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Veterans see value of Stars and Stripes

BY STEVE BEYNON,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: February 14, 2020

WASHINGTON — Many veterans are speaking out about the importance of Stars and Stripes as a news source for troops in light of the Pentagon's decision this week to gut the historic news agency of its annual funding to free up more money for what it considers to be crucial warfighting expenses.

Stars and Stripes began operations in the Civil War and has been a critical, and often the only, means for troops on the front lines to keep up with the news back home. Even with the post-9/11 wars occurring in the internet age, thousands of troops have been fighting in war zones where digital access is either inconvenient or nonexistent.

"We were mostly on a mountain near the Pakistan border during the deployment," said Michael Gerstmann, who served in the Army as a cavalry scout in Afghanistan in 2009 and left the military as a staff sergeant in 2011. "You know, there's nothing to do in these [combat outposts]. If you aren't doing missions or working out, not much is going on. Stripes was a good way to connect to home, even with some of the guys not being big news people, it was still something to do. Anything to take your mind off stuff was always good."



U.S. Army Sgt. Roger McCall, 153rd Military Police Company, reads an edition of Stars and Stripes while in the Green Zone, Baghdad, Oct. 18, 2007. Photo by Sgt. Brendan Mackie, U.S. Army National Guard

SEE VALUE ON PAGE 3

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Brazil native excels at Yokosuka

STORY AND PHOTO BY
PO1 RYAN LITZENBERGER,
COMMANDER, SUBMARINE GROUP SEVEN

FLEET ACTIVITIES YOKOSUKA – A Tefe, Amazon, Brazil native and Commander, Submarine Group 7's (CSG 7) Sailor of the Year is currently serving in Yokosuka, Japan.

Yeoman 1st Class Silvia Raya joined the Navy in 2005. Yeoman perform administrative and clerical work. They receive visitors, answer telephone calls and sort incoming mail. They type, organize files and operate modern office equipment such as word processing computers and copying machines.

At CSG 7, Raya is currently serving as the command's Flag Writer. The Flag Writer is personally assigned to perform the executive administrative and secretarial duties for current Commander, Submarine Group 7 Rear Adm. Jimmy Pitts. She also serves as the president of the command's First Class Petty Officer Association.

"I love my job. The reason I became a Flag Writer is because I was in search for a more challenging position. Due to change in my career, I had and continue to have the possibility to grasp the level of impact that decisions and policies discussed and approved by

the commanders will have in the Fleet," said Raya.

"Since selected as a Flag Writer, I feel fortunate to learn more about ethics, protocol, high-level correspondences, and being able to use my training daily. This experience taught me to maintain a composed attitude during short notice or urgent situations while improving my management skills."

Raya's experience gained working under the Navy's top leaders has made her ready for the next level, according to Chief Hospital Corpsman Tee Menchaca, her leading chief petty officer.

"She is one of the most involved sailors I have ever had the privilege to work with," said Menchaca. "The amount of impact she has on this command is incredible. She has worked very hard to get where she is at, but even more notable is her humility and selflessness. It only takes one glance to know that she truly cares about the sailors, and I look forward to the day that I'm sure will soon come that she puts on anchors. She sets a great example for everyone else."

Raya credits

her success to the support of her parents, her kids and husband, as well as the mentors who helped guide her in the right direction.

"My parents, my kids, and my husband are the reason why I kept moving and maintained my positive attitude," said Raya. "And without my mentors' honest guidance, I would not be accomplishing my professional goals and would not be making a positive impact in the commands where I serve and in my naval career."

Raya will move on to compete for Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year.

With more than 50 percent of the world's shipping tonnage and a third of the world's crude oil passing through the Indo Pacific region, the U.S. has historic and enduring interests in this part of the world. CSG 7 is responsible for coordinating a diverse fleet of submarines, surface ships and aircraft deployed to the Western Pacific and the Middle East; two forward-deployed submarine tenders and four attack submarines homeported in Guam; Submarine Squadron 21 in Bahrain; five surveillance towed array sensor system vessels and three oceanographic survey vessels when tasked for Theater Anti-Submarine Warfare operations. Under CSG 7 are two task forces: CTF-74 and CTF-54, which provide theater anti-submarine warfare support from the Red Sea to the International Date Line.



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Courtesy of David Nelson



In a May, 1970 photo, soldiers taking part in Operation Fishhook in Cambodia read Stars and Stripes' coverage of the events. Photo by John Cody, Stars and Stripes



Courtesy of David Nelson

VALUE: 'Stars & Stripes was a link to home'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. military set up dozens of combat outposts where small numbers of troops would operate out of in the most remote parts of those countries. In many cases, service members lived in austere conditions sometimes devoid of plumbing and cooked food and had few recreational amenities. In rural Afghanistan, these outposts were sometimes located at the bottom of a valley, conceding the high ground to the Taliban, making them prone to constant attack.

Even in cases where troops served in larger, more established bases with amenities such as coffee shops and fully equipped gyms, the internet could still be a luxury, making it difficult to keep up with current events. In a lot of cases at bases such as Camp Leatherneck and Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan, troops would have to go to recreation centers and wait in a line for time-limited internet use on a slow connection. In those cases, service members mostly used the time to communicate with their families.

"I grabbed hard copies of Stars and Stripes outside the [dining facility] on [Combat Outpost] Speicher [in Iraq], and it was a lifeline to what was

happening back home. Read it front to back every day I could," said John Ismay, a former Navy lieutenant commander who handled bomb disposals and now is a New York Times reporter. "Having a copy in my hands made me feel connected to all those earlier generations of American service members I'd seen photos of holding their own copies in earlier wars."

The Defense Department has proposed in its \$705.4 billion budget for fiscal year 2021 to cut Stars and Stripes of its more than \$15 million annual subsidy, which equals about half of the news organization's annual funds to pay expenses. Stars and Stripes remaining money comes from sales, subscriptions and advertising.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Thursday defended the Pentagon's decision to strip Stars and Stripes of its federal funding, telling reporters in Europe that the independent news organization is not a priority.

"Their hard work and dedication in reporting on issues that matter the most to the military community continues to be of value," Esper said. "However, as we look forward to the current budget proposal

and beyond, the DOD must prioritize spending to support our warfighters in the most critical areas of need. Therefore, the department has made the difficult decision that, beginning in fiscal year 2021, it will no longer provide appropriated funds to Stars and Stripes."

The Defense Department still needs to get its proposed budget through Congress. Whether congressional lawmakers will try to preserve Stars and Stripes' funding is up in the air, though some House members have signaled they will push back against the Pentagon ahead of the new fiscal year, which starts in Oct. 1.

"Stars & Stripes was a link to home when I was in Iraq and Okinawa," tweeted Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., a Marine veteran. "It's an A+ indie take on everyday DoD news, f*** ups, and Administration & General Officer BS. No wonder this President [Donald Trump] wants to cut it. He's got a fight on his hands."

Kevin Miller, a former Marine Corps infantry sergeant who served in Iraq, called the proposal to cut funding to Stars and Stripes a "travesty." Miller works for Swords to Plowshares, a San Francisco-based

nonprofit that provides services to veterans facing homelessness and unemployment or struggling with disabilities or substance abuse.

"They do such incredible work covering the DOD and [Department of Veterans Affairs], which are our two largest bureaucracies," Miller tweeted. "Without their report, many advocates would be left in the dark about what is going on in these two vital government agencies."

Kristen Rouse, a logistics officer who deployed to Afghanistan in 2006, 2010 and 2012, said Stars and Stripes was a way to connect with home and was one of the only news outlets reporting on stories relevant to troops serving in combat zones.

"Consistently, I found that Stars and Stripes was the only media outlet that described the world I was living [and] operating in," she said.

Rouse served with the Army's 10th Mountain Division and later the Vermont National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment, she is also the president of the NYC Veterans Alliance and board member of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, both are veterans advocacy groups.

Beyond the contemporary service members of the post-9/11 generation, Stars and

Stripes holds historical significance to veterans of past generations.

David Nelson, a former captain in the Marine Corps who served in 1971-1973, has kept decades-old copies of Stars and Stripes. He said the newspaper is "an important part of our military culture — especially for those serving in remote locations overseas."

"From my year in Okinawa in the early 70's, I kept a number of my Stars and Stripes newspapers," Nelson said. "If I had learned of the events and stories portrayed strictly by electronic means, I would not have been able to preserve my recollections of those days."

And Nelson recounted some of historical front-page headlines from Stars and Stripes.

"Look at the memories stored on one page of the Jan. 24, 1973, Stars and Stripes — the announcements of LBJ's death, the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, the Paris peace talks preceding the end of the Vietnam War, and George Foreman's boxing knock-out of Joe Frazier," Nelson said. "What a treasure and keepsake that issue of Stars and Stripes has been to me for the past 47 years, along with many other issues."

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Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jan David De Luna Mercado, U.S. Navy

Navy Misawa snow team completes pilot sculpture

NAVAL AIR FACILITY MISAWA

The Navy Misawa Snow Team completed this year's version of their annual snow sculpture at the 71st Sapporo Snow Festival on Feb. 3.

This year's concept was centered around naval aviation, with the primary sculpture being the bust of a pilot in a cockpit, with the popular v-shaped finger peace sign. It also included a carving of the enlisted aviation warfare insignia, and a large version of the logo commemorating the 60-year alliance between the United States and Japan.

"I enjoyed guiding newcomers on the techniques and subtleties of snow sculpture and demonstrating the interaction opportunities we have with the public," said Builder 1st Class Jenny Cunningham, assigned to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Far East, Misawa Detachment, the only returning sculptor from last year's team. "I have the opportunity to demonstrate Navy teamwork and cooperation and interact with Japanese Locals and visitors to the snow festival from around the world."

The team began working on the sculpture Jan. 28, carving from a 6x6 ft. block of compacted snow. With the statue's completion, it was left on display for the festival goers expected to visit Sapporo during this year's festivities. Previous works have included many famous U.S. Navy icons and symbols such as a replica of the Lone sailor statue, the Fighting Bees Seabees logo, the ship USS Constitution and more.

The weather varied initially, with days of

sun, warmer temperatures and rain, mixed with nights of snow, making it difficult to add detail to the statue. Many of the details and writing on the statue had to be rebuilt and repacked every morning.

To counteract the warmer weather, the team arrived well before the other teams in the park, and left in the afternoon when carving was no longer an option without the statue deteriorating. The Misawa Snow Team met the challenge head on and took advantage of the short windows of truly cold weather to meet their Monday deadline.

Consul General Andrew Lee, U.S. Consulate General to Sapporo, stopped by the statue with his family to meet this year's team and gave them a hand building the sculpture.

The sailors chosen to act as the Navy's ambassadors to Sapporo this year were selected by their commands due to their superior performance both on and off duty.

"It's an honor to represent the Navy at a historic Japanese festival and strengthen international relations with one of our foremost allies in the region," said Intelligence Specialist 2nd Class Joshua Miller assigned to Commander, Task Force 72. "I was going to travel to Sapporo on my own dime, so when I found out I got to stay for over a week, and get to help build a sculpture, I was thrilled."

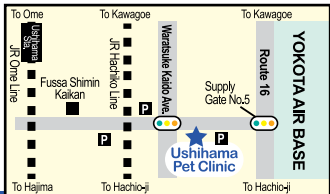
The Navy team is one of several dozen teams designing sculptures this year, with teams ranging from Poland to Australia. The Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force contributes two of the largest snow sculptures to the snow festival, ranging 40-by-80 feet in size. In previous years, JGSDF built structures modeled after Big Ben of London and the Arch De Triumph of Paris.

The team now moves on to the community outreach portion of their mission in Sapporo. For the rest of their stay, the team will interact with festival visitors and participate in two community relations projects before returning to Misawa on Feb. 8.

Intelligence Specialist 2nd Class Joshua Miller (top) and Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Elijah Karakey add detail to the symbol commemorating the 60 years of U.S.-Japan alliance. Photos by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Joseph M. Buliavac, U.S. Navy

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USAG fire dept. named best in Pac again

STORY AND PHOTO BY
WINIFRED BROWN,
US ARMY GARRISON - JAPAN

CAMP ZAMA – For the third year in a row, Installation Management Command – Pacific has recognized U.S. Army Garrison Japan Fire and Emergency Services as the best large fire department in the region.

