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STARS AND STRIPES®

Community Publication

OKINAWA

VOLUME 16 NO. 3

FEBRUARY 2 – FEBRUARY 15, 2023

FREE

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**CHECK US OUT
ONLINE!**



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Military children tell us your story!

Hey, 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.

Now that I have your attention, I want to give you a little job. No, wait! Don't stop reading! I'm not going to ask you to clean your room! I'm simply going to give you 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 12th 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

UNIQUE OKINAWAN SOBBA

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Photo by Carlos Vazquez

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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 submission will be posted on our special Month of the Military website: Military-child.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 (250-word maximum, please). 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. But no matter when they are submitted, they will be posted on the website. As we approach another April, our team is ready for the onslaught. In fact, we're already receiving submissions.

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 be submitted by April 15 to appear in Stripes Okinawa!

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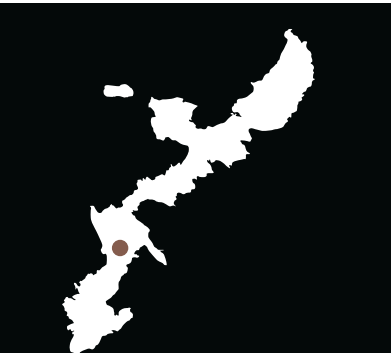
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Things to know

Location: 2-chōme-6-47 Chūō, Okinawa, or GPS 26.338912631326554, 127.80024262642046.

Directions: From Gate 2, Kadena Air Base, take a left at Koza Music Town onto Route 330. After just less than a half-mile, turn left on Park Avenue Dori. Player's Cafe is on the left. Parking lots are just past the restaurant on the right. Follow the signs.

Hours: Open 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. Wednesday through Monday.

Prices: Drinks range from soft drinks for 400 yen to a bottle of awamori for 3,000 yen. Food costs between 500 and 800 yen.

Dress: Casual
Phone: 098-929-1169

Player's Cafe

part of old town Koza revival

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MATTHEW M. BURKE,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: January 5, 2023

Player's Café is a classy yet unpretentious bar and restaurant in Koza, a formerly distressed area of central Okinawa.

The establishment offers food, drinks and lodging in an up-and-coming urban section of the island.

Patrons can relax in comfort and, on some nights, listen to live music surrounded by remnants of Koza's history, which is tied to American culture and Okinawan tradition.

Player's Café opened in 1999 in the area formerly known as Koza town, now officially part of Okinawa city. It's a short walk from the back gate to Kadena Air Base, familiar to service members as Gate 2 Street.

After World War II, bars and restaurants catering to Americans sprang up in the area as locals took to the American culture spilling off nearby bases. Jazz bands flooded the town, which existed from 1956 to 1974, soon giving way to rock acts like Condition Green and Murasaki.

The area peaked during the Vietnam-era when the island served as a way station for troops and equipment heading to Southeast Asia.

The café recently underwent an extensive remodel and upgrade with the addition of comfortable armchairs and bar stools, amplifiers, guitars and framed photos from Koza's past.

The café is also the lounge and front-desk area for Tripshot Hotels Koza. Tripshot's 10 lofts are dotted along the street in recently renovated, previously vacant second-floor

Player's Cafe's jerk chicken sandwich was juicy and succulent and spiced just right.

with potato chips and cole slaw for 800 yen.

The cutlet sandwich was crispy with a light drizzle of pasta sauce. The jerk chicken spices tangoed with the mayonnaise dressing to light up the taste buds. The chicken was cooked perfectly, juicy and succulent.

Player's personal-sized pizza appeared store-bought but was crispy and delicious just the same. Its over-abundance of cheese stretched from mouth to slice with each bite.

The bartender's spumoni was colorful and blended perfectly, with nary a hint of alcohol.

Player's Café won't win a Michelin star for food anytime soon, but the food and drinks were delicious and worth the price of admission. The warmth and comfort of the space are world class.

Player's is the perfect place to meet friends, break bread, share a few laughs and celebrate the resurgence of a once-proud town.

