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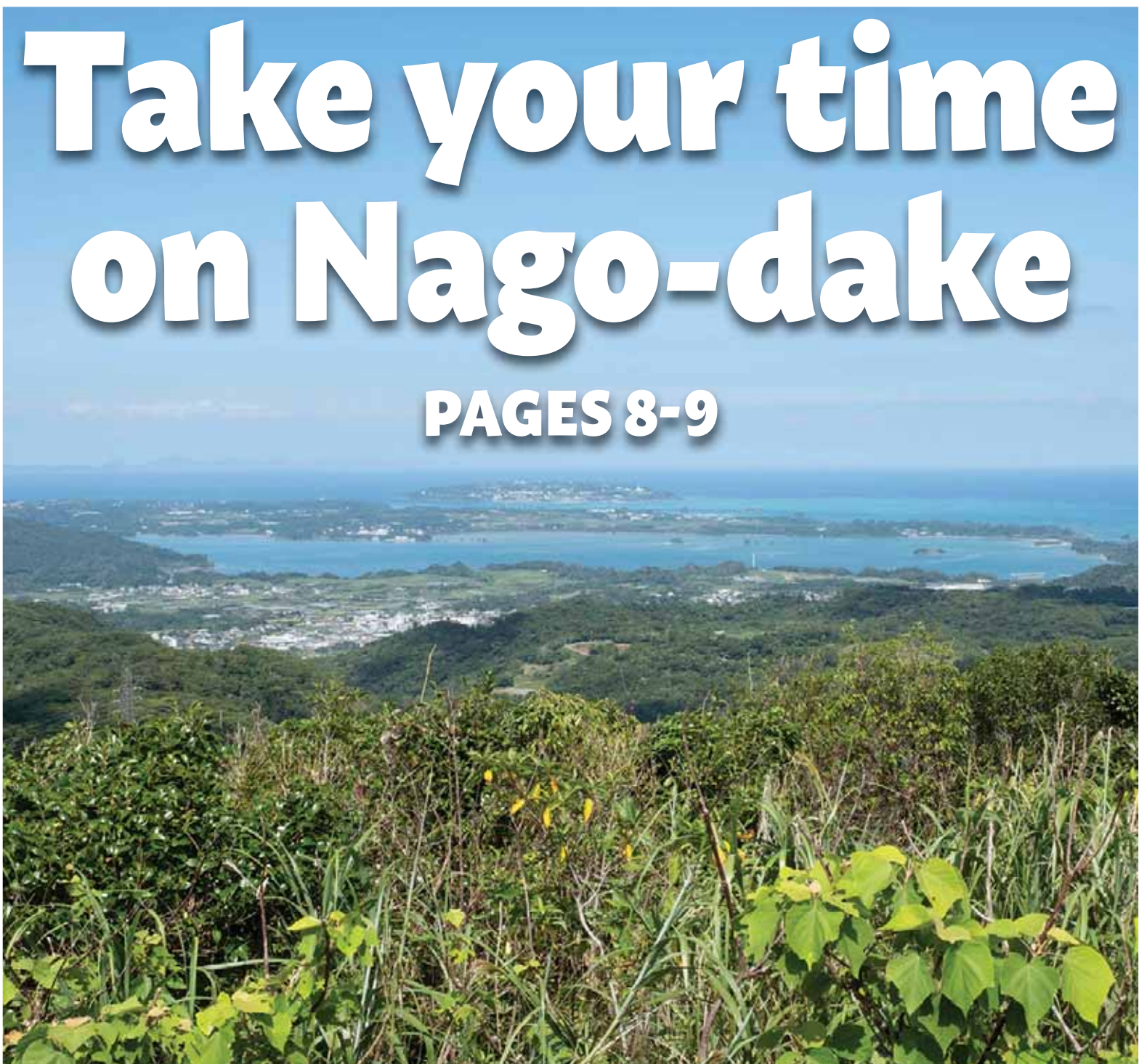
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My creative process, and other myths

The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



Sixteen years ago, I had a eureka moment. Military life, overseas tours, deployments and raising three children had rendered my legal career not only stale, but practically impossible. I worried that I'd never earn income again.

However, when a relative commented on how funny my annual Christmas letters were, it came to me in a flash of genius. "I'll become a writer!" I thought, envisioning myself happily tapping away at our home computer (back then, a behemoth, dust-gathering Dell), earning a tidy second income along with international prestige while the children played in the yard and pot roast simmered in the oven. Writing was the perfect work-from-home military-spouse career!

I had no clue how to be a writer, much less a paid writer. But ignorance is stupidity masquerading as bliss, so I started immediately, writing humorous commentary from our powder-blue Formica kitchen desk.

It took two years to get columns published. Another year to learn blogging. Two more years to get paid for columns. Three more years to land a decent column contract. And four more years to publish a book.

My plan to become a legitimate writer took more than a decade to implement, and even then, I hardly earned enough money to break even on printer ink.

Throughout this endeavor, friends, family and readers have often asked me, "What's your creative process?"

They expect me to describe being ensconced in an Irish sweater and vintage Levi's, sitting before a classic Smith Corona typewriter with a sticky "e," in a charming shed-turned-writer's-retreat adorned with flower-filled window boxes, sipping Earl Grey tea while channeling Hemingway, Austen, Dickens and Dostoevsky.

Instead, I admit the reality of my writing process: I've scribbled most of my column ideas willy-nilly on crumpled receipts, torn envelopes or my hand while driving to piano lessons or sitting in orthodontists' offices. I've never had a writer's retreat, or vintage Levi's that actually fit. When I write, I procrastinate by searching Etsy, watching dumpster-diving hauls on Reels, balancing my checkbook, painting my nails or doing anything else BUT write.

Through writers' groups, I've known other writers who proclaim, "I write, therefore I am." Or, "I live to write, I write to live." They portray themselves as artistic scribes, burdened by their gift with words. Their inspirations fuel their innate drive to put pen to paper, else they shrivel and die without their "craft."

I still have a lot to learn, but one thing I know for certain: Writers who say those things don't have a weekly deadline.

Don't get me wrong; I love writing. No matter how many or how few people read my work, I find great satisfaction in seeing my work in print.

That being said, there are days when I'd rather chew my own arm off than muster the brainpower required to write my column. Writing on a weekly deadline is hard work that hurts. Seriously, I've felt actual, physical pain while trying to write.

Occasionally, my friends and family offer to help. "I've got your next column!" they'll say, and bestow their brilliant cultural observations on me like precious gifts. What these well-intentioned people fail to understand is that ideas come easy. But when I'm required to extrapolate an idea out into a well-written piece with a compelling story arc and a logical conclusion before my Thursday deadline, my brain bleeds.

Syndicated humor columnist Erma Bombeck — who wrote three times a week for 31 years, the last written five days before her death — referred to her creative process as "giving birth to 450 words." Other than there being no stitches, stretch marks, sagging breasts or 18 years of parental responsibilities involved, Erma's description is spot-on.

