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Celebrate Hello Kitty's 50th birthday at limited café

STRIPE JAPAN



Photos courtesy of SANRIO CO., LTD.

in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya

This year, Japan's iconic Hello Kitty turns 50! To celebrate, a limited-time anniversary café is coming to Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya.

Diners can toast the London girl's 50th birthday (Nov. 1) early with cute sweets, drinks and eats inside an impressively decorated space perfect for social media pics.

According to a release about the café, fans can enjoy a two-tiered afternoon tea set with small bites (6,590 yen) and beverages, a Hello Kitty-inspired sandwich (1,690 yen), a pasta dish with red bow-shaped pasta (1,690 yen), and cream rice topped with an apple-shaped ketchup rice (1,690 yen). The dessert menu features a Hello Kitty face pancake (1,590 yen), a birthday cake parfait (1,490 yen) and

character-inspired sodas and coffee (starting at 990 yen).

Special merch like themed keychains, drinkware and stickers will also be on sale at the café and online.

The Tokyo café runs Sept. 13 - Oct. 27; Osaka's runs Sept. 13 - Oct. 20 and the Nagoya café runs Sept. 20 - Oct. 27.

Reservations for parties of four people or less are now open online and require an advanced payment of 660 yen per person.

If you can't get a reservation, don't worry! The café will also have walk-in reservations each day and a limited take-out menu available.

Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy some of Japan's kawaii (cute) culture and kawaii foods while celebrating one of its most recognizable icons!

Japan@stripes.com

Tokyo at BOX cafe&space SHIBUYA109

Address: 2-23-1 Dogenzaka, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo; B2F floor of Shibuya 109 building

Date and time: Sept. 13 – Oct. 27, 10:15 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Osaka at BOX cafe&space KITTE Osaka 2nd store

Address: 3-2-2 Umeda, Kita-ku, Osaka City, Osaka; 6th floor of the Kitte Building

Date and time: Sept. 13 – Oct. 20, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Nagoya at BOX cafe&space Nagoya Lachic 1st store

Address: 3-6-1 Naka, Nagoya, Aichi; B1F of the Lachic Building

Dates: Sept. 20 – Oct. 27, 11:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

Reservation fee: 600 yen (660 yen including tax)

