and re-

spect to the host. From where to put your shoes to how to sit, take a look at Japanese home etiquette here!



WEBSITE

Sushi etiquette

5 unofficial sushi rules according to Japanese!



Photos courtesy of Live Japan

into a sushi joint in Japan wasn't daunting enough!

However, you shouldn't have to miss out on Japan's peak culinary experience for fear of breaking the rules. To help avoid a faux pas, we present some of the most important sushi tips to remember when feasting in Japan!

In Japan, sushi is generally seen as a casual food, with the infamous 'sushi train' the pinnacle of easy-going dining. However, there are certain sushi rules in Japan that must be respected no matter where you dine!

This is particularly true of high-class sushi bars and other 'over the counter' restaurants. These establishments pride themselves on being personalized and formal experiences, and not abiding by the unwritten rules may offend the chef and shock other customers. As if walking



WEBSITE

5 essential chopstick tips to know in Japan!

7 tourist habits that shock Japanese locals



Chopsticks are, inarguably, the single most important eating utensils in Japan. Skillfully used to eat everything from rice to spaghetti, if you still don't know how to use chopsticks, you might want to start practicing!

Japan's code of etiquette extends well into mealtime. Particularly when dining out or eating at someone's home, there are numerous do's and don'ts when it comes to handling chop-

sticks. Get your ohashi practice off on the right foot with our 5 unmissable chopstick rules here!



WEBSITE

What not to do in Japan!

7 tourist habits that shock Japanese locals



With so many international residents and visitors roaming Japan these days, many Japanese locals are facing culture shock in their own neighborhoods! Be it train etiquette, protesting at public spaces, littering...

While most of us strive to do the right thing, it's only natural to make a few embarrassing mistakes! Everybody's experienced it! However, you can reduce the chance of finding yourself in awkward situations by studying

the customs and manners of your destination before you leave.

Here, we guide newcomers through some of Japan's lesser-known unspoken rules. Memorize these before your Japan trip, and you'll receive nothing but warm, friendly smiles!



WEBSITE

Travelers who research local etiquette before heading overseas are bound for a better trip than those who don't. Not only will you be saved from numerous cringe-worthy moments, but the locals will also appreciate your effort and welcome you into their neighborhoods with open arms! From inside trains and restaurants to out on the street, start practicing for your next Japan trip with LIVE JAPAN's manners guide today!



The softshell turtle ramen from Rakan Shokudo in Hiroshima Prefecture includes with three good-sized pieces of turtle meat, lots of bamboo shoots, chunks of fresh ginger and, of course, the noodles.



TURTLE POWER

Try tasty reptile ramen near Iwakuni

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SNYDER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 11, 2021

Along the Kose River, on a winding road on Mount Rakan in Hiroshima prefecture, sits Spa Rakan, a scenic rest stop boasting a small restaurant, convenience store and onsen.

You'll more than likely see high-performance vehicles on your way there; it's a popular route for car and motorcycle enthusiasts. And the trip is only about an hour-long drive from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

The restaurant, called Rakan Shokudo, offers a decent selection of udon, ramen and curry, all of which are easily ordered from a ticket vending machine.

If you're feeling adventurous, I recommend the soft-shell turtle ramen for 1,100 yen (about \$9.90) or the softshell turtle hot pot for 1,500 yen.

Make sure you bring yen; the restaurant's ticket machine accepts only Japanese currency, though the convenience store and onsen will take credit cards.

Insert enough yen into the machine and the menu buttons will illuminate the items you are able to purchase.

My turtle ramen came out in a large bowl. The broth was clear and light, with three good-sized pieces of turtle meat, lots of bamboo shoots, chunks of fresh ginger and, of course, the noodles.

The turtle has a texture and flavor similar to venison, and the meat includes some bones.

The ramen was tasty and filling, though it lacked something. Adding an egg and some seaweed at a minimum would have helped round out the dish.

The restaurant has limited seating inside, about five spots along the countertop and three tables, some traditional Japanese dining rooms near the spa entrance and, when the weather is right, a large patio dining area.

For dessert, go to the convenience store counter and order one of 19 flavors of ice cream for 350 yen each. My favorite is green tea, a flavor I don't see very often outside of Japan.

If you're interested in relaxing in the onsen, the entrance fee is a bargain. Adult admission is 650 yen and 250 yen for children age 3. A towel rental will set you back 150 yen.

