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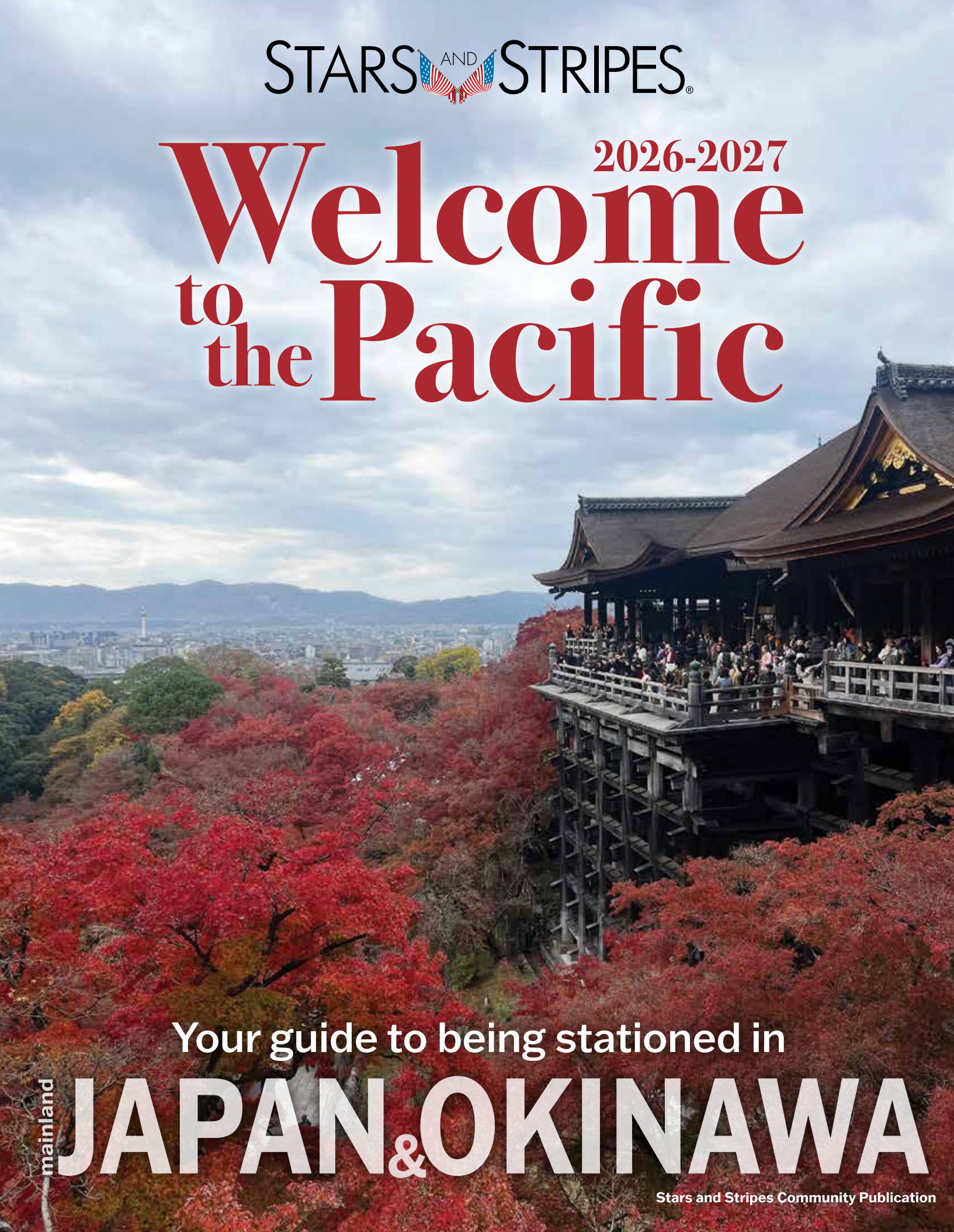
2026-2027

Welcome to the Pacific



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mainland

JAPAN & OKINAWA

Stars and Stripes Community Publication

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American Red Cross | Service to the Armed Forces

Across the Globe: Discover Your Local American Red Cross

The American Red Cross is committed to providing support and resources to members of our nation's military, veterans, Department of Defense personnel, and their families worldwide. From teaching life-saving skills and preparing families for natural disasters to providing workshops that address the unique challenges of military life and connecting families during emergencies, the Red Cross is always there.

Red Cross Emergency Messages

Available 24/7 through the Red Cross Hero Care Network, Red Cross emergency messages ensure that eligible personnel can connect with their loved ones during crisis, regardless of location. Red Cross messages can be initiated from the Hero Care App, by calling **+1 877-272-7337**, going online to **redcross.org/saf** or visiting your local Red Cross office during the duty day.

Training and Certifications

The Red Cross offers a range of training and certifications in lifesaving skills such as Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, Basic Life Support and Babysitting and Child Care. These courses equip individuals with essential skills and contribute to building a resilient community.

Behavioral Health Workshops

The Red Cross conducts workshops to address various aspects of military life. Some workshops, led by licensed mental health professionals, provide techniques to improve communication and coping skills, the mind body connection, and relationships with others. Mindful Movement workshops, led by coaches, incorporate breathing, stretching and mindfulness. All workshops are free of charge, with some available as virtual offerings. Programs may be offered at the location and time of your choosing, including after hours or weekends.

Disaster Preparedness

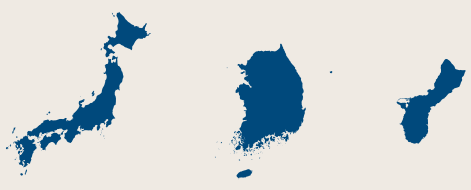
The Red Cross emphasizes disaster preparedness, offering free presentations to help families and military commands prepare for and respond to emergencies. From home fires to earthquakes and storms to evacuations, these sessions ensure individuals have the knowledge and skills to navigate disasters safely.

Visit your local Red Cross office or **redcross.org** to learn more. Sign up as a volunteer today!

Volunteer Opportunities

Whether distributing care packages, serving those facing a crisis as a caseworker, facilitating workshops, participating in vocational medical training as a spouse, teaching CPR or disaster preparedness, or serving at military hospitals, volunteers are integral to the Red Cross mission and there are opportunities to serve in military communities around the globe.

In locations across Japan, South Korea, and Guam, the Red Cross is there!



The Red Cross is dedicated to supporting the entire military community, providing assistance wherever they may be serving.

335401-44 2/25

American Red Cross | Service to the Armed Forces

In an Emergency, You Can Call the American Red Cross

In times of emergency, the American Red Cross helps our U.S. military communities worldwide communicate with their loved ones and helps facilitate their return home through our Hero Care Network "Red Cross Emergency Message" program. The Hero Care Network is free and available 24/7.

Eligibility includes:

- All active-duty military members
- All personnel working under the Status of Armed Forces Agreement (SOFA) including Department of War personnel, contractors and their family members

How it works:

Military families can initiate an emergency message either online, over the phone or through the Hero Care App. The Red Cross verifies the emergency and notifies the service member's military command, so they can make an informed decision regarding the possibility of emergency leave. The Red Cross also connects eligible military members and veterans to financial assistance provided by Military Aid Societies. Assistance can include funds for emergency travel, emergency food, shelter and more.

"Coming from a military background, I like working alongside the military and helping these service members get back home for these emergencies because I know how important it is... to these families."

Ciana Naputi has dedicated six years to supporting military families as a Hero Care caseworker. Knowing firsthand the impact Red Cross messages had on her own family fuels her empathy and dedication, ensuring everyone behind the call knows they are not alone. When families call the Hero Care Center, they'll connect with someone like Ciana who truly understands their challenges, working around the clock to get their service member home.

We encourage families to prepare for emergencies ahead of time by visiting redcross.org/saf, downloading the **FREE** Hero Care App by scanning the QR code or calling a Hero Care specialist at **+1 877-272-7337**.

335401-44 2/25

mainland JAPAN & OKINAWA

2026-2027 Welcome to the Pacific

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Let Stars and Stripes help you get started on the right foot

Welcome to your temporary home away from home! Are you ready for the new adventure or do you feel like you're in over your head?

Whether you're excited about exploring or anxious about figuring out where to live, how to get on the road or even how to get started, we can help with that!

Moving can be stressful, but moving overseas adds another layer of difficulty that no amount of planning can prepare you for. Stars and Stripes is with you every step of the way!

We know you have questions, but rest assured, this magazine has most of the answers. Let this be the start of a beautiful journey together.

In the following pages you'll learn everything from how and where you can buy a car and getting a cellphone from local customs and even how to use chopsticks.

And when you're done, don't forget to pick up a copy of Stars and Stripes Japan or Okinawa on base or visit us online at japan.stripes.com and okinawa.stripes.com! Writers Shoji Kudaka, Takahiro Takiguchi and Luis Samayoa (learn more about them on Pages 10-11) will keep you updated on fun activities, delicious restaurants and information you need to know so you'll be out and about in no time.

Our goal as your guide is to make sure you always have all the information you need and to support you throughout your time here. Without you, there is no Stars and Stripes.

We also want to hear from you! We share this space and all our community publications with our audience as you'll see with the neat photos submitted by readers throughout this magazine and on the cover. Have a story to tell or a photo you want to submit for an edition of our newspaper or a future cover of Welcome to the Pacific? Let us know!

We're in this together and can't wait to share this amazing country with you! Follow us on Facebook (Pacific Stars and Stripes), X (Twitter) (@StripesPacific) and Instagram (@Starsandstripespacific) as we continue to bring you the latest information and resources you don't want to miss.

Thank you for being a valued reader, and as they say here in Japan and Okinawa: いらっしゃい! (Welcome!)

Denisse Rauda
Publishing and Media Design Editor
Stars and Stripes
japan@stripes.com and okinawa@stripes.com

Cover photo
Lisa De La Cuadra took this beautiful fall photo at Kiyomizudera Temple in Kyoto.

Background photo
Tamaki Mano snapped the perfect "Fuji Diamond" photo.

Welcome to the Pacific Staff

Denisse Rauda
Editor

Yukiyo Oda
Layout Designer

Writers and Photographers
Shoji Kudaka, Hyemin Lee, Luis Samayoa, Takahiro Takiguchi

Max D. Lederer Jr.
Publisher

Laura Law
Chief Operating Officer

Lt. Col. Lucas Crouch
Commander

John Albaugh
Chief of Staff

Scott Foley
Revenue Director

Chris Verigan
Engagement Director

Marie Woods
Publishing and Media Design Director

Chris Carlson
Publishing and Media Design Manager

Eric Lee
Revenue Manager

Kentaro Shimura
Production Manager

Rie Miyoshi
Engagement Manager

Korea Area Manager
Nicki Cornelius

Multimedia Consultants
Max Genao, Doug Johnson, Hans Simpson, Chae Pang Yi, Benjamin Yoo, Gianni Youn, Robert Zuckerman

Sales Support
Ye Seul Kim, Dong Ju Lee, Yoko Noro, Yusuke Sato, Saori Tamanaha, Toshie Yoshimizu, Mako Watanabe

Graphic Designers
Kazumi Hasegawa, Mamoru Inoue, Yuko Okazaki, Kayoko Shimoda, Yosuke Tsuji, Yurika Usui

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Email: carlson.chris@stripes.com with questions or comments. To subscribe to Stars and Stripes, email: SSPcirculation@stripes.com. Mailing address: Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002

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KILAUEA MILITARY CAMP

KMC

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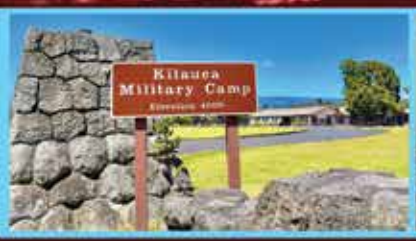

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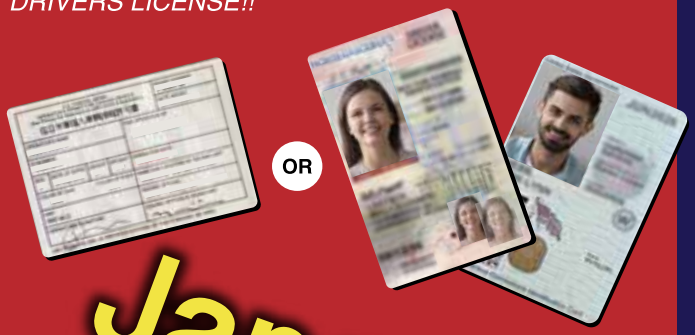

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HISAI!

