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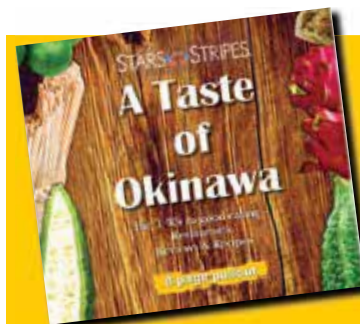
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Father passes baton to son during final flight at Kadena

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SENIOR AIRMAN YOSSELIN CAMPOS,
18TH WING

KADENA AIR BASE – With retirement around the corner, U.S. Air Force Col. Dominic Setka, former 5th Air Force chief of staff, jumped on the opportunity to take his final flight in an E-3 Sentry with his son, U.S. Air Force Capt. Nathan Setka, 961st Airborne Air Control Squadron air weapons officer at Kadena Air Base, Japan, Aug. 17, 2022.

Dominic began his military career in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1988 and after earning his commission in 1993 served as an air defense control officer. Within a few years, he decided that the Air Force would be a better place to raise a family. In 1999, Dominic transitioned into the Air Force as an air battle manager.

“Air battle managers provide air domain awareness and tactical connectivity to all the assets in the theater,” Dominic said. “So instead of having a bunch of individual chess pieces moving around the board doing their own thing, you’re connecting all those pieces to enable them to decisively outpace our adversaries.”

As Nathan wrapped up his time in college, he decided he wanted to commission in the Air Force.

“Nathan’s one of four kids and none of them showed any interest in being in the military whatsoever,” said Dominic. “So when he came up to me and said ‘Hey dad,



Col. Dominic Setka, left, and Capt. Nathan Setka stand in front of an E-3 Sentry at Kadena Air Base on Aug. 17.

I’m interested in becoming an officer in the military,’ I was extremely proud. Now that he’s following in my footsteps as an air battle manager, I look at it as an opportunity to sort of relive my career and keep on contributing.”

Serving in the same career has created a stronger bond and sense of understanding for Nathan and Dominic.

“I didn’t fully understand what my dad did until I got to my training assignment at Tyndall,” said Nathan. “It’s actually been really enlightening to understand what he did all while I was growing up. It’s opened up a lot of different

conversations that I never could have had if I didn’t join the Air Force.”

This flight on the E-3 Sentry marks the first time Nathan and Dominic have been able to fly a mission together.

“I think it’s a really cool opportunity to get to fly with my dad on the aircraft he flew 15 years ago,” said Nathan. “It’s not an opportunity that a lot of people get, so I’m going to make the most out of it. I think it will make my mom real happy as well, getting to see her husband and son working together one last time before he retires.”

Although the airframe of the E-3

Sentry is the same, the technology found inside of it is completely different, said Dominic.

The E-3 Sentry is a vital asset to the U.S. Air Force, as it provides situational awareness of friendly, neutral and hostile activity, command and control of an area of responsibility, battle management of theater forces, all-altitude and all-weather surveillance of the battle space and early warning of enemy actions during joint, allied and coalition operations.

“My last flight was in 2008, so the airplane is vastly different in the back end from the mission systems perspective, but the airframe is the same so it’s a minor miracle that we’re able to keep it flying,” chuckled Dominic. “The maintainers are as good as they are to keep that aircraft flying for this many years because the jets that he’s flying now are the same old jets that I started flying 20 plus years ago.”

As Dominic nears the end of his military career, Nathan’s is just taking off. Dominic leaves his son with a piece of advice.

“There’s no single path to get to where you want to go, so it’s okay if you don’t do those things that other people do because you’re setting your own path,” said Dominic. “You’re going to get to where you want to go by working hard. So the same advice I would give to him, I’d give to any young officer — do the best you can where you’re at, and you’ll achieve what you want to achieve.”

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BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPE OKINAWA

Respect for the Aged Day

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.

Celebrating this year on Sept. 19, 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 wisdoms. 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 Division. "The purpose of this holiday is to express respect for the elderly in our communities and wish them longevity."

"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 had contributed so much to society, and how to glean from their wisdom," Miura added.

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 Mon-

days 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?

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."



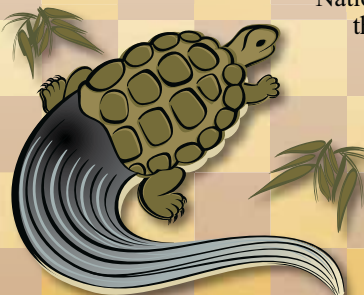
Silver Week glitters like gold

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. In the year 2022, Autumnal Equinox Day is celebrated on Sept. 23. Respect for the Aged Day falls on Sept. 19. It's a shame that we don't get a five-day off this year. But it can be named a "Bronze Week", can't it?

takiguchi.takahi@stripes.com



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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 "Al" 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.

Respect for the Aged repartee

Respect for the Aged Day is just another way we honor our elders. These are some great phrases to practice before you greet your elderly neighbors or grandparents.

"Anata wa nansai desuka?"

= How old are you?
("anata" = you, "nansai" = how old)

"Watashi wa _ sai desu."

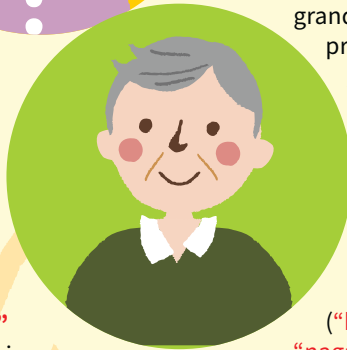
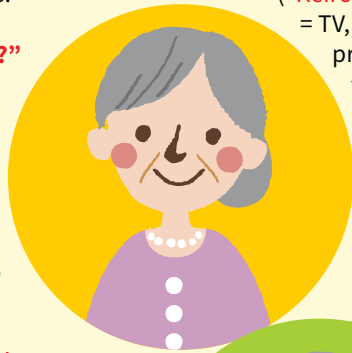
= I am ___ years old.
("watashi" = I, "sai" = years of age)

"Rokujuu sai/nanajyu sai / hachijyu sai/kyuujyu sai" = 60 years old/70 years old/80 years old/90 years old

("rokuju" = 60, "nanajyu" = 70, "hachijyu" = 80, "kyuujyu" = 90)

"Kono kyuujitsu wo donoyouni iwai masuka?"