Parking is free and more than 20 spaces are available, along with a large, separate area for motorcycles. Snyder.Jonathan@stripes.com @Jon_E_Snyder

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
STARS AND STRIPES
www.stripes.com

RAKAN SHOKUDO

LOCATION: 21-5 Iinoyama, Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima 738-0226. From the MCAS Iwakuni main gate take Route 2 then take Route 186 up Mount Rakan.

HOURS: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday through Tuesday.

PRICES: About 500 yen to 1,500 yen.

DRESS: Casual

TEL: 0829-72-2221

URL: sparakan.com



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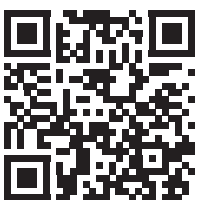


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Big Iowa Smokehouse

New Smokehouse set to be best in Tokyo

METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

“Kurobuta” or “black pig” is the wagyu of the pork world. Its high marbling score means more irresistibly juicy flavorful pork than its counterparts. It’s rare to find this premier pig even in the

U.S., where it’s all about quantity over quality when it comes to smokehouses, and even rarer in Tokyo. This is where the newly opening Big Iowa Smokehouse stands out from all the other BBQ smokehouse spots in the Japanese capital. Using only

the highest-quality kurobuta, or Berkshire pork, that’s raised on the small family-owned Farms in Iowa, it’s the first Iowa focused restaurant in Tokyo and aims to be as authentic of a U.S. barbecue experience as

possible.

Big Iowa’s American chefs smoke the kurobuta fresh each day in smokers imported from the U.S. and serve everything from racks of ribs

to generous servings of pulled pork. Everything’s covered in the smokehouse’s in-house dry rub so you can savor the smoky flavor by itself or douse it with any of the four BBQ sauces brought to your table (ranging from Texan to Kansas style).

With its prime location in Roppongi, Minato-ku, with ample indoor and terrace seating, Tokyo-based restauranter Mark Spencer originally planned to create a temporary barbecue pop-up spot during the Olympics. However, after a trip to Berkwood Farms and the Iowa state fair, he was so impressed with the 100% certified pure heirloom Berkshire pork, the family business and barbecue



culture that he made it his mission to permanently bring a bit of Iowa to Tokyo. With the help of the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and Iowa Pork Producers supporting it, the restaurant has just opened in

June, 2021.

While Iowa is sometimes overshadowed by its Midwest neighbors when it comes to barbecues, it’s the biggest pork producer in the U.S. and its barbecue style takes inspiration from its neighboring state and king of cookouts, Kansas City. Aside from pork on Big Iowa’s menu, there’s also sausages and beef brisket as well as the Iowa classics cornbread, mac and cheese and Jalapeño corn. If all that authentic flavor is not enough for you and you know you’ll be craving more soon, grab a couple of freezable retail packs of sausages, bacon and ham from the smokehouse’s fridge display to take home.

**Big Iowa
BBQ**



Website

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With LeBron James taking his throne to L.A., six of the NBA's top 8 all-time leaders in career points have played for the Lakers. King James will likely become a top-4 scorer during the upcoming season, making the top 4 all one-time Lakers. Who are the two outsiders in the top 8? A hint: one should be a no-brainer. The other isn't quite as easy.

Answer

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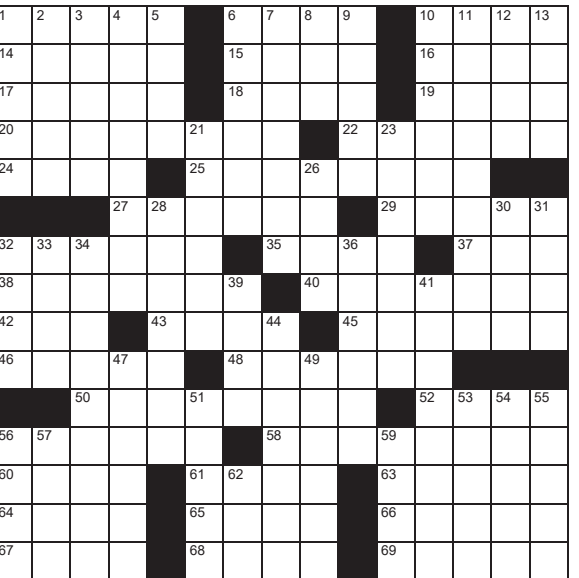
Sat. & Holiday Close at 5pm (Closed Sun.)