But the old Koza area has turned around in the past year. Young, hip entrepreneurs are back in business since Japan reopened for foreign tourists in 2022.

The shopping arcade off Gate 2 Street is buzzing. Park Avenue Dori, a strip mall connected to the arcade, is also seeing a revival, illuminated by the bright lights of the Player's Café's façade.

burke.matt@stripes.com
Twitter: @MatthewMBurke1

rooms.

The rooms are chic and inviting, appointed with warm woods, concrete and black panel chalkboards. But this new venture takes nothing away from the café.

Player's features a standard menu of drinks and cocktails, from ginger ale and mango juice for 400 yen, or just about \$3, to the house wine for 600 yen. Cocktails like rum and Coke or a Moscow mule cost 600 yen. Draft and bottled beer, Okinawan awamori, Japanese sake and whiskey are also available.

The food menu has changed over time and seems to be in flux at the moment, with only a few classic items available on a night in late-December. The kitchen offered spicy chicken for 780 yen, french fries and edamame for 500 yen each, and a small personal pizza for 800 yen.

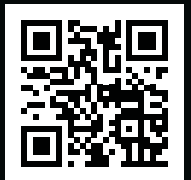
After the war, the boom times quelled as the U.S. consolidated its island bases and troop levels fell drastically. Starting in 2020, COVID-19 kept service members and their families and U.S. civilian employees confined to their homes and bases.

For something a bit heavier, try the pork cutlet or Jamaican jerk chicken sandwiches

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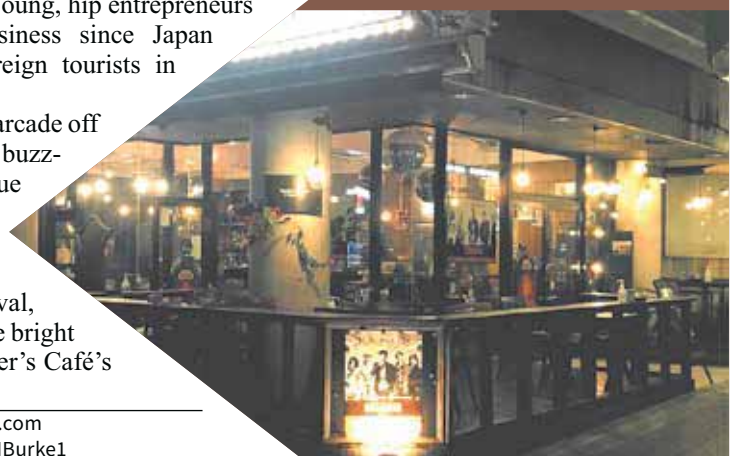


Website



GPS

Player's Cafe in Okinawa city offers world-class atmosphere, not to mention delicious food and drinks.



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Toujin Soba

Tasting how it all started

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

When it comes to Okinawa soba noodles, I go conservative. Dashi broth flavored with bonito flakes, noodles topped with pork belly, pork ribs and red ginger, sounds just fine to me. These days, noodle joints on the island serve up Okinawa soba with all kinds of flavors such as spicy curry, vegetables soup or with garnishes such as tofu, fried egg, mozuku seaweed, etc. But to me, the basic recipe and topping are always the best.

So, I was a little skeptical of a 110-year-old Okinawan soba recipe with dark-colored broth and diced pork, which is currently being served up at several soba joints.

Toujin soba (Chinese people's soba) - thought to be the origin of Okinawan soba - has been brought back to life at several soba joints on the island.

"We revived the menu item to make "soba joo-goo" (Soba lovers in Okinawa dialect) on the island happy," said Masashi Nozaki, chairman of the Okinawa Soba Hatten Keishou no Kai (Association for Okinawan Soba's development and



Toujin Soba

succession).

According to the association's website, Kankairou, the first soba joint in Okinawa, opened in 1902. Its proprietor was a man from Miyazaki Prefecture. A chef from Qing (then China) was brought in from a restaurant in Osaka to run the kitchen.

