Minoru “Daddy Mike” Yoneda, 91, who welcomed sailors and their families to Sasebo Naval Base for more than 40 years, died of pneumonia on Nov. 3.

Minoru “Daddy Mike” Yoneda welcomed sailors and their families to Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, with the same warm smile, gentle demeanor and compassionate gaze for nearly four decades. Yoneda, who died Nov. 3 at age 91, was a Navy veteran. He was a base ambassador, resident philosopher, historian and tour guide. He was a connoisseur of fine dining and an advocate for the children of military families.

Yoneda’s many contributions, from the sign outside the main gate to the Child Development Center (now the Teen Center), earned him the unofficial title of mayor of the naval base 30 miles north of Nagasaki.
YOKOTA AIR BASE – Post offices on military bases are calling for volunteers to help sort mail with thousands of holiday packages expected in coming weeks.

At the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo, officials are looking to put five volunteers to work each day with package deliveries expected to peak in mid-December, 374th Airlift Wing spokesman Staff Sgt. Juan Torres said in a Nov. 16 email.

“Having an adequate number of volunteers enables postal workers to process the packages while volunteers assist by delivering mail and sorting letters,” he said.

Most months Yokota’s mailroom receives between 15,000 and 17,000 packages, he said. “During the month of December, we see an increase in mail of up to 27,000 packages,” he said. “Due to this increase, we ask that customers remain patient as we work diligently to process your holiday mail for you and your loved ones.”

The post office at Misawa Air Base, home of the 35th Fighter Wing in northeastern Japan, expects between 700 and 800 parcels per delivery through the holiday season, Misawa spokesman Tech. Sgt. Chris Jacobs said in an email.

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Last month, the U.S. Postal Service told customers that new service standards will slow some deliveries.

“We ask that patrons send their packages on time to ensure they’re delivered before the holidays,” Torres said. “The earlier a package is sent out, the better the chances of it arriving before the holidays.

The Postal Service recommends shipping retail priority and first-class mail by Dec. 1 and express mail by Dec. 15, he said.

For feedback and inquiries, contact MemberServices@Stripes.com

To place an ad, call DSN 227-7370
japan.stripes.com/contact
Yoneda will be best remembered for his dedication to the sailors and families that he knew and loved. Until his passing, he always remained available for his shipmates and the families they cared for. Services were held on Nov. 4-5.

“Daddy Mike loved by all,” Poluhowich said. “He lived with a smile on his face.”

And so, in the end, Daddy Mike will be remembered for his warmth, charm, and sense of humor. He was a living example of what it means to be a true Sailor, and his legacy will continue to inspire those who knew him. May he rest in peace, and may his spirit live on forever.
Nijigen no Mori is an anime theme park that immerses you in the worlds of your favorite Japanese anime and games, including Dragon Quest, Naruto, Godzilla, and Crayon Shin-chan. Located on Hyogo Prefecture’s Awaji Island in the middle of Hyogo Prefectural Awajishima Park, this theme park is an exciting place to visit for Japanese anime fans!

There’s so much to see and do, you couldn’t possibly fit it all into a single day! Lucky for you, they also have plenty of delicious foods and accommodations, so you may even want to spend the night!

Nijigen no Mori is an exciting place to visit for Japanese anime fans! This theme park is an exciting place to visit for Japanese anime fans! Immediately after entering Lot F, you’ll see Dragon Quest Island on the left. Continue down the main street for about 150 meters, and you’ll see Godzilla Interception Operations: Awaji Island National Institute of Godzilla Disaster.

From Dragon Quest Island, it’s about 500 meters to the Crayon Shin-chan Adventure Park attraction, Ora to Asobo! Nijigen No Mori, and about 700 meters to the giant obstacle course, Appare! Sengoku Daiboken!

The nearest attractions are about 1km away towards the back, the Reverse Bungee and Horror House, so you may want to take your time and check out the other sights along the way. Naruto and Boruto Shinobi-zato is closest to Lots E and F. Lot E is also closest to Night Walk Hi-no-Tori.

As the park is rather large, we recommend using a train to travel between attractions. You can purchase an unlimited ride ticket at Highway Oasis for 500 yen along with your park ticket.

Nijigen no Mori is free to enter, although individual attractions require separate entrance fees. You can buy same-day tickets on-site, however, we recommend purchasing online in advance as entry may be limited.

