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Community Publication

# JAPAN

VOLUME 7 NO. 39

FEBRUARY 26 – MARCH 4, 2021

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### INSIDE INFO



**COVID-19 CANCELED GAMES, BUT NOT ALL ATHLETES' DREAMS**

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**KNOW A PICKY EATER? 8 AWESOME JAPANESE FOODS FOR ALL**

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## Military children, tell us your story!

**H**ey, all you kids in the military community need to read this. Seriously! So, please put down your iPad, iPhone or other digital device for the next couple of minutes. You'll survive, and I promise no one will take them. And, I also promise that this has nothing to do with more COVID-19 restrictions.

Now that I have your attention, I want to give you a little job. No, wait! Don't stop reading! If you do a little bit of work, you'll have the opportunity to be heard by tens of thousands of people. Seriously! You see, April is the Month of the Military Child, and for the 20th straight year, the Stars and Stripes community publications are dedicating it to you, the children of our men and women in uniform.

Each Stripes Okinawa, Stripes Japan, Stripes Korea and Stripes Guam issue in April will contain your stories, poems, drawings and photos about what life is like as a military child.

SEE MOMC ON PAGE 2



File photo



# BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

What to do when an earthquake hits

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MOMC:
We're here for you!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For those children who are part of the military community overseas but not technically a military child, we want to hear from you, too. You and your Department of Defense civilian parents are also a key part of the military community.

So, what's life like as a military kid? Tell us. And after you share with us, your story, poem or drawing will be posted on our special Month of the Military website: Militarychild.Stripes.com and could appear in at least one weekly paper.

We are giving you a platform to say what you want. Of course, to have your say, you have to write, type or draw it. You can be funny or serious. You can write a paragraph or a longer story (300-word maximum, please). Or you can

draw a picture or write a poem. But, whatever you do, be yourself. Stand up and be heard.

We get thousands of submissions a year, so for stories to run in the paper, they must be submitted by April 15. As we approach another April, our team is ready for the onslaught. In fact, we've already received hundreds and are already loading them onto the website and getting them ready for the papers.

By the way, like every year, we've been in touch with teachers across the Pacific who are using this as a class project. So be ready for that. For those of you who haven't participated in our annual salute, we hope to hear from you this year.

Stars and Stripes is very proud to serve the military community, and it's an honor to spotlight its resourceful group of children.

We can't wait to hear from you!

Chris Carlson,
Publishing and Media Design Manager
Stars and Stripes



Stories must
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Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez

# Anxiety and weight gain

BY HILARY VALDEZ,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**M**y whole life, I've struggled with weight. When under stress, I snacked, watching my waistline expand: I felt worse. I found happiness in comfort food-nirvana! After an hour, all that sugar made me hungry. One day eating thick, crunchy, potato chips watching television, I stumbled upon a cooking show discussing recipes for emotional eating. I learned stress was leading to my gaining weight. My expanding girth was the result of overeating and unhealthy food choices. My body's response was to increase my cortisol levels. Cortisol stimulates fat and carbohydrate metabolism while maintaining blood levels. I gently munched another potato chip, realizing I had to control my stress if I wanted to control my weight.



According to Medicine Net, cortisol has many actions in the body. The ultimate goal of cortisol secretion is the provision of quick energy and increased appetite. Chronic stress, or poorly managed stress, may lead to elevated cortisol levels that stimulate your appetite, resulting in weight gain or difficulty losing weight. Researchers say stress and elevated cortisol cause fat deposition in the abdominal area not the hips. This fat accumulation has been referred to as "toxic fat," since abdominal fat buildup is strongly correlated with the development of cardiovascular disease, including heart attacks and strokes.

Life is stressful. Being a human creates anxiety. There are different anxiety disorders with different symptoms: social anxiety, free-floating anxiety, panic disorder, or obsessive-compulsive disorder, can cause over-eating.

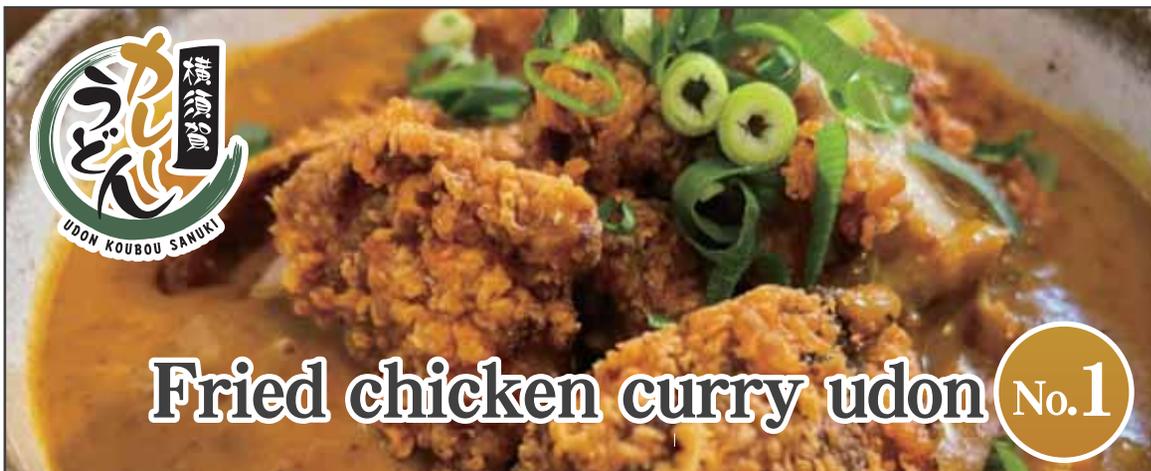
Fatty and sugary foods are the enemy. We snack more when we're sleepy. A University of Chicago study observed that after two weeks of sleep restriction, healthy eaters ate an average of 200 more calories a day, all in snacks. These munchies were often high in carbohydrates and were usually consumed between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.—the worst time, waistband-wise, for needless eating. And increasing 104 calories a day could add 11 pounds per year.

As I "matured" my "baby fat" was still with me. I had joint pain, a bit of high blood pressure, my waist size was 40. Time to change my eating behavior. I was glad I made the decision. 100 pounds later and a 33-inch waist, I was in a better frame of mind. I reduced my stress and weight by exercising, and I rode a bicycle in the neighborhood and to work. The quality of my sleep improved, I was happier and my confidence improved. I stopped listening to acid rock music before bedtime and switched to soothing music while reading a few pages of my favorite book: Danger Beyond Intrigue on Kindle. I stopped watching shoot-em-up, cut-em-up, blow-em-up television shows, before sleep time. And I was kinder to myself. I stopped saying negative about myself. I stopped calling myself fatso and said, "I'm getting better and better every day, in every way." And the hardest of all— I quit drinking alcohol...One Day at A Time.

I consulted with a dietitian specializing in weight loss to help me develop a balanced nutrition plan. Stress-related weight gain can be diagnosed and exclude low thyroid function. Your mental health can take a hit when you unintentionally gain weight due to anxiety or depression. With high stress, there's evidence of a connection between certain cancers such as pancreatic, esophageal, colon, breast, and kidney cancer.

Before eating, ask yourself are you hungry or do you feel stressed or anxious? If you're tempted to eat when you're not hungry, find a distraction. Don't skip meals, especially breakfast. If you're in a hurry, grab a piece of fruit. Eat whole grains and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Don't buy junk food. The bottom line? "More stress=more cortisol=higher appetite for junk food=more belly fat," says Shawn M. Talbot, PhD, a nutritional biochemist.

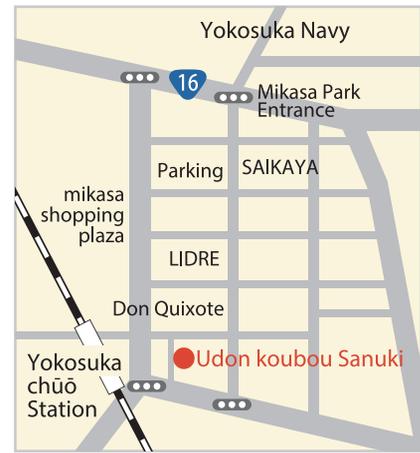
Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. He is an experienced Mental Health professional and Resiliency Trainer. Valdez is a former Marine and has worked with the military most of his career and most recently worked at Camp Zama as a Master Resiliency Trainer. Valdez now has a private practice and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



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# COVID-19 canceled games,

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ORNAUER,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: February 4, 2021



Kadena senior Breanna Arismendez had hoped to ramp up her game during her junior and senior softball seasons, but didn't get the chance last year and most likely won't again this year.

**F**ollowing her sophomore season of soccer in the spring of 2019, Arielle Sticker said she was hopeful of better things for her team and - long term - for herself.

The Humphreys midfielder, now a senior, scored 25 goals two years ago for a Blackhawks team that went 10-11 - far better than the team that went winless in 2017.

Enter the coronavirus. Sticker's junior season was canceled entirely. And DODEA-Pacific has stated that if a season happens this spring, it would be limited to in-school practice - and that's assuming students in DODEA-Korea schools return to classrooms.

"I was very angry," Sticker said. "I thought that this wouldn't last as long as it did. We would have gone really far in our tournaments. Everybody was talking about how good a season we could have had."

She's not alone. Throughout the Pacific, most student-athletes looking forward to 2020 or 2021 seasons have been left on the sidelines due to a pandemic that has pretty much turned the world upside down.

"It's been a weird year without sports," said Grace Bryant, a Zama senior and former Far East Division II Most Valuable Player whose Trojans couldn't defend their Far East tournament title.

