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Yokota family raises funds for son's treatment

BY KELLY AGEE, STARS AND STRIPES

YOKOTA AIR BASE — Sean Pine loves to play video games on his Nintendo Switch and talk with his friends online.

But the 10 year-old has spent the past three months in a hospital bed at Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Medical Center battling stage four neuroblastoma and Wednesday landed safely in San Diego where he was medevacked for further treatment. His mother and father are educators with the Department of Defense Education Activity at Yokota.

Gianna Duarte, 20, Sean's sister, organized a campaign on GoFundMe to defray some of the costs of treatment, food and transportation as the only son out of four children continues his ongoing struggle with cancer. Neuroblastoma is a cancer of the nervous system that primarily affects children age 5 and under, according to the Mayo Clinic website.

"I am hoping to get some help

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:

STARS STRIPES.

for my parents to help ease some of the financial burden so they can get some relief," Gianna wrote on the GoFundMe page,

"Help Sean and our Family."

Since June 10, the campaign has raised \$10,855 of the \$20,000 goal.

Sean was diagnosed at age 2,



Sean's father, Michael Pine, 53, a mathematics specialist and native of San Diego, told Stars and Stripes on June 9.

"It's one of the deadliest childhood cancers," he said. "But the promising thing is, he continues to beat the odds.'

Sean is on his fifth bout of neuroblastoma and his kidneys are failing, his father said. When Japanese doctors told the family

they could do nothing more for Sean, his parents decided to get him to a specialist, Dr. Peter Zage, at Rady Chil-

dren's Hospital in San Diego. Sean's cancer returned in October and since then Japanese and American doctors have been treating him so he can get safely to San Diego during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pines have been going back and forth to Rady Children's Hospital for Sean's treatment.

"For the last three months we've been battling just to get to the point to where we can get him out of the country," Michael Pine

Father and son flew to the U.S. on Tuesday with assistance from the International Health Care Clinic. Because of Sean's condition he must be on an intravenous drip and have a doctor and nurse fly with him.

Each time Sean relapses the family of six spends \$30,000 to \$40,000, after insurance, on treatment, transportation, hotels and food. A shot that helps Sean restore his bone marrow costs the family \$700 a month, his father said.

"So, one of the hardest parts of this has been that it's a family disease," his mother, Kristin Pine-Duarte, 45, a native of San Diego and third grade teacher at Yokota West Elementary School, told Stars and Stripes on June 9. "It impacts everybody. And we have three other girls that we thought about maybe trying to move back to the states, but financially that would devastate us."

The family has also stayed in Japan because Sean has stem cells stored there. When Sean relapses, he receives stem cells to boost his bone marrow count.

Alan Retzlaff, 28, a family friend from Coolup, Australia, donated \$500 to Sean's GoFund-Me campaign, he told Stars and Stripes by Facebook Messenger on June 6.

Retzlaff has known Sean's parents since his first trip to Japan in 2017, he told Stars and Stripes. Retzlaff met the Pine-Duartes during a monthlong trip to Japan in 2017, after which they remained in contact.

"I donated this sum of money on behalf of myself and my family," Retzlaff said. "Michael and Kristin have hearts of gold and deserve all the support they can get."

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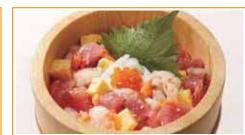


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Free service aims to ease PCS move stress

BY JONATHAN SNYDER, STARS AND STRIPES Published: June 10, 2022

n organization is providing a concierge service for military families during their moves to new duty stations at no cost to them.

Military No Stress PCS, founded in 2021 by Rob Schelle of Tampa, Fla., helps the newcomers find real estate agents, schools, utilities and other services and basic needs. It has expanded into a network of concierges at 87 stateside and 12 overseas bases.

"I worked in the hospitality industry for over 30 years and decided during COVID to take a more active role at home and assist my wife in the real estate world," Schelle, president of the organization based in Valrico, Fla., recently told Stars and Stripes by video chat.

"One of the things I've noticed early on, since we are so close to MacDill Air Force Base, was quite a few of her clients both coming and going were military families," he said.

Sixty-eight real estate agents who volunteer their time make up the nonprofit network.

"Part of the attraction to get Realtors to sign onto this is that we assign them a particular base or area and they are exclusive to it," Schelle said.



The team from Naval Supply Systems Command, Fleet Logistics Center, assists an unaccompanied sailor with his household goods at Yokosuka Naval Base on June 2, 2020. Photo by Brandon Taylor, U.S. Navy

The organization has so far assisted several hundred individuals by connecting them to resources and specialists they need.

"If we are actively involved with finding them a home and doing the research for that, we're looking at about 10 [people] per week," Schelle said.

Military families moving to a new duty station frequently start over in a place where they've never been. Some are in need of child care, a job for a spouse or are incurring moving expenses

not eligible for a government reimbursement.

"What we are doing is taking that load off their shoulders so that they're not wasting their time on Google and doing those things themselves, because they have more important things

to do during this overwhelming pro- **EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:** cess," Schelle said. Almost half of

all military families are "financially stressed" a significantly higher so far covered the organizaproportion than the general tion's expenses, Schelle said, but

population, according to Blue Star Families' most recent Military Family Lifestyle survey.

"There are a ton of concierge programs like ours out there that are available, but almost all of them charge a price," Schelle said. "My goal is to always pro-

vide this service free of charge to the men and women who serve this country."

Donations have

he is hoping to qualify for some grants.

About 600,000 families with a military connection will make a permanent change of station, or PCS, every year, according to the Blue Star Families website.

"We want to help reduce PCS stress by doing PCS research for active-duty families," Erin Lorenz, the Military No Stress PCS program coordinator, told Stars and Stripes by email on May 3.

"Our concierge service basics: they tell us what they're looking for, whether that's information on homes, neighborhoods, schools, commute times, community involvement, local services, etc., and then we do the research and give them our highest recommendations!"

Lorenz, a Navy spouse living in Annandale, Va., said she can find resources or answers to questions fairly quickly and then send a quick text or email response to the military family.

