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Community Publication

OKINAWA

VOLUME 14 NO. 39

MARCH 4 - MARCH 17, 2021

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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. And, I also promise that this has nothing to do with more COVID-19 restrictions.

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

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

SEE MOMC ON PAGE 2

Hit the BEACH!

Sun, surf, snorkeling
 await on Okinawa's
 sandy beaches

Pages 8-10

Torii Beach

White Beach

Zakimi Beach

INSIDE INFO

MARINES GIVE FINAL GOODBYE TO LANCE CPL. BEAR
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PIZZA SUN OKINAWA LIVES UP TO THE HYPE
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MOMC:
We're here for you!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For those children who are part of the military community overseas but not technically a military child, we want to hear from you, too. You and your Department of Defense civilian parents are also a key part of the military community. So, what's life like as a military kid? Tell us. And after you share with us, your story, poem or drawing will be posted on our special Month of the Military website: Militarychild.Stripes.com and could appear in at least one weekly paper.

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

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

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

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

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

We can't wait to hear from you!

Chris Carlson,
Publishing and Media Design Manager
Stars and Stripes

Stories must be submitted by April 15 to appear in Stripes Okinawa!

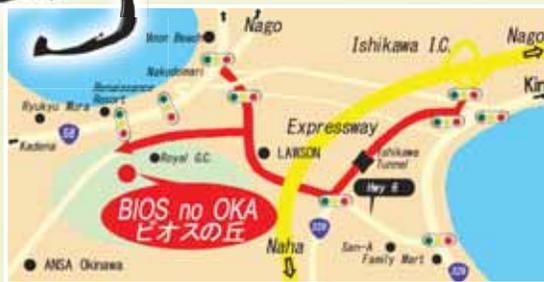


(We are closed this month please check our website for March business hours and details.)



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USO Okinawa staff spotlight

- **NAME:** Jodie Allen
- **POSITION/TITLE:** Center Operations Specialists
- **TIME WORKED AT USO:** Since September 2020
- **CENTER/OFFICE LOCATION:** USO Hansen

Tell us about them:

My name is Jodie Allen. I was born in New Mexico but grew up in Missouri, making me a Midwest girl at heart. I went to college in Florida and studied political science. I completed my degree in 2017. While in college I met my wonderful husband and we were married six months later. I have been a military spouse for over four years now and have since lived in four different states and two different countries. My life tends to be a big, crazy adventure, but I would not want it any other way.

Q. Do you have a hidden talent? What is it?

A. I love all things yarn. I can crochet and knit but prefer crochet. Cozy blankets are my favorite projects.

Q. What's the top destination on your must-visit list?

A. Picking just one is impossible, but if I must narrow it down, my top three would be Germany, Scotland, or Sweden.

Q. What's your favorite place to eat around here?

A. My go to place will always be Family Mart. What's your go-to karaoke song? The only one who hears me sing is my car, but my current go to

is something from the Hamilton soundtrack.

Q. Finish this phrase: "I'm crazy about ___"

A. American History. I am an absolute nerd when it comes to America's history. Cake.

Q. Why do you love working at the USO?

A. I love working at the USO because it gives such a unique opportunity to make a difference. I feel so lucky to work for an organization that does good for service members and their families daily. This is an experience I never take for granted.

Q. What is your favorite memory of working at the USO?

A. I love any chance to go out into the military community for morale support. My favorite time was when USO Hansen did a holiday bag drop for 75 Marines. I loved getting to see the genuine joy on their faces as they took a USO Holiday gift bag.

Q. Which program do you want to feature from the USO?

A. I thoroughly enjoy the 'Breakfast in the Barracks' program. It is a program where USO Hansen puts together breakfast to go packs and hands them out to service members at their barracks. It is a special morning "pick me up" for service members.

– USO Okinawa



USO Okinawa volunteer spotlight

USO MCAS Futenma Sgt. Maj. Reginald Daniels



MCAS Futenma, OKINAWA, Japan. USO Futenma became a second home to Sgt. Maj. Reginald Daniels during his six-month deployment to Okinawa, Japan. It's no secret that this has been a tough time to be travelling to Okinawa. Daniels and his crew were quarantined twice totaling 45 days. As soon as he could, he made it to USO Futenma to give the little free time that he had volunteer.

Daniels explained that the USO has been there since the very beginning of his military career. When asked when he first heard about the USO, Daniels said "as soon as I stepped off the bus after boot camp." He went on to share that a friendly volunteer handed him his first free USO snack pack on that first adventure as he stepped off the bus and then boarded a plane for the first time heading to his first duty station.

"I was nervous, nervous as a 27-year-old could be, then these people gave me a bag with a snack, a water and a hot dog," Daniels said. "I fell in love with the USO and the hot dogs at that moment. I've been hooked ever since."

Since then Daniels said he has deepened his connection by utilizing the facilities inside airports and other duty stations for not only himself but for his family.

"For me the USO is more than just a place to go and hang out," Daniels said. "Since I am gone a lot and having my family travelling, it feels good to know that they have a place to go. When they get stuck in the airport and they've had a hard flight the USO is there. They are genuine and



caring." "I love the volunteers and staff, seeing the young people coming in and relaxing here at USO Futenma," Daniels added. "I really helping by like cleaning. I like keeping things neat, so it feels like home"

Will Stanley, USO Futenma Center Manager, affirmed that during these challenging times, there's nothing better

than a volunteer that loves to keep things clean!

Even though Daniels works five to seven days a week, he has still managed to give over 60 hours of volunteer service by serving on the weekends and evenings.

"I came in to play ping pong and I knew this was the right place for me to be," Daniels said. "This is where I needed to be on the weekends; to help out where I could. It feels good to be here."

"I believe in the USO," Daniels said. "It is one of the truly beneficial organizations that we have. This organization is very unique, very special and I have gotten to experience it year after year. The mission of the USO and the people is the same, it doesn't matter what the building is. It could be in the middle of the desert, a wood hut, a trailer or a table in the airport. It's the same wherever I go. There are always people just trying to give a little smile and joy to the service members. There's nothing like it, it's the best thing."

If you would like to make an impact and donate your talent and time to the USO please visit volunteers.uso.org to sign up.

– USO Okinawa



A Marine pets Lance Cpl. Bear before heading out into the jungle at the Jungle Warfare Training Center at Camp Gonsalves in March 2015.

Marines give final goodbye to Lance Cpl. Bear

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MATTHEW M. BURKE,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: February 7, 2021

CAMP FOSTER — Lance Cpl. Bear wasn't your typical Marine.

He was lazy and overweight. He smelled terrible. He ate colorful, neurotoxic newts and survived repeated bites by poisonous snakes. But at the end of the day, he was every Marine's best friend.

The chocolate Lab was the mascot for Okinawa's Jungle Warfare Training Center at Camp Gonsalves until his death Sept. 3 at age 11. A rare form of liver cancer accomplished what

over a decade living in Okinawa's treacherous jungles could not.

Bear was impossible to miss, a 140-pound oak barrel with legs, and a big heart to match. He was never far behind the units at the training center, offering a reassuring cold nose in the hand or a bark to warn of impending dangers like jungle pigs or snakes.

A memorial service was held Jan. 11 to say goodbye to a Marine who had truly mastered jungle survival.

"He was just one of the guys, you know," Navy corpsman Petty Officer 2nd Class Phillip Morris said.