Just as a person who touches a hot oven will flinch, my brain recoils from deadline writing, and steers my subconscious toward soothingly menial tasks like cleaning the dryer lint trap. It's simple human nature.

It took me 16 years to learn how to write columns each week. I have no lofty creative process. It's real work, and it hurts. But when the task is done, and the blood is all mopped up, the feeling of accomplishment makes it worth the pain.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com and in Lisa's book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*
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APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 094-099	Dec. 15	Dec. 9	Dec. 9	Nov. 6
APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 340	Dec. 15	Dec. 9	Dec. 9	Nov. 6
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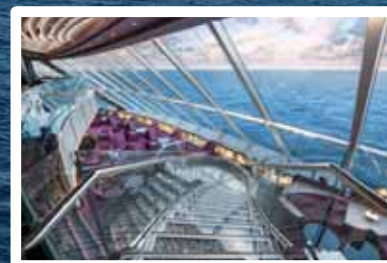
Put an extra label with the addresses inside the package in case the original one is defaced. Also include an itemized list of contents.

- Select a box strong enough to protect the contents and appropriate for the amount and size of items inside.
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- Use tape designed for shipping, using enough to secure the opening and seams of the box.
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Wasabi

13 curious things you never knew about Japan's most famous condiment!

LIVE JAPAN

Love it or hate it, wasabi is one of the more well-known condiments served with Japanese cooking, most commonly served with sushi.

Mixed with soy sauce, or served directly on top of sushi, a little dash of wasabi gives a real spicy kick to raw fish but without leaving an aftertaste. According to historical records, Japanese people have been adding wasabi to a variety of dishes for over a thousand years, and today it can be found in most restaurants.

It might seem like a dull green condiment, but actually there are a lot of things that even Japanese people don't even know about wasabi!



1 Eating wasabi? You're likely eating the stem, not the root!

When you think of a wasabi plant, the image of a chunk of the dull green plant probably comes to mind. Contrary to what you might imagine, however, the part that's ultimately grated up into the spicy green mass that's eaten with sushi is the lower portion of the plant's stem, and not the root!

▶ Raw wasabi at the market. Note that the roots have not been removed from the stem, and the leaves are relatively intact.



2 Wasabi is actually something of a cabbage?

A lot of people tend to think that the wasabi plant is like a Japanese version of horseradish, but actually it is an herbaceous plant (Brassicaceae) which is related to cabbage, as well as mustard and radish. However, calling it Japanese cabbage doesn't have quite the same ring to it!



3 Using wasabi to prevent food poisoning

Japanese people didn't start using wasabi on their food to add a bit of spice to it; actually, they discovered that it had medicinal properties. Eating raw fish or poorly cooked meat could lead to food poisoning because of the bugs which were on the food. However, it was believed that adding wasabi to their food helped against illnesses. This was with good reason as it has been discovered that wasabi contains a chemical called allyl isothiocyanate, now used as an insecticide, and it also has anti-bacterial properties too.



4 It is pretty hard to grow wasabi

As wasabi is served so generously in Japan, you can easily imagine that Japan is covered in fields of wasabi plants alongside rice plants. However, the wasabi plant needs particular conditions to thrive. In the mountainous terrain of Japan, its natural habitat is in river valleys, protected from direct sunlight and with its roots reaching into running underground water. Also, it will only grow around 1300 - 2500 meters above sea level while it won't thrive if the air temperature is below 8°C or above 20°C. It isn't a plant you can just grow in your back garden, and you would have to be pretty determined to want to grow it commercially.



5 Real wasabi is expensive

Wasabi is challenging to grow, which means that actually, there isn't a lot of wasabi plants on the market for sale. Just like any product where there is a limited supply and high demand, real wasabi is pretty expensive to buy. On top of this, Japan has been very successful at exporting its cuisine abroad, so in recent years demand for wasabi plants has really ramped up. Outside of Japan, in 2014, a kilo could cost \$160, but year on year, the price has increased by up to 10% so that today some restaurants are willing to pay \$300 or more for stock. Even in the country, prices for fresh wasabi can be somewhat steep as well.



6 Wasabi is cheap in supermarkets though!

As wasabi is in limited supply and expensive, you are probably wondering why you can easily buy a tube of wasabi for a low price in supermarkets. However, alternative ingredients have been utilized to replicate the taste of wasabi, without using any actual wasabi. If you want to eat real wasabi you have to check out a specialty shop.



7 The wasabi imitation game

Unfortunately, imitation wasabi isn't limited to the supermarket. Although the number of Japanese restaurants around the world is increasing, and demand for authentic wasabi is also growing, it's said that only around 5-10% of restaurants outside of Japan actually serve wasabi made from the actual plant. Many restaurants create an imitation of wasabi with horseradish, mustard, flavoring, etc., along with powdered wasabi. On the one hand, it means it isn't likely the wasabi you are eating is real, while on the other if a restaurant says they use real wasabi, then you should really savor it!



8 Not just for sushi

Outside of Japan you will commonly see wasabi just with sushi and sashimi, but in Japan you can find it being used in a lot of other dishes. It is a versatile condiment which can be seen added to soba noodles, to dipping sauces served with yakiniku, wasabi rice bowls, unagi (eel) chazuke, and more. When in Japan be prepared for some wasabi surprises!

▶ Wasabi is also a popular condiment for beef and other meats in Japan.



9 True wasabi's flavor disappears quickly

If you are lucky enough to get your hands on a real wasabi plant and plan to make some real wasabi paste, then you had better be careful, once you have made it if you leave it uncovered then it would lose its flavor after about 15 minutes. As your wasabi plant is quite precious, and eating real wasabi paste is a treat, you should try only to grate what you need when you need it. This goes for eating at a restaurant serving real wasabi too. If it is real then you need to eat it within 15 minutes or so – don't let it go to waste!



10 Real wasabi lasts quite a long time

In contrast to the short life of grated wasabi, the actual wasabi stem can keep its flavor for months if properly stored. So, although you should only grate as much as you need when you need it, your wasabi stem, under proper conditions, can last for months and be enjoyed again and again.



11 The Food-Borne supremacy

Wasabi has a long history of being used to prevent food poisoning, and just like Jason Bourne, wasabi has been shown capable of wiping out many bad things. Its antibacterial properties have been shown to be highly effective against E. coli and other bacteria, which cause food poisoning. Regular consumption of wasabi is perfect for your body's defenses, and lately, a few pharmaceutical companies have even started using this ingredient in antibacterial creams.



12 The wasabi plant isn't just about the stem

Talking about real wasabi might leave you thinking that the only useful part of the plant is the stem, but if you have a plant, then you should use all of it, including the leaves. These can be eaten pickled (in a dish called "wasabi zuke") or cooked and added to any meal for a little kick, or they can be eaten raw. When you visit Japan, definitely give it a go!