"When they pick up the phone or tap that email, they're just hoping to have some sense of calm come over them whether it's a simple answer to a question or someone pointing them in a direction to a resource that they will need and sometimes it's just affirmation that they are doing the right thing," Schelle said.

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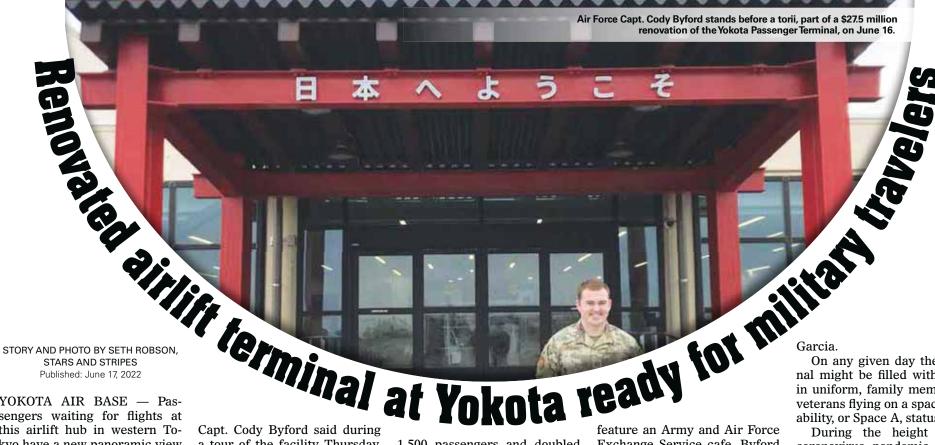








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YOKOTA AIR BASE - Passengers waiting for flights at this airlift hub in western Tokyo have a new panoramic view of warplanes on the flight line thanks to a \$27.5 million terminal renovation.

The Yokota Passenger Terminal, which reopened June 13 after a year-long refurbishment, includes a wall of windows facing a runway where C-130J Super Hercules airlifters, CV-22 Osprey tiltrotors, F-16 Fighting Falcons and various other aircraft take off and land daily.

"The coolest things are the windows up here in front where there used to just be a wall," 730th Air Mobility Squadron logistics and readiness officer Capt. Cody Byford said during a tour of the facility Thursday. "Now we have that perspective for our customers to be able to look out at the flight line."

The windows fill the terminal with natural light that falls on interior walls decorated with pink sakura, or cherry blossoms, red autumn leaves and an illustration of nearby Mount Fuji.

Passengers moving to and from aircraft walk through one of two massive red steel toriisymbolic gates in Japan's Shinto religion — on the runway side of the terminal.

The renovation tripled the terminal's seating capacity to 1,500 passengers and doubled the number of check-in counters from three to six. A new conveyor belt moves bags that before the renovation were handled solely by airmen, Byford

Folding glass doors allow staff to adjust the size of the area where passengers wait after security checks, said Byford, 27, of Round Rock, Texas.

More than 100 workers and 11 subcontracting companies completed the renovation in 186,977 man-hours, the Air Force said in a news release.

The new terminal will also

feature an Army and Air Force Exchange Service cafe, Byford said.

The terminal, in operation since **EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:** 1969, caters to passengers and handles luggage on the Patriot Ex-

press, which flies Boeing 767 jets between air bases in Japan, South Korea and the Seattle.

However, it can handle passengers from any type of aircraft that arrives or departs from Yokota, and it's a way station for passengers going to destinations in the Indo-Pacific region such as Singapore or Diego

On any given day the terminal might be filled with troops in uniform, family members or veterans flying on a space availability, or Space A, status.

During the height of the coronavirus pandemic, Patriot Express missions increased by

300%, with an additional 70,000 Patriot Express passengers traveling through the terminal in 2021

when compared to the previous year, according to the Air Force news release.

During the renovation passengers arriving or leaving Yokota were moved through a prefabricated buildings beside the old terminal.

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BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

or many, Japan's rainy season with its high humidity, high heat, gloomy, wet days, may be one of the worst seasons. But, I like this season because of all time. You'll see many hydrangeas, irises, peonies and lupines bringing vivid colors to counter the drab, overcast weather.

Risokyo Park in Towada City is a short

garden perfect for a rainy day activity. Here 200,000 irises, peonies and 2.000 10,000 lupines flowers will delight you.

In the large garden, there are a lot of rest 40-minute drive from Misawa stations, playground for kids,

along with a spadog-run. cious Why not take a photo of yourself with Instagram friendly "dokodemo doa" or anywhere door, in the Garden of Lupines? Just like Doraemon, the pinkish door sure will take you anywhere you want, or to a land filled with beautiful lupines flowers at least.

Drop by a restaurant Risotei, housed in a traditional old wooden folk house with straw thatched roof, as it offers tasty soba noodles and various drinks.

These flowers in the garden can be enjoyed until end of June. We are in the gloomy season, yes, but it doesn't actually rain every day. So, let's grab our umbrellas and go check out these seasonal beauties in the garden before they're gone!

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



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Rediscovering the charms, uses of Japanese mint

THE JAPAN NEWS-YOMIURI

a-hakka Japanese mint is gaining popularity as a food ingredient and as a fragrant spray for face masks and clothes.

In Soja, Okayama Prefecture, the invigorating scent of tea made from Japanese mint wafts through the air of a local store. The Soja area is thought to have played a leading role in the cultivation of Japanese mint, which began in earnest during the Edo period (1603-1867).

"The scent makes you feel refreshed," said Yukiko Kanamaru, a representative of the Horike Hakka Project. "I can also recommend spraying it onto your face mask."

Kanamaru started the project in 2016 to promote Soja as fountainhead the of Japanese mint cultivation. After obtaining Japanese mint seedlings from cafes k n o w about

Tea made from Japanese mint by the Horike Hakka Project. Photos by Japan News-Yomiuri

local residents and an agricultural high school, she grew them in the garden of an old house. The plant is used to make mint tea and is used in

dishes at local "I want people to

> Yukiko Kanamaru of Soja, Okayama Prefecture, poses with products that use Japanese mint.

the connection between Soja and Japanese mint and feel energized by its fragrance," Kanamaru said.

