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# Pumpkin Spice Latte is back!

BY DENISSE RAUDA,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Though Starbucks Japan already announced its chestnut-heavy fall drink and sweets lineup, pumpkin spice fans were not left behind this season! Pumpkin Spice Lattes are back!

For many Americans, fall just isn't the same without this coffee treat. So, grab one through Oct. 18, while supplies last!

This will be the second year in a row since 2006 that Starbucks Japan has treated its customers to the cult-favorite with a massive online following. The Pumpkin Spice Latte comes hot or iced and features cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and clove in a fragrant and flavorful concoction

perfect for getting cozy in the cooling temperatures.

And that's not all! Starbucks Japan is also introducing a Yakiimo Brulee Frappuccino during the same period. This frozen potion blends "a slightly caramel-flavored sweet potato with ice and milk, adding sweet potato brulee sauce and brulee chips," according to the company's release.

Make plans to try these two new drinks as well as the chestnut lineup before they're all gone! Prices for the Pumpkin Spice Latte range from 501 yen to 640 yen (about \$4.20 to \$5.36). The Yakiimo Brulee Frappuccino is available in a tall size only for 668 yen for takeout or 680 yen for dine-in.

rauda.denisse@stripes.com



WEBSITE



Yakiimo Brulee Frappuccino

Pumpkin Spice Lattes

Photos courtesy of Starbucks Coffee Company





LIVE MÁS



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# Getting ready, staying ready inside Kyoto's Disaster Prevention Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY HAZEL GRAY,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**H**ave you ever wanted to experience the thrill of fighting fires? Or practice escaping a burning building? Or how to respond to an earthquake in a terrifyingly accurate simulation?

At the Kyoto City Disaster Prevention Center, you can learn how to manage these common emergency situations and more. The center is only a half hour's-walk from Kyoto Station and the best part is that the entire experience is free!

Check out hands-on learning exhibits and simulations including learning how to escape a building on fire, learning how to use a fire extinguisher, knowing what to do when you are stuck in a flooding

underpass, experiencing a violent earthquake, flying an emergency helicopter on a rescue mission, and so much more! Reservations are required for the guided program, but some of the attractions can be experienced without one.

Our experience was unique because, not knowing that reservations were required for the guided program, we did not have them when we entered. The staff were very kind, allowing us to enjoy some of the exhibits without reservations. We were led first to a room upstairs where we learned how to escape from a burning building.

We watched a video of a hotel catching fire through an elevator malfunction and saw different people's responses to it. All of them tried to get out, but only a

few knew how to do it safely. They crawled down on the ground to avoid the toxic smoke, then quickly and carefully followed the emergency exit signs to evacuate the building. Then, in groups of two, we got to simulate this experience by running through a hot, smoky maze with doors and exit signs. We had one minute to get through. Ready, set, GO! Thankfully, we all survived.

The staff immediately conducted us to the next room, where we learned how to use a fire extinguisher. There are three general kinds, but all can be used in a similar way.

The standard method is a quick three-step process: Step 1, remove the yellow safety tab on the top; Step 2, remove the hose nozzle on the side and aim it at the flames; Step 3, squeeze the trigger! It is important to spray the base of the fire first until it is completely extinguished. Then move on to the lesser parts and the flammable objects that might cause an explosion.

After learning how to correctly use an extinguisher, we were all able to practice using one that sprayed water on a virtual fire. We successfully fought the house fire on our own! Of

course, some fires are too big for us to handle, and we need to call 911 (or 119 in Japan) so they can take care of it.

Upstairs on the third floor was an open space with many stand-alone exhibits we could try. We fought fires on an American arcade game, we experienced opening a car door in different levels of water to simulate escaping from a flooding underpass, we even flew an emergency helicopter on different rescue missions! There

is little English on the exhibits, but the staff were on-hand to explain. We spent about two hours at the center, more than half of which was spent in the third-floor free area.

In the U.S., September is National Preparedness Month, so make plans to visit Disaster Prevention Center and learn some important safety tips on your next trip to Kyoto!



Website

## GSA in Japan

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Sid Frazier

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

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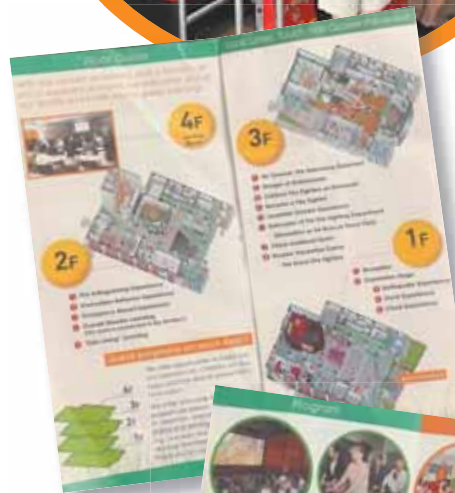
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GSA's Japan catalog.



A video game allows visitors to practice aiming a "firehose" to extinguish a virtual fire.



Visitors to the museum can get fun photos posing as firemen and more.



A brochure details the Disaster Prevention Center floor map and the experiences available.



Learn how to use a fire extinguisher with the fire simulator.



Try your hand at flying the emergency helicopter over Kyoto City in a virtual simulator.

## Visit the center

**Address:** 7 Sugata-cho, Nishikujo, Minami-ku, Kyoto Prefecture

**Telephone:** 075-662-1849

(Reservations by phone; Parties of 10 or more can reserve three months in advance)

**Hours:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (last guided program reception 1600) Closed on Mondays (except national holidays and Sept 1. In this event, closed on Tuesday); Closed on second Tuesday of each month except national holidays; Closed Dec 28-Jan 4 for New Years

**Admission:** free

**Directions:** 30-minute walk from Kyoto Station  
18-minute walk from Jujo Subway Station  
8-minute walk from Kintetsu Railway Jujo Station  
Shimin Bosai Center Mae (Kyoto City Bus stop #16, 19, 42)

**Other important information:**

Parking lot available, but limited space (10 parking spaces)

Several parking lots nearby, but those may have a parking fee





Keith Joell, Ke'Shaun and Geovanni, back, and Julius, Angelina Sky, and Joell's wife, Windy, after Ke'Shaun's enlistment ceremony. Courtesy photos



Keith Joell embraces Ke'Shaun after the oath of enlistment.

# Father enlists son at same Japan post where he joined Army

BY SEAN KIMMONS,  
U.S. ARMY, GARRISON JAPAN

**CAMP ZAMA** – As his fiancée looked on, cradling their first newborn child, Keith Joell raised his right hand inside the recruiter's office here in 2003 and enlisted into the Army.

Shortly after, he shipped off to basic training to begin a career he hoped would take care of his budding family.

Almost 20 years and three more kids later, Joell, now a chief warrant officer two assigned to U.S. Army Japan, recently enlisted into the Army his eldest child, Ke'Shaun, who has grown up to chart his own path.

"I was proud of him," Joell said, adding that he had the minimum rank to preside over the oath of enlistment ceremony here. "I was blessed, humbled and happy that I made it to the rank, where I can actually raise my right hand with him and administer the oath."

Ke'Shaun, 19, thought about his future after he graduated last year from Zama Middle High School, where his father also graduated when Ke'Shaun's grandfather served at Camp Zama as a first sergeant for USARJ.

