Awash with Age

Respect for the Aged Day:
How a graying nation honors its elders
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Kadena airman helps save boy who nearly drowned
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Kadena airman, lifeguards lauded for rescue efforts

CHATAN — Two months after arriving in Okinawa, Air Force Master Sgt. Roger Halle found himself resuscitating a 4-year-old boy who nearly drowned at Araha Beach.

Halle, stationed at Kadena Air Base with the 18th Civil Engineer Squadron as the assistant chief of operations, was recognized along with three local lifeguards Monday by Chatan Mayor Masaharu Noguni for their efforts July 26 to revive the boy who was visiting from Hong Kong.

Noguni praised Halle’s rapid response to the emergency and credited all first responders’ efforts to saving the young boy’s life.

“He used his professional skills to save a life with speedy techniques and tremendous courage,” Noguni said through an interpreter during a ceremony Monday to present Halle with a letter of appreciation. “I thank you for your daily work and using the skills to save a life quickly.”

Halle, of Willard, Mo., received the letter at the Chatan Town Hall in front of his family and fellow airmen, and gave credit to the other lifeguards who were on the scene with him.

“It’s not [only] me, I was there to help and assist, but in my opinion, they were the ones who saved his life,” he said. Halle, who works at the air base fire station, said his 13 years as a first responder and his Air Force training kicked in that day at Araha Beach.

Halle, his wife, Stephanie Halle, and their five sons headed for Araha Beach.

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DODEA starts school year in wake of staffing, course cuts

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOIS, STARS AND STRIPES
Published: August 26, 2019

S tudents on overseas military bases returned to class Monday at schools run by the Department of Defense Education Activity, which reduced its teaching staff over the summer in order to spend elsewhere.

At Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan, parents assigned to the USS Ronald Reagan arrived home from deployment Saturday, just in time to take part in back-to-school rituals. Last year, the aircraft carrier was at sea on the first day of school.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ron McGinnis Sr. smiled wide as he brought his first-grader, Ron “R.J.” McGinnis Jr., to Sullivan Elementary School for the first time.

“What means so much to be able to see him off,” McGinnis said. “He was so excited last night.”

Cuts and changes

Beyond the first-day excitement, DODEA’s decision to eliminate more than 300 teaching positions this school year also means reduced course offerings and larger class sizes.

DODEA director Thomas Brady said Friday that savings from federal funding for DODEA remained the same.

After the decision was announced in January, Federal Education Association spokesman Gary Hertz told Stars and Stripes that “no teaching position should ever be cut from any school system unless there is no other option.

Association executive director H.T. Nguyen said Monday that he couldn’t believe “DODEA is trying to justify cutting teachers by saying they are buying more computers.”

“That’s like an NFL team cutting its star player so it can buy more helmets,” Nguyen said.

Course offerings

Course cuts this year include The Foreign Language in Elementary Schools pilot program, which accounted for 87 of the 300 jobs.

Another 174 positions were cut for grades six through 12 in Europe and the Pacific; and in South Korea, school closures eliminated 43 teaching positions.

Teachers across DODEA have reported cuts to electives such as drama, speech, foreign language and music, the teacher’s association said.

Brady said course offerings at some high schools were eliminated after scrutinizing enrollment data, adding that high school staffing levels hadn’t changed in 10 years.

“There was a remarkable number of courses there were at two or three students,” he said. “We just don’t have that kind of resourcing.”

At Yokosuka’s Nile C. Kinnick High School, the Chinese and journalism programs were eliminated, principal Craig Maxey said.

The former journalism teacher will teach English this year instead and will sponsor a club that will continue to publish a school newspaper.

While some courses went away, Brady said other programs are growing, such as the Career and Technical Education Program.

Kinnick sophomore Jessabeli Tarun, 15, said she was looking forward to taking a culinary arts class for the first time.

“I want to be a pastry chef,” she said. “I love to bake cakes.”

Not all schools suffered the same cuts. For example, while Kinnick lost Chinese, Humphreys High School in South Korea kept the class.

In South Korea, schools at Camp Humphreys absorbed many of the staff and students from Seoul American High School. Seoul American closed in June after six decades as the Army prepares to start a new service school in Kaiserslautern, Germany, is so new that the furniture was still being unpacked last week. But the school is ready to go, principal David Lee said.

“We just got the keys to the building on Thursday and we’re rocking,” he said. “Gone are traditional classrooms with four walls.

Instead, each grade has its own section, called the neighborhood, with a common area, and spaces with tables and smart boards. Neighborhoods can be open or sectioned off using adjustable walls.

In the fourth-grade neighborhood, students were organized into three groups. Each group will go together for classes like art and music.

For core subjects like math and science, students will work across groups with all three fourth-grade teachers.

“I like how you have your own space but you can still see all your friends because it’s just one big class, essentially,” said fourth-grader Tim Cotter, 9.

Allison Koch, who has two children at the school, liked the concept but had some reservations.

“I’m not quite sure how it will work on a day-to-day basis … if it’s going to be too loud, if the kids are going to be distracted. It’s a lot of openness.”

Lee, the principal, said he was “looking forward to doing something different.”

