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# OKINAWA

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## USO Okinawa salutes US, Japanese honorees

USO OKINAWA

In 1971, USO Okinawa held its inaugural premiere event – The USO Okinawa Service Salute Gala. Forty-nine years later, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization was determined to carry on the time-honored bilateral tradition of recognizing seven service men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Japan Self-Defense Forces for their outstanding professionalism, leadership, service to country, and embodiment of the USO's eight core values. These core values include Mission First, Do the Right Thing,

Respect, Excellence, Collaboration, Accountability, Gratitude, and Innovation.

Traditionally this event is a black-tie, VIP event, with nearly 400 guests, featuring entertainment, a Kagami Biraki ceremony, dinner, and dancing. However, this year these elite service members were honored by the USO, high-ranking officials, and their closest peers in small gatherings. They join an elite group of men and women who are the best of the best.

**The 49th Annual Service Salute Honorees for 2020 include:**

- Staff Sergeant Fukuhara Kotaro,

- Japan Air Self-Defense
- Sergeant First Class Nakagami Masashi, Japan Ground Self-Defense
- Petty Officer 3rd Class Inoue Masayuki, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
- Sergeant Garrett Rookstool, United State Marine Corp
- Staff Sergeant Joseph Franck, United States Air Force
- HM2 Queena Brosas, United States Navy
- Sergeant Phernis Fichuo, United States Army

service helps to preserve peace and prosperity in this region. It is because of their service that citizens of both Japan and the United States can enjoy unprecedented freedoms. We could not miss these opportunities to thank them in 2020, no matter the challenging circumstances."

During the Japan Self Defense ceremony Sergeant First Class Nakagami expressed to the audience of his peers and leadership how much this honor meant to him.

"The USO supports the heart and life of soldiers and their

"These service members represent the best of the best of their service and their country," Phil VanEtten, USO Okinawa Area Director, said. "Their unselfish

SEE USO ON PAGE 5

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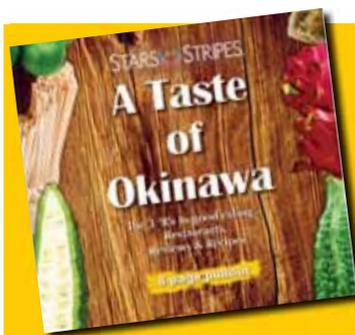
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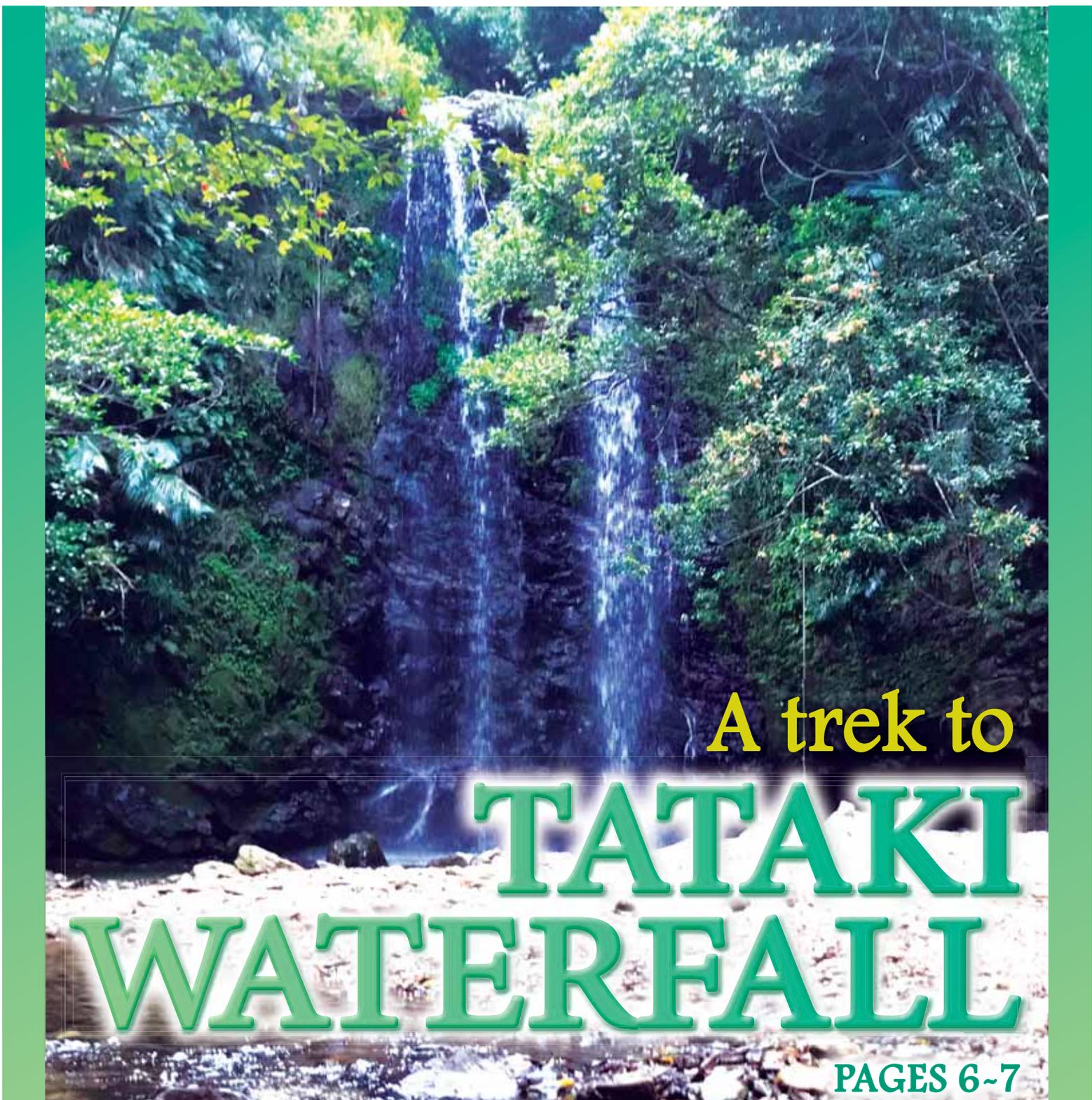
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A trek to

# TATAKI WATERFALL

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# OKINAWA MARINE HONORED FOR HEROICS

## He helped save life of fellow Marine threatening suicide

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: January 21, 2021

CAMP FOSTER — An Okinawa-based Marine who helped rescue a comrade threatening suicide in 2018 has received a medal for his lifesaving actions.

Sgt. Brandon Antoine, a 3rd Marine Division radio operator, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal during a ceremony at Camp Courtney on Jan. 13, according to a Marine statement. Division commander Maj. Gen. James Bierman presided over the ceremony.

The New Orleans native was awakened by a commotion early on the morning of June 16, 2018, according to a copy of his citation. He rushed outside Camp Courtney's Barracks 4433 and saw an intoxicated Marine threatening to take his own life by jumping off a fourth-floor air duct.

The air duct was slick with rain and Antoine feared the Marine might slip and fall to his death even if he did not jump, the citation said.

Antoine ran up four flights of stairs and helped Marines pry open a locked bathroom door, according to the citation. He then instructed two Marines to hold



Sgt. Brandon Antoine, a 3rd Marine Division radio operator, receives the Navy and Marine Corps Medal from division commander Maj. Gen. James Bierman at Camp Courtney on Jan. 13. Photo by Ujian Gosun, U.S. Marine Corps

his legs and waist as he leaned out from the window. He hung upside-down 45 feet above the ground for over 10 minutes.