The smiling, talkative teenager considered his options as his parents provided him information about the military and college. Much of his tuition could be covered by his father's G.I. Bill benefits while he lived at home to save money.

But the allure of independence

proved to be too strong. Ke'Shaun finally decided to sign a four-year enlistment to become a 36B, or financial management technician — a different route from the information services role his father holds at the 35th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

"I wanted to branch off and do my own thing," he said.

With an interest in the stock market, Ke'Shaun spends much of his free time zeroed in on investing apps. One day he hopes to manage a hedge fund, executing aggressive trades on behalf of clients.

"I love day trading; it's like an adrenaline rush," he said. "I'm always studying and trying to learn, because I realize if you're good enough, it could be a way to make some really good money."

He admits he will still need years of education to land his dream job. While in the Army, he plans to use tuition assistance to tackle college courses and certifications to help him get an entry-level job in the financial sector after the military.

His recruiter, Sgt. 1st Class Jason Blowers, said the Army is a treasure trove of opportunities that can provide Soldiers a step up if they decide to venture into the civilian workforce.

"A lot of kids going to college these days, they have that knowledge but they don't have that experience," Blowers said. "Corporations and businesses are looking for that experience, and the Army is a good way to help gain it while gaining that education as well."



Keith Joell, now a chief warrant officer two assigned to U.S. Army Japan, holds his newborn son, Ke'Shaun, at Narita International Airport before shipping out to basic training April 26, 2003.

There are also other incentives, such as bonuses up to \$50,000 or a duty station of their choice, for new recruits. Blowers stressed his role as a recruiter isn't to force someone to join, but only to guide them, whether they end up in the Army or elsewhere.

"We're not going to kidnap them in the middle of the night and shove them on a plane," he said. "We're here to ensure that they get what they are looking for and they get on their path."

For Ke'Shaun, his journey starts in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, where he will travel next

month to complete initial military training.

"I'm working out, prepping myself to be ready and hopefully fly through basic training without any trouble," he said. "Of course, since my dad is in the Army, he tells me what's going to happen, so it gives me a little advantage."

He will also soon weigh a bit lighter when he cuts off his impressive afro hairdo he began growing during the pandemic, which he plans to donate to a local charity.

"I'm not sad I have to shave it off, but it will be unfortunate to see my bald head," he said, smiling. "My head is going to look so small."

His father, who previously served as a sergeant first class before commissioning, has continued to offer his son tips on how to prepare for the rigors of military training.

"He grew up in a house of discipline, so I know that's going to translate to [being ready for] his drill sergeants," Joell said.

He told his son to keep a straight face and be respectful to his drill sergeants, who will eventually move on to someone else who will make a mistake and get their attention.

"It's a mental game," Joell said. "As long as you know you have emotional control, you'll smooth-sail through basic training. I tell him to treat it like a video game."

And once his son becomes a Soldier, Joell said Ke'Shaun will need to understand how to interact with others in his unit. After

living in several duty locations from Germany, Japan to stints in the United States, he believes his son has already been primed for success.

"My biggest advice to him is knowing people," he said. "The Army is the Army. It's the individual people that are the reason why people get in or out of the Army."

"He's learned to network and meet new people, so he understands how to deal with [them]."

Joell said the Army brings people together to form a cohesive team, where experienced mentors are willing to support their teammates and make them stronger.

"It's an opportunity to progress as a person," he said, "and you have a lot of supervisors that have also gone through the trials and tribulations, and they help you."

Even if Ke'Shaun goes to serve in a faraway place, his family will still be there for him, just as they were when he enlisted at the new Camp Zama recruiting office in late July.

Inside the office, located next to the building where his father joined the Army decades ago, Ke'Shaun recited the same oath as his mother held another newborn — Ke'Shaun's youngest sibling — and his two younger brothers held the U.S. flag behind him and his father.

"It's full circle," Joell said of the touching moment. "We will still be there every step of the way to support him, but the fact that he is on his own is amazing."

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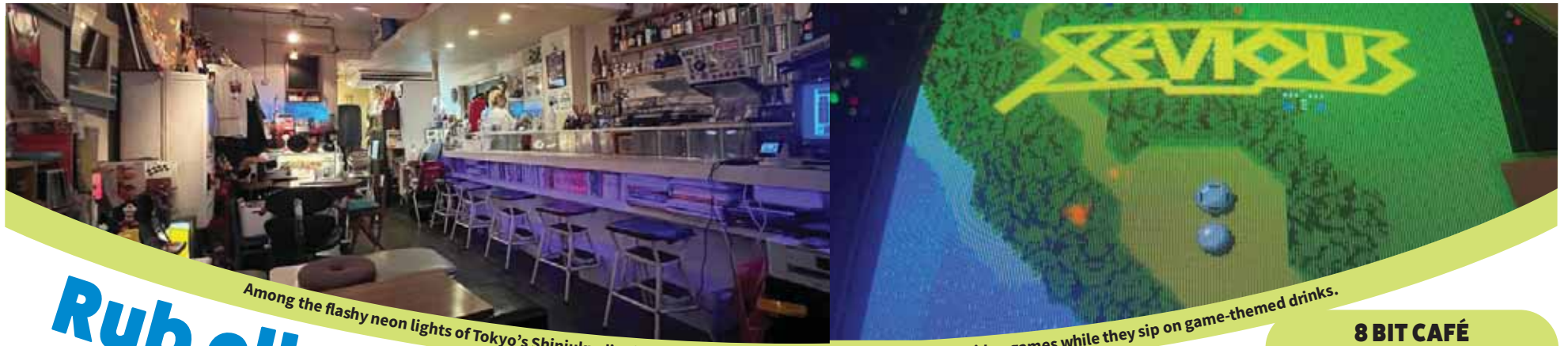
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# Rub elbows with Mario and Luigi at 8 Bit Café in central Tokyo

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: September 15, 2022

Among the flashy neon lights of Tokyo's Shinjuku district lies a café where guests can play 1980s video games while they sip on video-game-themed drinks.

8 Bit Café is near a slew of restaurants and can be quite hard to find. Thankfully, smartphone maps will direct people directly to it.

Guests have to take the stairs, which are in a steep and narrow staircase that leads to the fifth floor and the 8-bit world.

Inside they will find retro 1980s-themed game consoles and figurines. Mario, Luigi and Yoshi from the Super Mario franchise are on

top of a mirror in the bar.

I sat at the arcade table, which has the 1982 game Xevious, a shooter developed by Namco. The player controls a flying attack craft, the Solvalou, to destroy the Xevious forces who are plotting to take over Earth. It cost 50 yen to play, and it was neat that it was right where I sat down.

Gamers can also play Pico Park, an action puzzle game made for two to eight players on a large Nintendo Game Boy. I played with my friend on battle mode, in which players compete to see who can jump the highest; or a region battle, where players hit a ball into the opposing player's territory to claim that territory; a

jump battle, where players dodge incoming cannon balls; or a stop-watch battle, where players compete to see who is fastest on the button.

My friend won almost all the battles, but it was still a fun game to play on an easy gaming system.

8 Bit Café can hold around 30 people. If it becomes too crowded, guests may have to share their table with fellow patrons.

The cover charge to sit at the bar

is 500 yen or about \$3.75. Guests also must order at least one drink every 1.5 hours. The menu is offered in English.