*Reservation benefits included *Up to 4 seats can be reserved per application



Reservations



Online store

INSIDE INFO



HEAD TO SHIBUYA FOR VIRAL CHEESY SNACK BREAK
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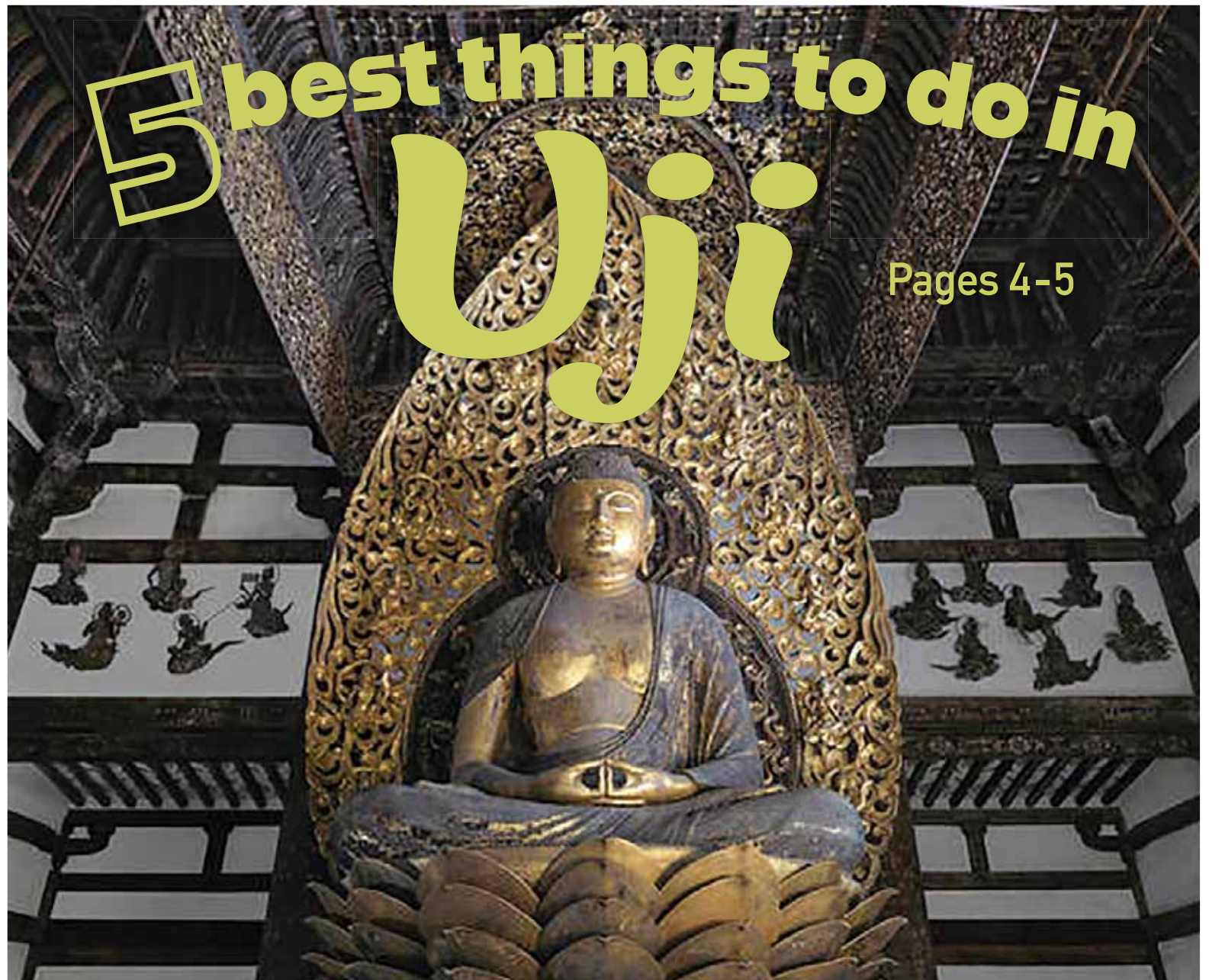
LIGHT UP NIGHT AT NOHEJI ILLUMINATION NEAR MISAWA AB
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Cheesy delight

Head to Shibuya for viral snack break

BY VERONICA CARNEVALE,
JAPAN TRAVEL

Are you a passionate foodie searching for the ultimate cheese pull? If so, look no further than the Mega Don Quijote store in Shibuya and its 10-yen-shaped bread!

This Japan-renowned discount store is famous for its vast collection of goods—including kitchen supplies, snacks, stationary, clothes, toiletries, cosmetics, and more—making it a popular spot for tourists and residents alike.

At Don Quijote's Shibuya location, you can enjoy not only its impressive variety of goods, but also its fun-shaped, cheesy snack.

This treat is located on the first floor and, contrary to what it is modeled after, costs ¥500.

After you pay at the ticket machine, pass your stub to the employee, and watch them cook your treat right in front of you.

The worker begins by pouring the batter into a specially-designed, 10 yen coin-shaped griddle before topping it with a generous block of mozzarella cheese. They close it up and, after a few minutes, your snack is baked to perfection and ready to eat!

Before devouring the cute bread—which may be difficult given the intoxicating aromas of batter and cheese—be sure to snap a commemorative photo.

Then, it is time to enjoy! The high heat of the griddle produces a crispy exterior and leaves the inside soft—perfectly complimenting the stretchy cheese within. These contrasting textures paired with the savory filling and sweet batter make for an addicting bite. Plus, the cheese's stretchiness creates a fun and social media-worthy eating experience.