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- Weekly pickup
- Castle feature
- Marshal Dillon
- Consequently
- Wild about
- State with conviction
- Fit for a king
- Palm reader, e.g.
- Part of SWM
- Highway crosser
- Black as night, e.g.
- Watering hole
- Reasonable
- Young bird of prey
- Blackboard material, originally
- Apt to gab
- Sassy
- Car protector
- "I have no idea!"
- Spotty ailment
- Library date
- Soup ingredient
- Bear witness
- Overjoy
- Head of the pack
- Cause a chemical reaction
- Virus prefix
- Bricklayer's tool
- Type of flooring
- "Ant-Man" actor Paul
- Revered one
- Friendly relations
- Alternative to a cab
- Batman
- Kind of spray
- Piece of cake
- Inkling
- Solemn tolling



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- Superman
- Gabriel, for one
- Rhett's belle
- Fab Four flick
- Prayer book
- Ragtime dance
- Had a bite
- Bit of statuary
- Moose or mouse
- Ready for use
- Be a snitch
- Hammock holder
- Sock pattern
- Tuition category
- News tidbit
- Letter getter
- Spanish three
- Big Apple river
- Relinquish
- Use a big rig
- Some three-digit numbers
- Bookstore patron
- Holler
- Sham argument
- Peeper's place
- Cheap and gaudy
- Flowering shrub
- Form of defense
- Big racket
- Final figure
- Pastoral poem
- Laufer hit, "Colors"
- dub-dub
- Dungeonlike
- "Dear old" guy

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

Kanji of the week



Yuu/seki (evening)

Language Lesson

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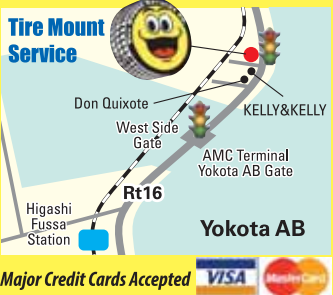
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7	2			4	6			9
				9			2	
3								
	1			5				8
	6	9		7	2			
2			1					6
	5	7	3				6	
		4			7	8		
				4				1

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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:

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

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The background is a rich, textured collage of Japanese culinary elements. In the top left, there are two small dark bowls filled with a light-colored liquid, possibly soy sauce or miso, next to a small dark teapot. To the right, a cluster of bright orange citrus fruits, likely mandarin oranges, is shown. Below the oranges, a black plate holds a piece of salmon topped with a green garnish. In the middle right, a wooden bowl is filled with white rice, with a pair of wooden chopsticks resting on top. The bottom of the image is dominated by a variety of fresh ingredients: several pieces of nigiri sushi (salmon and tuna) are in the bottom left; a basket of fresh green onions and a bundle of straw are on the left; and a large assortment of fresh seafood, including crab legs, mushrooms, and other delicacies, is arranged in the bottom right.

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RESTAURANT INFO

World Paella day

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES JAPAN

On a day in mid-October, I tried cooking paella, a Spanish dish for the first time. Several months back, I had tried ajillo and it went pretty well. So, I decided to give Spanish cuisine another go, hoping for a short gastronomic getaway from the ordinary.

I was aware of paella's popularity in the world, but was definitely surprised just how many recipes were available online. Many of the recipe photos featured colorful ingredients and fresh clams, shrimp and other delicious seafood, but I didn't want to spend a lot of time prepping for my meal. Fortunately, I found this recipe using frozen mixed seafood— perfect for a lazy chef like me!

I easily found every ingredient I needed down to the saffron at my local grocery store. The cooking itself took about an hour without any problems. The recipe required a pan with a lid, but since I didn't have a lid, I made one out of aluminum foil.

As soon as the ingredients started to hit the pan, the aroma had me looking forward to a great meal. Once the time is up, I was ready to take the lid off and dig in straight out of the pan.

I had seen paella served up in a huge pan and people share the food. This style probably serves to make the dish sociable. But in my case, I just couldn't wait to try the food.

The taste easily exceeded my expectation. The cooked rice did a great job of absorbing the seafood's savor. And it is well balanced with the taste of lemon and parsley. Slices of bell peppers added a nice accent of textures.

In fact, it turned out to be one of the best dishes that I cooked on my own and it took me less than 10 minutes to finish the painful of food!

Later, I learned that I'd just missed World Paella Day on Sept. 20. This day, according to the World Paella Day Cup organization, is dedicated to "the most universal plate of Spanish gastronomy." The organization hosts cooking competition events in search of the best paella chef in the world.

