YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE — Some folks spent their coronavirus lockdown binging on Netflix and home shopping; Navy spouses Sarah Murphy and Amy Dobbins wrote a book.

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The pair dreamed up their brand, “Good Morning Military,” at a picnic table outside their neighboring on-base townhomes.

Yokosuka spouses launch children’s book series

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAITLIN DOORNBIOS
STARS AND STRIPES

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BY HILARY VALDEZ, STRIPES OKINAWA

Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez

Isolation and quarantine

Well, here we are. Social distancing, sheltering-in-place and wearing a mask. Doing our part to help flatten the pandemic curve. Many places are shut down, so it’s not even a choice about whether or not to maintain social isolation. Isolation separates sick people from healthy people. It’s not fun but preventing the spread of infection is necessary and the standard precautions range from least to most difficult. Hand washing, wearing a mask and self-isolation are probably the easiest. Quarantine can be difficult, and can occur in a hospital, at home, a hotel, or a deserted tropical island with palm trees.

 Alone in quarantine

Quarantine has its challenges. For instance, it can test how much contact we can tolerate with family, friends, or relatives. During imposed quarantine, being alone, without companionship, or social contact includes a risk for depression and anxiety. When a stay-in-place quarantine occurs, anxiety can occur that includes feelings of worry, nervousness, or dread. Occasional moments of anxiety are natural and sometimes even productive for your mental health. Moments like this test your character and tolerance. Keep your sense of humor. And in your quiet moments, explore the meaning of your life and what is important to you.

 Social isolation

Here’s the rub. People in relationships need time to themselves. When we are isolated, family interactions intensify. Isolation can be a time for getting close to others. It can be a moment to share ideas and feelings. Time to be transparent: talk about your happiness, grief, fears, anger, and possibly love. Don’t let closeness scare you. It’s a precious moment to bond. Don’t just sit there. Do something. Create something. Find meaning and purpose in this situation.

Being in close quarters is a time to discuss how we think about the situation and how we feel about it. It’s a time to let down our defenses. “Lower the bridge-don’t raise the gate.” Sure, social isolation can increase loneliness if discussions focus on arguing about problems; this could lead to depression. Keep it positive and, if you are alone, reach out to others.

Break down the walls, build bridges

Finding solutions to curb chronic loneliness and isolation is very challenging, especially for older adults. With grandparents and parents! Isolation, when caused by environmental conditions beyond your control, is stressful. Social isolation is a major health risk that can increase the risk of premature death. It’s the feelings of loneliness or sense of social isolation that is mentally and emotionally disruptive. So, step one: stop building emotional walls; and two, start building bridges between one another. As humans, we need social connectivity combined with our need for human loving-kindness. (Have you had a hug today?)

Humans are social creatures and it is inherent to our cognitive and mental health to connect with others. Being conected to others socially is a basic human need, important for well-being and survival. So, while you’re harrumphing around, connecting with others with a gentle smile and a hello are a good start. Or, maybe, a grumpy “Good morning,” with coffee.

Re-frame your attitude

In any case, when the cabin fever starts to set in, re-frame your attitude about social isolation, feeling lonely, or feeling sorry for yourself. Rejoice! If you act happy, or laugh out loud, you’ll be happy. This is called a “paradoxical intention.” Try it. It sounds silly, and it is, but it will make you laugh and shift your attitude.

This temporary moment of isolation is an opportunity for introspection and interpersonal growth. Don’t hold back. Engage in meaningful conversations. Reach out! Have a “tele-dinner” or “tele-coffee” with friends on Zoom or Skype. Don’t sit around eating Humble Pie. Regardless of age, color or gender, we all need about the same amount of love and human connection.

Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. He is an experienced Mental Health professional and Resiliency Trainer. Valdez is a former Marine and has worked with the military most of his career and most recently worked at Camp Zama as a Master Resiliency Trainer. Valdez now has a private practice and publishes books on social and psychological issues. His books are available on Amazon and for Kindle. Learn more about Valdez and contact him at www.hilaryvaldez.com or at InstantInsights@hotmail.com
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“Due to the coronavirus, that’s all we did,” Murphy said. The concept soon became their passion project, and from January to June they dedicated their time to developing the first book. Murphy said she coined the idea and authored the book while Dobbins did its graphic design and launched their website.

“We are two military wives and we live abroad, and this really is just a story of us meeting each other and deciding to build this brand from the ground up,” Murphy said during the book’s virtual launch event. “This is a total backyard project.”

Murphy also recruited a stateside family friend, artist John Molinero, to paint versions of pictures she and Dobbins took of the base for the illustrations, she said.

“We want to give military readers the really special part of our growing up,” Murphy said. “This is a really special part of our growing up.”

The book’s cover features a guided-missile destroyer sailing toward Yokosuka as Mount Fuji rises against a sunset. Other locations featured inside the book include the base’s Chapel of Hope, Sullivans Elementary School, a playground and one of the installation’s gates.

One page features a moving truck, a sight familiar to the military child’s experience with regular permanent change of station moves. Illustrations of Dobbins and Murphy’s families also make appearances in the book.

“They turned their passion project into a professional opportunity,” Micah Murphy said.