In addition, IMCOM-Pacific named J.D. Felty, regional deputy fire chief, USAG Japan Fire and Emergency Services, the best fire officer in the region, and Yu Mori, a USAG Japan firefighter who works at Camp Zama, the best civilian firefighter in the region.

“We have many top-notch personnel within USAG Japan’s Fire and Emergency Services that are deserving of recognition,” said Frank Wombwell, regional fire chief, USAG Japan. “The Pacific Large Department of the Year Award recognizes everyone’s contributions. Our individual award winners stand out above the rest.”

The DoD holds the Fire and Emergency Services Annual Firefighter Awards worldwide, and this year’s competition was based on departments’ performances during 2019. The USAG Japan fire department had a busy year responding to emergencies, saving lives, training and conducting public outreach, according to the department’s nominating memorandums.

The department is located at seven post locations over 930 square miles throughout Japan, and not only did the department mitigate 530 emergencies, there were no lives lost in the 148 medical emergencies they responded to, according to department statistics.

Felty, who retired from the active-duty Air Force after 30



J.D. Felty, left, regional deputy fire chief, U.S. Army Garrison Japan Fire and Emergency Services, and Yu Mori, a firefighter with USAG Japan Fire and Emergency Services at the department’s Station 1 at Camp Zama Jan. 31.

years as a firefighter, began working for the Army at Camp Zama as a civilian firefighter in November 2017.

“I like the people, the job as a whole, and Japan,” Felty said.

One of the department’s most noteworthy accomplishments in 2019 was saving the life of a 63-year-old heart attack victim using CPR and an automated defibrillator. The department’s submission for Felty’s award noted that he directed the life-saving measures.

Felty also guided Basic Life Support actions and an EpiPen injection for a 4-year-old having distress due to an allergy, according to the submission.

In addition, Felty fostered a

strong, interactive relationship with six Japanese fire departments, solidifying the department’s partnerships by coordinating 20 realistic joint training and fire prevention activities.

As for Mori, Felty said he is a superior performer and hard worker.

“Mori is a phenomenal firefighter and has outstanding dedication to the mission, and then he brings knowledge and enthusiasm to the job,” Felty said. “It helps because he’s also one of the more senior firefighters who helps train our new hires.”

Mori said he was born in Osaka, but grew up in the Kanagawa area, and wanted to become

a firefighter because he loves to help people in need. He became a firefighter in 2007 and has always worked for USAG Japan at Camp Zama.

“I like the service to the community, which means medical service, firefighting and animal rescue,” Mori said. “Also, I’ve been a CPR instructor for over 10 years. I love to share and give the [information] to the rookies and our coworkers to make us at the same level, [so we can provide the] same service to the community. That’s my goal.”

Like Felty, Mori is also responsible for saving lives.

Mori recognized the signs and symptoms of heat stroke

in two children and provided immediate first aid, reducing the children’s convulsions and preventing the onset of shock, according to Mori’s nominating document.

Mori also quickly provided medical care for a victim of severe chest pain, stabilizing the patient, treating the patient’s shock and transporting the patient to a hospital, according to the document. The patient fully recovered.

In addition, Mori, who is a firetruck driver as well, optimally positioned fire apparatus at a rubbish fire, allowing firefighters to quickly subdue the fire and prevent it from spreading to an adjacent storage facility, according to the document.

Felty and Mori also collaborated with outside agencies for the Kanagawa Prefecture Joint Disaster Drill, one of the department’s instances of working with outside agencies to improve overall emergency response in Japan.


The department also teamed with the Tokyo Fire Department for Japan’s pre-Olympic disaster exercise.

Additionally, members of the department rescued a driver in an overturned car, providing quick action to stabilize, extricate and treat the driver.


Felty said it is the department’s 140 firefighters who make the department successful.

“They’re mission-focused and have a dedication to mission and willingness to work,” Felty said.

In related news, IMCOM-Pacific named the U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa fire department the best small department in the Pacific region, and IMCOM named it the best small department in IMCOM. The department will next compete at the Army-wide level.







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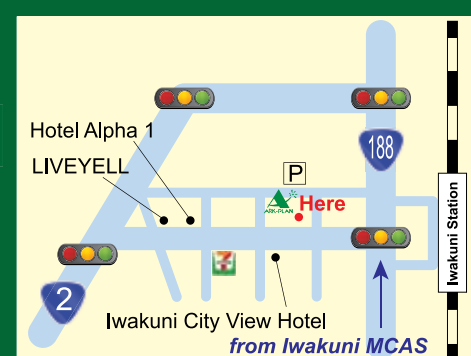
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Emma Sakamoto-Flack smells a bottle of seasoning while Brianna Maxwell cooks chicken.



Brianna Maxwell sprinkles seasoning on mixed vegetables as Dominic Rodgers looks on.



William Birdsall (left) advises teens on kitchen safety.



Kristian Brush cuts chicken



Camp Zama Youth Center Cooking Club teaches life skills

STORY AND PHOTOS BY WINIFRED BROWN,
US ARMY GARRISON

CAMP ZAMA – Instructors for the Cooking Club at the Camp Zama Youth Center rotate on a regular basis. Some instructors teach precise baking skills, others show teens how to make Japanese foods, and still others focus on particulars such as smoothies.

William Birdsall, however, a program assistant at the center, took a purely pragmatic approach when he led the club here Jan. 31. Hesitating to call the dish he taught the youths an actual “recipe,” he showed them how to improve the nutritional value of instant cup ramen by adding chicken and vegetables.

“The purpose of this is to basically show you guys, if you go to college and you’re a little low on funds, and all you can afford is ramen, this is what is going to help you so you don’t have to eat just cup ramen,” Birdsall told the youths.

Birdsall, a former military police officer previously stationed at Camp Zama, said he learned how to make the meal when he was a soldier and occasionally found himself too late to eat at the dining facility.

“I’ve cooked it before and I still cook it now too, so it’s not bad,” Birdsall said. “I’m glad I found out about it. I’m just trying to pass on the knowledge so if they do come into a situation where they’re tired of just eating plain ramen, and if they’re bored, they can just throw some stuff together and then, ‘bam.’”

The ingredients for the meal included three packages of instant cup ramen, a bag of frozen mixed vegetables, a bag of frozen chicken strips, hot sauce and assorted seasonings such as garlic powder.

Leftovers also often work well with the dish, Birdsall said, and he encouraged the teens to improvise if they make it in the future.

After the teens donned hairnets, carefully washed their hands and put on gloves, Birdsall delivered a safety briefing to his five students: Kristian Brush, Brianna Maxwell, Dominic Rodgers, Emma Sakamoto-Flack and Keito White.

Birdsall warned against any kind of horseplay due to the heat and knives being used to prepare the food, and also pointed out the location of the fire extinguisher.

The teens then got to work cutting up the chicken, heating it up in a pan on the stove, adding the vegetables, and finally, adding a little water and the ramen noodles. After carefully considering the seasonings, they mostly went with hot sauce and garlic powder.

In the end, the teens said their work tasted good and they enjoyed participating in the club.

“I like ramen,” said Kristian. “It’s really good and the vegetables make it healthy. It tastes good with the seasonings.”

Brianna, who advocated for a lot of garlic powder in the meal, said she also liked the way the meal turned out.

“Today’s recipe was easy and good,” Brianna said.

Keito, who has participated in the club previously, said he would likely make the meal on his own at home.

The club, Keito said, teaches helpful skills.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for learning,” Keito said.

Dominic and Emma, meanwhile, said this was their first time participating in

the club, and they might make the dish at home sometime.

“I liked helping cook it up and season it,” Emma said. “It tasted good.”

Hannah Maza, the center’s assistant director, said the monthly Cooking Club teaches important life skills.

In addition to nutrition and eating well, the club also teaches how to pick out ingredients and use a stove to properly heat up, for example, milk for hot cocoa, Maza said.

“Little life skills like that are what the clubs are used to enhance their experience here,” Maza said. “They think it’s just eating, but we’re trying to teach them life skills beyond the teen center—life after the teen center.”

The center also offers the Keystone Club, the Power Hour, Youth Sponsorship, the Debate Club, the SMART Girl’s Club, the Wise Guy’s Club and Functional Fitness, and all the clubs teach youth life skills, Maza said.

The center, a Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility, is located on Camp Zama in Building 744 and is open to all youths in grades seven through 12. For more information, call (DSN) 315-263-4500 or (COMM) 046-407-4500.

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Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni residents and Japanese teachers participate in a cooking class during a community cultural exchange with local Japanese children at Tsuzu Elementary School.



Students play interactive game during a community cultural exchange with local Japanese children.

MCAS Iwakuni residents stir up lifelong friendship

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. TRITON LAI,
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI

IWAKUNI CITY – U.S. Marines and families from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni participated in a community cultural exchange with local Japanese children at Tsuzu Elementary School, Iwakuni City, Jan. 25.

The exchange included interactive games, where Japanese students practiced speaking English and participants learned how to make different types of traditional Japanese soup. In addition, the event included the opportunity for residents on base to learn more about Japanese culture from local Japanese students.

“We learned about Japanese culture and they had the opportunity to learn about American culture. And with that, respect grows,” said Micah Chase, assistant English teacher for multiple schools.

The cultural exchange is a semi-annual event that is coordinated with the Marine Corps Community Services on base and the Tsuzu Elementary School. This year marks the 21st anniversary for the event.

“I wanted to have the opportunity to share what Japanese students offer with the air station personnel,” said Nobuaki Miyai, principal of Tsuzu Elementary School. “Once they know who we are, I think that brings us closer together.”



Name tags are spread for participants of a community cultural exchange.



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MY FAVES Daytrips near you

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

The Land of Rising Sun is home to many amazing tourist attractions. You may have been told to visit Kyoto and Nara, or an MWR tour may already have taken you on a trip to Mount Fuji.

According to travel comparison site Travelko, the most popular traveler's destinations within Japan (as of autumn 2017) include Tokyo Disneyland, Sapporo (Hokkaido), Kyoto, Hakata (Kumamoto), Naha (Okinawa) and Osaka.

Although I can't argue with the rankings, these sightseeing spots are often extremely crowded with domestic and international tourists. Looking for a hotel room or parking in these areas? It's usually tough and often comes with a high price tag.

If you want to enjoy one-day trip near your location in a relaxing and less-crowded atmosphere, why don't you try the following attractions, instead? I've visited them several times and see them as great places to enjoy an easy one-day trip. Visit them and you'll find out why!

■ KAWAGOE (Kanto Plain)

Called "Koedo" (little Edo), streets lined with traditional clay-walled warehouses, a three-tiered bell tower, a majestic castle and numerous Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples make the town a highlight of eastern Japan. The historic town can be reached in only a couple of hours by car or train from any of the U.S. military installations in the Kanto Plain, making it an ideal destination for a day trip. The town is very tourist-friendly, with its main attractions, such as Kawagoe Castle, classical fire observation tower and "Candy Street," centrally located and close together. A free parking lot caters to visitors and tourist information centers are located everywhere, providing a variety of invaluable background on the town, including free sightseeing maps. The classic-looking Koedo Kawagoe Loop Bus also enables tourists to access most of the sights quickly and easily with guides available in English, Japanese and Chinese.

■ NAMAMUGI (Kanto Plain)

Namamugi is home to Soji-ji temple, one of the largest and busiest in Japan. Each of its 26 buildings, such as Buddha hall, bell tower and main hall has a unique majestic look with traditional tile roofs and elaborate black wooden walls. Namamugi Uogashi Dori (literally, fish market street) is filled with countless fish shops where you can buy fresh seafood. The street is very busy from 6 to 10 a.m. The town also has a Kirin Brewery that you can tour and get a free tasting at the end. The beer is fresh and very tasty, and a staffer will teach you the perfect way to pour canned beer into a glass.

■ SHUZENJI (Camp Fuji)

Situated in the hilly center of the Izu peninsula, the town offers hot spring resorts, open-air baths on a river bank, elegant Japanese bridges, classical gray-tiled inns and pristine, yet charming temples and shrines. Shuzenji Onsen

is considered the oldest of its kind in the Eastern Japan and is listed as one of the nation's greatest 100 hot springs. All the hot water in town comes from a hot spring in the middle of the river. Shuzenji is one of the best places to check out the gorgeous autumn colors in late November. The colors are great, but the town has year-round appeal.