Due to the treat's popularity, you will likely need to wait in line; however, the queue moves quickly thanks to the fast cooking process.

If you are a fan of aesthetic, tasty, cheesy, and fun treats, you will not want to pass up on this 10-yen-shaped bread!

Getting there

Shibuya's Mega Don Quijote store is about a 1-minute walk from Shibuya Station.



Photos courtesy of JAPAN TRAVEL





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1-day sightseeing itinerary

5 best things to do

Uji

Kyoto Pref.

Uji, Japan is a... also has ties to... definitely wo... Here, we will in... ence zazen and sut... coronavirus so that

1

Phoenix Hall, as seen on the 10-yen coin.



See national treasures of Byodoin Temple

At the top of our list of things to do in Uji is Byodoin Temple, a 10-minute walk from JR Uji Station. Byodoin Temple was the center of Uji in the latter half of the Heian Period. It flourished as an aristocratic villa around 1000 AD.

It was originally the villa of Minamoto no Toru, the person on whom Hikaru Genji, the main character of The Tale of Genji, was based. However, in 1052, it was taken over by the Emperor's advisor, Fujiwara no Michinaga, and his son Yorimichi. He turned it into a temple, known as Byodoin.

The following year, in 1053, the Phoenix Hall, a national treasure, was completed. The beautiful statue of Amida Buddha (Amida Nyorai), sculpted by Jocho, the Heian period's greatest Buddhist priest, is enshrined inside the hall. The buildings of Byodoin Temple were said to embody the Buddhist Pure Land of Sukhavati. Today, they look just as impressive as they did when they were first built.

Visitors can enter Phoenix Hall between 9:30AM to 4:10PM on a first-come, first-served basis at a capacity of 20 people at a time. We recommended purchasing your admission ticket (300 yen) before heading to the other spots.

A staff member will guide you inside. Beautiful, historical artifacts decorate the hall, including the 2.8-meter high Amida Buddha (Amida Nyorai), the Pure Land image behind the statue, and the Praying Bodhisattva (Buddhist Saints) on Clouds.

Byodoin Museum Hoshokan also has many great treasures to see. Get a close-up look at the Phoenix Statue, a national treasure, and the 26 Praying Bodhisattvas on Clouds through the glass. The Bodhisattvas on Clouds each have different musical instruments and their own unique expressions and poses. There is also a colorful CG exhibit showing the phoenix hall at the time of its construction.

Byodoin Temple's museum shop includes a lineup of original goods featuring designs of Phoenix Hall, the Phoenix Statue, and the Bodhisattva on Clouds. There are so many souvenirs to choose from! The Origami Sets and Handkerchiefs are decorated with patterns of the pillars and beams of Phoenix Hall. The towels are also decorated with images of Phoenix Hall.

Byodoin

Address: 116, Ujirenge, Uji-shi, Kyoto, 611-0021

Nearest Station: Uji Station (JR Nara Line), 10 minutes on foot

Phone: 0774-21-2861



Courtesy photos

Main shrine

Worship Hall

2



Check out Japan's oldest existing shrine

After eating, head to Ujigami Shrine, another world heritage site in Uji. Exactly when the shrine was built remains unknown.

However, in the Heian Period, Ujigami Shrine and Uji Shrine seem to also have gone by the names Uji Chinjugami, Rikyu Myojin, and Rikyu Shrine.

The main shrine, built in the Heian Period, is the oldest existing shrine in Japan. It's characterized by three inner shrine structures housed inside the shrine. The worship hall is a residential building featuring Shinden-zukuri architecture and is also the oldest shrine building and a national treasure.

The colorful Goshuin, or temple seal books, are the most popular gifts from Ujigami Shrine. There are 25 different patterns, including limited-edition seasonal designs such as flowers and autumn leaves, and a two-page spread with Japanese poems.