"Despite the risk of severe injury to himself, Sergeant Antoine demonstrated poise and resolve as he kept the Marine calm and communicated

with the rescue team below, providing the fire department time to raise their bucket and recover the Marine," the citation said. "By his courageous and prompt actions in the face of great personal risk, Sergeant Antoine reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is the highest non-combat decoration for heroism that is awarded by the service.

The award took over two years to process due to a high level of scrutiny placed upon recommendations, 3rd Marine Division spokesman Maj. Kurt Stahl wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes.

"The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is not an award that is taken lightly, and it requires approval from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, which demonstrates just how heroic Sgt. Antoine's actions were the day he saved the life of a fellow Marine," he wrote.

Antoine declined to be interviewed for this story for "personal reasons," Stahl said.

Bierman praised Antoine's heroism in a statement emailed to Stars and Stripes.

"When faced with a dangerous and unfolding situation, he conducted himself in the best traditions of the Marine Corps," Bierman wrote. "His actions were bold and decisive; he didn't hesitate to risk his own life to save a fellow Marine. It was an honor to be part of the ceremony in which he was recognized."

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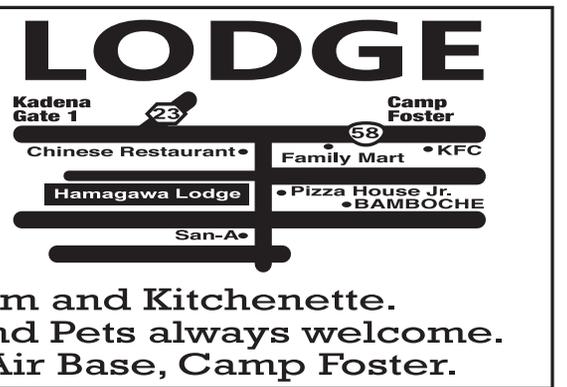
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U.S. Marines, sailors and Boy Scouts volunteered to beautify the Kakazu Ridge Park by fertilizing cherry trees and donating benches in Ginowan on Nov. 14.

# Beautifying Kakazu Takadai Park

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
CPL. BRENNAN BEAUTON  
MARINE CORPS INSTALLATIONS PACIFIC

GINOWAN – U.S. Marines, sailors and Boy Scouts volunteered to beautify the Kakazu Ridge Park by fertilizing cherry trees and donating benches on Nov. 14.

The event was coordinated by Jacob Preston, a life scout and son of U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. John R. Preston, the Marine Aircraft Group 36 sergeant major. Preston’s goal was to help the city of Ginowan and complete his Eagle Scout project. An Eagle Scout project is an opportunity for a scout member of the Boy Scouts of America to demonstrate leadership of others while performing a project that benefits his community. Preston reached out to Ginowan City and Marine Corps officials to bring his culminating scout



their growth. Navy Seabees assisted in the construction of the benches that were to be donated. Marines and the Boy Scouts cleaned up any trash that was found and pulled weeds from the towering staircase that leads to a picture perfect view of the city of Ginowan.

U.S. Marine Corps Col. Henry Dolberry Jr., the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, said he could not be more proud to be a part of the Ginowan family and to help out the city. Recently, MCAS Futenma Marines also assisted in beautifying Ginowan Beach.

“We are always going to assist in any way possible to make our partnership stronger,” said Dolberry. “We are constantly trying to figure out ways to do more stuff like this in a COVID-19 environment and we will do many more events with the city of Ginowan in the future.”

The Marine Corps regularly participates in community relations events throughout Okinawan communities ranging from English camps to beach cleanups.

project to life.

Kakazu Takadai Park is just minutes from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and is popularly known as one of several historic World War II battle sites on the island.

“Ginowan planted these cherry trees in 2018 as a sign of peace between the Americans

and Japanese because this was the one the first major battle sites of Okinawa,” said Preston. “The trees outgrew where they were planted, so I wanted to re-beautify the area.”

Keigo Wada, the deputy mayor of Ginowan, showed his appreciation to Preston and all those who volunteered their

time early on a Saturday morning.

“There are a lot of people that visit this park to study the past and history,” said Wada. “I really see the Boy Scouts effort and contribution today and I thank you for that.”

Fertilizer was placed at the stems of the trees to aid in



PO2 Kody Schwartz constructs a bench at Kakazu Takadai Park.



# USO: Military, community leaders recognized

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

families,” Nakagami said. “The USO is a marvelous organization!! Thank you to all people who cooperated with my activities so far. I know there are things a person cannot do alone, but with the help of others, many great accomplishments can be made. I hope that in the future, we’ll continue to cooperate with the four branches of the U.S. military to maintain a great relationship and together we can resolve difficult situations around the world. My dream is to make everyone who meets me smile. I think, smiles make peace. Smiles lead to peace.”

“We’ve been waiting for today. Unfortunately, we cannot share in celebration with the Americans who received the same award.” Nakagami added. “And we cannot take advantage of this opportunity to promote relations between the US and Japan provided by the USO. But, I’m grateful for holding this wonderful ceremony under this situation of COVID-19.”

The 2020 honorees came from a wide array of backgrounds, but all demonstrated both dedication and strong character.

**Marine Sergeant Garrett Rookstool** demonstrated his leadership by working as a Satellite Communications Operator with Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan. Due to his superior professionalism, the Commanding General, 3d Marine Division requested Rookstool by name to serve as his driver. The Marine Corps also recently selected him to be a drill sergeant stationed in San Diego.

According to his command, Rookstool epitomized the USO core values. He exemplified the concepts of “Mission First” and “Excellence” by consistently training nearly 100 Marines over the course of a year and ensuring their proficiency was of the highest degree. Accumulating over 50 hours of dedicated volunteer service, Sergeant Rookstool displayed the values of “Gratitude” and “Respect” for American and Okinawan communities. Sergeant Rookstool created an environment within his unit that upheld a high ethic of teamwork and ensured that himself, his peers, and his leadership accepted responsibility for group failures and praised individuals for their successes—through this, the values of “Collaboration” and “Accountability” were fostered within himself and within his unit.

“It has been a journey to get where I am now, but an important aspect to remember is that you always have to be willing to adapt to new changes, personalities, and always seek the challenges in life (no matter how uncomfortable or hard) to be a successful individual and or leader,” Rookstool said



## The 49th Annual Service Salute Honorees for 2020

 <b>Staff Sergeant Fukuhara Kotaro,</b> Japan Air Self-Defense	 <b>Sergeant First Class Nakagami Masashi,</b> Japan Ground Self-Defense	
 <b>Petty Officer 3rd Class Inoue Masayuki,</b> Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force	 <b>Staff Sergeant Joseph Franck,</b> United States Air Force	 <b>HM2 Queena Brosas,</b> United States Navy
 <b>Sergeant Garrett Rookstool,</b> United State Marine Corps		 <b>Sergeant Phernis Fichuo,</b> United States Army

in his acceptance speech. “My step-father once said, “to beat out the competition and allow growth you have to be willing to make the mistakes first, figuring it out and remembering it, will make you successful over others and give you the ability to teach them how to do it correctly so they become successful as well.” Needless to say, it is the leaders in our lives and our ability to challenge ourselves that make us who we are.”

“While in the Marine Corps I have lived everyday remembering my three Ps; Purpose, Proficiency, and Prosperity. Living your life to the fullest by understanding what your purpose is. For me the purpose is just being a Marine, not a specific MOS or doing a specific task or goal, I just love being a Marine and the opportunities that come with it. One of which is leading and teaching others to success. Proficiency find your purpose and learn everything and anything that will make you as successful as possible with your it, and then don’t stop learning and developing. Prosperity, the drive through proficiency will create success. This will bring joy and happiness into your life when you excel at your purpose. Creating that prosperity with each goal will in-turn allow for a drive towards the next goal! Your purpose in life is just that, YOURS. you pick, you make

it happen. Another P to hold tightly is Passion; find what you love to do and cherish it, give passion to others no matter who and what or the way they treat you.”

