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Savor the Japanese tradition of eating grilled eel to beat the heat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES OKINAWA

In Japan, there are many products to help you cool off in the steamy, damp summer months. Whether it's cooling spray, frozen neck rings, hand-held fans or slightly-salted electrolyte drinks and jellies, you've got options.

Another option, eating unagi freshwater eel, is a favorite among locals since the grilled and sauced delicacy is thought to help curb summer heat and fatigue.

In particular, it is custom to eat eel on the "Midsummer Day of the Ox," according to Japanese Zodiac. In 2026, the Midsummer Day of the Ox falls on both July 26 and August 7.

Though it might not look very appealing, unagi is delicious and nutritious. If you have not sampled it yet, I strongly encourage you try Japan's traditional delicacy in form of unaju (broiled eel on rice, served in a lacquered bento box) or unadon (broiled eel on rice, served in a ceramic bowl) at a specialized eel restaurant.

The dish, popular but not an inexpensive meal, will set you back around

4,000-7,000 yen (\$23 – \$47) at most unagi restaurants. A wallet-friendly option is visiting a depachika (department store basement floor) or convenience store where you can snag some unagi for 1,000 to 3,000 yen.

Mark your calendar and try some eel on July 26 and August 7. Or, if you're desperate to escape the heat, don't hesitate to go to your local unagi shop now. Let's get reenergized in midsummer with tasty unagi eel!

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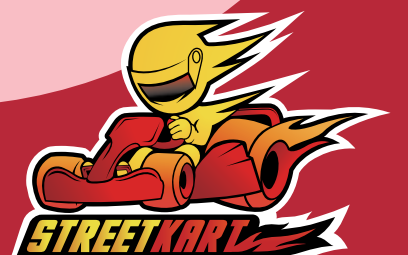
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Not only matcha!

8 Tasty Tea Varieties in Japan

LIVE JAPAN

The act of drinking tea is an integral part of many cultures throughout the world. This is especially true in Japan, where tea is served in the home and in business situations as a welcoming gesture, as well as during the traditional tea ceremony called 'sado.' When Japanese tea is mentioned, the most typical image that comes to mind is undoubtedly, green tea. However, it is certainly not the only tea consumed in Japan; the Japanese enjoy a large varieties of tea, both hot and chilled. Regardless of the type, it is safe to say that tea is one of the most widely drunk beverages in Japan.

The choices are so plentiful that they may even be a bit overwhelming to international visitors. How to choose which tea to drink? With a little knowledge of the types of tea available in Japan, you can find the perfect tea to complement your breakfast or afternoon break.

How to Drink Tea in Japan

Tea in Japan can be enjoyed in a number of ways. Of course, there is sado, the traditional tea ceremony, during which the tea is prepared and drunk in a ritual method. However, drinking tea isn't limited to formal occasions. In fact, tea is a part of Japanese daily life. It is often served in restaurants free of charge, accompanying, or sometimes in lieu of water.

Tea of various kinds can be found in just about any vending machine, convenience store, or supermarket. High quality loose leaf teas, as well as the traditional Japanese teapots called kyusu, can be found at tea specialty shops throughout Japan. For a convenient cup of tea, teabags can also be purchased in many places. While Japanese tea, is typically drunk straight, English style tea is often enjoyed with milk, sugar, honey, or lemon.

In Japan, the plastic bottles containing tea and other beverages are called "PET bottles." With the country's commitment to recycling, it is important to always dispose of any empty PET bottles in the proper recycling bin. Also note that it is often requested that the cap be removed and placed separately.

You may often find PET bottles come with a small free present attached, called 'omake'! Some popular omake include cell-phone strap charms, magnets, or PET bottle covers.

Tea Varieties in Japan

There are so many varieties of tea in Japan that it can be difficult choose! While 'nihon-cha,' meaning 'Japanese tea' (this includes green teas, mugicha, and genmai-cha), is an ever-popular choice, foreign-born teas, such as Jasmine and English, are also enjoyed by many people as well.



1 Matcha

(Powdered Green Tea)
抹茶

Simply speaking, matcha is powdered green tea, and most famous for its use in traditional Japanese tea ceremonies. It is grown from the same plants as the green tea brewed from leaves, however the growing and harvesting process is somewhat different. The tea plants used for matcha are shade-grown in the weeks leading up to harvest, which causes it to have more caffeine and theanine than standard green tea.

Instead of steeping leaves in water, to make matcha, the powder is dissolved in liquid. Tea using hot water is the most traditional way to consume matcha, but recently matcha lattes made with milk and sometimes a bit of sugar have become a very popular way of consuming matcha. You may also find matcha added to bottled, loose-leaf, and tea bag style ocha for an enhanced flavor.



Photo courtesy of Live Japan



2 Green Tea

お茶(ocha)
緑茶(ryoku-cha)
日本茶(nihon-cha)

Green in color, this is the classic tea made from Japanese tea leaves. Although 'o-cha,' meaning simply 'tea,' can generally refer to any tea, in Japan, it is most often used to describe green tea. Green tea can also be called ryoku-cha (緑茶), which literally means 'green tea.' This tea contains some caffeine, although not nearly as much as coffee. Green tea can also range from mild to strong, with darker colored teas signifying a slightly bitter, deep flavor.



3 Mugicha

(Barley Tea)
麦茶・むぎ茶

You may be wondering how a tea made with roasted barley, rather than actual tea leaves makes the list, but in fact, mugicha is one of the most popular teas in Japan! This caffeine-free drink is enjoyed by children and adults alike for its health benefits, as well as its rich, nutty flavor.



4 Houjicha

(Roasted Green Tea)
ほうじ茶

This Kyoto-born tea owes its toasty taste, low-caffeine content, and reddish-brown color to the roasting process that the green tea leaves undergo. Rather than simply being steamed like standard green teas, the tea leaves used in hojicha are roasted over charcoal, giving the tea a distinct flavor that is bold, but mellow.



5 Genmaicha

(Roasted Brown Rice Tea)
玄米茶

If you happen to hear a crackling sound as hot water is being poured over your tea leaves, there is a good chance you are drinking genmaicha. Made from green tea leaves and roasted brown rice, this tea is colloquially known as 'popcorn tea' because of the popping sound the brown rice makes during brewing. It has a lower caffeine content than the standard green tea, and a subtle roasted rice flavor that differentiates it from standard green tea.



6 Jasumin-cha

(Jasmine Tea)
ジャスミン茶

Another tea originating from China, Jasmine tea has the distinct flavor and aroma of Jasmine blossoms. It is often made using green tea leaves, but typically speaking, contains much less caffeine (if any) than regular green tea.



7 Uron-cha

(Oolong Tea)
烏龍茶・ウーロン茶

Although Oolong is known as being a Chinese variety, this deliciously smooth tea is very popular in Japan as well. It has more caffeine than green tea, but still less than coffee. It is also the featured ingredient in a Japanese cocktail called oolong-hai, in which it is mixed with a traditional Japanese hard liquor called shochu.