"Old documents mention black broth with the flavor of soy sauce and green onion and pork the

size of small beans. Following just a few leads like those, we struggled to bring back the taste," noted Nozaki.

According to him, using soy sauce for broth was a challenge. If soy sauce is poured into broth to the point where its color becomes black, it likely becomes a mere soy sauce. It was difficult to make it taste right for soba.

The dark broth was interesting and mysterious to me. For a die-hard believer of amber-colored bonito dashi broth, it was very hard to imagine how the soy sauce broth would get along with Okinawan soba.

But, after one sip of the black broth, it all made sense to my taste buds.

The broth certainly has the body of soy sauce, but it retained the subtle sweetness of soba broth. The perfect balance added depth to the taste of the noodles. And diced pork added another layer

of sweetness. It did not take me long to love the noodles and broth.

According to Nozaki, Okinawans have been surprised with or skeptical of the dark-colored broth like I was, but their response once they tried it. They all said it tastes like Okinawa soba, not ramen. It's not noodles to many soba joogoo.

A record of the historical Okinawa soba said Toujin soba was first recognized as Shina soba (China soba) in the early days.

Shina soba is commonly known as ramen in Japan. According to the National Ramen Museum, the names ramen and soba refer to ramen in mid-Meiji era. The history of Okinawa soba is intertwined with ramen, and the black broth evolved to Shouyu ramen.

But to me, Toujin soba is like none other than Okinawa soba. The noodles with black broth it shook my idea of what a soba is supposed to be.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



Toujin Soba is available at the following locations

Miyoya

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.36333, E 127.75485 (near Kadena Air Base)
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. or till food sold out

Mingei Shokudo

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.20213, E 127.75730
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (closed on Thu)

Uchinaa ya

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.22674, E 127.68455
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. (closed on Sun and holidays)



Photo by Carlos Vazquez

Uchinaa ya Yaese ten

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.14619, E 127.72547
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. (closed on Mon)

Uchinaa ya Nanjo-shi

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.15419, E 127.72547
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. (closed on Sun and holidays)

Okinawa Soba Kintaro

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.14819, E 127.72547
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. or till food sold out (closed on Wed)

Izumi Soba

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.64333, E 127.72547
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Closed on Sun and holidays)

Time to slurp away like Okinawans

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

You may have heard that it's OK to slurp noodles in Japan. That is very well said and very true, and in Okinawa there are many soba noodle restaurants across the island for you to slurp to your heart's content.

In the northern part of the land, Motobu Town is known for around 70 soba joints

dotting local streets.

The mid-part of Okinawa has some famous soba joints near the U.S. military facilities, while the southern part, on the other hand, has many places, especially in and around Naha City. You can hop around from one soba place after another if you will.

So next time you run into a soba joint on a local street, stop in and slurp way like Okinawans.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

Soba Joints in Motobu town

■ Yambaru Soba

A popular place, often crowded with tourists.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.650518, E 127.949460
HOURS: 11 a.m.- till food sold out. (Closed Mon. and Tues.)

■ Kishimoto Shokudo - Honten (main shop)

A famous soba joint near Motobu Municipal Market
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.660328, E 127.895893
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. or till food sold out (Closed Wed.)

■ Kishimoto Shokudo - Mt. Yaedake

A famous located near the mountain.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.657104, E 127.911035
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

■ Sawanoya - Motobu

A popular soba joint near Motobu Municipal Market.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.660179, E 127.896308
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. (Closed Thur.)

■ Kairo

A local restaurant near the Expo Park.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.685050, E 127.877898
HOURS: 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. (Closed Tues.)

Other noodle joints up north

■ Gabusoka Shokudo Honten (main shop)

A famous soba joint in Nago city.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.62226, E 127.99973
HOURS: 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Closed Mon. If a holiday falls on Mon., the non-business day shifts to Tue.)

■ Yakasoba

A restaurant in Ginoza village known for its various menu items.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.50716, E 127.99295
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

■ Ufuya

A fancy soba restaurant housed in a traditional Okinawan residential building.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.62100, E 127.96363
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Lunch, L.O. at 4:30 p.m.), 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. (dinner, L.O. at 9 p.m.)