Japanese mint contains more menthol than peppermint or spearmint and has a fresher aroma. In ancient times, it was used to treat stomach ailments. Today, it is often found in bath salts, confectionery - such as candy and gum - and other products.

Mint, which is a type of herb, is believed to have been brought to Japan from China. Its cultivation spread to such prefectures as Okayama, Hiroshima, Niigata and Hokkaido. In

1938, 70% of the world's mint oil produced in Kitami, Hokkaido. However,

domestic production went into decline with the emergence of less-expensive foreign products and synthetic goods following the end of World War II.

In recent years, the cultivation of Japanese mint has been touted as a way to revitalize communities in former mintproduction regions.

"The scent of mint is familiar in Japan as a poultice material," said Takanobu Toki, who researches Soja's local history. "It's becoming more popular now, likely because it's easy to grow and has gained acceptance as an aromatic plant among young people.'

In the Takadama area of Tendo, Yamagata Prefecture, mint has been cultivated in community halls and planted along sidewalks since 2017. Every

year, as a part of the school curriculum, local elementary school students learn about the region's mint-related history and make school lunch recipes that include the plant.

Takinoue in Hokkaido produces 95% of the nation's Japanese mint for commercial use. Here, a group of local producers formed the Wa-Hakka Labo (Japanese mint lab), which promotes "the best mint in Japan" through such activities as Japanese mint production, mint oil manufacturing and developing products such as mist spray.

Kitami Hakka Tsusho, a manufacturer of mint products in Kitami - once a major mint-production base - collaborates with the Kitami Institute of Technology to expand the cultivation of Japanese mint and the production of mint oil. Last summer, the company sold chocolate mint mochi at convenience stores.

There have also been efforts to protect scenic landscapes by planting Japanese mint on abandoned farmland. Moss Yamagata, a manufacturer and retailer of greening materials in Yamagata, grows the herb on five abandoned plots in the city that total about 2,000 square meters.

Masayuki Yamamoto, president of Moss Yamagata, said: "Cultivating Japanese mint can lead to the utilization of farmland and the conservation of satochi-satoyama [areas such as fields, rice paddies and forests near populated areas, which are prized for their environmental and ecological value]."



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f you are planning on traveling to Japan during July, August, or September, there are 18 things about

Here, get tips on how to cope with the heat, what to do in Japan in summer, and fun tips about Tokyo in

"Summer in Japan" that you need to know.

summer! Let's dive right in.

Visiting Tokyo in summer? Make sure

you know when to plan your travels!

Summer kicks off with tsuyu, Japan's rainy season, which lasts for most of June before paving the way for the two hottest months of the year.

Strictly speaking, summer is the three months of June, July, and August, but temporally it kicks off around mid-May, lasting through to mid-September.

If the time you come to Japan during the course of this window, you'll be able to ditch the jackets and overcoats and unleash your new summer wardrobes.

While summer invariably sees lots of tourists enter Japan, it doesn't necessarily coincide with peak season. The majority of inbound tourists flock to Japan during the spring cherry blossom season and autumn foliage season, so you may be able to capitalize on lower accommodation rates and a higher number of vacancies!



You don't need me to tell you, but here it is anyway, be sure to bring sun cream (or buy a Japanese sunscreen product when you arrive).

In summer, the skies of Japan can get a little muggy but, if you're out and about in the middle of a 37°C day, you will absolutely need it.

In many respects packing for summer in Japan is far easier than it is for other seasons. Unless you're planning on going to Hokkaido in summer or climbing Mount Fuji or another mountain, there's a very slim chance that you'll need any warm clothing.

However, a light waterproof jacket would certainly be worth your while because when it rains in the Japanese summer, it really pours.

Apart from that, your Japan pack list for summer should include:

- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Sunglasses ☐ Sandals
- ☐ Bandanna or headscarf
- ☐ Small hand towel
- ☐ Summer hat
- ☐ Wickable short-sleeved, lightweight hiking shirts
- Light shoes

The important thing will be good, comfortable footwear that breathes. Odds are you will be doing much more walking in Japan than you do normally (likely around 8-11km or 5-7 miles or more), so a solid pair of walking shoes or sneakers that will support you along the way - and release some sweat at the same time - is important.

The last idea could be to pack a portable electric fan. Of course, you can buy one of the Japanese hand fans—which also double up as cool souvenirs—but their utility really pales in comparison to their electric and battery-powered counterparts.



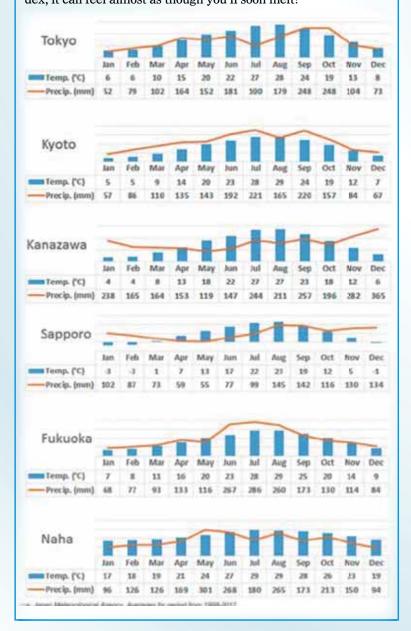
10 amazing Japanese summer foods you didn't know existed!

What's Japan like in summer? Hottest days, temperature, and humidity

In Japan, the days on which the temperature climbs above 30°C/86°F are called manatsubi ("midsummer days"), and days with temperatures over 35°C/95°F are called m shobi ("sweltering days").

According to the data for 2017 by the Japan Meteorological Agency, Tokyo's average temperature is 27.3° C/81.1°F in July, and 26.4° C/79.5°F in August. Furthermore, there are 42 "midsummer days" in these two months and two "sweltering days."

The factor that really makes Tokyo's heat almost unbearable is the humidity, however. In 2017, the average humidity was 78% in July and 83% in August. You'll also find numbers like these in tropical areas, such as Thailand's Bangkok. And with the heat index, it can feel almost as though you'll soon melt!