The women continue to work together on the “Good Morning Military” brand, leaving their husbands with Saturday mornings to focus at an off-base coffee shop “when we really want to hunker down,” Sarah Murphy said.

“If we even had a weekend alone, we could probably run for president,” she said, jokingly. “We could get so much done – but you know, that’s just women.”

The pair are now developing the second book in their series, “Good Morning Okinawa,” which they plan to publish with profits from the Yokosuka book. They said they plan to expand the series to include military bases across the world and from all service branches.

Purchase your copy of “Good Morning Yokosuka.”

"Good Moring Yokosuka" is the first in a series of children’s books that celebrate life on military bases. Created by a pair of Navy spouses, the book went on sale on July 28.

The inspiration for the 6-inch-by-6-inch board book came from bedtime stories Murphy read to her four children, she said. A variety of children’s books help them learn about the world around them, but the two women found a hole in the market for a book about life on military bases.

“We want to give military children a really unique keepsake that they can share with other people and say, ‘This is a really special part of our growing up,’” Murphy said.

“The story is simple, with little more than a sentence on each page. The book is appropriate for early readers, the pair said, but its novelty makes it a souvenir for all ages.”

The women had planned to launch their new book and brand with an in-person event before coronavirus precautions became necessary, Dobbins said. Instead, they hosted an online reveal via Facebook Live, transforming Murphy’s living room into a makeshift TV studio.

“The women decorated their living room into a makeshift TV studio.

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As another hot summer sun beat down on Okinawa, me and a group of five fellow surfers paddled out off Yomitan in search of our next wave. With only two more hours before the sunset, the clock was ticking. Lucky for us, we had pro surfer Danny Melhado to guide us.

This was my second time surfing and I chose Happy Surfing Okinawa for the one-day surf lesson taught by Melhado. My first attempt off the mainland in Shonan-Enoshima Beach in Kanagawa Pref. was fun, so I knew I wanted to try on my home turf here on the island.

With Melhado’s guidance, the six of us headed to the launchpoint where Melhado would direct us into what would hopefully be a successful ride on a wave.

As I paddled into the water, I began feeling a little nervous. Although the water isn’t very deep, waves were continuously crashing at me, making the advance a little daunting. Compared to the waters at Shonan-Enoshima, the waves at Yomitan seem to come in quicker.

As the others in the group reached the launchpoint, off they went catching waves, one after another. Danny, already at the launchpoint, assisted his students into the oncoming waves.

As I waited for my turn, I could see other students glide above the water with smiles on their faces. Although some of them said they were beginners, from my viewpoint they looked like they had done it before.

Soon, it was my turn. Danny cued me as I transitioned from a paddling position and pushed up to bring my feet to the middle of the board. Before I knew it, however, I was thrown under water, my body too tight and unable to maintain a balance on the surfboard. I laughed it off and paddled back to the launchpoint to keep trying.

As I was paddling against the waves, a concern crossed my mind; What if I just keep falling off, not having even one successful ride? Feeling pressure mounting in my mind, I went for my second try.

This time, however, my body reacted before my mind was crushed by the pressure. Bringing my feet to the center of the board, I found myself in a balance as if it was meant to be. It was probably because I was using a longboard which has good buoyancy. At that moment, my mind stopped thinking and worrying, just letting the wave carry me toward the shore.

Although it had been almost a year since I first tried surfing, muscle memory kicked in and I was reminded again of the unique and exhilarating feeling I experienced during my first attempt at riding a wave.

I went for more attempts with the aim of achieving that feeling and the balance I had already managed. I fell several times, but I did accomplish some decent rides. But then the exhaustion from paddling against the waves began to set in.

After about 10 rides, I felt so tired that I could barely walk on my own. But it felt good feeling the fatigue because I knew it was good exercise. After Kelsi Corriere that joined my first time surfing, I was nervous at first. “Once I got going back here, I was set.”

Melhado’s advice to get to know the local waves and, “Stay calm, just naturally.”

This was my first time surfing and I was more excited around. The feeling of wave on my drive back was great. I’m trying again.

Kudaka.shoji@stripesokinawa.com

Students of Happy Surfing Okinawa have fun catching waves.

Address: 1755, Waki-machi, Yomitan-cho, Okinawa City, Okinawa 902-0141

GPS COORDINATES: N 26.388187, E 127.725465

TEL.: 090-7943-8654

LESSON FEE: 10,000 to 15,000 yen per person (US$ accepted)

EMAIL: danmelhado@aol.com

WEBSITE: www.happysurfingokinawa.com

BLOG: http://happysurfingokinawa.blogspot.com

INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/happysurfingokinawa

YOUTUBE: Happy Surfing Okinawa

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After the session, the others looked tired yet happy. Madeline Prine from Camp Kinser is a regular surfer, but she learned a lot and received good feedback in the session with Melhado. Having someone out there, who knew what they were doing and who was able to give me guidance was very beneficial,” she said, adding that she’s surfed at other locations around the island like Sunabe Seal and Suicide Cliffs.

“I think surfing is one of the sports that are really fun because it’s so challenging,” she said. “When you have to work for something, and you have that payoff of actually wave and going out, standing up and surfing. On top of all, really good work out.”