1. By highway bus
   - From Kobe, take the highway bus from Kobe Sannomiya Terminal, where the JR, Hankyu, and Hanshin lines are located.
   - Take the highway bus to Nijigen no Mori Entrance by highway bus. A paid tram will take you from the bus stop to each attraction.

2. By car
   - By car, it takes about 1 hour from Osaka and 30 minutes from Kobe. As with the highway bus, cross the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge to the Nijigen no Mori parking lot (free of charge).
   - Details on getting to Nijigen no Mori.
   - If traveling from Osaka, you can take an intercity express bus from Osaka Sannomiya Station to each attraction.
   - You can also take a direct limousine bus to Awaji IC from Kansai International Airport.

The nearest attractions to each parking lot are as follows:
- Lot A: Night walk Hi-no-Tori
- Lot E: Naruto & Boruto Shinobi-zato
- Lot F: Dragon Quest Island, Godzilla interception operation, Crayon Shin-chan adventure park, Mori no terrace, Grand charlat (Kabuki Shinjuku 101)

Tickets

Nijigen no Mori is free to enter, although individual attractions require separate entrance fees. You can buy same-day tickets on-site, however, we recommend purchasing online in advance as entry may be limited.

- **ADULTS**: 1,400-1,600 yen
- **CHILDREN**: 1,200 yen

Prices vary by season.

Dragon Quest island
- **ADULTS**: 3,000 yen
- **CHILDREN**: 2,000 yen

Naruto & Boruto Shinobi-zato
- **ADULTS**: 3,000 yen
- **CHILDREN**: 2,000 yen

Godzilla interception operation: Awaji island national institute of Godzilla disaster
- **ADULTS**: 3,800 yen
- **CHILDREN**: 2,200 yen

*Prices vary by season.*

**Adult prices apply to junior high school students and older, and children’s prices apply to elementary school students and younger. Children under 4 years of age are free.**

Enjoy worlds of Dragon Quest, Naruto, Godzilla, more at Nijigen no Mori

What is Nijigen no Mori theme park?

Nijigen no Mori is located on Awaji Island, just across from Kobe City, connected by Akashi Kaikyo Bridge. The site is the natural terrain of Hyogo Prefectural Awajishima Park, which boasts an area of 134.8 hectares (333 acres).

Here you can experience all kinds of attractions based on the worlds from your favorite anime and manga!

Nijigen no Mori has attractions for everyone, from children to adults, and even those who may not be familiar with the shows. Pamphlets and displays around the park are available in English and Chinese, so foreign visitors can enjoy them as well!

Getting to the park

If traveling from the airport or the main railway station, you can catch a highway bus to Nijigen no Mori via Awaji IC across the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, the world’s longest suspension bridge that connects Kobe and Awaji Island. You’ll also get an incredible view of the Seto Inland Sea and Osaka Bay from the bridge!

**Details on getting to Nijigen no Mori**

- **By car**
  - It takes about 1 hour from Osaka and 30 minutes from Kobe, as with the highway bus. As with the highway bus, cross the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge to the Nijigen no Mori parking lot (free of charge).

- **By train**
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This attraction lets you experience the world of the popular anime, Boruto: Naruto Next Generations. Enter from Aun Gate, and step right into Shinobi no Sato, or “Ninja Village”. Inside Hokage Rock is a three-dimensional, mystery-solving maze. To the right of that is another attraction that tests you with brain teasers. When you purchase a ticket, you will receive two scrolls: Ten-no-Maki (Scroll of Heaven) and Chi-no-Maki (Scroll of Earth).

Ten-no-Maki will take you through the same training course as Boruto’s ninja school, through a three-story, 3-D maze. There are two courses. The Uzumaki Course takes you on a search for a captive companion as you aim to reach the top, challenging various physical obstacles. The Uchiha Course puts your brain to work with even more puzzles to solve!

But don’t worry, if you get stuck and can’t seem to clear either of the courses, you can make your getaway through the “Give Up Exit”!

In the Uchiha Course, put your brain to work with even more puzzles to solve!

Ninjutsu AR smartphone app

A free smartphone app called Hokage wo Mezase (English: “Aim at the AR Light!”) will let you augmented reality (AR) photos at the Ninjutsu AR spot that makes it appear as if you are using real ninjutsu! If you master 5 ninjutsu, your face will be displayed on the 11-meter-high Hokage Rock. Strike a pose and take a photo! We recommend downloading the app in advance from toward the bottom of the official site below.