8 Koucha

(Black Tea)
紅茶

In addition to Asian teas, British-style tea is also available in Japan. Be warned though: asking a Japanese person for 'black tea,' will lead to an entirely different drink from what you were expecting! This is because in Japan, English tea is called koucha, the direct translation of which is actually 'red tea.' (What the Japanese call black tea, or 'kuro-cha,' is actually a kind of fermented Chinese tea.) Koucha includes sweetened, unsweetened, milky, and fruit teas, to suit anyone's taste. Although traditionally black tea contains the highest caffeine amount of any tea, some Japanese brands are specifically made with a low-caffeine content.

Japan: A Country of Tea!

With so many varieties available, one may say that Japan is the country of tea! Whether you are interested in traditional green tea, or one of the newest flavored bottled teas, there is surely a tea for everyone. Try them all during your visit to Japan!

Okinawa's juicy, sweet pineapples a summer treat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPE OKINAWA

In Japan, pineapples grow in only two prefectures: Okinawa and Kagoshima. Though the majority of the pineapples are grown in Okinawa, the sweet and tangy fruit requires acidic soil, well-drained land and high temperatures found in only certain parts of the prefecture.

Conditions for the fruit to thrive exist in the farms up north in Okinawa's Yambaru region and Ishigaki Island. Higashi Village, which provides the bulk of pineapple production in the prefecture, has roughly 180 farmers growing 10 juicy varieties, according to Ogimi

Village's tourism association.

Okinawans were first introduced to the fruit in the mid-19th century when a plant washed up on Ishigaki island in 1868, probably from a Dutch ship stranded nearby.

Soon pineapple was being farmed on Ishigaki Island and on Okinawa's main island. Back then, the plants only provided small pineapples. It wasn't until the Showa Era (1926-1989), according to the Higashi Village website, that Okinawa finally had pineapples as we know them today.

Japan Agricultural Co-operative (JA) notes that the fruit is produced in Okinawa from May through July.

Supermarkets across the island and Japan's mainland stock up on the delicious fruit during this time.

During the season, you'll find ways to enjoy the juicy, sweet fruit fresh, canned or in sweets like Ryukyusu cookies and more. Restaurants even serve up Hawaiian pizza, curry rice with pineapple and subuta, a sweet and sour pork dish made with delicious Okinawan pineapple.

You can even visit Okinawa's Pineapple Park, a theme park dedicated to the fruit. Here, you can see various types of pineapple growing there, and even ride an electric-powered train through the jungle-like park.

There are plenty of ways to enjoy pineapple on the island, so make sure to take advantage of the season to sample Okinawa's juicy, sweet varieties.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



Pineapple types to try

Smooth Cayenne

This type has a good balance between sweetness, sourness, and juiciness. This is one of the most common pineapples in Okinawa.

Pokotto Pineapple (Snacking pineapple)

With this type, you can tear it open with your hands and eat it like you do with snacks. Its Japanese name came from the sound you would hear when you tear its flesh.

Peach Pineapple

Also known as "Milk Pineapple", this type has white flesh. You may find it not much different from the other kinds of pineapple in terms of how it looks from the outside. Once you slice it, though, this fruit delicately smells like a peach.

Gold Barrel

This is a rare and precious kind of pineapple, accounting for only one percent of all the pineapples domestically produced. It takes three years before being harvested. The name came from the fact that the fruit has gold flesh and a figure of barrel. Averaging 1.4 kg to 2.8 kg in weight, it weighs twice as much as regular ones.

Jewelry Pineapple

This type is known for its plump flesh and rich sweetness that comes home to your taste buds. Its name came from its rich juiciness and flesh that looks like a gem.

**Information from Orion Beer Co., Ltd.



Pineapple Park

HOURS: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Last admission 5:30 p.m.)

GPS COORDINATES: 26.61650, 127.96958

ENTRANCE FEES: Adult (16 years old and over) 1,500 yen / Child (4-15 years old) 800 yen / Under 4 years old: Free



Fry bitter melon and beat the heat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPE OKINAWA

If you live on Okinawa, you might have heard about goya, a local cucumber-like vegetable also known as bitter melon. As the name suggests, this green, bumpy veggie has a bitter taste but is a favorite in the summer season. Goya is also considered an Okinawan superfood as it is rich in vitamin-C,

iron, and fiber, which are thought to be ideal for good health especially in the summer heat.

Goya is great raw in a salad, but the most popular way to consume this treat is fried up in goya champuru, a stir fry. Cooking it with other foods such as tofu, bacon, and eggs, you can lighten up the bitter taste.

Why don't you try some goya champuru and beat the summer heat?

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

Ingredients (for two people)

- One Goya bitter melon (approx. 300g)
- Bacon (50g)
- Tofu (200g)
- Two eggs
- Pepper and salt (small amount)
- Dried Bonito flakes (as much as you want)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash goya, tofu, and eggs with water.
2. Cut goya into thin slices of about 5mm (approx. 0.2 inch) thickness.
3. Dice tofu into small cubes of about 2cm (approx. 0.8 inch) sides.
4. Cut bacon into small slices of 1cm (approx. 0.4 inch) width.
5. Beat eggs in a bowl.
6. Pour olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat, and add tofu.
7. Add bacon and continue frying.
8. Add in sliced goya.
9. After the ingredients start to soften and brown, stir in beaten eggs and a pinch of salt.
10. Cook through until the eggs are done.
11. Plate your stir-fry and sprinkle with pepper and dried bonito flakes.

*Add olive oil if necessary when frying

*The amount of each ingredient mentioned above is just for reference. Please add or reduce them to cater to your taste.

Check it out



BY VERONICA CARNEVALE,
JAPAN TRAVEL

JAPANESE URBAN LEGENDS

Are you brave enough to make it to the end?

Whether you are seeking scary stories for the Halloween season or simply looking for hair-raising tales, Japan's urban legends have you covered.

These modern stories have vague origins and are often told as truth, since they cannot be confirmed or disproved, heightening their believability and horror. Japan's breadth of culture has conjured tales of vengeful onryo (malevolent spirits), yurei (modern ghosts), and yokai (spirits in Japanese folklore) that continue to terrify generations. As with any oral story, there are multiple variations of these tales. Listed below are popular iterations of Japan's most chilling urban legends. Be sure to take notes should you be unlucky enough to encounter one of these unpleasant characters.

Turn off the lights and make sure no one is watching you from the dark. Let's begin.

As some of these tales can be gruesome and disturbing, reader discretion is advised!

Aka Manto (Red Cloak)

We begin our first story in the bathroom, a seemingly popular place for Japanese urban legends. Aka Manto is a male spirit who dons a red cloak and mask and is said to haunt school and public restrooms with a particular fondness for the last stall in the women's bathroom. Once you are seated in the stall, you will hear a male voice ask if you want red or blue paper. Choose your words carefully. If you say red paper, you will meet a bloody end, and if you say blue paper, you will

be suffocated to death until you are blue. If you try to confuse the spirit by asking for a different color paper, you will be dragged into hell. To avoid a brutal end at Aka Manto's hand, simply refuse his offer and run.

