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*My faves*

# Japan's festive lights illuminate the season

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Photo courtesy of Yoshihito Morita

## Bonenkai! Fun year-end tradition returns!

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
 STRIPES JAPAN

**W**hat do sake, neckties, coworkers singing and the end of the year have in common?

Bonenkai!

Much like the holiday season in the States, December is the most cheerful time in Japan thanks to endless year-end parties, called bonenkai (literally, forget-the-year party). Bonenkai can be enjoyed with anyone, but typically is done so with coworkers. The number of bonenkai you attend depends on how many groups of old and current coworkers or friends we belong to.

I'll usually enjoy it with at least five or six groups every year.

Like many things, this year-end tradition in Japan was put on hold the past couple of years because of Covid-19. But as things get back to normal, companies and groups of friends are once again planning bonenkai. I have a couple that I will be attending this year.

Bonenkai may seem like a Japanese Christmas party, as it is held from the end of November through December, but it is not. The party is more of a Japanese yearend traditional ritual, which dates back hundreds

**SEE BONENKAI ON PAGE 14**





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# Iwakuni volunteers welcome single troops to dinner

BY JONATHAN SNYDER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: November 15, 2022

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI — A program launched by military spouses at this air base south of Hiroshima puts single Marines and sailors in seats at family dinner tables.

Ohana Meals launched in September with a goal of raising morale in the base community after the slump that accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic, two of its organizers told Stars and Stripes on Nov. 7. Nicole Williams, a Navy spouse, said she noticed an obvious lull in spirits at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni during a town hall in February.

“We noticed morale was so low coming off of COVID,” Williams said. “People are staying indoors still, and they are not really connecting like we were before.”

Spouses from the base chaplain’s office and Marine Aircraft Group 12 organized the program at the base, which is also home to the Navy’s Carrier Air Wing 5. So far, Ohana Meals has steered 20 single service members to dinner with seven different families, said Navy spouse Helena Vigil.

Vigil, originally of Honolulu, gave the project its name, ohana, the Hawaiian word for family.

“Ohana means nobody left behind and we don’t want anybody left behind here,” Vigil said.

Ohana Meals is just hitting its stride as the holiday-season emphasis on communal feasting rolls around again. Lynn Strain, the wife of a contractor on base, and Navy spouse Katie Fuller together are planning an Ohana Meals Thanksgiving for as many single service members who want to sign up. Strain will host the event at her off-base home, she said.



Rachel Pierre plays with Bear, the Ohana Meals host family dog, in this undated photograph taken at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. Photo courtesy of Helena Vigil

“I’m hoping for 20 people to show up, but the more the better,” Strain told Stars and Stripes on Thursday. “We have always done this for Marines or anybody who is single for as long I can remember, so when I saw [Ohana Meals] I thought, OK, let’s continue.”

Families and barracks residents at Iwakuni may sign up to participate through a form on the Ohana Meals Facebook page.

“Lynn is just entirely a generous person,” Fuller said. “If you give her the opportunity to help someone, she is going to do it.”

Ohana Meals is designed for volunteer families to host dinner guests as often as they like, Vigil said. Families are matched with barracks

residents that are outside the family sponsors’ chains of command.

“Sometimes it’s hard being so far away from home,” Williams said. “So, when people come, they can sit on the couch and relax, play with the family dog and they can sit around and have a family home-cooked meal and chat with a ‘normal’ family.”

Williams said Ohana Meals is more than just providing food to single military members.

“We know lots of families open up their house for Thanksgiving and Christmas, but the idea is to have this opened year-round,” she said. “Because loneliness doesn’t just happen during the holidays, it happens year-round.”

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# Iwakuni Marine dives into teaching water survival

STORY AND PHOTO BY CPL. LANCE KELL,  
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI

**MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI** — In the summer of 2006 in Evans, Georgia, a 5-year-old boy struggled to stay above water in the deep end of a pool and called out for help. That day the lifeguard on duty was Tyler Huggins. It was his first year as a lifeguard and one of the most pivotal moments in his life.

"I quickly responded and retrieved the boy and brought him back to the wall," Huggins said. "The rescue was very impactful and is something I often reflect upon."

Huggins, an Evans, Georgia native, and now a U.S. Marine currently serving as the Supply Management Division Audit Branch Staff Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge for Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12, has taken his passion for swimming and that memory of his first year as a lifeguard to continue helping people use potentially life-saving skills by also serving as one of 11 Marine Corps Instructors of Water Survival (MCIWS) at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

Huggins's aptitude for swimming began at 5 years old. In high school, he joined the school's varsity swim team. At 15 years old, he became an American Red Cross certified lifeguard, learning how to conduct water rescues, how to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED). Then at 16, he became a coach for the summer swim team where he used what he had learned

throughout his life to prepare and mentor swim team members into becoming proficient competitors.

"One of my fondest memories in the water was when I first started coaching the summer league swim team," explained Huggins. "I remember having a coaches relay and all of our swimmers cheered us on in excitement. It was very touching, seeing the swimmers look at the coaches how I looked at the lifeguards when I was little."

Being a role model is not what Huggins sought, but it was something he grew into as he continued coaching and later became a MCIWS in 2019.

To become a MCIWS, Marines must endure a 3-week program that teaches American Red Cross rescues, CPR/AED administration, Marine Corps rescues, and the fundamentals of teaching Marines water survival. The red cross rescues include familiarization with pool rules, a lifeguard float, and working with other rescuers; the Marine Corps rescues are combat based in a water environment requiring potential MCIWS to perform deep water rescues while wearing personal protective equipment; and a key element of the course is ensuring the soon-to-be instructors know how to help individuals who are not confident in the water become confident by using the crawl, walk, run methodology.

"Being a MCWIS to me is one of my biggest accomplishments in the Marine Corps," Huggins said. "I will never forget the lessons I learned and still apply to this day."

Using his background as an instructor and coach, Huggins continuously passes these lessons to his students and junior Marines. Much of what he has learned has helped others become more effective swimmers, amphibious warfighters, and overall people.