"He did the training and then came inside the Habu Pit (lounge) where everybody hangs out at night, then he'd find someone's room to sleep in and that's it."

It's unclear when Bear was born, said his last handler, 2nd Lt. Jordan McGuire, a logistics officer at the camp. His paperwork lists varying dates.

However, Bear was a puppy when he arrived



View Video!

in the remote Northern Training Area town of Higashi on Feb. 16, 2009. Right away, the Marines could see the little dog was different.

Bear insisted on always being with the Marines and eating what they ate. He could often be

seen relentlessly giving his paw to a Marine chowing down on a Meals Ready to Eat, begging for scraps which were readily given.

Given free run of the remote jungle warfare training base, Bear would often appear at the Marine bivouacs as they prepared for training. He was a constant presence throughout and would mill around at the briefings and laze on the warm pavement.

Bear never bristled at anyone trying to pet him. He was always smiling, and his tail would wag more and more violently the closer one got to him.

He ballooned to 135 pounds near the end of his life, but that didn't stop him from scaling sharp jungle cliffs like a mountain goat.

In 2015, Marines from 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, were traversing a rocky jungle stream with high walls on either side, heading to a natural pool called the "Slide for Life" where they would practice making flotation devices out of their gear. They seemed to be in the middle of

nowhere and had already killed one habu snake.

A commotion of shaking branches and leaves on the steep cliffside to their right flank spooked everyone – until a smiling Bear emerged through the bush. He peered down at the Marines and then disappeared. His presence could be felt for the rest of the hike.

Afterwards, a lance corporal threw up bright yellow chunks of macaroni on the pavement by the stairs down to the stream. Bear was there to lap it all up.

Every morning, Bear would go on physical training runs with the Marines. He would keep up for a little while, McGuire said, but would soon fall behind. The Marines would be resting briefly before turning back when Bear would jog up gasping.

Bear would also follow the Marines through each iteration of the training center's vaunted E-Course, complete with mud pits, obstacles, ropes and water, Morris said. He would always go with the first group.

Bear worked tirelessly to get back in shape before his passing. After being temporarily



Bear takes a nap at Camp Gonsalves, Okinawa, in the summer of 2017.

"demoted" by a cheeky camp medical staff, he ate a restrictive diet and was dropped off a couple of miles from home each day, Morris said with a laugh.

Bear always found his way back. After losing more than 40 pounds, he was reinstated as a lance corporal.

McGuire, who wasn't too keen on the smelly dog at first, said Bear helped him get through much of his tour away from his family. The dog's tail wagged enthusiastically to the very end.

Bear's ashes rest in honor at Camp Gonsalves with the base's other previous mascots.

"I won't forget him just being there, helping out with morale," McGuire said.

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Bear hangs out.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:

STARS AND STRIPES

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Kubasaki takes top honors at virtual drill meet

BY DAVE ORNAUER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: January 20, 2021

CAMP FOSTER — Brent Cook needed more bodies for his Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps drill program at Camp Foster’s Kubasaki High School.

Students there, deprived during the coronavirus pandemic of their regular extra-curricular outlets — football, volleyball, basketball and the rest — needed something, anything, to do and a team to bond with.

That proved beneficial for Cook, who coached the Kubasaki Dragon Battalion to top honors at the Far East Drill Competition in December, according to results announced in January. The drill team took four of five events in the virtual competition.

“It’s awesome,” said Cook, a retired Marine Corps sergeant major, in his fifth year as the Dragon Battalion’s superintendent. “We’re very happy. The kids are very excited.”

Kubasaki placed first in the color guard, armed and unarmed regulation and unarmed exhibition categories and finished second to E.J. King High School at Sasebo Naval Base in the armed exhibition. In the overall standings, Yokota High at Yokota Air Base was second, followed by King and Nile C. Kinnick High School at Yokosuka Naval Base. All the schools are on U.S. military bases in Japan.

In a normal year, teams from 12 Department of Defense Education Activity schools in the Pacific gather in separate venues for JROTC drill and marksmanship competitions.

But this is a pandemic year, which actually helped Cook and his boss, retired Marine Capt. Kenneth Gipson, expand the drill team ranks from 23 members last year to 36 this year, Cook said.

“The kids, they really bonded. It was such a great environment, watching them bond and do something” together during the pandemic, Cook said, adding he avidly recruited and had little trouble finding takers.

“It gave them purpose. I loved watching their teamwork. They were so focused. They made it fun,” he said.

Cook singled out Cadet 2nd Lt. Madison Sharp, in charge of unarmed regulation and exhibition; Cadet 1st Lt. Mateo



The JROTC Dragon Battalion from Kubasaki High School at Camp Foster, Okinawa, won four of five events at the virtual Far East Drill Competition in December. Photos courtesy of DODEA

Alvarez, in charge of color guard and armed exhibition; and Cadet 1st Sgt. Ian Ayson, in charge of armed regulation.

Also, key to victory were six first-year Dragon cadets, all small in size, Cook said.

“They were tiny, they were lugging around weapons that were bigger than they were,” he said. “But they stepped up and fell in love with drill.”

Organizing the Far East drill competition in a pandemic started in spring 2020, when JROTC superintendents realized the problems ahead, Cook said.

Jason Perdew, a retired lieutenant colonel and commander of the Matthew C. Perry High School JROTC battalion at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, “was the pivotal

key person who made it happen,” Cook said.

Perdew, a former communications officer in the Marines, arranged the competition. He developed a digital score sheet, a system in which every school would do their routines in front of one video camera, and assembled a team of 15 judges, three each assigned to the five events.

“The biggest challenges were scheduling of team recordings and judging sessions,” he said. “Every team had different COVID rules to follow. Some could practice more than others. Some had to be outside. Some couldn’t. Bottom line was, we tried to replicate a live drill meet as much as we could.”

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Learning to manage our time more efficiently

Editor’s note: At Stripes Okinawa, we love to share your stories and share this space with our community members. Here is an article written by Jennifer Brown, a hospital corpsman at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa. If you have a story or photos to share, let us know at okinawa@stripes.com.

BY JENNIFER BROWN,
STRIPES OKINAWA

In today’s world time-management skills are a must in order to not only survive, but to thrive, as an adult in the working world. Unfortunately, it is easy to pile on too many responsibilities and feel overwhelmed. We want to get as much done as we can so that we can get on to more exciting things, like spending time with friends and family, working on our hobbies, and just relaxing. In order to do this, however, we have to be smart about managing our time. In a 2008 lecture, Carnegie Mellon professor Randy Pausch gave some tips on how to manage your time which have, in turn, helped me to do so.

Pauch suggests a daily activity planner and for me this was a visualized hour-by-hour way to plan out my day. This came in handy when I transferred to a larger university and my coursework grew to what seemed as an unmanageable amount. The planner allowed me to recognize where I wasn’t using my time wisely. That was hard to see, but it was what fueled me to be better at managing my time. The great thing about an activity planner is that you can really use it just about anywhere and in about almost any situation. Working

on a big project? Use an activity planner to literally map out how long it will take, what parts of the project should have more time allotted, and when you want to move onto something else.

Pausch also gave another tip which has made a ton of difference in my life: Standing to take a phone call. I started doing this during my junior year of college, and was surprised that doing so encouraged me to get through the important things in the phone call quicker than I did if I was sitting down. When I was sitting, I wanted to be sitting, so it cut down on the small talk and helped me get to the point sooner in the conversation.