Kuchisake-onna (Slit-Mouthed Woman)

Anyone who is familiar with Japanese urban legends, knows of the infamous, yet popular, Kuchisake-onna. This vengeful ghost appears as a seemingly beautiful woman who roams the streets at night. She wears a face mask and carries a concealed pair of scissors.

If you are unlucky enough to meet Kuchisake-onna during a solitary stroll, she will ask you if you think she is beautiful. As with Aka Manto, consider your answer like your life depends on it (since it does). If you say no, she will immediately murder you with her scissors. If you say yes, she will remove her face covering to reveal a gaping mouth that has been slit from ear to ear in a haunting smile. Then, she will ask again: say 'no' and you die, but stick with 'yes' and she will slit your mouth like hers. The only way to escape Kuchisake-onna, is to tell her that she looks average.

If you are concerned about possible encounters with Kuchisake-onna or any of the other ghouls, why

not try testing your survival skills at Tokyo's top haunted house attractions. If you fail, at least it is only a game.

Teke Teke

Teke Teke is said to be the ghost of a woman or schoolgirl who fell on a railway line and was cut in half by an oncoming train. The vengeful spirit—outraged by her untimely death—now haunts urban areas and train stations at night. Since she no longer has legs, she drags herself on her hands and elbows, which produces a chilling "teke-teke" sound. Should you encounter Teke Teke, run! If the malicious spirit catches you, she will slice you in half with a scythe. Although she lacks legs, she is extremely fast, and has been

known to keep up with cars. In some renditions of the story, she will ask you where her legs are, in which case you must reply "Meishin Expressway" in order to survive. In less hopeful iterations, your only chance of survival is to outrun her, which is completely impossible.

Toire no Hanako-san (Hanako-san of the Toilet)

For our next story, we return to the bathroom with a legend some compare to Bloody Mary. Hanako is the spirit of a young schoolgirl who met her end in an elementary school bathroom as a result of suicide due

to bullying or WWII bombings and is now said to haunt them. Many children test their wits by summoning the child spirit. In order to summon her, you must go to a third floor bathroom and knock on the third stall three times, after which you say, "Are you there, Hanako-san?" If you hear even the faintest reply, make a hasty exit. If you are too slow or choose to enter the stall, Hanako will drag you into the toilet, and you will never be seen again.

Okiku Doll

The legend of the Okiku Doll differs from our previous stories as the doll physically exists and resides in Mannen-ji Temple in Hokkaido. The tale dates back to 1918 when a boy purchased the doll for his younger sister, noting that they both had bob haircuts. The little girl was infatuated with the doll, and they were inseparable. Tragically, a short time later, the girl passed away from an illness. Her family displayed the doll, named Okiku, on an altar in remembrance of their daughter and noticed that the doll's hair was growing. They concluded that their daughter's restless spirit was inhabiting the doll and eventually provided it to Mannen-ji Temple where it remains today and is viewable to guests. Okiku's hair continues to grow to this day despite haircuts from the temple's priests. If you are in Hokkaido, why not stop by and observe the eerie phenomenon yourself?

Hokkaido's not the only place in Japan with terrifying real-life legends. Hidden among Tokyo's advanced skyscrapers and quaint temples are some truly horrifying spots. Check out Tokyo's most haunted locations, and decide for yourself if the shadows of the night live up to their reputations.

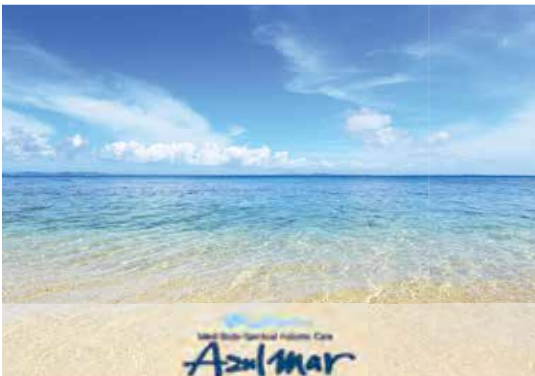
The Red Room Curse

For those reading these tales on your computer, this story is for you. The Red Room Curse is an internet-focused story that starts with an ominous pop-up. The pop-up features a red screen with black text that reads, "Do you like the red room?," which is accompanied by a sinister pre-recorded voice asking the same question. No matter how many times you close the pop-up, it will continue to appear until the voice has finished its question. Afterward, your entire screen will turn red and become flooded with past victims' names. No one knows what happens next, but the receivers of the pop-up are always found dead with their blood painting the walls red, creating the titular red room. Once you receive the pop-up, it is impossible to escape your fate.

If you are interested in experiencing this horror without putting your life on the line, check out Escape the RED ROOM, which is a themed escape room offered by The Real Escape Room in Asakusa. Also, check out the location's other terrifying attraction, Survive the Urban Legend.

Are you scared?

Of course, you can tell yourself that these stories are fictional, but are they? Sweet dreams.



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Kimodameshi brings chill to Okinawa

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Much like Halloween in October in the West, mid-summer is a season to intersect with the dead in Japan, as deceased ancestors are believed to visit and spend few days with us during traditional Obon period (August 13-15).

Also similar to the U.S., temporary haunted houses are built in amusement parks or shopping malls as seasonal attractions. Horror movies and reports of haunted locations are televised, while popular kimodameshi (literally, to test your courage through scared route) games are enjoyed in schools and local communities throughout summertime.

Just like horror films and scary stories give you goosebumps, kimodameshi and haunted houses make the Japanese cool with fear and terror - another reason they are considered summer attractions. On a hot summer evening, students will often explore cemeteries or haunted locations and enjoy exchanging horror stories with friends.

Kimodameshi is a must-play for students away at summer camp. It can be seen as a rite of passage for teenagers as they show their courage in public, and is a great chance for them to cling to someone they might have a crush on.

In kimodameshi, challengers, usually paired as boys and girls (sometimes alone or in a small group), walk along a spooky path in dark forests, graveyards, shrines, temples, abandoned buildings or any other haunted and mysterious spaces. In order to maximize fear, the location is scouted and scary objects, such as skulls and horror-props, are planted in advance. Sometimes, audio and visual effects are used to create an unusual atmosphere.

A good storyteller, usually a teacher, provides a horror story before sending them out to the spooky path. To prove that they had walked through the designated course, challengers need to bring something back from the haunted location or



Top photo courtesy of Hanayashiki,
Bottom photo courtesy of Toei Kyoto Studio

leave some sort of token (often a card or stones written with challenger's number or name) at the location, which can be recovered later.

Teachers, volunteering parents or senior colleagues hide along the path in ghost costumes, and jump out at challengers walking along the course.

During the event, students witness a strong-looking boy unable to move in his terror at haunted location while a gentle graceful girl shows her courage to take him out on the course. Some bust into crying and others leave their partner and run away from the course, and that makes some of great memories of school days that cannot easily be forgotten.