“We’ve done the same thing in education for hundreds of years, right? It’s different to have a neighborhood approach and have a lot of collaboration among teachers.”

STARS and Stripes reporters Matthew M. Burke, Matt Keeler, Seth Robson and Jennifer H. Svan contributed to this report.
In Japan, people age 65 and older are considered elderly, according to the Act on Assurance of Medical Care for Elderly People. The act defines people 75 and older as “late stage elderly.”

Japan has the highest life expectancy at 84.2 years (80.98 for men, 87.14 for women) out of 194 surveyed nations, according to the World Health Organization in 2018. (The U.S. ranks 34th at age 78.5.)

27.7 percent of Japan’s population — 35.1 million people (19.9 million women, 15.2 million men) — is age 65 and older. The number increases by 510,000 annually *

There are 17.5 million people in Japan age 75 and older, up by 330,000 in two years.*

There are 69,785 centenarians in Japan. The number increases by 3,000 annually *

The number of the elderly is rapidly increasing in Japan as the number of children being born declines, causing major concerns over how a shrinking workforce will continue to fund healthcare and social security.

* Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2017 statistics - Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Okinawa

Respect for the Aged Day may call to mind Japan’s rapidly aging population, but that only underscores this national holiday’s emphasis on honoring and appreciating the contributions senior citizens have made to society.

Celebrated this year on Sept. 16, this holiday traces its origins back to 1947 when a farming village in Hyogo Prefecture proclaimed Sept. 15 as “Day for the Elderly” or Toshiyori-no-Hi. They held a meeting to honor seniors and listened to them speak in order to benefit from their words of wisdom. The idea spread throughout the prefecture, then spread nationwide.

“Respect for the Aged Day (Keiro-no-Hi) was legislated in 1966 according to the National Holidays Act,” said Yukihiro Miura from the holiday section of the National Cabinet Office’s General Affairs Cabinet.

“The purpose of this holiday is to express respect for the elderly in our communities and wish them longevity,” Miura added.

“I think sometime after Japanese society started recovering from the devastation of the war, people began to think of how they could appreciate the elderly who contributed so much to how to glean from their wisdom,” Miura added. Although the war, people began to think how they could appreciate the elderly who contributed so much to society.

A statue of Arai Kannon (literally, washing deity) at Koganji temple in Sugamo, also known as Togenuki Jizoson, is one of the most popular temples for the elderly to visit in Tokyo. Many believe that if you pour water on the statue and polish that part of it with a cloth that corresponds to your own bodily ailment, you will be healed. Senior citizens can be seen queuing up to wash the statue in hopes of a healing every day.

The area is not only popular because of the temple’s statue; the street the temple is on is also a well-known shopping district for older patrons. Over 200 shops line a half-mile stretch of Jizo Dori shopping street, featuring all kinds of goods coveted by the elderly such as clothes, health foods and souvenirs.

With Tokyo’s famed shopping district for young hipsters in mind, some locals have even dubbed this street, “Harajuku for old people.”

This is a great place to buy Japanese souvenirs because of variety of traditional goods – and pocketbook-friendly prices. The area is particularly lively on the 4th, 14th and 24th of every month when the temple holds a small festival.

Jizo Dori shopping street begins a five-minute walk northwest of Sugamo Station on the JR Yamanote and Mita Subway lines.
Western ways changing Okinawa longevity

Okinawa Prefecture was once long recognized for having the highest longevity rate out of all 47 prefectures in Japan. But times have changed according to a Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare study conducted every five years. Apparently, nothing really does last forever.

While a 1995 survey showed that overall there were 22 centenarians for every 100,000 persons in Okinawa — 3.8 times the national average at the time — survey figures show longevity has been declining in Okinawa ever since. By 2005, male Okinawans had dropped from first to 25th place.

Most recently, in 2015, Okinawan women dropped to seventh place in the survey with a life expectancy of 87.44 years, slightly higher than the ministry's national average of 87.01. Okinawan men, however, plummeted to 36th place at 80.27 years, just shy of the national life expectancy for males of 80.77 years. The results are no surprise to Dr. Makoko Suzuki who predicted the trend a decade ago in an interview with Stars and Stripes in 2013.

Suzuki, now a retired medical doctor, Ryukyu University professor emeritus and co-author of the best-selling "The Okinawa Program: How the World's Longest Lived People Achieved Everlasting Health," conducted a 25-year study of the traditional Okinawa diet. He said the prefecture's claim as a haven for centenarians (once the most per capita in the world) came from an old island lifestyle that literally has been dying out. This has opened the door to diseases associated with obesity — once rare on Okinawa — like diabetes, heart failure and strokes that are now becoming all too common.

"The chief factor is diet," he said in 2004, pointing a finger at ubiquitous fast-food chains like A&W, McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. "Their (younger Okinawans') eating habits are more westernized, which raises their cholesterol."

While older Okinawans still take walks, he added, their younger counterparts, "have the tendency to hop into a car."

"The last two factors are the loss of the Okinawan culture and tradition in our everyday lives," Suzuki said. "Traditionally, Okinawans were more involved with their community and religious activities, which kept them active."

Respect for the Aged Day

A meeting to honor seniors and listen to their words of wisdom. The idea spread throughout the prefecture, then spread nationwide.