**Staff Sergeant Joseph Franck** is the client system supervisor for the 390th Intelligence Squadron, 55th Wing, Kadena Air Base. His was honored by his leadership as they stated that he exemplified all the USO core values during his 632 hours of volunteer service to the USO. He believes in “Mission First” as demonstrated by the 51 hours he spent assisting 4,000 passengers with 276,000 pounds of cargo arriving on the Patriot Express. SSgt Franck upheld the values of “Collaboration” and “Gratitude” when he organized a USO Spring BBQ where 10 personnel prepared and served food to 300 service members.

SSgt Franck displayed “Innovation” and deep “Respect” for local monks when he contributed 24 hours toward a Department of Defense cultural immersion event. Furthermore, he demonstrated “Accountability” and “Respect” as a USO representative when he worked the front desk, cleaned facilities, stocked, and inventoried items for 269 hours which supported DoD personnel and their families serving abroad. Finally, he tirelessly demonstrated “Doing

the Right Thing” and “Excellence” when he prepared and served food for DoD personnel during 12 events.

**HM2 Queena Brosas** is a Field Medical Service Technician at Marine Wing Support Squadron 171, Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, in MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. Her leadership stated that she has exemplified the USO core values through her selfless efforts to support others and communities. She embodies “Mission First” and “Collaboration” as demonstrated by her volunteerism in Sri Lanka, where she worked with local doctors to provided healthcare for 600 patients. Exemplifying “Gratitude” and “Respect,” she devoted 4 hours to a cross-cultural exchange with Indonesian college students. A model of “Innovation” and “Doing the Right Thing,” she served 42 hours as a choir member at MCAS Iwakuni Chapel and dedicated 15 hours at Vacation Bible School in support of 10 children. A Disaster Action Team member for MCAS Iwakuni Red Cross, she displayed true “Excellence” by preparing for natural disasters and operational mishaps. Always thinking of others, she displayed “Accountability” by continuing to volunteer at the MCAS Iwakuni USO and has log 26 hours, where she put together welcome package bags for

service members and families.

**Sergeant Phernis Fichuo** is a desk sergeant for the United States Army Garrison (USAG) Okinawa PMO and a team leader for the 247th Military Police Detachment here on Torii Station, Japan. His command nominated SGT Fichuo based on these eight USO core values in his daily life. He exemplifies dedication to the soldiers and unit by going above and beyond the normal responsibilities. His showed this dedication by sponsoring 10 newly arrived soldiers to Okinawa and ensuring they were taken care of during their relocation process. He built strong and mutually beneficial relationships by volunteering for the English Conversation Program hosted by the U.S. Consulate. He led the Torii Station PMO School Crossing guard program and maintained the relationship with the local school, promoting safety and community support. He ensured that our host nation relationship with our Japanese Security Guards were tight knit by providing support and inclusion, which built esprit de corps and raised morale. He has served as a Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (B.O.S.S.) representative conducting numerous fundraisers and as the Retention NCO was instrumental in the reenlistment process for four Soldiers and helping them progress their Army career.

In recognition of your overall excellence, commitment, and unwavering dedication to duty, the USO Okinawa proudly honored these 2020 service members which could not have been possible without the support of the following sponsors: Delta Air Lines, AIG Insurance, University of Maryland Global Campus, MBC Internet and Cable TV, American Engineering Corporation, Billabong, Samurai Gate – Eight Co., Matson, and Domino’s.

For seventy-nine years, the USO has been providing morale, welfare, and recreational services to service members around the world. The USO strengthens America’s military service members by keeping them connected to family, home, and country, throughout their service to the nation. The USO is a nonprofit, charitable organization that relies on the generosity of individuals and corporations to support its programs and services. The USO currently operates more than 200 centers around the world, including seven on Okinawa; USO Schwab, USO Hansen, USO Kadena, USO Kadena Air Terminal, USO Foster, USO Futenma, and USO Kinser. The USO on Okinawa also offers outreach to other military installations. To find out more or donate to the USO, please check out Okinawa.USO.Org.



# A tre Tataki W

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SHOJI KUDAKA,  
STRIPES OKINAWA



**F**or adventurous minds on the island of Okinawa, Tataki Waterfall in Ogimi Village is worth a visit.

Getting there requires a fun and challenging trek with plenty of twists and turns. I set out to visit one late autumn day when I'd grown tired of long days of seclusion while working from home. Since it was no longer beach weather, I chose this hike and location instead of heading to the coast. Plus, I am not a huge fan of water activities.

From Camp Foster, I made the 1.5-hour drive to the northern part of the island. The parking lot for the waterfall was well-maintained and looked more like a parking space for a theme park. This gave me the perception that the trek to the waterfall would be nice and easy— boy, was I wrong!

I headed out on the trail and soon had arrived downstream from the Henan river. From here, the signpost indicated, it would be another 30 minutes to reach Tataki.

The riverbanks are narrow, so I found myself literally walking through the river. The current wasn't fast at first, and I stopped a few times to admire the relaxing sounds of the water and the fish swimming by.

Halfway through, I reached a pond with deep green water. A stream splashed down hard at the far end of the pond, a sample of what was waiting at the end of this hike.

As I'd mentioned before about not being a fan of water activities, the irony was that this trek forced me deeper into the water. I couldn't find a detour to stay dry, so into the water I went. Soon, the level of water reached my chest and then I was swimming a breaststroke toward a log up ahead.

I reached the log, and I crawled upon it like a bug. When I managed to get to the top, I was absolutely soaked to the skin. So was my backpack.

I looked beyond this small setback and saw huge rocks dotting the river with fast-flowing water. For me, this was a challenge straight out of American Gladiators. This was no longer the easy trek I had assumed I was undertaking.

Even though I was already tired, I carried on. My sneakers had decent grip, which were a great help in avoiding tripping and another soaking.

A few minutes later, the route leveled, and I reached the tall rock wall with two vertical streams of water connecting at the bottom of the basin. Tataki, some say, means two waterfalls.

According to Ogimi Village, Tataki is

## Tataki W

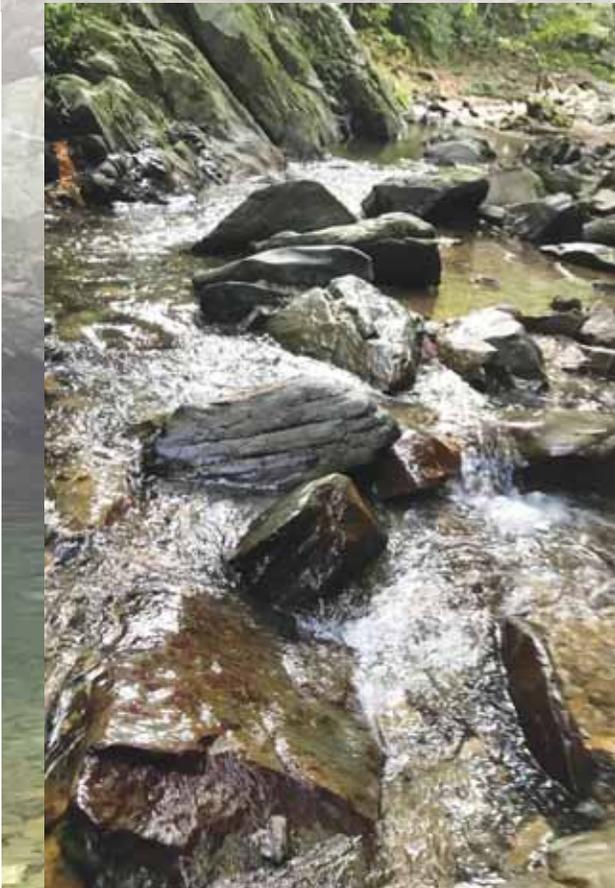
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\*Watch out for sudden increases in water levels. This often happens at the site. Several times in the past, hikers have received emergency assistance due to rising water levels.