= How will you celebrate this holiday?
("kono" = this, "kyuujitsu" = holiday, "donoyouni" = how, "iwai/iwaimasu" = celebrate)



"Keirou no hi no terebi no tokuban ga totemo tanoshimi desu."

= I can't wait to watch the special program on TV for Respect for Aged Day.
("Keirou no hi" = Respect for Aged Day, "terebi" = TV, "tokuban/tokubetsu bangumi" = special program, "totemo" = very (much), "- ga tanosimi desu/ - wo tanoshimi nisuru" = look forward to)

"Watashi no ojiichan to obaachan ni purezento wo agemasu."

= I will give gifts to my grandfather and grandmother.
("watashi no" = my, "ojiichan" = grandfather, "obaachan" = grandmother, "purezento" = gift, present, "ageru/agemasu" = give)

"Kenkou de nagaiki shite kudasai."

= please take care of your health and enjoy a long life.
("kenkou" = health, "nagaiki" = long life, "shite kudasai" = please do)

– Shoji Kudaka, Stripes Okinawa

File photo



Kajimayaa a celebration of longevity, childhood

BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

In Japan, getting older is a celebration. In the tradition known as Toshiiwai, elders are celebrated as they reach age milestones.

Kanreki is usually the first of such Toshiiwai and marks a person's 61st birthyear milestone. Next, koki is for the 70th birthyear, kiju for the 77th, sanju for the 80th, beiju for 88th, sotsujyu for the 90th, hakuju for the 99th, and hyakuju for the 100th.

The count for these milestones is done by kazoedoshi, the traditional Japanese way. For instance, the kazoedoshi way assumes that a baby is in their first year as soon as they are born.

In Okinawa, Toshiiwai is called Tooshibii and is celebrated every 12 years of a person's life. Tooshibii is not just a celebration of elders. This tradition celebrates those who are in their 13th, 25th, 37th, 49th, 61st, 73rd, 85th, and 97th birth years.

Kajimayaa is the name for the 97th year Tooshibii and is a very special celebration. The word means pinwheel in Okinawan dialect and was chosen because of the idea that people relive their childhood when they reach that stage of life. Pinwheels are given to those elders who have reached their 97th birthyear to mark their longevity and to give them an item they used to play with as children.

The concept of returning to childhood is part of Japanese Toshiiwai years as well.

For kanreki, the celebration of the 61st, elders are thought to be born again. It is based upon the concept of "eto" symbols in the Chinese Zodiac, which consist of 12 creatures and cycles every 12 years. For example, if you are born in a Year of the Dragon, the same

symbol will come around when you reach your 61st year (for the fifth time). Theoretically, then is when you start a new cycle of life.

To celebrate their new life, chanchanko, a padded sleeveless kimono jacket, and zukin, a hood are commonly presented to the elders as gifts. Both of the items should be in red for this tradition because the color is supposed to bring good luck and repel evil spirits.

These days, kanreki is celebrated in Okinawa as well. But "kajimayaa" is still the biggest longevity celebration on the island. One of the reasons why it is special is that the celebration involves not just families and relatives but also local communities.

On or around Sept. 7 of the lunar calendar, parades take place in local communities where those who are in their 97th year ride in open cars with a pinwheel in their hands. Folks in the neighborhood march together in traditional attire following the car, just like a part of an Eisa Festival. Since this is a unique tradition of Okinawa, kajimayaa is often covered by the media. Pinwheels are often handed out to participants as well.

This year Sept. 7 in the lunar calendar falls on Oct. 12 in the Gregorian calendar.

Last year, kajimayaa parades were reportedly scaled down due to COVID-19. With the pandemic still having a big impact on Okinawa, this year looks even more difficult than last year for kajimayaa parades to take place. However, if you happen to see elders with a pinwheel in their hands waving at you from the seats of an open car, please smile and wave back at them. Their smiles are a reminder of the joys of longevity and the fun of being a kid again.

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SWEET HISTORY

The tale behind Japan's favorite potato

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPE OKINAWA

In Japan and Okinawa, the beloved sweet potato is considered the taste of autumn. Rich in nutrition such as starch, sugar, fiber, and vitamin C, this root vegetable is popular for those seeking a healthy way to satisfy their sweet tooth.

You'll find that "sweet potato" goes by many names here, including satsumaimo (which means potato of Satsuma), karaimo (Chinese potato), kansho (sweet potato), Ryukyuimo (Ryukyu's potato), or Noguniimo. The names for sweet potatoes and the crop itself are deeply rooted in the history of Okinawa and Japan.

These delicious purple-skin and starchy-sweet root vegetables first arrived in 1605 in Okinawa during the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429 – 1879), according to Kadena Town. Noguni Sokan, a government official from Noguni Village (part of present-day Kadena Town), is credited with bringing and cultivating sweet potatoes from Fujian of Ming (present-day China).

Soon, neighboring villages on Okinawa would receive saplings and start to cultivate their own crops of sweet potato. Shinjo Gima, who governed Gima Village, now known as a part of Naha, was the one who helped accelerate the spread after studying the crop and finding that it fit in with the island climate, could be harvested every 5 to six months and, as a bonus, had a good taste.

In 15 years, sweet potato spread



Noguni Sokan Guu, a shrine in Kadena Town, is dedicated to the historical figure who is credited with bringing the sweet potato to Okinawa.

across the island and soon could also be found on the mainland.

As early as 1611, sweet potatoes appeared in Satsuma Domain, a present from King Sho Nei Ryukyu, who reigned from 1589 to 1620. Then, in 1615, sweet potatoes arrived in Nagasaki Prefecture with the help of the "English Samurai" William Adams, the first British person to come to Japan. Adams sent a crop he found during port call in Naha to Richard Cocks, director of the British East India Company's outpost in Hirado at the time.

Cocks' diary notes that he received a bag of sweet potatoes from William Adams on June 2 of 1615. Around that time, he also

received another pack of the root vegetables from William Eaton, another member of the company, who was visiting Ryukyu. Cocks planted the crops in a garden, the first documented cultivation of sweet potatoes in the country, according to Hirado City.