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Although the holiday was originally observed on Sep. 15, the National Holidays Act was amended in 2003, introducing the so-called Happy Monday system which moved several holidays to Mondays to create three-day weekends. Respect for the Aged Day has been celebrated on the third Monday of September ever since.

On this day, many communities honor the elderly with parties or ceremonies and present them with gifts. TV stations usually air senior-related programs such as features on the number of elderly in Japan or the oldest people in the country. And school children often visit facilities for the elderly to entertain them with song and dance.

How will you honor the elderly in your community on Respect for the Aged Day? takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

Silver Week glitters like gold

You may have heard of Golden Week, Japan's string of four consecutive holidays from late April to early May, but you probably didn't know that there is also a “Silver Week” which occurs once every few years in September. Here’s how it works:

Autumnal Equinox Day is a national holiday that falls on Sept. 23 (Sept. 22 during leap years). Japan’s National Holiday Act dictates that when Respect for the Aged Day, celebrated the third Monday in September, falls on Sept. 21, and it is not a leap year, the day between the two holidays becomes another holiday — National People’s Day.

Combined with the weekend that precedes the Monday holiday, you get the five-day aptly named, Silver Week. The last Silver Week occurred in 2015 after 2009. The next Silver Week will be in 2026. Mark your calendar!

— Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Okinawa
Cyclists, mark your calendars! Camp Kinser is gearing up for its bike race Sept. 22.

The 8.5-km (approx. 5.28 mile) course will take cyclists on long stretches through the Marine Corps base’ mid and south sections. The race is broken down into two courses: Road bike for 42.5 km (3 laps) and mountain bike for 17 km (2 laps). All participants will receive a t-shirt and 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers will be awarded.

Although this may not be as big as Tour de France or even Tour de Okinawa, a ride through Camp Kinser should be a great way to spend a Sunday. Registration ends online and at Camp Kinser Fitness Center on Sept. 20. All other MCCS fitness centers will accept in-person registrations up until Sept. 16.

BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

CAMP KINSER TO HOST BIKE RACE ON SEPT. 22

Things to know

DATE: Sept. 22
*Race starts at 8:05 a.m. (Check-in starts at 6:30 a.m.)
*A mandatory pre-race briefing will be held at 7:45 a.m.
*Start/finish near Bldg. #18 on Camp Kinser

ENTRY FEE: $30
:Register at MCCS fitness centers by 1 p.m. Sept. 16. Camp Kinser Fitness Center accepts registration by 1 p.m., Sept. 20.
*You can also register through Eventbrite by 1 p.m., Sept. 20.
*For more info, contact sports coordinators at 637-1869 or adultsports@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org

Car show cruises to Foster Flea Market on Sept. 14

BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

I t’s time for gearheads to get busy. USO Okinawa teaming up with Oki’s Finest, a community of car enthusiasts, to host a car show on Saturday, Sept. 14 at Foster Flea Market.

Join in, show off your car and mingle with other car lovers. Last year’s inaugural event brought in many entries, so organizers are expecting over 150 cars and over 200 to 300 attendance this year.

Expect to see some cool sports cars, classic and imported cars on display. But even if you aren’t into cars, there will be other activities to keep you entertained including a DJ, raffles and food trucks, organizers said.

There will also be prizes and trophies for those who enter their vehicles.

“If any of your readers are thinking about participating in the event, please show up!” said a rep of the group, noting that all are welcome regardless of car experience or knowledge.

Locals and non-SOFA can attend the event via the Flea Market gate on Route 58. Contact Amber Craig at acraig@uso.org for more info and to reserve a spot in the show.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com
Stripes Sports Trivia

SAY MY NAME! I pitched for 10 years in the bigs, debuting with the California Angels before stints with the Yankees, White Sox and Brewers. My career numbers (87-108, 4.25) are nothing special, unlike my life story, which is pretty hard to believe. During my time in the Bronx, I threw a no-hitter — a neat feat for someone with two hands. Me? I did it with just one. Who am I?

Answer

Jim Abbott

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The Weekly Crossword

Edited by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS
1 Table lifter (2)
6 Annexes
10 Unwanted email
14 Exploratory investigation
15 Rider's grip
16 Flat party attire
17 Spot, with "up"
18 Womans undergarments
20 Time between 1918 and 1939
22 Pass on
23 Numerical suffix
24 Branchid
25 Waterlogged
27 Pianos cousin
30 Word with dish or effect
33 Off course
36 Slave away
38 Crois cry
39 Plunder
41 Vagar
43 Little toymaker
44 It gets hit on the head
45 A Baldwin brother
49 Pair of people
51 Pasture grazer
53 Crazy about
54 Cobbler's tools
55 Military status statement
61 Something skeptical or chipped
62 Polter's prop
65 Hawaiian island
66 Japanese aboriginal
67 Metal spacer in printing
68 Writer's rep
69 They may be checked
70 Extremely small
71 Precursor to Windows