It takes about 70 minutes to clear both the Ten-no-Maki and Chi-no-Maki trainings. Those who opt to do the Ninjutsu AR Challenge may take a little longer. It also takes about an hour to get through the complete mystery-solving experience, Chi-no-Maki Gaiden. (Separate entry ticket required for Chi-no-Maki Gaiden)

The scrolls and apps for these attractions are currently only available in Japanese, but foreign guests will receive instructions for the scrolls in English, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, and Korean. Exhibits and puzzle-solving questions are also available in English, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, and Korean.

Try Naruto’s favorite ramen at Ramen Ichiraku!

You can also try Naruto’s favorite Ichiraku ramen! Choose from three types of broth: pork bone, miss pork bone, and pork bone soy sauce ($1,100 yen each). The rich broth, thin noodles, and character-decorated seaweed will have you hooked! You can also try Sasuke’s favorite onigiri rice balls, Akatsuki Cloud Okonomiyaki, and Orochimaru Sausage Coil.

Souvenirs at the museum shop

The museum shop offers over 100 original Godzilla goods, including key chains, cups, T-shirts, and towels. Who knew you could have so many cool and interesting Godzilla items!

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Godzilla cell shooting

In the Godzilla Cell Shooting attraction, you’ll shoot at cells as they scurry out from Godzilla’s body. Your score increases every time your beam hits a Godzilla cell!

A sounding alarm means an attack from Godzilla’s cells is coming, so get ready to hide! If you don’t escape in time, Godzilla’s cells will attack you and lower your score! The attack lasts about 2 minutes and uses loud, impactful sounds and vibrations.

Godzilla museum

The Godzilla Museum is the world’s first permanent Godzilla exhibit. There’s a diorama reproduction of the Tokyo Station destruction scene from the 2016 movie, Shin Godzilla, as well as displays of Godzilla suits and monsters used during the movie shoot, and over 100 monster figures! It’s a Godzilla fan’s dream come true!

Souvenirs at the museum shop

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(TM & © TOHO CO., LTD.)

Godzilla theme park opens on Awaji Island - offering chance to zip-line straight into a life-sized Godzilla!

Godzilla theme park opens on Awaji Island - offering chance to zip-line straight into a life-sized Godzilla!

Godzilla has been loved by fans of all ages, all around the world since its release in Japan in 1954. That’s over 60 years! In this attraction, a new story unfolds where you aim to capture Godzilla on Awaji Island over the course of four missions. If you clear them all, you’ll receive an original Mission Card! (*Children must be at least 110cm and over 25kg to ride.)

Ten-no-Maki 3-D maze

Godzilla will make you feel as if you’re “inside” the movie! Choose from three types of viewing courses - the Uzumaki Course, the Internal Invasion Course, and the External Inspection Course! The Internal Invasion Course (162m) sends you inside Godzilla’s body through his mouth, while the External Inspection Course (152m) lets you observe from the outside. Feel the thrill as you fly through the air, straight into Godzilla’s mouth!

If you master 5 ninjutsu, your face will be displayed on the Hokage Rock. Strike a pose and take a photo! We recommend downloading the Ninjutsu AR smartphone app in advance from the official site below.

It takes about 70 minutes to clear both the Ten-no-Maki and Chi-no-Maki trainings. Those who opt to do the Ninjutsu AR Challenge may take a little longer. It also takes about an hour to get through the complete mystery-solving experience, Chi-no-Maki Gaiden.

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NIJIGEN NO MORI: Glamping, food, and fun!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The great Demon King zoma and the beginning island

The game Dragon Quest was born in Japan in 1986, and has only expanded ever since, along with its fan base. In this attraction, participants become the main characters as they are thrown into the Dragon Quest world with an original story that fuses both digital and reality. The journey begins in the Kingdom of Onokogard.

Collect information in the Town of Onokogard

Fans will love the exciting townscape reproduction, based on the original game world. Talk to townspeople, help them collect gold, and buy weapons to increase experience points. Don’t worry if you’ve never played the game - even first-timers will enjoy this Dragon Quest adventure!

Finish up at Demon Castle!

The goal of the game is to pass Demon Castle. It takes about 2 hours to reach this point, so feel free to take breaks or have a snack in between! You can also participate in an additional side quest and take the test to join Robbin ‘Ood’s Merry Men!