(Greetings in Okinawan dialect)

I am Shoji Kudaka, a native Okinawan who has been writing for Stars and Stripes Okinawa for 10 years.

I am here to show you what our beautiful islands have to offer. Have you snorkeled around Cape Maeda or slurped Okinawan Soba noodles topped with pork ribs and seaweed? If you haven't yet, don't worry, I'll share all my knowledge about Okinawa with you.

Get ready to explore the island's stunning beaches and jungle trails with me. There is truly nothing like soaking up the sun on the beach and walking in a subtropical forest.

Starting with basic information on where to travel and dine, my reports include in-depth coverage of what's happening in the local scene, focusing on up-to-date information on culture, leisure, food, and festivities.

It's nice to go out and feel the Okinawan vibe, folks! The islands offer plenty of attractions, both traditional and contemporary. While festivals like our Dragon Boat races, tugs-of-war, and Eisa dance date back hundreds of years and still attract huge crowds, driving an ATV through jungles or ziplining over the ocean provide another side of Okinawa packed with thrill and excitement. Plus, there are plenty of delicious local foods to try!

Scuba diving, whale watching, fishing, hiking in the mountains, cooking, and eating Okinawan sweets. You name it, Okinawa has it all!

I grew up passionately learning English, watching the WWF, NBA games, and Star Trek on Channel 6. I still remember seeing Hulk Hogan colliding with André the Giant, Jordan making pretty much all the clutch shots, and Mr. Spock always exuding a Zen vibe like it was yesterday.

My childhood love for American culture carries on today and continues to motivate me to bring you stories and information about my other love, Okinawa.

STORIES

TRIP TO IE ISLAND | SENAGA ISLAND | SOUTHEAST BOTANICAL GARDENS | FORMER JAPANESE NAVY UNDERGROUND HEADQUARTERS

VIDEOS

CAPE ZANPA | WIND SURFING | ROCK CLIMBING | OKOGE PASTA

KONNICHIWA!

I am Takahiro Takiguchi from Yokosuka City in mainland Japan. For 13 years, I have been bringing our military community all the info they need to have a great time during their stay in my country.

Count on me to bring you the information you need to help you explore Japan's natural beauty, profound traditions, history, and unique pop culture.

With four seasons, Japan, a.k.a. "the Land of the Rising Sun," is blessed with countless natural attractions and unique traditions.

My wife and I live near Yokosuka Naval Base and love taking day trips and longer excursions to explore. We cherish being showered by cherry blossom petals, picking sunflowers, sampling hot coffee while taking in the gorgeous colors of autumn, soaking in an outdoor onsen bath as snow falls, and strolling to a Shinto shrine at midnight to wish for a happy new year on Oshogatsu.

I hope you will also get off base to enjoy this beautiful country, just like we do!

Get a taste of old Japan while appreciating the many sides of Mount Fuji, strolling down the nostalgic avenues of Gion in Kyoto, or discovering the "Hidden Christian" ruins in Hirado. My countrymen are known for their splendid architecture and craftsmanship throughout the ages. The shrines, temples and castles dotting the Japanese landscape will amaze you.

Japan will also give you many opportunities to enjoy sports, music and arts. You'll never experience anything like the authentic Kabuki plays in Ginza, Tokyo. And, whether you are a baseball fan or not, you must check out a professional Japanese baseball game. It's great baseball, but watching or being a part of the cheering sections and enjoying the Japanese take on ballpark food is something you'll never forget.

So, pack your bags and join me for some unbelievable adventures around Japan! I'll make sure you have everything you need, including some key Japanese vocabulary and phrases, insight into the traditions and culture and more that will come in handy during your journey.

Don't worry, you can count on me to be your guide!

STORIES

BLOOD TYPES AND ANIMAL ZODIACS | HOKURIKU | SHIMOKITA | TASTE OF JAPAN: SOY SAUCE

VIDEOS

FUJI FIVE LAKES | CHOPSTICKS | AIZU | YAMAGUCHI

Hello!

Email Luis at: samayoa.luis@stripes.com

Hello everyone, I am Luis Samayoa, a writer for Stars and Stripes Japan. I'm from San Diego and an Army staff sergeant. Throughout my military career, I have had the opportunity to travel around the United States and visit many countries. Japan, however, is still by far my favorite place overseas.

My first visit was a TDY to Okinawa a few years ago. Very early in my trip, I fell in love with the Chatan coastline on a bumpy inflatable motorized Zodiac boat. I love the 100-yen sushi conveyor-belt restaurants and seeing the history of Japan from shrines to castles. Since being here, I have had the opportunity to travel to many prefectures and explore the mainland. From trips to Hokkaido and devouring wagyu sushi to biting into delicious charcoal chicken in Miyazaki and slurping soba in Kyoto, then exploring corners of Kobe, Osaka and Kagawa, I've had an incredible time!

My Japanese vocabulary has grown to sound a bit of Kanto-ben and Kansai-ben which helps me travel between the two. Japan is a small country full of beautiful and historical sites.

To those stationed in Japan, the best piece of advice I learned early is to drop the video game controller and leave the dorms/barracks. Get off base and take a stroll around the neighborhood. Do some online research. I recommend Japan.stripes.com and Okinawa.stripes.com to help you with travel ideas! We've been given an amazing assignment in a country with an impressive public transportation system that will get you to some great places. A day off work doesn't have to only be hitting up "bar alley" or the seawall.

I've been here over two years and have found ways to save some yen while exploring and still making amazing memories! There's always something to do and events to check out.

Join me as I mark some adventures off my bucket list and share them with you in print and online. From Yokohama to Miyazaki and Kagoshima, all the way up to Hokkaido (again!) and everywhere in between, I'm looking forward to learning more about this beautiful place with you!

Stories

Lucky man Adventure

Visiting Hakodate

Visiting Kobe

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Videos

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Polar Science Museum

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Our community sites serving Guam, mainland Japan, Okinawa and Korea help you navigate life in the Pacific with tips, reviews, experiences, and other useful information.

Living here presents many opportunities to experience the diverse Pacific region. Stars and Stripes provides a variety of information regarding travel, culture, local news and more to help you make the most of your tour. Our community publications are distributed in Guam, Japan, Okinawa and Korea.

Look for our bright blue Stars and Stripes boxes in more than 800 locations across the Pacific to pick up your free copy or download the digital version on Stripes.com.

If you have a story idea, review or suggestion, we'd love to hear it! We accept reader submissions, which may be used in our special print publications or our community websites.

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Chureito Pagoda in Arakurayama Sengen Park, Fujiyoshida City.
Photo by Stefanie Lynn Casaceli-Hendra

The Japan way
Crash course in customs & etiquette

Every culture has its own rules regarding etiquette. In Japan, some of these rules are straightforward while others are more subtle. One of the basic concepts of Japanese society is to maintain social harmony by respecting how others might feel.

A subtle aspect of this is that Japanese often do not present their true feelings ("honne") to avoid conflict. The appearances they may present are called "tatemae" and are considered good manners.

A clear example is that Japanese often postpone what they want to do in order to support what others need to do. When you get lost, many Japanese are willing to take you to the right place regardless of their destination. If you ask for language support from your Japanese friends, most likely they will coordinate their schedule to help you right away.

Bear in mind, however, that this may be the result of tatemae – their desire to be polite despite how it may affect them. Don't take too much advantage of their kindness, and always show your appreciation – maybe with a small gift or by buying lunch.

Never be late or cancel an appointment with a Japanese friend that was set up to help your personal needs; it is considered very rude.

First encounters

When Japanese people meet for the first time, they say "hajime-mashite" and give their name followed by the word "desu" (e.g., John desu). Usually they'll bow if the situation is formal or just nod their heads otherwise.

The degree of bowing depends on the formality of the situation and the relationship between the people.

Business professionals exchange "meishi" (business cards) at the beginning of a meeting; make sure you have enough for everyone. Stand, bow slightly and use both hands to present your card with the Japanese side up and the text right-side up for your counterpart to read. The same rule applies when receiving a card from someone else.

Take time to review your counterpart's card carefully. You can ask about correct pronunciation of his or her name, or for an explanation of a job title. You want to show interest in, and respect to, the other party. Never shove the card into your back pocket.

Meishi should be handled respectfully because they represent the person. If you are seated at a meeting, place the card gently on the table in front of you. If you are meeting more than one person and have received multiple cards, arrange them neatly in front of you.

When visiting someone's home, it is polite to bring a gift, usually an inexpensive food item, which should be wrapped. When you visit a local home or office, you may be served green tea without asking. This custom is based on the idea that most people like green tea. If you don't want it, it's best not to refuse it, but say "thank you" and not drink it.

Every Japanese home has a "genkan" (hallway) with a lower tiled floor right inside the door where you take off your shoes (and never step on without shoes) and the upper wooden floor where you should walk without shoes or with slippers on. Often, if you use the toilet, you'll have to change slippers again. If you see slippers or sandals at toilets in hospitals or other offices, you should use them. It is a sanitary custom.

In order to thank someone, e.g. for an invitation, one often presents a gift ("temiyage") such as sweets or drinks. Similarly, when a Japanese person returns from a trip, he or she is supposed to bring home souvenirs ("omiyage") to friends, co-workers and relatives.

Eating out

Most restaurants provide an "Oshibori" a moist hand towel for cleaning your hands before eating. Before eating, it is customary to say, "itadaki-masu" ("I gratefully receive") before eating and, "gochiso-sama deshita" ("Thank you for the meal") after finishing the meal. It's not impolite to ask for a knife, fork or spoon if you have trouble with chopsticks. Some restaurants may not have them, but those serving Western food always do.

Chopsticks should not be used for anything other than putting food in your mouth; not for pointing at someone or moving dishes around the table. And they should not be stuck into a bowl of rice – as it resembles a funeral practice. When eating noodles, such as soba or ramen, it is okay to slurp loudly. In fact, they say it improves the flavor!

Many restaurants in Japan display plastic or wax replicas of their dishes at the entrance. They usually look very similar to the real dishes.

When you enter a restaurant, you will be greeted with the expression "Irasshaimase" ("welcome"), as you will find in any Japanese store as well. Waiters and waitresses are generally trained to be extremely efficient, polite and attentive.

While a majority of restaurants in Japan are equipped exclusively with Western-style tables and chairs, restaurants with low traditional tables and cushions for sitting on the floor are also common. Some restaurants feature both styles side by side. In case of a traditional Japanese interior, you are usually required to take off your shoes before stepping onto the seating area or even at the restaurant's entrance.

It is common in private households and in certain restaurants to share several dishes of food at the table rather than serving each person an individual dish. When eating from shared dishes, move food from the shared plates onto your own with the opposite end of your chopsticks or with serving chopsticks that may be provided for that purpose.

On the other hand, At restaurants that serve "set menus," bowl dishes (e.g. donburi or

See CUSTOMS on Page 14

See more on chopsticks ON PAGE 34

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Okinawan traditions

Shurijo Castle.
Photo by Marco

Okinawan society and culture have survived hundreds of years. The island may have evolved from an agrarian and trading culture to a modern business and tourism frontier, but many ancestral traditions remain. In addition to Japanese etiquette, Okinawans also adhere to their own cultural practices.

The elderly still have an exalted place in Okinawan society and should be shown respect.

Okinawan family life revolves around the household of the eldest son. Each new generation is obligated to the welfare of all the others. While the family is basically a male-dominated unit, women hold a respected status.

As a result of contact with China, Korea, mainland Japan and the West, Buddhism, Shintoism and Christianity have been introduced, but native animism remains the primary religion. Characteristics include a female priestess (Noro) and the worship of the spirit of things such as fire, rice, water and ancestors.

You will find many "utaki," or sacred places, on the island. In the center of a grove of trees, for instance, you may observe a small grouping of stones near a larger "ibe," a stone which marks sacred spots. Located at higher elevations in many cases, utaki are believed to be places where gods descend. Okinawans offer prayers at these stones, which should be treated with great respect.

Okinawans have intertwined the cultures of the Chinese and Japanese into their own, producing a multitude of colorful holidays and festivals. A popular festival is "Naha Oo Tsunahiki." This October celebration takes place in Naha, Okinawa's capital city, featuring a giant tug-of-war between East and West teams. Everybody is welcome to join either team.