just above 10 meters high. The waterfall seemed no different from Hiji Falls, the biggest waterfall on the island with a height of 25.7 meters. I visited about a year ago. At the time, I kept gazing in amazement that the splashing wa

## Tataki Waterfall



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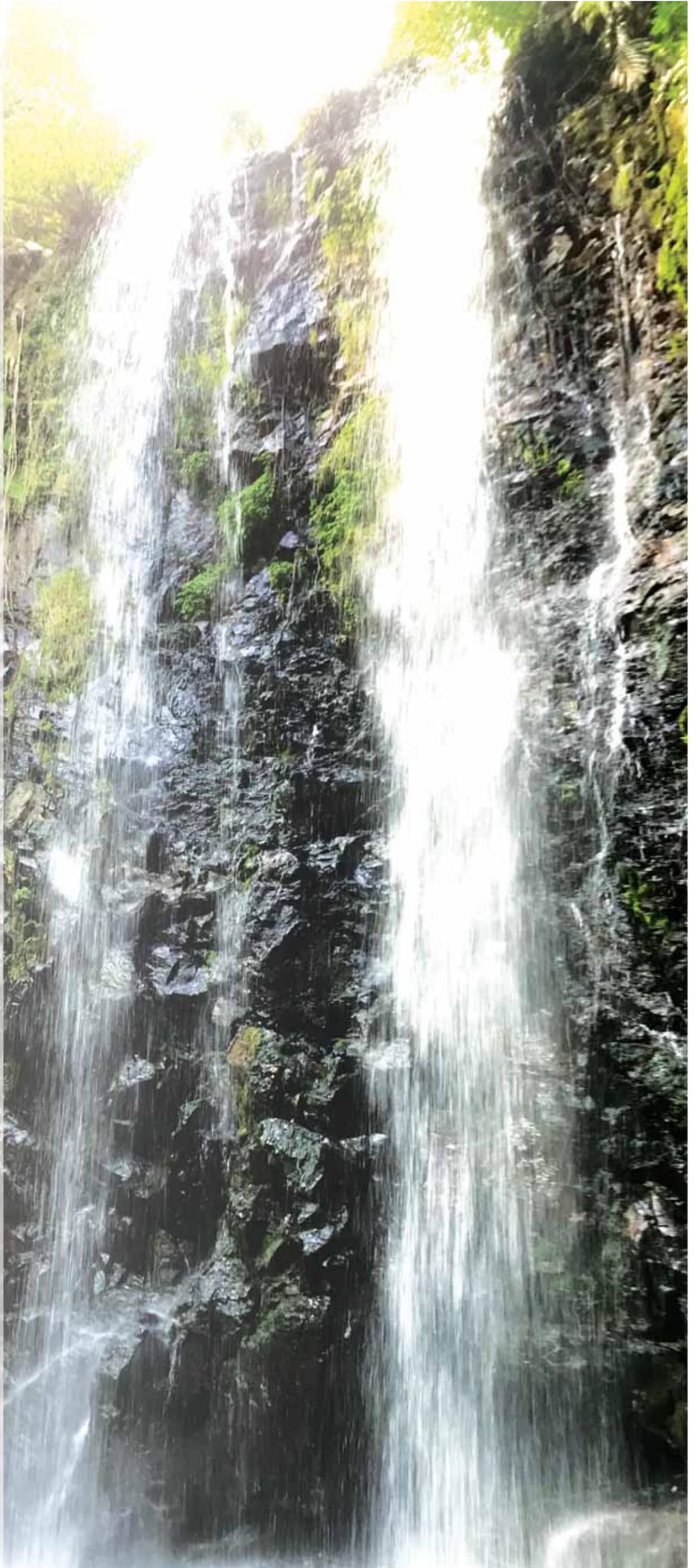
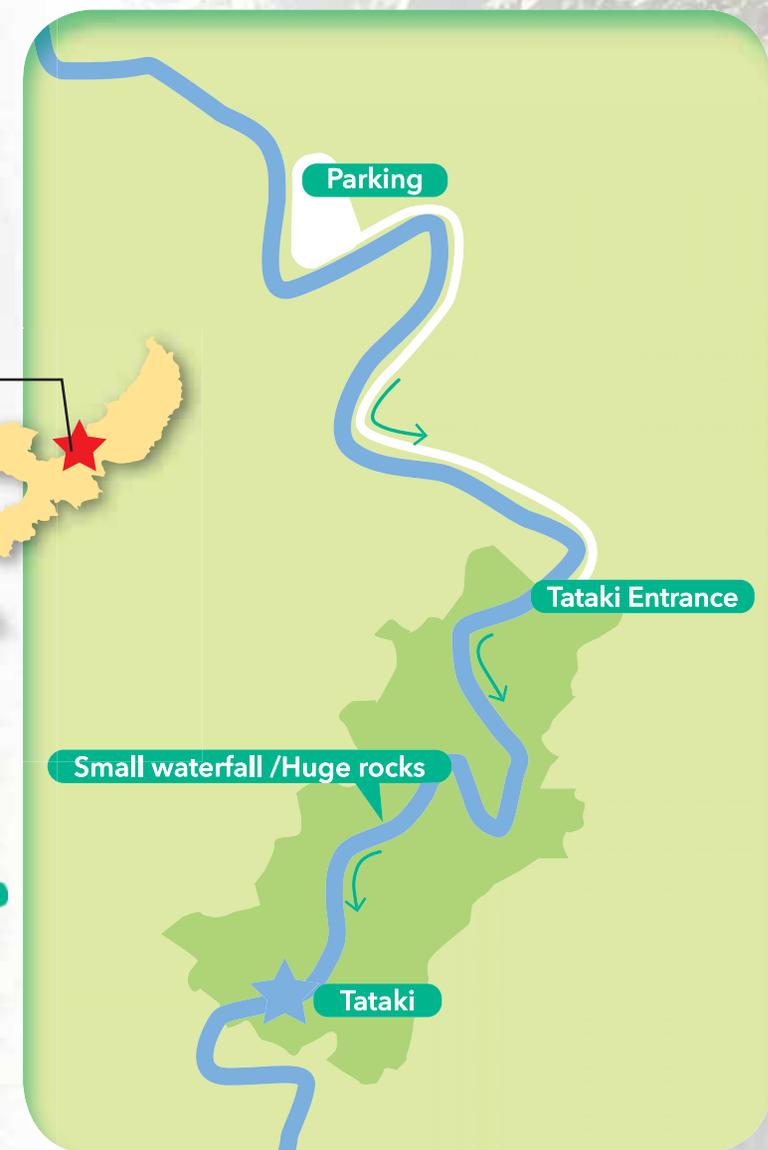
the skin once again.

On my way back, I took the same route as I did on my way to the waterfall. And once again, I got in the water and swam to get past that pond. It wasn't until after that I learned of a route that would have kept me and my backpack dry.

According to Ogimi Village's Tourism Association, the water level of Henan River doesn't change a lot from one season to another, but rain will have an impact, for sure. You would need to watch out for an increase in water after rain or during the rainy season. Sometimes the weather can change quickly, trapping trekkers in the middle of the river.

If you plan to visit, take some precaution ahead of your trip and know you will most likely get wet, so bring a swimsuit or trunks. The office managing the waterfall recommends bringing a lifejacket or wetsuit, which might be a good idea for young children. Don't miss Tataki for a splashing fun time!

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# Co-Lab Kitchen's outdoor patio an Okinawan oasis

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: November 26, 2020

Dining options on Okinawa remain limited for service members barred from indoor dining thanks to the coronavirus — but the dining patio at Co-Lab Kitchen, located at Aeon Mall Okinawa Rycom in Kitanakagusuku, is a rare oasis in what has become a virtual food desert.