Tall buildings seem to rise to the cities such as Tokyo, and the groncrete. That contributes to high

Meanwhile, Japan is thorougings of all sorts, so going inside mappine. The air conditioning dries in danger of catching a summer

Because of that, you should can off your sweat and walk in the st replacing the salts and minerals and sports drinks. Protect yourse



Here's yet another weather p summers: "Guerilla rainstorms unpredictable downpours that b small, local area.

These rainstorms are known to flooding and landslides, as river folding umbrella will protect you rain, it is almost useless against amount of water is just too much

Instead, flee indoors as soon as best shop, café, or someplace si sea, you might find yourself strar on both the clouds and the water quickly move away from bodies



Summer in Japan also mean a tropical cyclone that develops (called the Northwestern Pacific gale, and heavy rain as it moves

Every year, there are about them developing between July a ushu are most often hit by typh nese mainland, but Tokyo and of share of cyclones.

If there is a typhoon, its path, covered by the weather forecast. cross the path of one while you're

Typhoons often bring heavy r it hits. Cancel any outdoor activities the beach, or anything or port may also be delayed or stop be canceled.

) KNOW ABOUT IS SUMMER



How to survive Japan in summer: Hot and humid nights

While few people are strangers to intense summer heat, a characteristic of Tokyo is that it barely cools down after the sun has set, which is called nettaiya ("tropical night").

Nights in which the temperatures do not fall below 25°C/77°F earn that notorious title. While this phenomenon is most prominent in Japan's southwest, the concrete jungle of Tokyo and its radiating asphalt and concrete has their own share of hot, humid nights.

It is said that Tokyo and other major cities around the country experienced between 27 and 28 of these tropical nights per year. People who aren't used to a climate like that will likely find themselves having issues sleeping – and keeping on the air conditioning all night isn't great for your health, either.

Remedies come in the form of cooling sprays and sheets commonly found at drug stores, and fans set to weak and rotating also help fight the heat.

storms – Idden showers!

elf against heatstroke!

henomenon typical for Japanese
." It describes sudden, almost ring a large amount of rain to a

g Japan in summer, beware

e sky as dense as a forest in large

round is covered in asphalt and

h temperatures at ground level.

hly air-conditioned inside build-

ight send down a chill down your

your sweat and suddenly, you're

rry a small towel with you to wipe

nade while staying hydrated and

your body sweats out with water

cause quite a bit of damage with rs rapidly rise. While carrying a u from any other kind of sudden guerilla rainstorms because the to handle.

s the downpour starts, to the next milar. If you're at a river or the ided on a sandbank – keep an eye level. If there's any sign of rain, of water.

apan is typhoon season!

s typhoon season. A typhoon is in the northwest Pacific Ocean Basin) and brings strong wind, northward.

40 such typhoons, with most of nd September. Okinawa and Kyoons that do approach the Japa-Osaka also experience their fair

strength, and so on is extensively Should you be unlucky enough to in Japan, do avoid going outside. ain and strong wind even before ities such as mountain climbing, n or close to a river. Public transped entirely and air service may



ď

The strange sights of summer in Tokyo

As you explore Tokyo during the summertime, there's one particular thing that you will likely raise an eyebrow at: Japanese people in suits. It's a mystery to many why and how office workers walk around on scorching days with jacket, shirt, and tie – they're clearly sweating!

This is somewhat of a modern tradition handed down from worker to worker because of the strong conception of "office = suit & tie." In recent years, a style called "Cool Biz" has become prominent as an effort to save energy, allowing people to leave the tie at home and wear short-sleeved shirts. Nonetheless, you'll still spot a good deal of proper suits on the hot streets.

Women are part of this as well, even if a little different. Many Japanese women combine their short-sleeved shirts with arm covers all the way down to their wrists and walk under a parasol. "Fair skin" is a rather ancient beauty standard in Japan, so people will go to great lengths to prevent sunburn and shield their skin from UV rays.

That's also why makeup and foundation with UV protection are so popular. Even at the pool or beach, some people are wearing long sleeves – it's a sight that often puzzles tourists.



9

Summer in Japan is hot! Be sure to stay hydrated!

This tip may seem kind of obvious, but it's worth remembering. Really. The humidity can be unbearably stifling when it's at its worst, so always be sure to carry some water on you. This is most important when you're out exploring the great outdoors.

Thankfully, Japan is covered with vending machines, so you're never too far from a thirst quencher in the cities. But if you do veer off the beaten path, be sure to bring a couple of bottles of water with you!

Something that Japan does lack somewhat, however, is the availability of taps for water bottles. If you bring your own water bottle (or water pack), you would be able to fill up at your hotel-but you might not find cold water taps in public.



10

Summer relaxation, the traditional way! Japanese summer festivals

Of course, Japanese people had to deal with summer heat long before air-conditioning was a thing, and there are numerous traditional customs around staying cool.

A prominent example is the folding fan, still used to cool and refresh oneself nowadays. This traditional tool isn't only handy, it also comes in various colors and designs and thus makes for a wonderful memento of your trip!

At Japanese summer fireworks, a lot of people wear yukata, a cotton garment originally worn right after a bath. Over time, people started wearing it to summer events and now it is the iconic traditional outfit for fireworks and festivals.

A lot of shops around sightseeing spots or hot springs offer yukata rental, allowing you to experience the beautiful "light kimono" for yourself.

If you hear a sweet tinkling and jingling as you walk along Tokyo's summer streets, you've come across another seasonal tradition. The furin is Japan's wind chime. The chime has provided the "soundtrack" to Japan's summer for centuries.

The Japanese of old also knew how to cool the air without electricity. People would pour water in front of their houses and on the cobblestone streets in the mornings and evenings. That custom is called uchimizu and done to cool the area and to keep down the dust.

And do you know the mosquito coil, the spiral-shaped, insect-repelling incense? That was invented in Japan, and the distinctive shape and aroma of the handy goodie are closely tied to the hot summer months.



11

Delicious summer food – Stamina with cold noodles and eel!

When it comes to Japanese summer food, one of the most iconic dishes is somen. This term refers to ultra-thin noodles made from wheat flour which are enjoyed with a cold, soy sauce-based sauce. Ingredients such as leek, mioga (Japanese ginger), or white sesame are added as desired.