During this event, people in traditional costumes of Ryukyu Kingdom ride two huge ropes down the main street coming from opposite directions. When the two sides meet, the ropes are joined. Thousands of festival participants pull on each end of the rope in a great tug of war.

Dragon Boat races and Eisa dance festivals are also a big part of local festivities on the island. Every year in May, the Naha Dragon Boat Race is held. This dynamic competition between teams from across the island, including those from the U.S. military, is quite the spectacle. Thirty-six crewmembers crammed into long, colorful and traditional boats rowing in unison. It's fun to watch. Even better to participate!

Eisa is a traditional dance through which Okinawan's culture and emotions are dramatically and effectively displayed. Styles of dress and hairdos provide an insightful record of the distant past. Performance of classical and semi-classical island dances frequently highlight local festivals. There are dance organizations that welcome Americans. Taking advantage of such opportunities and learning from Okinawans is one of the best ways to enjoy and experience local customs and culture.

– Shoji Kudaka

CUSTOMS continued from Page 12

noodle soups) or Western-style dishes, each person usually orders and eats one separate dish. When you are ready to order, you can call the waiter/waitress by saying, "sumimasen" or excuse me. The bill will be given to you when the dishes are brought to your table or after the meal. In most restaurants, you are supposed to bring your bill to the cashier near the exit when leaving in order to pay.

Some restaurants, especially cheaper ones, have different systems for ordering and paying. At some, you may be required to pay right after ordering; at others, you have to buy meal tickets at a vending machine near the store's entrance. In restaurants in Japan, you are not expected to tip. When leaving, it is polite to say "gochisosama deshita."

Tachikawa, Tokyo.
Photo by Zach Hicks

Drinking

The Japanese are known for being reserved; but like most of us, they can also shed their customary social inhibitions when drinking – and many appreciate the opportunity to do so. Going drinking with friends or coworkers is almost a ritual in Japan. It is considered the best way to break down barriers and cement relationships. Behavior can get pretty rowdy. But all – within reason – is forgiven and forgotten the next day.

It is considered polite to pour other people's drinks then hold your own glass while your host or friend fills it. Having other people constantly fill your glass can lead to a lot of alcohol disappearing very quickly! The Japanese toast is "Kampai" (literally, "dry glass"). At "izakaya," local pubs, where you usually drink and share dishes with your friends, it is common to divide the bill regardless of how much you ate or drank. Most bars (with the exception of Western-style pubs) have a tab system. The bill is paid when you leave.

Miscellaneous

As a general rule, it's considered impolite to speak very loudly in public. Public displays of romantic affection are also frowned upon, as is eating on the street and commuter trains or buses (but not their long-distance counterparts). However, these days it's not uncommon to see any of these behaviors.

The Japanese study English in junior high school for three years, yet most don't speak it, and some may feel embarrassed about their ability to speak it. On the other hand, many people will understand English if you write it in block letters.

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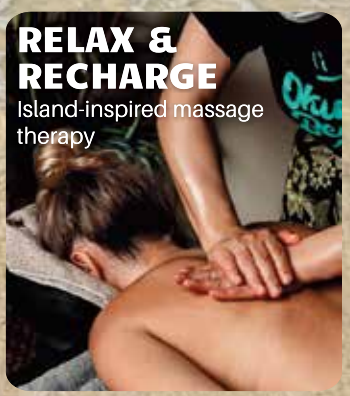

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Say it like a local

Japanese language guidelines

Japanese is not an easy language to master, but getting familiar with it can make a world of difference when getting around off-base. Many locals you encounter will be familiar with some English (its basics are a required subject in schools), and will try to communicate even if they do not fully understand you. Returning the linguistic effort will win you a wealth of appreciation.

Tips to get you started

Kanji are adopted Chinese characters used in modern Japanese writing with hiragana and katakana. Sometimes Roman letters, or "romaji," are also used. There are literally thousands of kanji used in Japanese (several tens of thousands in Chinese). Learning the much-simpler hiragana and katakana alphabets can be useful during your tour of Japan.

Hiragana is a phonetic alphabet like English whose symbols stand for sounds. It is the first alphabet learned by Japanese children, allowing them to write the language without having yet learned kanji. Hiragana is generally used with kanji for grammar.

Katakana is a phonetic alphabet using the same sounds as Hiragana. It's used to write foreign words and in some official documents. Since there are many English words incorporated into modern Japanese (though most are pronounced differently), learning katakana allows you to understand most words written in this alphabet.

When Japanese is written using Roman letters, the rules for pronouncing vowels differ from English. "A" is always short, like "ah" (but never like "bat"); "E" is always short, as in "get"; "I" is always short, like the "ea" in "eat"; "O" is always long, like "old"; and "U" is always long, like "tube."

Also, "AI" indicates the long "I" sound, while the consonant "R" is somewhere between an "R" sound (at the start) and an "L," with the tip of the tongue hitting the roof of the mouth (near the end). Unlike English, most multi-syllable Japanese words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable.

Nagano Snow Monkey Park. Photo by Derryk Stiner

BASIC JAPANESE VOCABULARY

NOUN

Water------ **mizu**
Morning----- **asa**
Day ----------**hiru**
Night--------**yoru**
Fire ----------**hi**
Toilet--------**toire**
House ----------**ie**
Mountain -**yama**
River-------**kawa**
Soap---- **sekken**
Blanket-- **moufu**
Hospital **byouin**
Police **keisatsu**
Train station **eki**
Money----**okane**
McDonalds------ **Makudonarudo**

ADJECTIVES

Light ------- **karui**
Heavy ----- **omoi**
Dirty -----**kitanai**
Clean------- **kirei**
Strong--- **tsuyoi**
Weak ----**yowai**
Deep ------ **fukai**
Shallow ---- **asai**

TIME

Today-------- **kyo**
Tomorrow ------- **ashita**
Day after tomorrow -------**asatte**
Yesterday **kinou**
Day before yesterday-------- **ototoi**
Tonight---**konya**
This month------ **kongetsu**
Next month ----- **raigetsu**
Last month------ **sengetsu**
This year **kotoshi**
Next year **rainen**
Last year **kyonen**

MONTHS OF YEAR

January -------- **Ichigatsu**
February **Nigatsu**
March **Sangatsu**
April --**Shigatsu**
May -- **Gogatsu**
June **Rokugatsu**
July **Shichigatsu**
August ---------- **Hachigatsu**
September ----- **Kugatsu**
October **Jyugatsu**
November ------ **Jyuichigatsu**
December ------ **Jyunigatsu**

SEASONS

Spring------**haru**
Summer - **natsu**
Autumn ------ **aki**
Winter -----**fuyu**

DAYS OF WEEK

Monday --------- **Getsuyoubi**
Tuesday **Kayoubi**
Wednesday ---- **Suiyoubi**
Thursday ------- **Mokuyoubi**
Friday **Kinyoubi**
Saturday **Doyoubi**
Sunday ---------- **Nichiyoubi**

SOME USEFUL JAPANESE PHRASES

GAMBATTE! (GOOD LUCK TO YOU!)

My name is~.
Watashi no namae wa ~ desu.
Wah-tah-shee noh nah-ma-eh wah ~ dehs.

What's your name?
Anata no namae wa nandesuka?
Ana-tah noh na-ma-eh wah nan-de-sue-kah.

Thank you.
Arigato (informal)
Air-ee-gah-toe.

Thanks.
Domo (very casual)
Dough-moe.

Nice to meet you.
Hajimemashite.
Ha-gee-meh-mash-teh.

Thank you very much for everything.
Domo arigato gozaimashita (formal)
Dough-moe air-ee-gah-toe go-zah-ee-mash-tah.

You're welcome.
Douitashimashite.
Dough-tash-ee-mash-teh.

What time is it now?
Ima nanji desuka?
Ee-mah nan-gee deh-sue-kah.

What is that?
Sorewa nan desuka?
Sore-eh-wah nan deh-sue-kah.

That's ok.
Daijoubu desu.
Dye-joe-boo dehs.

Could you please take me there?
Soko made tsuretette itadakemasuka?
So-co mah-deh zoo-reh-teh-teh-ee-tah-dah-keh-mass-kah.

Please drop me here.
Koko de oroshite kudasai.
Cocoa deh oh-roe-she-teh koo-dah-sigh.

When?
Itsu?
Ee-tsoo.

What?
Nani?
Nan-ee.

Please follow me.
Tsuite kite kudasai.
Suite-teh kee-teh koo-dah-sigh.

I didn't know.
Shirimasendeshita.
She-ree-mass-end-esh-tah.

I don't understand.
Wakarimasen.
Wack-ari-mass-en.

See you tomorrow.
Mata ashita.
Mat-ah-she-tah.

Have a nice day.
Yoi ichinichi wo.
Yo-itchy-knee-chi woe.

How much?
Ikura desuka?
Ee-koo-rah deh-sue-kah.

See more Japanese phrases

Tokyo Dome City, Tokyo. Photo by Jerome Baquilar

Check this link!
For more katakana and hiragana

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Sasebo Gobangai, a major commercial complex on the Sasebo waterfront near Sasebo Station and Sasebo Port, offers 74 specialty shops covering a wide selection of imported brands and ladies' fashion, as well as trendy accessories and local gourmet items. Restaurants and cafes look out over the water, and the complex hosts events for the whole family on weekends. Come and enjoy the ocean view in a unique shopping mall!

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PROMENADE EAST ZONE 2F/10:00 am~8:00 pm

We recommend our handcrafted hamburger steaks, each cooked to order, as well as our wagyu lemon steak. You can also enjoy other meat dishes such as beef loin steak and pork spareribs.

TERRACE ZONE 2F / 11:00 am – 10:00 pm

CHECK OUT THESE FEATURED SHOPS!

FOOD

- Mister Donut
- Akai Fusen - Baked Goods
- Baskin Robbins 31 Ice Cream
- TSUKIJI GINDACO - Takoyaki Fish Balls
- Ellena - Supermarket
- GODIVA
- Kyushu Famous Confection - SWEETS
- Epi-ciel - BAKERY
- KALDI COFFEE FARM - COFFEE BEANS & IMPORT GROCERICES

RESTAURANT

- SUSHIRO - Sushi
- STARBUCKS COFFEE
- Ootoya Gohan Dokoro - Japanese Cuisine
- Osakana Kazoku - Izakaya, Japanese Style Bar
- SAGAYA Yakiniku - BBQ Beef Restaurant
- Sanuki Udon HANAMARU - Noodle Shop
- Mendokoro AKIRA - Ramen Shop
- Hamburger Shop Hikari
- gyu-maru - HAMBURG, STEAK RESTAURANT
- Espresso D Works - Café & Bakery
- Taiwan Restaurant Seirode gohan by JIN DIN ROU - Taiwanese cuisine, Xiaolongbao, etc.
- Kentucky Fried Chicken - FRIED CHICKEN
- cuisine francaise LA CHANCE - FRENCH RESTAURANT
- HARBOR TERRACE COFFEE - SWEETS CAFÉ

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TERRACE ZONE 1F / 8:00 am – 10:00 pm

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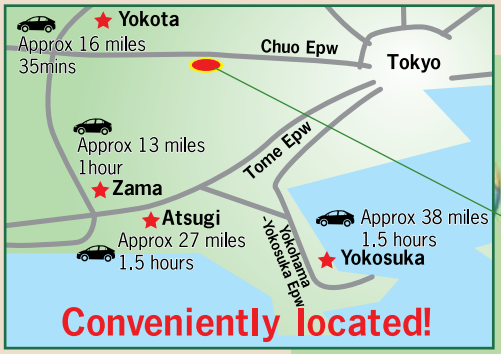