Noodles near US military facilities

■ Hamaya

Located near Sunabe Seawall in Chatan, this is popular among locals and tourists, alike.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.32931, E 127.74431
HOURS: Open 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (L.O. at 5 p.m.)

■ Gabusoka Shokudo Koza

This popular soba chain has a branch just a 10-minute walk from Kadena AB Gate 2. Their Okinawa soba broth is rich and tasty;
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.33572, E 127.79107
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (L.O. at 9 p.m.)

■ Gen Restaurant

Near Camp Foster Gate 4, Gen offers a variety of local favorites.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.30520, E 127.77349
HOURS: 11:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Joints in mid - island

■ Daruma soba

A popular soba joint, a 5-minute drive away from AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.32238, E 127.78940
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (L.O. at 8:55 p.m.)

Soba down south and Naha

■ Heiwaen soba

A soba joint near the Peace Memorial Park.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.098268, E 127.721910
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

■ Ishigufuu

A popular soba joint near Naha Airport.
GPS COORDINATES: N 26.17892, E 127.65643
HOURS: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Closed on Mon. If a holiday falls on Monday, the non-business day shifts to Tue.)



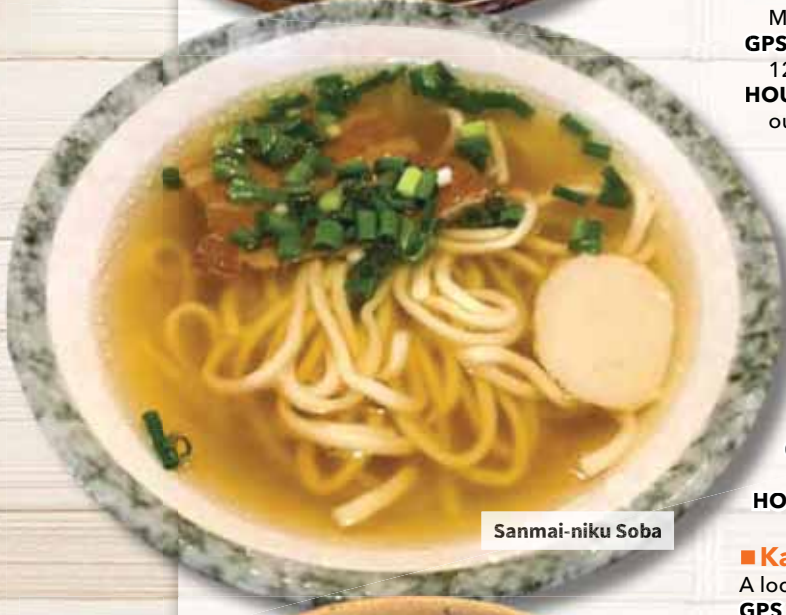
Mozuku Soba



Soki Soba



Mix Soba (soki, nankotsu, sanmai-niku)



Sanmai-niku Soba



Nakami Soba

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VALENTINE'S DAY

How a fake American holiday became an even faker Japanese one

BY KOICHI,
TOFUGU.COM

Christmas is over. Now it's time to take a look at another holiday that's isn't quite the same in Japan: Valentine's Day.

As with all Western holidays that have made their way over to Japan, almost all of the changes and "traditions" have been created by commercial organizations, looking to build swimming pools of 500 yen coins. In fact, only during one week before Valentine's Day, chocolate companies make half of their annual sales. That's a lot of money, and a lot of chocolate.

Then again, in America (and other places too), we give a lot of chocolate as well. So, what makes Japan different?

ONLY GIRLS GIVE CHOCOLATE

Back in the 1950's, a company advertised Valentine's Day chocolates to non-Japanese living in Japan at the time. Then, Japanese companies wanted to get on board too, and started advertising Valentine's Day chocolates as well. During this period there was quite a bit of "Westernization" where people wanted to adopt more Western / American traditions. Because of this, Valentine's Day in Japan did fairly well.

But there was one problem...