In 1698, Hisamoto Tanegashima, a lord of Tanegashima island in Satsuma domain, received a basket of sweet potatoes from King Shotei of Ryukyu, who reigned from 1669 to 1709. Then the Lord ordered his subordinate to cultivate the crop.

By 1735, the Satsuma Domain's sweet potatoes reached what is now modern-day Maku-hari in Chiba Prefecture. The crop was commissioned to scholar Konyo Aoki by Yoshimune Tokugawa, the eighth shogun of the Tokugawa, as a means to fight off famine. From the 17 sweet potatoes, Aoki succeeded in harvesting about 500 liters of the crop, according to Chiba Prefecture.

Later, sweet potatoes would continue to be the go-to crop when famine struck in the 18th and 19th centuries, then again during the food shortages pre- and post-WWII (1939-1945).

Though today, Japan is in "hoshoku no jidai", or an era of food satiation and without threat of famine, the love of sweet potatoes continues. So, next time you enjoy a steamed sweet potato from your local grocer, remember this simple, delicious root is steeped in rich history, too!

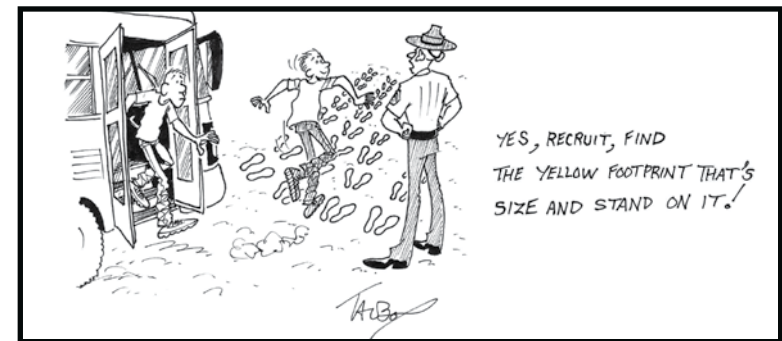
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A monument standing just outside of Kadena Marina commemorates "Noguniimo Declaration," which was made by Kadena Town in 2005.



COMICS CORNER



– Daryl Talbot

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SPECTACULAR SPELV

Exploring Ginoza Village

BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Thanks to the volcanic activity of the Palaeozoic and Mesozoic eras, the many islands that makeup Okinawa Prefecture share an interesting topography. About one-third of the prefecture is composed of Ryukyu Limestone, studies by Japan's Ministry of the Environment have determined.

Due to the presence of this prehistoric limestone, you'll find many caves to explore on the main island. Though some are not

open to the public, many welcome tourists with illuminations and walkways. Some caves even offer opportunities to try your hand at spelunking or cave exploration.

Matsuda Shonyudo, a group of large caves in Ginoza Village, falls under the second category. These caves are on the island's eastern coast, in the same municipality which hosts Camp Hansen and Camp Schwab training ranges.

Looking to escape the beating sun, I made my way there in early August, seeking an adventure below ground. Matsuda Shonyudo is appropriately advertised as "a big adventure to an underworld" and offers something different than the usual water activities and popular attractions Okinawa is known for.

Before I could make my way down into the depths of the caves, I first had to stop at the Matsuda Koryu Taiken Center. Reservations are required in advance; visitors must check in at the center to enter. English-speaking tour guides are available, so call ahead for availability.

For my guided tour through the caves, I was paired with Asatsugu Jahana, a local. Despite having a knowledgeable guide who knows the neighborhood and caves inside and out, this

tour was still a kimodameshi, or courage test, for me.

Before a safety briefing by two center employees, I was given a pair of overalls, a helmet, rainboots, and gloves to wear. The employees advised me to stay hydrated and to avoid touching fragile stalactites, bats, and other protected creatures. Also, to my regret, I had to leave my camera behind as they warned that it could get damaged in the wet cave.

Jahana, my guide, then led me on a 10-minute walk from the center to the entrance of Uunumee Do, which stands for "cave in front of plantains." It was a steep entry to the cave and required a careful climb down a ladder to the rocky ground.

Not far from the entrance, we stopped at a relatively flat spot. It looked like a bank of a river with the water flowing underneath. No illumination was installed inside the cave, so it would have been pitch dark without headlights and a flashlight. A small creature with many legs caught my eye as I turned my head to look around the rocky cave walls.

"Oh, you are lucky; we don't see Oogeji (cave centipedes) very often," Jahana said with excitement. Though I am no fan of centipedes or millipedes, the unexpected encounter did brighten my mood. The tour guide kindly offered to take a photo of me near the creature to commemorate the moment. The multi-legged creature, however, may not have been

camera-shy but was likely not used to in

ers and scampered away. We continued our walk into the depths of the cave and after about five minutes we entered an open space with several stalactites hanging from the ceiling. Next, we took another ladder down deeper to a stone pool. With Jahana's flashlight, I saw the water's lightly rippling surface and smooth texture of the surrounding limestone compared to the rugged texture of the cave walls.

The sound of the water was soothing, and I felt a little more relaxed in the dark cave. The cave adventure had provided quite a workout, and I felt a little sweaty in my overalls, but it was far better than being out in the sun. The stalactites' curious shapes, textures and colors were a welcome sight.

Some of the cave's stalactites looked like curtains. In contrast, others reminded me of a goya bitter melon because of their long and green color. According to Jahana, the color difference can be attributed to how a stalactite is formed. For example, stalactites will be white if they contain lots of lime or red if clay was present during formation. The gold sheen of others, Jahana said, is caused by bacteria on the surface of the stalactite.

We continued our walk and stopped in another cave room where we could see

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bats perched on the ceiling or flying around. When we were moving onto deeper parts of the caves, some bats flew close to us as if to check on the unexpected company, which Jahana said was a rare encounter.

In May, the bats of this cave migrate to Itoman for childrearing and then return to Ginoza Village in August, Jahana explained. These bats had just made their way back when I visited. And, like in all caves where bats live — watch out for the bat guano!