The drinks are quite affordable compared to the area bars; cocktails range from 600 to 700 yen. The café



Mario and Luigi watch over patrons at 8 Bit Café.

## 8 BIT CAFÉ

**LOCATION:** 3-8-9 Shinjuku, 5F, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo (Q Building)

**DIRECTIONS:** An 8-minute walk from Shinjuku Station via the Southeast Exit.

**HOURS:** 7 p.m. to midnight, every day except Tuesdays.

**PRICES:** There's a 500-yen seating fee. Most drinks cost between 600 and 700 yen. Appetizers are 500 yen.

**DRESS:** Casual

**INFORMATION:** Online:

facebook.com/shinjyuku8bitcafe



also offers quick snacks for 500 yen, including pickled vegetables and mixed nuts. Dessert foods for 500 yen include cheesecake, chocolate walnut cake, custard pudding and vanilla ice cream with rum or Bailey's.

A huge video-themed cocktail menu includes the Galactica Magnum, named after the Galactica franchise; the Princess Peach Temptation, named after the Super Mario character; the Ra's Mirror, named after a Dragan Quest item; and the Donkey Kong.

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# Japan's unbelievable contemporary embroidery art

## A new wave of Japanese embroidery artists is hitting social media

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KIM KAHAN,  
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

**T**raditional Japanese embroidery techniques such as sashiko are more practical than artistic, but check out this new style of badass embroidery. A wave of Japanese embroiderers are attracting global attention for designs which range from the dark and weird through to comedic and cute.

Spurred in part due to the rise of photo and image-sharing apps such as Instagram and TikTok, which gave the art a global platform to speak for itself, there has been a recent wave of contemporary Japanese embroidery artists flexing their needle-and-thread talent.



**Coelacanth Lemon Butter Meunière**  
by Genkakulemon

Take the eye-catching Genkakulemon A.K.A 幻覚レモン, who creates imaginative pieces using 3D embroidery and modeling clay. Newcomer Chika Mizusawa, who held her first exhibition in Tokyo less than one year ago, has seen followers flock to her Instagram page for her surreal embroidery models and details of the painstaking embroidery process. Genkakulemon's most popular piece to date is a bright blue fish with the title 'Coelacanth Lemon Butter Meunière.' Complete with embroidered lemon slices and handmade clay fish bones.

In a prior post she shares the process behind the exquisite piece, showing various steps and where she went wrong. Doing this allows followers to appreciate the time and effort that goes into each piece.



**'The Flower-Growing Lobster Present'**  
by Genkakulemon

Other designs include 'The Flower-Growing Lobster Present' which features a bright red lobster – embroidered, of course – resplendent with delicate flowers crawling up its back. Alluding to Japan's love of fish dishes, she displays it on a china plate.

Next up is the serial-memer, HANA. Featuring references from pop culture and Japan-specific topics, her embroidery comes with a smile. Her small, detailed works include Napoleon Dynamite, with his infamous 'Vote for Pedro' t-shirt and Salvador Dali, resplendent with a 3D, twirly mustache.



**Vote for Pedro**  
by HANA

Closer to home sees her recreate Taro Okamoto's Tower of the Sun, and another brings a meme to life, that of 'Uncle Reiwa.' Uncle Reiwa is the now-Prime Minister Suga, who spurned a milliard of memes, thanks to his deadpan announcement of the start of the Reiwa era.



**Dali**  
by HANA

On the 'kawaii' side of things is ume.kaori, a professional embroiderer based in Saitama. Known for her kitsch designs featuring animals from rabbits to kittens and even otters, she regularly holds exhibitions and pop-ups around Tokyo.

Focussing on the 2D, Kaori's brooch designs incorporate beads, pearls and gemstones with a twist. Opulence abounds as rabbits have jewelled bikinis, cats wear elaborate dresses with pearl necklaces and carry handbags. Elsewhere, otters hold gems in the place of the traditional shell.



**Rabbit brooches**  
by Ume.Kaori

Another embroidery artist who incorporates materials into their designs is the artist and author, PieniSieni.

Noted on her blog as a 'Bead and Felt embroidery Artist,' she makes the felt flowers which she entwines into her designs, which focus on lifelike botanicals and insects. She is known for devising a method of doing 3D embroidery freehand, which she teaches as a lecturer in the Ikebukuro area of Tokyo.



**Dandelion**  
by PieniSieni

PieniSieni regularly holds exhibitions of her work, in which visitors can admire the life-like flowers, ranging from realistic dandelions with roots to bunches of flowers. Eager embroiderers worldwide can learn how to make the designs themselves, as her books have been translated into French and English.

Over in Portland USA, Sawako Ninomiya has held exhibitions with the aim to introduce Japanese embroidery to the world since 2017. Prior to her Portland experience, Ninomiya taught embroidery to disadvantaged communities in India.



**Kimono embroidery**  
by Sawako Ninomiya

Now back in Japan, until 2020 Ninomiya ran the Tambourin Gallery in Tokyo, teaching embroidery and holding showings of her works. Nowadays, she works as a consultant and a fashion industry go-to for embroidery in Tokyo. Her designs have been worn by models including Serena Motola and appeared for brands such as APC France.

Her signature style is glitchy, often featuring pop culture figures and artists such as David Bowie and Yayoi Kusama, the latter appearing with two and a half eyes thanks to Ninomiya's block glitch effect. Another notable work was her hefty replica of the world's second-largest mountain, K2, which featured as much yarn as the mountain itself at 8,611 metres.

In a culture in which tradition is valued as much as contemporary designs, these artists are making their mark. Some incorporate flowers into their designs, others have more of a pop culture feel, all are original and exciting.



# My faves Go-to spicy snacks

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Unlike in South Korea or Bhutan, winter in Okinawa doesn't take a lot of spicy hot-pot-type dishes to get through. That may be one reason why the subtropical island didn't offer many spicy foods in the past. As someone who loves spicy foods, I would have to use a lot of Kōrēgusu, an Awamori liquor savored with island's hot peppers, or try level 10 at a Coco's just to taste some serious spiciness. Recently I've noticed more and more spicy foods sold at local supermarkets, offering more options to hot food lovers in Okinawa.

Listed below are some of the foods I've tried and found tasty and interesting. Although none of them would match the burning hot flavors of "Blair's Death Sauce" or "Flamin' Hot Cheetos," these local foods offer something hot and unique to stimulate your taste buds.

## ■ Spicy Mimigar Jerky

"Mimigar" or "pigs' ear" is a signature food of Okinawa where people are said to eat everything that pigs have to offer except their bleat. Although there are several flavors available for Mimigar jerky, this spicy flavor stands out among others because its chewy texture contributes to the spicy flavor by letting the hot flavor linger longer in your mouth as you chew. This is not only a good appetizer or snack food for fun nights, but also a good source of protein.

## ■ Shima-togarashi Mame

If you love peanuts and spicy food, this Okinawan hot chili peanut cracker is a no brainer. If you love either of the two, and hate the other, this is still worth a try. That's my take as a peanut hater. My first bite was met with the taste of peanut coated with brown sugar. But it didn't take long before spicy shima-togarashi (island's chili) kicked in. This interesting mixture of flavors surprised me and I was able to forget my dislike of peanuts, at least for a short while.