Because the shrine is a power spot for academics, there are many colorful amulets for academic achievement. There are also pastel-colored rabbit omikuji (fortunes), and kimono-patterned wish dolls based on The Tale of Genji. There are so many charms to choose from!

Ujigami-jinja Shrine

Address: 59, Ujijamada, Uji-shi, Kyoto, 611-0021

Nearest Station: Uji Station (JR Nara Line), 8 minutes on foot

Phone: 0774-21-4634



3



Enjoy matcha at Fukujuen Uji Tea Factory

Tea is on any list of things to do in Uji, and you can dip into matcha culture! When you leave Kotozaka and head down Kotozaka to Fukujuen Uji Tea Factory. Fukujuen Uji Tea Factory, an established Uji matcha tea shop, founded in 1792. At the factory, you can experience, learn about, and enjoy matcha tea culture.

There are a variety of shops and museums where you can buy original Uji tea and tea supplies, including a workshop where you can try different kinds of Uji teas, Fukuju Saryo, and traditional dishes and sweets made with Uji tea, and a thatched-roof tea house specializing in Uji Gyoza.

First, head to the Fukuju Saryo on the 2nd floor. There, you can enjoy seasonal dishes and sweets made with Uji tea. The menu shows the special set menu, Asahi Gozen, where the main dish is a bowl of soba. Other dishes include seasonal vegetables, gyokuro rice balls, and pickles, all made using Uji tea.

You can also partake in the popular stone mill matcha making experience (1,200 yen, tax not included). Use a stone mill to grind tencha, the raw ingredient matcha is made from.

Grind the matcha counterclockwise at a speed of 1 rotation per rotation for about 15 minutes. Turn the stone mill evenly and do not apply too much force. Finally, mix with your freshly ground matcha, and enjoy it with a bowl of soba.

There are about 25 different experiences, including matcha making, tea hand-rolling, teacup making, cafe course on matcha etiquette.

Fukujuen Uji Tea Factory

Address: 10 Uji Yamada, Uji City, Kyoto 611-0021

Access: 15 min walk from JR Uji Station, 8 min walk from Uji Station

Hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Fukuju Saryo L.O. 4 p.m.)

Fee: Stone-mill Matcha Making Experience: 1,200 yen (material costs; tax not included)

Closed: Mondays (the following day in case of public holidays)



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in Japan's green tea capital

BY WESTPLAN, LIVE JAPAN

famous city near Kyoto renowned for its beautiful scenery, the Uji River, and Uji Tea. It is famous for The Tale of Genji, a classic in Japanese literature. Especially for green tea lovers, Uji is a must-visit. Conveniently, Uji is just a 20-minute train ride away from JR Kyoto Station. The city introduces World Cultural Heritage sites, Uji tea shops, and temples where you can experience traditional tea ceremony. All of the places introduced here are well-equipped with measures against COVID-19 so you can feel at ease during your visit.



Tea Factory

and this is the spot for Uji Tea Factory. Koshoji Temple, gotokujuen is a long-100. At Uji Tea Factory you can enjoy traditional Uji tea.

where you can buy Uji tea. The photo shows a workshop where you can see the stone mill to make matcha. Here, you can enjoy matcha green tea and sweets in silence. Look out over the beautiful garden as you listen to the murmuring of water and the chirping of birds.

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will matcha-making. The stone mill to make matcha is slow and steady, brew some tea with sweets.

including hojicha experience, and a

1 mile from Keihan

00 yen (includes

public holiday)



Experience zazen at Koshoji

Koshoji was the first Soto Zen temple founded by Dogen Zenji in Fukakusa in 1233. Koshoji is about a 13-minute walk from Byodoin Temple across the Uji River.

Zazen meditation should among your list of things to do in Japan, and you can do it here in Uji, too! In addition to regular Sunday meditations, you can also practice zazen meditation with a monk and learn more about Zen's teachings. If you are new to zazen, there are easy-to-understand lectures that even foreign visitors can enjoy. Lectures are about 60-90 minutes long, but if you're short on time, you can experience it for 10 to 20 minutes on your own.