"Staff Sgt. Huggins not only swims daily, but anytime I have seen him in the pool, there are always junior Marines next to him," said 2nd Lt. Samuel Sawyer, an Aviation Supply Officer, with MALS-12. "Whether it is a weekday or a weekend, Staff Sgt. Huggins will be in the pool to assist others. He has successfully trained swimmers to become more comfortable in the water whether it is to pass swim qualification or train for Marine Forces Special Operations Command Assessment & Selection."

U. S. Marines are America's amphibious fighting force. Earning the title of United States Marine requires every recruit to earn at a minimum a basic swim qualification. During the various qualification levels Marines, at every stage of their careers, are required to demonstrate water survival proficiency. Huggins and other MCIWS are responsible for teaching skills that could be the difference between life or death.

"I think it is important for people to be comfortable and confident in the water because it is a necessary life skill," Huggins said. "Learning how to swim is something everyone should do. As a MCIWS I have a responsibility to ensure Marines are not just swim qualified but comfortable and confident



U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Tyler Huggins

in the water."

His first rescue tested if he was up to the task of saving a life. Since then, Huggins has made and carried on the commitment of teaching and preparing others with the necessary tools to, if necessary, react as he did.

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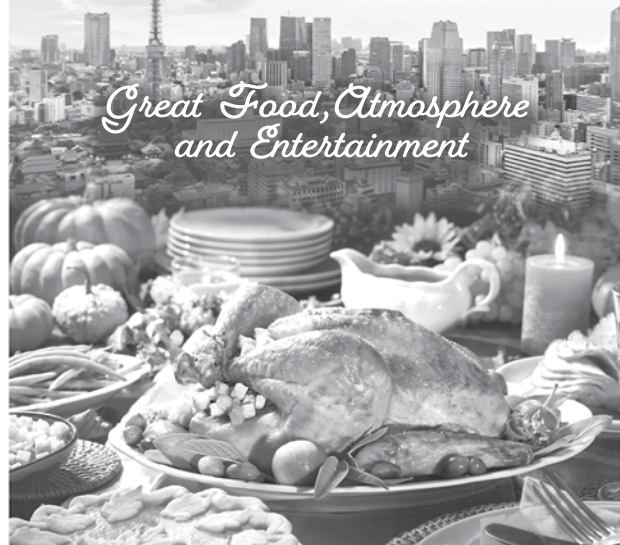
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Photos courtesy of Live Japan

# Omamori, Ema, and Omikuji

## Why Japanese lucky charms are amazing!

BY NAO,  
LIVE JAPAN

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

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

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

### OMAMORI: About Japan's traditional talismans

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

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF OMAMORI

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

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

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



Hukuro mamori

Suzu mamori

Omamori ya

#### THE KINDS OF OMAMORI

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

#### WHAT ARE THEY?

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

#### COMMON TYPES OF JAPANESE OMAMORI

- **GENERAL:** To support you to live peacefully and healthily.
- **HADAMAMORI:** To protect you both physically and mentally. You need to carry it with you all the time. In the past, people sew it onto their hada-gi (underwear), so it is called hadamamori. It is said if something as bad as hurt you happens, hadamamori will sacrifice itself to save you, so it gets cracked or broke.
- **YAKU YOKE:** To protect you from evil spirits, bad people/accidents/etc. yaku = sufferings, yoke = to avoid.
- **KENKO (HEALTH) MAMORI:** To protect your body from disease, injury, etc.
- **SHIGOTO (WORK) MAMORI:** To support you to get a nice job, to succeed in your job/project, etc
- **RENAI (ROMANCE) JOJU:** To support you to fulfil your love.
- **EN MUSUBI (WORK, ROMANCE, ETC.):** To support you to connect with others. It is generally believed to help you with matchmaking. However, it can also lead you to good friends or even a nice company as 'en' in Japanese means connection, chance, and any sort of relationship.
- **KIN UN (FINANCE):** To enhance your luck with money.
- **GAKUGYO MAMORI, GAKUGYO JOJU, GOKAKU KIGAN (STUDY):** To support you to achieve the learning target or to pass the exam.
- **KOTSU ANZEN MAMORI (TRANSPORTATION SAFETY):** To protect you from accidents during transportation. The most common use of this omamori is to keep it on a vehicle you drive.





- ➡ **• ANZAN (EASY DELIVERY):** To support you to deliver a baby with no trouble.
- **PET MAMORI:** To support your pet to live healthily.

WHERE CAN YOU GET AN OMAMORI?

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

It is important to know that while omamori may be cute in appearance, they are religious items and not something that you ‘buy’ per se. Omamori is given by Hotoke (Buddha) or Kami (Shinto deities). Hence, the money you pass to staff is not a payment but a dedication.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF OMAMORI?

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

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

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

OMAMORI ETIQUETTE

**Is it okay to open the bag?**

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

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

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

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



sharing the same Kami (Shintoism). If so, they may be able to take care of your omamori on behalf of where you originally acquired it.

4) **Burn it at home.**

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

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

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

**Is it okay to have many omamori?**

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

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

**What do the Japanese think of omamori?**

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

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

EMA:  
Japanese prayer boards

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

Japanese wishing board.

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

BRIEF HISTORY OF EMA

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

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

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



HOW TO WRITE ON AN EMA

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

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

**Is it okay to bring them back to home?**

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

**Do the Japanese write ema?**

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



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

# OMIKUJI: How to draw your fortune



Photo by nnayne, Shutterstock.com

## OMIKUJI: Japanese fortune slips

Omikuji is a type of Japanese fortune that is written on a strip of paper. These days, some temples/shrines may also have English omikuji. The list below shows the most common kinds of luck they will tell you.