Though the recipe I tried was simpler in comparison to what the Paella Cup contestants bring to the table, my paella day was just as special.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

Ingredients

- Uncooked rice (180 cc) ■ Onion (1/2 piece) ■ Lemon slices
- Frozen mixed seafood (150 g) ■ Garlic (2 pieces)
- Bell peppers (sliced, as much as you please)
- Parsley or Italian parsley (as much as you please)
- Olive oil (30 ml) ■ White wine or sake (30 ml)
- Salt and pepper (as much as you please) ■ Water (300 cc)
- Tomato sauce (50 cc) ■ Saffron (as much as you please)

How to make!



1



Pour olive oil into a pan and fry chopped garlic first, to be followed by chopped onion, and frozen mixed seafood.

2



Once the seafood is cooked, take it out and put it on a separate plate. The juice extracted from the seafood will be used in the next step.

3



Fry uncooked rice in the frying pan. Once the rice becomes transparent, put in white wine (or sake), salt, pepper, water, and tomato sauce. Mix them gently.

4



Cover the frying pan with aluminum foil and cook it over medium heat. Once vapor comes out, change it to low heat and cook for 10 minutes.

5



Take the cover off and put the seafood and sliced bell peppers on top of the rice. Cover the frying pan with the aluminum foil again and cook it over low heat for another 10 minutes.

6



Once the rice is cooked, turn heat off and leave the cooked rice covered for a few minutes.

7

Top with sliced lemon and parsley. Buen provecho or いただきます (Bon appetite)!

Based on recipe from Cookpad.



It's a fruit ...
it's a vegetable ...
it's a SUPERFOOD

Mainland Japan and Okinawa aren't left out of the healthy food craze

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Just as in America, superfoods are currently a trendy topic in Japan.

Visit a convenience store or drug store, and you will find a rack exclusively for superfoods, such as chia seeds, maca and spirulina. Magazines and TV programs often feature these trendy foods, as well.

Despite the trend and high media exposure, some don't know what superfoods are all about.

"They are natural, organic foods, mostly vegetables, which pack a lot of essential nutrients and vitamins," says Ayumi Katsuyama, managing director of the Japan Superfoods Association. "They are usually low in calories but rich in nutrition that prevents us from forming various lifestyle-related diseases, such as cancer and diabetes."

Today, JSA lists spirulina, maca, chinese wolfberry, cacao beans, chia seeds, coconut, acai, camu camu, broccoli sprout and hemp seeds as the 10 primary superfoods.

"These foods have proven their superb health effects and food safety throughout the long history of usage," Katsuyama said.

Why are these "super" foods getting so much attention these days?

"As it is getting harder and harder to sample natural foods free from additives, agrochemicals and contaminated soil and water, we have become more aware of the relationship between our health and foods," Katsuyama said. "Eventually people

noticed that powerful foods in the world, such as maca in Peru and Chinese wolfberry (kukonomi) in China, were improving the health of local people."

Although these raw vegetable materials were only available exclusively to locals, modern technology has enabled them to be frozen or powdered and delivered to any part of the world without spoiling the nutritional quality.

So, most superfoods are actually processed products, according to Katsuyama.

The term "superfood" dates back to the 1980s when physicians in North America who were applying healthy diet in their medical treatment, began calling foods that had outstanding nutritional values "superfoods". Then, two books, "14 Foods that will change your life" (2004) and "Superfoods" (2009), helped to establish the moniker.

Categorized as foods, superfoods are neither medicines nor supplements.

"As supplements contains artificial additives, overdosing them can cause physical troubles," Katsuyama said.

Although it's unclear what the true definition of a superfood is, thanks to global marketing approach of major food companies, today, they are widely available in convenience stores and grocery stores even in Japan.

Health conscious American celebrities have helped them to become popular, according to Katsuyama. "Since they started applying the foods to their everyday diet, people

see the foods fashionable as well as healthy," she said.

How can we apply these superfoods daily to improve our health?

"Nowadays, it is next to impossible to avoid all foods contaminated with farming chemicals and artificial additives," Katsuyama said. "So, we would recommend you add some superfoods in your daily diet. Just put some spirulina powder into your dishes, for instance, to improve your health."

JSA actually promotes superfoods by developing various products in Japan's market, such as powders or noodles made from acerola and spirulina.