Football and wrestling were scratched. Gregory Lunn, a senior lineman and 215-pound wrestler at Osan, said it was doubly upsetting in that he was hoping his Cougars could duplicate their 2018 D-II football title.

"I know we could have really won another championship," he said. "The school that didn't win anything (in football) for 13 years and all of a sudden wins the Far East, that says a lot."

Volleyball was played only in Korea. Basketball hopes were deflated.

And if DODEA-Pacific's spring sports ruling stands, soccer, baseball and softball will have gone two full years with no actual games. A virtual Far East track and field meet is still possible.

"It's tough, knowing you won't get the chance to play for something you and your team have worked for," said Leo Schinker, an E.J. King senior pitcher whose team's last game was a 10-0 Far East D-II finals loss to Yokota. "It's even harder (since we were) so close to a championship."

It's doubly harder for athletes counting on those junior and senior seasons to sharpen their skills and get more games on film to impress college coaches.

Breanna Arismendez, a two-time All-District catcher for Kadena, attended a Texas Tech softball camp after her sophomore year and realized she needed to increase her mastery of the sport markedly to walk on or earn a scholarship.

"I was planning on my junior and senior years to really push me ... but I didn't get the opportunity," Arismendez said. "I was so disappointed."

Student-athletes around the Pacific say they're engaged in weight, cardio and skills workouts on their own, participating in youth recreational programs or even playing with adult teams.

Arismendez is trying to improve on her .388 batting average as a sophomore by playing for the Diamond Divas, a fastpitch club team. "It's not Far East, it's not high school, but it's something," Arismendez said.

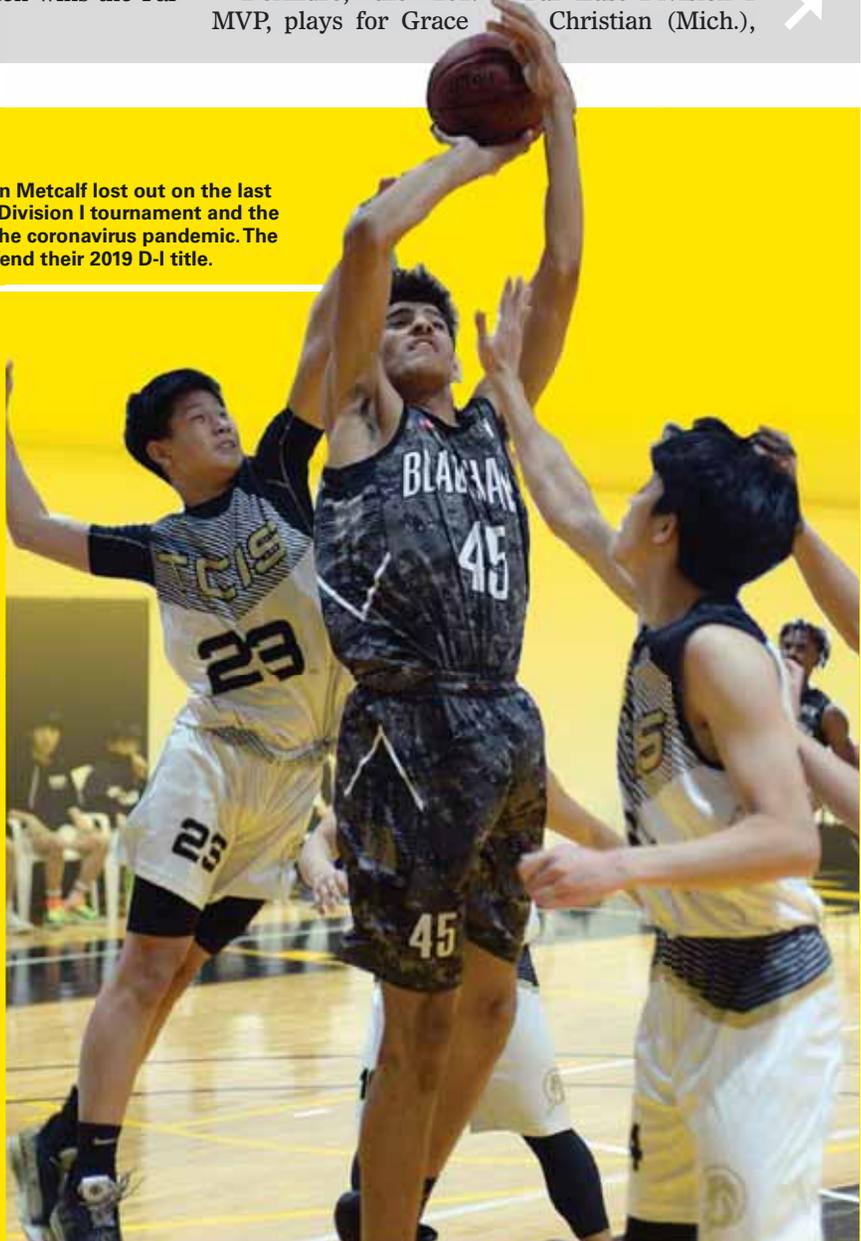
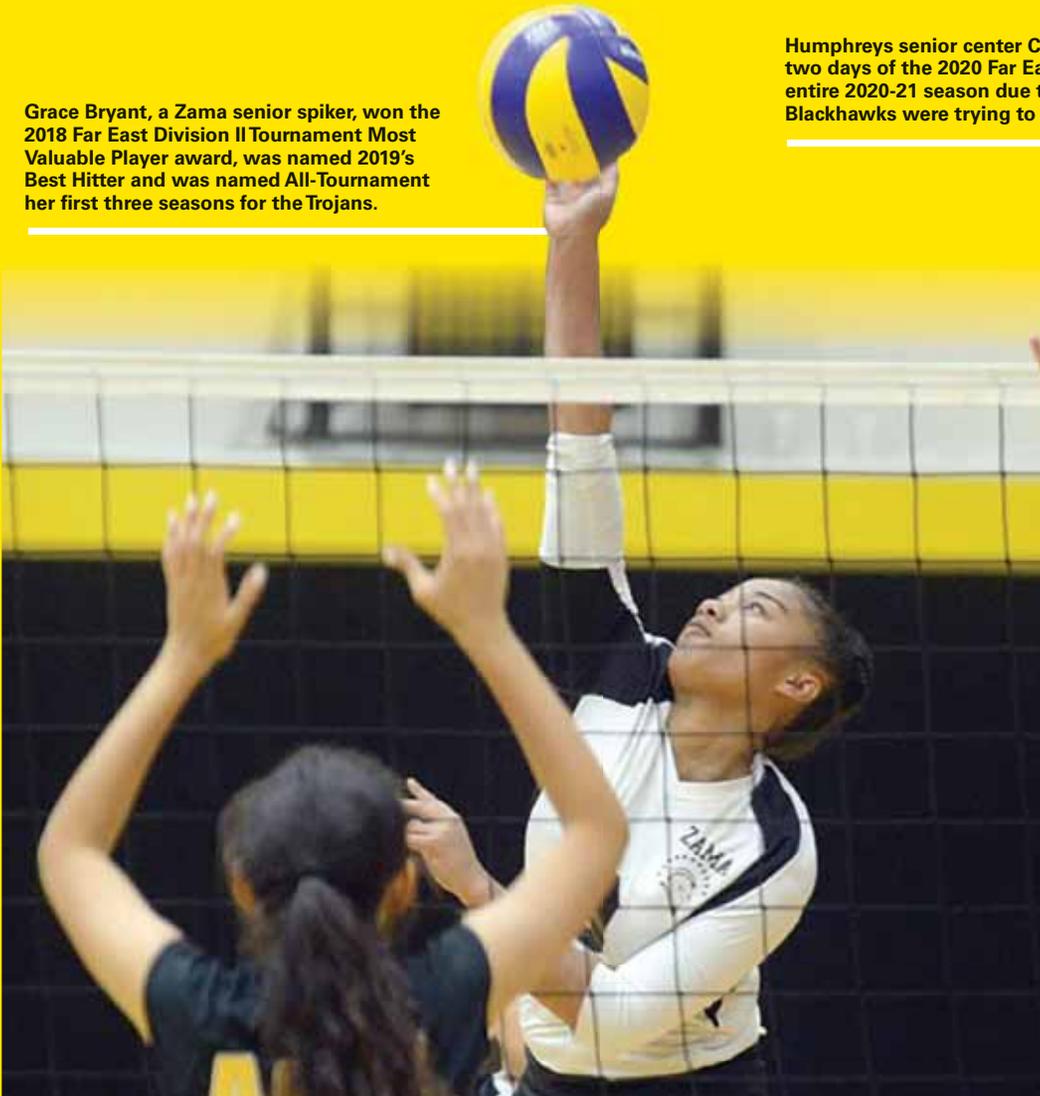
Humphreys' Collin Metcalf, who averaged 14.3 rebounds and 4.9 blocks a game on the basketball court last year as a junior, says he hopes to follow in the footsteps of his brothers.