The tradition of kimodameshi goes back to the reign of Emperor Hanayama, about 1000 years ago. An official history book in the era "Ookagami" describes that the Emperor sent three young aristocrats to an old house known as home of evils around 2 a.m. to test their courage. Only one of them was brave enough to accomplish his order, and he brought back a chip from the haunted house to show the emperor. The brave young aristocrat, Fujiwara Michinaga, later became prime minister and wielded his power over the nation.

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LET OKINAWAN DEMONS CHILL YOU AT MURASAKI MURA LANTERN FESTIVAL

BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

Summer is considered a spooky season in Japan and Okinawa. Locals seek a chill through Kimodameshi (test of guts) in an effort to have a break from the steamy heat.

At Murasaki Mura, an Okinawan history and culture theme park, visitors can enjoy Ryukyu Yokai lantern festival through Aug. 31.

Though you may recognize the venue for its yearly winter lantern festival featuring dance and floral-shaped, in the summer, it's all about the monsters.

The summer festival promises some ghostly "Majimun (demons of Ryukyu)" lanterns set along the classic Ryukyu landscape replicas.

Stroll along the paths to enjoy the intricate lanterns created by Hiroaki Fukushi, a renowned lantern maker from Aomori Pref. known for the gigantic displays used in the Aomori Nebuta Festival every year.

28 lanterns including one



depicting Kijimunna, a red-haired child demon, believed to live on a gajumaru tree (Chinese banyan), will be on display. You can also have fun collecting stamps by finding each of the demons.

Fukushi's lively depiction of the lantern demons will give you the chills and take you back to the old days of Okinawa. Head to Murasaki Mura for a chilly, fun time!

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



Photo courtesy of Murasaki Mura

RYUKYU YOKAI 2026

LOCATION: Murasaki Mura (26.407087, 127.719843)

DATES: Through Aug. 31

HOURS: 5:30 p.m. – 10 p.m. (last admission at 9:30 p.m.)

ADMISSION FEE: 1,800 yen (approx. \$11.12) for adults, 700 yen for high school and middle school students, 600 yen for elementary school students, free admission for infants.



WEBSITE

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FOREST ADVENTURE

FOREST ADVENTURE



Kimodameshi in Okinawa

Once upon a time in Japan Haunted house – World of commandments of Saint Kakugen

DATE: Aug. 30

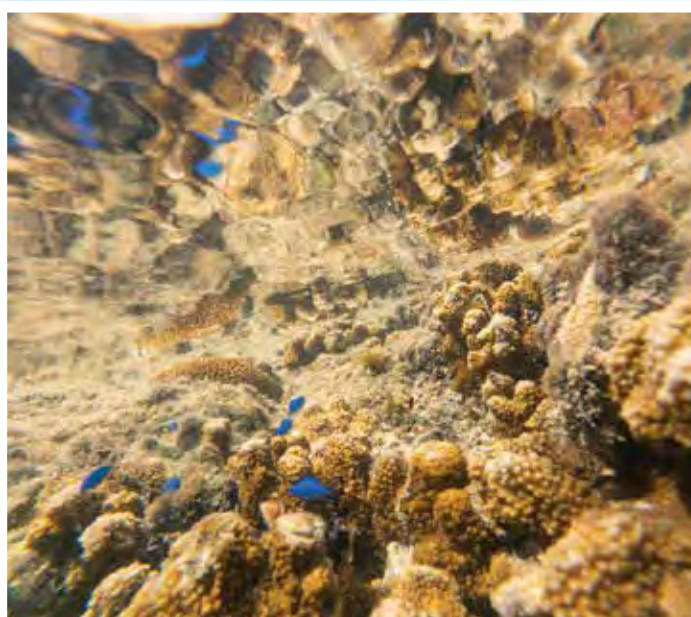
HOURS: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

(Last admission at 8:30 p.m.)

VENUE: 3F AEON Hall

(AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom)

TICKET: 800 yen (tax included)



Mini island hop a Bise

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA



Besezaki, or Cape Bise, is located at the northwest corner of Motobu Peninsula in the northern part of Okinawa's main island. It is known for its beautiful beach and unique landscape.

Though I'd visited Bise Settlement several times, I'd never stopped at the beach on the northern end of the street before. The curious landscape intrigued me to stop after my recent trip to Ie Island.

Getting to this beach was a bit complicated. Reaching Motobu Peninsula by driving two hours from the mid-section of the island was simple, but the last 10 minutes were spent maneuvering Bise's tiny roads. It was daunting.

By the time I got to the gate, it was already 1 p.m. I paid the 500-yen parking fee (about \$3.42) and quickly changed into a swimsuit and headed to the sandy shore.

Although this is a secluded spot, there were surprisingly many tourists having fun in the water.

'Miiugan'

My first plan was to join the others and just take it easy. But as I approached the

water, a small island in an elongated shape running from southeast to northwest came into my sight. According to a billboard posted on site, this island called "Miiugan" by the locals.

The broad coral reef was exposed by the low tide, and the small island was then accessible from the beach. I changed my plan to splash around and instead made my way toward Miiugan for some exploration.

On the way, I spent some time observing tropical fish in the shallow waters. Blue damselfish were busy cruising through the sunlit water or taking it easy in the shade of the coral.

Most portions of the reef were dry, but there were still water puddles here and there. As I accidentally stepped in some of them, I was surprised to find how hot the water felt due to the strong sunshine.

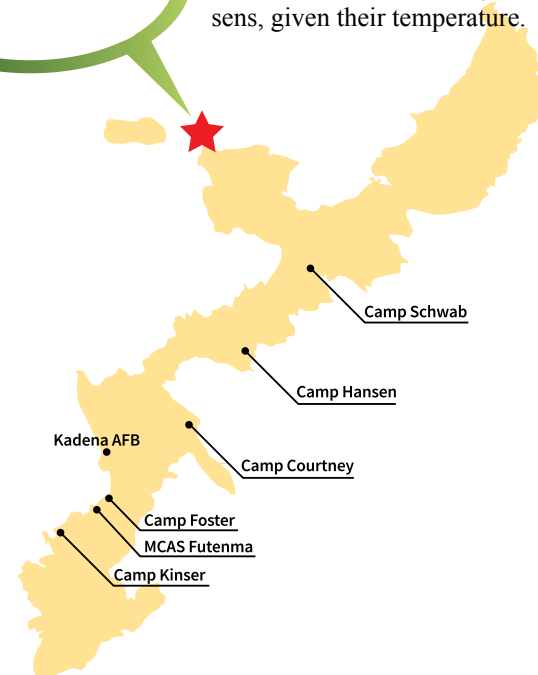
According to the signage, the island measured around 400 meters or more on each side. The number didn't seem big when I first saw it, but as I reached the island, the distance looked enormous. The

exposed coral reefs spread toward

the horizon like a desert by the sea.

Many puddles dotting the surface seemed like small oases, or oases, given their temperature.

BISEZAKI





Bisezaki

GPS COORDINATES:
26.709732, 127.880075
PARKING FEE: 500 yen



round Okinawa's zaki

A few fishermen were casting lines on the border between the reef and the sea. Trying to join the anglers, I walked away from the small island and toward the edge of the reef. But I stopped on the way as I spotted many crevices, offering a peek into the deep ocean underneath.