From the outside, Co-Lab — short for “Collaboration Kitchen” — is underwhelming and a bit confusing. Like a siren song, a large sign out front advertising cheap, all-you-can-drink specials beckons weary consumers and Americans looking for a pandemic pause.

The restaurant's sign promotes “sports and dining” — and, on a night in mid-November, a football match played on overhead television sets spread throughout. But the decor also includes streetlamps, pirates' portraits on the walls next to burlap coffee sacks and a massive, fake tree rising through the center of the restaurant. A ping-pong team banner hangs in one corner.

However, the restaurant is well-lit and warm, decorated with stained wood with cozy nooks throughout the interior. The massive front window opens into the dining room, so those seated outside don't have to feel completely shut out.

Flipping through Co-Lab's expansive menu, it's easy to see they fancy themselves as the local pub, a gathering place where large groups can share small plates and drink together. In normal times, that spirit hits the spot for pretty much any demographic.

Co-Lab specializes in grilled meats and Mediterranean-style tapas: mushrooms, pickled peppers and radishes, bruschetta, horse meat and salmon carpaccio, prosciutto, pate, canapes, tofu, ajillo and skillets. They also offer pizza, pasta and fried appetizers. The other half of the menu is dedicated to alcoholic beverages.

The assortment appetizer for 1,480 yen (about \$14) was as tasty as it was diverse. It came with pate and saltines, prosciutto, smoked salmon, mushrooms in a delicious, savory dressing and homemade pickled vegetables. It tasted like it had come from an authentic Italian kitchen.

The bacon and mustard potato salad for 480 yen had ample bacon and packed a flavorful mustard punch. Sea urchin and kimchi varieties are also available.

The Co-Lab pizza is personal sized for 1,080 yen. Half-and-half pies are available.

We tried half salmon and cream cheese and half teriyaki chicken and mayo. As far as Japanese pizza is concerned, it was really good. Both sides were clean and crispy, cooked to perfection.

The salmon and cream cheese offered a flavor that was new to me and quite delicious. The chicken teriyaki, not surprisingly, tasted of teriyaki, but with no sauce

or mayo to be seen, just a balanced profile of flavored meat, cheese and crisp crust.

The rump and aitchbone steak, part of the sirloin, for 1,380 yen was soft and juicy, cooked medium. It came on a board, sliced, with rock salt and Japanese steak sauce. But the star of the show was the grilled pork miso for 980 yen. It was tender, juicy, melt-in-your-mouth succulent, with a tinge of savory miso flavor, the best piece of pork I can ever remember eating.

Co-Lab's pork is the result of a collaboration between the eatery and the local Fukumaru Farm, according to the menu. Fukumaru has long experimented with feeding its pigs different things to influence the taste of the meat. It found that a diet of sugar cane, purple sweet potatoes and herbs, all local to Okinawa, gave the meat beautiful marbling and a special flavor. It made the fat almost gelatinous when cooked so that it melts in the mouth.

Fukumaru calls it Kibimaru-Ton, which has since won Japanese food awards. It more than lived up to its reputation.

The cheapest cut on the menu is the braised roast Kibimaru-Ton pork for 780 yen. Co-Lab also offers mixed grill platters for between 2,980 and 5,780 yen.

Salads include items like crab and prosciutto and cost up to 880 yen. A variety of pasta dishes with clams or eggplant cost up to 1,280 yen. Soft drinks, cocktails and wine range from 480 to 580 yen. Co-Lab also offers set menus starting at 2,980 yen per person that include eight food items and two hours of all-you-can-drink, until 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Sitting outside the restaurant made me long for the days of normalcy, the days before the pandemic. Yet it also made me thankful for places like Co-Lab, where I can pull up a chair, share a laugh over a good meal and a drink and forget the world for a while.

burke.matt@stripes.com  
Twitter: @MatthewMBurke1

## Co-Lab Kitchen

**LOCATION:** Aeon Mall Okinawa Rycom, Higa, Kitanakagusuku, Nakagami District, Okinawa 901-2305. GPS 26.314869, 127.797595

**DIRECTIONS** You'll find it in the northeast corner of the island's most acclaimed mall, at the intersection of Routes 330 and 85, between Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base.

**HOURS:** 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily

**PRICES:** The average dinner bill per customer is between 2,001 yen and 3,000 yen, according to the Co-Lab website.

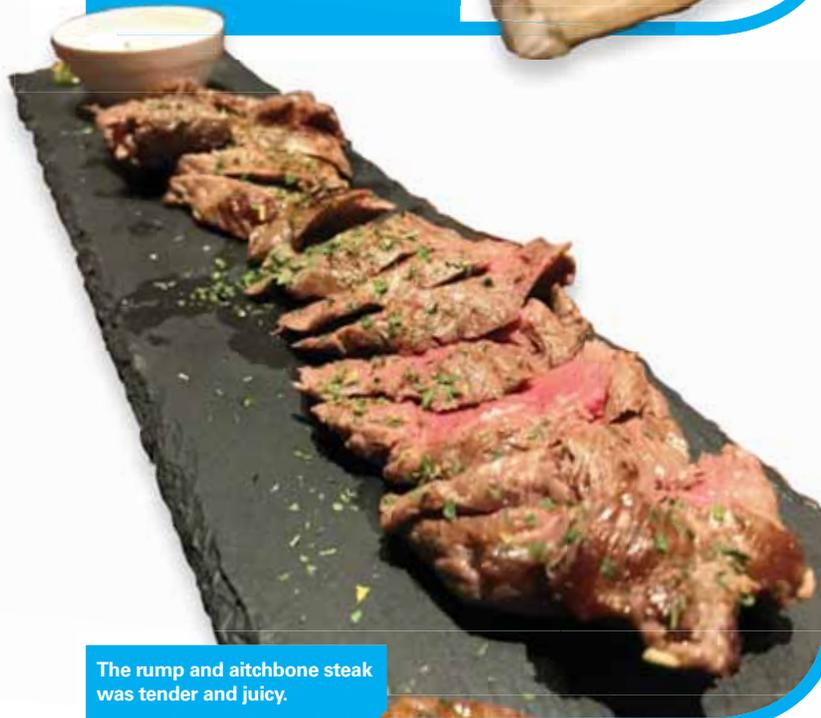
**DRESS:** Casual

**PHONE:** 098-923-2622

### WEBSITE



This half-and-half pizza features salmon and cream cheese on the right and teriyaki chicken and mayo, topped with dried seaweed shavings, on the left.



The rump and aitchbone steak was tender and juicy.



The grilled pork miso is a standout dish.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:  
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www.stripes.com

# MY FAVES Okinawa spots to eat your to-go meals

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,  
STRIPES OKINAWA

Since the arrival of COVID-19, we've had to change a lot of our usual pastimes and activities. Dining at restaurants is not really a good option right now. So, for me, grabbing my food to-go and sitting outside to enjoy it has been something I look forward to the most these days.

Sitting on a bench in a park or on a sandy Okinawan shore and taking a lunch break with a bento or a hamburger in my hands, helps me forget the lonely hours of staring at a computer screen at home. On one hand, I miss the days when I could enjoy sitting at a restaurant a care in the world. But, lunch with a view? Rolling green grass, clear blue skies or the sound of crashing waves definitely make my meals tastier than usual.

If you have spent some time on the island, I'm sure you have your favorite spots to take your lunch or dinner al fresco. Even if you are new to the island, don't worry, Okinawa has plenty of beaches and parks to choose from.

Below are some of my favorite spots along the coast with great ocean views. So, give one or all of them a try as a way to liven up your mealtime.