My second time jumping on a surfboard, and though it was tiring than the first time, it was also more fun this time replaceable thrill of finally catching a wave is one that some already had me thinking of when I’d go back and

Q&A with pro surfer

S&S: Please tell us about yourself, how you started surfing, your passion for surfing, your achievement as a surfer, etc.

MELHADO: I started surfing at the age of 10 in Florida. I competed from the age of 14 and became a member of the United States Surfing Team alongside world surfing champion Kelly Slater. I became an East Coast professional champion and competed worldwide on the World Surf League. After retiring from traveling as a pro surfer, I began teaching surfing in Hawaii. I have been teaching surfing now for 15 years, 10 of which have been here at my surfing school in Okinawa, Happy Surfing Okinawa. I have 37 years surfing experience around the world.

S&S: What is surfing like in Okinawa compared to other popular surf locations?

MELHADO: Okinawa has some world class amazing waves. It’s all reef breaks, which is not much different than Hawaii. The great thing about reef breaks is the wave is mechanical where it breaks in the same place every time and you have a channel of water to paddle back out so you’re not having to push through waves.

Now the hard facts about surfing in Okinawa: It’s very tidal (around 6 feet of water) so most places are not able to surf at low tides. Okinawa is a wonderful place for small wave surfing long boards and beginner surfing.

In the winter or summer typhoon season, we see bigger swells, which tend to be more expert-only waves as they are generally fast and hollow.

S&S: Do you have safety tips for surfing in Okinawa?

MELHADO: As far as surfing safely in Okinawa, you want someone to help teach you about tides, and each break is very different as well as each day is very different. You want to get to know the spots you frequent and have the best local knowledge you can get before just jumping into a new place. You can get so much out of a few guided tours, whether it is beginner school or getting introduced to a new spot.

S&S: Please tell us about your surf school. What should students expect from the program?

SEE WAVE ON PAGE 6
A group photo taken before the class. Photos courtesy of Happy Surfing Okinawa

MELHADO: The lessons are set up a couple days prior via www.happysurfingokinawa.com and vary depending on the best location for your level and the day’s conditions. We meet at the school at a set time according to the tide and the drive time it takes to get set up in the water. We limit lessons to a maximum of 5 people or less, so everyone gets great hands-on training and advice. We have a range of boards and will put you on what is best suited for your size and ability. We also have wetsuits and reef boots if needed.

S&S: You have been to many places as a surfer. Could you give some advice on surf travel?

MELHADO: Surfing has become a popular worldwide sport and it's wonderful to travel and experience all the waves, cultures and foods. There are lots of surf camps and schools around the world. I would always recommend you do your homework. Talk to people who have been there and what their experience was. If you're going to get a surfing lesson, make sure you are being taught from a professional. Just because someone puts up an ad does not mean they are a good teacher. Just like anything, there is a lot of bad apples out there just jumping on the wagon and you will get what you pay for. So do your research before your purchase.

S&S: What other advice do you have for those interested in surfing?

MELHADO: Surfing is a great way to stay fit, to get in touch with nature, and to give yourself time away from the stresses on land. You will be looking to improve your focus, balance, endurance (not muscles) and understanding of the ocean. Grace, finesse, style... smooth like butter. I look forward to sessions with you soon!
Memories with
STARS STRIPES. Pacific
Share your Memories with Stars and Stripes Pacific!
Your photos/stories will appear on the Stars and Stripes Pacific 70th Anniversary Website, 75.stripes.com.

Stripes Sports Trivia
Some already argue Mike Trout is the best player in MLB history. The Angels outfielder has finished top 2 in AL MVP voting in 7 of his first 8 seasons. Quite the start for the 25th pick in the 2009 draft. 25th!!! Your team likely passed on him for someone that’s not as good, but there was one player no one passed on because he went No. 1 overall. Who was he?

Answer

75 YEARS IN THE PACIFIC

Kanji of the week
泡
Awa or hou (foam/bubble)

Language Lesson
It’s scary.
Kowai desu.

Crossword by Margie E. Burke

ACROS
1 Alligator’s abode
2 Undercover device
3 Lift with effort
4 Bamboo screen
5 Edon dweller
6 Send packing
7 Icon
8 Dot on a computer screen
9 Storybook monster
10 Dazzle
11 Sonny who sang
12 Lion’s share
13 Circus site
14 Thrice-fingered sailors
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ACROSS
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Answers to Previous Crossword:
1. Eliston
2. Glass
3. Music
4. Adidas
5. Buffalo
6. Hat
7. Lock
8. Cut
9. Deity
10. Name
11. Quay
12. Can
13. Patent
14. Screw
15. Uplift
16. Tailor
17. Tire
18. New York Area
19. Ticket
20. Bridge
21. Hope
22. Sing
23. Hero
24. Party
25. Woman
26. Office
27. Head
28. Kite
29. Cup
30. Keyhole
31. Book
32. Loss
33. Legend
34. Shorten
35. Cost
36. Hat
37. Tackle
38. Song
39. Blanket
40. Snore
41. Sail
42. Alcoholic
43. Smear
44. Balcony
45. Beach
46. File
47. Live
48. Hide
49. Steak
50. Poem
51. Boise
52. Sweet
53. Place
54. Hill
55. Error
56. Line
57. Sneeze
58. Trout
59. Mount
60. Coach
61. Chair
62. Spot
63. Sparrow
64. Latch
65. Bit
66. Belt
67. Clock
68. Gas
69. Spa
70. Hut
71. Vase
72. Shirt
73. Group
74. Group
75. Group

Welcome to the Pacific magazine!
75 YEARS IN THE PACIFIC

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ANNOUNCING THE BEST OF 2020
Your votes. Your favorites. Your Best of the Pacific.