It seems that at some point someone messed up a translation and ended up telling the Japanese people that Valentine's Day was an opportunity for women to express their love to men. Because of this, even to this day it's mostly women giving chocolates to men (don't worry, men get their turn too, eventually).

WHO IS RECEIVING THE CHOCOLATE?

It gets more complicated, though. Because it's not nice to make people feel left out on Valentine's day (especially in, say, the office), there are

different kinds of chocolates girls give out now, depending on who they're giving it to.

GIRI-CHOCOLATE

Giri-Chocolate means "obligatory chocolate." This kind of chocolate refers to the chocolate you have to give to people (who aren't really people you love). These could be people like bosses, coworkers, male friends, etc. Even sadder still, there's also something called "Cho-Giri-Chocolate" (Ultra-obligatory-chocolate), which is given to unpopular people you really don't want to give chocolates to.

In order to tell these chocolates apart from other (less obligatory) chocolates, these chocolates tend to be pretty run-of-the-mill, and not super expensive. Things don't start getting crazy until we get to Honmei-Chocolates.

HONMEI-CHOCOLATE

Honmei-Chocolate means "favorite chocolate." This kind of chocolate is the kind of chocolate you give to the one you want to express your love to. These chocolates tend to be more expensive or possibly even home made. Basically, it has to be obvious that these are honmei and not giri, so they have to be on a completely different level (Way to go chocolate companies! Ka-ching! ¥¥¥).

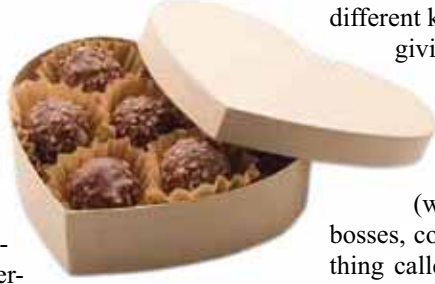
TOMO-CHOCOLATE

Tomo-choco just means "friend chocolates," and refers to chocolates you give to your female friends (as a female). Simple as that.

GETTING THE GUYS TO GIVE

Guys don't give anything on Valentine's Day in Japan, but they do have their own day one month later where they're expected to return the favor. That day is known as "White Day" (or, if you're old enough to remember, "Marshmallow Day"), and it also sounds pretty expensive.

Everyone enjoy their Valentine's Day... and to all you girls out there: I'm waiting for my cho-giri-choco from you.



File photos

Japan's answer to Valentine's Day



File photo

BY HASHI,
TOFUGU.COM

If you're a dude and you think you're safe from Valentine's Day. Hold up, you're not out of the woods quite yet; well, at least if you're in Japan.

For most of us in the West, Valentine's Day ends on February 15, but in Japan it's not quite over until March 15. March 14 – exactly one month after Valentine's Day – is White Day in Japan.

Valentine's day in Japan

Unlike Western traditions where gift exchanges between loved ones are mutual,

Japanese Valentine's Day is all about men getting presents. Sorry ladies, but you're out of luck on Valentine's Day if you want to celebrate it Japanese-style. Women have to wait for White Day before they can get any gifts.

What is white day?

If Valentine's Day in Japan is all about the guys, White Day is all about the ladies. White Day is a chance for all the men who received gifts on Valentine's Day to return the favor to the ladies in their lives.



Ice-cold response not typical.
Photo courtesy of Tofugu

White Day and Valentine's Day have a lot of similarities. Both aren't necessarily romantic holidays – you can give gifts to anybody of the opposite sex, even if your relationship is strictly platonic. Friends and co-workers exchange gifts on both days.

And on both days, chocolate is the gift of choice, but there's a bit more nuance to it

than buying a box of See's and being done with it. You can buy different types of chocolate for the different people in your life: your friends get different chocolates than your co-workers who get different chocolates than your significant other.

The origins of white day

Cynically enough, White Day is strictly a celebration manufactured by the candy industry (unlike true holidays rooted in years of tradition, like Pocky Day). In 1978, the National Confectionery Industry Association tried to boost sales, and decided that a new holiday was the best way to do it.