One other piece of advice from Pausch was to only have one piece of paper on your desk at a time. Academically, this was a useful trick because it helped me focus onto the task at hand without the distractions of other books, my phone or other school assignments. Try it at work, it might be the thing you need to get through your daily duties more effectively!

Check out Pausch’s lecture on time management for other good tips to help get you started. Whether you’re a student, professional, stay-at-home-caregiver, we could all use for a little more time for the things we enjoy in life.

Jennifer Brown is a hospital corpsman at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa. Originally from Florida, she joined the Navy in 2018 and has been on island for over a year. During her free time, Brown enjoys spending time with animals, running, rock climbing, and hiking. She is a graduate of the University of Central Florida and holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Her professional interests include social work, animal welfare, and children.

More from ▶
Randy Pausch lecture



File photos



DMM Kariyushi Aquarium

New, entertaining alternative for children and families

Editor's Note: High-density indoor and outdoor tourist attractions where social distancing is not possible are currently off-limits for Marines on Okinawa, and airmen from Kadena Air Base are barred from visiting aquariums, specifically, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Service members should check with their commands to make sure a visit to this location is authorized before planning a trip.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: November 19, 2020

Opening a competitor aquarium on an island the size of Tokyo when the first is world renowned is a pretty bold move.

Okinawa is already home to one of the largest and best aquariums in the world in Okinawa. When it opened in 2002, Churaumi Aquarium boasted the largest aquarium window panel in the world.

The DMM Kariyushi Aquarium in the new Iias Okinawa Toyosaki mall in southern Okinawa offers a completely different experience, focused less on scientific discovery and more on technology and entertainment. It provides visitors with a quality, alternative, natural experience on the opposite side of the island.

DMM Kariyushi Aquarium was built by Japan-based DMM Resorts Co. Ltd., according to its website. It was scheduled to open in April but was delayed until May 25 due to coronavirus shutdowns.

DMM projected more than 2 million visitors in its first year, a statement on its website from February said.

The theme of DMM Kariyushi is "new entertainment aquarium," combining "the latest visual expression and spatial representation," DMM statements from February and March said.

Everything in DMM Kariyushi feels futuristic, from the bright white ticketing area resembling the Star Wars ship Tantive IV to 60 shaped and well-lit water tanks holding 190 species to the cell-phone app that guides and explains the aquarium's attractions from the palm of your hand.

Upon entering, visitors are corralled into an empty room with a wrap-around screen. An introductory film covers all of Okinawa, from the sea to the air and tourist attractions in between. The motion tricks your stomach into jumping several times.

Fans blow air on your face to coincide with the wind and mist tickles your nose as you soar through the clouds, temporarily transporting you to another place and time.

A door opens, leading visitors into a dimly lit "Emerald Forest." The habitat is covered in vines and plants.

On a day in late September, tanks featured goldfish, rainbowfish and catfish to name a few. There were caiman and Chinese water dragons, corn snakes and poison dart frogs.

A wooden trail takes you up into the trees so you can

look down at the exhibits.

Real animals were apparently not enough for DMM Kariyushi. Peering through the grass and foliage revealed realistic boars and their young projected along the walls, darting back and forth. The sounds of the jungle added to the multi-sensory experience.

Visitors passed ocellate river stingrays and swimming Humboldt penguins, which are native to South America, on their way to a simulation of an Okinawa beach, complete with coral rock formations, tidal pools teeming with tropical fish, pennant coral fish, sailfin tangs, porcupine fish and red stingrays. Waves lazily lapped at the shore; boats passed by. A storm struck. It all felt real.

Next, visitors got to walk on water. Well, not in the biblical sense. After taking off their shoes they were prompted to walk out onto a thick glass aquarium window over a 20-foot-deep tank. The fish swam underneath as their guests looked down in amazement.

There were charismatic Asian small-clawed otters diving for fish thrown by smiling handlers. There was a pool with sea stars, sea cucumbers and various small sharks, like the blackspotted catshark, kids could touch. Staff supervised closely the entire time.

There were dozens more tanks downstairs in an area called "Ocean Beauty," where visitors were now face to face with fish they had been previously standing above. There were spotted morays, blacktip reef sharks, spotted eagle rays and green turtles.

Patrons could even traverse a tunnel passing through a tank and schools of fish, so they were visible on all sides.

A separate mirrored room with jellyfish floating in tubular tanks to the ceiling, lit by changing colored lights was very "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" meets "Doctor Who," a highlight of the experience.

A deep-ocean experience was provided by screens mounted on the wall with real water trickling in front. From what felt like the perspective of a small submarine's windows, a giant octopus attacked.

Exiting through the forest once more, visitors passed two-toed sloths, capybaras and six-banded armadillos being fawned over by attentive staff in small, temporary holding areas. It's tough to see animals in captivity, especially in a mall, but the staff seemed passionate and attentive.

DMM Kariyushi Aquarium cannot compare to Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium so it doesn't try to; instead, it tries to be something altogether different. That is where they succeed.

The aquarium offers an alternative natural experience that is equally fun and entertaining for children and families.

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An Okinawa tidal pool is recreated at the brand new DMM Kariyushi Aquarium

What to know

DIRECTIONS: 2F Iias Okinawa Toyosaki, 3-35 Toyosaki, Tomigusuku-shi, Okinawa, or GPS 26.160531, 127.649338

TIMES: Open daily, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Last entry is at 8 p.m.

COSTS: 1,500 yen for children 4-12; 2,000 yen for youths 13-17; and 2,400 yen for adults

FOOD: A cafe onsite offers snacks and drinks, including Okinawa staples like purple mixed sweet potato fries for 400 yen, an Agu pork hot dog for 560 yen and smoothies for 500 yen.

PHONE: 098-840-6900

WEBSITE

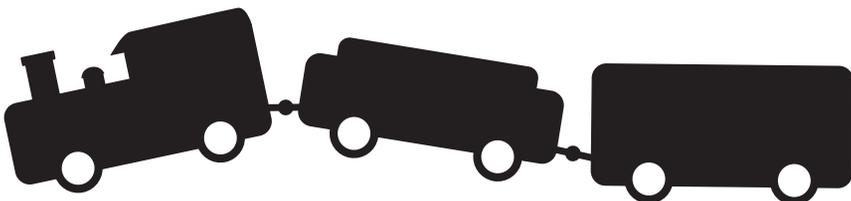


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EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
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Kids can have a hands on experience

KEIBIN



Remembering Okinawa's Light Railway at Yonabaru

Editor's Note: These are uncertain times. Please check your command policies for visiting attractions ahead of making plans. Wear a mask, practice social distancing and proper handwashing measures.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
DAVID KRIGBAUM,
WWW.WAYFARERDAVES.COM

One of Okinawa's distinct features that sets it apart from mainland Japan is its lack of a railway system, not counting the tourist-centric monorail between the airport and Kokusai-dori. But that wasn't always the case.

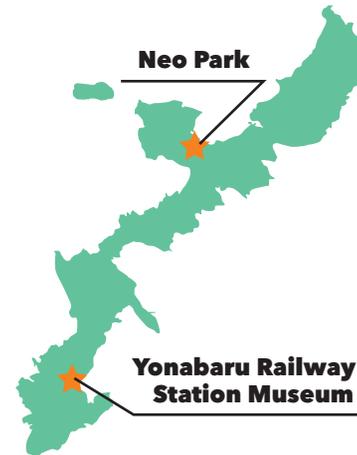
Beginning in 1914 and for the following three decades, railways, tramways and rail-running horsecarts were an integral part of the island's transportation system for everything from hauling cargo to getting children to school on time.