■ KUROISHI (Misawa)

A two-hour drive west from Misawa AB gets you to Kuroishi, an attractive city that is home to impressive streets filled in traditional wooden arcades, an abundance of hot springs, a craft art museum and Inn of Lamps in a pristine forest. As the name indicates, this impressive hot spring relies solely on light produced from its lamps. Situated deep in the valley, it sure will offer you a surreal, quiet and serene bathing experience. Tsugaru Kokeshi-kan Museum displayed countless Kokeshi dolls, charming wooden folk craft dolls widely produced in Tohoku (northeastern) region of Japan. Walking down Nakamachi Komise Street is fun, as it is home to sake breweries, tasty restaurants, souvenir shops and live music.

■ HIMEJI (Iwakuni)

Anyone wishing to experience an air of Japan's traditional and elegant past should consider visiting Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture. A three-and-a-half-hour drive from MCAS Iwakuni brings you to this quiet, calm and conservative city that harkens back to its old-world roots. The streets are filled with old-fashioned eateries and clothing stores as well as countless souvenir shops catering to tourists drawn to the 400-year-old Himeji Castle. The castle is one of a very few to have remained standing after World War II. There are many volunteer guides on hand, some that speak English. In addition to the historic landmark, Himeji offers visitors a classic Japanese garden, Koko-en, and a decent zoo. In all, Himeji not only impress you with the majesty and elegance of traditional Japan, it will give you new memories that will last a lifetime.

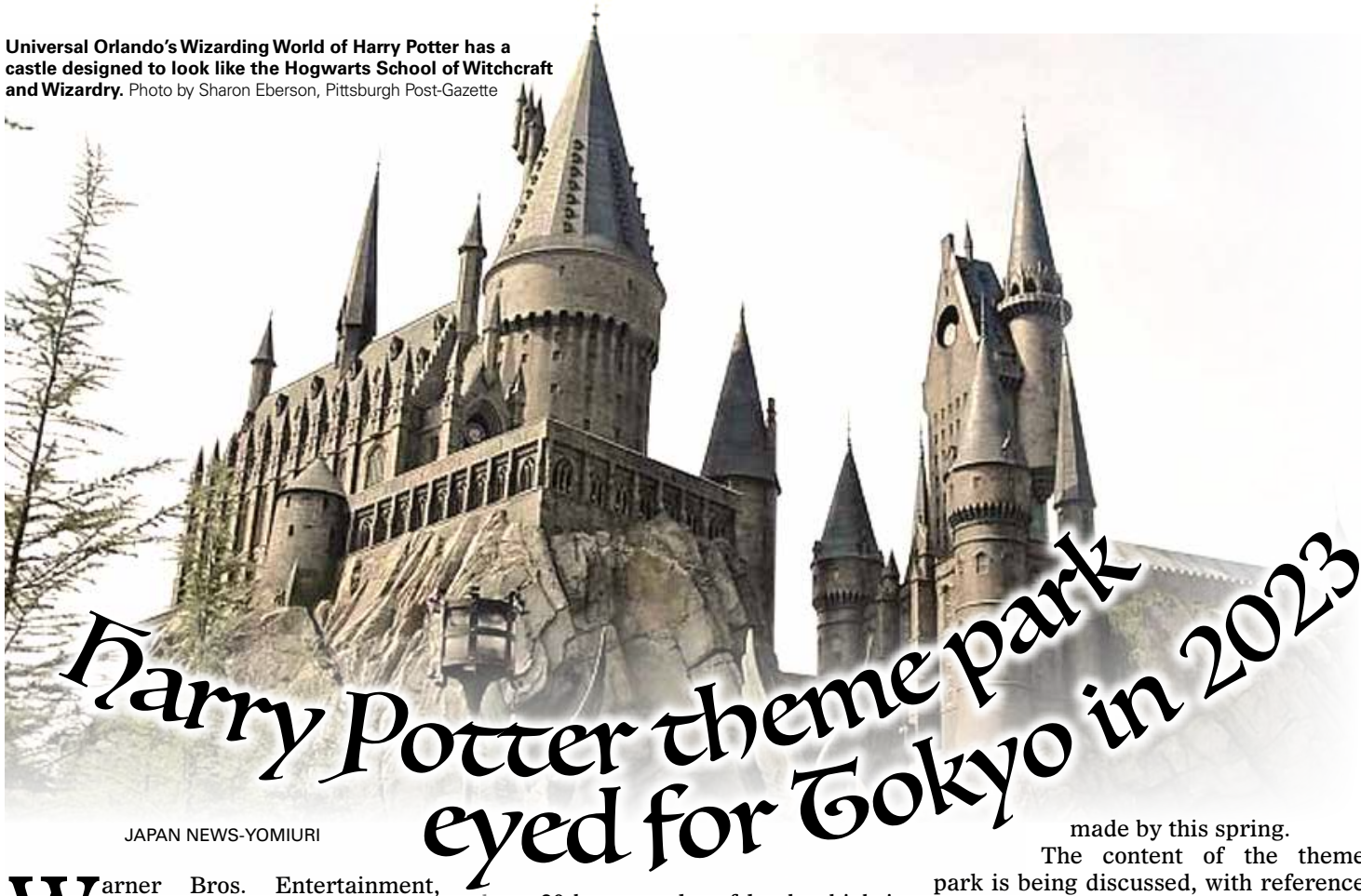
■ HIRADO (Sasebo)

The exotic look created by traditional Japanese homes shadowed by gothic-style cathedrals and a Dutch Trading Post with stone port facilities, makes Hirado a great attraction on the Western island of Kyushu. Fortunately, Hirado is only a 40-minute drive from Sasebo Naval Base. You can check out majestic Hirado Castle, which gives you a good view of the whole town and harbor against a backdrop of blue sea and the Mutsura Peninsula. The Dutch Bridge is Hirado's signature stone-made arch bridge over the river between the castle and downtown. The main street is lined with shops, restaurants and cafes housed in traditional Japanese buildings. Walking up a sloping stone path to the Hirado Church, you will encounter a very impressive view of the spire and cross of another Catholic church in combination with the traditional Japanese tiled roofs and grave stones of Komyoji and Zuionji temples.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Universal Orlando's Wizarding World of Harry Potter has a castle designed to look like the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Photo by Sharon Eberson, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



JAPAN NEWS-YOMIURI

Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc., a leading U.S. filmmaking company, plans to open a Harry Potter theme park in Tokyo by the spring of 2023, The Yomiuri Shim-bun has learned.

Warner Bros. plans to construct the park on part of land that is currently occupied by the soon-to-be-closed Toshimaen Amusement Park in Nerima Ward, Tokyo.

Warner Bros. will lease part of the

about 20-hectare plot of land, which is owned by Seibu Group, while the Tokyo metropolitan government will buy the rest of the land from Seibu to develop a park. The existing amusement facilities and swimming pools of Toshimaen will gradually close.

Negotiations are underway between Warner Bros., Seibu Group, the Tokyo metropolitan government, and others - with a decision expected to be formally

made by this spring.

The content of the theme park is being discussed, with reference to Warner Bros.' filmmaking studio in London where visitors can tour the studio sets that were actually used for the making of the Harry Potter films. On this tour, visitors can stroll through the sets, including those of the Great Hall of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry; the shopping street of Diagon Alley; and the Platform of the Hogwarts Express locomotive. They can also see movie props up close, including magic

wands. This is referred to as a studio-type facility, which is different from those of Universal Studios in the United States or Universal Studios Japan (USJ) in Osaka, where rides and attractions are also available.

Toshimaen opened in 1926 and had been a leading amusement park in central Tokyo. It includes amusement facilities, swimming pools, hot spa facilities. After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, the Tokyo metropolitan government decided to build a large park as part of its disaster-prevention measures. The government offered to purchase the land from Seibu, but the negotiations have stagnated in recent years.

According to sources, Warner Bros., with a proposal of creating the Harry Potter theme park, joined the negotiations around last year, which has gotten the talks moving again.

Harry Potter is a story by British writer J.K. Rowling, with the titular boy wizard the main character. It was first published in 1997 in Britain, and its Japanese translation was published in 1999 in Japan. As the story became a global hit, Warner Bros. made a screen version of the story in 2001.

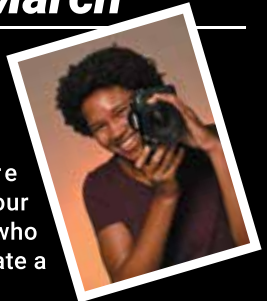
Sequels of both the story and the film have been made.

At USJ, about 45 billion yen was injected into the opening of the Harry Potter facilities in 2014. The number of visitors to USJ in fiscal 2014 totaled 12.7 million, up 2 million from a year earlier. As USJ is also fairly popular among foreign visitors to Japan, it has become a centerpiece of sightseeing tours in the Kansai region.

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March's theme will be Smoke and Fire. We will create beautiful unique smoky images that will help to spark your creative mood! Ages 13 and older, Sign up today, as seats are limited.

2020 Photography Contest:

It's time to start selecting pictures for the 2020 Photography Contest! Digital images must be submitted at the Arts and Crafts Center Photo Studio (Bldg. 334) from 1 March to April 30 Call -225-8133 for info. No more than 2 entries per category. Submissions cannot be older than 1 Mar 2018. Lots of great prizes for category winners! Categories: People (family, friends, strangers doing the things they do best at work, recreation, leisure), Scenic Nature (nature, skyscrapers, animals, etc), After Dark (what happens when the sun sets – evening events and activities), Digital Creation (half B&W-half color, several original images made to create one, digital sky is the limit), In The Water (under water, fun in/on the water – could be nature or man-made).

Photo Editing in Lightroom, with Cari Payer

March 21st, 9:30 am-2 pm (30min break for lunch) 4-hour class \$86.00

Looking to add POP to your photos? The creative process doesn't end when you push the shutter. Learn how to amp up your photos and produce images you want to show off. This class will cover Lightroom post-processing from import to Instagram. Bringing a laptop with Lightroom Classic installed is recommended so you can work along with the instructor, but not required. Ages 13 and older. Sign up today, as seating is limited.

Photographing to Framing Workshop
with Cari Payer and Arts and Craft center staff
2-day workshop, March 27 & 28 Fee: \$199.00

This 2-day workshop will take you through the full process of creating a beautiful piece of photographic art. From actually pushing the button to capture your image, to the edit, print, and framing that makes that image complete.

0700-1500 Day 1- An experienced professional photographer will lead participants to Kamakura to capture the floral beauty of this iconic location.

0930-1600 Day 2- Members will meet at the Arts and Crafts center in the morning for a digital editing class to prepare images for custom printing - learning about values, such as color space and paper choices, associated with into beautiful prints. Next, we will move into the frame shop to learn custom matting and framing techniques. Each participant will take home a beautifully framed 8x10 full color print of their chosen photograph framed in an 11x13 primary matted frame. While any camera is welcome to participate, the ability to shoot RAW files is preferred. A laptop with editing software for day two is preferred, but not required. Ages 13 and older. Sign up today, as seating is limited.





STORY AND PHOTOS BY
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Oshino Village is home to a set of eight ponds that were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2013. These ponds, known as Oshino Hakkai, are revered for their crystal clear waters, which come directly from the snow melting off nearby Mt. Fuji. As the snow melts, the waters filter down the mountain through porous layers of lava and have done so for over 80 years.

The extremely pure spring water was designated as one of the 100 Great Waters in Japan in 1985.

For ages, the eight ponds located in Oshino Village – Deguchi-ike, Okama-ike, Sokonashi-ike, Choshi-ike, Waku-ike, Nigori-ike, Kagami-ike and Shobu-ike – were considered a sacred site for pilgrims climbing Mt. Fuji. While each pond is enshrined with a different dragon king, pilgrims hopped in one pond after another to soak and purify themselves before their ascent up the sacred

mountain.

According to legend, the eight ponds represent the eight constellations of the Northern Hemisphere. The ponds are also home to pure water koi.

Recently, the ponds have become a home of pure water koi.