▶ Pickled wasabi - wasabi zuke - is a traditional food in Shizuoka, made by chopping up and salting wasabi roots and stems before pickling the mix in sake lees and seasoning with salt and sugar.



13 Eat a wasabi plant for its nutrition!?

By itself, wasabi is a bit pricey, so it isn't convenient to be eating large amounts every day, but even a little bit will give your body some tremendous nutritional boosts. Besides its antibacterial properties and isothiocyanates, it also anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. The leaves and stems have a lot of calcium and vitamin C too. Besides, in addition to being really good against food poisoning, it is also thought to be useful against allergies, inflammation, and cancer.



Courtesy photos

My faves Japanese frozen food

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPE OKINAWA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

■ Takoyaki

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

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

■ Yaki onigiri

(Roasted Rice Ball by Nichirei, 278 yen)

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

■ Gyoza

(Dumpling by Ajinomoto, 198 yen)

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

■ Ebi fry

(Fried Shrimp by Tolona, 138 yen)

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

■ Karaage

(Fried Chicken by Ajinomoto, 398 yen)

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

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

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ETIQUETTE IN JAPAN

Are Japanese table manners really that different?

LIVE JAPAN

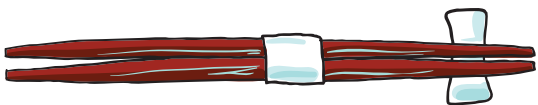
Japan puts a strong emphasis on good manners and, being a culture that uses chopsticks, has its very own set of rules involving them. Let's take a look at the basics of Japanese table manners!

Photos courtesy of LIVE JAPAN



1. While eating: holding the bowl just right

It is proper etiquette to hold up the chawan (tea bowl) and the wan (wooden bowl) while eating. Big bowls, however, should be left on the table as they are. Also, like in many other cultures, it is considered impolite to eat while resting your elbows on the table, and blowing one's nose or making loud noises while eating are frowned upon.



2. Chopstick etiquette

If you learn the proper way to hold chopsticks in your youth, you will always be able to hold them well and leave a positive impression with your skill. They might be a little difficult to use if you are unfamiliar with them, but give it a try. Also, there are many particulars regarding chopstick etiquette in Japan. For example, actions like piercing your food with chopsticks, wondering what to choose next while holding the chopsticks, and sucking the chopsticks are all considered bad behavior.

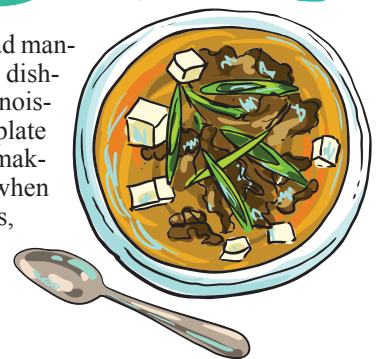


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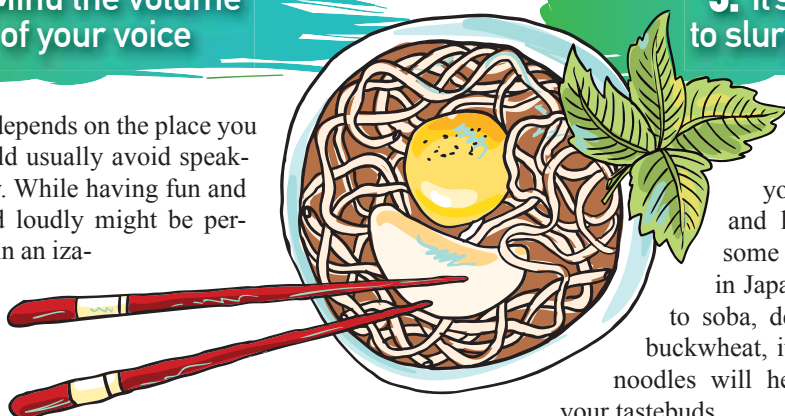
3. Don't make too much noise with the dishes

It is considered bad manners to handle your dishes carelessly and noisily. Tapping your plate with chopsticks or making a commotion when placing down bowls, glasses, and the like is seen as rather rude.



4. Mind the volume of your voice

Though it depends on the place you eat, you should usually avoid speaking too loudly. While having fun and joking around loudly might be perfectly alright in an izakaya, people value their quiet time in most restaurants.



5. It's okay to slurp soba!

While it may be considered impolite to slurp your food in some countries and locales, it is okay to make some noise when eating noodles in Japan. Especially when it comes to soba, delicious noodles made from buckwheat, it is said that slurping up the noodles will help the flavor spread along your tastebuds.



6. "Itadakimasu" and "Gochisosama"

There is a custom to begin and end your meal with a greeting that expresses your gratitude toward the food itself. There is a life force that exists within food, and, as you begin to consume that force, you say itadakimasu (literally, "I humbly receive"). Saying gochisosama (literally, "It was a feast") after the meal is a cultural given. Whether you say it out loud or not depends on the situation. When you are at a quiet place or by yourself, wordless appreciation is just as good as saying the phrase out loud.

Baskin Robbins Japan offering delicious way to rep your Harry Potter house

STRIPE OKINAWA

Whether you're Hufflepuff, Gryffindor or a plain old muggle who geeks out over anything Harry Potter, there are some sweet treats coming for you!

Through Nov. 30, Baskin Robbins Japan will be serving up Harry Potter-themed ice cream concoctions. The collection features a new temporary ice cream flavor, two sundaes and themed cups.

Pledge allegiance to your Hogwarts House with two different Harry Potter Double Cups featuring the house banners (490 yen/710 yen or about \$3.25/\$4.75). Sample the Hogwarts House Delight ice cream, a milk tea-flavored ice cream mixed with four crunchy candies in the house colors red, green, yellow and blue, then spun with a caramel ribbon.

For a more elaborate and Instagrammable treat, choose either the Sorting Sundae or Harry Potter



Hogwarts House Delight ice cream



Gryffindor & Ravenclaw



Slytherin & Hufflepuff



The Harry Potter Sundae

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Sundae. The Sorting Sundae allows you to choose a small scoop of your favorite ice cream flavor, then it is topped with whipped cream, chocolate sauce, golden sprinkles, chocolate shavings and a chocolate cookie sorting hat for 570 yen.

The Harry Potter Sundae (1,100 yen) is a bit larger and includes three "pop" scoops of your favorite

ice cream flavors topped with whipped cream, chocolate and almond brownie pieces, chocolate shavings, and strawberry sauce. What makes this sundae special is the chocolate-covered chocolate glasses, cookies designed with Harry's signature Hogwarts robes, and chocolate-filled crepe cookies inspired by a wizard's wand.

The collection also has an option for families and ice cream lovers, the Harry Potter Trunk Set for 2,920 yen. The cardboard box modeled after Hogwarts students' trunks, opens to reveal nine scoops

of ice cream, one of the Hogwarts House Delight and eight ice cream scoops of your choice. This set includes a limited original spoon with motifs of Harry's buddy Hedwig and Hogwarts acceptance letter.