DeAndre, the 2017 Far East Division I MVP, plays for Grace Christian (Mich.),

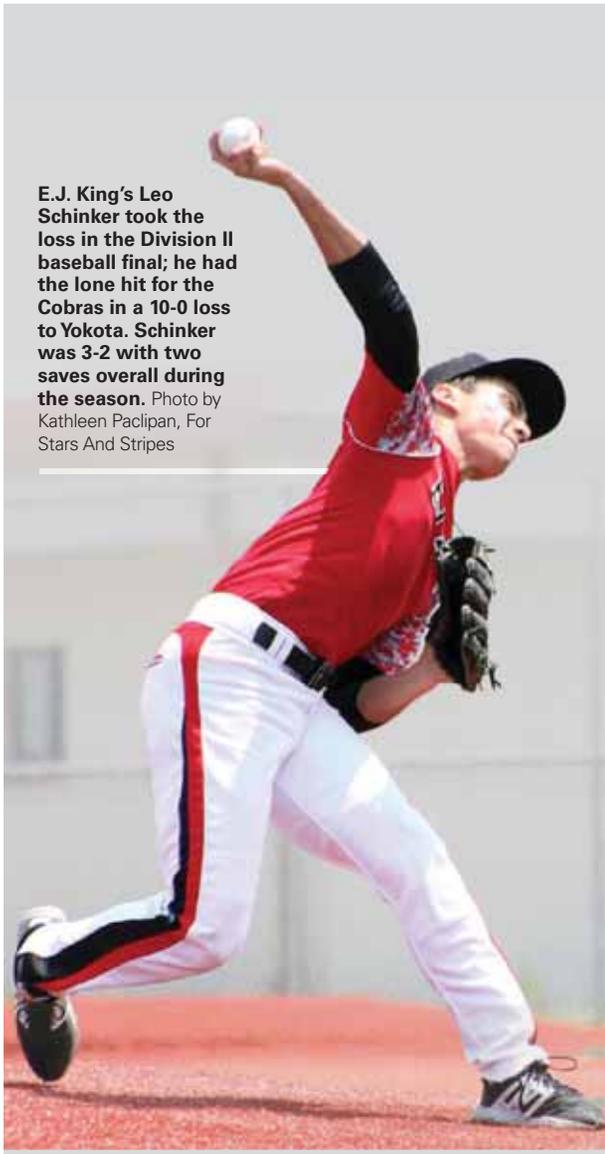
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Grace Bryant, a Zama senior spiker, won the 2018 Far East Division II Tournament Most Valuable Player award, was named 2019's Best Hitter and was named All-Tournament her first three seasons for the Trojans.

Humphreys senior center Collin Metcalf lost out on the last two days of the 2020 Far East Division I tournament and the entire 2020-21 season due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Blackhawks were trying to defend their 2019 D-I title.



# not all athletes' dreams



E.J. King's Leo Schinker took the loss in the Division II baseball final; he had the lone hit for the Cobras in a 10-0 loss to Yokota. Schinker was 3-2 with two saves overall during the season. Photo by Kathleen Paclipan, For Stars And Stripes

→ and Quintin, a three-time Far East MVP, briefly played for St. Bonaventure (N.Y.).

Metcalf says he's trained at home, working on shots and ballhandling, lifting weights and going to the gym to play against adults "who help improve my game in 5-on-5 situations."

Daegu senior Bethani Newbold, a former All-Far East D-II point guard who averaged 23.4 points and six steals in 14 games last year, works out on her own dribbling and shooting and plays in the company-level league on Camp Walker. She, too, wants to play in college.

"COVID (the name of the disease caused by coronavirus) has delayed my dreams, but it has not made them impossible," Newbold said. "I am always working on my overall game."

But nothing can take the place of true high school competition, Schinker said. "It's hard not seeing a live pitcher or feeling the pressure brought on by game-clinching moments, and that really applies to guys who haven't seen much game time," he said.

"I was looking forward to at least playing a game," Metcalf said.

Despite the limits imposed by the pandemic, student-athletes insist they're pressing ahead.

Metcalf said he plans to go to Mercersburg Academy prep school for a year in the hope of landing a scholarship. Newbold is looking at small colleges and says the pandemic has brought "many positives that will prepare my life and my mindset for future endeavors."

Stickar said she's aiming to play junior college ball in California. Lunn is interested in becoming a dual-sport athlete in track and football. Schinker said he wants to catch on at a Division III school.

"It's my intent to play ball at the next level and I know it will be harder than ever to make those dreams a reality," he said. "Regardless of corona, I'm refusing to throw in the towel and stop working."

ornauer.dave@stripes.com  
Twitter: @daveornauer

Humphreys senior Arielle Stickar scored 36 goals in her first two seasons for the Blackhawks, 25 alone as a sophomore, and led Humphreys to an eight-match improvement in 2018 as a freshman.



Daegu senior point guard Bethani Newbold lost the last two days of the 2020 Far East Division II tournament and the entire 2020-21 season due to the coronavirus pandemic. Photo by Mary Obsuna, For Stars and Stripes



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# Keep personal info off social media, Yokota med group urges

BY ERICA EARL,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 31, 2021

YOKOTA AIR BASE — Some medical group patients at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo have been conveying personal health information to their care providers via social media and personal email, a practice the group warns may be counterproductive.

Sending personal health data by email or Facebook messages, for example, is prohibited under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA, the 374th Medical Group said in a Facebook post dated January 28.

Plus, information that comes that way to the health care providers cannot be entered into an individual's health records, according to the medical group.

"Our primary goal is to ensure the health and safety of all of our patients," said the medical group's post. "Information relayed through non-authorized methods may not get entered into your personal health record, potentially jeopardizing your health."

An air base spokesman declined to specify what types of questions people have been asking or whether those questions concerned the coronavirus. A medical group representative was not available for an interview, according to

spokesman 1st Lt. Stuart Thrift.

HIPAA is the federal law that protects sensitive patient health information from disclosure without the patient's consent, according to hippajournal.com.

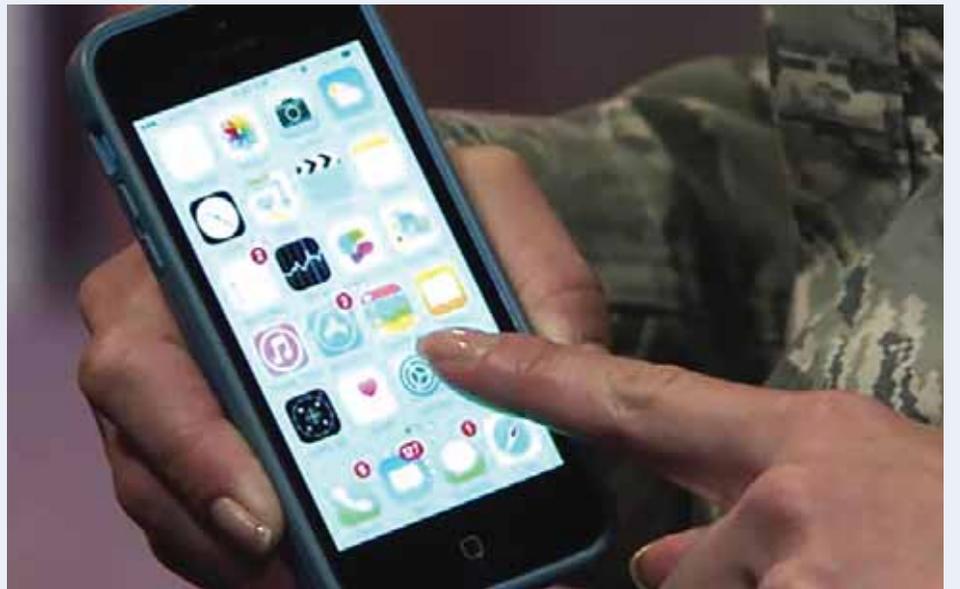
Once a physician engages with a patient on a non-official online channel, privacy issues could arise in discussing specific medical concerns on that platform, according to the website.

Elsewhere, Naval Hospital Okinawa at the Marine Corps' Camp Foster has seen an increase in patient inquiries about the coronavirus, but has not received many inquiries via personal email or social media, hospital spokesman Joseph Andes said.

"Most of the queries and the calls we get from the general public are COVID-19 related," he said. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus.

Naval Hospital Okinawa's COVID Care Line, a hotline designed specifically to answer patient's questions and concerns about the coronavirus, receives about 30 calls per day, but sometimes gets as many as 70, he said.

"These numbers usually ebb and flow in relation to current COVID-19 conditions on the island," Andes said. "It's also great for patients because it keeps our non-COVID related phone lines from getting tied up."



Although a great communication tool with friends and family, service members need to be mindful of the pitfalls of social media. Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Shaffner, Military Health System Communications Office

Patients at Yokota can get information from their providers through appointment and clinic hotlines, a visit to the emergency room if necessary or by participating in question and answer sessions on official Facebook pages, Thrift said.

Yokota also has a medical group hotline that's not limited to COVID-19 questions but serves as a platform for patients asking questions related to the pandemic.

Patients may also use Secure Messaging, a non-emergency medical advice line that's accessible at [www.tricareonline.com](http://www.tricareonline.com).

Yokosuka Naval Base, homeport south of Tokyo for the U.S. 7th Fleet, has not reported a pattern of patients reaching out to care providers by personal email or social media, said Erika Figueroa, a spokeswoman for the naval hospital there. But she said she could see how that might happen.

"Patients deserve transparency and access to information," she told Stars and Stripes. "But they need to do so through the appropriate channels."

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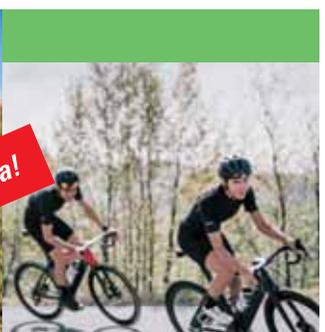
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Photo by Nathan A. Bailey, Stars and Stripes



# 10 years later, a reminder to prepare

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPE JAPAN

Ten years have passed since the East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011. The unprecedented 9.0-magnitude earthquake, subsequent tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown struck the eastern coast and caused significant damage nationwide.