An extra-fun way to eat this cool dish is called nagashi-s men or "flowing noodles." That name is rather literal, as the noodles literally flow down a bamboo slide, and you have to catch them with your chopsticks.

Zaru-soba and zaru-udon provide a similar cool noodle experience and are equally popular summer dishes. Hiyashi-ch ka also falls in that category, referring to a dish of ramen noodles with cold broth, cucumber, ham, and fried egg. The slightly sour sauce makes for a refreshing taste!

Then there' a category called "stamina cuisine," dishes made to charge your battery and fight against summer sluggishness. Unadon or eel bowl is a famous example, tickling your tongue with grilled eel in a thick, savory sauce on top of rice. Specialty restaurants serve it throughout the year, while others feature una-don as a summer-only dish.

Of course, Japanese classics such as sushi and sashimi are also available throughout the summer. You can also find a variety of outdoor barbecues, beer gardens, and terrace seating as well!



12

Eat summer sweets!

Summer sees ice cream, shaved ice, fruit parfaits and countless other chilled and frozen sweet treats decorating the glass-panelled counters of stores, bakeries, patisseries, gelaterias and confectioners all across the land of the rising (and baking) sun.

Each prefecture will have its own specialities and, with such a spectrum of colors on display, the selection of desserts is as eyecatching as it is mouth-watering. Be sure to give a try!

Photos Courtesy of LIVE JAPAN



Climbing Mount Fuji for beginners



What to do if there's a typhoon



Japanese fireworks! (History/tips/dates)

SUMMER: Sizzling fun tips for all!



How to make the most out of the heat!

Tokyo's summer may be hot, but it also brings its own selection of fun activities! Great spots to find such activities are the Okutama/Ome area (about 90 minutes by train from Shinjuku Station) and its Tama River in west Tokyo, as well as the Chichibu-Nagatoro area (2 hours by train from Ikebukuro Station) in northwest Saitama. There, exciting kayaking and river rafting await to keep you cool with plenty of fun and adrenaline!

In Japan, bathing in the ocean is also always an option, alongside savoring seafood cuisine at the Izu Peninsula spanning Kanagawa and Shizuoka Prefectures. Chiba's Boso Peninsula also beckons with beaches and delightful food!

Besides that, Mount Fuji's climbing season starts in July until early September. For the extra adventurous people, conquering the peak of Japan's most famous mountain is a stunning 2-day activity.

- •Okutama/Ome area: about 90 minutes from Shinjuku Station to Mitake Station via JR Chuo Line/ Ome Line.
- Chichibu/Nagatoro area: about 60 minutes from Ikebukuro Station to Seibu Chichibu Station via Seibu Ikebukuro Line. Then a 10-minute ride from Ohanabatake Station (accessible via foot from Seibu Chichibu Station) on the Chichibu Railway.
- Izu Peninsula: about 35 minutes from Tokyo Station to Atami Station via the Tokaido Shinkansen, then another 50 minutes via Kodama (train).
- ·Boso Peninsula: about 1 hour 30 minutes from Shinjuku Station to Kisarazu Station via JR Chuo-Sobu Line or Uchibo Line, then another 3 hours to Tateyama Station.
- •Mount Fuji: about 2 to 2 hours 30 minutes from Shinjuku Station to Fujisan Station via Fujikyuko (train service).



14

Perfect summer day trip spots around Tokyo!

Despite all efforts and activities, you might be overcome with the urge to just flee from Tokyo's crushing summer heat.

Luckily, there are plenty of beautiful spots around the capital that only take between 2 and 3 hours to reach! One of the most prominent examples is Karuizawa, a resort area in Nagano Prefecture. The average temperature in July and August is around 20°C/68°F, reaching about 24 to 26°C/72 to 79°F at max. Compared to Tokyo, it's a refreshing summer paradise!

Kiyosato or the Fuji Five Lakes in Yamanashi Prefecture are also great examples of summer escapes for Tokyoites, as are the Nasu Highlands in Tochigi Prefecture.

- · Karuizawa: about 1 hour from Tokyo Station to Karuizawa Station via JR Hokuriku Shinkansen.
- · Kiyosato: about 3 hours from Tokyo Station to Karuizawa Station via JR Hokuriku Shinkansen, Koumi Line.
- Fuji Five Lakes: about 2 to 2 hours 30 minutes from Shinjuku Station to Kawaguchiko Station via Fujikyuko (train service).
- ·Nasu Highlands: about 1 hour 10 minutes from Tokyo Station to Nasushiobara Station via JR Hokuriku Shinkansen.



15

Summer in Japan: Best time of year to climb mount fuji!

In many of Japan's rural areas, the summer season ushers in a slew of new activities. First and foremost, it is the peak climbing season for Mount Fuji. Though beware, this means that it will be considerably busier on weekends and public holidays!

There are several different routes to the summit, and climbers make the 3,776m journey up the mountain at all times of the day. A popular option is to climb Fuji overnight so you can watch the sun rise from the peak. From personal experience I can tell you it's certainly worth the grind.

Of course, you may need to bring some extra warm and waterproof clothing with you to mitigate against any potential storms or typhoons. The weather up there can be pretty erratic in the summer months.



16

Surf's up:

Japan is a great country for those who love the outdoors. Unknown to some, the options for outdoor activities go well beyond

nearly 30,000km. Along the said coastline, a host of beaches provide awesome surf conditions, particularly on a breezy summer day.

While most of the coastal prefectures will offer the ability to surf in some capacity, a few seem to be the pick of the bunch. Chi-

the many hiking trails, scenic walking routes, and powdery ski resorts. As an island nation, Japan has a pretty vast coastline of

surf in some capacity, a few seem to be the pick of the bunch. Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo's laid-back neighbor, has a huge selection of top-rated beaches with local water sports aficionados.

Japan's isolated prefecture, Okinawa, which sits idly in the East China Sea, is another great location to hit the waves. And coastal areas of Tokushima in Shikoku are said to play host to the beaches that offer the nation's best surf conditions!



17

Savor Japan's many summer events!

There are a plethora of fun, unique, and exciting events throughout Japan's summer that'll make you forget about the heat!