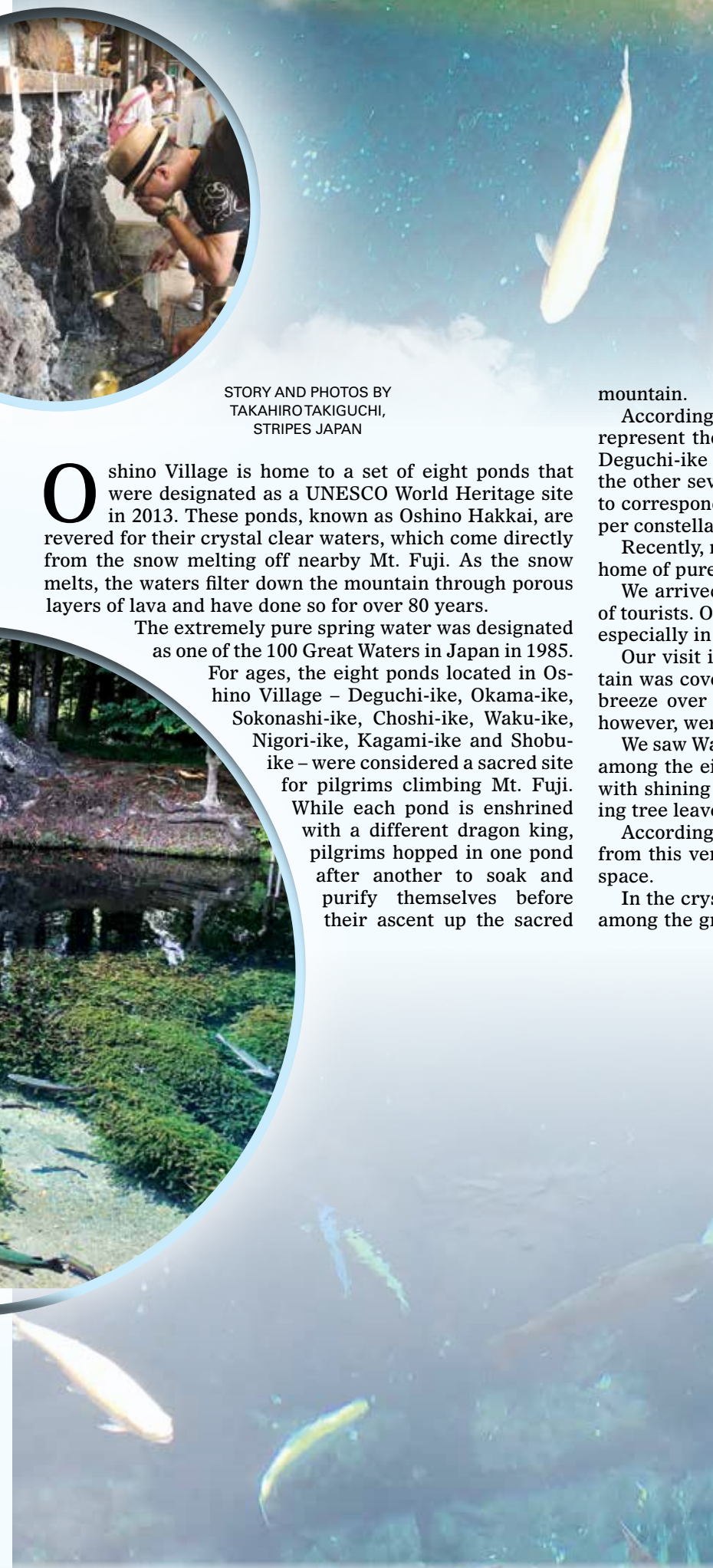
We arrived in Oshino Village on a day of tourists. Oshino Village is especially popular in the spring.

Our visit to Oshino Village was covered by a breeze over the mountains, however, we saw a lot of beautiful scenery.

We saw a lot of beautiful scenery among the evergreen trees with shining green leaves.

According to legend, the ponds are home to pure water koi.

from this view, the ponds are a space among the green mountains.



VILLAGE

me of pure water

to local legend, the eight ponds
the Polar Star and the Big Dipper.
represents the Polar Star, while
seven ponds are positioned in points
forming stars which form the Big Dip-
per.

my family and I took a trip to visit this
the water.

and at Waku-ike pond to a crowded area full
Oshino is known for the great views of Mt. Fuji,
the winter.

in the late summer, meant the majestic moun-
tains in clouds. The extremely fresh mountain
air, the ponds and cool, refreshing highland air,
are a reminder of our proximity to Fuji.

Waku-ike pond, the largest and the most majestic
of the eight ponds, which looked like a giant emerald
green water reflecting the sky and surround-
ing mountains on its surface.

to signboard on the pond, NASA used water
from the pond for an experiment in making snow in
space.

crystal clear water, we saw many carp swimming
underneath green freshwater plants just below the surface.



Oshino Village

LOCATION: 1514 Shinobugusa,
Oshino-mura, Minamitsuru-
gun, Yamanashi Pref.
(Village Hall)

URL: <http://www.vill.oshino.lg.jp/docs/2013091900041/>

TEL: 0555-84-3111



We were able to
sample a taste of
the spring water
from a dragon-
shaped faucet near
the pond. A surprise
to us, the water was
not too cold, though it
was smooth and sweet.

Afterward, we headed
toward the small open-air mu-
seum “Hannoki Bayashi Shiryo-
kan,” located near Waku-ike pond. The

admission is 300 yen (\$2.50) for middle schoolers or older.

From the observatory platform at the entrance gate, we
had a great view of the museum grounds, including a flower
garden, traditional farmhouses and watermill with classic
thatched roofs. We noticed one of the old farmhouses was
open for visitors, so we made our way over there to check
it out.

The 150-year old farmhouse exhibits various farming
tools, household items, swords and armor. We checked out
the displayed items in glass case, while walking around the
three-story wooden building.

Oshino is also known for tasty vegetables, soba, tofu and

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Tsuru-gun, Yamanashi Pref.

ADMISSION: middle schoolers or older -
300 yen, elementary schoolers - 150 yen,
ages 1-5 - 100 yen

URL: <http://hannoki.com/museum.html>

TEL: 0555-84-2587



eggs. We were approached by a vendor on our walk in the
area and were offered a sample of grilled corn. This corn
was fresh, crisp and sweet, unlike any ear of corn I could
get in the city. This flavor, the vendor said, is due to the
highland climate and extremely pure water from Fuji used
to water the crop.

Tofu made in the village boasts a rich and full-bodied
flavor. You can buy some at either Hakkai Tofu shop or
Sumiya Tofuten in the village.

There are a lot of noodle shops in the village offer-
ing their own taste, too. We dropped by the noodle joint
“Meisen Soba,” located in the parking lot. Various soba noo-
dles, available hot or cold, will set you back between 600 to
900 yen. We sampled soba with mountain vegetables and
ground potatoes. The soba noodle had a chewy yet smooth
texture with a refreshing sweet aroma, which went along a
with the semi-bitter mountain vegetables. It was delicious!

We wrapped up our tour by filling up our pet bottles with
clean and tasty spring water at the noodle shop.

This short trip to Oshino left us refreshed, hydrated, and
gave us a taste of how the pilgrims of yesteryear transited
through the area in search of purification.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

Oshino
Village

●Yokota

●Yokosuka

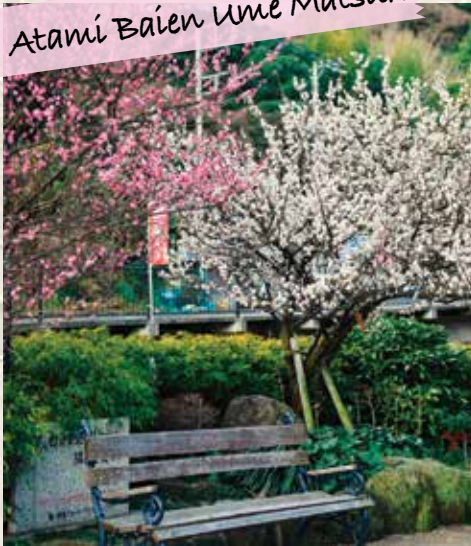
Check out the
video!



Kameido Tenjin



Atami Baien Ume Matsuri



Tokyo's best spots for plum blossom viewing

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NANO BETTS,
TRAVELSWITHNANO.COM

While cherry blossoms get all the glory when it comes to heralding the arrival of Spring, modest blooming buds of ume (plum blossoms) have been held in high regard here in Japan and are celebrated by the ume matsuri, the plum blossom festivals, all around the country.

Prior to the Nara Period (710-794 AD) it was in fact the blossom of the plum tree that Japanese referred to as hanami (flower viewing). Initially introduced to Japan from China, plum trees were considered ornamental trees intended for the gardens of the nobility and public spaces.

They were also equated with good fortune and are still thought to ward off evil. That's why so you will often find them planted around shrines, temples, or even private gardens.

Most often, you will find shrines hosting the festivities dedicated to the plum blossoms. These include performances, fun activities and plum-themed art and food stalls. Early February to mid-March is when the city starts to fill up with bursts of white, blush and hot pink. You can spot the blooming trees everywhere although there are a few spots which boast with a

nice choice for plum-watching. Here are some of my favorite places to see Japanese plum blossoms in and around Tokyo.

Check it out



Yushima Tenjin

Devoted to a deified scholar Sugawara no Michizane, Yushima Tenmangu Shrine (Yushima Tenjin) features a beautiful collection of 300 plum blossom trees. The shrine is very popular with students (and their parents) who come here to pray for luck during entrance exams and a successful school year. The shrine hosts the annual Bunkyo Ume Matsuri where you can enjoy traditional music, performing arts and tea ceremonies at weekends.

Kameido Tenjin

Kameido Tenjin attracts crowds during May when its beautiful wisteria garden blooms, but the 300 plus plum trees should not be overlooked. Kameido Tenjin is a beautiful place for ume hanami (as a rule of thumb, shrines with the word 'tenjin' in their name, the Kami name of Lord Sugawara, tend to be associated with plum trees) and offers a variety of entertainment from the middle of February to the end of March. The shrine's arched vermillion bridge is very impressive, and it is worth checking out the famous 'Goken no Ume' tree that blossoms both red and white flowers.

Hanegi Park in Setagaya

With 650 ume blossom trees (380 white and 270 red) the Hanegi Park offers one of the most beautiful spring scenes you can get throughout February. Located on Umegaoka (Plum Blossom Hill),

you can expect a joyful spring atmosphere with koto string instrument performances, outdoor tea ceremonies, haiku classes and mochi rice pounding exhibitions. Needless to say, there are food vendors selling plum-themed food including jelly, ripe plum madeleines and daifuku buns.

Hanegi Park



PALAU



© Kevin Davidson

"WE HAVE DONE THOUSANDS OF DIVES ALL AROUND THE WORLD IN SOME OF THE MOST PRISTINE AREAS, BUT IN FEW PLACES WE HAVE SEEN WHAT WE HAVE SEEN HERE"
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▶ Odawara Ume Matsuri

Plum viewing might be used as a good excuse to get a little break from the hustle of the metropolis. If you feel like a little day trip, then Odawara might be a perfect destination. Not only will you get a chance to see the famous Odawara Castle, but also enjoy 35,000 plum trees on show of all different colors, shapes and sizes set around the Soga Bessho Bairin grove and framed by the iconic backdrop of Mt Fuji. Major festival attractions include Yabusame (horseback archery) and lion dances among others.

Atami Baien Ume Matsuri

If you crave some sun and sea, then Atami is a perfect place to be if the weather is right. It is a little resort town located within an hour from Tokyo and used to be a major honeymoon destination back in the day. Not only does Atami host the Kawazu-zakura festival – a type of sakura blooming in January/February – but it also is home to a gorgeous ume garden. Basically, you will be able to view plums and sakura in one trip!

Ome-shi Plum Park

Ome-shi features 1,200-tree plum grove which are truly a sight to see. The 1,200 trees that cover the sloping hills of the park make it look like mounds of cotton candy. Like all other places, the park's festival lasts from the end of February to the end of March.



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Dumbo Doughnuts and Coffee, which has shops in Tokyo and Yokohama, boasts a revolving roster of quirky flavors.



Dumbo Doughnuts and Coffee opened in 2016, calling itself a specialty cafe where folks can enjoy New York-style artisanal doughnuts with coffee from a unique espresso machine.



Customers like to place their treats atop their coffee cups and take photos for social media.