In the aftermath, 15,899 were dead, 2,529 missing, and 6,157 were injured.

That day in 2011, I was 300 miles away from the epicenter, but all of our lives were affected, and I will never forget it. When the quake hit, I was working in my office at the Tokyo Culture Center, a large symphony hall in Ueno. My cellphone started to go off with warnings, and soon, the shaking started. The quake was definitely the strongest in my life, and it continued for over five minutes. Some of my coworkers managed to get under their desks, but I could not stand by myself without holding my own desk. I was staggering but froze because I didn't know what to do.

As soon as the long, terrible quake subsided, I called my wife and daughter. Fortunately, although a swell of phone communication disruptions was reported immediately after, I was able to reach them and make sure they were safe.

The television screen in the office lounge showed unbelievable scenes of the unfolding disaster along the coast. Cameras from helicopters followed the destructive trajectory of the oncoming tsunami off the coast of Fukushima up north. Like scenes out of a sci-fi movie, I couldn't comprehend what I saw live on tv—entire buildings and cars washed over by the ocean.

In Tokyo, my building and the ones surrounding seemed to not have much damage. However, the trains stopped, and the stations evacuated all passengers in preparation for potential aftershocks and damage. I couldn't go home, so I helped the employees at the concert hall distribute blankets and help evacuees coming in as the building was a designated evacuation site.

My wife and daughter were 10 miles away from our home in Yokosuka City when the quake struck. Since they couldn't take a train, they made the four-hour walk along Route 16 until they

reached our condominium. The electricity was out, and so were the building elevators. The building super was handing out candles to residents. The power outage also meant water could not be pumped up to the higher floors. So, they climbed up to our 13th floor apartment, and spent the cold night by candlelight, covered in thick jackets, listening to the news on the portable radio while they snacked on whatever they were able to pick up at the convenience store.

The next morning when some of the train lines were back online, I was able to finally get home to them but not before embarking on a five-hour commute on several packed trains.

For several weeks after, we experienced multiple aftershocks and many disruptions to our daily lives. The damage around Fukushima and surrounding areas continued to increase. Soon, there were food shortages all around the country. Public transportation, known worldwide for its reliability, was deeply affected. And the roads were backed up with traffic. Fires at the oil refineries in Ichihara and Sendai caused gas shortages. I couldn't fill the gas tank of my car until more than three weeks after the earthquake.

For months after, residents in the Kanto Plain were asked to reduce electricity use since many power plants in the country were out of operation, in addition to experiencing rolling blackouts.

These inconveniences cannot compare to the devastation those victims on the eastern coast in Fukushima and Tohoku experienced. But it definitely changed the entire nation's mindset in preparing for future earthquakes.

One of the lessons we learned was to have a go-bag ready. This bag contains a first-aid kit, flashlight, bottled water, emergency food, blanket, and cash, prepared in case of emergency. Filling our 10-liter water tank with new, fresh water on the weekend became part of my family's weekly routine.

Japan is made up of volcanic islands, and a large-sized earthquake might break out at any moment. March 11 is ingrained in my memory. I will never forget it, and it will always be a reminder to be prepared.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Photo by Nathan A. Bailey, Stars and Stripes



Photo by T.D. Flack, Stars and Stripes



File photo



Photo by T.D. Flack, Stars and Stripes



▲ To learn more about earthquake and other natural disaster preparedness, refer to this useful guide from the Government of Japan.

## Speakin' Japanese

### Be prepared

- “Jishin kana?” = Is that an earthquake?  
(“jishin” = earthquake, “. kana?” = is it..?)
- “Jishin no ookisa wa?” = How strong was that earthquake?  
(“ookisa” = strength)
- “Shingenchi wa doko desuka?” = Where was the earthquake centered?  
(“shingenchi” quake center, “. wa doko” = where is)

- “Mado kara hanarete” = Keep away from the windows.  
(“mado” = window, “. kara hanarete” = keep away from)
- “Tsunai no shimpai wa arimasen” = There's no tsunami danger.  
(“shimpai” = concern, “. wa arimasen” = there is no ..)
- “Doko e nigetara iidsuka?” = Where should I evacuate to?  
(“nigetara ii” = should escape/evacuate)
- “Jishin Kitto wo sonaete masuka?” = Do you have an “Earthquake Kit”?  
(“jishin kitto” = Earthquake Kit, “. wo sonaete” = have .. / .. is furnished)

- “Batteree/Denchi” = Batteries
- “Kaichyudento” = Flashlight
- “Mofu” = Emergency blanket
- “Hotai” = Bandages
- “Denwa” = Telephone
- “Mizu/shokuryo” = Water/food
- “Rajo” = Radio
- “Kyukkyusha” = Ambulance
- “Kyugo” = Help

-Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Japan

Pronunciation key: “A” is short (like “ah”); “E” is short (like “get”); “I” is short (like “it”); “O” is long (like “old”); “U” is long (like “tube”); and “AI” is a long “I” (like “hike”). Most words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but “OU” is a long “O” with emphasis on that syllable.

\*Check out the next Stripes Japan for more phrases and a look back at March 2011.



# BETTER SAFE

## What to do when an earthquake

BY TOMOYA NAKAZAWA,  
LIVE JAPAN

Japan is globally known as “earthquake country.” The Japanese archipelago actually sits on a spot called the “Ring of Fire” where four earthquake-causing plates overlap and smush into each other, causing the country to be so prone to quakes.

So what if an earthquake hits while you are in Japan? In a country as prone to earthquakes as here, you can never assume that the ground won’t shake during your stay. Let’s go over the three most important points so that you’re prepared for an actual quake: what to do during an earthquake, what to do right after an earthquake, and what to do during an evacuation.

### EMERGENCY ESCAPE PLAN

#### WHAT TO DO WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE HITS THE BASICS

First, remain calm and look around at local people around you. Most quakes are over after around a minute and without much consequence. Japanese buildings are made to withstand even large temblors. However if you are inside your hotel during a quake and the shaking seems particularly severe, take the following steps.

- Hide under a table or desk if you feel the ground shaking.
- If an earthquake occurs during the night, wake up friends and family and seek to get under a table/desk for protection against falling debris.
- Check the TV, internet, and radio for information regarding aftershocks. Use hotel staff as a resource as well.
- If the quake seemed particularly large, there may be risk of tsunami. There will be information on tsunami alerts (or lack thereof) on the TV and internet as well.
- If you require aid as a result of the earthquake, call the number 199. Tell the operator your name, how to contact you, where you currently are, and what kind of injury you require aid for.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not run outside in a panic.
- Avoid using a car and evacuate on foot if possible.
- Do not use the elevator. Evacuate via the stairs if possible.
- Stay away from broken wires, as well as walls and houses that look like they might collapse.
- Stay away from the coast (and away from possible tsunami).

#### SITUATION-SPECIFIC MEASURES DURING A QUAKE

What to do during an earthquake also depends on where you

are. Let’s take a look at some specific situations.

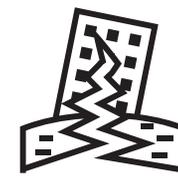
#### AT AN ACCOMMODATION

- Hide under a table or desk to protect yourself from falling objects and furniture.
- Stay put until the shaking fades.
- Once the quake is over, approach the staff and follow their instructions.



#### AT TRAIN STATIONS AND COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

- Ceiling panels and signs might fall during an earthquake. There is a risk of injury or death if you get hit on the head directly, so move away from things that could fall.
- Find a safe place where nothing can fall on you and stay put.
- Make sure that the tremors have stopped, then follow the instructions of the staff. Avoid hasty action and acting by yourself.



#### INSIDE A TRAIN

- Stay put until the staff gives directions. Do not leave the train by yourself as you might cause a delay and inconvenience others in case the trains start running again.
- Make sure that the tremors have stopped, then follow the instructions of the staff. Avoid hasty action and acting by yourself.



#### INSIDE AN ELEVATOR

- If an earthquake occurs while you’re in an elevator, press all floors and get off the next time it stops and find shelter.
- If you are trapped, contact the elevator’s management or security office by using the installed speakerphone. Explain your situation and wait for help.



#### INSIDE A CAR

- If you are driving while an earthquake hits, be aware that other people might not notice the shaking, so decelerate slowly, turn on the hazard lights and pull over to the left.
- Stay in the car until the tremors fade and act only after checking information about the situation via phone or radio.
- Parked cars might obstruct ambulances or firetrucks, so make sure to leave it unlocked and the key in the ignition so that emergency responders can move the car as needed.



#### WHILE OUTDOORS

- Move away from brick walls, vending machines, utility poles, and electrical wires, as they might fall over.



- If you are near the sea, evacuate immediately and check for information near the coast until the tsunami warning is lifted.

#### WHAT TO DO AFTER ACTING IN A HURRY IS DANGEROUS. SO SEEK SHELTER WHILE STAYING PUT.

- If the building you are in is not on fire, stay inside. It is dangerous to go outside.
- If you’re afraid of a fire or the shaking, go to a nearby park or designated shelter. If you have a helmet, bag, and so on, take them with you for protection against falling glass shards.
- Once the shaking has stopped, follow the instructions of the staff. In case you need to evacuate, follow the instructions of the staff.
- If you are on the ground floor, move outside to not get crushed in case of a collapse.
- Check the disaster manual in your building. One example is the “Tokyo Bousai” (Tokyo Disaster Prevention) manual, published by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Disaster Prevention Center. It is available in Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean. <https://www.bousai.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/>

#### PREVENTING SECONDARY DISASTERS

- Turn off anything that may cause a fire, such as cigarettes, and so on.
- Close the main gas valve to prevent gas leaks. If you already notice a gas smell, do not plug and unplug electrical outlets.