Does the Potterhead in your life have a birthday in November? Baskin Robbins will also be selling a Harry Potter Ice Cream Cake for 3,200 yen. Inside the cake is Caramel Ribbon x Chocolate with Dark Chocolate Bits ice cream and on the outside are icons of the movie series, including lightning

bolt-shaped yellow whipped cream, a Hedwig, Harry's loyal buddy, in white whipped cream, a chocolate Hogwarts letter, a chocolate Gryffindor House star and a plastic decoration of Harry Potter's glasses.

Just a quick note on Baskin Robbins Japan's ice cream cakes: They are different than what you would get in the States. In Japan, ice cream cakes are missing the cake ingredient. Instead, they are a shaped slab of ice cream that is frosted and decorated, so lacking on the cake but not the sugar!

Hurry in and catch the Harry Potter ice cream before it melts on Nov.10! Don't miss some of Japan's other great Harry Potter attractions like The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour, Diagon Alley at Akasaka in Tokyo, and the Wizarding World at Universal Studios Japan in Osaka.



The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour



Diagon Alley at Akasaka in Tokyo



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STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Nago Castle Park is a hot spot for cherry blossom-viewing in the winter as thousands of visitors come to enjoy the pink blush flowers. Nago-dake, a mountain just at the back of the park, does not receive the same glory. After watching Japanese TV show Nihon Hyaku Teizan (100 low/small mountains in Japan) spotlight Nago-dake, my mind to visit was made up. So, I made a plan to head to this mountain to enjoy early fall in October.

Nago-dake sits at a height of 345 meters, about 20-meters shorter than Onna-dake in Onna Village. Though Nato-Dake may not be known for reaching high places, it makes up for it with other features.

From my experience at Nago Castle Park, I knew there were serval parking spots available. While some of them were located at the bottom of Nago-dake, others were close to the mid-section of the mountain. Trying to make the climbing route as short as possible, I headed to those on a higher ground, which left me three options: an observatory on the north side, Okinawa Prefecture Nago Youth Center, and another observatory on the south side.

Each parking spot offered different climbing routes with different challenges. The one that starts from the north observatory was mostly a paved road, while the other two cut through forested areas. Since I wanted to experience the deep forest landscape, I chose to start from the youth center.

After checking in and receiving a map of the mountain at the youth center, I headed to the start of the trail from a nearby camping ground shortly before 11 a.m. For the first 20 minutes or so, I enjoyed a moderate hike with slightly mountainous, bumpy points, moderate slopes and wooden steps. Unlike Mt. Katsuu or Mt. Ishikawa, where climbers are faced with some challenges, Nago-dake seemed to be very much part of the well-maintained public park. Walking on the road felt more like a picnic than mountain climbing.

Under the shade of the forest, I also enjoyed cool, comfortable temperatures. The buzzing of cicadas reverberated here and there. For a moment, I was under the impression that the summer was still lingering, but I soon discerned the buzzing with a metallic sound that is specific to ooshimazemi (meimuna oshimensis), a type of cicada telling of autumn's arrival on the island. The landscape, though lush, had many brown leaves and no lingering summer flowers.

After a comfortable 40-minute walk, I reached a 3-way intersection.

On Nago-dake, whichever route you encounter several intersections. The signage will tell you when to turn. At this intersection, a “12” sign points up one direction to the peak. I chose to connect to a route going down. A map and the signs posted, however, led to the top seemed easy. However, later, I chose the wrong way.



GPS COORDINATES: N 26.585717, E 128.009996

Parking space is available at Tenjotenbodai (observatory 26.590380, 127.999374), Okinawa Prefecture Nago Youth Center (26.589070, 127.996839), and Ganju Hiroma (southern observatory near Ganju Hiroba, 26.587065, 127.997639)

*If you park your car at Okinawa Prefecture Youth Center you will be required to check in (sign up) and check out at the office.

one. As I went back to the base, I had gone up. Going down the road for an easy return. But on the slope I chose to go down to the peak and stumbled, I could have fallen. I reached the paved road, walked back to the youth center, and saw many butterflies and ferns, making it a mountain and surviving the fall. The views and easy challenge of pace to kick off the fall season is a fun place to enjoy the green. kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



time lake

route you choose, you will
ions. At each of them,
re to go including the
int at your trail map.
meant I could head
k, or a different way
north. Thanks to the
picking the right one
however, 30 minutes
y for “11” on my map.



Fortunately, I
noticed my mis-
take and was able
to correct it before
going too far.

From trail markers “11” to
“10,” the slope, as well as the wooden
stairs, were steeper than at the start,
making it seem very close to the top,
which is number “9” on the map.
When I reached “10,” I found myself
on top of a ridge, where I could take a
good look at the landscape surround-
ing the mountain for the first time and
felt like I was at the summit. To my
surprise, however, I had to go down
steep stairs before going up a final
slope to the top. Without any thick fo-
liage to block the sunlight hitting the
last stretch of the climbing route, I was
covered with sweat. After 20 minutes
of going down and up, a sign that read
“名護岳山頂 標高 三四五M (The
summit of Nago-dake, altitude of 345
m) finally came into my sight.

To be honest, I was not expecting
a view much different from the one I
saw at number “10.” But as soon as
I reached the top, I was blown away.
From the east to the northern forest
to the west coast, it was a panoramic
view I had never seen before in Okina-
wa. On the island where thick shrubs
often ruin the view from mountains,
this was a rarity. Even from Mt. Kat-
suu with a height of 452 meters, I
didn’t have a view this good. The su-
perb landscape was definitely worth
all the sweat.

Reaching the summit was a high-
light for sure, but it was not the last
bottom, I chose a different route from the one
n from “9” to “8” would take me to a paved
at this decision led me to a scary scene. The
rned out to be quite steep. If had lost balance
fallen for 10 meters or even more. Luckily,
without falling. From there, it was still a long
ter, but the path was full of all kinds of but-
t feel like a victory lap after conquering the
steep downhill unscathed.

Challenges of Nago-dake made for a nice change
season. No matter the time of year, Nago-dake
great outdoors at your own speed.





(Left) It can be fun and hard work at the same time, frothing the bubbles for Bukubuku, Okinawa's own tea beverage.
(Below) Watch the tea master at work.
Photos courtesy of Japan Travel

(Below) A Bukubuku afternoon tea set with Chinsuku, a traditional sweet made in Okinawa since the times of the Ryukyu Kingdom.
(Right) The rich minerals in the Okinawa soil makes for a multi-layered taste in the black sugar, sweet and a touch of salt.



Photo by
Maki Paterson, JTO

Okinawa Tea Tasting

The making of Bukubuku

BY BONSON LAM,
JAPAN TRAVEL

A gentle breeze sways the cotton Noren curtain of this café, telling visitors that it is open. A pink Frangipani and the blue skies bring a smile. A lounging cat and the trickle of water in the pond set the mood for relaxation on this cobblestone street filled with potters who have been hand-making kitchenware for centuries.