Prominent examples are Art Aquarium, Asakusa Samba Carnival, and the Sumidagawa Fireworks, but there is much and more to discover all around Tokyo and its surroundings!

Big and small, traditional and modern – put on your yukata and join the Obon Dance or the local Tanabata Festival!



18

Check out the summer festivals!

Festivals are an integral part of every season in Japan, but in summer it is the season of the firework show.

Hanabi "fireworks" shows are held all over Japan throughout July and August especially. The pyrotechnics and explosive choreography involved in Japanese firework festivals are of an unparalleled level anywhere else on the planet. They are truly breathtaking.

One caveat that's worth noting, however, is that their appeal doesn't go unnoticed, so they tend to be outrageously busy. If you want to go to one of the big firework festivals, make sure you get down early to secure a spot and bring whatever provisions you feel you might need—beer, water, food, chopsticks, etc.

Two of the big summer festivals are Tanabata (on July 7th around Tokyo; August 6-8 in Sendai) and Nebuta, from August 2-7.

Tanabata is a festival that's based on an old romantic tale from Japanese folklore, celebrating the concept of star-crossed lovers. Obon is held during the vacation period in mid-August, honoring those who have passed away.

The Aomori Nebuta Festival features huge floats called "Nebuta" made in the likeness of warrior dolls and based on traditional Japanese mythology; it's one of northeast Japan's biggest festivals.

Not only are the fireworks on display in all their booming glory at these festivals, but the locals will also dress up in traditional yukata summer kimono, lending an authentic vibe to the atmosphere.

Japan in summer: Hot and humid but endless fun!

Japan is infamous for its hot, humid summer during which even nighttime does not ease the heat. However, if you know how to deal with the weather, you won't just be able to survive a Japanese summer like a boss but also make the most out of it!

Always keep a bottle of water with you and head out to the beach, join a traditional festival, and indulge in delectable dishes for wonderful Japanese summer memories!



STORY AND PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE, STARS AND STRIPE Published: June 16, 2022

hings have gotten strange in Ikebukuro, where the Parco department store has opened a "Stranger Things" Official Goods Pop-Up store.

Customers can buy merchandise based on the hit 1980sthemed horror/sci-fi show on Netflix, but hurry up because the store disappears July 14.

The store is located on Parco's sixth floor, which is right next to the train station in the Ikebukuro ward. The shop

opened June 2, just in time for the show's fourth season, which started May 27.

Outside the store is a neat photo opportunity for "Stranger Things" super fans. There is a display of all four seasons

posters and adult onesies of Eleven, the main character who exhibits superhuman powers,

and a Demogorgon, the show's 1,900 yen or \$14.16. Other items predatory killer creatures and antagonists.

www.stripes.com

The available merchandise

comes from seasons one through three. Season four items will be released June 30 for fan favorites like Dungeons and Dragons master and heavy metal enthusiast Eddie Munson.

Customers can buy Funko

Pops of their favorite characters, including Hooper, Eleven, Will, Billy, Lucas and Erica, for

include posters, mugs, T-shirts, pens and bookmarks.

A neat collector's item for

DIRECTIONS: Ikebukuro Parco Main Building 6F PGS, threeminute walking distance from **Ikebukuro Station**

TIMES: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily **FOOD:** Plenty of restaurants available in the surrounding area and in the Parco building

INFORMATION: https://store.pgs. ne.jp/strangerthings

those willing to spend big bucks is a collectible figurine of a terrifying Demogorgon for 36,300

yen or \$270.80. The 16-inch figurine looks very lifelike and has 24 movable points and two replaceable heads.

The store is selling out of items fast but is restocked weekly, according to the store's official website. You may order items from the store's website, which has an even wider variety of merchandise, including rubber duckies based on the characters Eleven, Steve and a Demogorgon.

Hurry up before the gate closes to the Upside Down!

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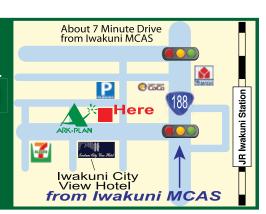
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Welcome to Iwakuni

English information available







STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES JAPAN

hao fan (Chinese fried rice) is loved around the world.

Commonly called "chahan" or "chaahan", this Chinese food has many fans in Japan as well.

It is an indispensable menu item for many Chinese restaurants in Japan. At ramen joints, chahan is commonly considered a perfect side to the noodles along with gyoza.

TV shows and magazines in Japan often feature unique fried rice recipes to tickle the appetite of the chahan enthusiasts. According to Kocho, a restaurant in Yokohama Chinatown, the oldest documented case of cho fan is fried rice cooked with eggs, which Chancellor Yang Su of Sui dynasty (581-618) loved.

This chao fan was called "Yang Zhou Dan (egg) chao fan", which later was changed to "gomoku chahan" in Japan. According to the restaurant, it was brought to Japan sometime between the 7th and 9th centuries. A document of Heian era (794 – 1185) indicated that this fried rice was meant to be cooked with sesame oil.

As chao fan spread across the globe, it led to recipes such as "pilaf", "paella", and "jambalaya." In Japan, various adaptations of chahan such as "curry chahan," "tomato chahan" and "kimuchi chahan" were introduced.

Because it's relatively easy to cook, many Japanese make chahan for lunch or dinner. During the pandemic, the food drew even more attention among those who tried their hands at cooking at

It was for that very reason that I tried cooking it myself. Although I don't dislike chahan, it is not on the top of my list when it comes to what I would eat at Chinese restaurants. Still, after I saw chahan featured so many times on TV, I could not resist the desire to make it on my own.

Luckily, there are a variety of recipes now shared on the web. I spent some time searching for something simple enough for a beginner like me.

The one I picked is probably one of the easiest you can find. This recipe feature a little trick: mix rice, beaten egg, and mayonnaise before frying them in a pan. This way, you can easily mix the ingredients and let the eggs and mayonnaise coat each grain of rice.

To add some flavor, I also mixed them with pickled leaf mustard, which gave a nice accent. If you are into spicy food, this is one ingredient I would recommend.