Let's go out and have a nice outdoor lunch!

## ■ Ginowan Kaihin Koen/Ginowan Seaside Park

This park offers the best of both worlds—grassy lawn and sandy beach. This spot is only a 10-minute drive from MCAS Futenma and Camp Foster (Gate 5). There is also a tiny peninsula which stretches out from the sandy shore, offering a nice view of the coastline.

**GPS coordinates:** N 26.281082, E 127.733917  
**Hours:** 9 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.

## ■ Araha Beach

This sandy beach area is the closest one to Camp Foster. It has an easy-going atmosphere and plenty of room for social distancing. This spot also offers plenty of opportunities for a nice walk and a little exploration. Check out the pirate ship play area. Your kids will love it! And the view from this beach? Stunning!

**GPS Coordinates:** N 26.304111, E 127.758669  
**Hours:** 7 a.m. – 10 p.m.

## ■ Sunabe Seawall

This is a lively area near Kadena Air Base, where you can both pick up take-out from any of the numerous eateries in the neighborhood and sit along the seawall and enjoy. Although this spot has no sandy shore, having a burrito or tacos on the boardwalk will definitely give you a Santa Monica vibe.

**GPS Coordinates:** N 26.328952, E 127.744062

## ■ Umino Eki Ayahashi roadside park

This roadside station on the Kaichu-doro Causeway is a good place to stop by if you work on or live near White Beach and Camp Courtney. On-site food vendors serve up easy eats like pizza, hamburgers, tempura, soba noodles and more. Check it out!

**GPS Coordinates:** N 26.332603, E 127.928471

## ■ 21 Seiki no Mori

A vast green grassy area and sandy beach are your options at this large park in Nago City. Stop for some burgers and fries at the A&W nearby and head over to this spot. Tasty grub, a nice sea breeze and beautiful views await!

**GPS Coordinates:** N 26.591346, E 127.969339  
**Hours:** 9 a.m. – 10 p.m.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



SUNABE SEAWALL



21 SEIKI NO MORI



ARAHA BEACH



GINOWAN KAIHIN KOEN



UMINO EKI AYAHASHI ROADSIDE PARK



# Japan to celebrate emperor's birthday Feb. 23

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES OKINAWA

While Americans celebrate the first President's birthday on Feb. 17, a few days later Japan will also be celebrating their own emperor's birthday on Feb. 23 as one of the 16 Japanese national holidays. Employees in Japan will have the day off and government offices will be closed on this day so plan ahead if you have official business.

Since former Emperor Akihito renounced on April 30 and the crown prince Naruhito was enthroned as the 126th Emperor of Japan in 2019, this will be the second time to celebrate the newly enthroned emperor.

Called "Tenno Tanjobi," the people of Japan celebrate the birthday of reigning emperor every year. Emperor Naruhito was born in 1960, and 2020 marked the first year where Feb. 23 will be a holiday for years to come.

Although the current designations of emperor's birthdays as national holidays was only legislated in 1948, the celebrating their emperor has been a custom since the ancient ages.

Birthdays of former emperors are no longer celebrated today except for the birthdays of the



Photo courtesy of the Prime Minister's Official Residence

## Ex-emperor's birthday still celebrated

Like the birthday of Japan's current Emperor Naruhito (Feb. 23), April 29 was originally celebrated as the birthday of his grandfather, Emperor Hirohito. He reigned before, after and – most notably – during World War II. After his death in 1989, he was renamed Emperor Showa, and Japan's parliament kept his birthday as a national holiday.

His birthday, along with Constitution Memorial Day (May 3), Greenery Day (May 4) and Children's Day (May 5), form the string of holidays that comprise Golden Week.

The Showa Era is the longest and most dramatic reign of an emperor in Japan's history. Emperor Showa was the longest living emperor. He died at age 87 after reigning for 63 years. In fact, the Showa Era literally covers some of modern Japan's brightest and darkest hours.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

## Japan's national holidays associated with Emperor's Birthday

- Feb. 23 - Emperor's Birthday - Emperor Naruhito (current emperor)'s Birthday
- Apr. 29 - Showa Day - Showa Emperor (Emperor Hirohito 1901- 89)'s Birthday
- Nov. 3 - Culture Day - Meiji Emperor (Emperor Mutsuhito 1852-1912)'s Birthday

Meiji Emperor and the Showa Emperor. Today, the country observes Bunka-no-hi (Culture Day) on Nov. 3, the Meiji Emperor's birthday, and Showa Day on Apr. 29, the Showa Emperor's birthday.

### Rare opportunity again to cancel

To celebrate the birthday of the reigning emperor, the public is invited to partake in the rare opportunity to see the emperor and inner garden of the

Imperial Palace.

For the occasion, around 30,000 gather to greet the Emperor, Empress and other members of the Imperial Family as they take their place on a balcony to receive the congratulations. This is one of only two chances each year where citizens are allowed to enter the inner garden; the other is Jan. 2.

During the appearance, the Emperor will often say a few words of gratitude while the

visitors wave miniature Japanese flags and shout out birthday salutations.

This is the second time Emperor Naruhito's birthday appearance at the Imperial Palace has been canceled due to the ongoing pandemic. In addition, both the Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako opted for video messages instead of the usual New Year's appearances this year.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

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Speakin' Japanese

Emperor talk

The Emperor's Birthday is a national holiday in Japan. Try the useful phrases for the Emperor's special day or your own!

**"Otanjobi omedeto!" = Happy birthday!**  
(**"otanjobi"** = birthday, **"omedeto"** = congratulations)

**"Kokyo wa doko desuka?" = Where is the Imperial Palace?**  
(**"kokyo"** = Imperial Palace, **".. wa doko desuka?"** = where is ...?)

**"Kokyo wa Tokyo ni arimasu." = The palace is in Tokyo.**  
(**".. wa .. ni arimasu"** = .. is in/at ..)

**"Kyo wa Tenno-Tanjobi desu." = Today is the Emperor's Birthday.**  
(**"kyo"** = today, **".. wa .. desu"** = .. is.., **"Tenno"** = Emperor)

**"Nihon no shukujitsu no hitotsu desu." = It is also a national holiday in Japan.**  
(**"nihon no shukujitsu"** = Japan's national holiday, **"wa .. no hitotsu desu"** = it is one of the ..)

**"Anatano tanjobi wa itsu desuka?" = When is your birthday?**  
(**"anatano"** = your, **".. wa itsu desuka?"** = when is ..?)

**"Watashino tanjobi wa \_\_\_\_ desu." = My birthday is \_\_\_\_.**  
(**"watashino"** = my)

**"Tenno"** = Emperor

**"Syukujitsu"** = Holiday

**"Kogo"** = Empress

– Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Okinawa

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 "l" (like "hike"). Most words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but "OU" is a long "O" with emphasis on that syllable.

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# Stripes Sports Trivia

Most people know him for throwing no-look passes, winning MVP, and a Super Bowl title, but did you know Patrick Mahomes' dad played in the MLB? A right-handed starting pitcher, Mahomes played for 6 Major League teams with a brief gig playing for the Yokohama BayStars in the middle. Which team did he debut for?