DOWN
1 Break up
2 Wilchy woman
3 GPS suggestion
4 Attendance book entries
5 Social equal
6 Game keeper
7 1981 film
8 "Mommie"
9 Headlight setting
10 Scissors sound
11 Mail units
12 Kind of party
13 Aida series
14 Attach, as a patch
15 University of Arizona athlete
16 On the peak of
17 Pizzazz
18 Use a fan on
19 Actress Delany
20 Wide-mouthed pitcher
21 Geometric measure
22 Cider season
23 Tailing
24 Weaving frame
25 Dumb
26 Cheap hotels
27 Eventually
28 Christi, TX
29 Pod
30 Arachnoid work
31 Abated
32 North American plain
33 Fuzzy fruit
34 Frat party attire
35 A Baldwin brother
36 Ieni kaeritai desu.
37 Buttonholes, C.O.O
38 Little toymaker
39 Naval campaign
40 Fuzzy fruit
41 Cheap hotels
42 Eventually
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65 Cheap hotels
66 Eventually
67 Naval campaign
68 Ieni kaeritai desu.
69 Cheap hotels
70 Eventually
71 Naval campaign

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

Kanji of the week

Language Lesson

I want to go home.

leni kaeritai desu.
CAMP FOSTER — The first Family Activity Box event sponsored by the USO on Okinawa proved to be such a hit, the organization has already scheduled another.

Initially, 25 families signed up for the event at the USO on Camp Foster. However, 61 families expressed interest, so another event has been scheduled Sept. 18 for the remaining 36, said center manager Angela Tom.

“Family Activity Box is a care package program that affords families a customized, connective family experience,” she said.

A box assembled “by hand” by USO staff and volunteers provides items for the whole family along with age-specific comfort items selected by the USO, she said. These include stuffed animals with a pacifier for infants, crayons for kids and journals and books for teenagers.

A box “is assembled ‘by hand’...”

Participating families also had the opportunity to spend time together on deployment.

Two military and family life counselors were also on hand to listen to families experiencing hardships.

In one activity, called “when we feel so apart,” family members painted four individual tiles called “when we feel closer along with ‘table topics’ cards for family-time conversation starters."

Doing a project together as a family...”

Marine Maj. Sam Wuornos, his wife, Christine, and daughters Evie, 7, and Ella, 4, show off a project they completed from a USO Family Activity Box at Camp Foster on Aug. 28.

Tom said she hopes to grow the program to enable other centers on Okinawa to host them in the future.

“Pasta Wednesday” at the USO during the family box event.

Q. Why do you love working at the USO?
A. I love working for the USO because I am given the opportunity to give back and make a difference in the military community. Working for USO Okinawa has been one of the most rewarding experiences. I have made lifelong friends and have an incredible work family here. The staff and service members really make it feel like a home away from home.

Q. Which program do you want to feature from your time at uso?
A. I would say the Service Salute events. Many people have asked me what the event is all about and why we have it. Service Salute is a black-tie event held to honor seven outstanding junior service members on the island. The seven service men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Japan Self-Defense Forces are nominated for their outstanding professionalism, leadership, service to country, and embodiment of the USO’s 8 core values.

— USO Okinawa

Q. My favorite memory of working at USO Okinawa thus far is my first experience at the 2018 Service Salute. It was my first big program. After many hours of planning and coordination, the event comes together in the most perfect way. I remember thinking to myself during the event how amazing it was to see all the service members congratulating and celebrating the seven nominated service members. It really put into perspective the term family in the military.

Q. What is your favorite memory of working at the USO?
A. My favorite memory of working at USO Okinawa thus far is my first experience at the 2018 Service Salute. It was my first big program. After many hours of planning and coordination, the event comes together in the most perfect way. I remember thinking to myself during the event how amazing it was to see all the service members congratulating and celebrating the seven nominated service members. It really put into perspective the term family in the military.
The 3 ‘R’s to good eating – Restaurants, Reviews & Recipes

A Taste of Okinawa

Satisfy your seafood and steak cravings at Sam’s by the Sea, the popular restaurant with a nautical-themed interior and exotic Hawaiian and Polynesian décor that was elected “Best Date Night Restaurant” in Stripes Best of the Pacific 2019. Take in the view of the ocean as you and someone special enjoy a tasty full-course dinner by candlelight. Delight your taste buds with our fresh lobster, King Crab, prawns, red snapper, mahi mahi, swordfish and oysters. And our top-quality juicy steaks will leave your mouth watering and your stomach satisfied. Our friendly staff promises to make it a memorable dinner.

Make it a date at SAM’S!

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Grab a **bite and catch some great views at Tee House**

Sitting high on a hill, the Tee House next to Banyan Tree Golf Course, offers perfect views of Okinawa’s blue waters and jets taking off from the flightline. Enjoy a delicious breakfast, a nice lunch or an early dinner in our dining room’s relaxed setting. Try some of Tee House’s tasty daily specials from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., or head over for their monthly, limited-time special if you’re in the mood for something new. Come in for a round of golf but stay for the great views and even better food at Tee House by Banyan Tree Golf Course!