## ■ Shima Rayu Kaki Pea

"Kaki no Tane" or "Kaki-pea" is a popular Japanese snack, which is a pairing of sliver-shaped rice crackers and peanuts. In addition to soy sauce flavor, which is the most common seasoning for this snack, its nationwide popularity led to so many variations in flavors such as picked-plume, chocolate, mayonnaise, etc. Seasoning that with Ishigaki Island's chili oil may not sound like a fresh idea, because the taste is very predictable. Chili oil's spicy flavor doesn't last very long because the snacks are hollow. But it is hot enough to offer a good flavor accent, going well with peanuts and sardines packed together.

## Spicy Mimigar Jerky



## Shimatogarashi Ebi Sembei



## Kara mucho (Spicy Mucho)



## Okinawa Shima togarashi Mame



## Bokun Habanero



## Shima Rayu Kaki Pea



## Wazano Kodawari Umakara Togarashi



## Moeyo Togarashi



## Rayu Sembei



## Otokogi Hot Chili Beef



## ■ Rayu Sembei

This is another snack flavored with Ishigaki Island's chili oil. The taste of the spicy oil remains modest with salty flavor taking the lead. I also found a bit of shrimp flavor in the mixture. Obviously, this is targeted to broad consumers rather than die-hard spicy food fans.

## ■ Shimatogarashi Ebi Sembei

From the name, you may think that this snack tastes like spicy shrimp. It is only half true. The flavor of shrimp is dominant, but other ingredients such as turmeric, brown sugar and sesame give depth and nuances

to the taste. And the hot flavor of island's chili sets the tone to let those different tastes work together. Recently, I've noticed this food sold at many shops and stores, probably a sign of its popularity among tourists.

## Savory & Sweating

For someone, who grew up eating many mainstream spicy snacks, above mentioned foods can be called "alternative spicy snacks" as many of them are meant to achieve something different by combining spicy flavors and with Okinawan foods. For those who are in need of quick solutions to fill their thirst for hot flavors, listed below

are what I think sitting on the top of my list as of now. Some of them are long-time sellers while some of them are relatively new comer. But all of them seems to me relevant to many spicy food enthusiasts. You can find these at most convenient stores. I purchased mine at Lawson and Family Mart.

## ■ Kara mucho (Spicy Mucho)

"Kara Mucho" is probably the king of spicy snacks for many Japanese. I have been enjoying this long-time seller since I was a kid. It comes in either shoestrings or potato chips. Written on each package is its catch phrase, "Why potato tastes so good if spicy?" I've had this food so many times, and still wonder what an answer to this question would be.

## ■ Bokun Habanero

"Bokun Habanero," or "Tyrant Habanero," is probably the second most well-known spicy snack after "Kara Mucho." As if to differentiate itself from the king of spicy snack, this food mostly comes in rings. Its official website says, "Although this food is targeted to all ages, little kids and those who are allergic to spicy foods need to be careful."

## ■ Wazano Kodawari Umakara Togarashi

It may be the least spicy among the five, but this rice cracker can be the most addictive. The mixture of soy sauce, Gochujang, cooking rice wine and more contribute to its well-seasoned taste. Senbei (rice cracker) generally comes in a round shape. But for this one, each disk is cracked into uneven pieces, which allows the spicy taste permeate deep inside each piece. The "tasty and spicy" flavor can be quite gripping.

## ■ Moeyo Togarashi

Fried hot chilies to enjoy straight forward spiciness. No sweetness, or sourness are there to console your taste buds. Moeyo Togarashi, which translates to "let the chili burn," is completely opposite of the "tasty" rice cracker mentioned above. With one bite, you will note this is a food for a serious test, not a joke. Needless to say, the hot flavor intensifies as you bite more.

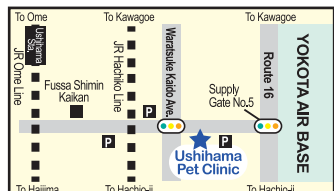
## ■ Otokogi Hot Chili Beef

On the package, this claims to be one of the hottest. I found the phrase well-deserved. On the surface, this seems to be just regular potato chips. Of course, you can see red chili powder sprinkled over, but the look presents nothing crazy. Your interpretation would stay that way until a couple of bites. Beyond that point, you might regret it if you don't have anything to drink by your side. Although "Otokogi" means manhood in Japanese, this is a food for any spicy food lovers, whether for man or woman, who have the guts to try.

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# Super cycling

## Challenge yourself on the Shimanami Kaido

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAEKO MCFADDEN, STRIPES JAPAN

Cycling is a favorite pastime and sport in Japan, so it's not surprising that the country is home to one of the top cycling routes in the world.

The Shimanami Kaido, one of the seven best cycling routes according to CNN in 2015, is a 70-kilometer-long (43.5 miles) cycling route across the Seto Inland Sea. It was opened in 1999 and connected Hiroshima and Ehime Prefectures across six islands (Mukaishima, Innoshima, Ikuchijima, Omishima, Hakatajima, and Oshima) through a series of six bridges designed to accommodate cyclists with ramps at three-to-five-degree inclines.

The route is open year-round, and you can start either in Onomichi in Hiroshima Prefecture on the island of Honshu or Imabari in Ehime Prefecture on Shikoku. There are multiple routes across the islands,

but the blue course is the most popular. The entire way is clearly marked with a blue line, thus, eliminating the need for maps or GPS.

To boost tourism, officials waived the 500-yen bridge tolls for cyclists through March 31, 2024, so don't wait too long to tackle this ride!

Experienced and intermediate riders can complete the Shimanami Kaido in one day. However, I recommend more casual riders, like me, split it up over two days to allow for sightseeing with multiple detours. I saw many riders, from serious cyclists to families with small children.

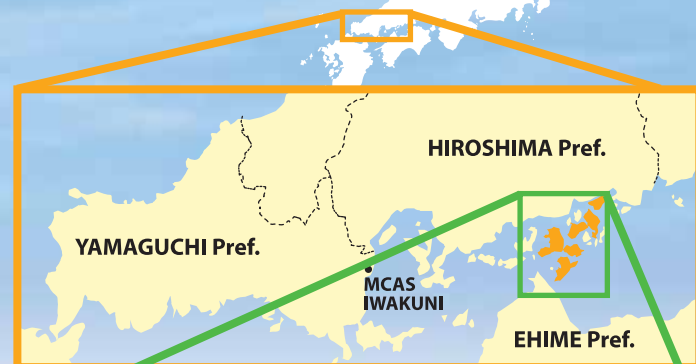
Along the route, cyclists can stop at over 150 rest areas, including retail shops, guesthouses, and more, which provide amenities like air pumps, bike stands, benches, water, and toilets. So, there is no need to push yourself too far because there is something for everyone along the route. The important thing is to enjoy the ride and soak up the beautiful scenery of the Seto Inland Sea and the islands' small towns.

Don't have a bike? The bicycle rental system is fantastic, so there is no need to bring your own bike unless you are a serious rider. You'll find dozens of bicycle rental terminals along the cycling course.

A cross bike rental (a hybrid bike with flat handlebars) costs 2,000 yen (about \$15) daily. Return the rental to the same terminal you picked up and get your 1,100 yen deposit back. If you split the route up over two days and return the bike at the other end, the rental should cost around 5,100 yen. Tandem bikes (3,000 yen/day) and electric-assist bicycles (2,500 yen/day) are also available at some rental terminals. Still, they must be returned to the original pick-up spot.