Chao fan/Chahan can be cooked with so many different ingredients. Give it a try yourself, and find your favorite chahan.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

Ingredients for two

- Steamed rice (200g x 2)
- Egg (2)
- Mayonnaise (15cc)
- Chinese stock powder (5cc)
- Soy sauce (5cc)
- Pickled leaf mustard

(as much as you want. I added 70g.)

- Green onion (as much as you want)
- Salt and pepper (appropriate amount)





Recipe



Watch Video!

- 1. Mix steamed rice, egg, mayonnaise, and Chinese stock powder in a bowl.
- 2. Once each grain of rice is well covered with the egg and mayonnaise, add soy sauce and further mix the ingredients.



- 3. Spread the mixture in a frying pan, and gradually fry it over medium heat.
- 4. Shake the pan occasionally and see if each grain of rice is dry or wet enough to your liking. (In Japan, it is often preferred that rice is dry enough not to stick to each other. This state is often called "para para.")



- 5. Add pickled leaf mustard and further mix the ingredients.
- 6. Add minced green onion and mix. Add salt and pepper to perfect the flavor. (For reference, I fried the mixture for 15 minutes in total.)



7. Serve the food in a rice bowl and leave it for 1 minute. Cover the bowl with a plate. Flip it upside down and take the bowl off. You will get a small dome of chahan like the one served up at Chinese restaurants.



GSA in Japan

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Check Out GSA's Japan Catalog!



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some tum yum.

The space is trendy,

almost aggressively so,

and I felt stuffy in the

blazer and skirt I was

wearing for the office

when I stopped by on a

causal café by day and

a bar by night and sells

the vibrant art from

various local artists on

display. The pieces were

going for 75,000 yen

(\$580), on average, but

don't worry, the Japanese

and Thai style curries are

I ordered a shrimp curry set

for 1100 yen (\$8.50), which in-

cluded a salad and yogurt dress-

ing, unlimited rice, and potato

the server just smiled and said,

I asked for medium heat, but

However, I didn't find the

curry too spicy; it was fragrant

more affordable.

biryani.

"hot only."

Igao operates as a

Tuesday afternoon.

HOURS: Monday-Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. lunch, bar Monday-Saturday 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.

ADDRESS: 1-2 Hiroo, Shibuya City, Tokyo **CONTACT:** 0357933778 igaolunch@gmail.com

WEBSITE:

https://www. igao.fun

https://www.

facebook.com/ oriental.diner. igao

WEBSITE

FACEBOOK

and had a pleasant fennel taste as

Other curry sets offered include keema and a rotating daily option, which was sold out

already by the time I arrived

which is Japanese only, shifts from sets to izakaya-style bar

The space is airy and, if you can imagine it, the vibes are that of a miniature, sterilized, familyfriendly lunch hour Warhol Factory. In addition to the gallery of art for sale, the café features manga-inspired posters, colorful

and in local parks representing a kind of curry Coachella, including the first outdoor event since pre-pandemic times May 14 and 15 in Okutama in collaboration with the events company 99flags. You can also rent the space for private parties, and artists can apply to exhibit and sell works in the café.

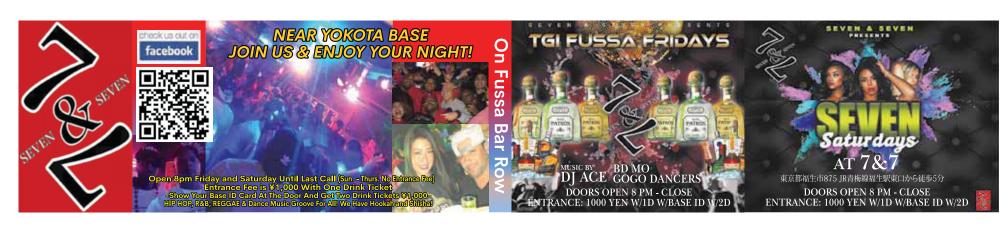
Igao accepts credit card payment for delivery orders, but instore is cash only.

Igao is open for lunch Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the bar is open Monday through Saturday from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. but can vary with events.

Igao updates its Facebook more often than its website for event information, so check there if interested.

If you have an appetite for pop culture after looking at pop art at the café, Igao is located only a few doors down from a mostly Western comic book shop called Homecoming.

earl.erica@stripes.com Twitter: @ThisEarlGirl







Cajun-style restaurant situated conveniently near a Hiroshima train station is a surprising piece of Louisiana in the heart of Japan.

Gator's Cajun Kitchen, on the second floor of a building just around the corner from Miyajimaguchi Station, serves up hearty portions of gumbo, jambalaya, po-boys and alligator.

Owner and chef Ryan Tanaka, born and raised in California, opened the restaurant in 2016 after a friend from Louisiana

recommended he consider Cajunstyle cuisine.

Americans will feel right at home at Gator's, which displays an Ameri-

can flag and New Orleans décor and provides English menus for

For an appetizer I ordered

the gator bites, available fried or sautéed chunks of alligator tail for 1,600 yen (about \$12.25).

For an entrée, I

had the seafood gumbo for 1,100 yen, which included a good with an assortment of American hot sauces available for added heat.

Alcoholic drinks and select appetizers are discounted during happy hour from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

I recommend the house sweet tea for 350 yen, which includes free refills.

If you feel adventurous, Gator's for a limited time offers an alligator claw dinner starting at 2,100 yen. The upper part of the claw is breaded and fried; the bottom portion I found to be more decorative than edible. If the claw dinner grabs your attention, call ahead to order because preparation takes about 40 minutes.

The restaurant is open for lunch 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and for dinner 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Seating is limited, so weekend reservations are advised. Paid parking is available nearby.

snyder.jonathan@stripes.com Twitter: @Jon_E_Snyder

Miyajimaguchi Hatsukaichi City, Hiroshima Prefecture **DIRECTIONS:** From the main gate, turn right and proceed to Route 2 toward Hiroshima; drive time is about 40 minutes to Miyajimaguchi.

HOURS: Open for lunch 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and for dinner 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday. Closed on

PRICES: Appetizers range from about \$2.40 to about \$8; main dishes will cost about \$7 to about \$16.