### MEANING OF OMIKUJI SYMBOLS

- 大吉 (Dai-kichi): Super lucky
- 吉 (Kichi): Lucky
- 中吉 (Chu-kichi): Lucky enough, okay
- 小吉 (Sho-kichi): So-so
- 半吉 (Han-kichi): Half-good
- 末吉 (Sue-kichi): It might not be your time for now, but your luck will come later (in the year)
- 凶 (Kyo): Bad
- 小凶 (Sho-kyo): Little bad
- 半凶 (Han-kyo): Half-bad
- 末凶 (Sue-kyo): Bad luck will come later (in the year)
- 大凶 (Dai-kyo): Very bad

### WHERE TO GET (DRAW) AN OMIKUJI?

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

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

#### 1) Omikuji stick version

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

#### 2) Omikuji paper version

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



Photo by Petchpirun, Shutterstock.com

### WHEN TO GET AN OMIKUJI?

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

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

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

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

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

### WHAT DO THE JAPANESE THINK OF OMIKUJI?

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

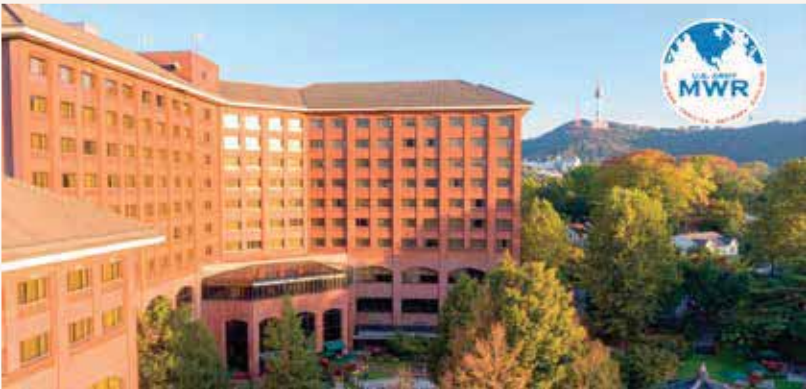
In general, they don't take the result too seriously especially when it tells a bad fortune. Though, at the same time, many Japanese still have religious respect for omikuji, so they bear in mind what they are told.

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



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# MEGURU PROJECT

## Discover history of Yokosuka at event until Dec. 11

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPE JAPAN

There are many historical points and attractions in the vicinity of Yokosuka Naval Base. This is due in part to the arrival in 1853 of American Commodore Matthew Perry at Uruga Port in Yokosuka City. From there the city developed as a naval city with Japan's first Western-style shipyard. Later, it served as an Imperial naval shipyard; then, in 1946, it would become U.S. Yokosuka Naval Base.

Since Yokosuka is at the entrance of Tokyo Gulf, it has also functioned as a fortress for Tokyo. Even today, you can still find a lot of ruins of gunnery battery sites, powder magazines and other military facilities of former Japanese military within the city.

With the aim of rediscovering the industrial heritage in the city, Yokosuka City hosted the "Meguru (touring historical sites) Project" in the fall of 2021 to highlight the city's history, particularly those around the Uruga and Kannonzaki districts. This year, Meguru Project came back as a larger-scaled event.

On weekends and Japanese holidays through Dec. 11, visitors will be treated to guided tours of Chiyogasaki Gun Battery Site and Uruga Dock, along with a 30-minute ship cruise in the Uruga Gulf on weekends. At the festival site, at Uruga Dock, dozens of kitchen cars offer various dishes while you can buy local fresh vegetables and souvenirs in the open market from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

During the event, various musical performance and concerts are held at Uruga Dock Theater, a temporary stage installed in the historical drydock. You can also enjoy a bird's-eye view of the historical shipyard and town of Uruga in a hot-air balloon from 9 – 11 a.m. Although the music is free, there is a charge for the balloon ride.

My wife and I attended the event to learn more about the area where we live. First, we toured the Chiyogasaki Gun Battery Site ruins up on a hill on Uruga Town's south end.

The site was constructed by the Japanese Imperial Army around 1892, according to our guide. During the tour, we checked out the large brick-made gunnery site, home to six cannons, powder magazines and

### THINGS TO KNOW

**LOCATION:** 2-15-2, Sakuragaoka, Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture (former Uruga Dock)

**DATE:** Until Dec. 11 (Weekends and Holidays only)

**HOURS:** 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (check out URL for tour schedule)

**FEE:** ■ Hot-air balloon ride: 2,500 yen  
■ Tour of Uruga Brick Dock and Chiyogasaki Gun Battery Site: 1,000 yen, elementary and middle schoolers 600 yen  
■ Uruga History Cruise: 800 yen, elementary and middle schoolers 400 yen  
■ Tour of Uruga Brick Dock: 500 yen, elementary and middle schoolers 250 yen

**URL:** <https://meguru-project.com/>

**TEL:** 046-822-8124



the paths and underground tunnels connecting them. Getting through some of these places required candlelight, so it felt surreal and almost like being at an amusement park.

The volunteer guides (some even spoke English) were available to answer any of our questions. At the top of the ruins, we were able to appreciate the vantage point of this spot while enjoying the beautiful view of the Tokyo Gulf and Chiba Peninsula beyond. We live in Uruga District and had no idea this was a

designated historical heritage site.

We drove to the site, but there is a shuttle bus available to take visitors from the battery ruins to the main festival site (former Sumitomo Heavy Industries Uruga Shipyard).

After the tour at the gunnery ruins, we joined a 30-minute Uruga History Cruise starting at the docking area of the former Sumitomo Shipyard for 800 yen. The two-story cruise ship was very comfortable and we were able to pinpoint many historical spots. Some of these

include Commodore Perry's anchorage point, many Shinto shrines, ruins of the Uruga Magistrate's Office of Shogunate Government, and a replica of Uruga's old wooden lighthouse.

As we took in the sights and sounds, a knowledgeable member of the crew explained the points of interest and the significant contributions made in this area for the development and modernization of Japan.

There is also another tour available of the Uruga Dock in the shipyard. Built in 1899 and the only existing brick-made drydock in Japan, more than 1,000 ships were built or repaired here until it was closed in 2003.

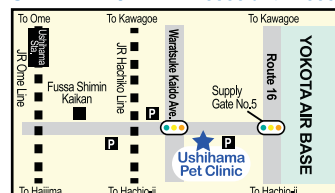
If you are in Yokosuka, this is a great chance to get to know the city's deep history and enjoy the great views of the unique gulf. My wife and I have lived here for years and we enjoyed learning more about our hometown.

[takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com](mailto:takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com)

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Tokinosumika Winter Illumination

Check it out

Photos courtesy of Tokinosumika

Kirakira Festival

Photo courtesy of Sasebo Kirakira Festival Executive Committee

Hiroshima Dream

Photo courtesy of Hiroshima Lightup

# My faves Japan's festive lights

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES JAPAN

As Japan starts to enter the holiday season, you'll notice many of the country's parks buildings and gardens are set ablaze with brilliant and elaborate illumination displays to help ring in the holiday spirit.