Rental bicycle reservations aren't required but are recommended during peak season or weekends. These rentals include a free helmet to borrow, or you can bring your own. I also recommend getting a seat cushion if you aren't accustomed to riding for many hours and long distances. You will thank yourself later!

For more advanced riders, you can rent through bike retailer Giant (two locations at Imabari Station and Onomichi Station) for 4,000 to 15,000 yen per day. However, Giant requires advanced reservations and charges an additional fee of 3,300 yen to return bikes at a different location.



Shimanami Kaido



View from Shiratakiyama Temple



Route – The Adventure Begins

➔ For my excursion, I started in Onomichi and split it up over two days, which is easily achievable over a weekend. On Saturday morning, I rented a cross bike at Onomichi Port. I took a short ferry ride (adult and bike cost 70-110 yen) that leaves every 5-10 minutes to Mukaishima Island. After that, I took a detour to Iwashijima Island and visited the Itsukushima Shrine on the beach.

Next, I crossed the Innoshima Bridge (1.2km) to Innoshima Island. Along the route, I detoured to Shiratakiyama Temple, with around 700 stone Buddhas overlooking the sea. The view was amazing and worth riding up the steep hill to the top.

For the third island, I biked across Ikuchijima Bridge (790m) onto Ikuchijima, Japan's No. 1 lemon producer. I stopped at Dolce, a famous gelato and sorbet shop for cyclists. Ikuchijima is also known as an island-wide art museum with 17 outdoor art pieces throughout the island.

After, I turned in for the night at Juicy Fruits B+B close to Setoda Sunset Beach, known for its white sand and clear blue waters. The food was fantastic and came with a stunning sunset. The owner also makes lemon preserves from his own lemon orchard. If you stay here, purchase a jar as a souvenir– you won't regret it.



Coast of Hinai-hana Peninsula near Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge

Day 2

I woke up tired and sore but was looking forward to the last half of the route. Ikuchijima also has lemon benches called the "lemon grove," which some say are great for social media photos. I, however, found that they are perfect rest stops on the ascent to Tatara Bridge (1480m) towards Omishima island.

Crossing over to Omishima, Ehime Prefecture is the halfway point for the trip. Unfortunately, the blue course only covers the northeast part of Omishima, so you'll quickly find yourself crossing the Omishima Bridge (328m), the shortest bridge on the tour, onto Hakatajima. From there, I made my way to Hakata Beach, a popular local swim spot.



Tatara (1480m)



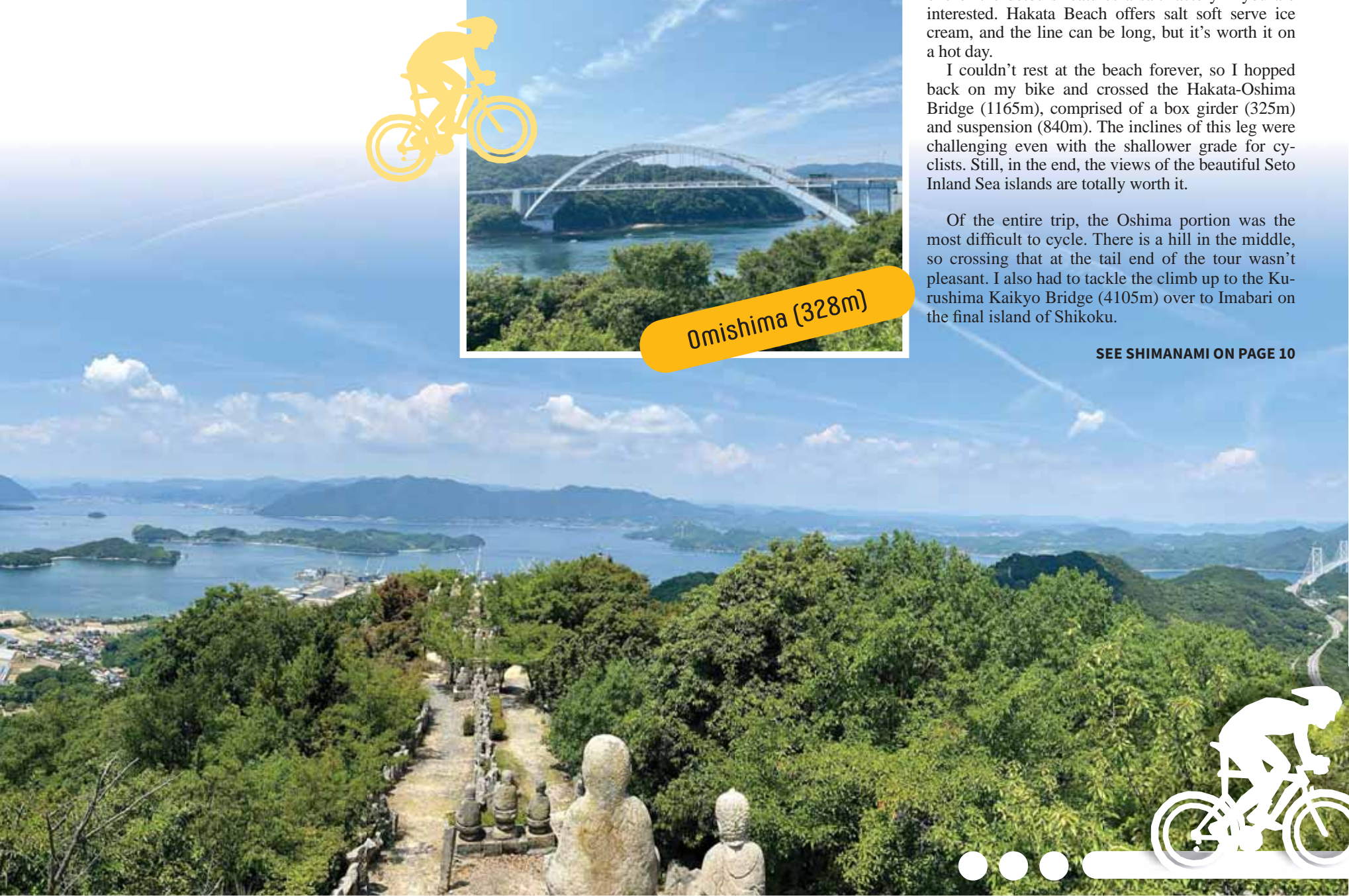
Omishima (328m)

Hakatajima is known for its salt production, and one of the detours features a salt factory if you are interested. Hakata Beach offers salt soft serve ice cream, and the line can be long, but it's worth it on a hot day.

I couldn't rest at the beach forever, so I hopped back on my bike and crossed the Hakata-Oshima Bridge (1165m), comprised of a box girder (325m) and suspension (840m). The inclines of this leg were challenging even with the shallower grade for cyclists. Still, in the end, the views of the beautiful Seto Inland Sea islands are totally worth it.

Of the entire trip, the Oshima portion was the most difficult to cycle. There is a hill in the middle, so crossing that at the tail end of the tour wasn't pleasant. I also had to tackle the climb up to the Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge (4105m) over to Imabari on the final island of Shikoku.