Before leaving the bat cave, we also spotted a layer of limestone stacked on metamorphic rock, which is thought to have originated in the Eurasia continent. I was not expecting to see a sign of the dynamic geographical history in this cave, but it was interesting.

As we went deeper, the cave branched off at one point to a smaller route. To reach the small cave, I had to crawl through limestone. Fortunately, the path didn't run long, and we soon hit a dead end. Here, we turned off our lights so I could experience complete darkness. Though scary at first, once my eyes adjusted, the stillness and quiet made me feel at peace.

After a moment in this tranquil space, our lights were back on, and we made our way through the main route down a steep left corner. We passed the exit and took several stairs

Camp Foster
Naha

MATSUDA CAVE

to the last portion of the cave, where a thin channel runs through like a small river. Here and there, prawns were swimming through the shallow water.

The route to the exit had many ups and downs, just like the other portions of the cave. We made a stop from time to time to observe thin stalactites called "straw" or to knock on thick ones to experience their "sounds."

When we finally reached the exit, I felt temporary relief. Jahana had forewarned me that there had been poisonous Habu snake sightings in the exit area in the past. So, cautiously, we made our way up and out of the cave, ensuring no snakes were lurking in the shadows.

It had been shy of two hours of exploring the caves when we made it back to the center. I was drenched in sweat but happy I'd tried something new. Though I regretted not being able to take photos of the beautiful prehistoric limestone, stalactites, and curious creatures within the cave, the sights remain engrained in my mind.



View Video!

COFFEE & BREAK GINOZA FARM LAB

After a few hours of exploring, working up a sweat, and an appetite, I was ready for rest and a good meal. Luckily, I knew a good place for energy replenishment nearby.

From Matsuda District, I took a five-minute drive to a roadside station to grab a bite at Coffee & Break Ginoza Farm Lab. The eatery is on the second floor of Ginoza Roadside Station. It is known for its delicious homemade hamburgers and a superb view over the east coast.

I ordered a classic burger (1,080 yen) and an iced coffee (280 yen) and sat near the terrace. This was my second visit to this place, and their hamburger had definitely left a good impression the last time I was here.

Once I dug in, I found it hard to stop chomping on the savory and juicy hamburger with its delicate sweet buns. Of course, my fatigue might have played a part in making the burger taste even better, but the view and the meal made my day.

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KATABARU TIDELAND

Not quite ready to call it a day, I made my way north for a stop at the Katabaru Tideland after lunch. Tidelands are pieces of coastal land or islands that flood during the high tide and appear for a short window at different points of the day. There aren't many tidelands on Okinawa, so I wanted to check this out since it was only a 10-minute drive from the restaurant.

From the seawall, at around 1:30 p.m., the Katabaru Tideland's reddish sands spread wide and far. Here they can spread up two kilometers max in low tide. I was expecting white sand but was surprised that the composure of the sea bottom here had created this color.

I walked down the seawall stairs to step onto the tideland, where many creatures started to wriggle around the closer I got. Upon inspection, I realized these were crabs walking sideways in a group toward the ocean.

Out of curiosity, I approached them, trying to take a close look at them. Still, as soon as I was within several meters of the herd, the tiny creatures upped their speed and scattered away.

I gave up trying to get close and sat to enjoy the superb view. Just me and the crabs (at a safe distance) taking in the serene landscape and sounds of the ocean. Eventually, the crabs eased their way closer to me, as long as I didn't make any sudden movements. I carefully pointed my camera at them for a quick pic. Luckily, the shutter noise didn't bother them, and these cool crustaceans carried on.

As soon as the group I photographed made their way into the water, I headed home, tired but relaxed from experiencing a side of Okinawa thousands of years in the making.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



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.

Spelunking sayings

There are many caves on Okinawa that you can explore. A jumpsuit and a helmet with a headlight will surely be necessary for spelunkers, but these phrases will also come in handy.

"Ashimoto ni kiwotsukete kudasai."

("Ashimoto" = step/foot, "ni" = a particle to indicate a target, "kiwotsukete/kiwotsukeru" = watch out/be careful, "kudasai" = please ...)

"Suibun-hokyu wo wasure-naiyouni shitekudasai."

= Please don't forget to stay hydrated.

("suibun-hokyu" = hydration, "wo" = a particle to indicate an object, "wasure-naiyouni" = so as not to forget, "shitekudasai" = please do...)

"Ookina shounyuu-seki ga arimasu."

= There is a big stalactite.

("ookina" = big/large, "shounyuu-seki" = stalactite, "ga" = a particle to indicate a subject, "arimasu" = there is ...)

"Habu ga kakurete iru kamoshiremasen."



= Habu snakes may be lurking.

("Habu" = habu snake, "ga" = a particle to indicate a subject, "kakurete/kakureru" = lurk/hide, "iru" = there is, "kamoshiremasen" = may be/possibly)

"Koumori ga tenjyou ni tomatte imasu."

= Bats are perched on the ceiling.

("koumori" = bat, "ga" = a particle to indicate a subject, "tenjyou" = ceiling, "ni" = a

particle to indicate a target, "tomatte/tomaru" = perched/stop, "imasu" = there is)

"Hashigo wo orimasu."

= I will climb down a ladder.

("hashigo" = ladder, "wo" = a particle to indicate an object, "orimasu/oriru" = climb down/go down)

"Semai basho wo toorimasu."

= I will go through a tight spot.