View the digital edition or download now.

A W E S O M E

S U D O K U

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

Answers to Previous Sudoku:

Copyright 2020 by The Puzzle Syndicate
These are the fluffiest and yummiest pumpkin, plant-based pancakes I’ve made so far! I stumbled upon a similar recipe on Pinterest but then knew I had to make it my own. If you’ve seen my other pancake recipe on the blog you know my normal jam is making veggie-packed pancakes. My kids usually expect to see green pancakes so these Homemade Pumpkin Pancakes made them giddy to try something new and orange!

This recipe only requires one bowl and a whisk and can be made in under 30 minutes. No need to break out the blender for this one!

1 First, you will want to prep the “flax egg” so it can sit and coagulate for 5 minutes. It’s so easy I don’t know why I haven’t been doing this sooner! You simply mix 1 tbsp of flaxseed meal and 3 tbsp of water and let it stand while you prep the other ingredients. (Of course if you’d rather just use an egg then you can easily make that swap.)

2 Second you sift together the dry ingredients:
   - 3 cups flour
   - 1/2 tsp salt

3 Then you will whisk the wet ingredients into the dry:
   - 2 tbsp sugar
   - 1 tbsp baking powder
   - 1 tsp baking soda
   - 1/2 tsp salt
   - 1 tbsp homemade pumpkin pie spice (if you haven’t tried homemade this will take your baking up a notch!)

4 Heat a skillet to medium heat, coat it with a little coconut oil, and scoop about 1/4 cup batter for each pancake. The pancake batter will very thick but this is good! The thick batter will create beautiful, fluffy pancakes. If the batter is just too thick you can try adding another 1/4 cup of milk. The batter will also change in thickness depending on the type of flour you use.

5 Flip the pancakes after a minute or two of cooking on each side and you’ll be ready for a feast! The texture of these pancakes was so perfectly fluffy we could easily eat these year around. In fact, when I ask my kids what they want for dinner at least one of them requests these. :)

6 You can click on the printable below to save the recipe to your Breakfast Pinterest Board or your phone for a shopping list! Please make sure you tell me over on Facebook or Instagram if you enjoyed these Fluffy Pumpkin Pancakes! And show me your photos of the delicious homemade Pumpkin Pancakes!

Allie Whalen is a culinary artist and amateur photographer with a love for the outdoors. She has recently begun sharing her experiences online where she talks about natural and healthy ways to take care of your body and the world around you. She is a military spouse based in Okinawa near Camp Hansen. Allie and her family are excited make beautiful Okinawa their best move yet. There they enjoy the rugged, tranquil life on the northern parts of the island. You can find Allie’s blog at alliemwhalen.com, where she details her travels, basic conservation techniques, home education, and leading a healthy lifestyle.
The 3 ‘R’s to good eating – Restaurants, Reviews & Recipes

8-page pullout
When it comes to food, some of the most unique culinary creations found in Japan are not limited to high-class restaurants, but can be found at the humble convenience store or supermarket. Often they no longer resemble the original inspiration in terms of appearance, but are distinguished by their rich and interesting flavor combinations as well.

When most people think about “bread,” usually a vision of baguettes, rolls or sandwiches comes to mind. In Japan, these common varieties are joined by a unique genre known as souzai pan (“pan” being the word for bread in Japanese). Despite their being found practically everywhere in Japan, since souzai pan blend in with their common counterparts so well, most are not immediately recognized by foreign visitors. But if you know what you’re looking for, you’ll find just to what extent bread is as much a food as it is an artistic medium.

Top 5 weird ways Japan took baked goods to another level

1. PIZZA BREAD

Imagine a handy sized pizza just for 100 yen, but without the messy sauce or drippy cheese – that’s the concept behind pizza bread in Japan! It tastes almost perfectly like a pizza and since it’s wrapped in a pouch, it’s a highly portable snack for when you’re on the go. Occasionally, you may even see a delectable homemade version of this – pizza toast – at local cafes and eateries. Eaten cold or toasted hot, pizza bread can really hit the spot. Varieties can range from the standard tomato sauce with cheese to a more unique tuna and mayonnaise mix.

2. YAKISOBA SANDWICH

Stir-fried noodles in a hot dog bun! When traveling around Japan, you may notice people munching on these at lunchtime, particularly in parks or outside convenience stores. Although the taste of noodle sandwiches may be a little difficult to imagine, there’s definitely some magic happening between the savory yakisoba and light sweetness of the bread that makes them taste unexpectedly great! Not only will you find yakisoba sandwiches in Japan, but also Naporitan – a version containing spaghetti, tomato ketchup or sauce, plus onions, mushrooms and other vegetables.