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**A Taste of Okinawa**

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**Custom Rolls**

Create your own sushi roll with items from the menu

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**Open Wednesday through Monday (Closed Tuesday) 17:00-23:00 (L.O. 22:30)**

**098-926-3290**

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**Kamisushi opens up their new location**

Kamisushi, Okinawa’s favorite sushi restaurant, is now conveniently located near Carnival Park Mihama. Our friendly staff awaits your arrival! You don’t have to go to the U.S. to get American sushi rolls. At Kamisushi, not only can you try traditional Japanese sushi, but you can also enjoy a variety of American sushi rolls – California, Dynamite and Caterpillar. Try our original Kami Rolls and Mihama Rolls by Chef Isamu Kamiya. You’ll be blown away by his sushi magic! Not a sushi eater? We also have a variety of Okinawan and Japanese dishes available to satisfy your taste buds.
Get a taste of Hawaii at Hale Noa Cafe

The Hale Noa Cafe in Chatan may have had a grand re-opening in January, but it has been serving its customers since 2015. With its Hawaiian vibe, Hale Noa serves up some of the best of the 50th state’s favorite foods. Enjoy Macadamia Nut Pancakes, Hana Bowl, Grilled Salmon and more! Hale Noa’s fluffy French Toast with berries and crème brulée sauce is to die for! Afterwards, wash it all down with one of our healthy and homemade smoothies. At Hale Noa Café, we are always adding new items to our all menu, so stay tuned!
WHAT TO EAT IN OSAKA

THE KITCHEN OF JAPAN

byFood

K
own as the younger, hipper, younger brother to Tokyo, Osaka has a reputation for futuristic ar-
chitecture, wild nightlife, and of course, amazing street food. It’s a port city in the Kansai region of Japan, with an easy-going but fun and colorful vibe, and a distinct Osaka dialect. Osaka is said to be the birthplace of kuidaore, a word in Japanese that loosely translates to “ruin oneself by the extravagance of food,” meaning either financially or physically (it’s all-you-can-eat madness out there, guys).

It’s a lot of fun in Osaka, and easy to get on board with Osaka’s unique food culture, but be warned, a lot of it is cheap, fried, and absolutely delicious! With so many places to visit and things to eat along the way, you can easily stuff yourself with all kinds of weird and wonderful Japanese foods. Discover Kansai cuisine in this comprehensive Osaka food guide, and find out what to eat in Osaka right here.

Osaka is sometimes known as the food capital of Japan, supported by its endearing nickname, Tenka no Daidokoro, meaning “the nation’s kitchen.” With its place as a port city, this originally referenced Osaka’s important place as a trade hub in the Edo period of Japan. True for travelers and Japanese people alike, the name now refers to Osaka’s amazing food culture. A gourmet’s paradise, Osaka is considered one of the best cities in Japan for passionate foodies to come and visit Osaka.

1. Okonomiyaki

Osaka is the original home to the now-typical Japanese food, okonomiyaki, and remains the best place to eat it. This savory Japanese pancake was invented before World War II and grew to build a legacy, now continuing to have country-wide popularity. You’ll find plenty of yatai street food stalls selling Osaka-style okonomiyaki around the city, the absolute best in Japan! Most restaurants in Osaka are teppanyaki hot plate style, so you can try the full experience of grilling okonomiyaki for yourself. Eating okonomiyaki this way goes hand-in-hand with the casual eating and drinking culture in Osaka, as you can take your time drinking and chatting with friends as it grills away.

Okonomiyaki in Osaka is the counterpart to Hiroshima-ka okonomiyaki, which has the ingredients layered. Osaka-style okonomiyaki is a kind of savory pancake made from a mixed batter of eggs and shredded cabbage, grilled and topped with a thick savory-sweet soy sauce, Japanese mayonnaise, and a sprinkle of seaweed, aonori. But, literally meaning “grilled as you like it,” you can grill it as you wish and put on whatever toppings you’d like. Try some okonomiyaki in its birthplace, one of the best foods in Osaka. It’s the best place to try this popular Kansai specialty. Enjoy the street food culture of takoyaki, with yatai street stalls throughout the city turning tako balls all day. Pick up some takoyaki en route to your next tourist stop; it’s an essential part of what to eat when you visit Osaka.

2. Takoyaki

Another amazing invention from the Kansai region, takoyaki should be right at the top of your list of what to eat in Osaka. These balls of batter-y goodness are quite similar to okonomiyaki, however, the bite-sized balls are made individually, each containing a piece of tako (octopus). Each ball is a bit crunchy on the outside but gooey on the inside, so it’s definitely food for the adventurous. Those dancing flakes sprinkled on top of the takoyaki are dried bonito flakes, or katsuobushi in Japanese, which are also used to garnish okonomiyaki. They are used to round out the dishes and give takoyaki its signature flavor. Osaka has more than 700 takoyaki stores in the city, a whopping amount of tako-love that shows ting down to an omakase chef’s special sashimi menu in Osaka is a must-do, too.