("semai" = tight/narrow, "basho" = place/spot, "wo" = a particle to indicate a target or an object, "toorimasu" = will go through)

Useful words

Roupu/Nawa = Rope

Herumetto = Helmet

Kaichuu-dentou = Flashlight

Haikingu buutsu = Hiking boots

Sekkaigan = Limestone

Doukutsu = Cave

Doukutsu Tanken =

Spelunking

Michi, Konseki = Trail (noun)

– Shoji Kudaka,
Stripes Okinawa



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File Photo

OKINAWA KOKUTO

The healthy sugar

BY SHERILYN SIY,
JAPAN TRAVEL

Sugar gets a very bad reputation. Aside from causing tooth decay, sugar is blamed for obesity, chronic acne, type 2 diabetes, increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and mood disorders. But the truth is, sugar from the right sources can be nutritious, and gasp, even healthy! Okinawa kokuto is, in technical terms, the non-centrifugal sugar made by boiling down cane juice using traditional methods. Impurities are removed in the boiling process. The cane juice condenses and when poured into metal trays, it naturally solidifies (no coagulating agents were used). Kokuto tastes like molasses. For the curious, the granulated sugar we are familiar with is centrifugal sugar. A kilogram of sugarcane usually produces 140 g of non-centrifugal sugar (kokuto) and 120 g of centrifugal sugar (raw sugar). Okinawa's method of producing kokuto came from Fuzhou, China, another evidence of the strong historical ties between Okinawa and China. Aside from energy giving sucrose, kokuto is a source of



Emergency Kokuto. (got to love that packaging) Photo by Japan Travel

calcium, potassium, iron, zinc, magnesium, and other vitamins and minerals. Unlike refined sugar, kokuto is considered an alkaline health food, something celebrated by preventive medicine enthusiasts. It has been observed to have numerous health benefits. Japanese women pop a piece of kokuto during their period as it is a good source of iron to replace lost blood. Kokuto could very well



be credited as one of the reasons for Okinawan longevity. My kids like to munch on chunks of kokuto as is. Kokuto's flavor can be described as earthy, malty, caramel-like with hints of smokiness. Because of this unique flavor profile, kokuto deepens the character of both sweet and savory dishes in unimaginable ways. I received a cute can of emergency kokuto (really more of a packaging gimmick than anything). I boiled the kokuto with water in a 1:1 ratio and thickened it a bit to make a syrup that I could easily add to my tea and coffee, instantly upgrading my favorite beverages both in taste and nutrition.



File Photo



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My faves Japanese frozen food

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Last year was an important year for the frozen food industry in Japan. The year marked the 100th anniversary of the first time Hokkaido fish was commercially frozen, according to the Japan Frozen Food Association.

What started with frozen fish has evolved to include a wide variety of foods through the last 10 decades. In the 1930s, for instance, frozen mashed strawberries and frozen sliced fish arrived on department store shelves for general consumers.

In the 1940s, precooked food called “home meat” and “home stew” made it to store freezers.

In the 1950s, frozen fish and croquettes were introduced to school lunches and also adopted by an expedition team to Antarctica.

And the 1960s, frozen food reached Olympic heights when, at the 1964 games held in Tokyo, frozen food was used to prepare meals at the athletes’ village and the response was golden. Following this success, hotels and restaurants began using frozen food for dishes on their menus.

Given the historical context, the year 2020 was understandably expected to be very special. It not only marked the 100th anniversary of Japanese frozen food but was also the year when the Olympic Games were originally scheduled to take place for the second time in Tokyo.

Although the Olympic Games ended up being rescheduled, the year still turned out to be something special for the frozen food industry.

In 2020, the pandemic caused frozen food sales to soar, according to the Diamond Chain Store Online. While dining out was restricted, people resorted to stocking up with frozen food from their local markets and convenience stores. The variety and shelf life of frozen food makes it a hot commodity for those who prefer to stay at home.

Not only can you enjoy croquette, hamburger, fried shrimp, and dumplings at home, but you can also get frozen ramen noodles, yakitori (skewered grilled chicken), Takoyaki, baked onigiri and more. You can even find French dishes like croissants, red wine beef stew and Tarte aux fruits in stock in the freezer aisle.

Before the pandemic, I didn’t eat frozen food often, but the stay-home period changed my mind. I took a chance and gave some of the frozen food offerings at my local market a try.

Below are a few of my picks from the frozen section. Frozen meals and food items are a great way

to introduce variety and different flavors into your cooking at a reasonable price. Bon appetite!

■ Takoyaki

(Octopus dumpling by Lawson, 210 yen or approx. \$1.92)

Traveling to Osaka may still not be an option. And while nothing compares to enjoying steaming octopus balls near Dotonbori, this snack food from Lawson’s convenience store will take you there — gastronomically, at least.

■ Yaki onigiri

(Roasted Rice Ball by Nichirei, 278 yen)

This is a kind of food I would buy at festival food stalls or highway rest areas. Its crispy-on-the-outside-but-soft-on-the-inside texture is well-replicated in the pre-cooked versions as well.

■ Gyoza

(Dumpling by Ajinomoto, 198 yen)

If you haven’t noticed, pre-cooked dumplings are big in Japan. If you go to a local supermarket, you will find various labels of frozen dumplings there. Some bear the names of famous gyoza restaurants such as “Osaka Ohsho” and “Min Min,” allowing customers to enjoy the authentic taste of their favorite dumpling at home.

■ Ebi fry

(Fried Shrimp by Tolona, 138 yen)

This is arguably one of the most popular food among kids for bento meals along with hamburgers and croquettes. Most frozen ebi fry are meant to be fried in a pan, but you can find many are now conveniently microwaveable, too!

■ Karaage

(Fried Chicken by Ajinomoto, 398 yen)

Whether for an appetizer or for a bento meal, pre-cooked karaage can be a great choice. “ZaHKaraage,” a popular label pictured in the photo, is especially worth a taste since it’s been a hit since its release last September. The garlic, soy sauce, and spring onion oil seasoning on these juicy karaage can be addictive.

*These prices listed above don’t include tax and are subject to change.

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Adult(Over 13)¥1,500 Child(4-12) ¥800

Water buffalo Carriage • not including entrance fee.

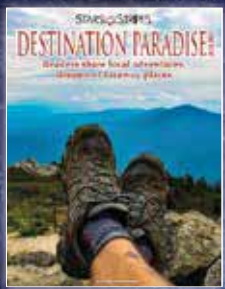
Adult(Over 13)¥1,200 Child(4-12) ¥650

Stripes Sports Trivia

The price of an MLB team, these days, is pretty astronomical. In 2012, the Dodgers were purchased for \$2 billion. More recently, the lowly Marlins fetched \$1.3B. The cheapest purchase of a current franchise was, go figure, one that has stayed in the family for nearly 50 years. Which franchise cost only \$8.7 million in 1973?

Answer

New York Yankees



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DID YOU KNOW?