3. CURRY BREAD

Visitors to Japan are often surprised by the extent to which Japanese love curry. It is possibly one of the all-time favorite foods for Japanese kids and a number of varieties have developed over the decades – including the curry donut. People outside of Japan would probably wonder why Japanese would take a spicy dish and place it inside a sugary pastry. That’s precisely where culinary creativity meets innovation: the curry filling tends to be on the milder side, while the deep-fried shells tend to be savory, resulting in a marvelous marriage of flavor and texture. Once you taste one you’ll love it too!

4. MELON BREAD

When you wander about a convenience store, supermarket or shopping street, you’ll undoubtedly come across a bread with an outer texture reminiscent of a pineapple, often coated with sugar granules. This is the almighty melon bread that’s very popular as a treat for kids and adults alike. Not only does it have a light honeydew melon flavor, but it has a somewhat crispy crust and tender inside. These days there are varieties made using maple syrup or whipped cream which are especially popular with kids. Particularly in the cooler months, shops may even serve these delectable rolls hot – a recommended indulgence indeed.

5. CHOCOLATE CORNET BREAD

Many dessert breads in Japan resemble their namesake, and the chocolate cornet is no different. A simple smooth, lightly sweet bread that’s filled with thick nutty chocolate custard, chocolate coronets are popular as a breakfast item or as a mid-afternoon sweet at work. These yummy treats are equally enjoyed for dessert or as an evening snack.
When you wake up in the morning, what’s the first thing on your mind? For many, the answer is simple. It’s coffee.

It’s a given that this intoxicating beverage is adored, but like the sought-after yet elusive utopia of Atlantis, does the perfect brew actually exist? We checked out what a few professionals had to say on this topic, and came up with some suggestions.

Tips for Getting the Perfect Cup:

Clean Your Equipment Often
You want your equipment clean and fresh, free of all bacteria or other contaminants that add up with use.

Check the water’s temperature
The Black Bear Micro Roastery— an authentic roastery that’s dedicated to researched quality in beans — made an online guide that discusses the issue of water. It mentions that, ideally, you want your water to be between 195-205°F (91-96°C). It’s essential to get just the right temperature. Water that’s even slightly too hot will burn the coffee, and water that’s a touch too cool can’t properly extract a bean’s flavour.

Use quality water
The Black Bear’s Roastery guide also suggests that the water shouldn’t add anything extra to your coffee’s flavour. A lot of the times tap water can contain chlorine or other substances that affect the taste. Choose filtered or bottled water as an option.

Bean freshness matters
In his brew guide, Garret Oden, coffee expert at Yellow House Coffee in Texas, reminds us that as soon as beans are ground and exposed to oxygen, the freshness declines quickly. To ensure prime quality in your sipping experience, buy coffee beans in smaller amounts and grind them day by day. This grind-as-you routine keeps your coffee as true to quality taste as possible.

Use the pour-over method of brewing
The pour-over is a hand brew method of pouring warm water over the coffee grounds. Grounds are placed in a filter that is held in a cone, such as the Kalita Wave or Chemex. In an interview with Real Simple Living—a website that provides solutions for everyday life—barista champion Katie Cargiulo explained that the pour-over is her favorite brew method. It offers a combination between an even saturation of grounds and removing of sediment, leaving a strong yet clean brew.

Follow the tips above, and your patience will pay off with a divine cup of homemade joe.
1. **NORITAMA**
The classic furikake rice seasoning choice

Marumiya is one of the biggest names when it comes to furikake, boasting its own extensive “furikake series.” The Noritama flavor combines nori (dried seaweed) with tamago (egg) and is the most popular long seller among colorful furikake products.

Japanese people immediately recognize the characteristic taste of the subtly sweet egg granule and the aromatic shredded seaweed, recognizable from the very first bite ever taken.

The nori is a blend of seaweed from various production areas while the egg granule also features two different kinds of flavors – for what seems like a simple furikake, there is a lot of commitment inside the package.

Since its release in 1960, the Noritama furikake rice seasoning has been renewed a total of eight times, reducing the salt content and the seasoning according to changes in both the tastes and lifestyle of modern consumers.

It’s a famous best-seller that ranks high in popularity for decades! With a slow, careful evolution in accordance with the taste of the time, Noritama provides a classic, satisfying flavor to enhance your rice with.

The shredded seaweed and yellow egg of this furikake looks colorful!

Both the popularity and the taste hasn’t changed in 50 years and counting.

2. **YUKARI**
Aromatic, carefully selected red shiso

The “Yukari” furikake of red shiso (beefsteak plant) is a staple seasoning on tables all around Japan. It is characterized by its vivid color and unmistakable aroma, and the more Yukari red shiso varieties the company behind this famous product develops, the more commitment to quality goes into the process.

Since Yukari’s release in 1970, there have been a variety of flavors on top of plain beefsteak plant: ume (Japanese apricot), sesame, seaweed, ginger, and so on. Especially “pen-type” furikake has gained a lot of attention, serving the sprinkles in a literal pen to be shaken out, easy to carry and fun to use.