Even 10 meters from the edge, the view was extraordinary, like standing in the middle of the ocean.

After a while, I headed back to the small island, walking toward its north-west point.

Along the way, I spotted a cave that runs through its rock walls, which could have led me to the other (south) side of the island.

Soon I reached the foot of a lighthouse. I circled the tip of the small cape and found stone steps that leading to the high ground where the lighthouse stood.

As I was trying to approach the steps, huge rocks were standing in the way, so getting wet was inevitable to reach the steps.

I didn't want to get in the water then, so I carried on toward the end of the reef instead of continuing to the lighthouse.

Beyond the sea, I could now see Ie Island, a remote island which I had visited only a month ago.

Mt. Gusuku, Ie Island's symbol, seemed to lure me and the broad, flat ground almost made it feel like I could keep walking over the ocean toward Ie.

At the edge of the coast, the deep blue water started to rise, bringing me back to reality. The tide would soon rise again, so it was time to go back to Bise Beach.

Fukugi Street

Once I was back on the main island, I headed to Bise Settlement for a walk along the old streets lined with fukugi trees. The tall trees are called "fukugi" in Japanese, but in Chinese letters, the name means "Good Luck Tree."

There is an estimated 18,000 fukugi trees lining the streets in Bise Settlement alone. These trees have been there since the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429-1879), according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Fukugi trees are impressive and functional as they were used as fences or windbreakers,

which is why local residents have taken good care of them.

Walking in the shade of the trees' thick green leaves, I enjoyed the calm atmosphere.

The last time I went there, some folks were riding a water buffalo cart. However, the activity is now available only on weekends, so tourists were riding e-scooters instead on the Wednesday I visited. The change of time felt a bit melancholic.

The streets run for about 1 kilometer north to south, parallel to the west coast of Motobu Peninsula. They were connected to each other by smaller streets called "sooji." Going from one street to another, it almost felt like being in a labyrinth.

Although there were cafés and eateries along the streets, many of them were closed when I passed them around 3 p.m.

Luckily, I found Parlor Hajimekunchi, a small shaved-ice store.

I bought a cup of mango-flavored shaved ice for just 200 yen and added a condensed milk topping for 50 yen. Although it was nothing fancy, the shaved ice was a nice, inexpensive treat to pair with the beautiful ocean view.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



View Video!



Fukugi Street

GPS Coordinates: 26.707970,
127.880858 (north end)



Parlor Hajimekunchi

GPS Coordinates: 26.705467,
127.880591
No fixed business hours,
according to the shop owner.





File Photos

Beginner's guide to bug catching in Japan

BY MONICA HAND,
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

A child racing through the park gleefully squealing, arms stretched out, hands cupped around some many-legged being. It's a summer scene not uncommon anywhere in the world as curious kids and cool bugs tend to go hand in hand. In Japan though, the bug-catching phenomena runs much deeper in its cultural history. It inspired the internationally beloved series of "Pokémon," after all.

Clearly, in Japan, bugs seep into life and culture; the nostalgic sounds of cicadas, the terrifying sightings of mukade, the surprising crunch of grasshopper dishes. With the number of insect species estimated to be over 100,000 throughout the country, it should come as no surprise how influential these little crawlers have been. Even in art and literature, Japan has always drawn parallels with the summer months to the sounds and sights of insects big and small.

And for many, these summer sounds and sights also come with the promise of a challenging adventure.

Why catch bugs

For children, it is a no-brainer why they love the thrill of chasing bugs in parks or on vacation. But for parents, introducing children to bug catching is a win-win.

Teaching where to find specific bugs, how to catch them and how to care for them is all a sneaky science lesson. Applying what they learn in real life makes it more impactful, helping to make biology studies more accessible. For this exact reason, many Japanese elementary schools include a project around bug catching and care for these exact reasons.

Not only does it get children involved in science from a young age, but it also promotes individual health. For example, there is the physical demand of the actual chasing down of floating fireflies or scurrying praying mantises. Then the motor skills needed to swing a net on a target that is moving in unknown directions. While it may seem small, it goes a long way, especially in the age of gaming and online learning.

After childhood, there are all kinds of benefits too, besides making the buggy months more bearable. In fact, bugs as a career path has a long history in Japan, with merchants in the Edo period selling crickets to city folks who missed the country sounds. Now, more successful catchers and breeders can make an impressive amount of money in the bug season, with some rare beetles going for over ¥10,000.

How to get started

■ Gear

While most stores in Japan offer the latest tools

in the ever-evolving bug prevention and elimination techniques, the tools for catching and raising are just as easy to find. As soon as any winter chill melts away, every coin shop and hobby store sets out a fresh seasonal aisle full of gear for all bug-related hobbies.

For starting out, it is best to have a net and a portable cage. Of course, catching methods will vary by bug, but the net and portable cage are both flexible in their catching capabilities making them great for everything from the high-flying dragonflies to the hopping crickets and speedy beetles. Optional gear additions include some gloves, plastic baggies for bait and a clear enclosure if hoping to keep bounties longer than just a few hours. All of this is available at a ¥100 shop or hobby store.

For some of the shyer bugs, like stag beetles, or kuwagata, setting up bait is a good idea. Beetle baits are often available at the same stores as the gear, but there are also homemade options. A common form of beetle bait for beginner bug catchers is a mature banana. While this kind of bait is best for beetles, it may also attract a few other interesting critters. For adult bug catchers, mixing the banana with a cheap sake will ripen the smell.

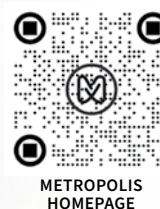
After placing the banana or concoction in a bag, set it up in a tree or low bush. Be sure to check back every few hours, enough time for a new friend to find it, but not so often that any potential buggy visitors get spooked away. Keep in mind, this is only recommended if the tree or bush is out of the way, rural, or on your own property.

■ Location

While the bugs of Japan are often found just about anywhere, there are some bugs that will have to be sought out in parks, riversides, or on vacations out of the city. Keep in mind that national parks and gardens prohibit taking or removing any kind of wild or plant life which means bug hunting there should be kept to observation rather than actively capturing.

As for exactly where to catch the bugs, it will also depend on what type is the target. A general rule is that wet areas like lakes and ponds will give the best chance for catching flying bugs like dragonflies, but mature, damp and woody areas or gardens will be best for all that crawl. Of course, the bug-specific location research is all part of the fun.

But as sightings of popular bugs like rhinoceros beetles, or kabutomushi are rare, many pet stores now offer them for purchase from larvae to fully developed stages. Raising a beetle could be an easy initiation into the bug culture of Japan!

METROPOLIS
HOMEPAGEMETROPOLIS
EVENTS



Courtesy photos

Guide to awamori

Classic Okinawan alcohol

LIVE JAPAN

If you think of alcohol and Japan, then the first thing that springs to mind is sake – but there are other alcoholic drinks too, one of which comes from the island of Okinawa! Awamori is an alcoholic drink which is also known as shimazakae, or island sake.