This is Uchina Bukubuku teahouse, a place of refreshment for sojourners from near and far.

History of Bukubuku Tea

In the sixteenth century, Bukubuku tea was served in the Ryukyu royal court to welcome envoys from neighboring kingdoms across the ocean. Its popularity grew during the Meiji period, particularly with weddings and the entertainment of guests.

Unfortunately, the Bukubuku tea utensils were destroyed in the Second World War. For Shota, it was painful enough to lose his family and friends, but the loss of the tea utensils meant part of his identity was lost until these utensils were found in Tokyo on the main island of Honshu.

It can be too painful to relive the horrors of war, but through the memories of celebrations, Bukubuku provided an opportunity for healing, a time of reconnecting with happier times, times that gave him identity and purpose. It is like the aromas of the tea bring back so strongly, these times that give him the opportunity to articulate the emotions behind his yearnings. It is these stories that are being revived in the Uchina Bukubuku Teahouse.

What was once limited to the royal court, can be experienced today at the Bukubuku teahouse, more than 500 years after its debut. It is amazing that you can still taste Bukubuku tea, made in the same century as when the War of the Roses, the printing press, and Machu Pichu were built.

Making of Bukubuku Tea

Bukubuku is essentially a roast rice tea, which Japanese cuisine connoisseurs may immediately trigger thoughts of Ochazuke, but instead is infused with the fragrance of Jasmine flowers. Unlike Ochazuke, it has notes of sweetness rather than savory or umami.

Jasmine tea was introduced to the Ryukyu kingdom during its trade with the port of Fuzhou during the Han Dynasty whose legacy is celebrated in the Ryukyu Lantern Festival. The jasmine flower used to scent the tea is venerated in Buddhist traditions, almost like incense. Jasmine tea grown in Okinawa is also called Sanpin-cha. Unlike Oolong tea, Sanpin-cha is only lightly fermented, giving it a subtle taste, more like green tea. To prepare Bukubuku, bancha or genmaicha can be added to the Jasmine tea. The aroma of firewood roasted rice tea adds another dimension to the scent of Jasmine flowers.

My first impression of Naha was the spectacle of colors from the coral reefs that greeted me as my flight descended over the harbor to the runway. The geology of southern Okinawa Island is rich with the limestone from the coral, and as the water percolates through these limestone deposits, it becomes hard, allowing tea makers to make lots of bubbles when frothing the tea. The rich minerals in the Okinawa soil make for a multi-layered taste in the black sugar, with a touch of salt, adding to the uniqueness of Bukubuku tea.

I was given an opportunity to make my own Bukubuku. Using a Chasen or tea whisk, I froth the tea until it foams with bubbles. These bubbles are set aside and added back it, making it look like a giant soft serve. Like a Cappuccino, the secret ingredient is the air, creating a texture that is surprisingly addictive. The frothing also brings out the aroma of the roasted rice and the jasmine. Actually, it is hard work frothing it for what seemed like ten minutes, so this is not a drink to be made in a hurry. Of course, you can just watch their artisans froth it for you but making your own Bukubuku is part of the experience here.

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Bukubuku and Matcha

Bukubuku reminds me of a Matcha tea ceremony I attended in Kyoto, but there are a few differences that make it a unique Okinawan experience.

The purity and reverence in witnessing a matcha tea ceremony is truly a moment of meditation, which can be likened to the austerity of a Eucharist commemoration. It recalls the days when priests created tea rooms with doors that were so short that guests had to kneel to come in, to literally humble themselves when they enter this sacred space. Even the samurai had to leave their swords at the door.

Bukubuku on the other hand had a sense of theatre. The presentation of Bukubuku to visiting envoys was visual and textural, and even today, the tea bowl, foam, and whisk look oversized. Drinking Bukubuku can be challenging for beginners since the foam on top is huge and you need to first eat the foam with a spoon before you can drink the tea. The subtle fragrance of roasted rice and jasmine means you are not just eating air bubbles. With so much foam, it is easy to end up with bubbles on your nose, bringing laughter to the newly initiated class clown. The name itself is an onomatopoeia as if the sound of the bubbles is part of the fun, the essence of an Okinawan tea party.

The cloudy Bukubuku reminds me of Korean “rice milk” though neither is made with milk, despite its cloudiness, making it perfect for vegans. However, like milk tea or coffee, Bukubuku is often paired with sweets, such as shaved ice or Taimo Dengaku, literally field potatoes boiled with brown sugar syrup.

Philosophy of teahouse

This is a perfect place to relax after a morning of sightseeing, and so it is only open between lunch and sunset. It is a place of Zen, after the energy of the morning is dissipated. Behind the tea house is a gallery featuring local folk art and crafts.

In the distance, you can see glimpses of the port, where ships take traders and passengers from distant islands. An ancient poet once said that “Buku Buku brings good luck on the day of departure. If you serve Buku Buku and send someone off, he or she will return to port safely.” This is an auspicious drink with a promise of a future reunion.

Awamori or Bukubuku

There is a longstanding debate as to whether Awamori or Bukubuku should take the crown of Okinawa's signature beverage. Alcohol or not, both drinks, along with Amazake and Sake, revolve around rice, which itself is revered in Japan. A drink made with rice may seem strange, but no one doubts the taste or the craftsmanship that goes into the making of sake or awamori.

Baisao, an 18th Century philosopher once said:

“Whether stranger or friend, knows my true mind. Sake fuels the vital spirits; works like courage, Tea works benevolently, purifying the soul. Courageous feats that put the world in your debt Couldn't match the benefit benevolence brings.”



Go back to a quieter time in the Bukubuku tea house.



Enjoy tea the traditional way.
Photo courtesy of Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau



GETTING THERE

It is a short stroll from Ukishima Garden, famous for its vegetarian lunches and dinners, and also the Taste of Okinawa cooking school, which features pottery from this area.



Burger joint Captain Kangaroo in Nago now hot spot for taco rice

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Before 2020, Captain Kangaroo near Tapic Stadium Nago was known for its hearty burgers. Now, this burger joint has become a spot to grab Okinawa's signature dish, taco rice.

If you love Captain Kangaroo's burgers, don't worry! You can still try their Sparky burger, Mexican taco burger and more at their new location in Motobu-cho. These two restaurants belong to the same chain and also have branches in Osaka and Ishinomaki.

I stopped by the colorful beach house-looking restaurant in Nago for a taco rice lunch. Their vast menu included some familiar names. But instead of burgers, they were for taco rice plates. It was a difficult choice to choose between the Special Cheese Taco Rice, the Teriyaki Chicken Rice, and others, but in the end, I went with the Spicy Chicken Rice for 900 yen (about \$6) and a Cola Zero for 300 yen.