Yukari is also a female name in Japan and carries the meaning of “fortune” and “destiny,” coming from the ancient belief that purple grass is something auspicious.

Red shiso furikake has a characteristic purple color and rich aroma.

3. **TARAKO OCHAZUKE**
The original flavor of rice with tea

Ochazuke is a traditional Japanese dish that features hot tea, broth, or water being poured over a bowl of rice topped with various ingredients.

In 1952, a company called Nagatanien developed an instant ochazuke, instantly successful as a simple and quick dish.

The Tarako Ochazuke is based on a soy sauce infused with the umami flavor of scallops and bonito while also featuring little arare rice crackers made of rice and seaweed, the staple ingredients of ochazuke.

Of course, the tarako (spicy cod Roe) flavor is wonderfully rich and brings a nice balance to the mix.

4. **POKÉMON FURIKAKE MINI PACK**
Great for lunch boxes, not only for kids!

These handy little bags are perfect for lunch boxes. One pack of Marumiya’s Pokémon Furikake Mini Pack is just right for one serving of rice.

It is an assortment of 20 individual bags that comes in four different flavors that are especially beloved by Japanese children: egg, salmon, bonito soy sauce with finely chopped bonito flakes, and vegetables.

Different Pokémon are printed on the little bags, so this flavorful rice topping is a highlight for fans of all ages! Extra calcium is added as well, giving you a nutritious boost!

There's plenty of wakame seaweed and salmon in the bag!

5. **MAZEKOMI WAKAME SAKE**
An authentically Japanese flavor with seaweed and salmon

Another classic dish is wakame gohan, blending wakame seaweed with rice.

Marumiya’s “Mazekomi Wakame” furikake series lets you enjoy this staple rice dish with a simple yet flavorful bag. The rich umami flavor is rich in the ingredients, characterized by being delicious even if the rice has cooled down.

The sake (flavor) has received an upgrade, adding even more salmon to the mix and thus making for a richer, saltier umami experience.

In general, the Mazekomi Wakame series comes in 24 varieties, including limited and premium flavors such as bamboo shoots or grilled eel.

Pour some hot water over the furikake rice bowl and enjoy a savoury broth.

6. **OTONA WASABI**
A flavor geared to adults!

Nagatanien created a furikake palate of adults called “Otona” on which flavors sharply declined people older than 12 years.

This has led to a bag that pairs nori seaweed by using freeze-caredly chosen ingredients that among adults such as wasabi, stay away from.

That’s what differentiates this seeweed from other sodicities.

Since its release, this has been a hit to overcome this time the boggling adults.

With seaweed, this sales research net sockeye has earned 99% of years.

This rice topping boasts the crispy and fresh flavor of seaweed.
**FURIKAKE RICE SEASONINGS**

H ave you heard of Japan’s furikake? In Japanese, furikake means “to sprinkle over.” Furikake are seasonings of various dried ingredients such as egg, seaweed, or sesame, made to top a bowl of plain white rice. In Japan, it is common to enjoy rice just as it is while the West knows it as a side to go with something else, and this is why furikake is rather prominent in Japanese daily life. A simple bag of furikake rice seasoning adds a flavorful kick to every bowl, inspired by dishes and ingredients such as eggs and seaweed, sukiyaki, and cod roe!

Try this fun way to enjoy rice for yourself with our 10 recommended furikake rice seasoning choices!

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**SUKIYAKI**

**Beef hot pot as a unique seasoning**

Launched in 1963, Marumiya’s “Sukiyaki” furikake celebrates its 55th birthday in 2018. Sukiyaki is a beef hot pot and one of the Japanese dishes that is fairly well-known around the world. When this Japanese rice seasoning launched, beef was fairly expensive, so this product was developed to let people enjoy the flavor easily and affordably at home. It was the very first meat furikake back then and the beef flakes were even patented. To commemorate its 55th anniversary, the original packaging is on sale as well.

The base color of the Japanese furikake package is white.

**MINION FURIKAKE MINI PACK**

**Gentle flavors for kids**

There’s hardly anyone who is not familiar with the Minions of the Despicable Me movies. These Minions are the stars of the “Minion Furikake Mini Pack” by Marumiya, a collaboration that makes for a wonderful souvenir for the little ones at home. Egg, salmon, bonito soy sauce with finely chopped bonito flakes, and vegetables are the four flavors of this mix, especially loved by children. All of them hold back on saltiness and instead focus on a gentle flavor after the most recent renewal.

The Minions are extremely popular in Japan.

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**WHERE TO BUY JAPANESE FURIKAKE RICE SEASONINGS?**

You can find a selection of Japanese furikake rice seasonings at most supermarkets and even convenience stores.

Keio Store is a supermarket chain that is all about the daily life around Keio Electric Railway’s lines. As of right now, there are 33 individual stores including the affiliates Kitchen Court and Keio Store Express, all of them loved by the locals.

We hunted for the best furikake rice seasonings at the Sakuragaoka Store, right next to Sakuragaoka Station, and also recommend its other diverse product selection, ranging from fresh foods to alcohol and miscellaneous goods.