Robbin ‘Ood’s Merry Men enrollment test ticket set
(Admission ticket + side quest):
• ADULTS: 5,400-6,000 yen
• CHILDREN: 3,900-3,100 yen
*Prices vary by season

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Dragon Quest island

Level up in Kita-no-Mori

Defeat random monsters appearing in the Kita-no-Mori (Northern Forest) to level up

Night walk Hi-no-Tori

Night Walk Hi-no-Tori is a projection mapping attraction in the forest based on Osamu Tezuka’s masterpiece, Hi-no-Tori (Phoenix).

Walk along the 1.2km path as you hold a black light and follow the map. Highlights include the Welcome Ceremony, where fireworks launch over the forest, forming the image of a magnificent Phoenix. The images and music bring this impressive fantasy world and original story to life!

*TIME: Starts at 7:35 p.m. (Last entry 7:30 p.m.)
(©TEZUKA PRODUCTIONS)

Crayon Shin-chan adventure park

Ora to asobo! Niigen no Mori!

You’ll find a total of 54 figures of Shin-chan and friends in various poses throughout the park, which you can freely touch and take pictures with.

If you use the AR app, you can also participate in a stamp rally by scanning their QR codes with your smartphone. Some figures are hidden in hard-to-find places, so have fun searching for them! If you find them all, you’ll receive a gift from the shop in Adventure Park!

There are also attractions for small children, such as Crayon Shin-chan Adventure Park, based on the favorite childhood anime, Crayon Shin-chan. This is an attraction the whole family can enjoy, from physical activities like zip lines and obstacle courses to brain battles and mystery-solving!

Ora to asobo! Niigen no Mori!

Appare! Sengoku daiboken!

Appare! Sengoku Daiboken! is a huge obstacle course based on the movie of the same name. There are a total of 4 courses of varying difficulty, including some for children.

Each course has an age requirement, and some may require a harness. The easiest children’s course is only one meter off the ground, and open to kids from 4 years to elementary school age (must be 120cm or taller).

The hardest course is the thrilling Samurai Taisho Course, set 8 meters above ground (must be 120cm or taller). Also, don’t worry if you get stuck halfway through - rescue will come to save the day!

Challenge! Action mask squadron!

In the Challenge! Action Mask Squadron! Course, you’ll wear an Action Mask helmet as you glide over the 225-meter-wide pond on a 140-meter-long zip line. As you approach the goal, you’ll also enjoy the thrill of being shot at with water guns by the evil Black Mekemeke Group!

(*Children must be 120cm or taller to ride.)

There’s also the “Ora no ‘Bikkuri! Dokkiri! Omoshiro mask!” for children 2 years and under, and the “Super Shiro Shutsugeki! Super Reverse Bunceel!” at a height of about 6m from the ground.

(c) Yoshito Usui / Futabasha / Shimel / TV Asahi / ADK (1993-2021)

Nijigen no Mori

- ADDRESS: 2425-2 Kusumoto, Awa-cho, Hyogo 656-2301
- PHONE: 0799-64-7061 (Nijigen no Mori Office)
- HOURS: Attractions 10 a.m.-10 p.m. (Last entry 8 p.m.)
  Varies by season
- ADMISSION: Free admission, separate attraction fees apply (prices vary by attraction)
- CLOSED: Open daily (may close in winter, please see official site for details)
Food trucks with light meals and drinks are available throughout the park near each attraction. There are also two restaurants, Mori no Terrace and Luida’s Bar, which you can visit without entering any attractions. Crayon Shin-chan is free to enter, so you can also enjoy a meal there!

The shops around the park offer a variety of limited-edition souvenirs. Some shops will allow you to visit without entering any attractions, including the shop on the immediate left of the Lot F entrance, the shop in Luida’s Bar, the Toritoku Okamato bookstore, and the Mori no Terrace shop. However, you can only visit the Konoha Shoten (inside Naruto & Boruto Shinbatozato) and the Godzilla Shop (inside Godzilla Museum) from inside their respective attractions.

Grand Chariot, Hokuto Shichisei 135° is a villa-style glamping facility situated on the hills of Nijigen no Moro.