You can also try the Sutra Copying Experience. Attain peace of mind as you slowly draw the brush strokes one by one.

Oshoin is a large, welcoming tatami room with tables and chairs on the veranda. Here, you can enjoy matcha green tea and sweets in silence. Look out over the beautiful garden as you listen to the murmuring of water and the chirping of birds.

The approach leading to the temple from the road along the Uji River is called Kotozaka. It gets its name from the sound of the water flowing, which resembles the sound of a Japanese koto. Kotozaka is exceptionally beautiful in the spring with its cherry blossoms, and in the fall with its colorful foliage. Many visitors come to see the seasonal sights!

Koshoji Temple

Address: 27-1 Uji Yamada, Uji City, Kyoto 611-0021

Access: 20 minutes walk from JR Uji Station, 13 minutes walk from Keihan Uji Station

Phone: 0774-21-2040

Hours: Open from dawn to sunset (around 5 a.m. - 5 p.m.), Open daily

Admission: 500 yen; 1,000 yen for zazen experience (reservation required); 1,000 yen for sutra-copying experience



File photo



Marvelous matcha sweets

Nakamura Tokichi Honten is a 15-minute walk from Ujigami Shrine and located in a traditional Japanese building along Uji Station Shopping Street. A large black-and-white curtain with the Maruto symbol marks the entrance.

This long-established tea shop, founded in 1854, is named after the first Tokichi Nakamura, and is the essence of Kyoto's Uji no Sato tea. Long ago, the original tea house was lined with various famous teas and souvenirs, and tea leaves were sold by the measure.

Today, it has been renovated into a cafe that also sells matcha sweets, and is crowded with visitors every day.

Nama-cha Matcha Jelly is a must-try treat, only available at Uji Honten. It is served in a bamboo bowl. Packed with plump matcha jelly, chewy dango, sweet azuki beans, and mellow matcha ice cream, this is a dessert you won't want to miss out on!

The Maruto Parfait is another delicious treat that showcases the bright green color and refreshing aroma of matcha, also served in a bamboo bowl.

Inside is a matcha castella cake and a mildly-sweet parfait cream that pair perfectly well together. It includes crispy brown rice puffs, berries, lemon jam, shiratama, and Dainagon azuki beans. The bottom is filled with matcha jelly and soft-serve ice cream.

The combination of high-quality matcha and layers of flavors makes this parfait one of the most exciting treats in the shop!

There are many kinds of Uji teas, but Nakamura teas are only available here. This original brand was born in 1994 to commemorate the 1200th anniversary of when Emperor Kanmu moved the capital to Heiankyo in 794. It gets its unique and profound taste from a blend of seven types of carefully selected tea leaves. These delicious, special teas also make perfect souvenirs.

Nakamura Tokichi

Address: 10 Uji Ichiban, Uji City, Kyoto 611-0021

Access: 1 minute walk from JR Uji Station; 10 minute walk from Keihan Uji Station

Phone: 0774-22-7800

Hours: Weekdays: Tea Shop 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Cafe 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (L.O. 4:30 p.m.), Saturdays, Sundays, holidays: Tea Shop 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Cafe 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (L.O. 4:30 p.m.)

*Varies by season Open daily



As you can see, there are plenty of unique things to do in Uji, Japan, including two world heritage sites! Experience the deliciousness of Japan's famous Uji tea. Some experiences may require advanced reservations, so please check in advance and be mindful of the time as you plan your visit to each spot.

Inside the Phoenix Hall of Byodoin Temple, This Glorious Feast For the Eyes Awaits!

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Photos courtesy of Yoshihito Morita



Things to know

Location: Atago Park
 (56 Teranosawa, Noheji Town, Kamikita-gun, Aomori Prefecture)
Period: Until Sep. 14
Hours: 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Admission: Free
Tel: 0175-64-2111
 (Noheji Town Office)



Light up your night at Noheji Illumination

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

A park less than an hour away from Misawa Air Base is currently lighting up the night with beautiful illuminations.