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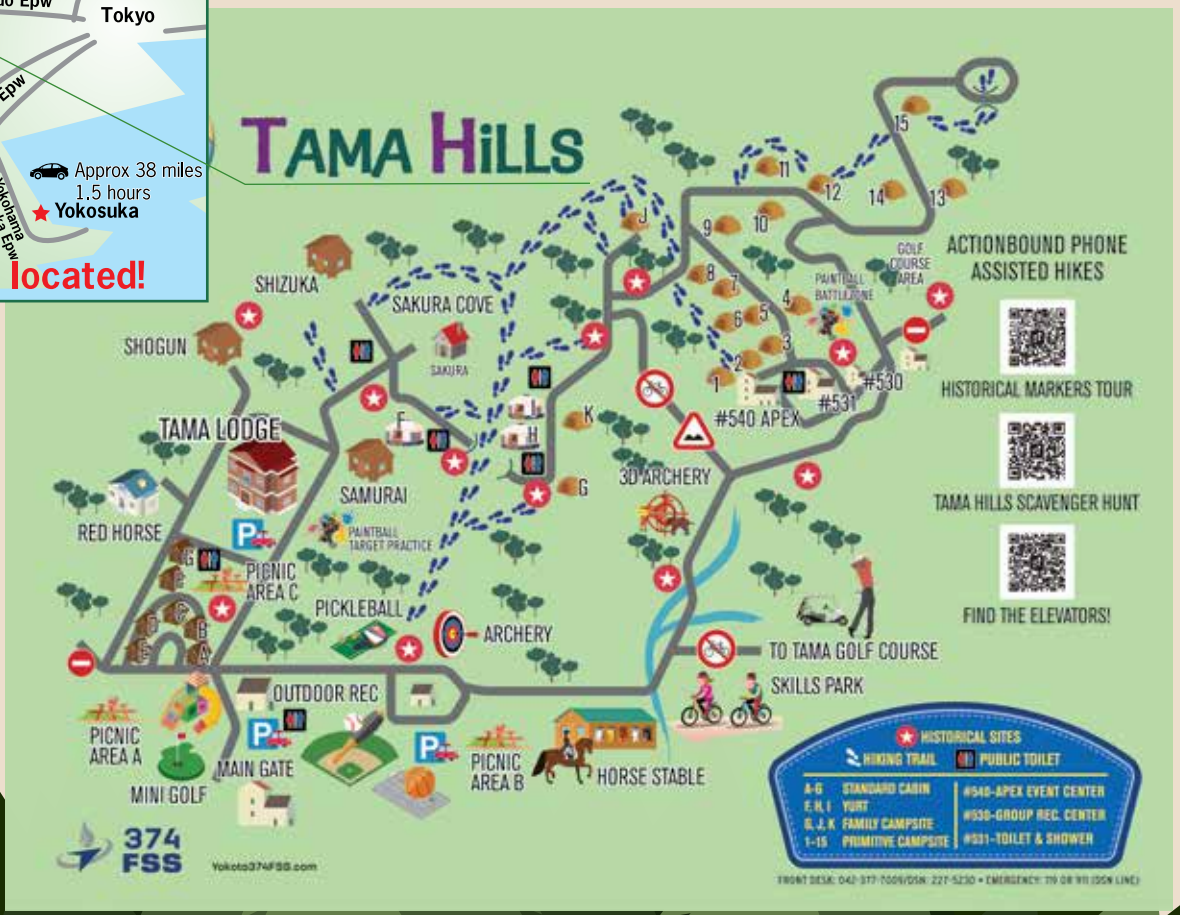

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A valuable lesson

Knowing your yen

If you are new to Japan or Okinawa, local currency and the conversion between dollars and yen may leave you annoyed at the cash register.

"It's 3,240 yen, sir."

When the cashier tells you the price, you may have no idea whether it is expensive or cheap.

Well, the simple conversion is not hard if you remember the formula, $1 = 100 yen.

The exchange rate fluctuates often but as of March 2026 the rate was $1 = 159 yen. Considering the 10 percent consumption tax and handling charges in exchanging currency, however, one dollar is closer to 100 yen than the rate. So, as long as you are in Japan and use yen cash for your personal shopping or service, the formula can give you a clear idea of the value in yen at shops or eateries.

So, according to the formula, that 3,240 yen tab is roughly $32.40.

Bills

Now, take out all the local bills you have in your pocket and lay them out on the table to compare. Since there are only three bills - 10,000 yen, 5,000 yen and 1,000 yen - commonly in use, it's easy to remember them. There is also the less-common 2,000-yen note and you can read more about that below.

While all the three bills have same height (76 millimeter), the width is different – a 10,000-yen bill is the widest at 160 mm, and at 150-mm, the 1,000-yen bill is the shortest. The colors are different, as well. 10,000 yen is dark brown, while that of 5,000 yen is dark violet and 1,000 yen is dark blue.

Interestingly, although $100 and 10,000-yen bills are almost same in value, $100 bills are not used nearly as much in daily shopping in the States as the 10,000-yen bill is in Japan. People often use 10,000-yen bills at the bar, flower shops and even taxis.

Among the three bills, 1,000 is the most useful for daily use. Most vending machines accept it along with coins. Many eateries offer a lunch set for 1,000 yen or less, and most taxi rides within town can be managed with a 1,000-yen bill. So, I encourage you to possess as much yen cash in the form of 1,000-yen bills as possible for your convenience.

Different bills are used for different occasions in Japan. When you are invited to a wedding reception, you are supposed to wrap new and unfolded bills in red and white envelope to congratulate the new couple. On the contrary, when you attend a funeral or any memorial service, you can enclose rather old and not clean bills in a black and white envelope to the deceased family, so that they can use the bills without hesitation.

Coins

Now, let's check out the local coins. There are six– 500 yen, 100 yen, 50 yen, 10 yen, 5 yen and 1 yen.

Among the six coins, the 100-yen coin is the most useful for various vending machines, coin laundries and parking lots. You may notice that there are many 100-yen shops near your base. But, be aware, when you buy a 100-yen item in the shop, you have to pay 118 yen at the cashier thanks to the 10 percent consumption tax.

When you visit Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples, be sure to bring coins for casting in front of the main halls. Japanese believe the sound of casted coins in the wooden box can remind gods of us and our wishes. A 5-yen coin is often cast, as it is pronounced "go-en" in Japanese, which is associated with good relations (goen) with gods or Buddha.

With its high value, the 500-yen coin is often considered a saving coin. Some people, including my wife, will always put the coin in a piggy bank whenever they find one in their supermarket change.

Save 200 of the coins, and you've got yourself a nice overnight package to a hot spring resort. So, make sure you check those couch cushions every once in a while – it's probably worth your time.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

Behind the bill

1,000 yen

76 x 150mm, dark blue

Front: Portrait of Shibasaburo Kitazato, scientist and co-discoverer of bubonic infectious agent in 1894.

Back: Hokusai Katsushika's ukiyo-e woodblock print, "Kanagawa-oki nami ura."

2,000 yen

76 x 154mm, dark green

Front: Shurei-mon gate of Shuri Castle in Okinawa.

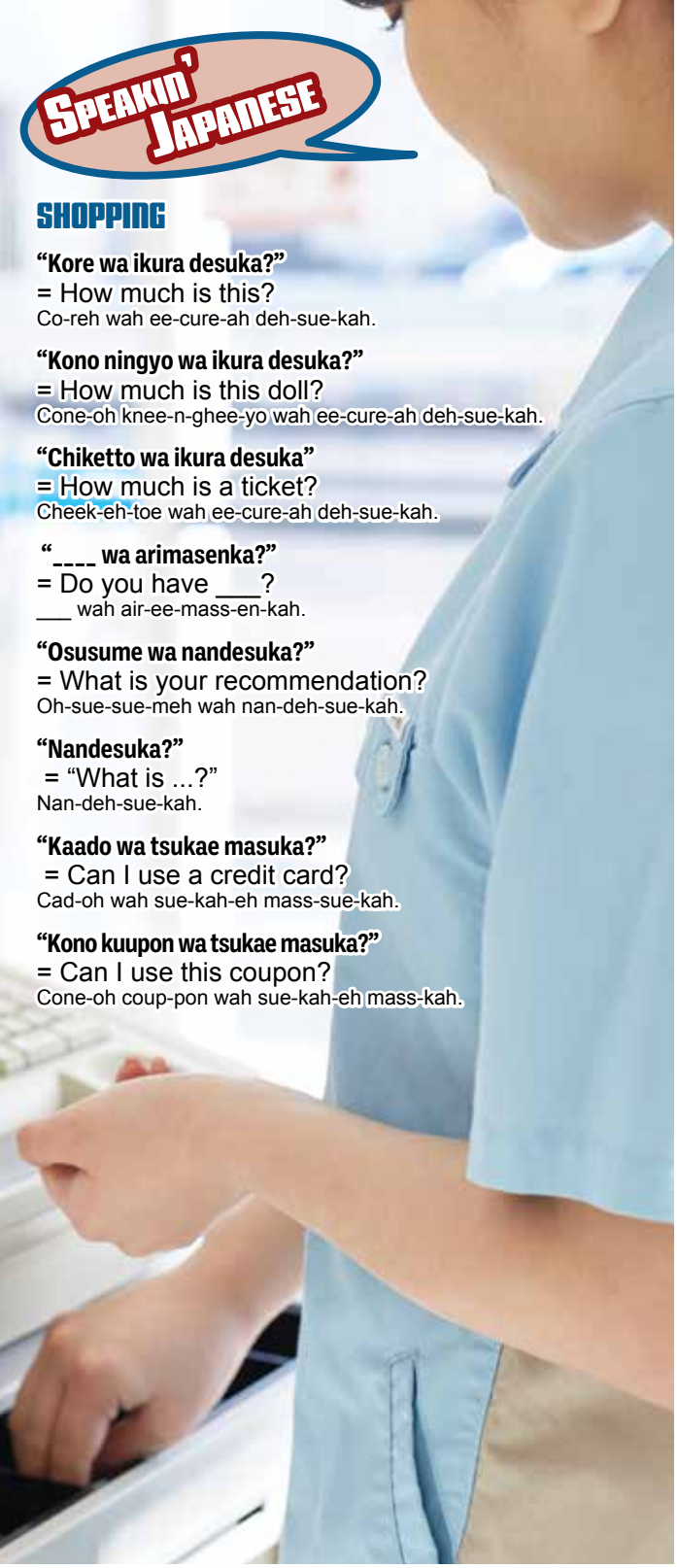
Back: A scene from "Tale of Genji" and a portrait of its author, Murasaki Shikibu.

5,000 yen

76 x 156 mm, dark violet

Front: Portrait of Umeko Tsuda, an educator who founded Tsuda University.

Back: Painting of Japanese wisteria flowers.



Speakin' Japanese

SHOPPING

"Kore wa ikura desuka?"
= How much is this?
Co-reh wah ee-cure-ah deh-sue-kah.

"Kono ningyo wa ikura desuka?"
= How much is this doll?
Cone-oh knee-n-ghee-yo wah ee-cure-ah deh-sue-kah.

"Chiketto wa ikura desuka"
= How much is a ticket?
Cheek-eh-toe wah ee-cure-ah deh-sue-kah.

"____ wa arimasenka?"
= Do you have ___?
___ wah air-ee-mass-en-kah.

"Osusume wa nandesuka?"
= What is your recommendation?
Oh-sue-sue-meh wah nan-deh-sue-kah.

"Nandesuka?"
= "What is ...?"
Nan-deh-sue-kah.

"Kaado wa tsukae masuka?"
= Can I use a credit card?
Cad-oh wah sue-kah-eh mass-sue-kah.

"Kono kuupon wa tsukae masuka?"
= Can I use this coupon?
Cone-oh coup-pon wah sue-kah-eh mass-kah.

10,000 yen
76 x 160mm, dark brown
Front: Portrait of Eiichi Shibusawa, an industrialist widely known as the "father of Japanese capitalism."
Back: Tokyo Station Marunouchi Building, a historic structure commonly known as the "Red Brick Station."

Protecting your pets in a new country

Most pet owners will tell you their dog or cat are not pets, but family members. And, when it comes down to it, finding the right doctor for your pet in a new country can be just as hard as tracking down the perfect pediatrician for your child. With that in mind, here are a few pointers to help get you started:

Finding a vet

When looking for your new vet, look for one that's local. This will not only be convenient for the regular checkups, but any emergency care needed will be that much less stressful. Walking distance is ideal. Ask neighbors where they take their furry friends. Also, many Japanese vets do not speak English, but that doesn't mean they're not out there. Ask around to see who around you knows of an English-friendly vet. Many pet clinics offer pre-registration, which is a good idea if emergency services are needed.

Rabies shots

There has not been a recorded case of rabies in Japan since 1957. In order to keep the country rabies-free, **you are required by Japanese law to get your pets a rabies shot**. The shots can be administered at a veterinarian's office, or even at certain public schools.