Food

- **Luida’s bar**
  - This restaurant is a reproduction of Luida’s Bar in Dragon Quest. The menu features Dragon Quest Island collaboration dishes.
  - Free Crayon Shin-chan goods.
  - Cap (3,850 yen), Mug (1,650 yen), Cap (2,750 yen), Plush Toy (2,200 yen).

- **Mori no terrace**
  - This terrace has 250 seats, including terrace seats. The menu is full of dishes made with local specialties devised by Chef Haruyuki Yamashita of HAL YAMASHITA.
  - There are also 14 super-popular Godzilla-themed dishes that you will only find here!

- **Godzilla Footprint Curry (1,948 yen)**
  - *All prices include tax*
  - This delicious Awaji Black Curry has plenty of onions, but don’t worry – it’s not as spicy as it looks!

- **Mori no Terrace Dessert Plate (1,800 yen)**
  - In the food cart next to Mori no Terrace. In the summer, it is filled with ice cream. You can eat it at Mori no Terrace.

- **Godzilla la Cream Puff (550 yen)**
  - In the food cart next to Mori no Terrace. In the summer, it is filled with ice cream. You can eat it at Mori no Terrace.

- **Gokigen Lunch Box (1,600 yen)**
  - This lunch box featuring Homilot (Healslime) is so cute, you’ll want to take a picture before taking a bite!

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We are finally in Japan’s most beautiful season! You know what I mean, right? All around us the green forests, mountains and landscape are transformed into fiery crimson and vibrant orange hues, and there’s no better time to get to know your host nation than now. Fortunately, the weather is still great and that makes your hunting for fall leaf spots fun and refreshing.

Recently my parents, my wife and I drove to the central mountainous region of Nagano and Gunma prefectures, popular spots for Momiji-gari (or fall leaf hunting in Japanese), to see the bright colors during their peak.

Anxious for the breathtaking scenery filled with gorgeous fall foliage, we left our home in Yokosuka City near the U.S. Naval base before 5 a.m. We drove through Yoko-Yoko and Kan-etsu Expressways, and it was around 8:30 a.m. when we got to Karuizawa in Nagano. We drove along Route 43, enjoying the great views and beautiful weather.

Karuizawa – one of Japan’s most renowned premier resort spots

Karuizawa is a fascinating town, home to a lot of classical western-style wooden architecture, high-end summer residences, rich forest and natural beauty. Its busy streets are filled with trendy restaurants, cafes and souvenir shops.

We parked in the town center and picked up some free guide pamphlets at the tourist center. The history of Karuizawa as a premier resort town began when Canadian missionary Alexander Croft Shaw arrived there in 1886, according to the guide. Shaw was fascinated with the beauty of Karuizawa and built his church there.

Shaw wrote about the town as an ideal summer getaway, which attracted many celebrities at the time to build summer homes in the area and helped develop Karuizawa as a premier resort town.

Many summer villas and historical buildings still stand along the main street. We saw Shaw’s Memorial Anglican Church and St. Paul’s Catholic Church, as well as other wooden religious and public buildings with interesting traditional architecture. The town’s buildings and surrounding maple trees in their crimson colors gave the feeling of being in a postcard or painting.

One building we were unfortunately not able to visit here was the former Mikasa Hotel, known as one of Japan’s most important cultural properties. It is currently under renovation.

Shiraitonotaki – countless crystal-clear waterfalls in the crimson forest

After parking at the entrance to Shiraitonotaki, we climbed along the uphill promenade and took in the unique view of multiple waterfalls crashing down from the mountain slopes. Surrounded by leaves in gorgeous pastel colors, the multiple streaks of crystal-clear water drape over the 60-meter-wide dome-like hill reminding us of a white curtain to the world of dreams. Visitors to Shiraitonotaki can approach the falls, so I put my hand up and felt the freezing stream. I put my hand up to my mouth and tasted the sweet, smooth spring water.

We enjoyed strolling around the waterfalls, then made our way back to the car to continue our hunt for more fall foliage. Our drive led us through the Shiraito Highland Way, aka “Japan Romantic Road.” featuring countless impressive maple trees dressed in red and orange leaves. The mountains were a kaleidoscope of fall colors here and there as well.

While we repeatedly stopped our car to photograph nice views of autumn mountains through the route, we found there are a lot of tourist attractions scattered throughout the route, including Mount Asama Magma Stone Park, the site of lava formations left over from nearby Mount Asama’s 1783 eruption.