While I waited, I enjoyed the colorful interior, which reminded me of the burgers I had had at their branch in Motobu-cho.

When the food arrived, I was amazed at the generous presentation. Chunks of fried chicken were piled high on white rice and topped with a red sauce, so it looked more like a volcano than taco rice. As soon as I dug in, the flavors caught me off guard. First, I got the spicy kick I was expecting, but then a sweetness set in to ease the heat.

The chicken itself was fried to perfection and still tender. I was hooked and finished every morsel of this delicious meal.

According to the manager, Toru "Max William" Shoji, the Spicy Chicken Rice flavor is achieved with sweet chili sauce. Shoji also said that the Special Cheese Taco Rice is the most popular menu item, and the Teriyaki Chicken Rice is the popular choice among American customers.

The beef-based taco rice at Captain Kangaroo is different than anywhere else thanks to its use of coarser ground beef, the manager added.

I was too full from my filling Spicy Chicken Rice lunch for any other taste tests, but I will definitely be returning to try other taco rice dishes at Captain Kangaroo.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



Things to know

GPS COORDINATES: 26.59528, 127.95816

HOURS: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. (last order)

*Closed on Wed.

*Parking space available by the joint.



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The rise, fall and comeback of batting cages in Japan

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

In 2011, Kitashirakawa Batting Center in Kyoto, was closed for good, calling an end to its more than four decades of batting cage glory. It was a very popular spot when I was a college student about 20 years ago. When Fridays came around, the place was packed with people looking to relieve stress by taking cuts at 90 mph fastballs, or young couples flirting over 60 mph balls before moving onto other amusement available at the same location.

Batting cages may be an amusement whose heyday has long passed. According to Weekly Playboy, a Japanese magazine unrelated to the American magazine of the same name, the first batting cage debuted in Tokyo in 1965, and was followed by many other facilities in the late 60s and 70s. According to the report, the popularity of the amusement held in the 80s, leading to the launch of a ground breaking system in the 90s which made it possible to throw various pitches including breaking balls by using two rotatable discs. In the early 2000s, many of these facilities closed. Declines in birth rate and popularity of baseball, or increase of diversity in amusement were cited as the

reasons for the downfall.

The closure of the batting cage in Kyoto, which opened in 1970, would attest to the rise and fall of the amusement.

"The popularity of batting cage was at the highest when our company started, back in 1966. I would assume now they are down to about 700," Mr. Yamamoto of Kinki Kresco, a long-established maker of batting cage equipment says.

It's hard to track the precise number of batting cages, as they are not officially registered, but the decline looks evident. Weekly Playboy quoted a survey that indicated there were 541 batting cages in Japan as of 2014, showing a decrease of 269 from 2001. However, it is still too early to say that the batting cage is dead, as it has been making somewhat of a comeback in the Japanese pop-culture scene lately.

Masashi Yoshioka, a famous batting cage enthusiast who has visited more than 800 batting cages in Japan, was recently featured in several TV and radio shows, talking about the rise of unique batting cages; ones where you can swing at 142 mph fastballs, or earn prize money for home runs, or even practice fielding.

Plus, in a TV show called "Real Yakuyu Ban (Real Baseball Pinball)," a pitching machine was used to let professional

players virtually face a pitcher on a monitor controlled by TV talents. The way the pros were fooled by the virtual pitcher drew much attention and contributed to the popularity of the show. Nikkan Sports, a Japanese sports journal, reported in November of 2015 that then Manager Yoshinobu Takahashi of the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants, decided to introduce the machine to the team's training, as he was impressed with the quality and variety of the pitches it can throw. According to Mr. Yamamoto of Kinki Cresco, the maker of the system, the virtual pitching machine is now a very popular system at batting cages in Japan.

Here on Okinawa, there are several batting cages facilities still running. Although they may not provide fastballs with ridiculous velocities, some of them have unique features. There is a batting cage facility that introduced a "strikeout game" to let customers try their skills of locating pitches by throwing at targets in the strike zone. Others host home run competitions where you can earn gift cards.

Even though some of them look retro, like the now-closed amusement complex in Kyoto, batting cages continue to stay relevant on this southern island.

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Where to take your cuts on Okinawa

CHATAN SPORTS CENTER

- GPS Coordinates: N 26.324864, E 127.763463 (South of Kadena Air Base)
- Hours: 8 a.m. – 11 p.m.
- Tel: (098) 936-7011
- Web: <https://chatan-spc.com/batting/>
- Notes: A sports complex. 30 pitches for 200 yen. Velocity ranges from 80 to 140 kmph (approx. 50 to 87 mph.)



AMEKU SPORTS LAND

- GPS Coordinates: N 26.236235, E 127.684055
- Hours: 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.
- Website: <https://www.amekufamilysports.com/>
- Notes: An amusement complex with pool tables, video games, darts, ping-pong. Velocity ranges from 70 – 145kmph (approx. 43 to 90 mph). 10 plates. 20 pitches for 200 yen. Home run competitions take place periodically.



ROUND ONE

- GPS Coordinates: N 26.275824, E 127.731014
- Hours: 10 a.m. – 6 a.m. (subject to change)
- Website: <https://www.round1.co.jp/shop/tenpo/okinawa-ginowan.html>
- Tel: 098-870-2110



- Notes: There are batting cages as part of Spo-cha service. 90 minutes for 2,590 yen (2,790 yen on Sat. Sun. holidays)



ENAGIC SPORTS WORLD SOUTHERN HILLS

- GPS Coordinates: N 26.20808, E 127.72836
- Hours: 1 – 10 p.m. (weekdays), 9 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Sat, Sun, and holidays)
- Website: <https://www.southern-hill.com/live/battingcage/>
- Notes: An amusement/sports complex with skate rink, bowling alley, ping-pong etc. 200 yen for 25 pitches. Velocity ranges from 70 – 140 kmph (approx. 43 – 87 mph). 10 plates



Kevin Vega, from Kadena Air Base, swings at a fastball at Chatan Sports center.



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San-Ae



A day of exploration on Yagaji Beach

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Yagaji Beach is located by Route 110, which connects the northwest coast of Okinawa's main island and Yagaji Island. I passed by this beach when I toured the Motobu Peninsula by bike back in February. Its peaceful waters looked beautiful and soothing.

Several months after that, the view still lingered on my mind. So, I decided to go back there. According to the beach's website, people can enjoy camping, BBQ, and kayaking there. For me, BBQ was the top priority because it had been a while since I enjoyed grilling on the beach.

Because I don't own a grill, I made a reservation to rent one on-site. I also pre-ordered food (beef, sausage, chicken on a stick, and vegetables) so I could just go there without too much preparation.

Renting a grill set cost me 3,000 yen (approx. \$20), and a total of 2,500 yen was charged for food. Plus, I rented a pop-up shade for 1,000 yen.