#### CONTACTING FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Contacting friends and family to confirm their own situation is important. Phone lines are very likely congested, so it might also not be able to connect. We recommend using one of the following services.

#### DISASTER EMERGENCY MESSAGE BOARD

This is a free service that lets you leave a message for friends and family. To record a message for friends and family, call 171 and leave such a message, deal with the operator and leave a message.

This message can be checked by calling 171 and entering a specific phone number. If you do not enter it properly, it is important to decide on a specific number and then share it with family and friends.

#### DISASTER MESSAGE BOARD

This is a free service that lets you leave a message for friends and family. To record a message for friends and family, call 171 and leave such a message, deal with the operator and leave a message.



# THAN SORRY

## ake hits while you're in Japan



ate to high ground as fast as possible regarding a tsunami. Do not go back until a warning is canceled.

### THE EARTHQUAKE

#### BE AWARE, STAYING SAFE

in danger of collapsing or catching fire. Do not blindly rush outside.

If a building is collapsing, evacuate to a safe area or evacuation spot. Furniture and other items should be covered while protecting your head. On top of that, watch your step.

When an earthquake occurs, open all doors and windows in the building.

When an earthquake occurs, evacuate to a higher floor or go to an open area to prevent the building from collapsing.

For more information, visit the "Tokyo Metropolitan Government Disaster Preparedness Website" that provides a disaster manual in English. [www.tokyo.lg.jp](http://www.tokyo.lg.jp)



#### PREVENTING DISASTERS

Prevent fires, such as gas, the stove, and electrical appliances.

To prevent fires caused by a gas leak, check for gas leaks, do not light an open fire and use electrical appliances.

#### NOTIFY FRIENDS

It is important to tell them you're safe and to check on them. However, telephone lines may be busy after a big earthquake and you may not be able to get to the internet. In that case, we have the following channels:

#### EMERGENCY MESSAGE DIAL (171)

This service becomes available after an earthquake on the Shindo scale. It lets you check on your family via phone. If you want to use this service, follow the instructions of the manual.

It can be used by friends and family by dialing a specific phone number. To use this system, you need to register on a phone number beforehand and inform your friends.

#### WEB171

This service becomes available after an earthquake on the Shindo scale. Access

web171 (<https://www.web171.jp>) via the internet and enter the phone number you want to check messages for. If a message has been left, you'll be forwarded to a registration screen to check the message. If there is no message yet, you can leave an email address to receive a notification as soon as a message is left. You will also have to decide on a specific number beforehand if you want to use that service. (Note that Facebook and other SNS platforms may also have a "Mark me as safe" feature as well.)

#### IF YOU ARE BURIED

If you get stuck underneath furniture or debris, call out loudly for help. Should you be injured and shouting is difficult, knock or tap on the things nearby or use the alarm of your mobile phone to notify people nearby.

#### IF A FIRE BREAKS OUT

- Call out loudly to warn people around you. The Japanese word for "fire" is kaji.
- Try to put out the fire with a fire extinguisher. However, not every fire can be put out by one person, so if in doubt, stay safe and run away.
- Move while crouching down and covering your mouth and nose with a wet towel or something similar to avoid breathing in the smoke.



### WHAT TO DO DURING AN EVACUATION

#### HAVE AN EVACUATION BAG AT THE READY

It can be a good idea to separate out essential items into a smaller bag for a "just-in-case" situation.

- Only pack the most important things to keep your bag as light as possible.
- Choose a simple and light bag or backpack that is easy to carry but able to fit.
- Store necessities and valuables in your emergency bag, but try to keep the number of things to a minimum.

#### WHAT TO PACK

- Flashlight
- Mobile charger and extra battery
- Emergency food and water
- Cash
- Medicine and other medical supplies

#### OPTIONAL

- Work gloves
- Plastic bags
- Poncho
- Helmet
- Candles, lighter



#### PREPARING FOR SECONDARY DISASTERS

- Check information about the weather and aftershocks regularly. Such information is announced by the municipalities and the Japan Meteorological Agency (<http://www.jma.go.jp/en/>).
- There is a possibility of landslides and collapsing houses due to aftershocks, so stay away from the shore and buildings.

### PREPARING FOR AN EARTHQUAKE

#### CHECK THE EARTHQUAKE RESISTANCE STANDARDS

The law regarding earthquake resistance of buildings changed and became a lot stricter after 1981, so houses built before that time might not meet the modern standards. It is important to ask how old a building is to assess its ability to withstand earthquakes.

#### CONFIRM THE LANGUAGE SKILL OF YOUR LANDLORD OR ACCOMMODATION STAFF

It is important to be able to communicate with the local staff or your landlord in case of a disaster. Make sure to check what languages they can speak beforehand.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

The 2000 Tottori earthquake (magnitude of 6.7), the 2007 Chuetsu offshore earthquake (magnitude 6.6), the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami (magnitude 9.0), the 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes (magnitude 7.0), and the most recent 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake (magnitude 6.6). The Japanese government and local municipalities are constantly improving how to deal with disasters based on the experience of past earthquakes and so on. However, once a strong earthquake occurs, the damage is often more severe than expected.

You can never be too prepared for a natural disaster such as an earthquake. Being in a country with a different language and culture while an earthquake hits will certainly seem scary, but knowing how to deal with such an occurrence is going to help you navigate the situation confidently!



Photos courtesy of Live Japan

# Why Disney fans have post-pandemic sights on Japan

BY CARLYE WISEL,  
BLOOMBERG

As some families eagerly await COVID-19 vaccinations so they can get their Mickey-loving kids back to the Magic Kingdom, the most passionate Disney fans are looking forward to something else entirely: a trip to Japan.

Tokyo Disney Resort will emerge from the pandemic bigger and better than before. And it's already a nostalgia feast - the idyllic Disney of childhood as preserved in one's mind, where the castle is still blue, soap is magically dispensed in the shape of Mickey Mouse, and families efficiently board versions of Space Mountain and Big Thunder Mountain Railroad that somehow always look as good as new.

Only-in-Japan rides and unique experiences, such as a Big Band revue with Mickey Mouse playing the drums live, amp up the charm beyond anything seen stateside. Whimsical snacks - including mochi shaped as Toy Story's Little Green Men aliens, soft-boiled eggs with Mickey-shaped yolks, and a rotating variety of popcorn flavors that include garlic shrimp, curry, and honey-soy - can't be found anywhere else. And on souvenir stands, kawaii culture makes for Disney keepsakes unlike any others.

That's why 3 million visitors to the parks each year (in normal times) come from overseas - 10% of its total attendance. In 2019, Tokyo Disney Resort reported record-setting visits while its sibling parks in the U.S. and Hong Kong saw 3% declines in attendance.

"It truly does feel like the ultimate pilgrimage," says Geoffrey Koester, a higher education administrator, content creator and lifelong Disney fan.

That's partially because the two theme parks, Disneyland and DisneySea, four hotels, and shopping district located at Tokyo Disney Resort are wholly owned by the deep-pocketed Oriental Land Co.; in addition to licensing and royalty fees, it contracts Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI) to bring its next-level visions to life.

Unlike Walt Disney Co., OLC's business entities

almost completely revolve around the theme park resort, resulting in well-funded experiences, along with forward-thinking expansions that celebrate nostalgic Disney icons rather than flashy commercial acquisitions. (That comes with a flip side; a less-diversified balance sheet means the company lost its only real source of income during its four-month closure in 2020.)

Cutting-edge technology combined with a reverence for classic Disney stories, rather than its more recently acquired "Star Wars" and Marvel franchises, is the fairy dust to Tokyo Disney's appeal. A 75 billion yen (\$720 million) "Beauty and the Beast" expansion completed in 2020, for instance, gives guests a ride through Beast's castle from aboard an enchanted teacup; a further 250 billion yen (\$2.4 billion) will soon bring "Peter Pan" and "Tangled" attractions to DisneySea in a more significant way than at parks in the U.S. There's a caveat, though: While it's all familiar intellectual property, the storytelling is primarily in Japanese, be it on rides, shows, or parades.

"I often find myself wishing I could erase all of my memories and experience our Disney parks again for the first time," says Alexa Starkey, dental hygienist and self-proclaimed Disney adult. "Tokyo Disney Resort represents a way to get that first-time Disney feeling again."

Tokyo DisneySea tends to astonish Americans most. Taking inspiration from the seven seas, its "ports" meld shockingly realistic scenery wherein a Venetian gondola drifts past a fiery volcano, or an elevated train bypasses turn-of-the-century Manhattan as it curls toward a steam-powered ocean liner.

"So many of the attractions at Tokyo are not found at any other park, and even those that share a name with another park aren't nearly the same experience," says Koester.

The Jules Verne-inspired Journey to the Center of the Earth, for instance, puts passengers face-to-face with a ghastly, oversized lava monster before bursting through a volcano; the Japanese take on

Tower of Terror drops its original "Twilight Zone" theme for a fresh storyline about the disappearance of a wealthy hotelier. On the entertainment side, the nighttime Electrical Parade Dreamlights puts a modern spin on the illuminated Main Street Electrical Parade floats of yesteryear, while stage shows include the Mardi Gras dance revue, Let's Party Gras.