Keio Seiseki Sakuragaoka
Address: 1-11-1, Sekido, Tama-shi, Tokyo, 206-0011
NEAREST STATION: Seiseki-sakuragaoka Station (Keio Line), right next to the station
PHONE NUMBER: 042-337-2511
HOURS: 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. (2F is open until 9:00 p.m.)
Closed: January 1, irregularly twice a year

*This information is from the time of this article’s publication.

*Prices and options mentioned are subject to change.

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**MAZEKOMI WAKAME SHIRASU**

Rich flavors of both the sea and the land

This is another recommended furikake of Marumiya’s “Mazekomi Wakame” series. Shirasu are boiled young white sardines, sweetfish, or herrings that are often used as a topping for rice, tofu, and so on.

The back of the package of this furikake also features recipe ideas, such as adding the flavorful mix to pasta.

This furikake is rich in calcium and comes with plenty of shirasu.

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**MUTENKA FURIKAKE MINI**

No colorings, no preservatives, good for the body

These furikake are free of any additives and the set of 20 bags comes in five different varieties: ume with bonito, bonito, egg, small fish, and nori seaweed.

Tanaka Foods, the company behind this product, is a long-established manufacturer from Hiroshima, founded in 1901. It’s also a pioneer of furikake seasoning for a single serving, releasing “mini furikake” way ahead of the competition in 1975. Without any colorings, preservatives, or other additives, one of these bags promises an authentic and natural flavor experience, completely relying on the taste and aroma of the ingredients alone.

Especially the rich sesame fragrance positively stands out. Even toddlers can enjoy this product without worries.

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**LIVE JAPAN**

FuriKake rice seasonings
Your tastebuds sing!
Say cheers with these 18 popular Japanese drinks

BY JAMES KRICK

Japan is of course a country that is famed for its cuisine. Across the globe, Japanese food is revered for its depth, flavor and its subtlety. Ask anyone from New York to Hong Kong about sushi or ramen and you will no doubt receive an enthusiastic response! However, for many first time visitors to the country, Japanese drinks remain something of a mystery. Today, we will look at some of the most famous and unique Japanese drinks that are just as interesting as the food and can be the perfect compliment to your meal.

Japan is a country where both the traditional and the modern live in tandem. This is an aspect of the culture that can also be seen even when we look at what people drink in modern Japan. We start with perhaps the most important and famous Japanese drink of all, the humble green tea.

Green tea

Green tea first originated in China and legend states that the first green tea seeds were brought to Japan by two Buddhist monks, Saicho and Kukai, in the early 9th century. These seeds were then planted in Uji, near Kyoto, which then became the birthplace of Japanese green tea (specifically Uji matcha) in Japan.

Today, there are about 20 different variations of green tea that exist in Japan. The green tea flavor has also become a symbol of the country and can be found in everything from Kit Kats to soap! However, nothing truly symbolizes the importance of green tea to Japanese culture more than the traditional tea ceremony, chado (茶道) or “the way of tea.” This ritual with Zen Buddhist origins, which uses the matcha tea variation of green tea, has come to represent Japanese culture to the outside world and is all centered around the presentation and enjoyment of the humble beverage.

Royal milk tea

In keeping with the different teas of Japan, another unique drink that is very popular amongst Japanese people is Royal Milk Tea. This blend of “English” tea (a combination of Assam and Darjeeling leaves) is brewed and then a healthy measure of milk is added. This can then be sweetened with either milk or honey to taste. This is a drink that can be enjoyed either hot or cold and is a year-round favorite.

Bubble tea

Originally an imported drink from Taiwan that is a fairly recent fixture to menus in the big cities of Japan, bubble tea has now become a massive aggregate! For a particularly decadent twist, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream for a melon soda float.

Aloes drinks

Okinawa is famous for many different tropical fruits and vegetables. Perhaps one of the best known is its aloe vera plant, which is cultivated year round. The plant contains over 200 active compounds and vitamins and is acknowledged by the people of Okinawa as one of their secrets to long life! Aloe vera juice and aloe yogurt drinks are now among the most popular drinks in Japan and are widely available.

Melon soda

An absolute favorite amongst young Japanese high school students, melon soda is widely available and is a particular treat at karaoke bars and other places where students congregate! For a particularly decadent twist, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream for a melon soda float.

Flavored soy milk

Soy milk, a natural byproduct of making tofu by grinding soybeans, has long been an alternative for dairy milk in Japan. It is a beverage that again holds a place of special importance in Japanese cuisine, and is used to make yuba or the skin from boiled soy milk. It is also used as the base for a special winter stew called tonyu nabe (soy milk hotpot). However, in recent years the popularity of soy milk as a stand alone beverage has soared with many flavored options such as banana, sakura, and of course matcha! There are even limited edition flavors such as pudding-flavored soy milk!

Yakult

Today a drink that is famous the world over, this probiotic, fermented milk beverage was first invented by the renowned Japanese scientist, Dr. Minoru Shirota in 1935. This small but mighty drink has been scientifically proven to help maintain a healthy stomach and increases the amount of good bacteria in your system. The drink is so popular in Japan that not only does it come in different flavors, but it is delivered from door-to-door to offices each day and it even has a baseball team (the Yakult Swallows) named after it!