Paying 500 yen for the admission fee at the entrance, I drove into a camping site, which was a long stretch of lawn that ran along the coast. The lush green area was well maintained and comfortable. I pulled into a spot facing a small islet that floats not far from the shore.

The barbecue grill I rented was compact and easy to handle. As soon as I lit the charcoal, my appetite began to grow. I decided to cook up the vegetables first. I am sure there are proper ways to grill vegetables, but every time I barbecue, that curiosity doesn't last long because of my appetite for beef. And

this day was no exception. As soon as the edge of cabbages and onions turned brown, I took them off the grill to make room for the main dish.

Sizzling on the grill under the hot sun, the red beef looked even more appetizing than usual. As I grilled the beef and sausages, the aroma kept me tipsy, even without alcohol.

When I was done with grilling, it was around 12:30 p.m. I seated myself on a log with a plate full of grilled food in my hands, facing the ocean and the islet. I certainly felt tired after cooking in the strong sunshine. Still, with one bite of the beef, the fatigue was off my mind. While enjoying the grilled food and ocean view, I thought back to my childhood when my family camped out by the ocean and enjoyed the same food.

Once my stomach was full, I was ready to explore the ocean, which looked very enticing.

It was around 1 p.m. The tide was low, and a line of sand was exposed above the water, connecting the shore to that islet. According to the beach's staff, this natural bridge is commonly called "pure road" and is believed to bring happiness if visitors cross it to the small island. If they happen to be couples, the trip can bring romance, at least that's what the beach's website

says. Although I was alone on that day, a walk on the sandy bridge to the islet seemed like the thing to do, even if it didn't bring some luck for love.

The distance to the islet was about 150 meters. The sandy road felt a little bumpy under my beach sandals. Up close, the islet looked enormous.

Just like many other rocks and islets around Okinawa, this one has a skinny bottom, making it look like a giant mushroom. The top was covered with shrubs and trees. The huge structure was composed of two parts: one big rock and a small one lining up horizontally to the shore. There was a gap between the two, through which I could see two more islets floating in the distance. There were a few people around those islets. They must have walked through the low tide to get there. So, I decided to follow their steps.

As I left the first islet and headed to the second, the water remained shallow. At times the surface of water reached my

thighs, but it soon subsided back to below my knees. Here and there, small fish were swimming by. There were also sea cucumbers lying at the bottom.

After going more than 200 meters, I came close to the second islet. There was also another one about 50 meters away. The one close to me had a cave that ran from the front to its back. Out of curiosity and also looking for some shade, I decided to explore the cave.

Inside, the grotto was low-lit by the sunlight bounced off some puddles of water. In the dusky space, I could see several crabs hiding themselves in between cracks on the rocks. I was not sure what other creatures were lurking, but I didn't feel any danger.

I just sat there for several minutes, enjoying the view of the shore through the mouth of the cave. The waters around the islet cast blue light into the cave, creating a relaxing atmosphere.

When I left the islet with a cave after 10 minutes or so, I spotted a possible danger for the first time. As was I walking to the other islet, there was something transparent floating on the surface of the water and less than a meter from me. It took me several seconds to realize it was a jellyfish. Although I was not sure if it was a box jellyfish, the idea of encountering potentially dangerous life forms made me nervous.

Recently I heard several news reports where locals or tourists were stung by this marine creature with toxic venom. So, I quickly left the area. Fortunately, the waters remained shallow and posed no difficulties. The last islet I visited looked similar to the first one. As I walked around, I spotted another jellyfish waiting for me. Taking it as a sign of a point of no return, I decided to head back.

By the time I was back on the shore, the tide was getting high. I spent some time just watching the natural bridge gradually disappear.

In total, I probably walked about 1 kilometer in the water. Exploring such a distance in the ocean without swimming was something I had never experienced in Okinawa. I felt tired for sure, but also very much satisfied with my time on Yagaji Beach.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

ADMISSION (single day trip)

500 yen for 12 years old and above, 300 yen for between 11 and three years of age

*During busy season such as Golden Week, the above fees are adjusted to 750 yen and 450 yen respectively.

HOURS: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (for a day trip)

*You can also spend the night camping or staying at an on-site lodge. In that case, the admission fees will be 1,000 yen for 12 years old and above, 600 yen for between 11 and three years of age.

*Reservation required.

*For more information, contact Yagaji Beach Office at 0980-52-8123 or <https://yagaji-beach.com/contact-en>

*The beach's office says their swimming season ends in October. It will be at your

own responsibility to get in the water during winter time. You can enjoy BBQ there with no problem.

GPS COORDINATES:

N 26.647958

E 128.033799

Costs for BBQ food range from 1,500 to 15,000 yen depending on the number of participants and the type of food.



WEBSITE





Photo by MichaelMaggs_Creative Commons

How to play Pachinko

Anime-themed pachinko machine comes to Japan

JAPAN TRAVEL

Too many visitors to Japan have never played the game of pachinko, even though the country—whether you're in Tokyo or Hokkaido—is packed with pachinko shops. With flashing lights, swirling sounds and hundreds of tiny metal balls, Pachinko, or Japanese pinball, is a must-try for any tourist looking for the “Japan experience.”

Trust us, you've never seen anything like it, and this article features two powerhouses of Japanese culture wrapped into one: an anime-themed pachinko machine. After learning the ins and outs of this anime-themed “DD Hokuto no Ken”, or in English, “DD Fist of the North Star” pachinko machine, you should be more than ready to engage in your first dazzling pachinko endeavor.

About DD Fist of the North Star

“DD Fist of the North Star” is a current Japanese comic or “manga” series based on the popular 1980s manga series of nearly the same name, “Fist of the North Star.” Both versions were adapted into anime series. DD Fist of the North Star's storyline is set in an alternative world in the year 199X, where a nuclear war from the original story arc never occurred. With this extra cute version of the series adapted to a pachinko setting, you'll be in for a frenetic experience.

Basics of Pachinko

The game, which is sort of like pinball mixed with slots, gained popularity in the 1940s, and now Japan is home to more than 12,500 pachinko parlors, according to a BBC article. To start, a player inserts cash into the machine to get small metal balls, which the player then launches into the machine with a lever. Some balls fall out of bounds, while some land into bonus areas, usually resulting in a chance to win more balls.

Every time you walk into a pachinko parlor, the sights and sounds are sort of like a mini Las Vegas. Typically the player cashes out and gets a prize, which can later be traded for other goods as well as

the counter in a pachinko parlor.

Each pachinko machine has different nuances.

1. Put money in the machine (cash only) on the left side.
2. Press the ‘Play’ button (marked ‘玉貸’).
3. Turn the round lever, which will let metal balls shoot out. Continuously hold it, so balls keep shooting out.
4. Aim the balls for the upper left area of the pachinko board.