Once your pet gets the shot, you'll receive a sticker showing they are inoculated. The sticker should be displayed in front of your home, for example, on your door, door frame, or mailbox.

Filariasis medication

Vets will also recommend pills for filariasis ("firaria" in Japanese) and ticks. These are mostly for those dogs that take walks in wooded areas, where fleas, ticks, and other parasites are prevelant.

Bringing a pet into Japan

The Animal Quarantine Service oversees bringing pets into Japan. Pets from the U.S. entering the country need to follow proper vaccination procedures in order to avoid being quarantined. The timeframe for being quarantined can range all the way up to 180 days if needed.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of Japan's favorite dogs is Hachiko, the faithful Akita dog who waited for his human, Professor Eizaburo Ueno, to return to Shibuya Station every day, even after Ueno's death. You can visit Hachiko's statue outside the station, which is considered one of the country's unofficial landmarks.

Photo by Arnet Tamayo /U.S. Air Force photo

Contents provided by MoriTown Akishima

Welcome to MORITOWN!

Get together!!!

Chow time,relax time,
shopping time,,,
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Food：肉・たこやき

Hungry troops welcome!

Shabu-shabu Onyasai
Shabu-shabu

Inaba Wakou
Tonkatsu

Nakano Grill
Charcoal-Grilled Hamburg Steak & Steak

Gyukaku Yakiniku Shokudo
Yakiniku Sets / Rice Bowls / Cold Noodles

Torisaku
Chicken Specialty

GINDACO
Takoyaki

SAIZERIYA
Italian Cuisine

Kamakura Pasta
Pasta

OSAKA OHSHO
Chinese Cuisine

Long-Hu Dining
Chinese Cuisine

Ramen Kagetsu ARASHI Express
Ramen

Ringer Hut
Nagasaki Champon

Yoshu Shonin
Chinese-Style Ramen

Sojibo
Soba Noodles

Kobara Cafe
Indian Curry & Indian Cuisine

UORIKI Image is for illustrative purposes only
Sushi Izakaya

Tendon Tenya
Tendon & Tempura Sets / Bento

Gokoku
Japanese Cuisine

MARUGAME UDON
Udon&Onigiri & Tempura

YOSHINOYA
Gyudon (Takeout Only)

Kentucky Fried Chicken
Fried Chicken

Burger King
Hamburger Restaurant

MOS BURGER
Hamburgers

Ginza Cozy Corner
Western-Style Sweets

Little Mermaid
Bakery & Cafe

Starbucks 〈East Building 1F/Restaurant area〉
Espresso Drinks & Coffee Beans

EXCELSIOR CAFFÉ
Cafe & Light Meals

TULLY'S COFFEE
Café&Light Meals & Coffee Beans

Kaju Kobo Karin
Fresh Juice Stand

Dipper Dan
Crepes

Baskin-Robbins (31 Ice Cream)
Ice Cream

Mister Donut
Donuts & Dim Sum

Gong cha
Bubble Tea & Tea

Grocery & Market :食

Fuel up. Stock up. Take something home.

Ito Yokado Super market

WAKUWAKU HIROBA Specialty Food Shop

Karuizawa Farmers' Gift Food&Grocery & Gift Shop

Shopping :買

Clothing,furniture,Household items,,,,everything!!!

Goods

NITORI Furniture & Home Decor

MUJI Lifestyle Goods

SPORTS DEPO Sporting Goods

Fashion

GLOBAL WORK

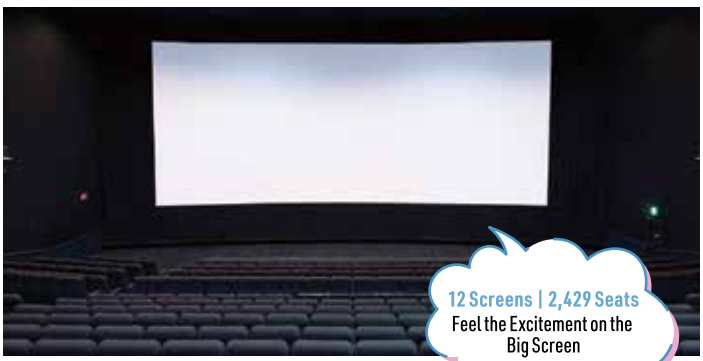
GLOBAL WORK Family

ABC MART / ABC-MART SPORTS

ABC-MART Shoes and Sports Apparel

Fun×service :楽

Recharge by enjoying karaoke and amusement.



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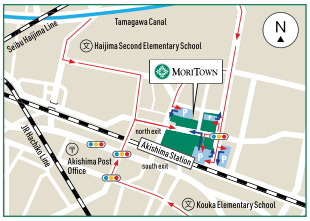

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Trash talk

How to sort your garbage in Japan

Do you find Japan's garbage disposal system confusing? If so, you are not the only one! The rules of sorting out garbage can be daunting, even for locals. Figuring out the disposal system is so complicated that it's even a regular topic on Japanese quiz shows.

One of the reasons why the system seems complicated is that it's up to each municipality to set rules for trash separation. That means every time you move to a new city, the rules you'd grown accustomed to at your old place might not exactly apply to your new home.

Not only do recyclables, days of disposal and designated locations vary by municipality, but so do the types of garbage bags used for each type of trash and each city. Spend more time in Japan, and you'll soon notice the rules also change from time to time.

Before you trash talk and get overwhelmed, don't worry! The disposal system does have some standard rules that will make understanding the disposal system a bit easier, no matter where in Japan you reside. Check out the list.

MOERU/KANEN-GOMI (COMBUSTIBLE WASTE)

This is a type of waste that can be burned in an incinerator. Ashes are used for landfills or recycled in general. Kitchen waste, grass, clothes, and Kleenex tissue are some examples of this type of waste. Some municipalities consider clothes as "recyclable." Plastic products are often categorized as "combustible."

For reference, Chatan Town, a host municipality of Camp Foster in Okinawa lists diapers, cooking oil, leather bags and shoes, and rubber products as an example of this type of garbage. Fussa City, the host municipality of Yokota Air Base on the mainland, considers waste such as aluminum foil, cooling pillow, fishing line as combustible.

MOENAI/FUNEN-GOMI (NON-BURNABLE WASTE)

This is a type of waste that is sent to disposing facilities other than incineration facilities. Metals, glass, and ceramics are examples of this type. Some require special attention because they should be disposed of in a specific manner. For example, Chatan Town advises that blades broken dishes and glasses should be wrapped in thick paper.

SHIGEN-GOMI (RECYCLABLES)

This category includes paper products, bottles, plastic bottles for beverage (separate from other plastic products), cans.

Paper products include milk cartons, cardboard, newspapers, and magazines. When disposed of, they need to be tied with a string.

Plastic bottles for beverages, liquor, and condiments are generally considered "recyclable." Labels and caps need to be removed and bottles should be rinsed with water before being disposed of.

YUUGAI/KIKEN GOMI (HAZARDOUS WASTE)

Some municipalities have this category for hazardous waste. In both Chatan Town and Fussa City, florescent lights, lighters, mercury-containing thermometers, and dry cell batteries fall under this category. (Florescent lights of 120cm or more in size are categorized as "Oversized Waste and lighters other than disposable ones are considered non-burnable waste" in Fussa City.)

SODAI-GOMI (BULK TRASH)

This category normally includes furniture, bicycless, futon (Japanese-style bedding), carpet, old lumber, and so forth. Most likely, bulk trash disposals are subject to fees and require prior registration at a municipal office or online.

– Shoji Kudaka

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- YOKOSUKA PDF
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- ZAMA

**Search online for your local municipality's trash rules. Many now include English translations and explanations on disposing of bulk trash, including paying the fees for pickup.

OKINAWA

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- KADENA PDF
- GINOWAN PDF
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More about life in Japan

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Kinkaku-ji Temple in Kyoto.
Photo by Christopher Chandler

Climate change

Weather in Land of Rising Sun

The Japan Archipelago stretches nearly 1,700 miles from the northern mainland of Hokkaido to the southernmost islands of Okinawa, and the climate can vary widely depending on where you are stationed.

While the mainland – home to Misawa, Yokota, Yokosuka, Zama, Atsugi, Fuji, Iwakuni and Sasebo – has four distinct seasons, Okinawa, with its subtropical climate, doesn't show the clear seasonal changes. However, Okinawa does have a couple of chilly months and a rainy season.

Here is a breakdown of the climate in Japan and Okinawa below:

Spring (March-April)

Splendid views of cherry blossoms highlight spring throughout the nation. With the rise in temperatures comes the color explosion at the end of March or beginning of April, finishing up near the end of April in Misawa. Temperatures range from 40-60°F.

Summer (June-Sept.)

Summer begins with the rainy season - cold northerly and warm southerly air masses collide to create 45 to 50 days of dreary weather, dropping anything from drizzle to torrential downpours.

Heavy thunderstorms in July often precede the end of the rainy season. The steamy 80-90°F weather during the summer lead to many locals hitting the water or relaxing at cool resorts in mountainous areas.

Autumn (Oct.-Nov.)

Temperatures begin dropping, with light breezes and cooler temperatures around 55-65°F. Just as the cherry blossom is a symbol of spring in Japan, the autumn colors embody the spirit of fall, with the front moving across mainland Japan and finishing in Sasebo in early December.

Winter (Dec.-Feb.)

Winter in the Pacific coastal area is quite dry and sunny, with the temperatures rarely dropping below 30°F. Meanwhile, the northern and central regions experience snowfall and temps around 10°F colder. In fact, the Misawa area gets the most snow each year, while the other mainland installations are blessed with relatively mild temperatures and very little snow.

Okinawa

Although there are cherry blossom trees on Okinawa, they are different from those in the mainland and the warmer weather helps make the viewing season the earliest in Japan – usually January or February.

March and April are a nice 70-75°F, though it gets a little bit chilly in the morning and evening. This leads into Golden Week, which on Okinawa signals the start of the rainy season. Believe it or not, the island is known to experience the least amount of clear sunny days in the nation, so the end of the rainy season in June is met with joy and a sense of liberation. Then, summer continues July through September, with the annual highest temperature around 90-95°F. Temperatures begin to drop in October, but usually don't get below 60°F.

December through February are usually chilly, around 55-65°F, with sparse rainfall and occasionally strong winds. And it almost never snows on Okinawa.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

Haneji Dam, Okinawa .
Photo by Gabriela Irwin

	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Aomori (Misawa)	29°F (7.2)	46°F (2.8)	70°F (4.0)	47°F (5.1)
Tokyo	40°F (2.2)	57°F (5.0)	77°F (5.0)	63°F (7.2)
Yamaguchi (Iwakuni)	42°F (3.2)	56°F (6.8)	78°F (11.6)	64°F (3.7)
Nagasaki (Sasebo)	44°F (3.2)	59°F (8.0)	80°F (12.4)	66°F (4.0)
Naha	64°F (4.7)	70°F (7.4)	83°F (7.6)	76°F (7.3)

*degrees [°F] (precipitation [inch])

DID YOU KNOW?

Summer brings typhoons, as well. Tropical storms often hit Okinawa and the mainland causing serious damage between July and October, especially from August to September.

Land of earthquakes

An earthquake occurs when two tectonic plates slip over each other. Japan is situated at the intersection of three tectonic plates, making it highly prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity. So, unfortunately, it is very likely that you will experience one.

Be aware: Tsunamis can follow a large-scale quake. It is recommended to keep an emergency earthquake kit available with the survival basics.

STAY INFORMED WITH STORM TRACKER

TYPHOON SEASON PRIMER

Only in Japan

You have to see it to believe it

When you think of Japan, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Mount Fuji? Cherry blossoms? Those would be two that truly represent The Land of the Rising Sun, but there are a many more lesser-known things that can be found in mainland Japan and Okinawa.

Onsen

Soaking in an onsen is about as Japanese as it gets. There are thousands of these bathing facilities near hot springs throughout the country, and if you want the true Japan experience, these are a must. Most don't allow tattoos, so check before going. And never wear a bathing suit. Naked people only!

Sumo wrestling

Japan's national sport is huge – both literally and figuratively. With six main events each year, sumo enthusiasts turn out in droves to watch these half-naked giants prove that you don't need to look fit to be a top-notch athlete.

Baseball

With rules almost identical to MLB, baseball on the field is similar in Japan. Off the field though, it's a whole different ballgame being played. From relentless cheering on offense to "beer girls" with mini-kegs on their backs, the fan experience at a Japanese baseball game is worth the price of admission.