The parks are also a proving ground for technology. Pooh's Hunny Hunt - in which a sweet but slightly psychedelic story unfolds from a seemingly self-driving vehicle - pioneered "trackless" rides nearly two decades before one arrived at Walt Disney World. Now Disney's U.S. parks are using this system for many of their freshest attractions, such as the Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance ride that opened in 2019 at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

Daniel Jue, WDI portfolio creative executive for Tokyo Disney Resort, has a further theory regarding the parks' devout fandom: its Japanese guests. Here, they don matching outfits and character headbands, mimic parade choreography, and simply let loose in a way that doesn't happen elsewhere in Japan's day-to-day society. It's participation as attraction.

"My hypothesis is that there is a kind of a human, essential need that Tokyo Disney Resort fulfills for our Japanese guests," he says.

Take Duffy the Disney Bear, a stuffed animal that received a lukewarm reception in American parks but is perhaps the greatest Tokyo Disney phenomenon. Japanese audiences dress up Duffy dolls in costumes, push them in strollers, and commandeer high chairs for the dolls in restaurants. Duffy's corresponding crew of a half-dozen gleefully simplistic animals, known as Duffy & Friends, have such strong appeal that they paved the way for OLC to generate roughly \$8 billion a year in merchandise spending in 2018 and 2019.

Cultural beliefs such as omotenashi - the Japanese philosophy of intuitive hospitality - only further Disney's own core values of service with a smile. Such little things as the fact that bags left in one's room can be seamlessly transferred to another hotel are commonplace Japanese amenities that would come across (at best) as unconventional consumer demands at American theme parks.

"There's this level of standard that has to be met, no matter what, and in Western culture, we're a little loosey-goosey on it," says Chris Nilghe, founder of TDRExplorer, which offers English-language information and guides to visiting the resort.

Tokyo Disney Resorts closed for months at the start of the pandemic, then reopened on a limited basis in July, with fewer available shops and restaurants in order to facilitate social distancing. By the time international borders reopen, operations should be closer to normal.

Rules and regulations, including bookings and ticket sales, are ever-changing amid the pandemic. Generally, first-time guests are encouraged to book hotels roughly six months in advance, with rooms at Hotel MiraCosta - facing the visual spectacle of Tokyo DisneySea - in highest demand.

"Tokyo Disney Resort represents a way to get that first-time Disney feeling again."



Visitors wearing masks pose July 1 at Tokyo Disneyland in Urayasu, Japan. Cutting-edge technology combined with a reverence for classic Disney stories add to the Tokyo park's appeal. Photo courtesy of Japan News-Yomiuri

# Tsubaki

*A perfect bloom in an imperfect season*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
YASHIRA M. RODRÍGUEZ SIERRA,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**I**remember the first time I saw Japan's rose. Flipping through a book about flowers, I fell in love at first sight with the camellia flower. There's no doubt that the camellia flower has an incredible beauty, that it even enjoys a privileged position in Asian cultures.

In Korea, the flower represents longevity. Similarly, for China it is part of their traditional medicine and for Japan, the camellia is used in the traditional tea ceremony.

The camellia japonica is called Tsubaki in Japan and is considered "the rose of Japan." The bright red, pink and white flowers bloom in an evergreen shrub. There are 300 different species and about 3,000 hybrid camellias around the world.

The popularity of the flower goes beyond its remarkable beauty and

dates back to the Edo Period (1600-1868) when it was included in the tea ceremony tradition. The leaves of the camellia sinensis species are used for many teas popular worldwide used for casual drinking and medicinal purposes. In art, camellia japonica has for centuries inspired numerous paintings, illustrations, poems and more.

The seeds are extracted and the oil used in hair moisturizers. Even sumo wrestlers use the camellia hair oil as part of their regimen.

The extracted oil is also used in cooking, especially for tempura style frying and salad dressings, in other beauty products like soap, and in paints.

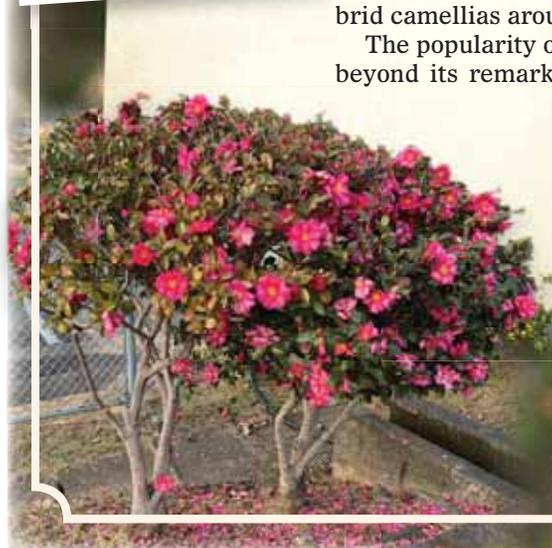
The camellia bushes flower from January to April and you'll find these blooms in all corners of Japan. A few towns and shrines across the country even celebrate the arrival of the camellias. In Hagi, an old castle town in Yamaguchi

Prefecture, there is an annual festival in honor of the vibrant blossom. On Oshima Island, the flower is used to make many of the local items like jam and oil. The island is also home to three of the 50 International Camellia Society Gardens.

During the spring flowering season, I collect the camellia blossoms shed by the bush for a fun project. In a glass bottle full of water, I soak the camellia blossoms between two to four weeks. At the end of that process, I have camellia-infused rinse to use after shampooing my hair. Give it a try!

*YN3 Yashira M. Rodríguez Sierra is originally from Caguas, Puerto Rico. She is assigned to Sasebo Naval Base. Rodríguez Sierra enjoys nature and moving to Japan was a dream come true. She volunteers at a local orphanage and before joining the Navy she was an artist and journalist.*

For more information about Oshima Island:





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**GETTING THERE**  
 From JR Beppu station you can use bus numbers 2, 5, 41, 43 and go down at "Umi Jigoku Mae". Kamado Jigoku is a few minutes walk from the bus station.

# Beppu a hot spring haven in Japan

*Editor's Note: These are uncertain times. Always check with the rules set for travel by your base command. Wear a face-mask, wash your hands and follow social distance guidelines if and when you travel.*

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
 DIAGORAS KALAITZOGLOU,  
 JAPANTRAVEL

Beppu, one of the best hot spring cities in the world, is also known for its "hells" (in Japanese "jigoku"). Seven photogenic hot springs which will definitely stimulate your senses. Since I like to take my time visiting places I decided to visit each one separately with a slow pace, starting with Kamado Jigoku, also known as the "Cooking Pot Hell."

There are two ticket offices and entrance-exits, the south and east one. Kamado Jigoku has six districts or points of interest, since the first one is just after the south ticket office I decided to enter through here. The entrance fee is ¥400 or if you plan to visit the other hells as well you can have a combination ticket for all seven hells for ¥2,000 (valid for two consecutive days). If you have purchased the "Be Beppu" booklet you can have a 10% discount for the combination ticket for all seven hells plus a free onsen egg in Kamado Jigoku.

"Be Beppu" is an information guidebook about Beppu made by Beppus Tourism Information which apart of the information and photos offers many free bath tickets and discount coupons. You can get it from the tourism information office

inside JR Beppu station.

After the entrance you will find the first hell, a bubbling hot 90 degrees Celsius thermal mud. You can hear the bubbles burst and if you look carefully you'll notice the interesting bubble burst liquid formations. Afterwards you will be greeted by a Japanese demon (oni) statue. Under it, is a vent which blows out steam at 100 degrees Celsius. Some interesting information is written at the info board, if you hold a lighted cigarette or a match and strongly blow the lighted tip towards the steam, the steam intensity will instantly increase. This is the case with all the steam coming out from the hells as well. On the left there is an Agave century plant which blooms only once in 60 years.

Passing the statue you will find yourself at a beautiful cobalt blue hell. It is 85

degrees Celsius and there is steam pouring out. An information board tells you that the white substance seen all around the hell is composed of amorphous silica (inorganic material commonly used in semiconductor circuits) and hot spring deposits. It takes around 70 years to form.

Continuing past the beautiful blue pond it's time for you to relax a little bit before you proceed to the next attraction. There is a bench which you can sit and warm up your feet on the hot stones, just make sure you remove your shoes. Then you can actually drink and taste the hot spring water, be careful to do sip down slowly as the water can be as hot as 80 degrees Celsius. If you are still not warm enough, a nice steam bath for your feet and hands will make you relaxed. And

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**JapanTravel.com**

finally there is a steam bath for your throat and face skin. Steam pours out from tubes, you can just place your face in front of it and if you open your mouth it will reach your throat as well. The steam pours out at 100 degrees Celsius.

Further on, there is one more thermal mud pond with a temperature of 80 degrees Celsius. You can see mud bubble bursts here as well but not as intense as the previous one (at least during my visit). And then you will be at the biggest and probably the most photogenic hell of Kamado Jigoku. A big pond of silky blue color. An information sign states that the ponds color changes several times a year, from dark to light and from blue to green color. The explanation to this phenomenon is yet to be found. You can walk around the circumference of the pond enjoying the various different points of view. There is a vent that sprouts hot water with steam and it's the point where most of the people make a stop. Not only because you actually get sprinkled while you pass by but because usually the person in charge will blow with a lighted cigarette or a candle towards the vent causing an instant increase of its intensity which lasts for quite a few seconds offering an even more thrilling spectacle.