The entrance to traditional Japanese houses are usually built higher than ground level by about six inches, so you can take off your shoes before entering. If you are invited to a Japanese house, be sure to wear your clean socks, preferably the ones without holes, so you can take off your shoes without making your feet the talk of the party. Slippers can be used on the floors, but make sure you take them off when you enter a tatami room.

Kanji of the week

燕

Tsubame/en (swallow)

Language Lesson

Do you understand?

Wakari masuka?

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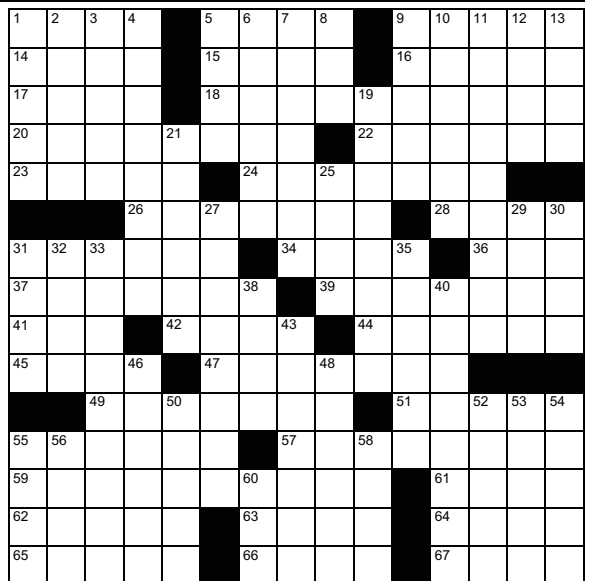


Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Declines
- 5 Pack away
- 9 Bell sound
- 14 Unappealing food
- 15 Horne of "Stormy Weather"
- 16 Pooh's passion
- 17 Maneuverable, at sea
- 18 Try the patience of
- 20 Retailers' battle
- 22 Gave out
- 23 Liable to lose it
- 24 Took for oneself
- 26 Clear up
- 28 Takes a load off
- 31 Small bump
- 34 Artificial bait
- 36 Sis's sib
- 37 Recluse
- 39 Sadly sentimental
- 41 WWII female
- 42 Judi Dench title
- 44 Spine-tingling
- 45 Farm feed
- 47 Walloped
- 49 Project glowingly
- 51 Rifle recoils
- 55 Expressed out loud
- 57 Tuna variety
- 59 Hard to miss
- 61 In a bit
- 62 Performance place
- 63 Trellis piece
- 64 "Dent" anagram
- 65 Bicycle part
- 66 His partner
- 67 Storm centers

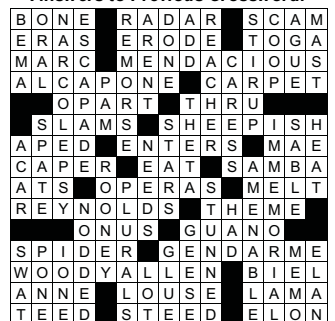


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- 3 Bullwinkle foe
- 4 Broad range
- 5 Large amount
- 6 Gas brand since 1902
- 7 Hot, in Vegas
- 8 Is no longer
- 9 Treasure holder
- 10 Belmont beasts
- 11 Too low to hear
- 12 Ration (out)
- 13 Gave the once-over
- 19 Smoker's accessory holder
- 21 Peeper protector
- 25 Female gamete
- 27 Save for later
- 29 Field follower
- 30 Big name in electronics
- 31 MSNBC offering
- 32 Like some exams

- 33 Wearing medals
- 35 Golden State motto
- 38 Thompson of "Love Actually"
- 40 Devote
- 43 Fit to consume
- 46 Sign of age
- 48 Place for wine
- 50 Stick-on
- 52 NY's Island
- 53 Norwegian currency
- 54 Puts in the mail
- 55 Clothing closure
- 56 Skeddaddled
- 58 "All are off!"
- 60 Blonde shade

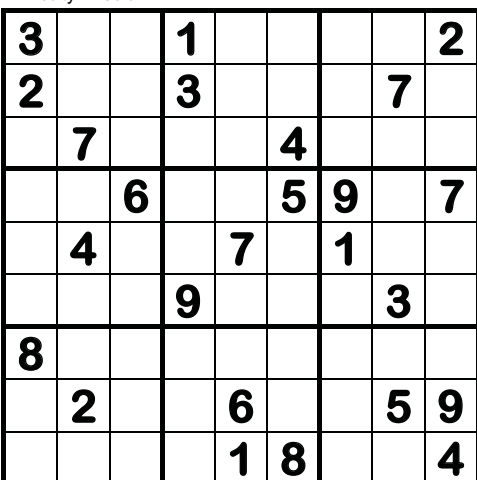
Answers to Previous Crossword:



SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

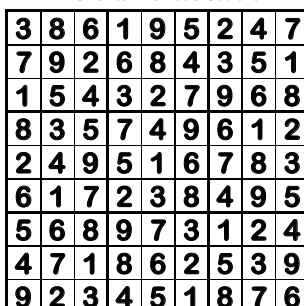
Difficulty: Medium



HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:



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A Taste of Okinawa

The 3 'R's to good eating –
Restaurants,
Reviews & Recipes

4-page pullout

What to eat in Okinawa: The Hawaii of Japan

BY HUI SUM PING,
BYFOOD

What comes to your mind when you think about what to eat in Okinawa? Ishigaki beef? Okinawa ramen? Okinawa pineapple products? In Okinawa, most of the local dishes are very different from other traditional Japanese dishes because of Okinawa's

location and historical background.

Okinawa Prefecture consists of more than 150 islands in the East China Sea, between Taiwan and Japan's Honshu island. Thanks to the tropical climate, vast beaches, and coral reefs, as well as the Ryukyu Kingdom's history, there are lots of delicious dishes in Okinawa during each of the four seasons, from hot food to cold desserts.