Japanese foods: superb in nature

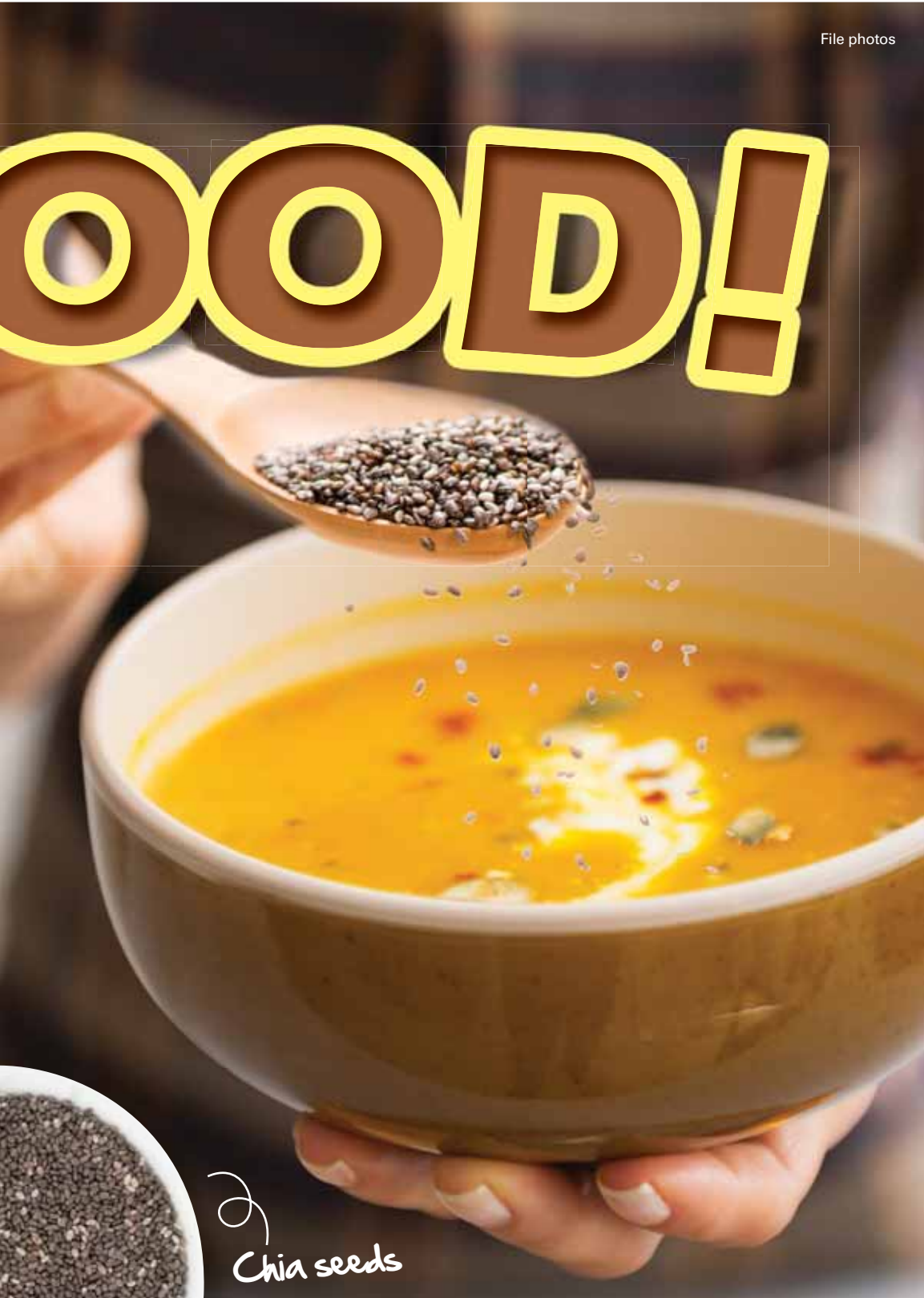
According to Katsuyama, many Japanese foods can be called superfoods in their nature. "Nominated as one of the UNESCO World Heritage, Japanese cuisine is superb - It is tasty and nourish while it has unique sophisticated culture," she said.

What makes Japanese cuisine unique is that its depends on dashi stock made from dried groceries, such as shiitake mushroom and kelp. These are all low in calories and contain a lot of superb minerals. Habitual drinking of green tea, instead of juices or other white-sugar beverages helps Japanese to enjoy such longevity, according to Katsuyama.

JSA categorizes Japanese superfoods into four groups - fermented

foods, teas, seaweeds, and natural foods.

1. Fermented shoyu (Japanese soy sauce), kadu (vegetable), led in a fermented (bran), amazake (sweet rice), etc.
2. Teas: macchiato, matcha, etc.