Atago Park's "Hikari Monogatari" runs through Sept. 14 in Noheji Town. Though illuminations are usually a winter attraction, visitors can enjoy the mid-summer brilliance.

Noheji's illuminations feature

130,000 LED lights with more than 10 different color hues. It spans an 8,000 square meter area and is themed after the four seasons of the Noheji Town, including spring's cherry blossoms, the blue sea of Mutsu Gulf, autumn leaves of Mt. Eboshidake and the snowy scenery of Noheji Town.

There is an observation tower in the park where you can look down at the illuminations from above, according to Yoshihito Morita, a Misawa Commissary employee

who recently visited the illumination event.

"It is a fantastic experience to see a fully illuminated park with colorful LEDs," Morita said. "But be sure to bring bug spray."

On Aug. 30-31, visitors can enjoy snacks from food trucks set up during those nights.

Atago Park is only a 50-minute drive from Misawa Air Base, so brighten up your summer evenings with some beautiful illuminations! takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



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Stripes Sports Trivia

Barry Bonds, the MLB career and single season homerun record holder, was much younger and thinner when he played for the Pittsburgh Pirates. The 5-tool player was great, but well before he became otherworldly and for the Giants, he was drafted out of high school in 1982. He decided to go to college before being drafted by the Pirates four years later. Who drafted Bonds in 1982?

Answer

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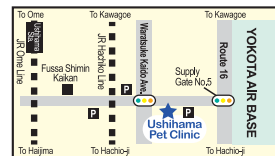
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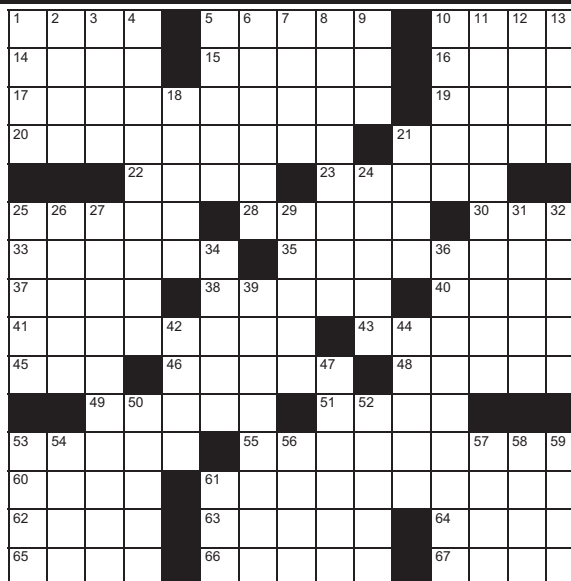
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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Pet lovers' org.
- 5 Photographer's request
- 10 Whole lot
- 14 Grad student's grilling
- 15 Moulin Rouge city
- 16 Fed. watchdog
- 17 Setting for the 2005 film, "Waiting"
- 19 Costner flick "___ Range"
- 20 Hay fever medicine
- 21 Finger-wagger's word
- 22 Parks on a bus
- 23 Home follower
- 25 Prickly bush
- 28 Hercules type
- 30 Boring routine
- 33 Golf spots
- 35 Battlefield worry
- 37 Comics canine
- 38 Dry, in a way
- 40 Skiing mecca
- 41 Cockpit reading
- 43 Folded food
- 45 1950 film noir classic
- 46 Greyhound, e.g.
- 48 Melancholy verse
- 49 Bake in a shallow dish
- 51 N.Y. summer times
- 53 Bit of info
- 55 Know-how
- 60 Knock about
- 61 Shasta's home
- 62 Passionate about
- 63 Subway entrance
- 64 Takes out
- 65 Use a spyglass
- 66 Cut, as ties
- 67 Big name in applesauce