Mt. Fuji

Fuji-san, as the cool kids call it, is Japan's tallest mountain – well, volcano, but that's another story. As the symbol of Japan, Fuji can be found in art and photos all across the world, and on a clear day can be seen from many different regions in Japan. The climbing season typically runs from early July through early September.

Vending machines

These things are everywhere. No, really – EVERYWHERE. From beer to hot coffee, cigarettes to cup noodles, you can find just about anything in a

vending machine in Japan. Feeling parched while walking down a dark alley in the middle of nowhere? You're covered. On Mt. Fuji? No worries, there's one at the top.

Convenience stores

Like the vending machines, convenience stores can be found wherever you look. Whether it's a Family Mart, 7-Eleven, Lawson or something else, these things truly epitomize the word "convenience." And they serve delicious food. No kidding! Next time you're at a major intersection in Tokyo, count how many of these you can see at one time. It's fun! It's Japan!

Naha Tug-of-War

An annual event on Okinawa, this is not your ordinary game of tug-of-war. In fact, it was once recorded as the largest tug-of-war event in the world. Every year, over a quarter million people attend the October event. Equally as impressive as the size of the crowd is the weight of the rope – roughly 40 tons.

Stores from home

Just because you're halfway across the world from home, doesn't mean you can't get a good ol' taste of the U.S.A. every once in a while. Many places from the U.S. can be found here, including: Costco, IKEA, McDonald's, Denny's, 7-Eleven, TGI Friday's, Hooters, Gap, H&M and many more.

Whale watching

The winter months on Okinawa don't bring snow, but what they do bring are giant humpback whales. Every January through March, the whales migrate south to warmer Okinawan waters. There are many places that offer whale watching tours, so make sure to take advantage while you're there!

Depachika

When you think of department stores, you often think of the past, and you never think of food. In Japan, the department stores thrive and the basement floors hold the depachika – a magical food wonderland where you can find just about anything you want. Yakitori, sushi, salads? All there!

See ONLY on Page 32

Yokohama Stadium, Japan.
Photo by Brian Lehto

Naha Tug-of-War.
Photo by Shoji Kudaka

Welcome to SASEBO Town!

Only a 10 minute walk from main Sasebo Naval Base gate, Sanka-cho and Yonka-cho machi covered shopping streets. The streets are connected and feature an indoor atmosphere while being outside, stretching for almost 1,000 meters. There are many shops in and surrounding area, including restaurants, grocery stores, specialty stores, and cinemas with events held throughout the year. Please visit us and enjoy a leisurable time. We look forward to seeing you there!

1 DICO
CASA SUMI 1F, 2-11, Minato-machi

A premium apparel shop featuring carefully curated men's and women's items from Japan and abroad, along with authentic Japan-made denim. Find the perfect piece to elevate your everyday style.

2 Makino Jewelry
5-2, Sakae-machi

We offer custom-made jewelry created from your photos and ideas. Our team helps you find the gemstone you love, carefully selected to match your design. We also provide jewelry repair and resizing services. Each piece is handcrafted in Japan with great attention to detail. English support is available.

3 Specialty Shop - YY Boueki
2F, 7-14, Shimanose-cho

YY Trading offers a wide range of goods—from collectibles and figures to records, cat items, and Pokémon cards—plus plenty of fun events. Come visit us and check out our social media with the QR code!

4 SHOBIDO
9-8, Shimanose-cho

We feature fine watches, jewelry, and lighters for that special gift or for yourself. Need to fix something? From small to big repairs, we can repair your watch, jewelry, and change that battery in your favorite timepiece, come see us for trouble free service.

5 Fashion Shop – NEW SBT
2F, 7, Shimanose-cho

Welcome to your Exclusive unique fabulous unbelievable cute style's that makes you feel Lovingly Happy joyful always in a winner bold mind and beautiful. El-Roi ! Get yours 20% off now!!

6 KAWASHIMO Music Shop
4-20, Motoshima-cho

A specialty store for guitars, ukuleles, and keyboards. We have a wide range of products at affordable prices. Our Japanese-made unique guitar picks, straps, and drumsticks are very popular items for music lovers to musicians. We look forward to seeing you soon!

7 CoWorks24 Sasebo
6-21, Kamikyo-machi

Experience Sasebo's premier indoor golf – open 24/7! CoWorks24 offers a private A/C room with a TRACKMAN simulator and 400+ world-famous courses in stunning high graphics for just ¥3,300/ hour. Bring your friends together with up to 4 people in total!

8 NAGATA JEWELRY
3-19, Kamikyo-machi

We are specializing in fashion and bridal jewelry including engagement rings and wedding bands. We have many varieties of high – quality jewelry. We always welcome all customers with courtesy and "first-class service."

9 Yakiniku YAMI-ICHI Sasebo
1-25, Yamagata-cho

Our restaurant is a yakiniku restaurant featuring charcoal grilled meats that you cook at your table. We also have a wide variety of all-you-can-eat & all-you-can-drink English electronic menus at your table that make ordering quick and easy.

10 Kobe Sanda MOTOYANAGI
1-16, Shimokyo-machi

Sandaya's famous croquettes—loved in Kansai—are now in Kyushu for the first time! Enjoy a specialty shop serving premium, expertly crafted croquettes in a bar inspired atmosphere.

11 DREAMER / E-BAR
2F, 1-1, Shimokyo-machi

We are a sports bar with darts and pool. We are open for lunch (11:00–14:30, L.O. 14:00) and dinner (17:00–20:30, L.O. 20:00). Enjoy our great burgers, pizza, wings, and a wide selection of drinks. Come by and enjoy the atmosphere! <Instagram: dreamer_ebar> see you soon!

12 SASEBO GREEN HOTEL
4-1, Miura-cho

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TEL. 092-938-4700 URL.https://fukuoka.aeonmall.jp

Hirosaki Castle.
Photo by Brian Lehto

ONLY continued from Page 29

Cherry blossoms

Every spring, the cherry blossom trees bloom in Japan and it's a BIG deal. The world-famous re-birth each spring draws massive crowds during peak blooming days, and many Japanese partake in hanami – a social eating and drinking party under the cherry blossoms. This is a must as far as Japan experiences go.

Cherry blossoms can also be found during springtime on Okinawa, although they bloom much earlier than those on the mainland.

Manga

If you haven't heard, comics are a "thing" here in Japan. And the word for Japanese comics is manga. People young and old alike read manga, whether by book or mobile device. Akihabara, known as the hotspot for Japanese pop culture, is home to the Tokyo Anime Center.

Pachinko

Although there are no casinos in Japan, there is pachinko. There are many pachinko parlors throughout Japan, so you're likely to see, or hear, many. They're loud but if some gambling-style entertainment is what you're looking for, this is about it in Japan.

Karaoke

First off, this is not Tuesday night karaoke at Bill's Saloon. In Japan, it's different, of course. Karaoke is something you do in a private room with your friends. You pay by the hour, get costumes, and get to limit your off-key singing torture to only your group of friends.

Dragon boat races

Each spring, around early May, Okinawa is invaded by dragons. Specifically, dragon boats in search of glory on the water. The Naha Hari Festival is host to the races, and the event as a whole is a great slice of true Okinawa. Members of each U.S. military branch row in the fiercely competitive boat races, which regularly draw a large crowd.

Animal/maid cafés

You've heard of the famous cat cafés, but in Japan, the animals-café mashup doesn't end there. Not a cat-person? Also offered in Japan are: owl, dog, bird, hedgehog and rabbit cafés. If you're not an animal-lover and prefer to be served by maids or butlers there are cafés for that as well.

Shrines/temples

As many convenience stores as there are in Japan, there are three times as many shrines and temples combined. Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples are everywhere. From giant ones like the Meiji Shrine, to small ones you wouldn't even notice, there is definitely no shortage of places for one to worship.

Blood type

In the U.S., there are astrological signs that many think determine your personality. In Japan, it's believed that your blood type is the determining factor. So, if you meet someone new and they ask what your blood type is, they're likely not a vampire. They probably just want to get to know you better.

Rest areas

These are not what most think of when they think of a rest stop. Big parking lots lead to shopping, food and bathrooms – nice and clean bathrooms. Some even have hotel rooms for those looking for a place to literally rest. In Japan, the rest areas are not just stops, they are destinations.

Water sports

From scuba diving and snorkeling, to kayaking, parasailing, surfing and Flyboarding, there is no shortage of fun to be had in the waters of Okinawa. With year-round weather that is ideal for being outside, Okinawa makes it easy for the outdoorsy, water-lovers to enjoy their stay.

Kumano-Nachi Grand Shrine.
Photo by Christopher Chandler

Aquarium Bay View, Osaka, Japan.
Photo by Daniel Mayor

Celebrating holidays

There are 16 national holidays on the current Japanese calendar. While some of them are memorial days for the imperial family of Japan, others are related to historical events.

There are also local days of remembrance. For the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Aug. 6 and 9 are important days to reflect back on the days the atomic bombs were dropped in 1945. Likewise, June 23 is a memorial day for Okinawans to commemorate the Battle of Okinawa, which ended that day the same year.

There are also Japanese holiday seasons and traditions to be noted. "Golden Week" marks a highlight of the first half of the year. From late April through early May, many people will travel during this time, which consists of multiple holidays.

Obon is another big holiday tradition. For several days in July or August (depending on the region), Japanese families get together to welcome the spirit of their ancestors and then send them off again. In addition to Obon, Okinawans also hold a family gathering called "See Me" in the spring.

New Years' Day (Jan. 1)
A day to celebrate the new year.

Coming-of-Age Day (2nd Mon. of Jan.)
Celebrate those who have newly become adults in a given year.

National Foundation Day (Feb. 11)
The day when the first emperor is said to have assumed the position.

The Emperor's Birthday (Feb. 23)
The birthday of Emperor Naruhito.

Spring Equinox Day (Mar. 20 or 21)
A day which supposedly has equal day and night length. Also a day to commemorate ancestors.

Showa Day (Apr. 29)
Originally the birthday of Emperor Hirohito.

Constitution Memorial Day (May 3)
The current Japanese constitution took effect on this day in 1947. (Observed on May 6 in 2026.)

Greenery Day (May 4)
A day to commune with nature and to be thankful for blessings.

Children's Day (May 5)
A day to adore children and appreciate mothers.

Marine Day (3rd Mon. of July)
A day to appreciate ocean and celebrate Japan as a marine nation.

Mountain Day (Aug. 11)
A day to show appreciation to mountains.

Senior Citizen Day (3rd Mon. of Sept.)
A day to pay respect to senior citizens.

Fall Equinox Day (Sept. 22 or 23)
A day which supposedly has equal day and night length. Also a day to commemorate ancestors.

Sports Day (2nd Mon. of Oct.)
The 1964 Tokyo Olympics kicked off on this day.

Culture Day (Nov. 3)
A day to promote culture and arts.

Labor Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23)
A day to commemorate labor and production and give one another thanks.

Speakin' Japanese — Holiday exchange

Today is _____ [Hinamatsuri, Mountain Day, Spring Equinox Day...]
= Kyo wa Hinamatsuri (Yama-no-hi, Shumbun-no-hi) desu.
今日はひな祭り（山の日、春分の日）です。
Pronounced: Kee-yo wah hee-nah-mats-your-ree (yeah-mah-no-hee, shoom-boon-no-hee) deh-sue.