Dumbo Doughnuts in Tokyo an unmissable treat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON KIDD,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: September 19, 2019

I've become an absolute fiend for a bright-pink, sweet-and-sour doughnut baked by a tiny backstreet shop in Tokyo's Azabujuban district.

The Framboise from Dumbo Doughnuts and Coffee is so good, I'm willing to put up with the sometimes-rude, disinterested college kids working the counter. It's so good, I'm OK with

strangers staring as I slather my face in raspberry glaze while working my way through this massive, messy confection.

Dumbo opened in 2016, calling itself a specialty cafe where folks can enjoy New York-style artisanal doughnuts with coffee brewed from a one-of-a-kind espresso machine. A second location popped up later in Yokohama.

I'm unclear on what makes Dumbo's doughnuts so "New

York," but the shop's website says they're handmade with a secret dough that makes them crispy on the outside and soft and fluffy in the middle. They're too pretty to dunk in your coffee. Customers have been known to balance them atop the shop's pink paper cups for photo ops.

Dumbo boasts an intriguing, revolving roster of quirky flavors that include Passion Fruite (380 yen, or about \$3.60), Matcha Cream Cheese (380 yen) and

Salted Chocolate Caramel (350 yen).

I can't explain what any of these taste like, because I'm a devotee of the Framboise (350 yen), which is as pleasing to the eyes as it is the taste buds.

Its electric-pink glaze topped with a cute coupling of raspberries isn't overly sweet, and just a hint of tanginess rises to the surface of each chewy bite. As advertised, it's crispy on the outside and pillowy in the middle. Highly recommended.

My picky eater of an 8-year-old always goes against that advice and chooses the classic-looking 320-yen Cinnamon Sugar, which is about as big as his face. Somehow, he manages to devour the whole thing.

My colleagues have given high praise to the Plain Glazed (350 yen) and Marshmallow Chocolate (380 yen), the latter of which is reminiscent of a nice cup of cocoa. Another who tried the Cinnamon Sugar wasn't as impressed. She said it was too dense and chewy for her liking.

As for Dumbo's coffee, I'm not sure what makes the espresso machine so unique, but the shop says it uses beans from Arabica Kyoto.

Other than the small size, I have

no complaints about my usual order: a large iced cafe latte for 450 yen. I appreciate its creaminess and deep flavor, but a colleague thought hers was way too milky.

Other coffees, which are available in regular and large sizes, include blend coffee, cafe au lait, cappuccino, espresso, cafe mocha and matcha latte.

If jitter juice isn't your thing, there's blood orange juice, blue grapefruit juice, lemonade, tea, milk and milk cocoa. Nothing on the beverage menu costs more than 500 yen.

The shop itself is pleasant looking, but with just eight counter seats is often uncomfortably crowded. Two seats are sometimes blocked by ceiling-high stacks of pastel pink pastry boxes.

If you're not lucky enough to squeeze in at Dumbo's counter, there's a small park just steps away offering plenty of benches, playground equipment and restrooms.

Dumbo's biggest downside is its hours. The shop doesn't open until 9 a.m., forcing many morning commuters to grab their caffeine or sugar fix somewhere else.

kidd.aaron@stripes.com
Twitter: @kiddaaron



LOCATION: 2-17-6 Azabujuban, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0045

DIRECTIONS: A short walk from Azabujuban Station's Exit 1. About a 5-minute taxi ride from the New Sanno Hotel. GPS coordinates are 35.653957, 139.735837.

HOURS: Open daily, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

PRICES: All doughnuts cost less than 400 yen. Beverages, available in regular and large sizes, are 500 yen or less.

DRESS: Casual

INFORMATION:

Online: dumbodc.com (English and Japanese); **Instagram:** dumbodc

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5 APR Departure - 8 APR Return

Price ¥82,000 (\$746)

Price includes:
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 -Airport transfer in Guam (shared vehicle)
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 *Non-Escorted Tour
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5 APR Departure - 8 APR Return

Price ¥54,800 (\$499)

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 -3nights stay at Okinawa Kariyushi Beach Resort Ocean Spa
 -Car rental for 4days
 -Breakfast x3
 *Non-Escorted Tour
 ~For more details, please feel free to contact us~

Universal Studios Japan 3-Days

5 APR Departure - 7 APR Return

Price ¥50,400 (\$459)

Price includes:
 -Round trip bullet train between Shinagawa/Shin-Yokohama and ShinOsaka
 -2nights at Hotel Granvia Osaka
 -1Day park ticket for Universal Studios Japan on 6 APR
 *Non-Escorted Tour
 *Single room price is ¥66,600 (\$606)
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The Marshmallow Chocolate doughnut tastes a lot like a cup of cocoa.



Gambino Model
Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund

Harbor Circuit Indoor Karting

Feed the need for speed in Chiba

JAPAN TRAVEL

Harbor Circuit in Chiba City is an indoor kart track where you can get your pulse racing and quench your need for speed. The facility is based on similar venues in the UK, the home of indoor karting. First-timers shouldn't worry—all gear is available for rent and you don't even need a driver's license. All you need is a spark of curiosity.

Anyone over 130cm tall (regardless of age) can and manufactured by France's premier kart-maker. Top speeds reach up to 50 km/h! Seats and pedals are adjustable for your comfort, so for eigners need not be too concerned about the fit. There is also a smaller kart tailored for those twelve and under. Mounted with the Honda GX160 engine, the 'FunKid' is chain-driven, meaning it runs quietly enough to keep little eardrums intact.

A real-time ranking system allows groups of friends or family to compete against each other, and for individuals to race against their personal best times. Endurance races and time trials are held periodically at Harbor Circuit and are open to the public.

Enjoy the down time by

drinking non-alcoholic beer and snacks. There are several tables with great window seating of the track so if you prefer to watch you can have just as much fun. There is no liquor served as racers are not permitted to drive after drinking.

Courses and pricing

Prices start at 1,980 yen for a single 6-minute ticket, with significant savings for buying in bulk (i.e. three tickets – 5,300; five tickets – 8,000; eight tickets – 10,800). Group races of 5 or more people run 4,300 per entrant for the Mini Grand Prix and 5,600 per entrant for the Sprint Grand Prix. You can even reserve the whole course for 48,000 yen per hour on weekdays and 96,000 per 90 mins. on weekend and holidays.

A trial pack for new admission includes the license fee and 3 minutes for 1,000 yen.

Harbor Circuit is especially designed for families and children with numerous packages. Parents and children (under 19) can buy tickets together at 3,400 yen for two. A child ticket for a six-minute ride can be purchased for 1,000 yen (children must be in elementary school and over 118 cm tall. Newly added is a special "Bambino" type electric kart designed for ages 4 and up. As these carts can hold two people, there are perfect for children who need a guardian/



Harbor Circuit

ADDRESS: 2F Harbor Circuit, Chiba Sports Plaza, 13-26 Dezuminato, Chuo-ku, Chiba Pref.
TEL: 043-441-3243 (Japanese only)
EMAIL: mail@harbor-circuit.com
URL: <http://www.harbor-circuit.com/2014english.asp>

beginner-friendly, too. Though first-timers probably won't set any records the first time round, completing the course will bring satisfaction, relieve stress, and even provide a good workout. Once you try, you'll be hooked.

Hours and specials

Weekdays - 2 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.
Weekend & Holidays - 10 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. (If weekday after holiday, we close at 9:30 p.m.)
Sunday - 10 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (If holiday on Monday, open until 11:30 p.m.)

- Final admission accepted 30 minutes before close. We are normally open every day.
- Every Wednesday is Ladies Day! Girls can enjoy the first session for 1,000 yen!

Driving requirements

- Driver Pass: admission fee for 500 yen. No annual fee.
- Sport shoes (no sandals)
- We recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and full length pants
- Free rental service of helmet and face mask. You can bring your own helmet with full face and visor
- Customers may also purchase their own face mask for 500 yen (optional)
- Gloves are not necessary but we also have free rental service (or feel free to bring your own)

Course summaries (6 minute race)

- Bambino (4 years old and up - 1,000 yen)
- Junior Kart - 1,600 yen
- Adult Kart - 2,000 yen
- Group Race - 4,300 yen per person
- Admission to the facility is just 500 yen
- Most credit cards are accepted.

Safety

Safety is a top priority, with crash prevention brake lamps and coverings on engines and mufflers to prevent burns. This all makes it easier to fly round Harbor Circuit's pumping course layout, complete with its flying junction and tunnel. Sharp corners and twisty turns test even the most experienced drivers, yet it's



The leaderboard.
Photo courtesy of Harbor Circuit



Feel the excitement.
Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund



Colors change as you travel around.
Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund



Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund

Near the bottom of the path

Kitayamazaki and Unosu Cliffs offer breathtaking views in national park

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MALCOLM LARCENS,
JAPANTRAVEL

The Sanriku Coast stretches from Miyagi Prefecture in the south to Aomori Prefecture in the north. It is renowned for its jagged coastline and its many beautiful bays and vistas. Kitayamazaki and Unosu Cliffs are among the most impressive parts of the coast. Jodogahama Beach is also another great place to visit.

The Sanriku Fukko National Park was created after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the goal is to promote the Sanriku area and help with the rebuilding efforts. It's called a Geopark based on all the diversity of landscape and terrain. The area includes beaches, cliffs, caves and many hot springs. At about the same time, the government started building the Michinoku Coastal trail, it will go from Hachinohe to Fukushima when completed. The general area of the park is from Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture to Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture. The Sanriku area is rich in natural resources, from great seafood, farming and to the start of modern day steel smelting in Kamaishi.

Tanohata is a small village north of Miyako and is home to both Unosu Cliffs and Kitayamazaki. The population of Tanohata is only about 3500 people making it one of the smallest villages in Japan. Don't let the size deter you from visiting it, you will enjoy great seafood and breathtaking vistas.

GETTING THERE

From Morioka, take Route 106 to Miyako or the Yamada Line from Morioka Station, the trains runs only a few times a day. From Miyako, take Route 45 north towards Kuji. Both Unosu Cliffs and Kitayamazaki are accessible from Route 45, the coastal highway. Unosu, is about 30 minutes north of Miyako and Kitayamazaki is about 1 hour north on Route 44 off Route 45. You could also take the Sanriku Railway from Miyako but you would need to walk a lot or take a taxi from the station. By car, is definitely the best way to get there.

IWATE PREF.



Lunch at Kitayamazaki

you'll see a big sign on Route 45 to indicate the turn off.

Before or after heading to see the cliffs, I recommend that you sample some of the fresh seafood available at the restaurant near the tourist area. Depending on the season you might be able to enjoy fresh oysters, scallops, sea urchin (uni), sauri (sanma) or salmon. All caught the same day or the day before. I had the scallop set, it was so fresh.

There are 3 spots that you can view Kitayamazaki from, the top, you can see the main rock from a safe distance. Lookout two is about 360 steps down and gives you a nice panoramic view. Lookout three is at sea level, you can feel the waves

Unosu is about 5 kilometers from Route 45, the coastal highway that runs from Sendai to Hachinohe. The turn off is easy to miss since they made some changes to the road. You'll see a couple of steel grain silos near the road, follow that road. From the parking lot, it's a 5-10 minute walk to the cliffs. If you're feeling adventurous, you can take the walking trail that will take you down to water level. It's a 45 minute walk. We didn't have enough time to walk when I was there.

On the other hand, Kitayamazaki is much easier to find. You take Route 44 and follow the coast,

crashing on the rocks and feel the power of the ocean. The lowest platform was washed out by the tsunami in March 2011, it's still worth the walk down.

Another option is to take a boat cruise to get a closer look at the rock formations. The tours run from April 11 to November 3. The boat cruise takes about

1 hour and start from Tsukue Fishing port, it costs 3500 yen per person with a minimum of 2 people. If you want to go on your own, you have to pay 7000 yen. You can find more information here; https://tanohata-taiken.jp/?page_id=65 (Japanese only)

About halfway between Unosu and Kitayamazaki is hotel Ragaso, it's built right on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, it commands an incredible view of the sea. It would be a perfect place to watch the sunset from your room or the bath. They have a public bath available to anyone for only 400 yen located on the 4th floor with huge windows looking at the sea. Even though most people have baths in the afternoon or evening, it would be amazing to watch the sunrise soaking in the hot bath.