DRESS: Casual

INFORMATION: gatorscajunkitchen. jimdofree.com





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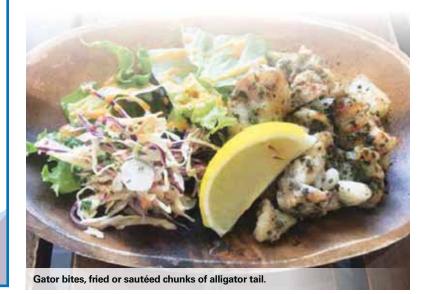
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In 1986, Argentina edged out West Germany, 3-2, to win the World Cup in front of more than 100,000 fans in Mexico City. It's the last time Argentina won the Cup and it's most known for Argentina's quarterfinal match with England, which featured the "Hand of God Goal." Who scored this famous goal?

Answer

Diego Maradona



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KNOW?

ne of Japan's World Heritage sites, Mount Fuji is actually an active volcano. While it repeatedly has small-scale eruptions, those of the large scale have occurred most recently in 864 and 1707. Some volcanologists say this symbol of Japan may erupt sometime soon. So, if you're planning to climb the 12,388-foot mountain this summer, you better sleep on it and maybe try to avoid the day it erupts.

Kanji of the week



Language Lesson

Why?

Naze?

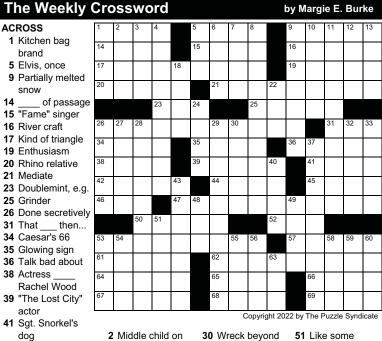


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33 Sand bar

32 Jetsons' dog

40 Fit together

43 Overlook's

offering

often

49 Till stack

A S I A T E S T

48 Holiday entree.

37 Scented splash

dog 42 Gymnastic

- apparatus
- 44 Overfill
- 45 Hospital fluids
- 46 Hobby shop buy
- 47 Fried foods are hiah in it
- 50 Gather bit by bit
- 52 Chop down
- 53 Knight's garb 57 Academy in
- Maryland
- 61 "Stormy Weather" singer
- 62 Symbol of biblical wrath
- 64 Church leader
- 65 Green shade 66 Sicilian volcano
- 67 Like an untended
- garden 68 "NFL Live"
- carrier 69 Coral formation
- **DOWN**
- 1 Sandpaper

- 2 Middle child on "The Simpsons"
- 3 Perched on 4 Burke sitcom,
- Women"
- 5 Bar stock
- 6 "Melting Watch" artist
- 7 "Working Girl"
- character Trask 8 Like some
- changes
- 9 Color in a
- Hawthorne title 10 Cocoon contents
- 11 Submerged
- 12 Very shortly
- 13 and now
- 18 Caked deposit 22 Long, long time
- 24 Base or case closer
- 26 Counter worker
- 27 One more than
- 34-across 28 On the cutting
- edge
- 29 Like some temperatures
- S I D E S S P A M K O A L A T O N E A C C I D E N T A L P H E N O L A N A C O N D A A K I N L I T E R S E A T R E C U R R E F E C T O R Y MACERATE

L A W R E N C E C L I M B S A S I A C O N F E S S I O N

ENDONTUNA

Answers to Previous Crossword:

jackets

53 Tobacco wad

54 Place for an ace

55 Bearded flower

56 Walk unevenly

58 Go to the polls

59 "Green Gables"

63 Restroom sign

airl 60 Plant part

SUDOKU Edited by Margie E. Burke **HOW TO SOLVE:** 4 5 1 Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9: and

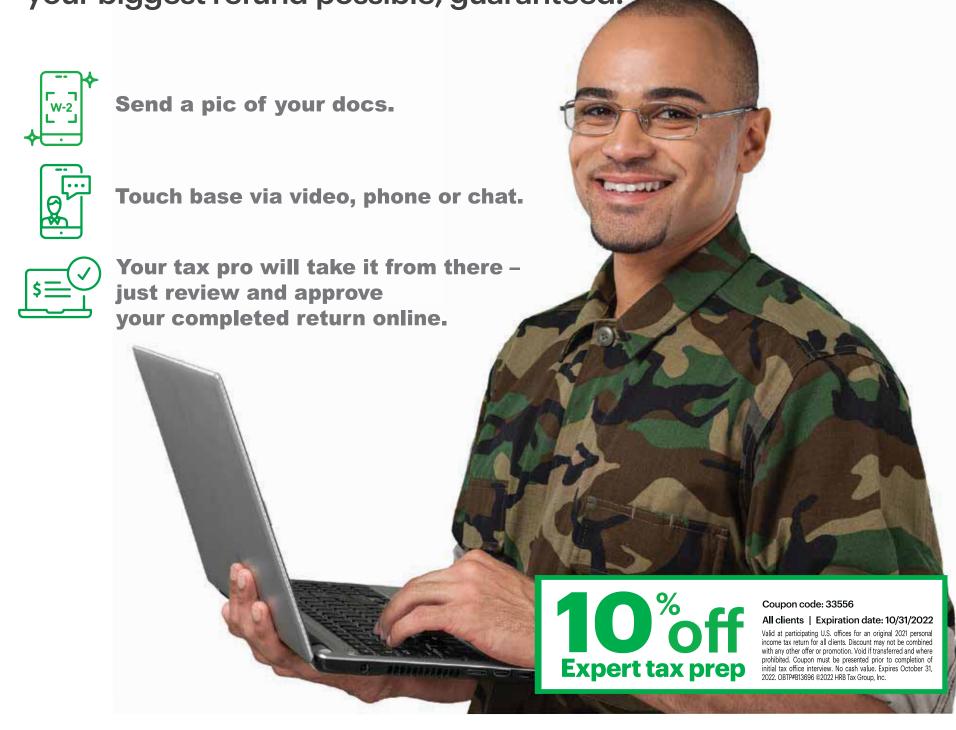
6 each set of 3 by 3 boxes must 2 | 5 9 Answer to Previous Sudoku: 7 1 9 2 6 8 5 1 3 8 9 2 6 4

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



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