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DOWN

- 1 Put out
- 2 Type of school
- 3 Carry's partner
- 4 Superheroes often have them
- 5 Cowboy gear
- 6 Grammy-winning Carey
- 7 Persia, today
- 8 Football official
- 9 Not an exact fig.
- 10 Hullabaloo
- 11 Casual canvas shoe
- 12 "Pardon me"
- 13 Glazier's sheet
- 18 Love to pieces
- 21 E-mail command
- 24 Dance that "takes two"
- 25 Vast
- 26 10:1, e.g.
- 27 Type of commerce
- 29 Fail to say
- 31 Clear a cribbage board

- 32 Quick to get ticked
- 34 State under oath
- 36 Turbulent situation
- 39 Bring back, say
- 42 Stiffly formal
- 44 Urban area, for short
- 47 Stack again
- 50 Comic's specialty
- 52 Yield
- 53 Plumbing problem
- 54 Crackerjack
- 56 Caesar's 44
- 57 Skinny
- 58 Strain, as flour
- 59 Toward sunrise
- 61 HTML go-with

Answers to Previous Crossword:



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STARS AND STRIPES



DID YOU KNOW?

The Japanese national anthem, "Kimigayo" (literally, the reign of your majesty), is known as the oldest and shortest among the world's national anthems. The lyrics have only 32 characters, and it is sung in only 11 measures (about 50 seconds). The lyrics are based on a tanka poem written 900 years ago, which wishes that the emperor's reign would be continued forever.

Kanji of the week

椿

tsubaki/chin (camellia)

Language Lesson

Let's talk.

Hanashi mashoo.

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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

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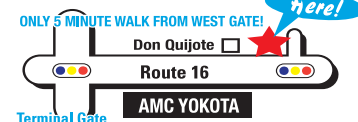


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Crazy Japanese bathrooms that shock foreigners



BY YUU SATO,
LIVE JAPAN

Naturally, different countries have different cultures! One of the things related to culture is the “toilet situation.” You may ask, “Isn’t a restroom always the same in every country?” What about it?

We asked Australian men, American men, and Italian women visiting Japan, how they felt as foreigners when it came to Japanese toilets, especially those that they had never seen before coming to Japan. We also asked about the difference from their home country.

(The following reflects the opinion of the interviewees only)

I don’t know how to use a Japanese-style toilet

The older Japanese-style toilets are less common, and not too familiar even to Japanese people. You may think that there are almost none left in the country. However, according to a survey conducted by the Japan Tourism Agency in 2016, 10,181 units, or 42% of the 24,525 toilets in Japan’s major tourist attractions are of the so called “Japanese-style.”

Surprisingly, it’s many more than one would expect! What did foreigners think when they first saw this kind of toilet?

“I’ve been to China before, so when I saw a Japanese-style toilet in Japan, I was already used to it. But I was a little surprised! I don’t really want to have to use a Japanese-style toilet for a long time, because my knees would hurt. If I can choose between a Japanese-style toilet and a Western-style one, I would choose the western one.” (Australian man)

“I have never used a Japanese-style toilet.” (American man)

“I never used Japanese-style toilets, but so far I have never had any issue with bathrooms in Japan.” (Italian woman)

It seems that many foreigners don’t know how to use a Japanese-style toilet when they first see one. If you are used only to Western toilets it may be hard to picture how to use the Japanese ones.

The Japanese toilet is also called “squat toilet” by foreigners. The reason why this name is used, it’s probably because of the position, and the stress on the thighs, when using it, making it similar to the homonymous legs exercise.

The first time I used a warm water jet toilet seat, I was so surprised I jumped!

Toilet seats with hot water bidets incorporated in them are common in Japanese Western-style toilets. Did you know that these TOTO bidets, and other warm-water jet toilet seats are actually not very popular overseas? I asked foreigners if they use hot water jet toilet seats in their country!