Kitayamazaki from the second lookout

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SOAKING AWAY STRESS AT THE SENTO

BY DAVID R MUNSON,
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

The first time I went to the public bath in my old neighborhood, I felt more than a little out of place. I was an outsider, a newcomer, a conspicuous new addition to the scenery, not unlike a golf ball in a carton of eggs. But the awkwardness quickly passed, and I soon became a regular there.

Over the next couple of years, I went back again many, many times, right up until its doors closed for the last time. In this way, what started on a whim turned into one of the most valuable experiences I've had in Japan.

Six months before, I had arrived in Tokyo from Shanghai to start over. It was my fifth international move in about six years, and in addition to the usual challenges of getting settled, I also had to address my mangled personal affairs. My life had recently exploded with great vigor. So much so that my ears were still ringing. My life was a mess, and so was I.

I tried to put myself back together again but did so poorly. Nothing was working. And so, on

the night just before that first trip to the sento, after half a year of ping-ponging between Nerima and Roppongi for work, sleeping far too little and generally trying to ignore my problems, I desperately needed to relax. But how? After some consideration, I thought, A bath? Yeah, I'll take a bath. So I tried, and I failed.

The bath itself happened, but the relaxing did not. My attempt took place in my one-piece plastic unit bath, the extra-small sort with everything crammed into it. My leaky toilet was running quietly but continuously the whole time, and the washing machine I shared with my neighbor was throbbing and splashing noisily on the opposite side of the wall. Not exactly peaceful. There was also the persistent, back-of-the-mind awareness that just outside that thin plastic door were my unwashed dishes, the bills I'd forgotten to pay, and my abject loneliness. It was not the experience I had sought. I needed a change of scenery.

So the next night, it was off to the bath. I fumbled my way through the entrance, paid my

fee, and entered the locker room. Others were there, but only a few. After my fleeting embarrassment disrobing, I bathed. I shaved my face and scrubbed myself clean, then spent the next hour cycling between the hot bath, the really hot bath, and the cold bath — heat, cool, repeat.

By the time I left that first night, I felt transformed. I hadn't felt that relaxed at any time in the previous five years, and it wasn't just physical. My mind was at ease, too, and I felt for once as if maybe everything might actually work out. That night, I fell asleep at 10pm and slept until the next afternoon. From then on, I was at the sento two or three nights a week. I had found something good.

It pains me that the regular old neighborhood public bath never gets the recognition it deserves, being perpetually overshadowed by its fancy hot spring cousin. I get it: a sento is unlikely to impress you. It is not going to be fancy, and its amenities are apt to be spare. Most are old and well worn, bearing a time-shadow patina of decades of activity absorbed into every

surface.

Even so, the very mundanity of the typical local bath is part of what makes it so special. It puts on no airs and demands nothing of its patrons. It fits the definition of a third place perfectly: it is neither home nor work. It is a neutral ground and a leveling place. It has its regulars and can feel like a home away from home, thoroughly lacking any pretense or extravagance.

And for me, it wasn't even just the sento — there was a whole evening ritual around it. There was the route I would walk through a tiny park and along a narrow footpath contained by mossy garden walls. The neighborhood cats I would pet along the way. The small, family-run convenience store where I would stop on my way home for a big onigiri and a cold can of beer.

And everything changing with the seasons. Walking in the rain or snow, under plum blossoms or autumn leaves and the stars, with the sound of the breeze whispering by. In the midsummer, cicadas emerging ghostly white in the streetlight glow. Every walk there and every walk home was an exercise in mindfulness,

noticing what had or hadn't changed along the way over the previous handful of days.

It became a special place in the landscape of my daily life, not in spite of its ordinariness, but because of it. And that regular ritual of going to the bath helped me feel at home both in my neighborhood and in my very skin. This, in turn, helped build a foundation upon which I could better reconstruct my blown-up life.

Just before its demolition, when I had not yet realized the bath had closed for good, I arrived one evening at the entrance just as another regular was departing. The windows were dark, the shutters closed, and the sad shake of the man's head said it all. I would never bathe there again. And just a few weeks later, all that was left of the place was a single bank of shoe lockers standing strangely at the edge of a large plot of torn-up ground where the sento had once stood.

There's an apartment building on the site now, and I've since moved elsewhere, but I will always remember that old sento fondly, and I must always give it credit for the good it did me.



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METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

The Canadian pop-punk queen is back. Avril Lavigne is returning to Japan after a five-year absence due to her battle with Lyme disease. She's famous in our inner-teenager hearts for a range of best-selling singles such as "Complicated," "Sk8er Boi" and "Girlfriend." This is an opportunity for her Japan-based fans to see her latest performance Head Above Water in Osaka and Tokyo.

ADDITIONAL SHOW

May 8

at
Tokyo Garden Theatre

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OPEN 6 p.m. / START 7 p.m.
- COST: ¥ 9,500 -
- WEBSITE: <https://www.creativeman.co.jp/artist/2020/05avrillavigne/>

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(The facility opens 2020 May)
- ADDRESS:
Ariake 2-1-8 Koutou-ku, Tokyo

- TICKETS:
rt.tstar.jp/special/music/western/avril

(Osaka, Aichi dates only)
<https://ib.eplus.jp/avrillavigne>

- MORE INFO:
<http://www.creativeman.co.jp/>
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UPCOMING CONCERTS

STRIPES JAPAN

PIXIES
Yokohama, Feb. 24, 6 p.m., Yokohama Bay Hall; Tokyo, Feb. 25, 7 p.m., EX Theater Roppongi, 8,500 yen (standing); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

NEW ORDER
Tokyo, Mar. 3 & 4, 7:30 p.m., Shinkiba Studio Coast, 10,000 yen (1st floor: standing), 12,000 yen (2nd floor: designated seat); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

A-HA
Tokyo, Mar. 10 & 11, 7 p.m., Tokyo Dome City Hall; Fukuoka, Mar. 14, 6 p.m., Fukuoka Civic Hall; 9,000-12,000 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669. For more information, visit Ticket Pia (<https://t.pia.jp/>).

GREEN DAY
Tokyo, Mar. 27, 7 p.m., Makuhari Messe, 10,000 yen (standing), 15,000 (gold standing); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

BOB DYLAN
Tokyo, Apr. 1, 2, 6, 17, 20 & 21, 7 p.m., Apr. 4, 5 & 19, 5 p.m., Zepp DiverCity; Apr. 14 & 15, 7 p.m., Zepp Tokyo; 19,000 yen (1F-standing), 25,000 yen (2F-designated seat); Udo 03-3402-5999.

For more information, visit Ticket Pia (<https://t.pia.jp/>), Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) or eplus (<http://eplus.jp/>).

ALANIS MORISSETTE
Tokyo, Apr. 2, 7:30 p.m., 10,000 yen (standing), Toyosu Pit. For more information, visit LiveNation: <https://tinyurl.com/v93c5g2> or Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) Ticket sales start Feb. 22.

LOUIS TOMLINSON
Tokyo, Apr. 30, 7 p.m., Shinkiba Studio Coast, 9,500 yen (All standing); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

MEW
Tokyo, Jun. 11, 7 p.m., Mynavi Blitz Akasaka, 7,500 yen (1F-standing), 8,000 yen (2F-designated seat); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

BILLIE EILISH
Yokohama, Sept. 2, 7:30 p.m., 9,500 yen (Stand A seat), 10,500 yen (Stand S seat), 12,000 yen (Arena S standing), 15,000 yen (Arena SS standing). For more information, visit <https://www.billiejapantour2020.com/>. Ticket sales start Feb. 22.

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(Apr.05 departure - Apr.12 return)

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\$1,047

*Tour point...
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• 5.5 nights hotel accommodation
• Breakfast
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Stripes Sports Trivia

The price of an MLB team, these days, is pretty astronomical. In 2012, the Dodgers were purchased for \$2 billion. More recently, the lowly Marlins fetched \$1.3B. The cheapest purchase of a current franchise was, go figure, one that has stayed in the family for nearly 50 years. Which franchise cost only \$8.7 million in 1973?

Answer

New York Yankees

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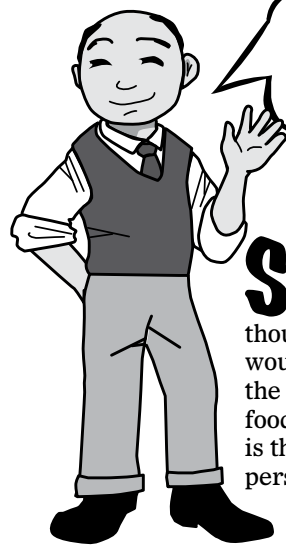


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DID YOU KNOW?

Sea snakes are a precious food in Okinawa. A specific type of broth, “Iraboo jiru” (Sea snake broth), was thought of as a luxury dish that Okinawans would serve to distinguished guests during the time of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The food can still be found at local diners and is thought to be effective in boosting a person’s energy.

Kanji of the week

郷音

Kyo / Hibiki (Sound)

Language Lesson

I’ll get there a little late.

Chotto okuremasu.

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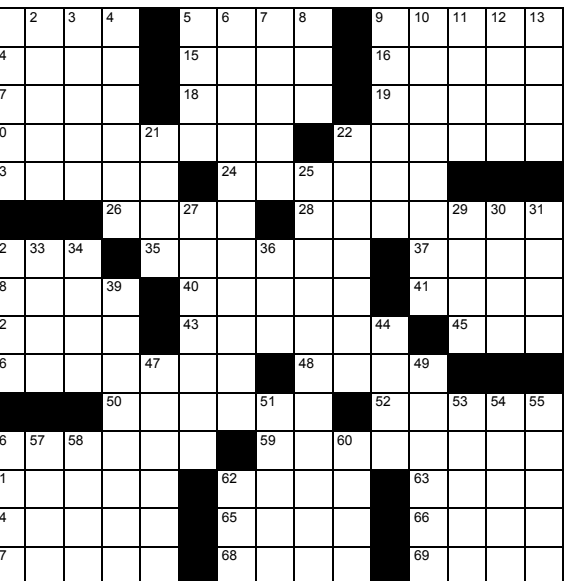
Sat. & Holiday Close at 5pm (Closed Sun.)

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- After all?
- Number for one
- Gives the axe to
- "That hurt!"
- Boisterous play
- Unaccompanied
- Something in the air
- Manage somehow
- Battle bravery
- Awfully dull
- Blackbeard, e.g.
- Take the wrong way?
- Ski race
- 1996 presidential hopeful
- Starbucks staffer
- Be a pain
- Murphy Brown star
- Within reach
- Meadow sounds
- Plain as day
- Lysol target
- Capri or Wight
- Like most wedding cakes
- Ballet dance step
- Wood finish
- Side by side?
- Whitaker of Hollywood
- Moolah
- Plain awful
- Ornamental climbing vine
- Up and
- High school subj.
- Horse gait
- Boxer's quest
- Tolstoy heroine
- Place for an ace
- Anesthetic of old
- Lab procedure
- Like the Sahara



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- Check the books
- Something to settle
- Sewing kit item
- Chevron competitor
- Hotel amenity
- Urge onward
- Tarzan extra
- Jesus, for some
- Causing worry
- Bubbly drink
- Maritime speed
- Moistureless
- Messy one
- Window box, e.g.
- Anomalies
- Dance class attire
- Escape slowly
- Fictional plantation
- Kind of race or dealer
- Egyptian bird
- Skin reaction
- Curly cabbage

- Word from the Beaver
- Colonists' quest, maybe
- Financial worry
- Linger aimlessly
- Queen of Soul
- Sty dwellers
- Slip-up

- Garlicky sauce
- No longer in mail or crime
- Final words?
- Tim of "The Hateful Eight"
- Louder piece
- Cave dweller

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

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

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

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

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

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March 2020

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- ✓ **Are unable to bear children.**
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- ✓ Body mass index (BMI) is at most 30.
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RESTAURANT INFO



Serving it up in an instant

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

It's lunchtime and you're looking for something quick and cheap to eat. But you have your eyes and mind set on either a big bowl of noodles, a hamburger, or curry and rice. Not to worry, you're in Japan and all of these meals can be made instantly at the fraction of the cost of a regular meal.