It dates back hundreds of years, not quite as old as sake which is at least 1300 years old, but not soon after the start of agriculture in Okinawa. Using long grain indica rice, the origins of the Awamori brewing technique can be found in

Thailand, and even today as local production of this rice is not sufficient indica rice from Thailand is imported to make this celebrated drink. It has an alcoholic percentage ranging from around 30° – 60° and in Okinawa it is drunk at pretty much any social occasion, whether that be celebrations or just a casual gathering of friends. Not so well known as its older cousin sake, Awamori is gradually making its presence known and is increasingly sought out by adventurous visitors to Japan who want to try everything this amazing country has to offer.

●What is awamori?

The rather original manufacturing process for distilling Awamori came from Thailand and involves black koji (a kind of yeast) mold being added to long grain indica rice and water, this is then left to age in order to create a mold. This is distilled in pot stills, in some ways it is similar to the production of shochu, and the resulting brew is actually 100° pure alcohol. Once it has been distilled it is put into storage, it needs to be stored for an extended period of time in order to improve its mellowness. A characteristic of this drink is how its taste and aroma are enriched by a natural aging process. The distilled awamori is then aged in clay pots, usually kept in cool underground store-rooms.

It is the black koji that is used in the fermentation process which gives it its unique flavor. This variety of yeast produces a lot of citric acid, which incidentally helps prevent the souring of the moromi (the rice and water mixture). It is very effective in extracting the taste and character of the mixture. Black koji was found in Okinawa and it has been found to be resistant to high temperatures and humidity. The name of the resulting alcohol,



Awamori, is thought to refer to the appearance of the mixture during the distillation process where one can see a lot of bubbles rising and swelling (in Japanese 'awa' means bubbles and rising/swelling is 'mori').

The distillation takes place in a traditional still, heated directly by a flame with oxygen supplied by large fans. The solid mass of swollen rice grains is distilled once, and after about 4 hours the alcohol percentage reaches 70°. Water is added to arrive at the final product with an alcohol percentage of around 30°, except for a product called hanazake that is around 60°.

In a similar style to sake and shochu, Awamori is sold in large bottles of 1.8 liters, and also smaller sizes of around half that volume. In general it is quite inexpensive, but unlike sake this alcohol can be aged and becomes more valuable as it gets older.

There are around 48 local distilleries dedicated to making varieties of awamori in Okinawa. These labels vary in taste, from mild to strong, and various accents depending on the containers they are distilled in, from stainless tanks to earthenware pots and even casks.

●How to drink awamori

As Awamori does have a strong alcoholic content it is usually served together with water and ice, you can drink it straight with some ice, dilute it with water or even add it to a cocktail. No further special equipment required! As Awamori is actually sugar free with no amino acid content, it has a lower calorie level than other



comparable drinks, so it is perfect for people with high blood sugar. Some people like to use something slightly different to water to mix their Awamori with, such as sparkling water, but you can also

see locals adding coffee milk to their drink! This makes it very easy to drink!

●Awamori is essential for knowing Okinawa

Just as to a certain extent sake embodies Japan, and is therefore an essential drink to try when visiting Japan, Awamori embodies the islands and culture of

Okinawa. To try this drink is to impart some of the local culture, and to add some koregusu will mean literally imparting some Okinawan fire!

Different types of awamori

Kusu

Once Awamori has been aged for three years or more it is given a new name of Kusu, although in the rest of Japan the pronunciation

koshu is used, but anyway this literally means old sake. Japanese law dictates that the bottled spirits must be at least 3 years old, but Awamori producers often mix older spirits with younger spirits to preserve the stock of older spirits. Before World War Two there were records of two to three hundred year old kusu, but unfortunately these were all lost.



Habushu

You'll see bottles and large jugs of lethal-looking habushu ("snake liquor") all over liquor shops and souvenir shops in Okinawa. Pit vipers are soaked in awamori, herbs and honey for a dramatic-looking drink. The liquid has a yellow hue and is believed to have



medicinal properties and libido-enhancing qualities. Sometimes the snake is drowned alive in the awamori, alternatively the snake made unconscious from freezing, then gutted before being sewn up, before dying in a violent manner - what the producers are looking for. The snake is then preserved in an ethanol bath for a month before soaked in awamori.

Hanazake

On an Okinawan island called Yonaguni, which is also Japan's westernmost island, there are three distilleries which are producing a variant of Awamori called Hanazake.



Literally meaning "flower sake", hanazake drink packs a punch with an alcohol percentage of 60°, and is normally drunk straight. Originally it was intended for religious ceremonies, but today you can see brave souls drinking this for pleasure and social occasions.

Flavor-infused Awamori

Japan being Japan it is no surprise that other flavored varieties of Awamori has been created, for example there is a plum version which is perfect for around the beginning of spring when the plum blossoms are out, and for locals who love their Awamori with coffee milk there is now a ready-made coffee flavored version too. In general a number of flavors have made their debut, normally



with local fruits, such as passion fruit or mango, in order to broaden its appeal to a wider range of people.

Koregusu (Hot Sauce)

In particular the people of Okinawa like spicy food and a popular local condiment is koregusu is just the ticket for adding some heat to any dish. It is made from chili peppers, which are washed, and then soaked in Awamori for at least 10 days. It



can be bought in supermarkets, but it is often homemade. It is then added on pretty much anything, whether that is rice or Okinawan noodles, or sonki-soba. Unlike a regular chilli sauce, koregusu has a wafting fragrance of Awamori that adds depth as well as heat to the dish.

Tsushima Maru Memorial Museum

Every life is a gift, a dream come true

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BONSON LAM,
JAPAN TRAVEL

Ono wasn't just beautiful. She was the embodiment of beauty. Poetry is beauty. Art is beauty. Nine centuries after Ono graced the earth, Sadako was born. She was the personification of her parents and grandparents' dreams, an heir to the family's traditional shop selling pastel textiles and Ryukyu arts. Remember the Aloha Shirt? Well, it was born in the streets of Okinawa.

"So short is the life of a flower, yet all the hardships it endures." This was about a young lady in a post-war movie Floating Clouds, but equally, it could be about Sadako's parents, who were torn between hope and fear as they sent their daughter to escape a looming war.

August 11, 1942, was a beautiful sunny day. The ticker tapes tied the thousand elementary school children on-board Tsushima Maru with their parents waving to them from Naha Port. They were filled with hope, possibly a sense of release that overshadowed the glimpses of fear and sadness. They will meet again, or so they thought. Just two nights later, while the children were gazing at the stars, it was torpedoed and sunk before everyone had the chance to escape, with no news of the 254 survivors reaching their parents for years.

The ocean may be dark and all-enveloping, but when you have lost a life, it seems so empty of humanity. Especially when you have just let go of your one-year-old child's ashes. For someone who is not a parent, this is hard to comprehend or to feel deeply, but if you ever put your life and soul into a dream, a baby of your creation, and see its life crushed, then you might get a glimpse of what is like to lose something dear to your heart.