“There is no warm water toilet seat in Australia. I’ve never seen it. I wonder if it’s considered too weird...” (Australian man)

“In the United States, warm water toilet seats are not common. Most people use ordinary common toilets. If you want to use a warm water toilet seat, you are going to have to build or order a custom one.” (American man)

“I was surprised when I used it at first, because in Italy we do not have automatic hot water jet toilets like in Japan! Many Italians have a similar experience to mine when it comes to hot water toilets, and it’s a popular topic. Hot water bidet toilets have been introduced in Italy about three years ago, but they are not as popular as they are in Japan.” (Italian woman)

I think there are many things that surprise foreigners when they come to Japan. However, it seems that Japanese warm-water toilet seats are one of the most surprising things. Press the right button to wash yourself with moderately warm water. This warm water bidet toilet has conquered the hearts of many foreigners.

This may be hard to understand for Japanese people, since in Japan people are used to this kind of toilets not only at home, but also in public toilets.

However, these seats are rarely used overseas, and many foreigners don’t know, or have never used hot water jet toilets. Many foreigners have tried these seats for the first time when they came to Japan, and it seems they were surprised by how wonderful they are.

There are accounts of foreigners who initially were not really convinced about these toilet seats, but overtime got so used to them that they could not be without them anymore. In this interview, an Australian man told us that he had a bit of resistance at first, but once you experience it, your idea may change.

Japanese public toilets are as clean as the ones at home!

“Japanese public toilets are really nice and clean. They are not like the Australian ones!” (Australian man)

“Japanese public toilets are cleaner than the ones in America! However, the ones in crowded stations like Shinjuku or Shibuya are an exception.”

“Japanese public toilets are very clean and I love them! Some toilets have a nice smell, which is really wonderful. If I had only one complain, it would be that soap sometimes is nowhere to be found. I don’t like not washing my hands properly after using the bathroom.” (Italian woman)

One of the things that surprises foreigners, is the cleanliness of Japanese public bathrooms. The reason why toilets are so clean may be because we have been used to “cleaning toilets” since childhood. In schools abroad, unlike Japan, children rarely clean the school and the bathrooms, as the cleaning is assigned to cleaning companies.

In the Japanese customer-service industry, toilets are thoroughly cleaned. This is because many managers think that the cleanliness of the restrooms reflects the service and attention the business has for the customers. For this reason, toilet-cleaning happens several times a day, and the bathrooms are always kept clean.

This Japanese way of thinking is probably what leads to Japanese public restroom being clean.



Are there pay-to-use toilets? What are they like elsewhere?

“In Australia there are ‘eco toilets’ in national parks. An eco-toilet is an eco-friendly toilet with a recycling function that readapts waste into the soil.” (Australian man)

“In Italy, most station bathrooms charge 70 cents to 1 Euro to use. Public toilets in famous tourist destinations like Rome and Venice are also pay-to-use. When you use the bathroom in a café or a bar, you need to buy something. In Italy, the cheapest item you can get in a café is an ‘espresso’, so if you want to use the bathroom, make sure you buy coffee and then use it.” (Italian woman)

Pay-to-use toilets, are bathrooms that require you to pay to use them. This is not for the toilet itself, but it’s for toilet paper, soap, water, and drier. Free-to-use toilets are common in Japan, but there are more pay-to-use toilets overseas. There are also places where you are expected to tip after using the bathroom, even though the bathroom itself may be free-to-use.

One of the reasons why there are so many pay-to-use toilets overseas, is to maintain public services. In addition, it helps prevent crimes from being committed behind the closed doors of the toilets, which will open only upon paying.

Wrapping Up

The Japanese government initiated efforts to introduce more western-style toilets, mainly in tourist areas, as part of the measures to welcome foreign visitors in Japan for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. This was based on the idea that Japanese-style toilets may be “stressful” for foreigners.

The latest Japanese toilets boast a good reputation among foreigners, so I would like to welcome foreign visitors to enjoy our hospitality.