Chia seeds

- tea, bancha (course tea)
3. **Seaweeds:** konbu (kemp), nori, hijiki, kanten
 4. **Traditional natural foods:** umeboshi (pickled plum), edamame, genmai (unmilled rice), tofu, soba, azuki
- Among various fermented foods, Katsuyama pointed out amazake as one of the best superfoods. Made from fermented sake lees, amazake is often compared to yogurt.
- “Yogurt, however, is a dairy product and contains animal fat and some people are concerned that the over ingestion might lead them to chronic illness,” Katsuyama said. “On

the contrary, amazake contains only vegetable fat and is very effective in protecting us from various lifestyle-related illnesses. Plus, the price of amazake is very reasonable.”

Located in Japan, you can enjoy these superfoods in your dairy diet anytime.

“Pay attention to superfoods and incorporate them more into your daily consumption,” Katsuyama said. “This will help keep you conscious about your health and surrounding nature and environment, and that is sure to contribute to your quality of life as a result.”

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Natto



Matcha

Japanese Superfoods

Natto
A traditional Japanese food made from fermented soybeans and served with soy sauce, mustard and Japanese bunching onion. Along with its powerful smell, strong flavor and slimy texture, it contains a lot of protein, vitamin K, dietary fiber, NattoKinase, mucin, and is considered to keep stomachs healthy and beautiful.

Tofu
Bean curd. Being basic whole food nature, it contains a lot of protein and isoflavone, and is considered to lower the risk of several chronic diseases including cardiovascular diseases.

Miso
Fermented soybean paste, which is used in soups in Japanese cuisine. Since it contains a lot of protein, vitamins B and E, this fermented food is considered to improve gut health and is effective at preventing radiation sickness and preventing cancer.

Soba
Buckwheat noodles are low in calories and contains a lot of lutein and vitamin B. It is also thought to help with anti-aging, preventing degenerative diseases, improving blood circulation and lowering blood pressure.

Umeboshi
Pickled plum is a traditional Japanese snack, usually dried and preserved in a salty brine using shiso leaves. Umeboshi is rich in citric acid and calcium, combats fatigue, stimulates digestion and promotes the elimination of toxins. Eating a couple of them before and after a party may prevent hangover, as well.

Nori
One of the most popular seaweeds in Japan, nori contains a lot of calcium (10 times as much as milk), copper, iron, vitamins A, B, C, D, E and K, and is considered excellent at regulating and purifying blood. It is also helps reduce cholesterol levels.

Nukaduke
vegetables picked in a fermented rice bran. Since vegetables picked in a fermented rice bran doubles or triples the vitamins and minerals of normal vegetables, plenty of vitamins A and B, along with calcium and iron help to keep the nervous system healthy and improve constipation.

– Source: “Best 50 Superfoods”
“Shokuhin Seibunhyo” and “Superfood Benricho”
takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Nori