Instant foods cover a wide range. Everyone knows about the noodles, but there is a variety of other foods. Recent improvements in freeze dried technology enables high-quality coffee, tea, skim milk, cocoa, juices and various soups to be processed into powder. Just add water when you're ready to drink or eat.

Vacuum-packed technology preserves curry, soup, stew or even ingredients for various other dishes. And quick-freezing technology preserves shumai, gyoza, fried rice, pizza and French fries, along with various fishes and vegetables, in wonderful shape.

But, of course, when folks talk about instant foods, noodles are at the tip of the tongue.

"Instant noodles greatly help me hold down my meal expenses," said Kohei Suzuki, a 40-year-old salary man from Tokyo. "I bought instant noodles for around 60 yen (54 cents) at a supermarket and cooked it at home, along with an egg and frozen vegetables. It cost less than 100 yen (90 cents)."

Suzuki serves instant noodles for weekend lunches almost every week.

"I have two kids," he said. "Instant noodles for lunch is very helpful."

Suzuki said he changes up the flavor of the instant noodles - soy sauce, miso and tonkotsu (pork bones) - so family members won't get tired of a particular taste.

SEE INSTANT ON PAGE 6



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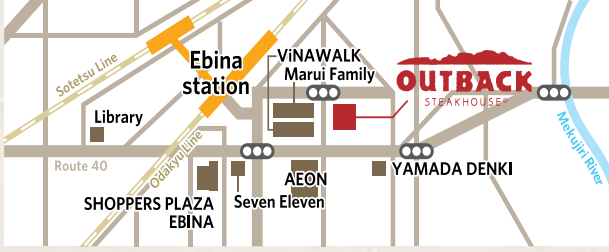
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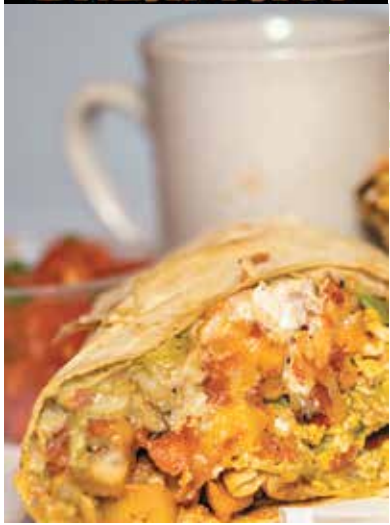
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RESTAURANT INFO



INSTANT: Saves money

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“I frequently eat a cup of noodles for lunch at the office,” said Chihiro Ito, 46, vice director of a Tokyo company. “When I need to work at the office during lunch, I go buy a cup of noodles and eat it while doing my work. I feel it helps me to save money.”

In fact, instant noodles is an inexpensive food. As of June 2019, the average retail price of noodles in a bag was 111 yen, and Cup Noodles was 193 yen, according to the Japan Instant Food Industry Association.

Suzuki and Ito both agreed that instant food helped keep the family spending down. But Ito said instant food does more than save money, it save lives.

“I think instant foods sustain the lives of poor young people who are living alone and too busy working or studying to fix food,” Ito said. “Although eating only instant foods may hurt their health, the foods are saving their lives as long as they keep eating them.”

Although that might be a bit of an exaggeration, instant foods are a staple in many people’s lives.

Kunihiko Ishii, 57, an agency temp in Kanagawa Prefecture, admitted he’s lived on various cheap instant foods throughout his life. “With me repeatedly quitting and starting different jobs, instant foods helped me stay alive,” Ishii said.

Actually, the Japanese-Taiwanese inventor of the instant noodle, Momofuku Ando, invented the instant noodle to help feed the poverty-stricken in the post war chaos.

“I think the instant noodle is the most significant invention in the Japanese food industry in the post war period,” says Hidetoshi Hasuo, Secretary-General of the Japan Instant Food Industry Association. “There is no other Japanese food that has had such international popularity.”

Today, there are 5.72 billion servings of instant noodles consumed in Japan every, according to Hasuo’s association. So, technically, on average, a Japanese person eats 45.2 servings of instant noodles every year.

Worldwide, 103.6 billion servings of instant ramen are eaten in one year.

The country that consumed the most instant noodles was China with 40.25 billion servings, the 2nd was Indonesia, the 3rd was India and the 4th was Japan. Can you guess how the U.S. ranked?



Rapid ramen and more galore

Most Japanese associate instant foods with noodles.

In fact, according to rankings of Yahoo online shopping in the category of instant foods, 16 of the top 20 are occupied by instant noodles. The remaining four were instant powdered soups, various miso soups and sealed pouches of eggs and chicken.

Today, there are 1,538 brands of instant noodles. Of those, 1,279 are cup of noodles. And more than 90 percent of them are manufactured by six major companies: Nissin, Sanyo, Toyo Suisan, House Foods, Myojo and Acecook.

Needless to say, a package of instant noodles consists of noodles and packs of soup ingredients.

The dried noodle block made from flour, palm oil and salt was originally created by flash frying cooked noodles. This is still the main method used in Asian countries, while air-dried noodle blocks are favored in Western countries.

As for flavors, soy sauce and miso are the most common flavors in Japan, while most other countries use chicken, pork and beef flavors, according to Hidetoshi Hasuo, secretary-general of the Japan Instant Food

Industry Association.

“Japan originated the culture, but each region of the world has built its own flavor and culture by now,” Hasuo said. “That shows that the instant noodle has become a global food phenomena.”

So, how different are Japanese instant noodles from others?

“Japanese instant food is authentic food,” Hasuo said. “We actually make a soup from fish or meat and then freeze-dry them into powder, while most of foreign makers use artificial flavors.”

Instant noodles are often criticized as being unhealthy or junk food. A single serving of instant noodles is high in carbohydrates and fat, but low in protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. To make for that, many makers add minerals, such as calcium, and various vitamins, according to Hasuo.

Instant noodles are considered a great preservation food, too. According to Hasuo, the shelf life of instant noodles range from 6 to 8 months. Their stability comes from the high sodium content with low moisture, and low water activity.



Momofuku

Surprisingly, it as a luxury product at home, and some companies joined Time Magazine Ando passed



over,

It was 6th place with 4.4 billion servings, according to data from 2019 that was provided by the International Ramen Manufacturers Association.

In the States, instant noodles are often associated with young students. According to Hasuo, in Japan, male bachelors in their 20s or 30s are considered the main users of cup of noodles, while the noodles in a bag are mainly enjoyed by children (cooked by their mother) for a snack.

“Mostly, cup of noodles are eaten at night, often after drinking,” says Jun Oikawa, 49, an employee at a ramen shop in Tokyo. “Although I don’t eat them much, I reserve a couple cup of noodles at home for when I’ve been drinking at night.”

“In terms of instant food, countless variations of miso soup are also impressive,” says Yuko Endo, 52, a housewife and mother for three children. “In a supermarket, you will see at least 10 different miso soups in red or white flavor on a shelf. Just like me, I think most housewives use them to make the daily dinner for their family.

“Without instant foods, I can’t make my kids lunch boxes every day,” Endo added, confessing that she sometimes makes her kid’s lunch boxes using only instant foods.

I think it’s safe to say that she’s not the only one.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



u Ando

when Ando’s invention was put onto store shelves, people initially saw product as it priced 35 yen, slightly more expensive than a serving of up. But consumers quickly embraced the convenience of making ramen les took off. Instant ramen became a staple food in Japan, and other ed the market.

ne featured him in its ‘60 years of Asian heroes’ in 2006.

away in 2007 at the age of 96.

The father of instant noodles



Winning recipes

The Japan Convenience Foods Industry Association holds an instant noodle recipe of contest every year. For the 2015 contest, there were 1,305 entries. After intense examinations, 12 finalists stepped forward for final competition in Tokyo. Nana Shibuya, 17, a high school student from Fukushima Prefecture, won the championship Takumi Wada, 15, another high school student from Mie Prefecture, took second.



“Fukushima’s blessed koduyu ankake ramen”

Nana Shibuya said she made the recipe to highlight Fukushima Prefecture’s local delicacy koduyu soup. Her hometown, Koriyama City, consumes a lot of bonito flakes, so her recipes calls for a lot of that. “By combining the nutritious bonito flake, taro (potato), traditional green shiso flavored miso, I feel I could make a refreshing and somewhat nostalgic tasting noodle dish,” Shibuya said.



INGREDIENTS (TWO SERVINGS)

- One pack of instant noodle (salt flavor)
- “Koduyu-an (thick sauce)”
 - 30 grams of carrots
 - 40 grams of konjak
 - 30 grams of lotus roots
 - 40 grams of frozen shiitake mushrooms
 - 20 grams of frozen cloud ear mushrooms
 - 20 grams of kidney beans
 - Ginkgo
 - Tofu
 - 30 grams of frozen shellfish adductor
- Soy sauce and salt
- Starch powder
- Water
- 160 grams of bonito flake
- 120 grams of taro
- Kelp dashi broth
- Green shiso miso
- Yuzu (orange)
- Japanese honewort
- Fruit of the matrimony vine

RECIPE

- 1 “Making Koduyu-an (thick sauce)”
Dice up a carrot, konjak, lotus root, defrosted shiitake, defrosted cloud-ear and kidney beans into bite-size pieces and boil with ginkgo. Put tofu into water. Put defrosted shellfish adductor and shiitake into 200 cc of water. Mix half of soup paste that comes with the instant noodles with the water of shellfish and shiitake and make a thick sauce by adding starch powder.
- 2 Bring to boil and add bonito flake, grinded taro, kelp dashi broth and the remaining half of the attached soup paste.
- 3 Boil noodle, cut finely and mix it with green shiso miso.
- 4 Spread 2 on plastic wrap, put 3 and wafer-wrapped green shiso miso. Heat in microwave for 2 minutes and half in 600 w.
- 5 Put 4 into a bowl, then pour 1. Finally, put yuzu, Japanese honewort and fruit of the matrimony vine.



“Sakutto ankake sushi”

A unique fried roll sushi dressed by thickened “ankake” sauce containing various vegetables.



INGREDIENTS (TWO SERVINGS)

- One pack of instant noodle (salt flavor)
- 1 carrot
- 1 asparagus
- 3 shiitake mushrooms
- 120 grams of fine sliced meat
- 30 cc of sake, 15 cc of soy sauce, 80 grams of sugar (a)
- 6 grams of sliced onions
- 1500 cc of dashi broth
- 80 cc of soy sauce
- 1 sheet of nori (seaweed)
- 200 grams of tempura powder
- 40 grams of starch powder
- 1 lemon

RECIPE

- 1 Make 3 plum blossom shaped carrots; thinly slice remaining carrot (15 cm long). Using peeler, peel the asparagus and cut into size same as the carrot. Boil thinly sliced carrot and asparagus till soft. Then strain. Slice shiitake and put into dashi broth to boil. Add soy sauce and sugar.
- 2 Wrap the thinly sliced carrot, asparagus and shiitake with thinly sliced meat. Skew it and broil.
- 3 Boil the plum-shaped carrot.
- 4 Flavor 2 with (a)
- 5 Cut welsh onion into round slices
- 6 Boil noodle and move onto strainer.
- 7 Mix attached soup paste with dashi broth and soy sauce, then boil.
- 8 Wrap 6 and 4 with nori (seaweed). Skew it, cover with tempura powder and fry.
- 9 Put starch powder into 7.
- 10 Put 8 and 3 into a bowl. Decorate it with slices of lemon peel. Pour 9 onto it, then sprinkle 5.

Ooodles of cold noodles



STORY AND PHOTO BY READ URBAN,
GROOVEKOREA MAGAZINE

This cold noodle salad is quick, light, and won't have you spending more than five minutes in front of a stove. The prep work is easy and the final dish comes together quickly. Boiling the noodles and a quick sear are the only things that will tear you away from your other summer duties.

The trick with this recipe is cooking the noodles correctly. For most noodles similar to soba or somen you want to cook them all the way through. This can sometimes result in overcooked noodles if you aren't paying

attention. For cold noodle recipes I try to remove them from the heat 30 seconds before I think they are going to be done. It might take some practice, but you are looking for firm and fully cooked noodles (save all that al dente talk for the Italians).

Serve this salad soon after you toss it in the dressing. Like any salad, you don't want it soggy and limp. You can prepare most of this beforehand (even cooking the mushrooms), just make sure to keep the dressing separate. If you decide to make this the day before, toss the cooked noodles in a bit of vegetable oil (it will help keep them from sticking together).