3. Sushi & sashimi

When you’re visiting Osaka, you’ve just got to try the local sushi and sashimi, simple but oh so delicious. As a port city, it’s unsurprising that Osaka has one of the biggest fish markets in Japan, Osaka Central Fish Market. With canals running throughout the city, Osaka has a laid-back kind of seaside vibe with fresh, high-quality seafood to match. From the finest sushi restaurants to local markets like Kuramon Ichiba, you can find freshly sliced sushi throughout the city. Even bento boxes of sushi sold at the supermarket are extra fresh and easy to grab when you’re on-the-go sightseeing. Conveyor belt sushi trains are a fun, easy going way to have sushi in Osaka, but sit down to an omakase chef’s special sashimi menu in Osaka is a must-do, too.

byFood byFood is a platform for food events in Tokyo, with over 80 experiences to choose from and a fantastic resource for learning about Japan’s thriving food culture! What’s more, byFood runs a charitable outreach program, the Food for Happiness Project, which donates 10 meals to children in Cambodia for each person who books a food event through our platform!
4. Kushikatsu

Kushikatsu are an irresistible snack in Osaka, one of the city’s signature foods you should definitely try on your Osaka trip. The word broadly covers skewered meat or vegetables, kind of like a yakitori chicken stick, only it’s not just chicken, and it’s panko-crumbled and deep-fried. Now one of the city’s biggest and most famous kushikatsu restaurant chains, Daruma is said to have started selling kushikatsu in 1929, skewered meat as a quick fix lunch for laborers. Cheap, easy and of course delicious, kushikatsu continued to gain momentum throughout the war era for working class people. Fast-forward through to today, who doesn’t love bite-sized, deep-fried morsels on skewers? You can grab them either as local street food or order a la carte at specialty restaurants throughout Osaka. Head to the nostalgic Shinsenkei if you want Osaka’s best kushikatsu, where many of the restaurants are open round the clock, or the Tsutenkaku area can also sort you out. And remember everyone, it’s a big no-no to double dip. Kushikatsu is an essential snack to accompany a sake and a beer, in Osaka’s friendly drinking culture.

5. Yakiniku

Kind of like Korean barbeque, yakiniku means “grilled meat,” which is an extremely popular thing to eat in Osaka. You can, of course, get a grill’s worth of yakiniku anywhere in Japan, but Osaka gets away with stealing some glory from their neighboring city, Kobe. As in the name, Kobe is home to the world-famous Kobe beef, which is considered one of the highest quality wagyu (Japanese beef) produced in Japan. With such close access to such high-quality meat, not just limited to Kobe beef, Osaka serves some seriously delicious yakiniku. You can grill for yourself with friends at yakiniku restaurants all over Osaka (you can’t go wrong at the Koreatown in Tsuruhashi) or again grab some grilled wagyu meat sticks to-go from a street vendor.

6. Horumon

Following the philosophy of “waste not, want not,” horumon or horumonyaki is like yakiniiku, except you’re grilling the other random meat bits like organs, offal, giblets, and innards. Also referred to as motusu, it was introduced to Osaka by a yoshoku (Western-style cuisine) chef who swiftly had the term “horumonyaki” trademarked in 1940. Horumon comes from the word hormone, also doubling up as it sounds similar to the word for “discarded goods” in the Kansai-Osaka dialect, which aligns with the Japanese mentality of motifs, to avoid being wasteful. Practical and delicious, horumonyaki has a reputation for being a “stamina-building” food and goes perfectly with a beer. Beef sinew broiled in sweet miso and mirin sugar marinade (dote-yaki) is a tasty entry-level horumon. A dish designed for adventurous eaters, grilled livers, kidneys, intestines, hearts, try the works and grill your own horumonyaki in Osaka.

7. Kitsune udon

Udon noodles are popular throughout all of Japan, but the kitsune udon variety was invented in Osaka. The local style is less intense than what’s eaten in Kyoto, the Osaka style soup comes with noodles in a light dashi fish stock broth, topped with a piece of deep-fried tofu skin (abura-age) that’s been stewed in sweet soy sauce. The name “kitsune” means fox, derived from the myth that abura-age is a fox’s favorite food, also used on the outside of an inarizushi (rice ball wrapped in tofu skin). It’s now eaten widely throughout Japan, although Osaka is the birthplace of this simple yet filling udon dish.

8. Butaman

The humble steamed pork bun, of course, originated in China, but is now widely sold throughout Japan and named butaman in Japanese. The delicious pork bun specialists at 551 Horai have brought Osaka some fame in the butaman game, with their headquarters proudly in the heart of Namba. It’s so popular that around a whopping 170,000 buns are sold each day! With juicy pork for “discarded goods” in the Kansai-Osaka dialect, this cheesecake is incredibly popular for a reason and is a must-try dessert in Osaka. Their flagship store is located in Namba but also have 11 stores in the Kansai area. However, with the intention to keep it as an Osaka delicacy, Uncle Rikuro doesn’t plan to expand, so you’ll have to head to Osaka if you want to taste it! It’s definitely one of the best cheesecakes in Japan (and somehow always makes it onto your Instagram feed).

9. Negiyaki

Negiyaki is yet another dish that is grilled on a teppanyaki hot plate, and is loved by people from Osaka. Another pancake-style food, it is made of negi (green onions) between thin layers of grilled batter, without meat and more crunch. It’s a popular form of okonomiyaki, a flour-based food, much like takoyaki and okonomiyaki. Okonomiyaki is well-loved and consumed regularly by people in Osaka, either in restaurants or at home.