I love the beauty of this winter tradition, and the warm lights feel like an appropriate way to end another year. While strolling in the bright streets at night, I can't help but reminisce about the people and places I encountered over the last 12 months.

Here are some of my favorite places to check out the winter fun. Not only are these spots home to some dazzling light displays, but the locations are also worth a stroll year-round.

Most of these sites are free, so visit one near you and enjoy the happiest season in Japan with the millions of bright lights!

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

## Misawa Phantasia Winter Illumination (in Misawa)

Get into the holiday spirit at Phantasia Winter Illumination near Misawa Air Base. This vibrant project at the Misawa Nakayoshi Park runs through January 9. Visitors will be treated to the "Forest of Illumination" featuring over 70,000 LED lights, an illuminated reindeer and, at the center, a 16-meter-tall Christmas tree.

During the event, the park opens from 4 p.m. to midnight for the sparkling lights, so there's plenty of time to enjoy this holiday treat.

On Dec. 2 and 3, the park will also host "Misawa Nakayoshi Sauna," an event where visitors can enjoy a sauna soak free of charge. Free T-shirt, half pants and towel rentals will also be available.

■ **LOCATION:** 2-1-1 Chuo-cho, Misawa City, Aomori Pref. (a 6-minute drive from Misawa AB Main Gate)  
■ **HOURS:** Through Jan. 9, 2023, 4 p.m. – midnight

■ **NAKAYOSHI SAUNA:** Dec. 2, 6 – 8 p.m., Dec. 3, noon – 8 p.m.  
■ **ADMISSION:** Free  
■ **URL:** <https://misawa-phantasia.jimdofree.com/>  
■ **TEL:** 0176-53-2175 (Misawa Chamber of Commerce)



## Tokyo Midtown Christmas Illumination (Near Hardy Barracks)

Tokyo Midtown is one of the most popular stops for holiday lights, great food, and great shopping.

This year's "Midtown Christmas 2022," features golden-hued LED lights and special performances in the garden area.

The elaborate display in the building's green space elicits the nostalgia of Christmas morning with music and ambiance, while incorporating modern technology for brilliant displays that are a treat for the eyes. At the center of the display, visitors can enjoy a magnificent illumination dome (3-meter

high and 4.5 meter in diameter) projecting brilliant multicolor LED lights, according to the event provider.

And the fun doesn't stop there. Up the holiday fun by hitting the ice-skating rink constructed on the premises every winter season (starting from 1600 yen). This display definitely features fun for the whole family!

■ **LOCATION:** 9-7-1 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo  
■ **PERIOD:** Through Dec. 25 (Promenade are illuminated until Feb. 26)  
■ **HOURS:** 5 – 11 p.m.  
■ **URL:** <https://www.tokyo-midtown.com/jp/event/xmas/en.html>  
■ **TEL:** 03-3475-3100



## Tokinosumika Royal Road Winter Illumination (Near Fuji)

Hotel and Resort Tokinosumika in Gotemba is just a 30-minute drive from Camp Fuji and offers a large illumination display called "Hikari-no-Sumika" (home of lights) every year.

With its proximity to Mount Fuji, you'll be



Tokyo Midtown Christmas Illumination

Photo by Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Japan







# s illuminate the season

getting two great views for the price of one! If you want to make a daytrip out of it, add area attractions like the Fuji Five Lakes, Fuji Safari Park, or the Sengen Shrine to your itinerary. Ending the day at the light display will be the cherry on top of a fun day!

During my family's last visit to Tokinosumika's illuminations, we enjoyed the tunnel of lights which spans a quarter mile long. The lights will wow you and you'll get many great pics to share with friends and family back home. My daughter remembers our visit fondly and I'm sure your kiddos will love it, too!

The display follows the theme of "Royal Road for Winter 2022-23" and includes the tunnel plus other lights with elaborate sequences, figures, and ornaments, according to the resort. The grounds also feature a couple of 120-year-old fir Christmas trees dressed up in lights for the season.

For an admission fee, check out "Castle Hill," an impressive multimedia show featuring 3D mapping, music, and a 150-meter-tall water fountain.

- **LOCATION:** 719 Kamiyama, Gotemba City, Shizuoka Pref.
- **PERIOD:** Through Mar. 12
- **HOURS:** Through Jan. 9, 4:30 – 10 p.m., Jan. 10 – Mar. 12, 5 – 9:30 p.m.
- **ADMISSION:** Tunnel of Light, Twin Trees are free; 1,500 yen (500 yen for elementary schoolers) for Castle Hill
- **URL:** <https://www.tokinosumika.com/illumination/renewal/>
- **TEL:** 0550-87-3700



## ■ Yokohama Milight (near bases in Kanto)

Head to Yokohama for the Yokohama Milight Illumination project spanning a one-mile-long stretch from JR Yokohama Station to Minatomirai Station. The illuminations light up this popular hangout with the backdrop of majestic Landmark Tower, Bay Bridge and Marine Tower.

While strolling through the lights you may want to drop by Dockyard Garden behind the Landmark Tower. On the bottom of the dry dock, you can see a large ship-shaped blue illumination made up of 100,000 LEDs while

cheerful Christmas music is played.

The walk-through of Yokohama Bay this time of year is truly gorgeous, and an easy trip for those on Yokosuka, Zama and Atsugi.

- **LOCATION:** From JR Yokohama Station (East Exit) to Dockyard Garden (Landmark Tower)
- **PERIOD:** Through Feb. 12
- **HOURS:** 4 – 11 p.m.
- **URL:** <https://www.ymm21-illumination.jp>



## ■ Hiroshima Dreamination (Near Iwakuni)

The Hiroshima Dreamination draws over 600,000 visitors each year and is only a one-hour drive from MCAS Iwakuni.

This year, the large-scale illumination project presents a "Fairyland" with 1.4 million lights. Colorful lights fill Peace Boulevard, a major road running from east to west through downtown, along with Namiki Street and Alice Garden. The squares made up of blue-based illuminations around the streets create the "Sky Island" where light shows are offered every 15 minutes from 5:30 – 10:30 p.m. through Jan. 3.