SEE SHIMANAMI ON PAGE 10





Sunset from Juicy Fruits Lodge

# SHIMANAMI: Go out of your comfort zone

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9



Hakata Oshima (1165m)



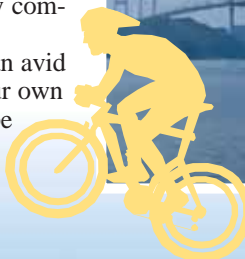
The Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge was completed in 1999 and is the longest suspension bridge in the world. To maintain a shallow incline, the bridge has an impressive corkscrew ramp on the side. You can watch cyclists going in circles down to the bottom from the bridge.

After arriving in Imabari, it was a final push to return the bike at the train station and make my way home. This fantastic trip pushed me out of my comfort zone since I'm not a long-distance cyclist.

It is challenging, but you don't need to be an avid cyclist to enjoy the Shimanami Kaido. Set your own pace and enjoy the ride and the scenery. I hope this goes on your travel list — you won't be disappointed!



Kurushima Kaikyo (4105m)



## Hop on a bike

### More information



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### Transportation

**ONOMICHI -> IMABARI:** There are multiple options from Tokyo. One is to take the Tokaido Shinkansen to Shin-Onomichi (3.5 hours), then the JR Sanyo Line train to Onomichi Station (8 minutes). To return from Imabari, you can ride the JR Yosai Line to Okayama Station (2 hours) and then take the Tokaido Shinkansen to Tokyo (2 hours).

**IMABARI -> ONOMICHI:** One option from Tokyo is to take the Shinkansen to Fukuyama Station (3.5 hours), then hop on a bus to Imabari Eki Mae (1.5 hours). To return from Onomichi, take the JR Sanyo Line train to Shin-Onomichi Station and the Shinkansen to Tokyo

Taeko McFadden is originally from Virginia and is currently a U.S. Navy commander with the Seventh Fleet at Yokosuka Naval Base. McFadden has been stationed in many places around the Pacific including Thailand, Korea, and Hawaii. McFadden said she enjoys traveling and exploring new cultures and hopes to share with other servicemembers the wonders of Japan and inspire them to explore the sights and culture in the country. Follow her on Instagram @TaekoMcFadden



On-ramp to Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge



# Tasty ramen from warm-hearted chef near Hardy Barracks in Tokyo

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

**S**lowly but surely, fall is on its way to Tokyo. The cooler season makes us want to enjoy something warm like rich and tasty ramen.

Ramen is considered Japan's soul food and you'll find that every region of the country has their own take on the delicious bowl of noodles and broth. Many restaurants offer options on the broth base like soy sauce, miso, tonkotsu (pork bone), salt, fish, and more.

In Japan, you have the luxury of sampling a large variety of ramen as you try to find your favorite. And, you'll find ramen joints around every corner. Near Hardy Barracks in Roppongi, Kaotan Ramen

Entotsuya is a great place for a quick and tasty lunch or dinner.

From the outside, Kaotan looks like a worn-down hut reminiscent of a 1950s Japanese house. Inside, the décor isn't any fancier, but where Kaotan lacks in beauty, it makes up for in delicious ramen.

Order from handwritten menu sheets hanging on the walls. I recommend the signature "Kaotan ramen" for 780 yen (about \$5.75). The broth is made from multiple dashi stock, finely chopped fried onion and savory pork rib slices topped with fixings like fresh garden peas, bean sprouts and pickled bamboo shoots.

If you visit during lunch, Kaotan lets you upsize your ramen or add a side of rice to your regular ramen serving free of charge.



Tabelog  
Website



During my lunch-time visit, I enjoyed chatting with the chef Akira Oikawa. Before coming to cook ramen at Kaotan, Oikawa worked as a licensed acupuncturist and moxa-cauterizer. Through our conversation, I learned of Oikawa's attention to detail in his previous work and how he now applies it when crafting delicious ramen.

I enjoyed the conversation and the rich and flavorful ramen bowl Oikawa prepared for me.

If you can't make it to lunch, Kaotan is also open all night until 5 a.m., perfect for those looking for a filling meal after a night in Roppongi.

Don't let the rough exterior and interior of this interesting ramen joint deter you from trying the delicious ramen being served within. Try Kaotan for lunch or a late-night meal!

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

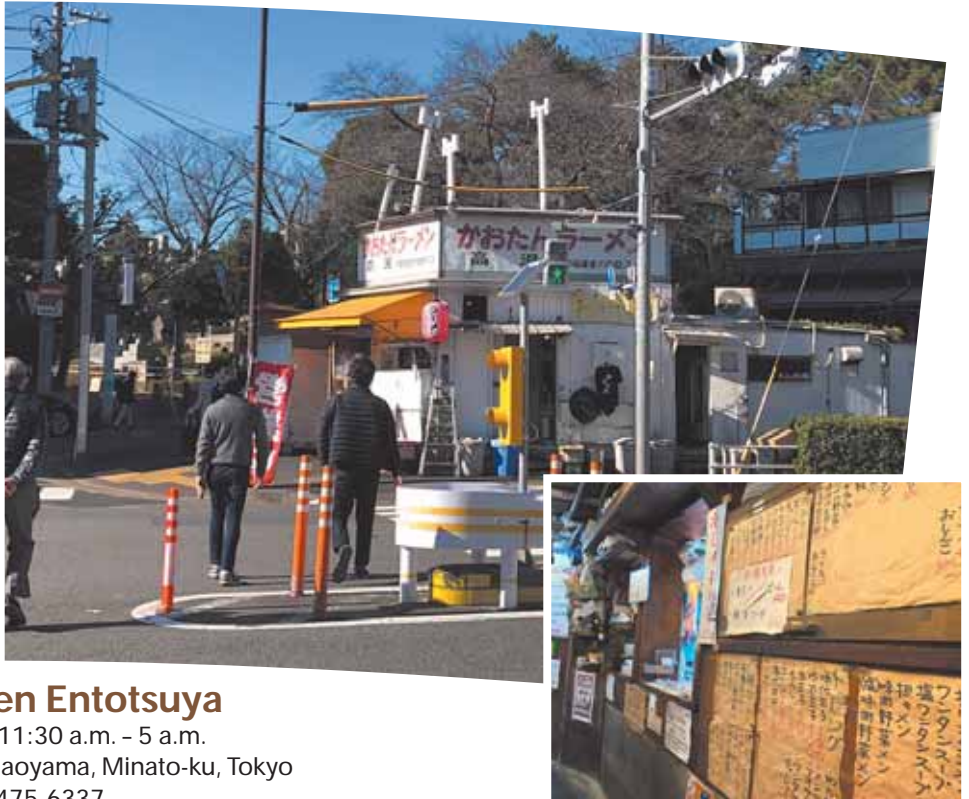


## Kaotan Ramen Entotsuya

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Iwakuni City View Hotel from Iwakuni MCAS



Photos courtesy of Vermicular



# Vermicular's cookware is Japanese craftsmanship spanning generations

BY SARAH B. HODGE,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Searching for a durable, gorgeous piece of cookware that will last for years? Look no further than made-in-Japan Vermicular.