VIEW
VIDEO

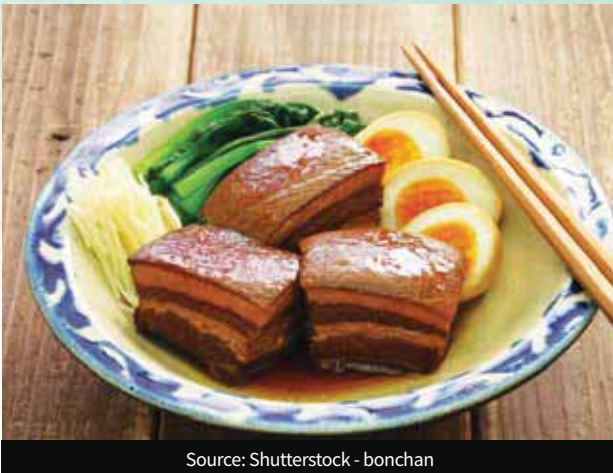


Source: Shutterstock - Chirstumo

1. Okinawa Soba

Okinawa soba, also known as Okinawa ramen, is a kind of noodle that is generally thick like udon, and slightly twisted. It is a local specialty dish of Okinawa Prefecture that uses noodles made in a process derived from Chinese noodle-making. It is easy to find in most local restaurants in different areas of Okinawa.

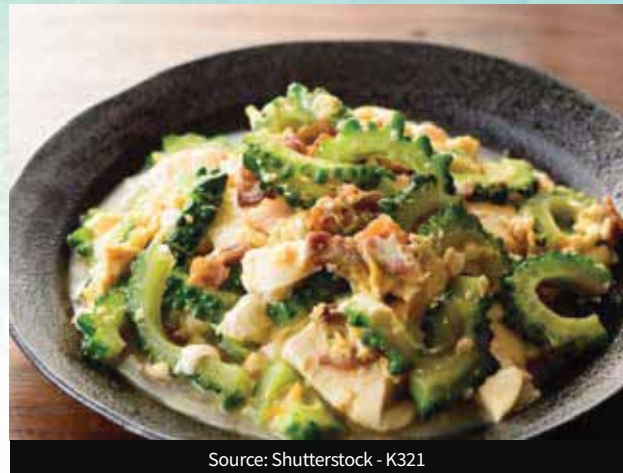
There are also regional styles of Okinawa soba. For example, if you order this Okinawan dish on Ishigaki Island and the other Yaeyama Islands, you'll find they have thin, straight noodles. The Okinawa soba of the Yaeyama Islands is called Yaeyama soba. The buckwheat noodles of Miyako Island are also thin and flat without any shrinkage, and are called Miyako soba because of the unique characteristics of the ingredients and the way they are arranged.



Source: Shutterstock - bonchan

2. Rafute

Rafute (braised "pork cubes") is another local dish of Okinawa Prefecture. It is made with skin-on pork belly stewed in soy sauce and brown sugar. During the Ryukyu Dynasty, the Chinese pork dish "Tong Po Lo" was introduced to the Ryukyu kings, who loved it so much that it became one of their court dishes. One of the characteristics of the dish is the use of awamori (an alcoholic beverage indigenous and unique to Okinawa) in the cooking process. One recommended spot to try this dish is Yuunangii (ゆうなんぎい) located in Naha.



Source: Shutterstock - K321

3. Goya Chanpuru

Goya chanpuru is a kind of Okinawan bitter melon stir fry, mainly made with stir-fried vegetables, pork, and tofu. Bitter melon ("goya") is known as the "king of summer vegetables" and is very rich in vitamins. It is said that one of the reasons why many people in Okinawa live long lives is because they often eat bitter melon, a traditional food in Okinawan cuisine. You can find this Okinawa bitter melon dish easily in most local restaurants in Okinawa. Check out Goya: 3 Easy Japanese Bitter Melon Recipes for Summer to learn how to cook goya chanpuru and other bitter melon dishes!



Source: Shutterstock - Liyy.photo

4. Ishigaki Beef

When it comes to what to eat in Okinawa, Ishigaki beef should be a must-try dish on your list. Ishigaki Island is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Okinawa Prefecture and boasts Ishigaki beef, a brand of beef raised in the warm and natural environment unique to Ishigaki Island.

Ishigaki beef refers to pure Japanese black cattle that have been produced and raised in the Yaeyama area with a certificate of registration and production history. The cattle must have been fattened and managed in the Yaeyama area for approximately 20 months or more after birth. Check out our post on Ishigaki Island for restaurant recommendations, including places to try Ishigaki beef, and things to do!

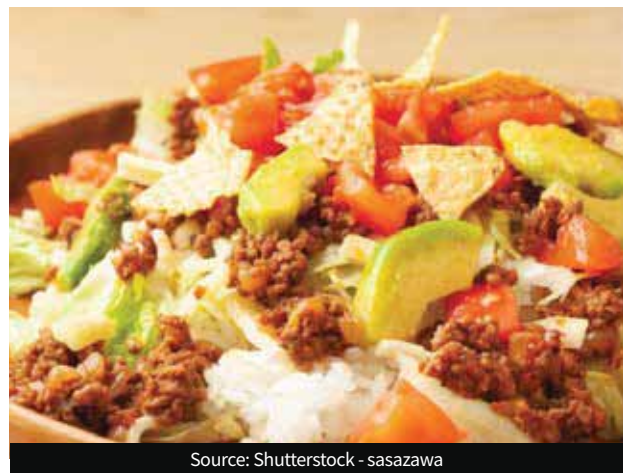


Source: Shutterstock - watson

5. Umibudo

Umibudo means "sea grapes" in Japanese. In Okinawa Prefecture, it has been eaten for a long time and is sometimes called "green caviar" because of its shape. Umibudo is eaten raw, dipped in soy sauce and vinegar as a sauce.

Umibudo is also used as a garnish for sashimi. It is also eaten as umibudo-don (umibudo rice bowl) on a bed of rice topped with sanbaisu vinegar, or as umibudo soba (buckwheat noodles) without seasoning. If marinated in a seasoning solution for a long time, the umibudo beads will shrivel up.