The Okinawan train service used toy-like German steam engines on narrow gauge 2'6" wide tracks. Locally called "Keibin," the dialect word for "light rail," the roughly cruciform railway system would ultimately be composed of 51.3 kilometers of track linking Kadena in the north, Ito-man in the south, Naha in the west and Yonabaru in the east.

Yonabaru, at the time an important shipping port, was the terminus of the east-west 9-km route to Naha, the capital and major port on Okinawa's west coast. Yonabaru Station was a modern grey structure in a sea of traditional red



<p>Yonabaru Railway Station Museum</p> <p>ADDRESS: 3148-1 Yonabaru, Shimajiri District, Okinawa Pref. TEL: 098-835-8888 WEBSITE: https://www.yonabaruekisha.com/</p>	<p>Neo Park</p> <p>ADDRESS: 4607-41 Nago, Nago City, Okinawa Pref. TEL: 0980-52-6348 WEBSITE: https://www.neopark.co.jp/</p>
--	---



We spent about an hour inside though really you can breeze through in about 15 minutes. Admission is 100 yen and you're given a replica train ticket which you can then punch and stamp with original equipment just like at a real old train station.

Some signage is in English, but it's mostly Japanese-only. There is a no photo policy, but if you ask, the staff may be fine with using a phone translation app to read displays. The museum is open every day except Tuesday.

If you want to experience a tiny train for yourself, Neo Park in Nago has a diesel-powered miniature train masquerading as a one of the old Keibin trains. (And another mocked up as a miniature D51, because, why not?)

tile roofed buildings, surrounded by small metal steam trains and wooden horse carts piled high with goods.

The last train ran on Mar. 28, 1945. Both the shipping port and train station were destroyed during the Battle of

Okinawa shortly thereafter, never being rebuilt to resume service. For its 100th anniversary, a replica of old Yonabaru Station was built on the site of the original and is now the Yonabaru Railway Museum, Okinawa's only museum dedicated to rail transportation.

It's a small museum but appropriately sized for the story it tells of the role rail transportation played in Okinawan life for a short while. No Keibin trains survive and even of the old station; only the stumps of pillars remain behind the museum. Inside there are a few small artifacts and lots of pictures, including railway highlights such

as Crown Prince Hirohito's 1921 visit (Hirohito became emperor five years later).

What interested me most were the video and written stories of people who used the train in their everyday lives. As a rail enthusiast, I find the small stories color the black and white of history books with human details, like how the train didn't stop but merely slowed enough people could board as it passed through some stations. That story came from women who rode it like a school bus when they were kids. I also liked how it touched on not just the trains but also the roles of trams and rail-riding horse carts.



File photo

Soak up the sun

Okinawa's beaches set to open soon

Editor's Note: Due to the on-going pandemic, beach openings and activities are subject to change. Check ahead of your visit and don't forget to follow safety guidelines.

BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

When March rolls around in Okinawa, beach season will be right around the corner.

It's time to go surfside and celebrate the beach openings. Some are resort-oriented while others offer a quiet environment to enjoy nature. You may say this subtropical island has several beaches open throughout the year. However, who would not want to celebrate the return of beach party fun to the island? Let's check out the best spring break beaches that Okinawa has to offer.



1 ANA INTERCONTINENTAL MANZA BEACH RESORT

MARCH 21: A ceremony is scheduled to be held at 10 a.m. Home to water activities such as ocean park (water obstacles), sea kayaking, jet skiing, and more. Water obstacles are scheduled to be available starting this day (no free admission to be offered). This beach is expected to remain closed until March 7.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** TBD ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Subject to change) ■ **TEL:** 098-966-2212 ■ **WEBSITE:** [https://www.anaintercontinental-manza.jp/en/facility-information/Facilities information](https://www.anaintercontinental-manza.jp/en/facility-information/Facilities%20information) ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.505998, E 127.859180; 40-minute drive from Camp Foster.

2 SHERATON OKINAWA SUNMARINA RESORT

Open throughout the year. Water activities such as banana boating, snorkeling tour, zip lining are available.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** 500 yen per hour (1,500 yen at most) ■ **OPEN:** 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (- 6 p.m. July through August) ■ **TEL:** 098-965-2222 ■ **WEBSITE:** <https://sheraton-okinawa.co.jp/en/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.462274, E 127.811721; 40 minute drive from Camp Foster.

3 KARIYUSHI BEACH

MARCH 6: Water Land (obstacle courses) is scheduled to open on the same day. This beach is home to other activities such as parasailing, sea kayaking, jet-skiing, boat tubing and more.

■ **ADMISSION FEE COSTS:** 550 yen for 13 years old and above, 330 for ages 4 -12, free admission for 3 years old and below. ■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** Free parking available at Okinawa Beach Resort Ocean Spa. Visitors need to inform staff they're parking for the beach. ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (subject to change) ■ **TEL:** 098-052-4093 ■ **WEBSITE:** <http://www.kariyushibeach.co.jp/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.531863, E 127.929991; One-hour drive from Camp Foster

4 KANUCHA BEACH

MARCH 28: This beach is home to water activities such as obstacles courses, parasailing, and flyboard. Some activities may be subject to special fees on this day. A Hula show is scheduled around noon as well.

■ **ADMISSION FEE COSTS:** 1,650 yen (inclusive of tax), free admission for those who stay at the hotel ■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** Included in admission fee ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. ■ **TEL:** 0980-55-8880 ■ **WEBSITE:** <https://www.kanucha.jp/en/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.546250, E 128.077198; 20-minute drive from Camp Schwab

5 ZANPA BEACH

APRIL 1: Home to water activities such as banana boat, parasailing, flyboard and more.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** Free ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. ■ **TEL:** 098-958-5000 (for info on water activities) ■ **WEBSITE:** <https://www.daiwaresort.jp/global/okinawa/feature/1024857/index.html> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.435686, E 127.715952; 15-minute drive from Torii station.

6 SUNSET BEACH

APRIL 9 (Date TBD): A beach adjacent to American village. A popular spot for families and couples. This is also a good place to hold a beachside BBQ party under tent.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** Free ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Subject to change) ■ **TEL:** 098-936-8273 ■ **WEBSITE:** <http://www.uminikansya.com/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.314209, E 127.755104; 10-minute drive from Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base.

7 IKEI BEACH

TBD: A popular beach on Ikei island. Water activities such as flyboard, banana boat, and boat tubing are available. This beach is open as of Feb. 9, but their operation is subject to change.

■ **ADMISSION FEE COSTS:** 400 yen for adult (middle school student and above), 300 yen for ages between elementary school student and 5 years. Free for 4 years old and below ■ **OPEN:** 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. ■ **WEBSITE:** <http://www.ikei-beach.com/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N26.388176, E 127.991146; 30-minute drive from White Beach.