Answer

Minnesota Twins



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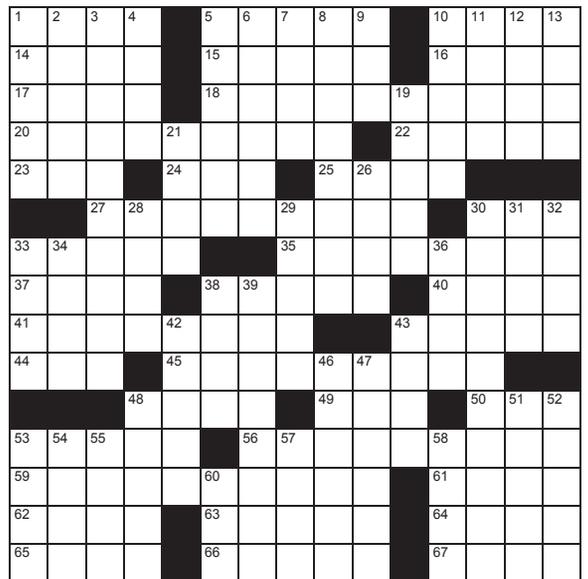
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## Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- 1 In this way
- 5 Bailey of "Hello, Dolly!"
- 10 Bubbly drink
- 14 Second to none
- 15 Sharpshooter Oakley
- 16 German automaker
- 17 Fountain fare
- 18 Plum or apricot, e.g.
- 20 TV show opener, often
- 22 Cattle catcher
- 23 Something to lend
- 24 Vigor's partner
- 25 Lament loudly
- 27 Descend
- 30 1942 flick "My \_\_\_ Sal"
- 33 Go bad
- 35 Handel specialty
- 37 Kilauea flow
- 38 Small variety (var.)
- 40 Seductress
- 41 Roof projection
- 43 Not too bright
- 44 Pricing word
- 45 Uncontrollable
- 48 Cry softly
- 49 Very long time
- 50 Suds source
- 53 Met highlights
- 56 Roy Rogers ingredient
- 59 Shrewd bargain
- 61 Flat floater
- 62 Cut, maybe
- 63 Hardens, as clay
- 64 Troop group
- 65 Flat-topped hill
- 66 On one's toes
- 67 Small particle



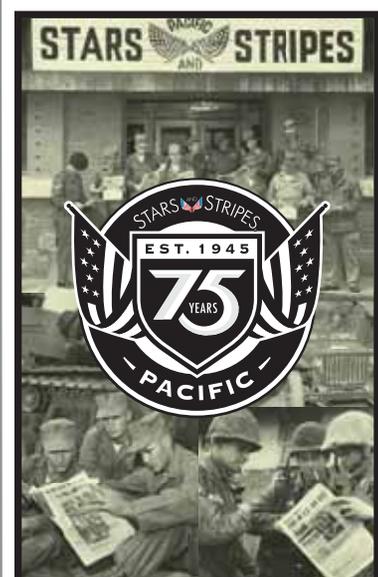
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### DOWN

- 1 Small sample
- 2 Big to-do
- 3 1977 Alan O'Day hit, "\_\_\_ Angel"
- 4 Clothing line?
- 5 Footnote word
- 6 Place in a crypt
- 7 Soon, to a poet
- 8 Skin infection
- 9 "School Daze" director
- 10 Word before reef or snake
- 11 Composer's creation
- 12 Kauai keepsakes
- 13 Type of sax
- 19 GM's birthplace
- 21 Like some grins or twins
- 26 On a trip, maybe
- 28 Make-up artist?
- 29 Furry one, in internet slang
- 30 Concert keyboard
- 31 Intentions
- 32 Easy run
- 33 Sow's chow
- 34 Finish a drive?
- 36 Chef's need
- 38 Left-handed Beatle

### Answers to Previous Crossword:

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



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STARS AND STRIPES



## DID YOU KNOW?

There are countless vending machines throughout Japan. Items available range from canned coffee, hamburger, yakisoba and rice bowl (served hot!), beer and sake (served freezing cold), to cigarettes, tissue, underwear and condoms. Most are available 24/7, 365, but those serving adult beverages usually stop running between 11 p.m. – 5 a.m. How convenient!

Kanji of the week

顔

Kao (face)

## Language Lesson

What time is it?

Ima nanji desuka?

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

### HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answers to Previous Sudoku:

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

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

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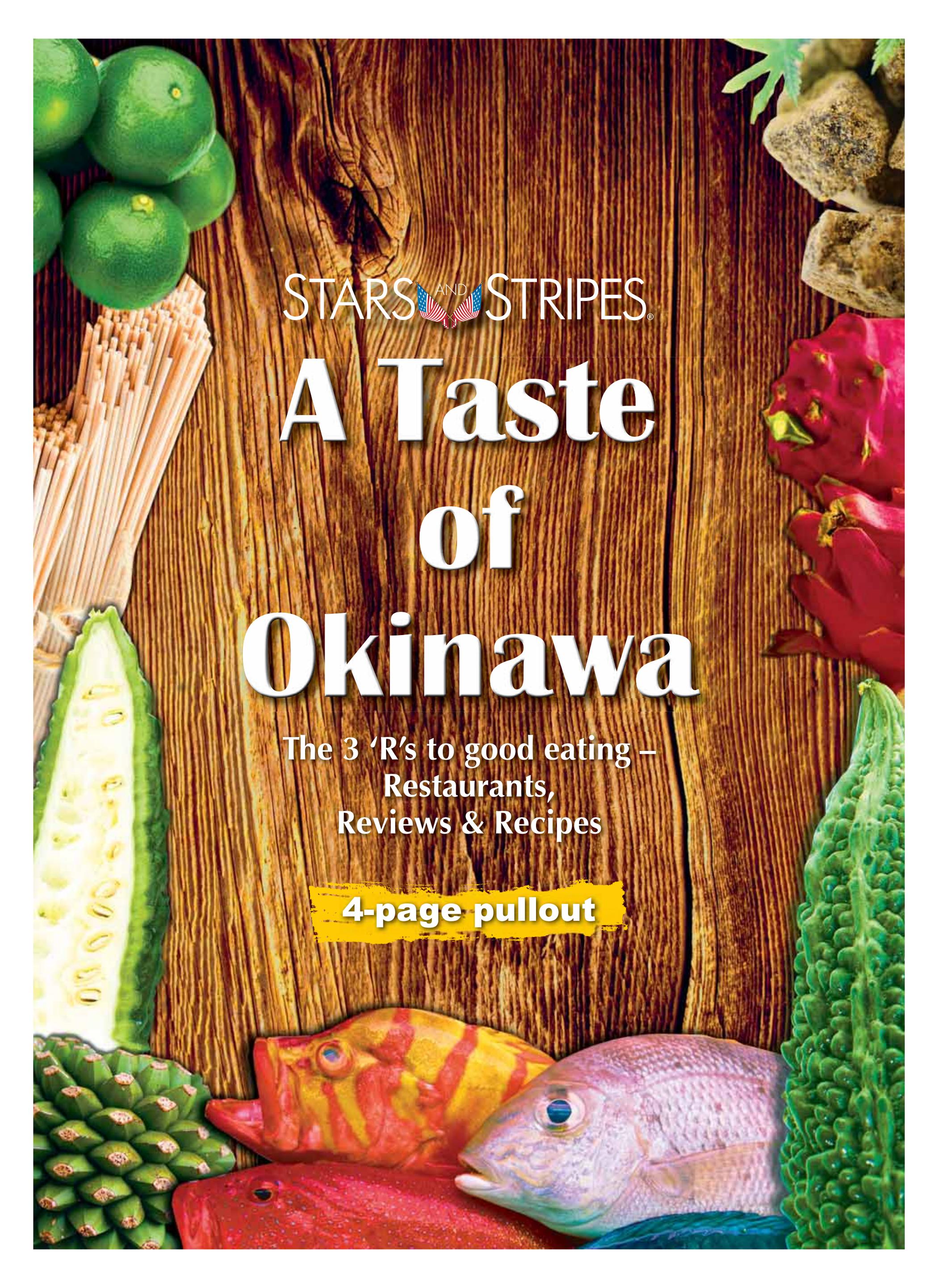
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STARS  AND  STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

# A Taste of Okinawa

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

**4-page pullout**



# Crispy, Tasty & All About Japanese

## Classic Senbei Flavors



### Shoyu (Soy Sauce) Senbei

The most common flavor of senbei you will find in Japan is shoyu (soy sauce). Made by brushing or dipping the rice crackers in shoyu while toasted over a flame, these tasty snacks have an inviting aroma and a deeply savory flavor.