Happy New Year! (before Jan. 1) = Yoi otoshi wo!
良いお年を！
Yo-ee oh-toe-she woe

Happy New Year! (after Jan. 1) = Akemashite omedeto gozaimasu!
明けましておめでとうございます！
Ah-kay-mash-teh oh-meh-debt-oh go-sigh-mass

On Sports Day, students participate in fun activities like soccer, basketball and other activities.
= Supootsu-no-hi niwa seito ga atsumatte sakkaa ya basukettobooru nado iroirona kyogi wo tanoshimi masu.
スポーツの日には生徒が集まってサッカーやバスケットボールなどいろいろな競技を楽しみます。
Soup-oat-sue no-hee knee-wah say-toe gah at-sue-matt-teh zack-kah yeah basket-toe-beau-rue nah-doe ee-row-ee-row-nah key-oh-gee woe tan-oh-she-me mass

You'll see many young people in beautiful kimonos in Japan on Coming-of-Age Day.
= Nihon dewa Seijin-no-hi niwa kireina kimono wo kita ookuno wakamono wo mikake masu.
日本では成人の日にはきれいな着物を着た多くの若者を見かけます。
Knee-hone deh-wah say-gin-know-hee knee-wah key-ray-nah kee-moe-know woe key-tah oh-coo-know wack-a-moe-know woe me-cac-eh mass

I will take a nice vacation overseas during Golden Week this year.
= Kotoshino gooruden-uiiiku niwa kaigai de tanoshii kyuuka wo sugosu tsumoridesu.
今年のゴールデンウィークには海外で楽しい休暇を過ごすつもりです。
Coat-oh-she-know goo-roo-den-weak-oo knew-wah kai-guy deh tan-oh-she q-kuh woe sue-go-sue tsue-morey-deh-sue

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4-16-70 Higashi Hemi-cho, Yokosuka

Chopsticks and Japanese dining

Any meal in Japan is sure to include some form of chopsticks.

Since their invention in ancient China more than 3,000 years ago, chopsticks have been widely used in Asian countries. In Japan, chopsticks are called "**hashi**" and are used for cooking and eating all kinds of dishes, including rice, raw fish, vegetables, noodles, soup and desserts. At some restaurants, you'll even catch locals using their chopsticks to eat French fries.

Being an important dining tool, us Japanese usually learn how to use chopsticks before we start walking. Japanese parents take teaching the skill to their children seriously, as it is considered one of the most important manners in society.

As a child, I remember not being allowed to eat unless I used my chopsticks. If I stuck my chopsticks vertically into a bowl of rice – a big no-no in Japan – my father would scold me severely because it is a funeral tradition to offer a bowl of rice in this manner to the altar of our departed ancestors.

My wife and I also struggled in teaching our daughter how to use chopsticks. At first, she tried to grip it the same way she would hold a spoon, but eventually, with much persistence and patience, she became comfortable enough to pick up food with her chopsticks.

Despite chopsticks' importance to Japanese culture and tradition, there are still some Japanese people that do not know how to use them correctly. According to a survey by the Cabinet Office (2010), only slightly more than half of Japanese over the age of 18 were deemed to be able to hold their chopsticks correctly. In fact, I often observe some young people using their chopsticks incorrectly and awkwardly.

In Japan, you'll have plenty of opportunities to master the technique at restaurants or at the home of Japanese friends. As Japanese food gains popularity globally, having chopsticks skills will come in handy when you enjoy sushi, soba noodles and other Japanese and Asian dishes.

Just as chopsticks are a unique, beautiful dining tool, a pair can also be an ideal souvenir for your friends and relatives. Many souvenir stores sell novelty pairs with Japanese animated characters like Hello Kitty or Gundam, but you can also find nicer ones made of lacquered wood or bamboo ranging from 1,000 – 5,000 yen ($9–45).

At restaurants and convenience stores, you may encounter disposable chopsticks, called "waribashi." These are made of wood or bamboo and are attached at the top, requiring them to be split apart before use.

As the

Did you know?

Tatebashi is a ritual where a pair of chopsticks are stuck upright in a bowl of rice and presented as an offering to the newly deceased. Doing this at a table is frowned upon and considered bad luck. Another blunder to be careful to avoid is passing food directly from one chopstick to another. Much like sticking your chopsticks into a bowl of rice, this also has to do with Japanese funeral rituals. In hashiwatashi, relatives of the deceased use chopsticks to pluck bones from the cremated remains, and then pass the bones from chopstick to chopstick until the remains finally reach the kotsutsubo, or urn.

Waribashi

saying goes, practice makes perfect. Though chopsticks may seem difficult at first, consistently trying to use them will go a long way in ensuring you enjoy authentic Japanese cuisine the authentic Japanese way.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

Speakin' Japanese: Chopsticks chat

Asking for help with your chopsticks

"Hashi no tsukaikata wo oshiete kudasai." = Please teach me how to use chopsticks.
hashee noh zookaheekahtah woe ohsheeheyteh koo-dah-sigh

"Doko wo nigittara ii desuka?" = Where can I grip?
doughkoh woe neegeetahrah ee deh-sue-kah

"Tadashii mochikata wo misete kudasai." = Show me how to hold them right.
tah-dahshee-ee moecheekahtah woe me-set-teh koo-dah-sigh

"Muzukashii desune?" = It is difficult, isn't it?
moo-zoo-kah-shee de-sue-neh

In a Japanese restaurant

"Iraisshaimase" = Welcome!
ee-rah-shy-mah-seh

"Waribashi wo kudasai." = May I have a pair of disposable chopsticks, please.
Wah-ree-bash-ee woe koo-dah-sigh

"Fooku wo kudasai." = May I have a fork, please.
folk-oo woe koo-dah-sigh

"Sumimasen. Hashi no tsukaikata ga wakari masen." = I'm sorry, but I don't know how to use chopsticks.
zoo-me-mass-en. Hashee noh zookaykahtah gah wack-ari-mass-zen

Shopping for chopsticks

"Kono hashi ga hoshii desu." = I want this pair of chopsticks.
cone-oh hashee gah hoe-shee dehz

"Kirei desune?" = They are pretty, aren't they?
kee-ray dehz-neh

"Ikura desuka?" = How much is it?
ee-koo-rah deh-sue-kah

"Kaado wa tsukae masuka?" = Can I use a credit card?
kah-doe wah zoo-kai mass-sue-kah

- Takahiro Takiguchi

Gifts and tips

For foreigners new to Japan, guidance toward tipping is usually pretty straightforward: You don't tip in Japan.

While this is a good general rule, the tipping situation in Japan is a bit more complex than that. There are a few circumstances when it is appropriate or expected to provide either a tip or some form of extra compensation in the form of gifts or treats. Travelers should keep in mind that, like in the U.S., local customs can change from prefecture to prefecture and there is no set-in-stone rule on tipping or compensation, just general guidelines. But remember, if you're at an on-base restaurant, you are expected to tip.

When to tip

It's common for Japanese staying at ryokans (Japanese-style hotels) to give a tip to the staff in advance of the service they provide. This is seen as providing your gratitude in advance for the service the staff will provide. This is known as "kokoroduke" and should be somewhere around 1,000 or 2,000 yen. These tips should be provided in a somewhat discrete manner. The currency should be placed in some sort of paper or envelop and provided to the hotel staff after you are escorted to your room. If you're staying at a high end western style hotel, it's acceptable to leave some coins underneath your pillow after you check out of the room. But it's not expected.

Other situations where you might tip include receiving a massage at a spa or having someone bring bags to your room. Additionally, if you find yourself taking a taxi and the bill comes to somewhere around 800 or so yen, it's not uncommon to hand the driver a 1,000 yen note and tell them to keep the change. Again, this is not expected, but it is acceptable. However, if your bill ever lists something similar to a "service fee", then a tip has already been calculated into your bill. If you're ever in doubt, simply do not tip.

Tips in Japan are seen as more of an appreciation for service, unlike the U.S. where tips are often given to compensate workers for low wages.

Gifts of gratitude

Americans affiliated with the military often have questions regarding providing gifts or tokens of gratitude to Japanese people. The most common examples are usually neighbors, or workers from the Japanese moving companies who move household goods to or from the base. In these situations, it is acceptable to provide some sort of gift or treat but providing money would be a social faux pas.

Keep in mind, that while Japanese do appreciate gifts or treats from a foreigner's homeland, you should generally provide something that will go along with the Japanese taste palette. For example, sugary lemonade is a common drink for Americans during the summertime. Japanese, however, typically do not like things containing a lot of sugar.

In the case of Japanese movers, leaving a tray of chocolates or cookies with some soft drinks or bottles of water would be acceptable and appreciated. If the weather is cold outside, coffee would also be a good treat. In the case of trying to give a gift to someone like a Japanese neighbor, good ideas include American beer (which is much cheaper on base) or packages of smoked salmon (which are also sold on base at a far cheaper price). Keep your gifts simple and thoughtful and they will be well received no matter what you decide on.

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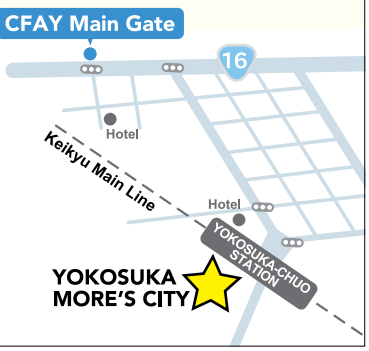
2-30 Wakamatsu-cho Yokosuka, Kanagawa, 238-8533

http://yokosuka-mores.jp



Getting connected with a cell phone

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Fast, reliable and safe internet, TV, and phone services. Whether you're streaming movies or surfing the web, Allied Telesis provides the military's fastest internet service. To find out what's available in your area go to: **https://atcc-gns.com/**

So, you've just PCS'd to Japan, and now you need to get a new cell phone or a new SIM card. Well, first off, they have those here, so you're in luck. Now, where do you start?

As you've likely already noticed, most bases in Japan already have a branch where you can get a phone without leaving your installation. There are benefits to staying on base, but just because it's the easiest, doesn't mean it makes the most sense for your situation. There are plenty of off-base locations throughout the country, but if you do go this route, you might consider bringing someone who can speak Japanese.

If you want to weigh your options and see all Japan cell providers have to offer, here is a quick breakdown.

SoftBank

softbank.japan/en/mobile

SoftBank has been one of the big boys on the block ever since it became a major player on the Japanese cell phone scene. SoftBank pioneered discount service plans, and has locations on U.S. military installations throughout mainland Japan and Okinawa.

docomo

nttdocomo.co.jp/english

It seems like almost every major technological advance in the Japanese cell phone industry has come from the minds of the people from NTT DOCOMO, whose parent company, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT), is to telecommunications services in Japan what AT&T used to be in the U.S. So, it is no surprise that NTT DOCOMO phones can receive signals just about anywhere in the country.

au

au.kddi.com/english

Handsets made by au have had the distinction of getting the best signals on and around military installations. That's no small thing when you consider the proportion of calls that you make or receive on base. Being owned by KDDI, Japan's leading international telephone service provider, enables au to offer superior global roaming services for people traveling abroad.

fadtech Telecom

Fadtech.net

FadTech Telecom was established in 1997 and specializes in offering Satellite TV, cellphone, pocket Wifi and prepaid telecom services. Offering Rakuten Mobile Wi-Fi routers for military members. The company has multiple on-base locations around Japan and Okinawa.
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Websites worth bookmarking

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Stars and Stripes and Stripes Japan are the best sources for military and local military community news, respectively. **Japan.Stripes.com**

For important news you may have missed straight to your inbox, don't forget to sign up for one or all of Stars and Stripes informative newsletters.
ww2.stripes.com/subscribe/newsletters

Every April, the spotlight is on our military kids! We receive thousands of drawings, pictures, poems and written submissions from military kids pacific-wide and in the Europe region which are published in the paper and online.
Japan.Stripes.com and **Okinawa.Stripes.com**

The website of Japan Times, the country's main full-fledged English daily newspaper, offers the traditional range of coverage – national and local news, sports, business, op-ed and entertainment. **www.japantimes.co.jp**

Popular with the expat crowd in Tokyo, the online version of Metropolis magazine offers a wealth of info – from local fashion, sports and travel to music, the arts and feature articles. **metropolisjapan.com**

FOOD

This site enables users to find local restaurants according to general locale, cuisine or price. Results come with contact information, maps, average costs and details about the food and venue. **www.gnavi.co.jp** (in Japanese)

Explore a wide range of Japanese cuisine through pictures and simple explanations. Easy to follow recipes are also included.
justbento.com

This site is the go-to platform for foreigners in Tokyo who share a love for Japanese food.
www.byfood.com

TRAVEL

A for-the-traveler, by-the-traveler website, this community travelogue is continuously updated with first-hand accounts and tips on sites, both popular and obscure, to see; adventures to be had; and even places to eat – all over the country. **en.japantravel.com**

For a mix of all things Japan, check out Live Japan. You'll find fun food stories, useful travel tips and even some cultural articles to help you navigate the country. **www.livejapan.com**

Book a ticket on the Shinkansen, express train, and airport train is quick, easily and up to one month in advance on Japan Bullet Train's website. After purchasing, use the QR code sent to your email and scan for physical tickets at the station or JR ticket counter. Support available online and by phone in English.
https://www.japan-bullettrain.com

SKIING/SNOWBOARDING

This site for skiing and snowboarding in Japan covers almost every aspect of getting to the slopes. **www.snowjapan.com**

KITCHEN SINK

Activate Your Japanese! A program by The Japan Foundation to encourage foreign nationals working and living in Japan to increase their Japanese language skill level. The site has study materials and helpful videos.
https://www.hikidasu.jpf.go.jp/en/

Provides details about museums, restaurants, historical sites and pop culture spots in the Tokyo area.
www.timeout.jp/en/tokyo

CLASSIFIEDS

With more than 5,000 members, the Facebook page, **"Yokota Swap Page"** is a testament to its success. Competing Facebook page **"New Yokota Swap"** also tops 5,000 members. The **"Yokosuka Resale"** page also has an impressive 5,000+ membership, searching the name "**Yokosuka resale**" on Facebook will reveal at least two others. **"Misawa Yard Sale 2.0 No Rules"** is home to more than 5,000 members, while **"Camp Foster Yard Sale"** sports more than 16,000.