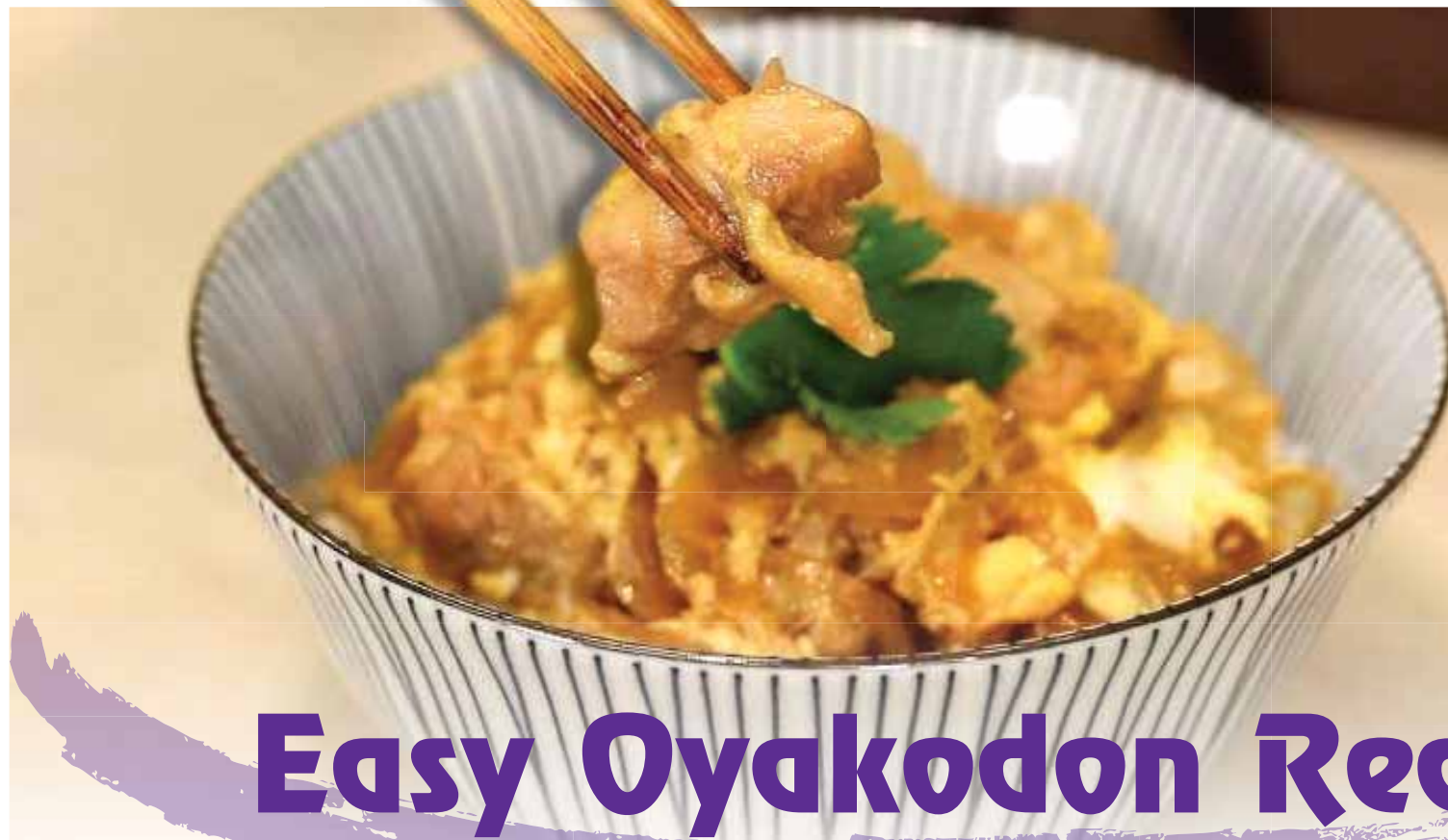
Nukaduke



Soba



Tofu



Chef profile

Introducing the Recipe Supervisor and Cook

Toshihiro Minami is the manager of cooking studio Osaka Delicious. Initially working at another company, he joined a night school and changed careers to become a cooking class instructor. He also develops recipes, acts as a cooking assistant, and makes television appearances. In addition to all varieties of Japanese food, Toshihiro is in charge of a wide range of cuisines including western and Chinese.



<http://osakadelicious.jp>

Easy Oyakodon Recipe

How to make Japan's definitive donburi dish!

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EFEEL,
LIVE JAPAN

While trips remain off in the future, you can easily reminisce about your Japan journeys with authentic Japanese dishes at home! Here we present a tried-and-tested oyakodon recipe, which sees chicken simmered in dashi topped with egg and rested upon a bowl of steaming white rice.

In addition to common ingredients like chicken and egg, we'll be using a recipe offering substitutes for Japanese condiments like "mirin" to make it even easier.

This recipe was also supervised and prepared by Japanese cooking instructor Toshihiro Minami and comes with a cooking video attached, so all you have to do is watch as you cook to bring the tastes of Japan to life!

* The information in this article is current as of September 2021.

Oyakodon is a nourishing household dish beloved by all!

Oyakodon is a kind of Japanese donburi dish made by simmering chicken in a dashi soup stock flavored with soy sauce, sugar, and mirin, before running an egg over it and placing it atop of rice.