Brothers Kuni and Tomo Hijikata grew up with the employees of their family's cast iron foundry, Aichi Dobby, founded in 1936. Known for its technical expertise, the once-prosperous foundry was deep in debt by the mid-2000s. As heirs to the family business, the Hijikata brothers left their corporate jobs and returned to their grandfather's foundry in Nagoya. They needed to find a way to transition from manufacturing industrial components to a product that would be the best of its kind.

Tomo stumbled upon the superior cooking properties of cast iron pots, and after testing several, the brothers came up with the goal of creating an enameled cast iron pot with a precision seal. Both brothers apprenticed on the foundry floor, Kuni in casting and Tomo in machining. Apprenticing earned the brothers the respect of their workers and resolved differences between the casting and machining sections. The development process stretched to three years and included overcoming several technical challenges, but after 10,000

iterations, the Vermicular oven pot (which takes its name from its proprietary blend of vermicular graphite iron) was born in 2010.

The fledgling brand received widespread media attention in Japan and the brothers won the hearts of the Japanese public with their heartwarming success story. Over the last decade, the company has gone from 15 employees to over 250 and has expanded into additional markets in Asia and United States.

Inspired by the ethos of washoku, Vermicular's oven pots feature self-basting lids, ridged bases, double handles and triple thermal technology. Their precision seal distills the essence of ingredients' natural flavors, textures, and aromas without the need to add extra liquid. Vermicular's signature oven pot has remained unchanged for a decade; CEO Tomo believes that releasing products on an annual basis becomes an end in itself rather than a means to develop better products.

Vermicular's innovative cast iron induction cooker, marketed as the Rice Pot in Japan and the Musui-Kamado overseas, features four temperature settings from lower-temp braising, sous vide, and steam baking to high-temp searing. Optional accessories like magnetic wood trivets and potholders effortlessly take cookware from kitchen to table. Vermicular also makes a lightweight cast iron frying pan and just launched an oven-safe skillet in Japan that will be released in the US this fall.

I put Vermicular's oven pot through its paces making Braised Herb Chicken with Shio Koji and Vermicular's recipe for pull-apart bread and loved the easy cleanup, heat retention and gorgeous color... plus, the unique double handles on base and lid felt super-secure when carrying from oven to table. A beautifully produced English-language cookbook (available separately) features dozens of Japanese and international recipes that make the most of the Musui-Kamado and Oven Pot's cooking abilities.

You'll find Vermicular displays in department stores, Vermicular's flagship stores in Nagoya and Daikanyama, and online at [vermicular.jp/](http://vermicular.jp/) and [vermicular.us](http://vermicular.us) (no FPO shipping available). Happy cooking!



Photo courtesy of Just One Cookbook



BRAISED  
HERB CHICKEN  
WITH SHIO KOJI

Recipe adopted from Namiko Hirasawa Che, Just One

## Ingredients

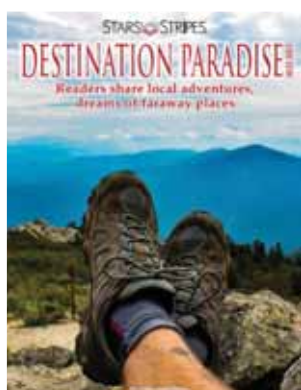
- 1 lb bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (roughly 4 pieces)
- 2 Tbsp shio koji
- 2 cloves garlic (minced/crushed)
- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour (plain flour)
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp dried rosemary (or 1 Tbsp fresh rosemary)
- ½ tsp dried oregano (or 1 Tbsp fresh oregano)
- 1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 carrot (cut into 5 cm thick slices)
- ½ large onion (cut into 4 wedges)
- 1 cup chicken stock/Broth (homemade or store bought)
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 1 lb red potatoes (small)

## Instructions

- 1 Put the chicken, shio koji, and garlic in a large plastic bag and massage ingredients together. Marinate in the bag for 30 minutes up to 2-3 hours. You can also experiment with different herbs.
- 2 Add flour, paprika and herbs to the bag and shake to coat.
- 3 Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Place chicken (skin side down) and remaining marinade into the Dutch oven.
- 4 Cook 3 minutes on each side or until lightly brown.
- 5 Add carrot and onion and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly.
- 6 Add broth, wine, and potatoes and bring to a boil.
- 7 Reduce heat and simmer covered for 40 minutes or until chicken is done and vegetables are tender.

To store:

You can keep the leftovers in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator for 3 days or in the freezer for a month.



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STARS AND STRIPES



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Sep 30th  
-  
Oct 2nd

Photo by Pedro Szekely, CC BY-SA 2.0

## Time

Sep. 30 (Fri) 2.30pm - 8pm  
Oct. 1 (Sat) 10am - 8pm  
Oct. 2 (Sun) 10am - 6pm

## Admission

Free entry

## Czech Festival

Bringing a slice of Europe to Tokyo

The Czech Festival in Tokyo is Japan's largest Czech-based event, and the multi-day affair includes a variety of ways to connect with this charming European country.

There will be Czech products including accessories, character goods, toys, and books available to purchase, traditional Czech food and drinks on offer (including beer, wine, sausages, open sandwiches,

stews, and more), music performances, tourism and culture information, and plenty more.

The event takes place at the Adrift Shimokitazawa event complex, and admission is free of charge. Do note that the event hours for the 2022 festival differ from day to day if you're planning on visiting.

– Kim, Japan travel

## Adrift Shimokitazawa

3 Chome-9-23 Kitazawa, Setagaya City, Tokyo

## Getting there

Adrift Shimokitazawa is located just three minutes on foot from Higashi-Kitazawa station on the Odakyu Odawara Line, or around six minutes on foot from Shimokitazawa Station on the Odakyu Odawara Line and Inokashira Line.



facebook



Oct 8th  
-  
Jan 29th

Photos courtesy of PR Times

## Time

10:00 - 18:00

## Admission

¥2,400

## Avengers Station

A limited-time event at the Kadokawa Culture Museum

Following on from successful stints at the Mori Arts Center Gallery in Tokyo and the Kyocera Museum of Art in Kyoto, the Avengers Station exhibition is making its way to Saitama's Kadokawa Culture Museum this October. The event allows visitors to step into the Marvel Cinematic Universe, with a variety of displays and interactive experiences to check out.

Attendees will be able to explore original

costumes, props, and footage from the films up close, with displays covering the evolution of Iron Man's armor, the inner workings of Bruce Banner's lab, and Black Widow's weapons, among others.

Adult admission to the event is priced at ¥2400, and tickets can be arranged online here (in Japanese).

– Kim, Japan travel

## Kadokawa Culture Museum, Saitama

3 Chome-31-3 Higashitokorozawawada, Tokorozawa, Saitama

## Getting there

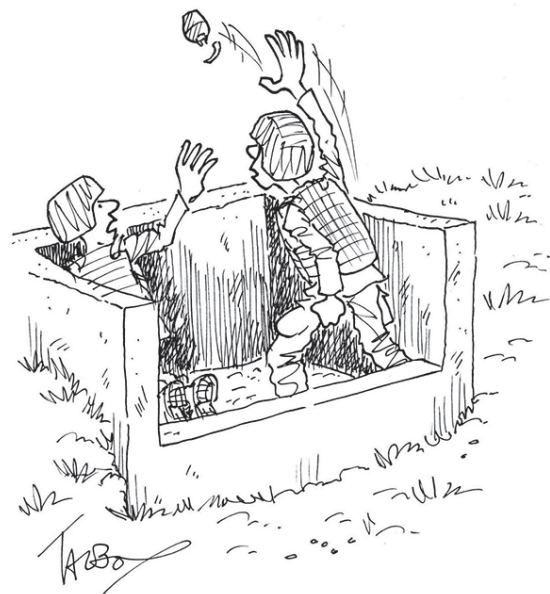
The event takes place at the EJ Anime Museum within the Kadokawa Culture Museum. The venue can be accessed within 10 minutes on foot from JR Higashi-Tokorozawa Station, served by the Musashino Line.