8 EMERALD BEACH

APRIL 1: Adjacent to Expo Park, this beach dazzles visitors with its emerald green and cobalt blue.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** Free ■ **OPEN:** 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Apr. - Spt.), - 5 p.m. (Oct.) ■ **TEL:** 0980-48-2741 ■ **WEBSITE:** <http://oki-park.jp/kaiyohaku/en/inst/75> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.699269, E 127.878045; 90-minute drive from Camp Foster

9 ORION CHURA-SUN BEACH

APRIL 3 (Date TBD): A resort beach home to many events and concerts. Water activities such as sea kayak, banana boat, and boat tube are available. A beach opening ceremony is scheduled for April 3.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** - 500 yen ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. (- 7 p.m. for July and Aug.) ■ **TEL:** 098-850-1139 ■ **WEBSITE:** https://churasun-beach.com/?page_id=44 ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.157011, E 127.647582; 40-minute drive from Camp Foster. Close to Naha Air Port.

10 TROPICAL BEACH

LATE APRIL: Resort beach near MCAS Futenma and a good spot to have a beach BBQ party at. Water activities such as banana boat and sea kayak are available.

■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** Free ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Subject to change) ■ **TEL:** 098-897-2751 ■ **WEBSITE:** <http://www.ginowanotropicalbeach.jp/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.28148, E 127.731782; 10-minute drive from MCAS Futenma.

11 UPPAMA BEACH

TBD: Beautiful beach on Nakijin peninsula. Water activities such as jet ski, sea kayak and boat tube are available.

■ **FACILITY USAGE FEE COSTS:** 300 yen ■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** 500 yen (subject to change) ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. (subject to change) ■ **TEL:** 098-056-2767 (hotel) ■ **WEBSITE:** <https://www.belparaiso.com/lang/english> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.691601, E 127.99193; 90-minute drive from Camp Foster

12 SESOKO BEACH

MID-APRIL: A popular beach on Motobu peninsula. This beach boasts of beautiful views of the Island and Motobu Peninsula.

■ **ADMISSION FEE COSTS:** Free ■ **PARKING FEE COSTS:** 1,000 yen ■ **OPEN:** 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (- 5:30 p.m. for July through Sept.) ■ **TEL:** 098-047-7000 ■ **WEBSITE:** <http://www.sesokobeach.jp/> ■ **GPS COORDINATES:** N 26.650026, E 127.856139; 90-minute drive from Camp Foster.



A quick getaway to Torii Beach

BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

Although Torii Station may not stand out when comes to its size and the number of servicemembers it hosts, the small Army base is home to a beachside recreational area that will leave a big smile on your face: Torii Beach.

Whether you're a family looking to play in the water and picnic, or a group of friends in the mood to camp, play a little volleyball and unwind, Torii Beach is the perfect location.

Located in the west part of the installation, beach access from Torii's main gate is very simple. All you need to do is go straight down the hill, make a left at the end, and you should be close to the beach's entrance in less than five minutes. Passing by sugarcane fields, the ocean blue and white beaches come into sight. It's beautiful and peaceful, the perfect place to get away from the daily grind. And, yes, if you can't go without your mobile devices, Wi-Fi



Photo by Aya Ichihashi, Stars and Stripes

Torii Beach

A

TEL: 098-962-4659

DSN: 644-4659

NOTE: Facilities and equipment available for use include cabins (up to 6 people), pavilions, camp sites, bonfire pit, inflatable bouncers, ocean kayaks, grills, surfboard and more.

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/toriiwrokinawa/

FOR MORE INFO: torii.armymwr.com/programs/torii-beach

is available.

Lining up along the long stretch of white sand are cabins, a campground, pavilions, a water slide fit for kids of all ages and shower and bathroom facilities. MWR Torii has you covered with any camping, grilling and water sport gear rentals, so it is the perfect place for beach parties

with family and friends, or unit parties.

Although events like the Torii Beach Summer Party Series and Ghost on the Beach can draw a big crowd, this secluded location always gives off a relaxed vibe. It's a great place to run along the shore, read a book or sit alone enjoying the peaceful view.

Just a 20-30-minute drive away from Gate 1 of Kadena Air Base, Torii Beach offers a quick getaway from the ordinary.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

Replenish and rejuvenate at White Beach

BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

White Beach Naval Facility is not just for ships making port calls to replenish their food supply and load up troops. The U.S. base is also a great place for servicemembers and families to enjoy some recreation and rejuvenation on Okinawa.

Located around the tip of Katsuren Peninsula, White Beach features fully-furnished log cabins located on a bluff in the middle of the facility. The view is beautiful and the cabins are only a short walk to the beach. Camping trailers and tent sites located next to the beach are also available for rent. Pet lovers, there are designated "pet friendly" cabins and campers available.

As you walk around this sprawling facility, the beauty of the ocean and tiny islets sprinkled off the coast draw your attention. The clean, white sandy beaches are perfect for tossing frisbees with friends, building sand castles with your kids or taking a jog.

You'll also notice local tombs spread along the coastline of the facility. Be respectful. And you may have the opportunity to come across some curious creatures because



Photo by Shoji Kudaka

White Beach

B

TEL: 098-954-1877

DSN: 622-1877

HOURS (RESERVATIONS DESK): Mon. - Fri. : 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

FACEBOOK (NAVY MWR, OKINAWA): www.facebook.com/ NavyMWRokinaawa/

FOR MORE INFO: www.navymwrokinawa.com/programs/ f9ab0b40-8bb3-4bcb-a21c-4b73b4755ea2

nature is well preserved on White Beach.

For those of you looking to break a sweat, basketball and tennis courts, a softball field and swimming pool are available.

When you get hungry or need a break from the strong sunshine, take refuge at Port of Call Club. Having a fresh sandwich at Subway or spicy wings at Wingz@Beach are quick solutions for those who don't feel like grilling at their campsites.

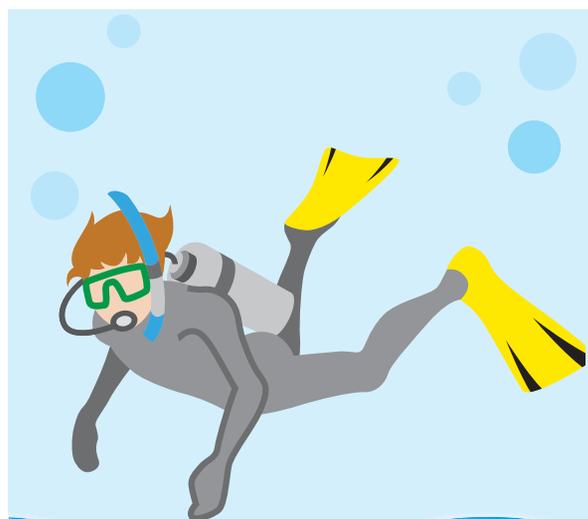
For those who run out of snacks

and drinks can count on Skoshi Mart for a quick replenishment. Plus, there are lounge chairs, game rooms with slot machines, pool tables and computer access when you need a timeout from camping.

There are places outside the gates of White Beach that people should also check out. There is a paintball facility about a 10-minute drive from the gate, as well as notable historic sites like the remains of a sugar factory located a minute away.

Located in a secluded area, is the perfect getaway for families and groups of friends. So take in the scenery, take advantage of the recreational facilities and rejuvenate a White Beach.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



GRAB A MASK AND SNORKEL!

Explore Okinawa's marvelous water world



STRIPES OKINAWA

If you are on the island of Okinawa, you have the opportunity to see world-class reefs in crystal clear water. And you can explore this marvelous water world with a mask, fins and snorkel. Once you learn how to snorkel properly, it could become your favorite hobby during your stay on Okinawa. I guarantee that your encounters with all the marine species will be a lifetime experience.