It’s worth dropping by the park to enjoy the panoramic view of unique stones and the snow-capped Mt. Asama and blue Gunma Mountain Range in the distance. Since we had already visited this park last year, we skipped it this time and continued on our way.
As we reached the town of Kusatsu in Gunma Prefecture, the awesome orange slopes and bright yellow and red trees took our breath away. It was the maple woods in the Kusatsu Alpine Plant Garden located next to Road Station “Kusatsu Undojaya Park.” We just had to stop to stroll the crimson woods and take plenty of photos.

We reached the center of Kusatsu Town around 2 p.m. Kusatsu, along with Arima (Kobe) and Gero (Gifu), was deemed as one of the best three springs in the country during the 15th Century. Here, a large turquoise hot spring pond called “Yubatake” (hot water field) actually overwhelmed us with sight and sulfuric smell. The Yubatake is not only the centerpiece of the town, but also the water source for all the hot spring baths in the area. It produces some 4,000 liters of hot water per minute amid clouds of rising steam. The hot water field is surrounded by hundreds of inns, hotels, eateries and souvenir shops housed in traditional buildings, showcasing Japan’s typical onsen hot spring resort.

After parking nearby the town’s symbol, we ventured out for a stroll around the center town. It was 2:30 p.m. and we were hungry from all the driving and sightseeing, so we just stopped by the tiny Chinese restaurant Korin, located near the hot water field, to sip ramen noodles. The noodles there were mild and not very salty, which to me, would make a perfect meal at the end of a long night of hopping izakayas and game parlors in the area.

As we walked around the town enjoying the sights and sounds of the spring, sellers in yukata approached us to sample onsen manju, spring-steamed buns made with dough using spring water and filled with bean paste. We couldn’t resist but pick up one from their trays and sample it. It was really delicious with its complicated flavor and springy texture. You bet we bought many boxes of Kusatsu’s signature sweet there!

To wrap up our hunt, we couldn’t leave the famous hot spring resort without enjoying a hot soak at Sainokawara Open-Air Bathhouse located on the wide gravelly riverbed. With 600 yen ($5) for admission, we entered the hot spring to bathe in its hot spring pool. Separated for male and female bathers, the open-air pool of hot spring was really huge, which can accommodate several hundred bathers at the same time. I actually saw 50 to 60 bathers enjoying their soak in the large rock-built pool. Bear in mind – although there is a bathhouse with coin-locker, there is no shower, no place to wash your body with soap and shampoo in the bath. You just simply rinse your body with bath water at the pool side, then go soak into the huge stone-built pool. That’s it!

Surprisingly, the water was not too hot, but I could feel the strong transparent sulfate spring water – heavy, smooth, and slimy. It felt like I was bathing in soap. And, though there were dozens of others bathing here, I was able to enjoy a long soak in the quiet and peaceful setting. When I got out of the water, I was nice and warm while my skin felt pretty smooth.

Feeling warmed up and refreshed, we left the hot spring resort around 6 p.m., the drive back set us back about four hours due to heavy traffic in the area. But nothing could diminish the great time spent Momiji-gari fall foliage-hunting and enjoying the fresh mountain air, popular streets of Karuizawa, beautiful waterfalls and a hot soak in renowned Kusatsu hot spring resort.

As the end of autumn nears, it’s not too late to get out and enjoy Momiji-gari and the fresh seasonal air. In the Kanto Plain, Sasebo and Iwakuni areas, you can enjoy the fall foliage through mid-December; so make plans to get out and catch the beautiful colors now! Happy leaf hunting!
A cross Japan, Japanese pork dishes can be found in a wide variety at all kinds of restaurants. You might be surprised at just how many ways you can enjoy pork!

Japanese pork is also a widely used meat which can be found in many different kinds of cooking, and in particular, it is a central part of cuisine in Kyushu, Okinawa, and the Kanto region (East Japan). Probably pork’s own version of Kobe beef can be found in Kagoshima prefecture in Kyushu, which is famous for its kurobuta black Berkshire pigs.

In Okinawa there is another fairly well-known species of pig called “agu”, which actually has quite a long history and dates back to the Ryukyu Kingdom.

Hungry yet? Here we’ll share some of the most unique and delicious Japanese pork dishes that you’ll want to add to your food list!