- **LOCATION:** Center streets of Hiroshima
- **PERIOD:** Through Jan. 3
- **HOURS:** 5:30 – 10:30 p.m.
- **URL:** <https://www.dreamination.com>
- **TEL:** 082-554-1813



## ■ Kirakira Festival (in Sasebo)

Every year, Sasebo City's Shimanose Park and Saruku City 403 shopping arcade get the razzle dazzle treatment with over 1 million lights! Visitors are also treated to the brilliant lights, gigantic, illuminated artworks, live music and dance performances on the weekends.

If you're stationed at Sasebo Naval Base, you'll want to make plans to see this beautiful sight for yourself!

- **PERIOD:** Through Dec. 25
- **HOURS:** 5 – 11 p.m.
- **LOCATION:** Shimanose Park and Saruku City 403 Shopping Arcade in Sasebo City
- **URL:** <https://www.facebook.com/sasebokirafes>
- **TEL:** 095-822-8223



Misawa Phantasia Winter Illumination

Photo courtesy of Yoshihito Morita



Tokinosumika Winter Illumination

Photo courtesy of Tokinosumika





Photos by Staub, Zwilling

# Special rice cooker combines French, Japanese engineering

BY SARAH B. HODGE,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Cast iron pots, pans, and kettles have been staples in the traditional Japanese kitchen for centuries. Rice was traditionally cooked in a hagama, a cast iron pot with a round bottom. With the invention of electric rice cookers in the 1950s and the introduction of cheaper aluminum and stainless steel cookware, cast iron rice pots faced a steep drop in popularity.

In the 1990s and 2000s, French brands Le Creuset and Staub entered the Japanese market, creating renewed interest in cast iron cookware. Originally available only through culinary channels, Staub's cast iron cocottes (or French ovens) are favored by top chefs for their heat retention, durability, and flavor-enhancing properties. The company became part of the Zwilling Japan group in 2008, and today Japan's Staub store ranks third in Zwilling's global sales.

According to a representative for ZWILLING J.A. HENCKELS JAPAN LTD, "We developed shapes and usage specific to Japanese cuisine: La Cocotte de GOHAN, The Wanabe, and made-in Japan ceramic rice bowls. We call this series 'Japonesque' and it brought a lot of attention and understanding that STAUB is not just for cooking French food."

Staub's cocotte de gohan (marketed as the Petite French Oven in the US) cooks rice in as little as 20 minutes thanks to its unique chistera lid. Made in France, the cocotte takes its design from the traditional Japanese hagama and cooks quickly thanks to its excellent convection and gentle heat

distribution. During cooking, the curved drop-shaped structures on the inner lid collect condensation and evenly redistribute it onto the food. You simply rinse and soak uncooked rice, bring the rice and water to a boil in the cocotte de gohan, cover, simmer for 10 minutes and steam for 10-15 minutes for perfect rice every time. I've even switched to using this over my trusty Zojirushi, which takes nearly an hour to steam a cup of white rice.

The cocotte de gohan is available in Small (12 cm) and Medium (16 cm) beginning at around \$110; the small can accommodate from one rice cooker cup (3/4 cup) of uncooked rice, while the medium can cook two cups. The cocotte's compact size and heat retention make it a great choice for soups, fondue, and rice dishes like risotto. It's become one of my favorite Staub cocottes in my lineup due to its small footprint and versatility, plus it looks great on the table (you can mix and match different sizes and colors for effect).

Need ideas on how to use your new rice cooker? Zwilling Japan offers a number of Japanese-language recipes for the cocotte de gohan on their website, including a bacon and mushroom pilaf, easy tomato risotto, and jambalaya, and Staub has also developed recipes for the Petite French Oven, including this spiced chocolate fondue and baked ricotta with chives.

So if you're looking for a small, versatile powerhouse that makes fantastic rice and will look great on your table to boot, Staub's cocotte de gohan is the perfect choice!

## Spiced chocolate fondue

### Ingredients

- 1 cup heavy cream
  - 1 cinnamon stick, broken in half
  - 2 cardamom pods, lightly crushed
  - 2 whole cloves Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
  - Pinch of ground cayenne
  - Pinch of flaky sea salt
  - 8 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
- Fruit, Pound Cake, and/or Donuts for serving



File photo

### Instructions

1. In a medium cast-iron petite French oven, combine the cream, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, and cayenne. Bring to a simmer, then remove from the heat.
2. Let the spices steep into the cream for 20 minutes.
3. Strain the cream, then return it to the cast-iron pot over medium-low heat, until the cream just barely simmers.
4. Place the chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and leave it for a few minutes to melt the chocolate.
5. Whisk until smooth, then pour the mixture into a fondue pot.
6. Serve the fondue with fruit, pound cake, or doughnuts for dipping.

— Courtesy of Staub

## Cocotte de gohan suggested cooking and steaming times

Sushi rice	1 cup rice, 1 cup water, soak for 30 minutes	Simmer for 12 minutes	Steam for 10 – 15 minutes off heat
Basmati rice	1 cup rice, 1 1/3 cups water, soak for 30 minutes	Simmer for 15 minutes	Steam for 10 minutes off heat
Wild rice	1 cup rice, 3 cups water	Simmer for 30 minutes	Steam for 30 minutes off heat
Brown rice	Soak overnight (30 minutes for GABA), 1 cup rice, 1 to 1 1/2 cups water	Boil for 3, simmer for 30	Steam for 30 minutes off heat

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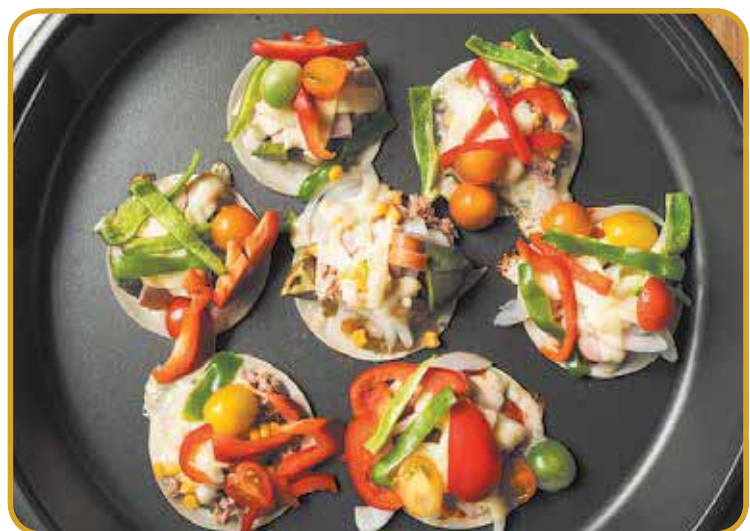
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# Cooking up pizza with tubed condiments



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**H**ave you ever used tubed condiments?