I've had opportunities to dive and snorkel in Hawaii, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, La Paz, Baja Calif. and some islands in Thailand and Indonesia. But honestly, Okinawa is my most favorite place to snorkel because of the amazing colorful coral and countless tropical fish. There are many easy entry spots with shallow reef areas (5 to 30 feet) and dynamic drop offs. Water visibility is extremely high and on any given day, the sky is as clear as the water.

And if you're lucky, you'll also have the opportunity to swim along with turtles, manta ray and various types of reef sharks. You can literally spend hours floating over Okinawa's endless coral heaven.

Here are a couple places I recommend for snorkeling while on Okinawa Island:

Cape Maeda, in the center of Okinawa, is the most popular snorkeling spot on island. Many diving shops offer snorkeling tours to this area. There is a wide variety of marine life, but one of the best parts is a cave you can swim into. If you're new to snorkeling, this is a great place to start. It also has good facilities - bathrooms, places to eat - at the site. Swimming can be prohibited depending upon weather. *Current status is indicated on the following website. <http://www.maedamisaki.jp/en/>
Odo Kaigan, also known as John Man Beach, near the southern tip of Okinawa Island, also offers good snorkeling and is less crowded than Cape Maeda. But note that there are a limited number of free parking spots.

SEE SNORKEL ON PAGE 10

Speakin' Japanese

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.

Beach babble

"Beach (biichi) ni ikou!"

= Let's go to the beach!

("ni" = to, "ikou" = let's go)

"Dono biichi ga osusume desuka?"

= Which beach do you recommend?

("dono" = which, "osusume" = something you would recommend, "desuka?" = do you~/ is it~)

"Parasailing to surfing (saafin) ni chousen shitai deusu"

= I want to try parasailing and surfing.

("chousen" = challenge, "shitai deusu" = I want to do ~")

"Biichi parasoru wo motte kimashitaka?"

= Did you bring the beach umbrella?
("parasoru" = umbrella/parasol, motte kimashitaka? = Did you bring~?)

"Sono biichi niwa koko kara douyatte ikimasuka?"

= How do we get to the beach from here?

("sono" = the/that, "niwa/ni" = to, "koko" = here, "kara" = from, "douyatte" = how, "ikimasuka" = get to/go to~?)

"Sono biichi wa itsu akimasuka/shimarimasuka?"

= When does the beach open/close?

("itsu" = when, "akimasuka" = does ~open?, "shimarimasuka" = does ~close?)

"Biichi taoru" = Beachtowel

"Hiyakedome" = Sunscreen

"Mizugi/Kaisuipantsu" =

Bathingsuit/ swim

trunks

"Kayakku" = Kayak

"Kanshiin/ Raifugaado" =

Lifeguard

- Stripes Okinawa



SNORKEL: BE SAFE



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Here are some of the recommended spots in the Okinawa Island chain.

Yonehara Beach, Ishigaki Island: This place has an amazing drop off at the outer edge of the reef. Please note the current is extremely strong at times, so snorkelers and divers should know what they are doing if they venture out a long way from shore. But if you do, you'll really enjoy the drop off. In this spot I once saw 10 sea turtles in less than an hour. This beach also has a shallow inner reef area for beginner snorkelers, but there are no lifeguards or jellyfish nets to protect swimmers. Current can be fast and it is advised to exercise caution. A camping site is located right behind the beach, which attracts many backpackers from not only Japan but around the world. It is not family oriented beach, but if you are looking for some wild beach life, this is the place.

Nishibama Beach, Hateruma Island: Hateruma Island is the most southern island in Japan. There are so many amazing snorkel spots around this island, which makes it very popular with both single backpackers and families. The water here is a beautiful emerald green. The beach offers a large inner reef for both beginners to experienced snorkelers. There is also a 10-15 feet drop off outside the reef for expert snorkelers to enjoy. Don't miss watching the sunset from this beach because it will be the best sunset of your life.

It takes practice and experience to be a good snorkeler. The key is being relaxed, which only comes if you spend a lot of time in water. I recommend practicing in a pool, especially if you are bringing along children. You can all practice clearing your mask when water comes into it, controlling your fins in the water and breathing through a snorkel properly.

Listen, if you are not an experienced snorkeler, I highly recommend taking a snorkeling tour from a local diving shop, which will provide step-by-step instructions. Even if you are an experienced snorkeler, it is good to use local snorkeling tours because guides will brief you on the local fish, landscapes and condition of the area.

When I travel to Okinawa to snorkel and dive, I will always make sure I'm aware of the high/low tides, wind conditions and currents. Respect the ocean before entering it.

Now, go grab your gear and hit the water.

TOKYO MENTAL HEALTH

TOKYO MENTAL HEALTH

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SAFETY TIPS

Don't snorkel alone.

Wear a life jacket if you are not confident in the water.

Check the current and times of tides before entering.

Always remember the entry spot and look back often to check your location. This will help you to recognize if the current is pushing you.

If you are caught up by the current, swim parallel with the beach calmly until the current settles.

Respect the reef. One of the main threats Okinawa reefs face is damage caused by humans. Avoiding direct contact with the reef is the first rule of snorkeling.

Watch out for habu jellyfish and its poisonous tentacles.

Make sure to put on lots of sunscreen.

Drink a lot of water before and after snorkeling to prevent dehydration.

Try

Thursday gnocchi any day of the week



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

When I'm looking for a quick and easy dinner recipe, my go-to is either pasta Pomodoro or spaghetti Aglio e olio, two of my favorites. This time, I was looking for something new, so I went for gnocchi, a flour and potato variation pasta dish.

Jamie Oliver, the Naked Chef from TV, calls gnocchi a "comforting midweek dinner," so I was ready to try making my own. It looked like it would be simple enough, especially after watching a Japanese culinary researcher prepare this

treat on TV.

It took me about an hour in total, from washing and peeling potatoes to serving up gnocchi with sauce on a plate. Since it was my first time cooking this dish, and I was filming and taking photos at the same time, it would probably take less time than that.

According to Rachel Roddy, an award-winning food writer, gnocchi is a cornerstone of Roman

home cooking. In an article for The Guardian, Roddy shared a Roman folk rhyme which says gnocchi is the dish made on Thursday "if God wants." It was only after I finished cooking that I realized it was a Tuesday.

Despite that oversight, the gnocchi was great even for a Tuesday! My dad was a little suspicious of the pasta, which looked more like a dumpling than anything else. However, once trying a piece, he liked it. So did my mother. As I looked at my parents trying gnocchi on Tuesday, I was thinking about families in Rome at a dining-table, enjoying their Thursday gnocchi.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

INGREDIENTS

Gnocchi with cheese cream for one person

For gnocchi

- Potato (150 g)
- All-purpose flour (45 ml)
- Potato starch (5 ml)
- Flour to sprinkle on gnocchi (as much as you please)
- Hot water to boil gnocchi (1,000 ml)
- Salt (10 ml)

For cheese cream

- Milk (200 ml)
- Cheese for pizza (Blend of gouda (80%) and mozzarella (20%) cheese] (40g)
- Powdered chicken stock (2.5 ml)
- Salt (a little)
- Starch mixed with water (15ml)

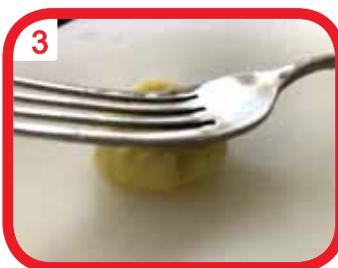
Topping

- Black pepper (as much as you please)
- Dried Parsley (as much as you please)

Check out more recipes



DIRECTIONS



Presed against a fork



Sprinkled with flour



Boiled in hot salted water



Drained gnocchi



Incorporated into sauce

- 1 (For precooking) Peel a potato and cut off buds. Wrap the potato in saran wrap and microwave (600W) for four minutes. Prepare boiling water with salt in it.
- 2 Put the heated potato in a plastic bag with flour (45ml) and starch (5ml). Knead it to mix the ingredients together.
- 3 Mold the dough into small balls, each the size of one bite. Sprinkle flour on each piece as you mold it. Press each piece against the back of a fork to make dents (or grooves) on the surface.
- 4 Put the dough into (salted) hot water and boil them over medium flame. Start to remove the pieces from the water as they float to the top of the surface. Drain the gnocchi in a colander.