The last pond is one more thermal mud one, like the two previous ones. This one had a bit more reddish color and there is no particular area for muddy bubble bursts, it seems that it boils from everywhere. The difference in color is due to iron contained in the soil.

Finally, there is a large foot bath and a shop serving drinks and steamed delicacies, eggs and vegetables. Everything steamed in the hells steam of course. The

## Grab lunch at Jigoku Mushi Kobo Kannawa

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KIM B, JAPAN TRAVEL

Japan has lots of great choices for DIY cooking adventures. Yakini-ku, where you barbecue meat on a grill, or shabu shabu, where you boil meat and veggies in water are two popular options. Beppu, in Oita Prefecture, has one of the most unique DIY meal options though - steaming your eats through the power of Mother Nature!

The city is well known for having many onsen, and they use the natural surroundings to their advantage from a cooking perspective, too.

Jigoku mushi literally translates to "hell steaming", and you can have the chance to steam your own lunch at Jigoku Mushi Kobo Kannawa. There is plenty available to choose from on the menu, from seafood and meats to eggs and veggies, all of which are provided to you in wire baskets to pop into steam ovens. It makes for a very unique (and delicious!) eating experience, and is one of the most memorable lunches I've enjoyed during my time in Japan.



Gloves and fabric liners are provided for your safety.

### GETTING THERE

Jigoku Mushi Kobo Kannawa is located in Beppu, Oita Prefecture. The closest station is Beppudaigaku, but the premises is still approximately 30 minutes walk from there. Taxis are available from the station if you'd prefer to get there faster!

egg sold is special, named "Onsen Piitan", its shell looks normal but once you break it you will notice the difference, not only the color of the egg is different, but the taste was also rich and extremely delicious. As soft as it needed to be with a unique flavor that will give you cravings for more eggs.

This egg sold in Kamado Jigoku is very special and differs from the other onsen eggs as it is steam cooked for around 24 hours. The different color and rich taste is the result of this prolonged steamed cooking and this is also one of the reasons they want to distinguish it from the rest of the onsen eggs, thus naming it "Onsen Piitan". They sell more than 3,000 eggs daily.

Exiting there is a souvenir shop selling all kinds of interesting things but before that I saw this small garden which had

some very cute stones with cat paintings. I thought that somebody around there must definitely love cats and then I saw something moving on the other side of the garden and finally understood where the inspiration comes from. A beautiful white, green eyed cat was moving around, gave me a look from afar and then vanished in the vegetation. Apparently I learned that cats love to be around onsens and hot springs for various reasons. From the warmth provided to ease in giving birth, the kittens have more possibilities to survive the winter. Plus, cats are not the only creatures attracted to the warmth, all kinds of insects come as well which are a good source of cat food.

I exited from the east ticket office but there was one last surprise for me. I went past the toilets and just next to the east tickets office I noticed a building which had "iyashinoyu"

written in Japanese. I got excited as it looked like an onsen, something that the ticket office confirmed. It happens that if you have purchased an entry ticket for Kamado Jigoku you can use this onsen for free. But you need to go to the east ticket office and ask for the key, you unlock, bath, lock again and return the key. So you can even have a real onsen experience after visiting the beautiful hells of Kamado Jigoku. It seems that most of the people are unaware of this hidden gem plus there is no English sign. Later on I found out that the onsen was built by the Kamado Jigoku owner for family use but he has it open for visitors as well. An excellent way to finish your visit in Kamado Jigoku.

For more info visit: [bebeppu.com](http://bebeppu.com)

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Class time runs from 9:30am – 12pm at the Yokota Arts & Crafts Center

Learn the fundamental working of your digital camera. Get off the couch and your camera's Auto setting by learning how to capture pictures professionally. This class will open a new level of understanding in digital photography. Bring your camera, a lens, a digital camera card and a charged battery for this illuminating experience! Fee: \$35 per person. Instructor is Mark Allen. Space is limited, so register at the Arts and Crafts Center today! Have questions about this program? Call us at 225-8133.

### The Wood Shop

Offers state-of-the-art wood crafting machinery in a safe and clean environment. A Safety Orientation is required for self-help woodworkers before using machinery; classes are held regularly and cost \$5. After completion, a certificate is issued that is valid throughout your tour at Yokota. The cost of using the shop is \$2 per hour or \$35 monthly. Check the class schedule for details.

### Awards and Plaques Shop

Boasts an assortment of plaques in all shapes and sizes, as well as lucite statues. Engraving services are done in-house; customers can choose fonts and colors. The shop also offers a full-color sublimation service to transfer your favorite snapshot or piece of art onto almost any surface. Stop by to see samples.

### The Frame Shop

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Hot Item Plaque shop



A&C Plaque Shop



Wood Shop



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# Know a picky eater?

## 8 awesome Japanese foods for all

LIVE JAPAN



Japanese food is absolutely amazing, but it's also completely different in taste, presentation, and texture from dishes in many Western countries. From raw fish to stinky (if healthy) natto soybeans, there are many dishes in Japan that might discourage the less adventurous gourmands.

While liking or disliking a dish is a matter of personal taste, fortunately it's also fairly easy to find Japanese dishes that will amaze even the most Western food-oriented palates – if you know what you are looking for. As an Italian expat who's resided in Japan for years, I've had many friends and family who have visited Japan, some of whom were somewhat picky with what goes on their plate. Here are 8 food suggestions which, in my experience, delighted everyone!

### 1 Shabu-shabu / When you've tired of ramen

Shabu-shabu is a dish that falls into the nabe category. Nabe are hot-pot dishes. This kind of food is a variety of ingredients boiled into a large ceramic pot. The water can be seasoned with different spices and dressings and the food is then dipped in a variety of sauces.

Shabu-shabu is plain water boiling vegetables such as cabbage and mushrooms, along with tofu. Prime cuts of beef or pork meat are thinly sliced and served. You then dip the meat in the water (it usually takes only a few seconds for it to be ready) and finally add a dressing of ponzu sauce (a citrus-based dressing), or sesame sauce, or spicy oil, or any combination of the three.

The name shabu-shabu derives from the swinging hand movement performed to cook the meat while holding it with chopsticks.

The flavor of shabu-shabu usually lays in the quality of the meat, and in most cases, meat in Japan is really good (albeit a little expensive at times). Also, this dish, unlike many other Japanese ones, will allow you to mix and match and choose what to add or what to avoid, to customize your perfect Japanese hot pot.

If you like soups, you will love this dish, but you will also enjoy it if you're looking for a healthy, tasty, and complete meal.

### 2 Yakiniku / For when you crave some serious meat

Regardless of where you're from or what dishes you're used to eating, chances are that you are familiar with one or more different styles of grilled food.

Yakiniku literally means “grilled meat” but actually it could be also grilled veggies or fish, or all of the above. Originally Yakiniku is the Japanese version of Korean barbecue restaurants, and while that might sound exotic to some, what yakiniku boils down to is grilled food seasoned to taste. You get to choose what food you want, what cuts you want, and what seasoning you want to use.

If you prefer to add just salt, and/or pepper, you can, and if you are curious about other seasonings, you will have plenty to choose among.

Depending on the quality of the food you order prices will change, but by and large, the cost won't be too high, especially considering that many yakiniku restaurants offer an “all-you-can-eat” (tabehoudai) option, allowing customers to order as many dishes as they want to, within (usually) a 2-hour time, for a fixed price.

### 3 Yakitori / A quick and tasty dish for those who like a lot of choices in one dish

This is also another kind of grilled food, and like yakitori it has a slightly misleading name. Yakitori stands literally for “grilled chicken”, but in reality, these are skewers of all kinds of meat, veggies, fish, and shells. One thing that groups them all up is that they are grilled.

When you go to a yakitori restaurant or to almost any traditional Japanese restaurant (Izakaya), you'll likely find a number of yakitori options. Some may be quite curious (ranging from heart to liver and other organ meats – to crispy chicken skin and tail), while other choices will be quite familiar sounding.

In fact, most kinds of yakitori are skewers with cuts of chicken breast or thigh, or beef flank, steak, and more. The



Photos courtesy of Live Japan

seasoning once again varies depending on your order, and on your personal choices, so that you can be on familiar ground or explore more unique (to you) flavors.

### 4 Eel / When you just want a bite of savory 'cooked sushi'

Japan is probably the king of eel preparation, but Italians are not new to this dish. Eel is prepared in many different ways in the Mediterranean peninsula and it's even a staple dish during Christmas and New Years time.

If you like eel, then you'll be pleasantly surprised by how many delicious choices you'll have here in Japan. But once again, if you want to stay on familiar grounds, then try a simple, yet fantastic eel over rice dish, where the fish is prepared grilled, or steamed and laid over rice. This typically takes the form of the “unagi-don” or eel bowl. The eel can be glazed or seasoned with a number of spices and sauces, making the experience always tasty, and never boring.

### 5 Karaage / Because who doesn't like fried chicken

Who doesn't like some nicely fried chicken? Japan has developed its own way of preparing fried chicken, and you'll find karaage almost anywhere you go.

What makes things even better is that while the word ‘karaage’ technically refers to fried chicken, you can find different kind of food stuffs fried in a similar way. That includes squid. The Italian food lovers among you will surely know of “calamari fritti” (fried calamari – Italian style fried squid). A similar dish is also octopus karaage.

Karaage in general is crunchy and flavorful and there are different kinds of batter that are used. It can have a soy cause seasoning, or pepper, or lemon, or even cheese. Karaage is one of the most common Japanese dishes but it's also familiar in flavor and presentation to Italian fried food. You'll love it.