If you are a foodie, you may be familiar with garlic or chipotle paste packaged in tubes like toothpaste.

Or if you prefer paste that comes in big bottles and containers, you may have just ignored the small tubes that sometimes look like oil paint containers.

Although tubed condiments are available in both Japan and the U.S., many consumers from both countries may not be familiar with them given their uniqueness and compact size.

In my case, tubed condiments are something I didn't really explore thoroughly until recently. These small and colorful packages placed on a shelf in the spice section always caught my eye when I shopped in a grocery store or a supermarket. But their wide variety was so overwhelming that I had no clue where to start. So, I ended up sticking to regular ones such as wasabi, mustard, and Gochujang (Korean Chili Paste).

However, several TV shows changed my mind by spotlighting

tubed condiments as a way to make cooking enjoyable and even offer a solution for "Jitan (time-saving)." In those shows, unique condiments such as anchovies, shredded basil, olives and many more were introduced. Recipes using tubed condiments were also shown, including fried eggs flavored with tubed red-pickled ginger, and yaki-onigiri (grilled rice balls) seasoned with tubed charred garlic.

As a lazy amateur chef who is all for cutting corners, I decided to give some of the recipes a try, including "tube pizza." To put it simply, this is a kind of pizza made with tubed condiments, not pizza sauce. Instead of pizza dough, dumpling wrappers roughly the size of your palm are used. There's no need to bake them in an oven; a pan and stove will suffice (I used an electric hot plate).

Chili pepper, jalapeno, and minced basil were the tubed condiments I could get at my neighborhood supermarket. Spreading the tubed condiments on dumpling wrappers felt more like scribbling than cooking. Adding more colors with cheese, tomato, onion, corn,

and bacon, I felt like I was creating modern art.

On a hotplate set at 200 °C and my pan covered with lid, it took only five minutes before the dumpling wrappers were golden brown on the bottom. Since it looked the toppings were good to go and I didn't want to burn the wrappers, I turned off the heat and sampled my pizza.

Although some vegetables turned out to be a little undercooked, the wrapper, tubed sauce, and cheese were OK. With one bite, I found the food totally legit to be called pizza. It will not replace Domino's or Papa John's, but it made the cut as a decent and fun meal. I was literally a tubular experience.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



VIEW VIDEO



## Simple recipe for 'tube pizza'

Spread tubed condiment (2.5 ml each) on dumpling wrappers.  
Heat them up on a hotplate at 200 °C (392 °F) with a lid on until wrappers have a crispy texture and the cheese melts.

### Combos I tried (recommended by S&B Foods)

#### Aragiri Togarashi (chopped hot pepper)

Spread paste on a dumpling wrapper and top it with sliced sausage, onion, and cheese.

#### Kizami Basil (sliced basil)

Spread paste on a dumpling wrapper and top it with tuna, corn, and cheese.

#### Aragiri Harapenyo (chopped jalapeno)

Spread paste on a dumpling wrapper and top it with diced avocado, sliced bacon, and cheese.

\*Depending on your liking, add toppings such as sausage, bacon, ham, boiled shrimp, tuna, shirasu (whitebait), onion, green pepper, mini tomato, avocado, corn, cheese, etc. But be careful not to add too much. The wrapper tends to bake quicker than the toppings. **TIP:** If you saute vegetables before you put them on the wrappers, it can help balance out the difference in required cooking time.



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## NARA FOOD GUIDE

# 9 Absolutely must-try foods when visiting Nara

BY WESTPLAN,  
LIVE JAPAN

**N**ara Prefecture is a major sightseeing destination, prominent as Japan's former capital. Nara food and cuisine comes in various forms: narazuke pickles, persimmon leaf sushi, locally-produced alcohol, and much more.

It may not be flashy but is elegant and fastidiously preserves ancient techniques. This article will introduce famous Nara food that is most representative of the prefecture.



**PERSIMMON LEAF SUSHI**  
Photos courtesy of LIVE JAPAN



## 1 NARAZUKE PICKLES

The umami of sake lees and artisans' techniques shine

Narazuke pickles are made from marinating gourds, cucumbers, ginger, and other vegetables in sake lees. The food originated in the 700's, when Nara's Heijo-kyo was the capital of Japan.

At the time, the narazuke pickles were said to have been called "kasuzuke", kasu being the word for sake lees, since the precipitate that sunk to the bottom of unrefined sake was used to pickle the vegetables.

Narazuke made with gourds were considered "The King". The crunchy outside, the smooth inside with its slightly sweet taste, and the faint essence of sake all make them a perfect match to eat with white rice.

Narazuke are sold at many stores, including some which stock narazuke made with unusual ingredients like persimmon, burdock root, carrot, onion, melon, and bamboo shoots, so try looking around different shops as you wander the streets of Nara.

## 2 PERSIMMON LEAF SUSHI

Try a traditional fermented taste

"Persimmon leaf sushi" photo on the page left top

Persimmon leaf sushi (kakinoha-zushi), is one of Nara's traditional local dishes. It is made by taking bite-sized, hand-pressed portions of rice topped with salt-marinated mackerel, wrapping it in persimmon leaves, which have antibacterial properties, and then leaving them to ferment for several days.

In the olden days, mackerel was caught, heavily salted, and transported from the Kumano-nada Sea to Okuyoshino in Yoshino City. Because of that, the route became known as Mackerel Road (Saba-kaido).

Local people would make sushi by putting thin slices of the salt-marinated mackerel on rice and fermenting them in persimmon leaves from the mountains, eating it as celebratory food on festival days.

In the past, only mackerel was used, but in the present day, persimmon leaf sushi made with salmon, seabream, shrimp, eel, and other varieties are sold.



## 3 MIWA SOMEN

Distinctive for its thin, chewy noodles

"Miwa somen" is said to trace its origins back to "muginawa" wheat ropes from which it got its shape.