**Butadon**

- Quite similar to gyudon, or beef bowl, butadon, also known as “tondon”, is a Japanese pork bowl dish. In it you will find thinly sliced pork as well as onions which have been simmered in a soy sauce broth until tender, and served in a donburi bowl over rice. This kind of cooking particularly became popular during a BSE scare earlier in the millennium when many restaurants temporarily stopped serving beef.

**Tonkatsu**

- Tonkatsu can be found pretty much everywhere in Japan, this is a deep-fried pork cutlet that has been breaded in crispy panko crumbs. This Japanese pork dish is served with a brown sauce, though there are different types of sauces, and quite commonly served with shredded raw cabbage, a rice bowl and miso soup.

- In many restaurants, they will give you unlimited rice, so this dish can be particularly filling if you are also a big fan of delicious rice. There are also different versions of this dish such as katsudon (a bowl of hot rice topped with sliced tonkatsu, onions, and egg), katsu curry (Japanese curry and rice with tonkatsu), and a katsu sando (a sandwich of white bread, tonkatsu, and sauce).

**Tonkotsu ramen**

- Another version which you may or may not have tried is tonkotsu ramen! This started in the Hakata region of northern Kyushu and is one of the “Top 3” most popular varieties of ramen in Japan.

- In its original form, it is a bowl of creamy white pork bone soup eaten with thin straight noodles served al dente, sliced green onion, and tender slices of barbecue pork char siu.

**Japanese Hamburg**

- Now Japanese hamburger might put you in mind of beef, but actually the best tasting version includes both pork and beef! It might sound odd, but you can even find mixed beef and pork mince in supermarkets which is perfect for making Japanese hamburger.

**Shabu Shabu and Rei-Shabu**

- This Japanese pork dish which again features thinly sliced meat, as well as bite-sized vegetables cooked lightly in a broth is known as Shabu shabu. The dish gets its name from the onomatopoeia “shabu, shabu” which means “swish, swish”.

- Quite often it is eaten with beef slices, but it can be eaten with pork as well. If you are cooking at home then you can easily find both pork and beef slices in supermarkets which have on the label that they are specifically for shabushabu (しゃぶしゃぶ).

- Buta shabu meat can be chilled and served cold over a salad or cold noodle dish for a refreshing meal in the summertime called “rei-shabu”.

**Tonkatsu**

- This is the Japanese pork version of yakitori, basically bite-sized pieces of pork that have been skewered and grilled. In addition to more familiar cuts of meat like pork loin and pork belly, don’t be afraid to try some of the more unique items like pork jowl and liver.

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**15 Japanese pork dishes you’ve never heard of!**

*But will want for dinner tonight*
**Buta-Maki**

Buta-maki is another version that can be skewered and grilled, but can also be pan-fried or steamed. Normally it is pork that has been wrapped with something, or even something wrapped with pork, for example bacon-wrapped cherry tomatoes, or thinly sliced pork rolled up with shiso (perilla herb).

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**Shogayaki**

Shogayaki is an easy dish to make and is often made at home or included in bento boxes. It is a dish of pan or grill fried pork loin, the pork is thinly sliced, and this is cooked with soy sauce, sake, and mirin along with ginger.

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**Nikujaga**

Nikujaga is a dish of meat and potatoes, made with thinly sliced pork simmered with vegetables in a dashi and soy sauce broth. The dish is considered to be one of the great comfort foods of Japan and reminds many people of their mother’s home cooking. It’s typically eaten as part of a traditional Japanese meal with rice, miso soup, and several vegetable side dishes.

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**Gyoza**

Gyoza originated in China, and was quite popular with Japanese soldiers serving overseas. When they returned to Japan they initiated a desire for a Japanese version of this steamed (or boiled or pan-fried) kind of dumplings. It is usually filled with minced pork and vegetables, but you can find other more unusual ingredients inside it. Nowadays it can be found as a side dish pretty much everywhere, from ramen restaurants to izakayas.

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**Kakuni**

Kakuni is a dish of pork belly cubes stewed slowly in a soy sauce broth until they become meltingly tender and rich. The dish is also known as “rafute” in Okinawa, where it is a highly prized local dish.

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The term “motsu” refers to offal, the inners of an animal such as intestines and liver, and there are several popular ways of eating these particular cuts of pork in Japan. For example, a kind of hot pot which is famous in Fukuoka (Kyushu) is motsu-nabe, it is well seasoned with chili, garlic, and miso or soy sauce.