### 6 Tempura / For those who want an exotic dish, but a familiar flavor

When it comes to Japanese food very few dishes are as traditional, tasty, and non-adventurous as tempura.

Tempura is often shrimp, fish, vegetables, or chicken dipped in a special batter, fried, and served with a variety of sauces (or simply salt). The combination of the preparation of the batter and the frying style makes for a crunchy and light texture that is also very flavorful.

While it's true that tempura does not remind of Italian cuisine, it's one of those dishes that is very easy to fall in love with regardless of one's preferred flavors. You will easily find tempura in izakaya restaurants, or in tempura-specialized venues.

### 7 Nikuman / A bit of West and a bit of east in one bite

This particular kind of soul food has its origin in China. It's a snack that can easily be found in convenience stores (conbini) and supermarkets and it's a steamed bread dumpling filled with pork or beef meat.

The Italians among you may associate it to a sandwich or to our ravioli. While it may look somehow similar it's very different, but it's rich and filled with familiar flavors, and even the least adventurous among you will likely find it delicious.

Just pay attention when you bite down. It's got a scorching hot core!

### 8 Gyoza / For those looking for a quick flavor-packing snack

When people say “Italian dumplings” they are talking about ravioli, and when they say “Japanese dumplings” they mean gyoza. This extremely popular and accessible dish is a dumpling originated in China (but since very much modified into a Japanese staple) made with a lightly or deep-fried dough and a meat (usually pork) and spices filling.

You can then season gyoza with a variety of sauces. Now, if you're expecting anything similar to an Italian dumpling, you'll probably be disappointed, but like the other items on this list, not only are gyoza as Japanese as apple pie is American, but they are also tasty, and an easy new food if you're not a risk taker.

Regardless of how delicious food in other countries can be (and Japan is rightfully famous for many of its specialties), sometimes it can be hard to try flavors that we are not used to or that are excessively different from our national cuisine. Fortunately, while many people think that Japan is a land of almost only fish and dishes that are too exotic, you will find that there are in fact many foods (not including the amazing desserts) that are as traditional as they are familiar.

# Stripes Sports Trivia

The "Madden Curse" has been long talked about in the NFL. Whether it was Mike Vick in 2004, Donovan McNabb in '06 or Shaun Alexander in '07, the curse has hit some players hard. But, the cover hasn't always featured a player. For the first few years the cover featured John Madden himself. Who was the first player to steal the cover away from the former Raiders coach?

**Answer**

Eddie George

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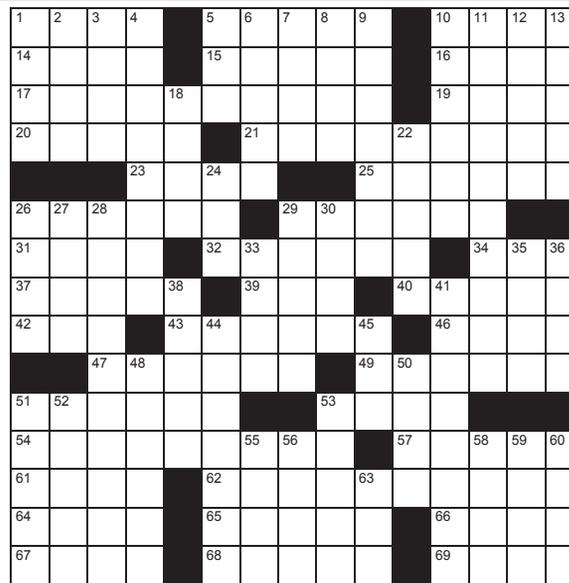
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## The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- Gift tag word
- Kickstarts, in a way
- Quote, as a source
- "Tomb Raider" heroine Croft
- Be ready for
- Black stone
- On the cutting edge
- Actor's aim
- Prove to be untrue
- Colorful salad ingredient
- Icky buildup
- Newspaper supplement
- High-\_\_\_ (edgy)
- Slow gallop
- Animal's den
- Raspy
- TV movie network
- Musical eightsome
- Band's booking
- Actress Wilson of "Pitch Perfect"
- \_\_\_ constrictor
- Tilling tool
- Aquarium growth
- Type of voyage
- Pants measurement
- Be plentiful
- "Don't bet \_\_\_!"
- Crooked copies
- Bantu language
- Curved molding
- Imagined
- Arm bone
- Like many cliffs
- Cognizant of
- Most born in August
- Remorseful
- Card game start



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- Great review
- Kind of thermometer
- Salon service
- Do a checkout chore
- Oscar or Tony
- Part of TLC
- Captain hanged for piracy
- Underwear of yore
- Autopsy subject
- Like some tumors
- President before Polk
- Make an effort
- Coastal bird
- Computer key
- "That's disgusting!"
- Oscar Madison, e.g.
- Kind of salad
- "West Side Story" Oscar winner
- Type of terrier
- Jason's ship
- Grimm beast
- Prefix with phone
- Cowder tidbit
- Yours, in old days
- "Unforgiven" director
- Formal speech
- Take the pot
- Stable-owner of Greek myth
- Unless, in law
- Run \_\_\_ of (violate)
- Scottish goblin
- Basket willow
- Wild about
- "Veer" anagram
- Writer Rice
- Letter after epsilon
- Revered one
- 007, for one

### Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

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

## DID YOU KNOW?

To give their children an edge over the competition, many parents in Japan send their children to "juku," or cram schools. The schools have been around for decades. There are more than 50,000 juku in Japan today and about 50-70 percent of students who plan to take entrance exams use them..

## Kanji of the week

# 浦

Ura (creek)

## Language Lesson

I'm hurt.

Kega wo shimashita.

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## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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

Edited by Margie E. Burke

### HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

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

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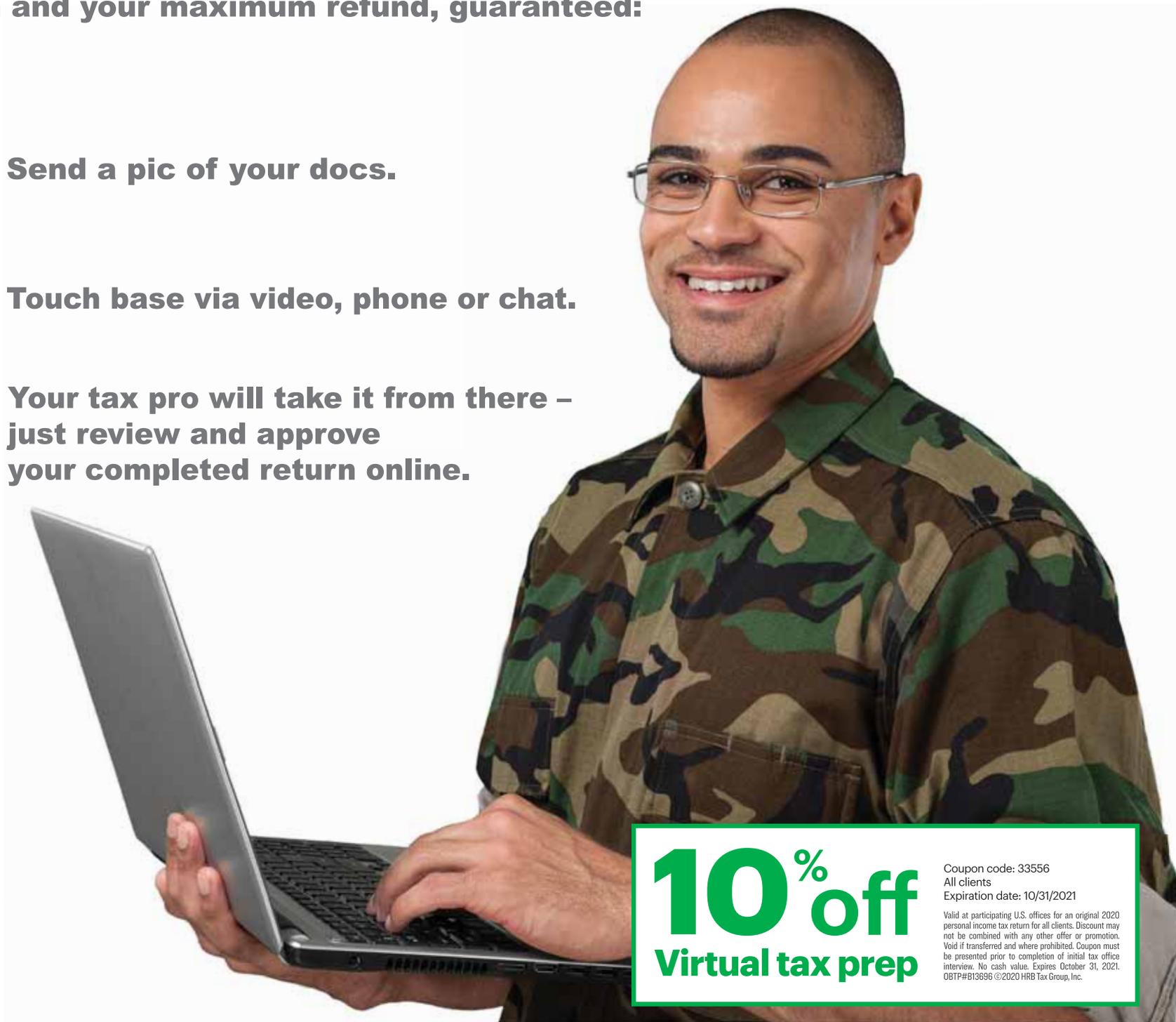
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