- 5 In a frying pan, pour milk (200 ml) and heat over medium heat. Once it's boiled, add cheese (40g) and powdered chicken stock (2.5 ml), and stir them together.
- 6 Add salt to adjust the taste. Add starch mixed with water (15ml) and stir the mixture. Once the sauce starts to thicken, add in the gnocchi. Once the pasta is incorporated into the sauce, remove the pan from the heat.
- 7 Serve up the gnocchi on a plate and top it with black pepper and dried parsley.
- 8 Bon appetite!

*This recipe is adapted from Kurashiru cooking website.

ISLAND THEMED GIFTS

BY ALLIE WHALEN, STRIPES OKINAWA

Raise your hand if you love giving gifts! Raise your hand if you love giving gifts, but you don't love running around to buy it all and you never seem to find the time to pack it up and take it to the post office. Raise your hand if you'd rather leave the gift-giving to someone else!!

This blog post is for you - whether you love giving gifts or not. And this blog post is especially for those of us that live overseas and can never seem to make it to the post office on time to mail those thoughtful presents.

I have put together gift ideas that are easy to buy (and ship!) on Amazon and will give the gift receiver some island love. You don't have to spend extra time -searching for just the right thing. Get all of your island-themed ideas right here!

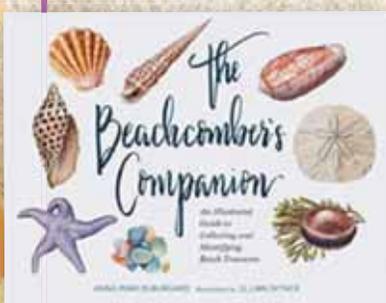
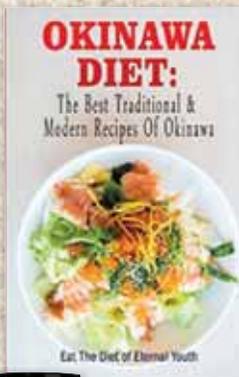


Photo by Allie Whalen

FOR THE WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE



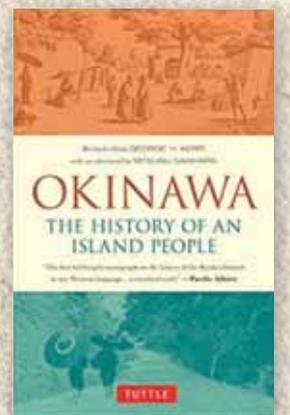
- 1 Pineapple Essential Oil Diffuser
- 2 Citrus Blend Essential Oil
- 3 Pineapple Christmas Ornament
- 4 "Okinawa Diet: The Best Traditional and Modern Recipes of Okinawa"
- 5 Okinawa Cane Sugar
- 6 Tropical Reusable Grocery Bags
- 7 "The Beachcomber's Companion"



FOR THE MEN IN YOUR LIFE

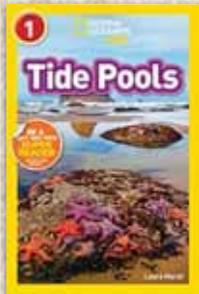


- 1 Sushi Ornaments
- 2 "Okinawa: The History of an Island People"
- 3 Okinawa Sea Water Salt
- 4 Organic Soba Noodles
- 5 OkiLife T-Shirt
- 6 Organic Pacific Rim Coffee
- 7 "The Lost Art of Reading Nature's Signs"



FOR KIDS

- 1 Pineapple String Lights
- 2 Vintage Okinawa T-Shirt
- 3 "National Geographic: Tide Pools"
- 4 Whale Shark Christmas Ornament
- 5 Fruit Bat Stuffed Animal
- 6 Okinawa Hi-Chew Candy
- 7 Tropical Reusable Sandwich Bags



FOR BABIES

- 1 Okinawa Teething Necklace
- 2 "O is for Okinawa: Learn Your ABC's Oki-Style"
- 3 Tropical Leaves Muslin Swaddle Blanket
- 4 Whale Shark Stuffed Animal
- 5 Pineapple Romper



I hope you've found something for your favorite neighbor, babysitter, or the friend that's only a text away! I just love giving gifts but sometimes with the busyness of the season and holiday traveling it's nice to be able to find the right present on Amazon.

Let me know over on Instagram or Facebook if you've found the perfect gift for your loved ones! And don't forget to save this list to your Pinterest gift idea board so you have it handy in the future when you're scrambling to find a gift.

Allie Whalen is a culinary artist and amateur photographer with a love for the outdoors. She has recently begun sharing her experiences online where she talks about natural and healthy ways to take care of your body and the world around you. She is a military spouse based in Okinawa near Camp Hansen. Allie and her family are excited make beautiful Okinawa their best move yet. There they enjoy the rugged, tranquil life on the northern parts of the island. You can find Allie's blog at alliemwhalen.com, where she details her travels, basic conservation techniques, home education, and leading a healthy lifestyle.

Amazon.com photos

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

Following a recommendation from one of our readers, I was on a quest for some good eats at Pizza Sun Okinawa.

The restaurant serves up what it calls “California-style pizza.” Stephanie Landaverde, who herself hails from California and sang Pizza Sun’s praises, however, declared she’d never had pizza like this before.

“Pizza Sun is so good. They really are. You’re gonna like it,” Landaverde said, adding that the pepperoni pizza, house salad with vinaigrette dressing and garlic knots are her favorites.

Though I’d never heard of this eatery, Landaverde’s enthusiasm convinced me I needed to make my way to Mihama American Village and give Pizza Sun Okinawa a try.

I found the restaurant with its modern and casual California-vibe on the north side of American Village. The menu has many options and offers takeout, another plus for the current circumstances.

I ordered a large 16-inch pepperoni pizza to go. While I waited, owner Kazuyuki Kuroki and I had a little chat about his shop.

“Americans are my target customers from the beginning,” Kuroki said. “I want to serve up

pizzas that suit their taste”

To attract American customers, Kuroki said quality pizza is key. A quick look at the menu prices, and you may notice these pies are a bit pricy (a 16-inch large pepperoni pizza is 3,580 yen or nearly \$35). For Kuroki, the price matches the quality ingredients and quality hand-made product he serves up, which he says keeps his customers coming back for more.

Kuroki let me try some of the other menu items while I waited for my pizza. I tried Landaverde’s favorite salad with vinaigrette and the garlic knots.