Originally it was called Marshmallow Day and was all about marshmallows, not chocolate. People liked the idea of the new holiday, but weren't too keen on the marshmallows. The preferred candy changed from marshmallows to chocolate, but the color scheme stayed the same – hence the name "White Day," and why white chocolate remains a popular White Day gift, even today.

White day outside of japan

White Day is definitely a uniquely

Japanese invention, but it's spread to some other Asian countries, including South Korea and China.

South Korea even has yet another Valentine's-Day-related holiday: the aptly named day for single people, Black Day. People in Korea celebrate being single by burying their sorrows with a noodle dish with black bean sauce called jajangmyeon.

(No doubt, Black Day is just a ploy by the powerful Korean noodle industry.)

So for those of you in Japan, I hope you have a happy White Day; those of us elsewhere in the world will just have to buy our own chocolate.



Jajangmyeon
Photo courtesy of 아침꿀물

Stripes Sports Trivia

SAY MY NAME! Where do I start? The fact that I'm a 5-time NBA champ is almost as interesting as my life off the court. After being selected near the end of the 2nd round of the 1986 NBA draft, I played for 5 teams and have lived quite the life. One that includes piercings, tattoos, acting, Madonna, wrestling, dresses and world politics. Who am I?

Answer

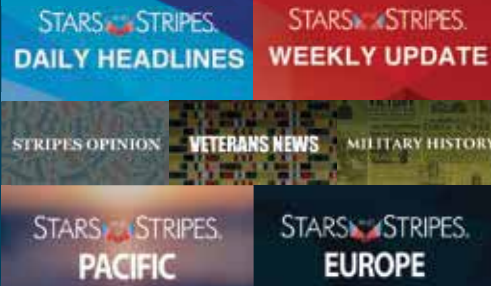
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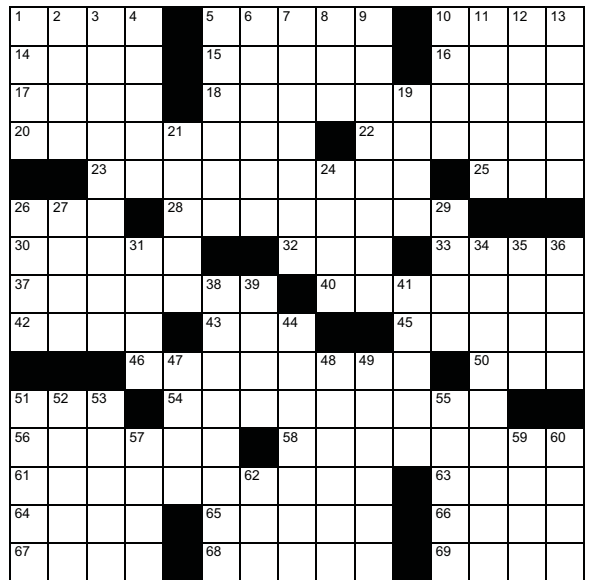


Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Host's request
- 5 Freshwater catch
- 10 Advance, slangily
- 14 Whitish gemstone
- 15 Awaken
- 16 Pricing word
- 17 Yellowfin, e.g.
- 18 What a teacher takes
- 20 Life-and-death
- 22 Nitwit
- 23 Now and then
- 25 "___ you nuts?"
- 26 Dickensian cry
- 28 Heads off
- 30 Chilled
- 32 "Yadda, yadda, yadda"
- 33 Congregation's cry
- 37 Ring-shaped
- 40 Part of a heartbeat
- 42 Latest fad
- 43 Cork sound
- 45 Contract specifics
- 46 Pull apart
- 50 Pub crawler
- 51 Rapper Lil ___ X
- 54 Get through
- 56 Gum-yielding tree
- 58 Tolerates
- 61 Dictatorial
- 63 Good-for-nothing
- 64 Nursery item
- 65 Historic period
- 66 Drop-off spot
- 67 Kitchen items
- 68 Slow on the uptake
- 69 Appear (to be)