These noodles were first made more than 1,200 years ago in the Miwa district in central Yamato, Nara Prefecture, and are characterized by being thin with a springy, chewy texture.

In the Edo period, Yamato's Miwa somen was praised as being "as thin as thread and as white as snow" among those who traveled through to visit the Ise Grand Shrine, leading to its fame throughout Japan.

To this day, somen shops are concentrated nearby the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail. There are also many restaurants where you can eat somen within Nara City.



## 4 GREEN TEA RICE PORRIDGE

A local dish born of the wisdom of everyday life

Green tea rice porridge (chagayu) exists all over Japan, but just as the Japanese saying "Mornings in Yamato begin with green tea rice porridge" suggests, it is especially popular in Nara.

This porridge, fragrant with the smell of if its roasted soybeans and broad beans, is a home-cooked dish born of the wisdom of everyday life, as even a small amount of rice can be made into a filling bowl of food.

Nara's green tea rice porridge is distinctive for its soupy, non-sticky consistency. It originates from a history of being eaten by Buddhist monks in the Kamakura period, later spreading to the homes of common people. It is said to have been eaten by most households until as late as the 1950's.



## 5 YOSHINO KUDZU POWDER

Made with traditional methods

The Yoshino district of Nara, with its quality water and cold climate, has the perfect conditions for refining kudzu powder. That is why Yoshino kudzu powder, made by the traditional refining method "yoshino-zarashi", is renowned for its high quality.

Kuzu is manufactured into many different products, including kudzu starch noodles, yuzu desserts, and other kudzu dishes, all of which you can eat not only in Yoshino, but at specialty shops located around Nara City as well.



## 6 NIHONSHU

Nara is said to be the birthplace of sake

In the Muromachi period, Nara's sake was beloved as a delicacy in Japan. The basics of modern sake brewing techniques are said to have been established by Nara's Shoryakuji Temple, which is why Nara is considered "the birthplace of sake".

In addition, "Okuninushi-no-mikoto", the god of sake, is enshrined at Omiwa Shrine in Miwa, Sakurai City. Every year on November 14, brewers from all over the country attend the sake brewing festival, after which "sugidama" (balls of cedar sprigs made and hung outside of breweries after new rice is harvested) are distributed to all brewers.

Today there are 29 sake breweries within Nara Prefecture, many of which allow you to sample the sake. There are also specialty sake shops and restaurants around Nara that provide sake tastings.





7

## YAMATO TEA

Distinctively sweet and gentle tea leaves are used to make this treat

→ Tea from Nara is called Yamato tea (Yamato cha) and is grown primarily on the Yamato Plateau in the eastern region of Nara City. The Yamato Plateau has a high elevation and high variance in temperature between day and night, often causing fog to form in the mornings. The proper amount of fog-induced humidity and sunlight grows sweet and soft tea leaves which in turn produce high-quality tea. Along with the staple green teas and roasted green teas, you can enjoy Yamato tea in the form of Japanese black tea, as well as a variety of other tastes.



8

## PERSIMMON SWEETS

Nara is Japan's leading persimmon producer

Persimmons from Nara have been cultivated since the Yamato period and even today, the prefecture is Japan's most distinguished persimmon production region. Therefore, you can find lots of sweets using persimmons in Nara.

Treats of dried persimmon wrapped around a core of yuzu citrus peels, monaka wafer cakes filled with sweet paste made from Yoshino's Fuyu persimmons, persimmon jam, persimmon vinegar, and even persimmon butter are just some of the various products that have been developed.



9

## KAKIGORI

You won't find better than in the holy land of shaved ice

Nara is actually known as "the holy land of shaved ice (kakigori)". Nara Prefecture has two "Himuro shrines", that is, shrines relating to ice. It also has the "Kenpyo-sai" (ice dedication ritual) in which those with jobs relating to ice come from all over the country to pray, and the "Himuro Shirayuki Matsuri" snow festival.

With so many ice-related events, there are many shops where you can eat shaved ice not only in summer but year-round! Each and every shop provides its own creative variations on shaved ice, some using special methods to make the syrup into mousse while others use syrup made with locally produced Nara Yamato tea and strawberries.

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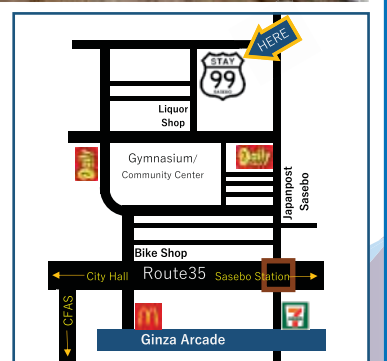
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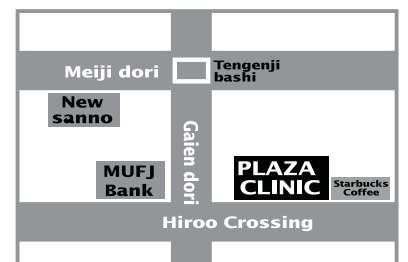
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## BONENKAI: Part of Japanese culture

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of years.

The tradition of bonenkai always provides a good reunion opportunity for friends who may not see each other as often as they'd like. That's especially true this year after two years of cancellations.

And bonenkai also helps us to get recharged and refreshed from all the frustration and exhaustion at work, too.

"As the name implies, displaying a boisterous, extravagant behavior, that is completely out of character and over continuous refills of sake, helps to forget all the frustrations of the past year, and prepare a fresh attitude for the upcoming year," says Kunihiro Ishii, a Tokyo salaryman.

A work-arranged bonenkai, is an all-hands, must-join type of party, as it is considered as one of the most important company events of the year.

While large companies might rent a ballroom in a nice hotel or restaurant, most small companies book an izakaya (Japanese-style pub) for their bonenkai. As a result, most of the izakayas are fully booked during the season.

Just like other official ceremonies, a typical company bonenkai begins with a senior member's speech recalling the events of the past year, expressing gratitude for the year's successes and wishes for the best in the upcoming year.

Then, a toast follows. After that, everyone, regardless of rank, position or gender, drink, eat and let loose.

However, some in the company must be careful, as there is an unwritten code for younger and junior employees.