10. Ehomaki

An ehomaki is a long tube of sushi, traditionally eaten during Setsubun (the bean-throwing festival) for good luck. Each year on February 3, you are meant to eat these “fortune rolls” all in one go while pointing in a particular direction (which changes each year) to ward off evil. Setsubun is celebrated throughout Japan, however, omakase originated in Osaka, made by street vendors in the mid-1800s. Bigger than your standard sushi roll, an ehomaki averages 5cm thick and 20cm long. These are filled with egg, fish, vegetables, or even pork cutlet.

11. Fugu (Pufferfish)

The giant fugu pufferfish decorations flying overhead throughout Osaka are impossible to miss. They’re calling for those who are feeling game (and rich) to try pufferfish in Osaka. Zuboraya is the biggest restaurant for fugu in Osaka, and among one of the many Michelin-starred restaurants throughout the city. You can have fugu in many different styles and dishes and don’t worry, they’re prepared carefully so you can dine death-free when tasting fugu in Osaka.

12. Kappo cuisine

Kappo is the answer to fine dining in Osaka, the specialty meal that rivals elegant kaiseki in Kyoto. A kaiseki meal in Kyoto is typically a multi-course meal, combining craft with food. Kappo in Osaka is similar, that is its high-end food, but with an emphasis on cutting, cooking, and preparing, without covering up what goes on behind the scenes. It’s a little more rustic, but the result is always fresh and creative dishes that are presented beautifully every time. Kappo dining also is different as you are seated in bar-counter-style, with an open kitchen and chefs working right in front of you. You watch the chefs cook and they watch you as you eat; its an immersive, interactive experience, only to be had in Osaka. Kigawa is the big name in kappo dining in Osaka, alongside other high-class establishments. When visiting Osaka you have to have a kappo experience, the Osaka version of kaiseki.

13. Jiggly cheesecake

It was Rikuro Nishimura who founded the company in charge of making the fluffiest baked cheesecake in Japan: Rikuro-Ojiiisan (or, Uncle Rikuro). As the story goes, Rikuro was once a humble pastry chef, and now widely known for developing the ever-popular Japanese cheesecake. Jiggly, wobbly, sweet and delicious, this cheesecake is incredibly popular for a reason and is a must-try dessert in Osaka. Their flagship store is located in Namba but also have 11 stores in the Kansai area. However, with the intention to keep it as an Osaka delicacy, Uncle Rikuro doesn’t plan to expand, so you’ll have to head to Osaka if you want to taste it! It’s definitely one of the best cheesecakes in Japan (and somehow always makes it onto your Instagram feed).

Explore the different areas of Osaka, knowing exactly what to eat in Osaka with our helpful guide. Whether it’s casual street food or a fancy kappo meal, you can have it all with Osaka’s fun food culture quickly putting you cozily in a food-coma in no time. Discover your new favorite Osaka food and make sure you try okonomiyaki, takoyaki, sushi, and kushikatsu on your Osaka trip. As Osaka is sometimes regarded as the kitchen of Japan, you can always expect a guaranteed high standard of food quality in this food capital.
Serving up tasty food with a flair

Four Seasons teppanyaki steak house in Okinawa City has been dazzling customers and their taste buds since 1972. Watch as our talented chefs slice, dice and cook up your entrées right at your table. It's more than a meal, it's an event! Located near Kadena Air Base’s Gate 2 on 330 Street, our restaurant is the perfect place relax, unwind and simply enjoy some fun with your food. If you haven't had the pleasure of enjoying Japanese teppanyaki, come in for a visit! Reservations recommended. Private rooms available for groups of 5 or more.

Welcome to Four Seasons Okinawa City

Lunch Hours: 11:00—Lunch Steak Set ¥ 1,300—
Dinner Hours: 17:00—Dinner Steak Set ¥ 1,512—

*Current Prices

- Okinawa City branch has 4 parking places.
- Okinawa City branch is located near Gate 2 and on 330 streets.
- Seafood & other menus are widely available.
- All sets come with soup, salad, bread or rice, tea or coffee.

3-1-25 Sonda, Okinawa City TEL(098)933-5731 Open Hours: 11:00-

Welcome to Four Seasons Mihama

Lunch Hours: 11:00—Lunch Steak Set ¥ 1,300—
Dinner Hours: 17:00—Dinner Steak Set ¥ 1,512—

*Current Prices

- Mihama branch has 40 parking spaces.
- Seafood & other menus are widely available.
- All set come with soup, salad, bread or rice, tea or coffee.

2-5-2 Chatan, Mihama Town TEL(098)926-1329 Open Hours: 11:00-

Four Seasons sizzling with scrumptious fun

Our teppanyaki steak house in Mihama is the perfect place to enjoy tasty food and have fun doing it with family and friends. Watch as our talented chefs slice, dice and cook up your entrées right at your table. It's more than a meal, it's an event! Located in the popular American Village, our Mihama branch offers a casual atmosphere where all ages are welcome. If you haven't had the pleasure of enjoying Japanese teppanyaki, you need to come to Four Seasons. Please make reservations as sometimes we are full. It depends on how busy we are. Thanks for understanding.
Buy into the secret behind Okinawa’s sweet-savory cuisine

Okinawan brown sugar, made from sugarcane grown in fields blessed with strong southern-island sunlight and minerals delivered by the ocean spray, is very rich in flavor. Brown sugar is not only used in making sweets but also for adding extra flavor to various dishes. Brown sugar syrup can even be substituted for regular syrup. Try some of these recipes.