Calpis

Calpis is a non-carbonated soft drink with a very unique taste. It has a somewhat sweet and milky texture and a light, slightly sour aftertaste not unlike Yakult. It is a drink that is popular with all age groups and is found throughout the country. Interestingly, Calpis is based on the ancient Mongolian drink airag, which the inventor of Calpis, Kainu Mishima, tasted during an expedition to Mongolia.

Pocari Sweat

In the summer months, Japan can be punishingly hot and humid, so it is important to stay hydrated! Pocari Sweat is the drink (with a somewhat off-putting name) that will help you do just that! Strange name aside, Pocari Sweat is in fact a non-carbonated isotonic sports drink that contains important minerals and electrolytes that keep you hydrated and well-supplied with nutrients. The drink is available in convenience stores across Japan and is a favorite with athletes and sports teams.
A summer favorite which is available at all matsuri (festivals) and is one of the most uniquely Japanese drinks on this list (despite first being introduced to Japan by a Scottish pharmacist during the Meiji era), Ramune is a carbonated soda for a refreshing summer treat. Sometimes referred to as “marble soda” abroad, to open this beverage you must push the marble that seals it into the narrow neck of the bottle.

Ramune

A staple of the izakaya, shochu is a clear alcoholic drink that can be distilled from a variety of ingredients such as sweet potatoes, barley, or rice. Regional variations of shochu can be drunk all over Japan and this is a very popular drink amongst salarymen and women during work parties.

Shochu

Umeshu or Japanese plum wine is a sweet, plum-flavored liqueur with a rich taste and a honey-colored look. This alcoholic favorite can be drunk straight but is also delicious when mixed with soda water or even with a splash of water.

Umeshu

Amazake is perhaps the most unique drink on this list and has one of the longest histories. This sweet drink is made with fermented rice, and it can be alcoholic or non-alcoholic. Sometimes it is made with the sake kasu that’s left over from the Japanese sake brewing process, giving it a delicious tang. It can be served either hot or cold but is more traditionally enjoyed hot in winter to warm up winter revelers through on the chilly evenings. This drink is also a traditional New Year’s beverage that is offered at temples and shrines during hatsumode.

Amazake

Coffee

While Japan may be seen by many as the nation of green tea, make no mistake Japan is also a coffee drinker’s paradise. The most popular drink in the world after water, coffee can be found absolutely everywhere in Japan, from convenience stores and vending machines to tiny shops run by coffee purists who sell some of the most expensive and rare coffees in the world. Visitors to Japan should not miss the opportunity to sample a cup of one of Japan’s drip coffees which is the preferred method of brewing across the country.

Coffee

Much like the growth of Japanese whisky, Japanese craft beer has also experienced a real boom in recent years. There are now many different craft beer pubs dotted around the country that offer some fantastic Japanese interpretations on beers such as IPAs and stouts but also some truly unique Japanese flavors such as beers brewed with sakura or yuzu!

Japanese craft beer

Japan’s diary coffee is the preferable method of brewing across the country.

Japanese sake (Nihonshu)

The grandfather of Japanese alcoholic drinks, nihonshu, or sake as it is known outside Japan, is a rice wine that is made from rice, rice koji, and water. It is believed that sake is the oldest alcoholic drink in Japan and there is evidence of sake consumption dating back to the third century! This is a drink that can be served cold in summer and hot in winter and certainly should not be missed by any visitor to Japan. Sake has a huge number of different varieties and regional specialties. You can also find a great number of specialty sake bars that will give you the opportunity to try a wide variety.

Japanese whisky

In 2014, the world of whisky experienced a shock when, for the first time in history, a Scottish whisky was defeated and a Japanese whisky was named the best in the world. Japan takes its whisky very seriously indeed and this can be seen with the wide and varied selection of local brands available. For those who are very interested in the process, the major Japanese distilleries also offer guided tours and sampling!
Emery Lanes Strikes Café rolls out food special

Emery Lanes Bowling Complex is a hidden gem for food specials! Whether it is one of their unique burgers of the month, or their famous grilled cheese, you should stop by on your lunch break! But did you know, they also have Okinawan local favorite Soba noodles? Every Thursday Strikers Café features the local dish for the bargain price of $6.50. Soba noodles are unique to Okinawa! The thin noodle dish is served up hot with a delicious broth, pork and scallions. A great way to experience local treats right here on Kadena!

A Taste of Okinawa

Taste the Hawaiian vibe at Hale Noa Café

Owned by a chef in Hawaii, Hale Noa Café has been attracting a wide-range of foreign customers. With its Hawaiian vibe, Hale Noa serves up the some of the best of the 50th state's favorite foods. We choose the fresh-est ingredients for the best taste made from scratch. Enjoy Macadamia Nut Pancakes, Hawaiian Bowl, Fresh Poke Bowl and more! Hale Noa's fluffy French Toast with berries and crème brûlée sauce is to die for! Afterwards, wash it all down with one of our healthy and home-made smoothies. Start your day with a superior breakfast at Hale Noa Café.