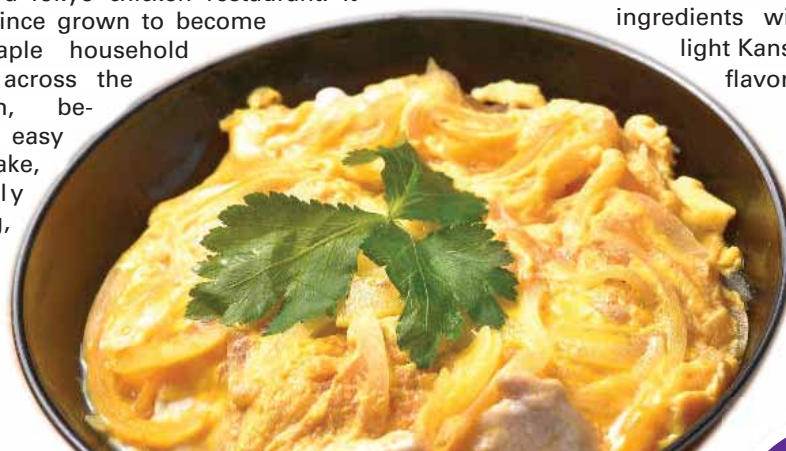
The name "oyakodon" means "parent and child bowl" in Japanese, which refers to the literal parent and child of a chicken and egg.

Oyakodon originated around 1887 from a Tokyo chicken restaurant. It has since grown to become a staple household dish across the nation, being easy to make, highly filling,

and perfect for busy professionals or the insatiable appetites of children.

Depending on the region of Japan, the oyakodon recipe is different, with residents of Kanto preferring egg doused over chicken and onion with a sweet and salty soy sauce base.

At the same time, those in Kansai use chicken, spring onion, and egg with a light dashi flavoring. For this recipe, we'll be using Kanto ingredients with light Kansai flavors.



Ingredients

(Serves Two)

- 200g chicken thigh ■ 1/2 onion
- 2 eggs ■ 400g rice (cook in advance)
- 150ml bonito soup stock (dashi)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp sake rice wine (white wine works too!)
- 1/2 tsp sugar ■ 1 tsp mirin
- A sprinkling of Japanese mitsuba leaf (optional)

* To make bonito soup stock, check out Dashimaki Tamago Recipe.



* If you don't have mirin, mix 1/3 tsp sugar with 1 tsp white wine for a substitute.

How to make oyakodon



1 Slice the onion thinly. Cut the chicken into large bite-sized pieces while cutting away the excess fat.



3 Once the broth is simmering, add the chicken and onion and allow it to cook for up to 4 minutes on medium heat while occasionally turning it over. While they're cooking, place your desired amount of cooked rice into a bowl.



4 Once the chicken has been thoroughly cooked, turn down the heat a little and pour over the egg in a circular motion starting from the center and heading to the sides. Adding it from the center ensures that the egg will be evenly cooked.



Also, keeping the heat at a stable temperature where the broth is simmering lightly will help create the perfect oyakodon!



2 In a frying pan on medium heat, add and mix the bonito soup stock, soy sauce, sake rice wine, sugar, and mirin (or substitute).

While the sauce is heating up, break the eggs into a bowl and aggressively beat until there is no remaining white.



Check out the video on how to make!



5 Once you've added the beaten egg, immediately close the lid and allow it to simmer for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Once the egg is half cooked, turn off the heat.

Scoop out a large portion with a spatula and place it on top of the rice. And you're done! For a touch of color, add some Japanese mitsuba leaves. For extra flavoring, sprinkle on shichimi togarashi spice or Japanese sansho pepper.

The fluffy and runny egg thoroughly absorbs the savory dashi to form an exquisite harmony with the hearty chicken. Being a simple dish, it's super easy to cook and is packed with nutrients and flavor!



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AEON MALL ZAMA TEL.046-252-3344
10-4, 2-chome, Hironodai, Zama-shi, Kanagawa, 252-0012, Japan

*Last order timing differs by venue. *Business hours are different at some stores.
*Our hours of operation may fluctuate due to Japanese Government COVID-19 regulations.
Thank you for your understanding.

RESTAURANT INFO



WingStreet



PIZZA HUT LOCATIONS:

Yokosuka 1000-2100

DELIVERY IS AVAILABLE

Offering: Pizza, Personal Pan Pizza, Wings
Pasta, Breadsticks, Dessert, and multiple drinks.

Atsugi 1030-2000

DELIVERY IS AVAILABLE

Offering: Pizza, Personal Pan Pizza, Wings
Pasta, Breadsticks, Dessert, and multiple drinks.

*We extended Pizza Hut Delivery hours on Friday and Saturday until 2200.



LIVE MÁS



TACO BELL LOCATIONS:

Yokosuka 1000-2100

DRIVE-UP WINDOW AVAILABLE

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts
Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.

*We extended Yokosuka Taco Bells Drive thru hours on Friday and Saturday until 2200.

Atsugi 1000-2000

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts
Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.

Sasebo 1030-2000

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts
Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.