The vinaigrette dressing, which got Landaverde hooked, surprised me with its punchy and garlicky flavor. The garlic knot, on the other hand, with its soft but chewy texture, I couldn’t get enough of. Both elevated my expectations for the pizza.

I also tried the spicy and creamy jalapeno cheese poppers and the crispy lumpia — both equally delicious options if you’re looking for appetizers to munch on before you get to the main event: the pizza.

By the time I was done sampling the sides, my takeout order was ready, and I was looking forward to giving the pizza a try.

Back home, my parents and I were surprised at the size of Pizza Sun’s large pie. Then, after the first bite, we had a second surprise: this pizza was delicious.

That chewy but soft dough was the perfect base for the rich cheese and juicy tomato sauce, which

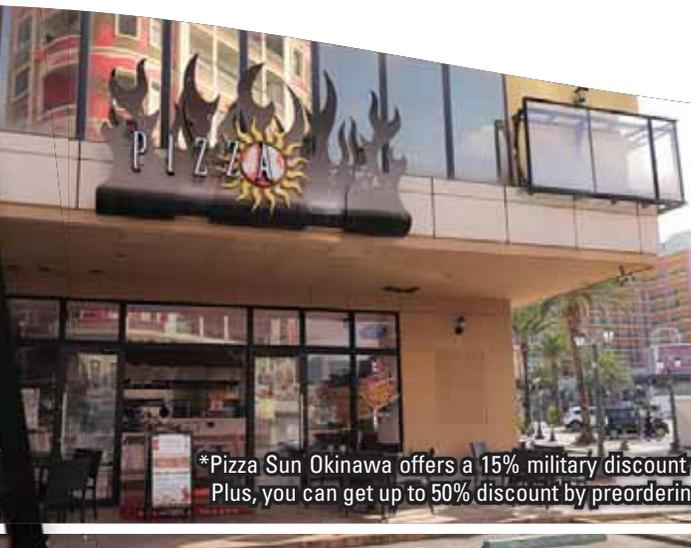
balanced out the glossy, flavorful pepperoni slices on top. I can usually only handle a few pizza slices from the chain restaurants, but not this time. Both my elderly parents and I couldn’t get enough of this pizza!

As my family and I devoured this pizza, something Landaverde told me during our phone conversation came to mind: “When we first got here on the island, the hotels on the base were full, so we were at Hilton. The Pizza Sun was our first family meal together (in Okinawa). It was and will be, our last family meal together,” Landaverde professed.

Whether you’re American, Japanese, from California or from anywhere else, Pizza Sun Okinawa is a good option for takeout and, when the time is right, dining in.

The restaurant also offers discounts on takeout orders, including 1,000 yen off large pizzas and 500 yen off medium pizzas. Additionally, check with the store about discounts for placing pre-orders up to 24 hours in advance.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



Pizza Sun Okinawa

GPS coordinates: N 26.316781499730748, E 127.75486756747307
Hours: Regular hours are 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Open seven days a week
*Hours may change in case of State of Emergency, so call ahead for more information.
Tel: 098-936-0042



Facebook



Instagram

*Pizza Sun Okinawa offers a 15% military discount when you show your Military ID. Takeout discounts are also offered. Plus, you can get up to 50% discount by preordering a day or more in advance. For more info, check out their SNS pages.

Stripes Sports Trivia

The UConn women's basketball team doesn't do much losing on the court. The Geno Auriemma-led Huskies hold countless NCAA records among the all the National Championships they've won. In 2017, an overtime loss in the Final Four ended the Huskies 111-game winning streak – a record, of course. What team beat them?

Answer

Mississippi State



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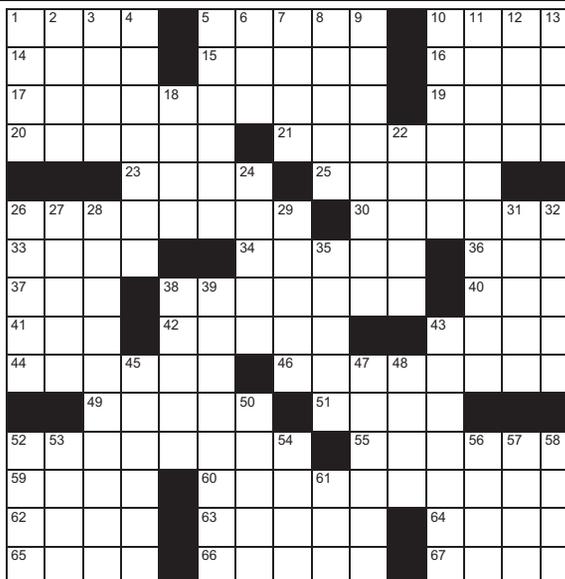


Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Boat's berth
- 5 Part of a repair bill
- 10 Skewed view
- 14 Multinational money
- 15 Come about
- 16 A while ago
- 17 Flashcards subject
- 19 Kind of ID
- 20 Renter
- 21 Courting music
- 23 Put up, as a picture
- 25 Finch, say
- 26 Varied
- 30 Biased against seniors
- 33 Bird feeder filler
- 34 Small sample
- 36 80's group who sang "Take On Me"
- 37 Melville setting
- 38 Talk like Porky Pig
- 40 Slot machine icon
- 41 Pop-ups, e.g.
- 42 Cheyenne shelter
- 43 Ticklish Muppet
- 44 Navy clerk
- 46 Tactful
- 49 Koontz creation
- 51 Within earshot
- 52 Ivory tower inhabitant
- 55 Etsy wares
- 59 Piercing site
- 60 Assessment
- 62 Chutzpah
- 63 Now or _____
- 64 Edit menu choice
- 65 Gives the heave-ho
- 66 WTO's concern
- 67 Pound sound



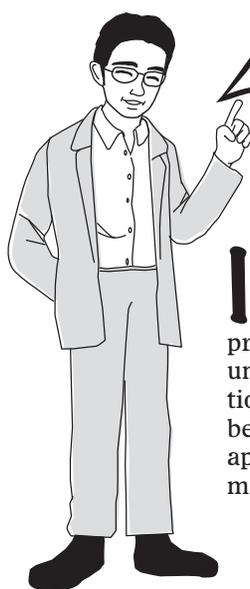
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DOWN

- 1 Close, as an envelope
- 2 Tackle box item
- 3 Blue flower
- 4 Cheap insult
- 5 Sing the blues
- 6 You-here link
- 7 Tiny amounts
- 8 Willow for basketmaking
- 9 Craft anew
- 10 Pep in one's step
- 11 Impossible to fill
- 12 Got an A+ on
- 13 Parched
- 18 Try, as a case
- 22 Raring to go
- 24 _____ and go
- 26 Test, as ore
- 27 Glove leather
- 28 Like some temperatures
- 29 Old-fashioned
- 31 Cause of a red face
- 32 Medium's card
- 35 Oktoberfest souvenir
- 38 Forestall, with "off"
- 39 Urban housing

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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



DID YOU KNOW?

In Japan, it is widely believed that graduation from a prestigious high school and university virtually guarantees preferential treatment from prospective universities or employers after graduation. Every year, major universities are besieged by four to eight times as many applicants as there are available slots, making for stiff competition.

Kanji of the week

渡

Wataru or to (cross)

Language Lesson

Can you take my picture?

Shashin wo totte kudasai?

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answers to Previous Sudoku:

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

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

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