The strong taste of the broth holds up well to the distinct flavor of the organ meat, which can be beef or pork. It is a good dish to drink alcohol with, and with friends and family. Other motsu dishes to try include motsu-yaki, or grilled pork giblets, and motsu nikomi, a dish of pork giblets braised in a tender stew. Similar to motsu-yaki, horumon-yaki refers specifically to pork intestines, which are marinated in a sauce and grilled. It goes great with beer and sake.

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Japan is famous for its fish, and with good reason, and it is famous for its beef dishes, for example, yakiniku and sukiyaki, but we don’t necessarily think of Japanese pork dishes when we want to eat Japanese food. However there is an amazing selection of delicious foods which you simply must try, whether that is a side-dish of gyoza on order along with your ramen, or enjoying a gut-busting large portion of katsu curry.

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**Buta-Maki**

**Shogayaki**

**Nikujaga**

**Gyoza**

**Kakuni**

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These Japanese vending machines sell Ippudo ramen broth - in a can!

By Krys Suzuki, Live Japan

On chilly autumn nights after a long day of work, nothing beats a nice hot bowl of ramen. But what if your favorite ramen shop is closed when you get out? Do you simply head home on an empty stomach? Of course not! You swing by the nearest Japanese vending machine, and grab a can of ramen broth instead!

Coming this autumn to a Tokyo area JR train station near you, you’ll be able to buy hot cans of delicious Ippudo ramen broth to keep you warm on the way home, right from the vending machine!

Your favorite ramen broth... in a can!

Despite the relaxing of Covid restrictions, some shops still practice shortened hours. This leaves some late-night commuters looking for a quick nighttime ramen fix to hold them during the ride home. Enter Ippudo’s ramen broth in a can!

Starting October 12, “Koku to Uma-mi no Ippudo Ramen Soup” (Rich and Umami Ippudo Ramen Broth) will hit Acure vending machines in most East Japan Rail (JR East) train stations for only 150 yen per can. That’s right - the creation of this delicious hot ramen broth was supervised by none other than Japan’s famous ramen chain, Ippudo.

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Japan's vending machines also sell soup!?  

Canned soups aren’t an uncommon sight in Japanese vending machines during the fall and winter. And in recent years, evening sales have skyrocketed.

To further expand their lineup, Acure - the company that operates these vending machines - has teamed up with Ippudo, one of Japan’s top pioneers of modern ramen culture, to oversee the production of a drinkable tonkotsu broth. Because it’s in a can, it doesn’t contain any chunks of meat, vegetables, or noodles, but don’t let that fool you – the broth alone is so delicious, you won’t believe it’s from a vending machine!

A recipe for canned ramen

When asked about his thoughts on teaming up with a vending machine company, the head of Ippudo called it an “unprecedented challenge for Ippudo,” being a completely different space from their usual ramen shops. However, he also recognized it as a greater opportunity to introduce Ippudo ramen to a wider variety of customers.

By making some adjustments to the original recipe, such as reducing the salt and oil content and the strong aroma and aftertaste, Ippudo managed to produce a simple, well-balanced broth with all the satisfaction of a bowl of ramen and the easy drinkability of a canned beverage.

Whether you're looking for a warm soup on a cold night, need something light to hold you over until you arrive home without spoiling your appetite, or simply crave the delicious taste of Ippudo ramen, Acure vending machines have you covered.

You may even want to buy a few extras to bring home and cook with. The broth is so versatile, you can easily whip up an entire meal by adding your own meat, noodles, and vegetables!

In the wake of Covid, restaurants are finding new ways to attract customers outside of the actual stores. Train station vending machines are just one other point of contact that will create more opportunities for people to know and love Ippudo ramen beyond the restaurant!
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The WNBA has had its share of superstars. From Sheryl Swoopes to Lisa Leslie, Candace Parker to Maya Moore, the league has had plenty of faces. To no surprise, many of the its stars played college hoops at powerhouse UConn, including the league’s all-time scorer. Who is she?

**Answer**

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Kanji of Nomi, a Japanese journalist, researched the relationship between blood types and personality. He published several books in the 1970s, which were a huge success. Nomi’s blood-type theory of personality was rapidly accepted throughout Japan, and today, many this a strong strategic tool in learning the personality of others and building effective human relations.

**Sudoku**

Difficulty: Medium

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.

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