Simply, juniors have a lot of responsibilities during the party.

First, it's junior's job to walk around the table with a bottle of beer or sake, and pour it into the senior's glass, while thanking them for their help throughout the year.

Juniors are also the night's entertainment, as a performance for seniors and other participants is on the

to-do list.

Some will sing a trendy song or dance in costume, while others perform magic or read a traditional comic. And this isn't your buddy drunkenly mumbling into a microphone at local dive bar. These performances are prepared and practiced months ahead of time.

I remember my 30-year-old daughter preparing and practicing for her company's bonenkai eight years ago (at that time, she was in her first year with the company). Her and four coworkers set aside time to master the pop dancing of Korean idle unit "Shojo Jidai Girls' Generation".

As the party progresses with seemingly endless refills of sake, oftentimes salarymen will take off their necktie and tie it around their heads. This amusing sight is also a gesture to show how much a person is dedicated to the party. If you are planning to do it yourself, be sure to choose wide tie that's light in color, as a lighter colored tie, especially red and pink, stands out among a crowd with dark ties on their heads.

A company bonenkai usually closes with "sanbonjime" (literally, closing of clapping hands three times). Then, participants stand up from their seats, take their coats and exchange greetings ("otsukaresama deshita" or thanks for the hard work).

The clapping and greeting might seem like the grand finale, but this is not the end of bonenkai. Nope, it's just rings in the beginning of the next party. A good bonenkai doesn't end without having a second and third party of the night. And juniors are often supposed to stay until their boss and seniors go home. So, if your senior is a drinker, you've probably got a long night ahead of you.

When the senior finally decides to go home after the third or fourth party (probably the following morning), they are usually followed by a junior, who catches a taxi, and sees him off with a deep bow.

OK - now the bonenkai is over. Otsukaresama deshita! You may go home. Time to recover before your next bonenkai.

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# Stripes Sports Trivia

A member of MLB's 3,000 hit club, Ichiro has more total hits in his career than Pete Rose, if you include his time playing in Japan. The longtime Mariners outfielder racked up 1,278 of his 4,300+ hits while playing for which Nippon Professional Baseball team in Japan?

## Answer

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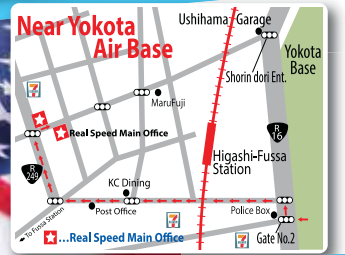
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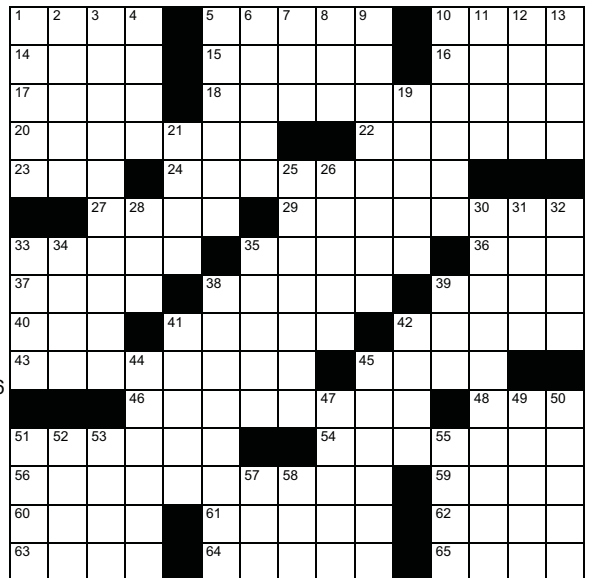
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## The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- Light pats
- Take place
- Rush job notation
- Bryce Canyon locale
- Wake up
- Napa Valley sight
- Flat-topped hill
- Senior diplomat
- Fragrant rice
- Inventor's quest
- Shocked letters
- Soda since 1886
- Anagram for "ruse"
- Distinction
- Blubbered
- Far from poetic
- Tissue layer
- Loathe
- It may be slippery
- Cowboy wear
- Period in history
- Meager
- Abstain from
- Fierceness
- Mr. Peanut prop
- Seasoning for lamb
- Heathcliff, e.g.
- Changes
- Danger for small boats
- Type of test
- Narrow margin
- Prefix with phobia
- Repulsive insect
- Elementary particle
- Despicable
- Shopping binge
- Capone nemesis



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- Man of many words
- Stand-up guy
- Windy City athlete
- Beach Boys song, "Surfin' "
- "You're welcome," for one
- Online image
- A or B, on a 45
- Auth. unknown
- Smart-alecky
- Like most chips
- Got a perfect score
- BOLO or YOLO, e.g.
- Take as one's own
- "Savvy?"
- Increase in value
- Slimy garden pest
- Beginner
- White hat wearer
- In short supply

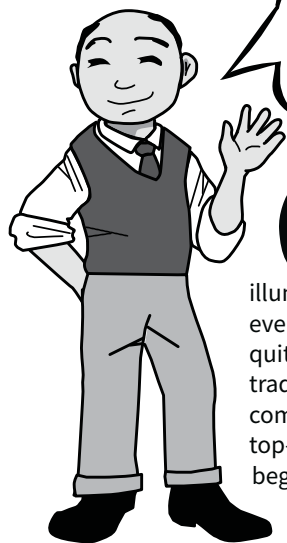
- Word with hot or home
- Tailor's tool
- Bart, to Homer
- Disdain
- Warren's "Bonnie and Clyde" co-star
- Crater Lake's state
- Nativity scene

- Lewis Carroll heroine
- Felipe's farewell
- Contract details
- Eden dweller
- Tiny parasites
- Former skater Lipinski
- Larger-life link
- Absorb, with "up"
- Roof stuff

### Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

## DID YOU KNOW?



Okinawa's famous Naha Tug of War used to take place after dark. Bonfires, or "te," were used to illuminate the event back then. Today, the event is hosted at around 4 p.m., drawing quite the crowd. Though the bonfire tradition may be over, the battle flag the competitors carry can still be lit on fire at the top—an homage to the event's nocturnal beginnings.

## Kanji of the week

本

Hon (Book)

## Language Lesson

I'm sorry.

Gomennasai.

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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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:

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

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