**Teriyaki chicken**

**Ingredients** (2 servings)
- brown sugar (100g)
- soy sauce (100ml)
- chicken thighs (400g)
- mirror glaze
- cooking sake (10ml)
- water (25ml)

**Preparation**
Combine brown sugar and water in a pan and simmer on medium heat for about 5-8 minutes until thick syrup is formed. Poke holes in the chicken with a fork.

**Directions**
1. Combine brown sugar syrup and soy sauce and simmer on low heat until thickened, then add cooking sake.
2. Cook the chicken in a skillet on medium heat until both sides are golden brown, then cover it and steam for about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the cover, add 1 and cook for a further minute.

**Yam with brown sugar sauce**

**Ingredients** (4 servings)
- yam (500g)
- • soy sauce (50ml)
- • water (50ml)
- • brown sugar (40g)
- • potato starch (1tsp)

**Directions**
1. Cut leeks into diagonal pieces, onion into wedges, tofu into cubes and mitsuba into chunks.
2. Lightly cook konnyaku noodles in boiling water and cut into bite-sized pieces.
3. Put ingredients A except for brown sugar into a large pot and bring to a boil. When it comes to a good boil, add brown sugar.

**Rafute (Okinawan-style glazed pork)**

**Ingredients**
- 400g pork belly, 100g brown sugar, 100g soy sauce, 100g sake, 600 ml bonito broth.
- Bonito broth can be replaced by fish broth.

**Directions**
1. Prepare the following ingredients: 400g pork belly, 100g brown sugar, 100g soy sauce, 100g sake, 600 ml bonito broth.
2. Cut pork into four pieces and boil for about 30 minutes.
3. Drain the pork and wash it lightly under running water. Simmer pork in a mixture of soy sauce, broth, brown sugar and sake over medium heat.
4. Add a little water if the liquid evaporates.
5. Simmer for 40-60 minutes and serve.

**Sukiyaki**

**Ingredients** (4 servings)
A • sukiyaki broth / cooking sake (200ml)
- • mirin / sweet cooking wine (200ml)
- • brown sugar (60g)
B • other ingredients
- • leeks (2) • onion (1)
- • tofu (1block) • konnyaku noodles (1package)
- • bunches mitsuba (Japanese parsley)
- • eggs (4)

**Directions**
1. Cut leeks into diagonal pieces, onion into wedges, tofu into cubes and mitsuba into chunks.
2. Lightly cook konnyaku noodles in boiling water and cut into bite-sized pieces.
3. Put ingredients A except for brown sugar into a large pot and bring to a boil. When it comes to a good boil, add brown sugar.

**Miso-marinated cod**

**Ingredients** (4 servings)
A • miso marinade / miso (200g)
- • cooking sake (15ml)
- • mirin / sweet cooking wine (10ml)
- • brown sugar (20g)
B • other ingredients
- • cod fillets / Any white-meat fish can be substituted (4)
- • okra (2)

**Directions**
1. Combine ingredients A to make miso marinade.
2. Sprinkle salt on cod fillets and let rest for one hour. Wipe off excess moisture.
3. Spread half the marinade evenly on a large flat-bottomed container. Put a layer of paper towels on the marinade, cod fillets, another layer of paper towels, then cover completely with the remaining marinade. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest in the refrigerator overnight.
4. Put a sheet of wrinkled aluminum foil in a toaster oven and bake the fillets for 5-7 minutes. Garnish with boiled okra.

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-Okinawa Prefectural Government
Great menu, great desserts at nice café

Visit Rose Garden Café American Kitchen for a delightful dining experience with a menu serving up American breakfast favorites like thick bacon, country ham, eggs benedict and pancakes. If you can’t make it in for their morning menu, stop in for lunch or dinner. The café offers premium burgers, pasta dishes, like meatball spaghetti and chicken parmesan, and juicy steaks seared to perfection. And save room for dessert! You’ll want to try the delicious cakes and pastries available daily. Any time of day, Rose Garden Café American Kitchen offers great food and great prices. We’re waiting for you just down the street from Kadena Gate 5!

Kushiya Monogatari

Head to Kushiya Monogatari for kushiage, deep-fried skewers made popular in Osaka. In this buffet-style restaurant, pick your skewers and fry them at your table! Kushiya Monogatari uses healthy oil in all of its table fryers and offers over 30 ingredients for its skewers. Pick from shrimp, beef, pork, chicken and veggies in this all-you-can-eat setting. Have fun battering the skewers and cooking them up right in front of you. Dip your skewers in a variety of sauces and spices available. Also included are curry and rice, fresh salads, cakes, fruit and ochazuke. Your family will love this unique experience!

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All-You-Can-Eat

Deep-Fried Skewered Foods.

Customers can choose their preferred ingredients from varied choices and deep-fry the food themselves.