Ingredients ... 2 servings

Cold Somen Salad

- 4 ounces somen
- 4 shiitake mushrooms, stems removed
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- ½ a carrot, shredded

For marinade

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon ginger
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- ½ tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil

Dressing

- 2 tablespoon soy
- ½ tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds

Garnish

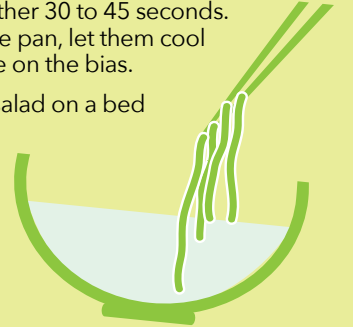
- Ingredients:
- Sesame seeds
 - Chopped scallions

Directions

1. Combine all of the ingredients for the marinade in a small bowl. Toss the whole mushrooms in the marinade and let them sit for at least 30 minutes.
2. Bring a pot of water to the boil and cook the noodles according to the package directions. Probably, two to three minutes – remember, you want a firm noodle that is completely cooked through. Strain the somen and run cold water over them until they are cool.
3. Whisk together the ingredients for the dressing in a shallow bowl. Toss the noodles, carrots, and cucumber in the dressing.
4. Place a sauté pan with a tablespoon of

vegetable oil over medium heat. Remove the mushrooms from the marinade and pat dry with a paper towel. Sear the mushrooms on one side for about a minute, then flip and finish cooking for another 30 to 45 seconds. Remove from the pan, let them cool slightly, and slice on the bias.

5. Set the noodle salad on a bed of greens, fanning out the mushroom on top. Garnish with extra sesame seeds and scallions.



A Taste of Japan



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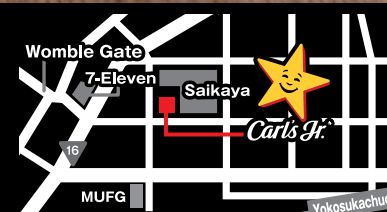
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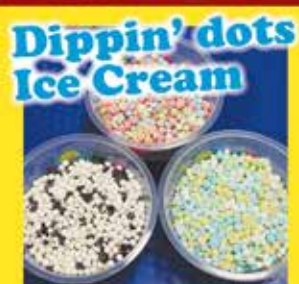


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LOCATION : DiverCityTokyo (ODAIBA), AKIHABARA, JIYUGAOKA, CHOFU, HIRATSUKA, FUJISAWA



A Taste of Japan



Jack & Betty Open: 11:00 am
Close: 19:00 pm

0176-51-6667 2-8-34 Chuo-cho, Misawa, Aomori



A little story about Jack & Betty hotdogs

Located in Sky Plaza Misawa, Jack & Betty Food Corner offers a variety of tasty hotdogs. Our eight original homemade hotdogs are popular with the military community and all lovers of hotdogs. Our large juicy "dogs" are served on local freshly baked buns, a combo that will leave your mouth watering and your stomach grumbling for more. And if you do have some room left, we recommend our homemade, naturally-flavored and additive-free gelato, the perfect dessert to any of our tasty hotdogs! So, stop by Jack & Betty. We'll make you feel at home while you chomp on our tasty dogs.

RESTAURANT INFO



Freshness is always better!

Located inside the Yujo Community Center, G&R's Pacific Pub is a convenient meal spot featuring pasta, fresh salads and a large variety of sandwiches with a side order. Some of G&R's specialty sandwiches include turkey, bacon and provolone served on a panini or the popular chicken & bacon avocado wrap. And don't miss our "Kids' Corner," featuring – Lil' Pasta, grilled cheese sandwich & side orders. For a scrumptious quick lunch or dinner, stop by the Yujo from 10:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. weekdays on Monday through Friday.



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RESTAURANT INFO



225-8293 • BLDG. 327 (YUJO)
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(CLOSED HOL/FAM)

\$1 Members First
Discount off
items \$4 or more.

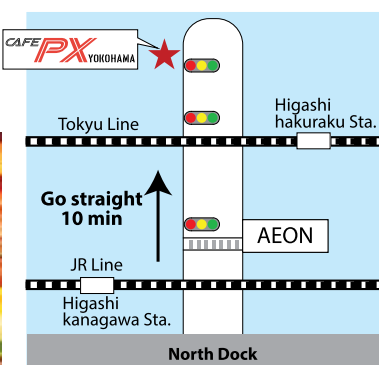
Members
First

A Taste of Japan



Show your Military ID. To get 20% discount.

CAFE PX YOKOHAMA
Tel: 080-2019-9164



Café offers a taste of American diner

TAK the owner of CAFE PX wants military members to have fun and remember their lifestyle in the United States, enjoy their lives and meals by coming to CAFE PX while they are stationed in Japan. He was also a cook at the old Negishi housing "All Hands Club" so he knows how to make great American-style food like B.L.T, omelets, pizza, burgers, hotdogs, milk shakes and more. He wants to create an American hometown neighborhood diner, style and feel so his customers can relax, eat and enjoy his hospitality.

RESTAURANT INFO



Kampai – Okinawan style!

Get into the *spirits* of the Ryukyu Kingdom

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPE JAPAN

The French have their wine, you can't get more American than beer and everybody knows Japan is all about the sake, right?

Well, if you're in Okinawa and you haven't tried the "awamori," you haven't truly tasted the south of Japan.

"To the uninitiated, awamori can be off-putting as (it has) a very strong scent," according to New York-based Kampai.US, which aims to bridge the gap between Western palates and Japanese spirits. "The smell belies the nature of the spirit itself as the underlying tastes can be earthy, floral,

sweet, herbal, or some combination of these."

This distinctly Okinawan liquor is Japan's oldest distilled alcoholic beverage. It boasts nearly 600 years of history, having been Okinawa's official liquor since the days of the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429-1879).

Today, there are 47 awamori distillers in Okinawa Prefecture that make nearly 1,000 different varieties. Annually, Okinawa produces more than 21.7 million tons of awamori (more than 12 million bottles) – and 80 percent of it is consumed right here in Okinawa, according to the Okinawa Awamori Distillery Association.

The Thai technique for distilling liquor was introduced to Okinawa in the 15th century. Since then, it has been refined to suit the subtropical climate of Okinawa. Throughout history, awamori has been praised for its superior quality and rich, robust flavor.

"On Okinawa, 'sake' means awamori," said Yoshihide Matayoshi, executive managing director of Okinawa Awamori Distillery Association.

Although many Japanese tend to associate awamori with "shochu," another Japanese distilled liquor originating in Kogashima Prefecture on Kyushu, there is a strict definition for awamori that distinguishes it, according to Matayoshi.

Awamori must be made from Thai rice (indica) and black rice mold with a one-time fermentation process. Shochu, on the other hand, can be made from any type of starch crop or mold, and is usually processed via two-time fermentation.

"Indica rice, black rice mold and one-time fermentation – without clearing these three conditions, the liquor cannot be called awamori," Matayoshi said.

According to Matayoshi, the techniques used to make awamori were introduced by the Ryukyu Kingdom to mainland Japan via present day Kagoshima in the 17th century, leading to the later development of shochu.

"So, our awamori is how Japan's shochu came to be," he said.

As Okinawa's official liquor, when a G8 Summit was held here in 2000, awamori was used for the toast at the reception. "Since the average age

of national leaders gathered at the summit was 56," Matayoshi said, "we prepared 56-year-old awamori for the toast."

Just how many of the world leaders in attendance have since developed a penchant for the liquor is unknown. Thanks to the distillery association's efforts, however, Americans – especially service personnel and civilians assigned to Okinawa – seem to be developing a taste for the spirit.

"We have provided foreigners with opportunities to taste awamori at duty free shops in several airports in and outside of Okinawa," Matayoshi said. "I noticed that 90 percent of foreigners who bought awamori were Americans. Some said they were stationed on Okinawa and others said they have friends on Okinawa."

You can buy awamori at any liquor shop for prices ranging from about 1,250 yen (\$12.50) for a standard 1.8 liter bottle to up to the equivalent of \$500 for 20-year-old awamori. It can be drunk in a variety of ways.

"To enjoy the rich and mellow distinct flavor of awamori, I recommend drinking it on the rocks, or dilute it with cold water," Matayoshi said. "In an Okinawan restaurant, it is always served with a container of ice and carafe of water. Pour awamori and water into a glass at 3 to 7 ratio. This brings out the (subtle) sweet flavor of awamori, and you can enjoy its smoothness and sweet fragrance. Adding a halved "shekwasha," or flat lemon, gives it a more refreshing taste."

When consumed straight, it is customarily served in a small earthenware vessel called a "karakara," from which it is poured into a small cup called a "choku."

Though distinctly Okinawan, Matayoshi said that it would be a mistake to think awamori only pairs well with local cuisine.

"Awamori can be a good accompaniment to Japanese foods as well as Chinese, Italian or French dishes," he said.

So the next time you're planning to "kampai" (toast), try it like the locals. Try it with awamori for a truly Okinawan taste.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Mellowing with age

The taste and aroma of awamori are enriched through the aging process.

"The new awamori sometimes has way too strong smell and taste," says Okinawa Awamori Distillery Association's Yoshihide Matayoshi. "Through the aging process, the liquor develops more body and a milder flavor."

When Awamori is aged for three years or more it is called "kusu," or aged liquor. Traditionally, it was aged in clay pots or vases underground in constant cool temperatures.

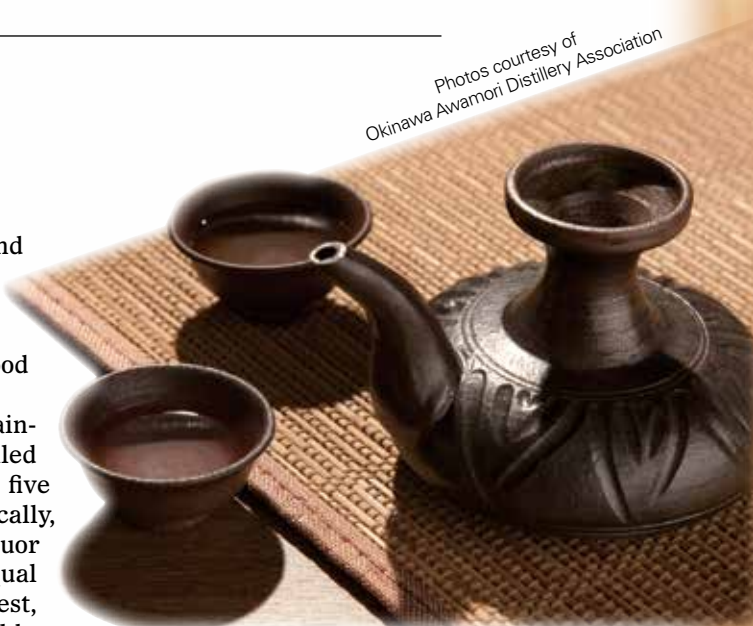
"You can still find containers of awamori in Okinawa's caves today," Matayoshi says. "Before World War II, 200-year-old or even 300-year-old kusu were preserved in these caves, but they were all destroyed during the battles."

These days, the oldest that can be found is 150-years-old awamori at Shikina Distillery in Naha City. Typically, however, most aged awamori available on market is 20 to 30 years old, according to Matayoshi.

"The difference between new awamori and some that has been aged 10 years is not only double in terms of taste and flavor," he says, "it is three to four times better – or even more." "Aging is indispensable for good awamori."

There is a traditional method for maintaining and gradually maturing awamori, called shitsugi (top off) that employs three to five clay pots of differently aged awamori (typically, 1, 2, 3 and 5 years old). After drawing liquor from the oldest pot for consumption, an equal amount is added to it from the second oldest, and so on. In this way, the pot with the oldest awamori remains full.

"This is really a unique system of maturing aged liquor used in the world only for awamori and Spanish sherry," Matayoshi says. "By maintaining it periodically with this system, we can keep maturing awamori without losing its quality for more than a century."



Photos courtesy of
Okinawa Awamori Distillery Association

According to law, however, awamori for which this method is used cannot be labeled according to age because it is not 100 percent the same age.

- Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Japan



WingStreet



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LIVE MÁS



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