For those who opt to drive, the museum is approximately 8 minutes from the Tokorozawa IC on the Kanetsu Expressway.



Website

## COMICS CORNER



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– Daryl Talbot

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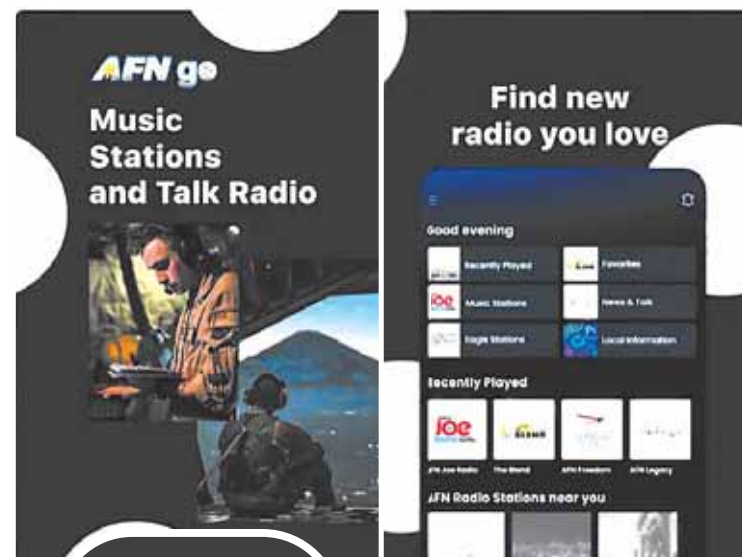
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Map showing location near Hibiya Line, Hirono Station, No.1 Exit, MUFG Bank, Tengenji Crossing, New Sanno Hotel, Arisugawa Park, and National Azabu.



Courtesy photos

[www.afnpacific.net](http://www.afnpacific.net)

# AFN tests new video-on-demand app in the pacific

BY KELLY AGEE,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: September 20, 2022

platform possible for the greatest audience in the world.”

Verizon Media built the streaming service which has been in the works for three years due to AFN's negotiations with more than 40 major program owners to get licensing approval to place their shows on the app, the release states.

“Some of the shows on AFN Now can be viewed no matter where you are, while others are limited to U.S. military installation IP ranges and restricted to on base or on post viewing,” AFN chief of television Karreem Lowe said in the release.

During the app's testing period the AFN team will evaluate the app's functionality and performance on devices including Apple

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iPhones, tablets and Apple TVs; Android phones and tablets; and in-home digital media platforms including Amazon

Fire, Roku and smart TVs with app serviceability.

Service members, Defense Department civilians, and family members in Japan and South Korea are eligible to take part in the test period. Register at [www.afn-pacific.net](http://www.afn-pacific.net) and click on the AFN Now banner at the top of the page. After registering, applicants will receive a webpage with directions.

The new app will be available only to DOD-affiliated audience members outside of the U.S. and its territories. Anyone registering for the service must pass Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System verification before the app will work, according to the release.

[agee.kelly@stripes.com](mailto:agee.kelly@stripes.com)  
Twitter: @KellyA\_Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE — Get your electronic devices ready because American Forces Network is inviting audience members in Japan and South Korea to test its new video-on-demand and live-streaming app starting Sept. 20.

AFN Now is the biggest technological leap for the network since its multichannel, satellite-delivered television services were launched in 1997, according to a news release from the Defense Media Activity.

“It gives us the opportunity to accelerate AFN digitally with content delivery and customer experience while preserving the integrity and history of the AFN brand,” DMA director Hal Pittman said in the release.

AFN Now will deliver AFN television programming to U.S. service members, families and retirees living overseas on devices they use every day, such as smartphones, tablets and computers. The app is free to download and use to watch AFN programming with internet access, according to the release.

Typical AFN programming consists of TV shows popular in the United States, along with professional sports, movies and news programs.

“We're looking for as many people as possible to register, download, and test AFN Now before the worldwide release,” Mike Drumheller, director of the AFN Broadcast Center in Riverside, Calif., said in the release. “We want honest and useful audience feedback on the app's performance to make it the best media

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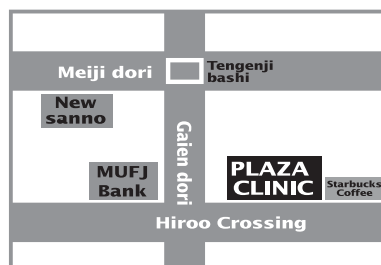
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- Botox for migraine headaches
- Restylane, Juvederm
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# Stripes Sports Trivia

Growing up in the 1990s, LeBron James, like most young hoopsters, idolized Michael Jordan. Now, LBJ finds himself in the conversation of whether or not he's even better than his favorite player. James wore the No. 23 when he played for which high school?

**Answer**

St. Vincent-St. Mary High School

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**Kanji of the week**

犬 Inu/ken (dog)

## Language Lesson

Tomorrow is my day off.

Asu wa yasumi desu.

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## The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke

**ACROSS**

- 1 Reunion group
- 6 Altar spot
- 10 Inking
- 14 Nametag word
- 15 1948 Hitchcock thriller
- 16 "Cheers" regular
- 17 Bug fighter
- 19 Sandpaper grade
- 20 Wordsworth work
- 21 Ivory source
- 22 Red Square figure
- 23 Varnish ingredient
- 25 Came out
- 27 Amazement
- 29 Like a wave
- 31 Group in power
- 33 Conference room events
- 37 Heavy metal
- 38 Rise up
- 40 Hang laxly
- 41 Like ghost towns
- 43 Pioneer product
- 45 Sidewalk material
- 47 Fly catcher
- 48 Put into place
- 51 Storm drain cover
- 53 One of 150 in the Bible
- 54 Starch source
- 56 Breakfast choice
- 59 Pelvic bones
- 60 Formal
- 62 Ancient Brit
- 63 End of a Hemingway title
- 64 Linguist's concern
- 65 Latin "to be"
- 66 Compensates
- 67 Extend, in a way

**DOWN**

- 1 Crack, in a way
- 2 Fallon's predecessor
- 3 Something superheroes often have
- 4 Slug's trail
- 5 Kind of story
- 6 Circa
- 7 Galley gear
- 8 "She's Gotta Have It" director
- 9 European trade org.
- 10 Barren
- 11 "Nothing \_\_\_!"
- 12 "Sesame Street" regular
- 13 Make changes to
- 18 Nomadic
- 22 Fasting period
- 24 Dim \_\_\_
- 26 Pandemonium
- 27 Like the Sahara
- 28 "Wish you \_\_\_ here!"
- 30 Brownish hue
- 32 Protect, in a way
- 34 Oslo native

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**Answers to Previous Crossword:**

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

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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Edited by Margie E. Burke

### HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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