How do you celebrate the birthday of the departed,

when their absence fills the room, made more poignant by the empty chair and the abandoned marbles? In the fires that filled Naha during the war, there was precious little left to remember the lives of these school children, but the museum searched far and wide to find these treasures to bring home the feeling of loss, a glimpse into the hope they had for a brighter future.

Part of the joy of the Uchinachu Festival is that it brings different generations together. Mari cried, reflecting on her uncle who left by ship and never returned. She was dancing for him, and having just lost her dad made it all the more poignant. It is these festivals that allow grandkids to ask grandparents about their lives, about what happened, something that rings true at the Naha city museum, the festival, or here at Tsushima Maru Memorial Museum.

It is said that starlight is like a time machine. It may be years since that light was birthed, so by the time we see it, it is like looking into the past, a past that may not exist anymore. Looking at the school bags and the young faces captured in time at the museum is like looking at a time machine, of these stars shining brightly from the past, memories from a generation whose lives were cut short.

The survivors and founders of the museum are well and truly convinced that we should do everything we can to help make this planet we each call home, that little bit better for everyone. What they want to tell us is the dreams that each person has.

Even in the darkest times, people have dreams. They dreamed because they were alive. Now we are living in the future that they dreamed of. So as you enter the museum, let these thoughts speak to you.



Imagine being in the classroom with the students that boarded the Tsushima Maru.

ADDRESS: 1-25-37 Wakasa, Naha, Okinawa
900-0031 (Directions)
PHONE: 098-941-3515
EMAIL: info@tsushimamaru.or.jp



WEBSITE

GETTING THERE

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the museum is a short stroll from Naminoue Shrine and Beach where you can hear the gentle sounds of the waves, the same waves that calm the souls of the deceased memorialised at the museum.



Tsushima Maru Memorial Museum is designed like the ship itself, you board on the upper deck and descend below the decks.



Abandoned Marbles are a reminder of a lost youth.



The memories of the lost live on in the photos in this memorial museum.



Quick getaway to Ukabi Island

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPE OKINAWA

CHINEN MARINE LEISURE CENTER

GPS COORDINATES: 26.174462, 127.829622

HOURS: From April through November, only the boat tour to Komaka Island is available, while the tour to Ukabi Island is scheduled between December and March. The first boat departs for Komaka Island at 9:15 a.m. while the last boat coming back from the island departs at 3:30 p.m.

*A boat ride to Komaka Island for a two-hour stay on the island costs 4,500 yen (approx. \$27.79, adult) and 3,500 yen (between 3 years old and elementary school age), accordingly.

*A boat ride to Ukabi Island for one-hour stay on the island costs 3,500 (approx. \$21.61, adult) and 2,500 yen (between 3 years old and elementary school age) for a round trip. Free for kids under 3 years old.

*Above fees are subject to change. For the most up-to-date info, please check with the center.



WEBSITE

It was by accident that I went to Ukabijima in Okinawa. On a day in late June, I hit the road and drove down south. My destination of the day was Komakajima, an island only a 15-minute boat ride away from Chinen Peninsula on the eastern coast of Nanjo City. When I tried to buy a ticket at Chinen Marine Leisure Center, however, I was told that there would be no boat heading to the island.

A boat bound for Ukabijima, another small island, however, was departing in a few minutes, so I made a snap decision to change my plans. With a 1,400-yen ticket - half the price of regular admission for a solo passenger since I was joining other passengers on the boat - I was on my way.



As I boarded, our destination was already in sight. Ukabijima has an 800-meter circumference and is only about 800 meters away from the shore. It looked more like a small stretch of shore with no trees or buildings than it did an island. But, as the boat approached, the island grew larger than my initial impression.

As soon as the boat came to a stop, we got off and set foot on the sandy beach. While the western side of the island was covered

with sand, the eastern side seemed to consist of pebbles and coral remains. I put my bags on the sandy shore then prepared to do some snorkeling. A member of the crew told me I couldn't go beyond the buoys in the water.

When I dipped into the water, I noticed the current was fast. I had to constantly move my legs to avoid drifting away from the designated area. Luckily, the waters were shallow, so I didn't need to worry too much. It was not until

I put my face under the water that I noticed how many fish were surrounding me below the surface. Brightly colored fish of all shapes and sizes were constantly following me as if they were expecting to be fed.

At one point while swimming over the rocky rugged bottom, I spotted a school of blue damselfish. As I was trying to get as close to it as possible, something different came into my view. It appeared to be something black and long, possibly a cucumber or a moray eel, sticking its head from a chasm. It crossed my mind to get closer and take a photo and also identify what it was. But I decided not to and kept my distance from the creature. On that day, I was happy enough just swimming with the fish.

I was in the water for about 40 minutes. When I got back on the shore a boat was just arriving, bringing more people to the island. Once all the passengers got off, I boarded and made my way back to the main island.

Under the cloudy sky, the sunlight was not as strong as I expected it to be. But my face and neck were already feeling the burn and it finally felt like summer had arrived.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



A stop at Hamabe no Chaya

When you travel to Nanjo City, there are many options for lunch. Hamabe no Chaya is a good place especially if you're having trouble deciding non where to go.

The name means "teahouse on the beach." Located along the southeast coast of Okinawa's main island, this place offers exactly what its name suggests.

Going downstairs and opening the door of this wooden building on the side of a cliff makes it feel like being in a cozy hideaway.

Every stop at this ocean front eatery rewards me with an opportunity to look at the beautiful ocean



out a large window, while enjoying a good meal.

The menu items include various toasts such as Croque-Monsieur (600 yen) and Walnut and Cinnamon Toast (600 yen), Basil Chilled Noodles (1,000 yen), Purple Sweet Potato Cheesecake (550 yen), while the drinks range from Iced Coffee with local ice cream (700 yen) to Hibiscus Tea (600 yen) and more.

My favorite combo is Pizza Toast (600 yen) and hot Drip Coffee (580 yen). Served up with four slices of Tomato on top of cheese, green pepper, and pizza sauce, the toast has a nice mixture of sour taste and melting cheese.

It has been more than 30 years since the teahouse/café opened there. But having the tasty toast and sipping the coffee with nice bitterness, while enjoying the beautiful ocean view, continues to refresh and amaze me.

HAMABE NO CHAYA

GPS COORDINATES: 26.133550, 127.784689

HOURS: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Yahara Dukasa

On our way back home, we stopped by a couple of locations on Chinen Peninsula. One of them was Yahara Dukasa. This is a piece of rock standing in the sea, about 20 to 30 meters away from the sandy shore. Legend has it that Amami-kiyo, the goddess who created Okinawa, set her foot on the rock when she landed on Okinawa for the first time. According to Nanjo City, the goddess temporarily stayed at Hamagaa Utaki, a rocky sacred site nearby, after her landing. Although these two landmarks are small in scale if they are compared to Sefa Utaki, they have nonetheless a strong sacred atmosphere, just like the most famous sacred site in Okinawa. The serene and mysterious mood helped me cool down and relax after having a lot of fun on Ukabi Island and the stimulating dining experience at the café.