Special Features of the DD Fist of the North Star machine

The featured game has a jackpot payout rate of 1/319, meaning it's a high-risk, high-reward game. But, go big or go home, right? It's important to pay attention to bonus, special time and the jackpot aspects of the game. During regular play, you do not want to turn the dial all the way. A moderate turn will help you aim for the upper left area. But, during a bonus time, turn the dial with full strength to push the balls all the way to the right.

Slot Jackpot / Special Time

Watch to see if three matching symbols appear on the slot machine. This is the jackpot, and getting it puts the machine into payout mode. During “Special Time” the probability of doing well increases.

Balls drop into bonus pockets, causing flashing lights and other effects. Different colors and flashing lights in the game can show a higher degree to which you can expect a chance to get a bonus. For example, a rainbow spectrum color signals the highest probability of chance for this game. Additional “big chance predictions” are: a group of characters on the screen, letters or backgrounds have a pattern (instead of solid), and other color shifts. Please see the YouTube video for more information.

Now, you're ready to experience gaming in Japan with the DD Fist of the North Star pachinko machine. For the real Japanese experience, come to Japan to play pachinko!

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GSA Global Supply® is now storing and delivering approximately 750 high-demand National Stock Number (NSN) items formerly stored in and shipped from the continental United States. The change reduces delivery time to a few days from weeks or months.

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Cynthia McKeague

The program does not replace existing retail stores managed by GSA in Japan. For more information, please contact your local Customer Service Director Cynthia McKeague at cynthia.mckeague@gsa.gov.

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Stripes Sports Trivia

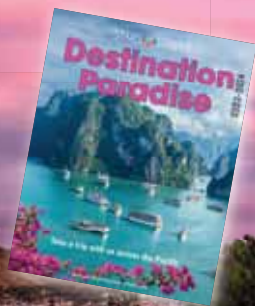
Japan has produced some very good players in MLB, including a future Hall of Famer in Ichiro and a World Series MVP in Hideki Matsui. Shohei Otani moved to the MLB in 2018. Who was the first player to make the move from Japan to the MLB. Hint: He was a pitcher, but probably not the one you're thinking of.

Answer

Masanori Murakami

Exploring the Beauty of the Pacific

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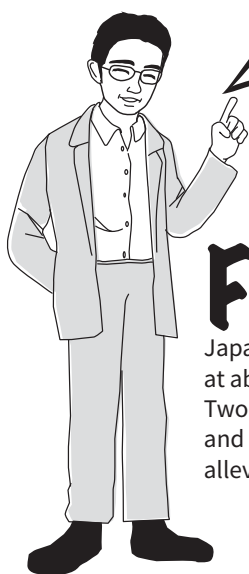
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Kanji of the week

牛

Ushi/gyu (cow/beef)

Language Lesson

I have headache.

Atama ga itai desu.

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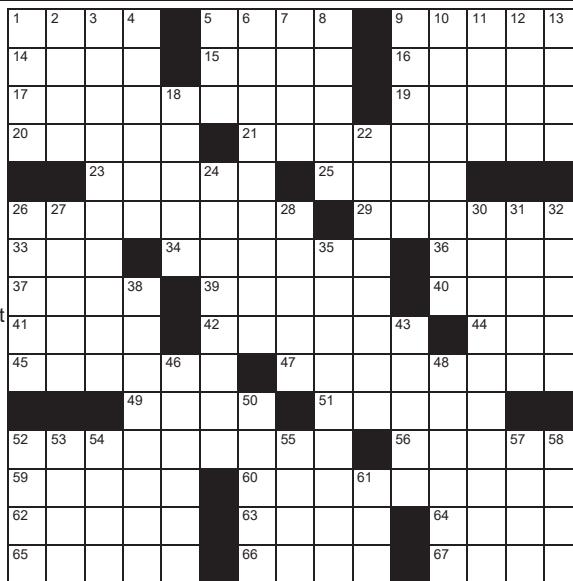
Digital edition also available. Download online.

Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Bomb, as a mid-term
- 5 Lengthy narrative
- 9 Rustling sound
- 14 Latvian capital
- 15 Babe with a bat
- 16 "Deed I Do" singer Lena
- 17 Haughtiness
- 19 Love, in Lyon
- 20 Indian condiment
- 21 "Survivor" event
- 23 Entice
- 25 Trash bag closers
- 26 What bell-bottoms do
- 29 Camera stand
- 33 Abbr. in some military titles
- 34 Fast too long
- 36 Potted "pet"
- 37 Elevator pioneer
- 39 Cowpoke's charge
- 40 Potter's oven
- 41 Basketball defense
- 42 Donkey sound
- 44 Grant permission
- 45 Mesh, as gears
- 47 Save for later
- 49 Growing business?
- 51 Gets soupy, as ice cream
- 52 Yellow-flowered plant
- 56 Classical language
- 59 Watchful
- 60 Huge victory
- 62 Late newsman Morley
- 63 Parasitic insects
- 64 Had the answer
- 65 Contest submission
- 66 Multitude
- 67 Adriatic and Aegean



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DOWN

- 1 Peck film, "Cape"
- 2 Surrounding glow
- 3 Irksome
- 4 Riot opportunist
- 5 Memorable time
- 6 Use a comma
- 7 Monroe's "The Seven Year"
- 8 Swindle
- 9 Ship like Ahab's
- 10 Pining while away
- 11 Pressing need?
- 12 Tight
- 13 Roll-call response
- 18 Midway attractions
- 22 Able to read and write
- 24 Earthenware fragment
- 26 Stopped in one's tracks
- 27 Acknowledge

- 28 Arborist's concern
- 30 Goliath, e.g.
- 31 Drunk as a skunk
- 32 "Divine Comedy" author
- 35 Intensity
- 38 Ocean voyager
- 43 Room dividers
- 46 Sinclair Lewis' Elmer

- 48 Celery servings
- 50 "Pollyanna" actress Hayley
- 52 Bulk buy
- 53 Verve
- 54 Word before field or wing
- 55 Finger part
- 57 Brainchild
- 58 It's breaking, at times
- 61 Morning drops

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

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.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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

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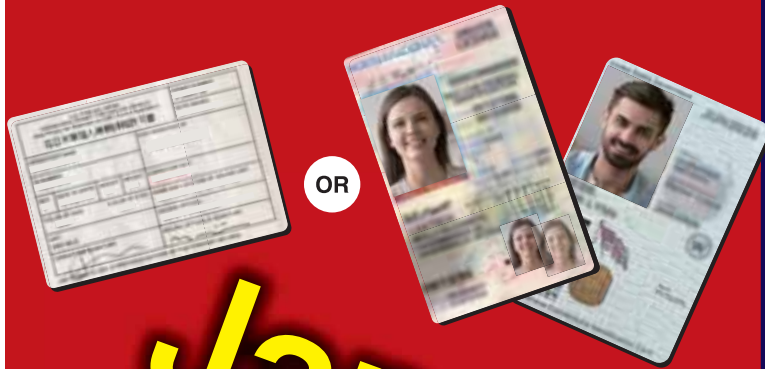
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