### Nori Senbei

To make this kind of senbei, a thin sheet of dried nori (seaweed) is wrapped around toasted rice crackers to give the entire snack a sea-salty taste. Nori seaweed is also commonly made by mixing tiny shredded pieces of nori or aonori (powdered seaweed) into the senbei dough before baking.



### Kuro Goma Senbei

In place of the usual rice flour dough, the dough used to make kuro goma (black sesame) senbei contains flour and sesame seeds. Kuro goma senbei have a crunchy texture and nutty taste with an appealing speckled surface.



### Togarashi Senbei

If you like spicy foods, togarashi (red chili pepper) senbei is the snack for you! The rice crackers are toasted the usual way before being thickly coated in red chili pepper powder and flakes. Though a popular snack for spicy snack lovers, this treat is too spicy for many Japanese people.



LIVE JAP.

If you haven't tried senbei are a type of Japanese cracker enjoyed for centuries. First via China in the Tang Dynasty were made from potato and Since the Edo period, however, senbei made with toasted rice be senbei are popularly made with t

### Snack A

The Many Flavors of Japanese Not all recipes are the same. In th are made from non-glutinous rice formed into flat discs that are baked ever, senbei made from glutinous ern Kansai region. Senbei are so markets and department stores at outdoor festivals. There a artisan makers that still ex neighborhoods and distric duce everything about se ent kinds of toasted ers available thr countr

## Sweet Senbei



### Kuromame Senbei

Kuromame (black soybean) senbei are made from a dough of flour and cooked black beans. The addition of beans tends to make kuromame senbei quite a bit thicker and more filling than other kinds of rice crackers, making this perfect for when you get hungry between meals.

## Fishy Senbei Varieties

Being an island country, Japan incorporates seafood into a variety of different foods - and even into regional senbei! Although their appearance can occasionally be somewhat peculiar to Western palates, these rice cracker varieties nevertheless tend to be quite tasty and go down well with a cold swig of beer.



### Ika Senbei

Ika (squid) senbei, also known as "ika-sen," are of several kinds of seafood senbei in Japan. There are numerous ways to make Ika-sen including mixing pieces of grilled squid together with a binding agent before baking them flat, or even by baking a whole squid onto a pre-made senbei. Either way, ika-sen usually retains its squid appearance and with a wonderfully enhanced taste. This snack goes especially well with a cold beer!



### Ebi Senbei

Ebi (shrimp) senbei, similarly nicknamed "ebi-sen," are made by mixing finely minced shrimp into senbei dough before baking. The color of the shrimp adds bright threads of red and pink to the toasted rice cracker when cooked. Quite an addictive snack and perfect for shrimp lovers!



# and Addictive! Senbei Rice Crackers



AN  
ied them,  
pe of traditional  
ker that have been  
st introduced to Japan  
sty, the original senbei  
had a cake-like texture.  
a salty soy sauce variety of  
came popular and nowadays  
the same toasted rice recipe.

## Attack:

### Japanese Rice Crackers

In the eastern Kanto region, senbei is made from rice flour mixed into a dough and then either fried or roasted over a flame. However, rice can be found in the west-ward everywhere from super-tanto yatai (street food stands) to even specialty senbei shops, especially in older districts. Here we will introduce you to the different types of Japanese crackers throughout the country.

## Regional Senbei Varieties



### Nure-Senbei, Chiba

Nure-senbei essentially means “wet rice cracker.” It gets this name from the fact that it’s dipped in soy sauce during the cooking process. This results in a moist and chewy rice cracker quite different from the traditional senbei. This unique senbei is a local specialty of the city of Choshi, which specializes in the production of shoyu.



### Mentaiko Senbei, Fukuoka

Mentaiko (spicy cod roe) senbei, A.K.A. “menbei,” comes from the area famous for mentaiko, Fukuoka. The mentaiko is mixed into the senbei dough before it’s toasted to bake the spicy flavor right into the rice cracker.



### Kare Senbei, Hokkaido

As a result of a collaboration with a famous curry shop in Sapporo, kare (curry) senbei were born. Though Japanese curry tends to be a bit milder and even sweeter than other types of curry such as Indian or Thai curry, it does have a good blend of spices and aromatics. This curry and senbei combination is a truly special treat.

## Other “Un-Cracker-Like” Senbei

## Senbei



### Zarame Senbei

Though a variety of savory rice crackers take up a good majority of Japanese senbei culture, there are a number of sweet senbei as well. Zarame (granulated sugar) senbei is one such senbei. Though its appearance may be similar to that of a cookie, its taste is quite unique making it a great souvenir for sweets-lovers.



### Arare

Arare is another type of rice cracker that’s made like senbei from pounded rice that’s toasted over a flame, but which is much smaller in shape. They get their name from the fact that the sound it makes when roasting them sounds similar to hail (also arare). They come in a variety of shapes such as tiny stars and seed shapes and are often mixed with other ingredients such as wasabi peas. As they are bite-sized, they make a great snack to offer guests you are entertaining in your house.



### Kawara Senbei

Kawara (roof tile) senbei get their name from the fact that originals were shaped like the roof tiles on Japanese homes or buildings. Made with flour, sugar, and eggs and more like cookie wafers than rice crackers, these senbei make a great snack to enjoy with coffee or tea. They have since evolved and now come decorated with a variety of designs or messages written in icing.



### Hone Senbei

Hone (bone) senbei are made from fish or eel bone. After the fillets have been removed and eaten, the spine bones are deep-fried to a crisp before being seasoned with salt or other seasonings. The rich umami flavor goes especially well with Japanese sake which is why you will often see this snack served at drinking establishments in Japan.



## Senbei: That Perfect Souvenir (Or On-The-Go-Snack!)

The world of senbei has a variety of flavors and types so be sure to keep a look out for those you’ve yet to try. If you’re in Japan and keep an eye out - particularly in the more touristy areas - you’re bound to happen upon an artisan rice cracker shop. Often the shops will even grill a cracker to perfection right in front of your eyes. Be sure to get some of their freshly roasted senbei for a mouthwatering treat!





# HANABI'S

## Hanabi's offers new Taste of Asia menu

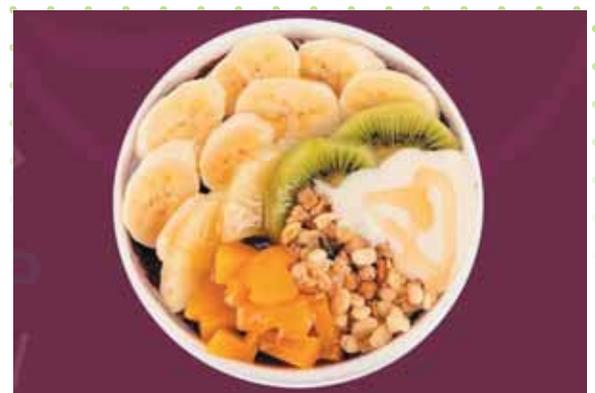
Hanabi's food spread now includes its Taste of Asia menu! If you crave Chinese take-out, this is the stop for you. The menu features fan favorites like spicy sesame orange chicken over a bed of steamed rice. For a lighter option, wonton soup might be just the way to your heart. Wontons, broth, and bok choy mixed together to create a great side to any of our fantastic entrees. The Taste of Asia Menu also features classics like Sweet & Sour chicken, shrimp, or Beef with Broccoli. Undecided about dinner tonight? Stop by Hanabi's inside the Rocker Enlisted Club. All are welcome!



RESTAURANT INFO



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