YAHARA DUKASA

GPS COORDINATES: 26.139480, 127.796772

HAMAGAA UTAKI

GPS COORDINATES: 26.140293, 127.796388



Dried squid on Ojima

I also stopped by Ojima Island. I had been there just a week ago to see a dragon boat race. This time, though, I wanted to see squid drying on wire. It is a seasonal tradition that starts in late June and continues until October. I was impressed by the sight of the squid drying in the sun as it also made me feel that summer had arrived. I could have bought some on the spot and washed them down with a can of beer, but I decided not to because I had to drive. With plan on coming back with a designated driver next time, I hit the road and made my way home.

OJIMAS' SQUIDS DRIED BY THE SUN

GPS COORDINATES: 26.131796, 127.774180



Churaumi Night Aquarium 2026

Where Music Meets the Ocean!

Let the sounds of Okinawa and the beauty of the ocean create unforgettable summer nights at Churaumi Night Aquarium 2026.

Churaumi Music Night

Vol. 1 Special Performance by Violinist "Ryoma"



A live violin and piano performance against the enchanting backdrop of the giant "Kuroshio Sea" tank.

Date : Aug. 1 (Sat) – 3 (Mon), 2026

Time : 19:00 – / 20:00 –

[Approx. 30 min. per performance]

Vol. 2 Rinken Band's "Tomoko Uehara" Special Performance



A live song/sanshin performance in front of the "Kuroshio Sea" tank giant aquarium by Tomoko Uehara of the "Rinken Band," a group formed in 1977 and beloved by Okinawans to this day.

Date : Aug. 11 (Tue), 2026 **Time :** 18:30 – / 19:30 –

[Approx. 30 min. per performance]



OKINAWA CHURAUMI AQUARIUM

Extended Hours All August: Time: 8:30 – 21:00 daily
(Last admission: 20:00)

*Event details subject to change. Thank you for understanding.

OKINAWA CHURAUMI AQUARIUM

Complete the Picture!

Ocean Expo Park & Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium Stamp Rally

Enjoy exploring and visit four locations within the park, collect stamps to complete a design, and take your finished card home as a commemorative postcard.

Date : Aug. 1 (Sat) – 31 (Mon) *Except Wednesdays

Time : 8:30 – 16:30

Stamp Locations
• Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium
• Tropical Dream Center (Churashima Botanical Garden)
• Oceanic Culture Museum • Native Okinawan Village

Web-Exclusive Evening Admission Discount Tickets

<https://bit.ly/3QCKjIH>

On sale: Through Aug. 30 (Sun)

Valid: Jul. 18 (Sat) – Aug. 31 (Mon)

17:00 – 20:00 (last admission)

• Adults: 1,730 yen • High School Students: 1,140 yen

• Elementary and Junior High School Students: 560 yen

*Not available at the aquarium ticket counter

*Must be purchased by day before visit.



YONABARU TUG OF WAR RETURNS AUG. 15-16

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES OKINAWA

Come Aug. 15 and 16, Yonabaru Town on the southeast coast of Okinawa's main island will host the 44th installment of the Yonabaru Ootsunahiki (tug-of-war) festival.

Considered one of the three major tugs of war, along with those in Naha and Itoman, Yonabaru Ootsunahiki boasts more than 450 years of tradition.

This two-day festival is packed with live music, food, game booths, fireworks, and more. The highlight is the tug-of-war that takes place on Sunday.

Before the tug-of-war kicks off

at 5 p.m. on Sunday, there will be a parade called "Michi June" on Routes 331 and 329, where the huge rope for the contest will be carried. This giant rope, weighing five tons and measuring 90 meters in length, will take a lot of muscle to carry. You can be part of the parade and help carry the rope. To do so, meet at the locations listed below by 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Locals dressed as historical figures will ride along on the rope. The sound of drums and trumpets will pump up the mood even more. It's quite a sight to see!

The parade as well as this tug-of-war can be physically demanding, so be sure to wear shoes, not sandals.

Come to Yonabaru and pull the rope together!

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VIEW VIDEO!

Things to know

LOCATION FOR THE FESTIVAL: Yonakohama Koen (26.204370, 127.762748)

LOCATION FOR TUG OF WAR: Udun-yama Seishonen Hiroba (26.203938, 127.755739)

DATE: Aug. 15, 16 (Sat.- Sun.)

TIME: Aug. 15: 11 a.m. – 8:40 p.m.; Aug. 16: 11 a.m. – 9 p.m.

(Tug of war takes place Sunday, Aug. 16, starting at 5 p.m.)

Timeline for tug of war on Aug. 16: 3:50 p.m. – (parade): 5 – 6 p.m. (tug of war)

MEET-UP AREAS FOR THE PARADE: Achiri Hiroba mae (Team East, 26.201702, 127.757968), Oyakawa Hiroba mae (Team West, 26.202134, 127.756108)

*Parking spaces are available at four locations nearby including Nishihara Marine Park (26.208888, 127.767419), Yonabaru Elementary School at (26.204375, 127.755115), Yonabaru Marina (26.206333, 127.766249, subject to fees).

*Public transportation recommended

*Traffic restrictions are scheduled to be in place around the area on both days.



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Stripes Sports Trivia

What actor won the Academy Award for Best Lead Actor in the boxing biographical movie, “Raging Bull”?

Answer
Robert De Niro

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DID YOU KNOW?

Just 40 miles west of Misawa Air Base on the northern extremity of mainland Japan (Honshu), Aomori City is known as the gateway to Hokkaido Island. Surrounded by orchards, it’s famous for production of apples (446,000 tons annually), as well as the yearly amounts of heavy snow (up to 60 inches a year), holding the nation’s record for both.

Kanji of the week

地

Chi/ji [ground]

Language Lesson

Before - now - later

Sakki – ima - atode

Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

1 Like some cheddar
6 Auction actions
10 Self-satisfied
14 Seesaw, essentially
15 Scoundrel
16 Bread for gyros
17 Crop up
18 Writes in the margin
20 Small amount
22 Parsley, e.g.
23 Producing, as electricity
25 Mistake maker
28 ____ of burden
31 Salon jobs
32 AWOL soldier
34 Infamous Amin
35 Citadel student
37 "So ____ heard"
38 Accompanied
41 Pizza topping
44 Related maternally
45 Sliding stocks
47 Whodunit staple
49 Earhart, for one
51 Made sense
55 With fervor
57 Guard dog's warning
58 "Yes ____?"
59 Prefix with call or cop
60 Broadcast sound
61 Expansive
62 Privy to
63 Bakery supply

DOWN

1 Loud door sound
2 Day saver
3 Passionate
4 Calls it quits
5 Lead up to
6 Faultfinder
7 Suffix with "invent"
8 Blue denim fabric
9 Mink's kin
10 Special wrench
11 Pain-lesening
12 Western tribe
13 Long cut
19 Cultural group
21 World Heritage Site org.
24 Forest denizen
25 Salt solution
26 "Put a ____ it" (hush)
27 Certain Protestants
29 Dissolve
30 Head lock?
33 Unexcitable
36 News anchor Cooper
39 Gorged oneself

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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

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

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