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- 3 Fading away
- 4 "The Republic" author
- 5 Skipper's pursuer
- 6 Do a tire job
- 7 Last longer than
- 8 Type of tax
- 9 Inclination
- 10 Stitched line
- 11 Bamboo lover
- 12 Come to pass
- 13 Kind of song or park
- 19 Furniture covering?
- 21 Motivate
- 24 Big Apple team
- 26 Wild swine
- 27 Tolstoy heroine
- 29 Appease fully
- 31 Stage prompts
- 34 Dots-and-dashes system
- 35 "Blondie" boy
- 36 Arboreal abode
- 38 Faced the judge
- 39 Equine color

- 41 Locomotive power
- 44 Robert of "The Music Man"
- 47 Large-scale
- 48 Storage spots
- 49 Throat soother
- 51 Civil rights org.
- 52 Honda's luxury line

- 53 Gown material
- 55 Canterbury stories
- 57 Corn cores
- 59 Bigger than big
- 60 Petunia part
- 62 Donkey Kong, for one

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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



DID YOU KNOW?

Many Japanese think that Okinawa is a very attractive prefecture. The Regional Brand Survey, an annual survey to rank prefectures in Japan based on how attractive they are, found in 2022 that Okinawa is the third most attractive prefecture next to Hokkaido and Kyoto. The survey is a little controversial since some of the prefectures tend to always rank low on the chart and tourist favorites enjoy the top spots time and again.

Kanji of the week



Man (Ten thousand)

Language Lesson

I don't know.

Wakarimasen.

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SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Easy

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

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:

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

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Speakin' Japanese

Talking romance on Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is considered to be a great chance for women to confess their love in Japan. They give chocolates (often homemade) to men on the day to express their love. But don't for a second think that all the women who are presenting you a chocolate are in love with you! You need to know there is a custom of women giving "giri-choko" (obligation chocolate) to their male friends, supervisors or colleagues to show their friendship. Men are supposed to give return gifts (usually candy) to the women who gifted them chocolates on White Day (Mar. 14). Enjoy the day and try to avoid thinking every woman who gives you chocolate loves you.

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.

"Watashino chokoreeto wo uketotte kudasai." = Please accept my chocolate. ("watashino" = my, "chokoreeto" = chocolate, "uketotte" = accept, "kudasai" = please)

"Kokorowo komete tukuri mashita." = I made it with the greatest of care. ("kokorowo komete" = with the greatest of care, "tsukuri mashita" = made)

"Arigato gozaimasu." = Thank you so much.

"Sukidesu." = I love (like) you.

"Aishitemasu." = I love you.

"Watashimo desu." = I do, too.

"Tsukiatte itadake masenka?" = Will you go out with me? ("tsukiatte" = go together, "itadake masenka?" = will you ... please?)

"Deeto ni ikimasenka?" = Let's go on a date, shall we? ("deeto" = date, "ikimasenka?" = Let's go, shall we?)

"Shokuji ni ikimasenka?" = Let's go out for dinner, shall we? ("shokuji" = meal/dinner)

"Kireina akai bara wo doozo." = Here's a beautiful red rose. ("kireina" = beautiful, "akai" = red, "bara" = rose,

"doozo" = go ahead/please)

"Chokoreeto wa osuki desuka?" = Do you like chocolate? ("osuki desuka?" = do you like..?)

WHEN ON OKINAWA, you can also say it in "Uchinaanguchi" (island dialect) like this:

"Kanasandoo." = I love you.

"Valentine Yaakutoo, isshoni Gohan Kamiigai ichunnaa" = It's Valentine's Day today. Let's go out for dinner, shall we?

"Majun narannaa?" = Would you please marry me?

"Yaa nukutoo shiawaseni sabii sa" = I will make you happy.

"Yorokonde onegee sabira" = With my pleasure

"Guburee yashiga naibiransaaya" = I am sorry, but I have to refuse.

"Chocolate suki yaibinnaa?" = Do you like chocolate?

"Nifeedeebiru." = Thank you so much.

– Shoji Kudaka and Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Okinawa

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Cynthia McKeague

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