Source: Shutterstock - sasazawa

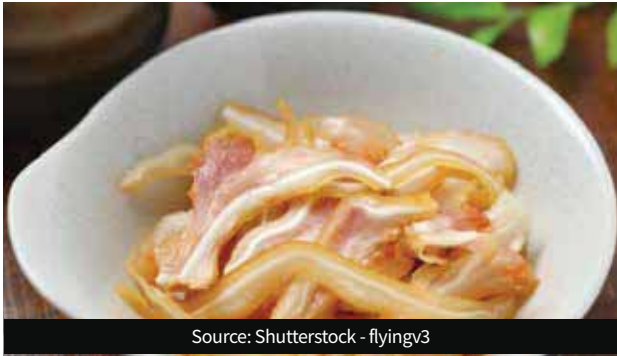
6. Taco Rice

Taco rice is an Okinawan dish consisting of rice topped with ingredients from the Mexican-American style taco dish, served with a tomato-based salsa. It was first created in 1984 in Kanatake Town, Okinawa Prefecture. It has become a popular dish in the prefecture and has been used in school lunches since the 1990s.

The rice is with minced meat or dry curry in the way it is eaten. It is usually served with a tomato-based red salsa, but sometimes tomato ketchup is used in place of salsa at popular restaurants and bento shops.

byFood





Source: Shutterstock - flyingv3



Source: Shutterstock - Princess_Anmitsu



Source: Shutterstock - Liza888

→ 7. Mimiga

Mimiga (pig's ear) is an Okinawan dish made from seasoned, thinly cut pig's ears. The pig's ears are boiled or steamed and cut into strips. Mimiga is eaten as a vinegared dish, often with sauces such as ponzu, vinegared miso, peanut miso, or just salt. It is characterized by the crunchy texture of the cartilage, similar to that of hardened jellyfish. It is high in collagen and is considered beneficial for health and beauty. When mimiga is eaten cold, it is often called mimiga sashimi. The texture is crunchy and chewy.



Browse food experiences in Okinawa (<https://www.byfood.com/okinawa-food-experiences>) and check out our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/JapanbyFood/videos>) to follow along on our food adventures in Japan!



8. Sata Andagi

Sata andagi (Okinawan donuts) is a type of deep-fried sweet from Okinawa Prefecture. It is a spherical fried doughnut made of sweet batter. It is considered to be a good luck snack and is served at weddings and other celebrations. Because of the sugar content, the small size of the air bubbles in the crumb, and the density of the dough, it is a confection that is satisfying and filling, with a crunchy surface. In addition to being made at home, sata andagi are also sold at tempura stores, on street corners, and in markets, especially in Okinawa shopping streets such as Ishigaki City Public Market. When sold in stores, the type made with refined sugar are called "white" and those made with brown sugar are called "black."

9. Okinawa Pineapple Ice Cream / Hyouka

Okinawa is famous for pineapples so there are a lot of pineapple products to try. The pineapple-flavored ice cream or hyouka (ice) are both worth a try. Especially in summer, these pineapple treats are suitable for cooling off in Okinawa's hot weather. In Okinawa, you can taste different flavors such as bitter, sweet, and salty; and enjoy a variety of texture, from popping umibudo to crunchy mimiga. If you are thinking about what to eat in Okinawa, mark these local specialty dishes down so you can try them on your trip to Okinawa!

A Taste of Okinawa

19th Hole

September Specials



Shaved Ice: \$2.50

Choice of strawberry, melon, lemon, mango, grape, peach, or pineapple syrup. Top with condensed milk (.50 cents extra).

Tacos: \$4.75

2 Tacos with ground beef, lettuce, tomatoes, and a mix of cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses. Served with salsa on the side.



Chinese Style Cold Noodles: \$3.75

Chinese noodles topped with tomato wedges, cucumber strips, fried egg, ham, and served with a soy sauce-based broth.

Korean Style Cold Noodles: \$3.75

So-men noodles topped with cucumber slices, soft-boiled egg, kimchee, and served in tsuyu (vinegar, soy sauce, & sugar) sauce.



19th Hole Snack Bar is No. 1

After spending the day golfing 18 rounds at the Banyan Tree Golf Course, swing by the 19th Hole. Enjoy a vast menu including cold noodles and shaved ice, perfect for cooling off from this summer heat. Try the Chinese-style cold noodles topped with tomato wedges, cucumber strips, fried egg, and ham served with soy sauce-based broth. Or try the Korean-style cold noodles featuring tasty so-men noodles topped with cucumber, a soft-boiled egg, and kimchi in Tsuyu, a vinegar, soy, and sugar sauce. Come find out why 19th Hole Snack Bar is number one among golfers!

19th Hole Snack Bar

Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri • 8 am - 3 : 30 pm
Sat, Sun, Holidays • 7 : 30 am - 5 : 30 pm
Closed on Tuesdays



RESTAURANT INFO



Gen a real gem on Okinawa

Offering authentic Japanese and Okinawan cuisine at a reasonable price, Gen was recognized in Stripes' Best of the Pacific 2013 as the best restaurant to experience the local culture on Okinawa. Owner and Head Chef Naoki Tsukayama highly recommends the "Fish Garlic Butter Combo," a popular dish among American customers. Tsukayama and his staff make you feel at home, so stop by and enjoy a delicious meal. Gen is located across from Camp Foster's fire station. Just look for shi-shi dogs on a traditional Okinawan tile roof outside Foster's Fire Station Gate.

RESTAURANT INFO

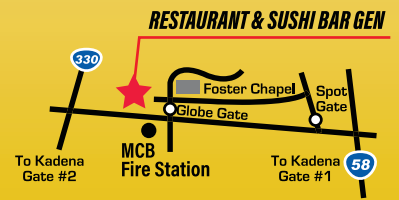
RESTAURANT & SUSHI BAR GEN



We're located just outside Camp Foster Globe & Anchor Gate No.3



Open every day 10:30-22:00
(Last order 21:00)
Cash Only(\$/¥)



A Taste of Okinawa

Transit Café

098-936-5076
www.transitcafe-okinawa.com
@transitcafe.okinawa



Eat here, take it out or Uber Eats!

Thank you for your service! Come to Transit Café and enjoy some of the best food and drinks on Okinawa and relax as the blue sky gradually changes into yellow and orange over the sea. Try our delicious lunch, dinner and dessert options perfect for everyone in your family. Enjoy a seaside meal while hearing the sound of the waves and feeling the sea breeze. Stop by before you "transit" to your next destination! Open daily with takeout available from 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. We are now on Uber Eats! And, try our new Vegan Menu!

RESTAURANT INFO