GUIDES

Information on morale, welfare, and recreation for each branch of service is available at **www.campfuji.usmc-mccs.org/**, **www.iwakuni.usmc-mccs.org/**, **www.navymwrsasebo.com/**,**www.navymwratsugi.com/**, **www.navymwryokosuka.com**, **zama.armymwr.com/**, **www.35fss.com/** (Misawa), **www.yokotafss.com**

Okinawan sites

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Call us biased, but Stripes Okinawa is the best sources for local restaurants, travel spots and everything Okinawa.
Okinawa.Stripes.com

With a host of regular contributors, this site is chock-full of info such users would want to know: off-base eatery reviews, on- and off-base school resources – including homeschooling – and an army of active forums and blogs.
okinawahai.com

GENERAL INFO

Okinawa Lab is a site with useful information to tourists on the island in categories such as "sightseeing," "knowledge," "play-experience," and "gourmet." **https://okinawa-labo.com/en/**

The site is geared towards tourists to the island, which makes it perfect for someone just arriving and planning on staying for a few years. **www.beokinawa.jp**

GUIDES

Courtesy of the Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau, this searchable, user-friendly site has a detailed destination guide and summaries of topics. **visitokinawajapan.com**

On this website, you can enjoy photos and articles on tourist stops and activities on the island. **https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/okinawa/okinawa/**

Information on morale, welfare, and recreation for each branch of service is available at **www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/**, **kadenafss.com/**, **www.navymwrokinawa.com/**, **www.torii.armymwr.com/**

Useful Apps

Stars and Stripes
Get all of the U.S. military news you need on the device you use most. Enjoy a free preview of the front page top stories.

GuruNavi
An app for those who like to eat. It's an easy to use restaurant finder app that searches for places to eat in your area.

Liberty MCCS OKINAWA
Helps you locate your favorite places, as well as provides information such as transportation schedules.

JapanTransit
The most downloaded navigation app in Japan. It will show you the route or how to transfer by railways or airplanes.

GO
A taxi app that allows you to book a taxi from anywhere. Book in advance and choose vehicle type. It also has flat-rate service to Haneda and Narita airports.

Japan Wi-Fi auto-connect
This app from NTT connects users to Japan's public corporate and municipal secure Wi-Fi networks.

Ridin' the storm out with Dave

Dave Ornauer has been with Stars and Stripes since 1981, and one of his first assignments as a beat reporter in the old Japan News Bureau was "typhoon chaser." Pacific Storm Tracker is designed to take the technical weather lingo and simplify it for the average Stripes reader. **www.stripes.com/blogs/pacific-storm-tracker**

Get your DoWEA homework done

The Department of War Education Activity is a PK-12 American school system for U.S. military, DOW civilian dependents and other eligible families. DoWEA Pacific manages on-base schools in Guam, mainland Japan, Okinawa and South Korea.

Registration

Families can register online using the DoWEA Student Information System (DSIS). This system allows sponsors to complete required documentation and include uploads of required forms prior to arriving at the new duty location. Families may also complete their registration in-country upon arrival to the new PCS location. Visit the school website for office hours.

Enrolled students who are advancing to the next grade level will need to revalidate enrollment eligibility by providing required documentation along with any required and/or updated immunization records for each child.

Students preparing to enter kindergarten must be five years old by Sept. 1 of the enrolling school year. Students entering first grade must be six years old by Sept. 1 of the enrolling school year. Proof of your child's age must be provided through documentation such as birth certificate or passport.

For the universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) program, students must be four years old by September 1 of the enrolling school year. Contact the school directly to learn more about eligibility requirements and how to apply for UPK.

Records

Parents should hand-carry all academic, immunization and special education records if possible. Some schools may require records to be mailed. If so, send records via U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail to the military address of the receiving school. Sending priority mail to the Pacific usually takes about seven to 10 days, while other methods could take several months. The sending school can also ship records to the commercial address of the DoWEA Pacific school. It is recommended that you confirm the current mailing address with the school.

Student meal / free and reduced lunch program

All families with students enrolled in DoWEA Pacific schools are eligible to apply for the Free and Reduced Meal Program. Completing this application is an annual requirement for families, if eligible, to continue to receive either a free or reduced lunch. To find the correct Free and Reduced Meal Program point of contact for your family's school, please visit the DoWEA Pacific website.

To pay for school lunches, parents and sponsors will need to set up and fund a prepaid account with the agency that operates your school's lunch program. Contact your school for additional information.

School liaison officers

School liaison officers can help your family with transition issues. SLOs operate independently of DOW schools and have expertise in transition support.

Special needs children

If your child has special needs, be sure to research the available support options for your desired location. DoWEA schools follow student special education plans (IEPs) and are committed to providing supports for students within the least restrictive settings. Services are provided to the greatest extent possible within inclusion environments as well as small group or individualized supports as needed.

However, many overseas locations are limited in their medical and educational resources. Specialized medical, mental health, or educational services may not be available to meet your child's unique needs. Parents should understand and take into consideration how limited services might impact the growth and development of their special needs child. DoWEA Pacific staff members are available to help parents of special needs children to make informed choices.

You can reach out to the District Special Education Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS) by contacting the DoWEA District Superintendent's Office in the location where you are considering your next assignment, or you can contact the Pacific Regional Special Education ISS at the DoWEA Pacific Director's Office. In addition, very helpful information for families can also be accessed through the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

Home school support

DoWEA-Pacific schools offer auxiliary services to eligible military-connected families who choose to home school their children. Auxiliary services include use of academic resources, access to the library of the school, after hours use of school facilities, and participation in music, sports, and other extracurricular and interscholastic activities. Students whose eligibility category requires tuition may be charged for extra-curricular activities.

Home schoolers using or receiving auxiliary services must meet the same eligibility requirements as dependents enrolled in DoWEA schools who use or receive the same auxiliary services. Eligible home schoolers are not required to attend a specific number of courses to receive auxiliary services, including participating in extracurricular and interscholastic activities.

– DoWEA-Pacific

More info on homeschooling

Sites to visit

DoWEA registration information
www.DOWea.edu/registration-process.cfm

DoWEA-Pacific
www.dodea.edu/Pacific

Exchange Student Meal Program
www.aafes.com/about-exchange/school-lunch-program/

Exceptional Family Member Program
www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp

Tutor.com (Free online tutoring for military families)
www.tutor.com/military

Celebrate April's Month of the Military Child with us!

Each year, Stars and Stripes teams up with DoW EA to give our wonderful military brats a platform to be heard. Kids of all ages from across Pacific bases submit stories, poems, drawings and photos about what life is like as a military child. These run in our community newspapers in mainland Japan, Okinawa, Guam and Korea in April. They are also all published online. We hope you and your children join in on the fun.

Mainland Japan

Okinawa

Take advantage of on-base colleges

The Department of War has contracted colleges and universities to provide in-resident college and graduate programs on military installations in mainland Japan, Okinawa, South Korea and Guam.

The current contracted institutions are:

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Ranked No. 1 for Online Bachelor's Programs and Online Bachelor's Programs for Veterans by U.S. News & World Report, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is committed to helping you achieve your educational goals. Professional advising staff at their nine locations in Japan, Okinawa, and South Korea can help you select the right degree to propel your career in the aviation, management, safety, logistics, engineering, and space industries. The school offers local and online courses to accommodate your busy schedule, and awards credit for applicable military coursework and certificates. Visit your local campus and speak to an academic advisor today!

University of Maryland Global Campus

UMGC is one of 12 regionally accredited, degree-granting institutions in the University System of Maryland (USM). The university brings quality higher education wherever the military needs it, with cutting-edge degree programs and classes offered both online and on-site at military installations worldwide. As the first university to serve military overseas, UMGC has earned a global reputation for excellence. Headquartered in Adelphi, Maryland, UMGC has on-site classroom locations in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Offering both undergraduate and graduate degree programs, UMGC Asia's mission is to provide top quality education and services to U.S. military communities in Asia and the Pacific.

Troy University

The University proudly counts some 60 flag officers among the ranks of its alumni, has a presence on or near over 30 military installations worldwide and participates in online learning programs with all service branches. For generations, Troy University has understood the needs of the military student and has built a military inclusive institution offering a broad range of high quality, very affordable undergraduate and graduate academic programs supported by outstanding student services. Contact your education center to learn what in-residence and distance-learning programs are available on your base.

Education Centers

Mainland Japan

Yokota Air Base
Bldg. 316, 2nd floor
DSN: 225-7337

MCAS Iwakuni
Bldg. 411, Rm. 127
DSN: 253-3855

Misawa Air Base
Bldg. 653, Rm. 203
DSN: 226-4201

Camp Zama
Bldg. 278
DSN: 263-5068

Camp Fuji
Bldg. 110
DSN: 224-8353

All U.S. Navy bases
1-833-330-MNCC
www.myeducation.netc.navy.mil

Okinawa

Torii Station
Bldg. 246
DSN: 652-4954

Kadena Air Base
Bldg. 59, 3rd floor
DSN: 634-1500

Camp Foster
Bldg. 5679
DSN: 645-7160

Camp Courtney
Bldg. 4425
DSN: 622-9694

MCAS Futenma
Bldg. 407
DSN: 636-3036

Camp Hansen
Bldg. 2339
DSN: 623-4376

Camp Kinser
Bldg. 1220-B
DSN: 637-1821

Camp Schwab
Bldg. 3000, 2nd floor
DSN: 625-2046

Military Tuition Assistance

If you've thought about going to college, but didn't know if you could afford it, then the Military Tuition Assistance program may be just the benefit you need. The program is available to active duty, National Guard and Reserve Component service members. While the decision to pursue a degree may be a difficult one personally, TA can lessen your financial concerns considerably, since it now pays up to 100% of tuition expenses for semester hours costing $250 or less.

Courses and degree programs may be academic or technical and can be taken from two- or four-year institutions on-installation, off-installation or by distance learning. An accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education must accredit the institution. Your service branch pays your tuition directly to the school. Service members need to first check with an education counselor for the specifics involving TA by visiting their local installation education office or by going online to a virtual education center. Tuition assistance may be used for the following programs:

- Vocational/technical programs
- Undergraduate programs
- Graduate programs
- Independent study
- Distance-learning programs

Eligibility

All four service branches and the U.S. Coast Guard offer financial assistance for voluntary, off-duty education programs in support of service members' personal and professional goals. The program is open to officers, warrant officers and enlisted active-duty service personnel. In addition, members of the National Guard and Reserve Components may be eligible for TA based on their service eligibility. To be eligible for TA, an enlisted service member must have enough time remaining in service to complete the course for which he or she has applied. After the completion of a course, an officer using TA must fulfill a service obligation that runs parallel with – not in addition to – any existing service obligation.

Coverage amounts and monetary limits

The Tuition Assistance Program may fund up to 100% of your college tuition and certain fees with the following limits:

- Not to exceed $250 per semester credit hour or $166 per quarter credit hour
- Not to exceed $4,500 per fiscal year, Oct. 1 through Sept. 30

Tuition assistance vs. VA education benefits

While the TA program is offered by the services, the Department of Veterans Affairs administers a variety of education benefit programs. Some of the VA programs, such as the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008, also known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, can work well with the TA program, as it can supplement fees not covered by TA. In addition, the Post-9/11 GI Bill® funds are available to you after you leave the military. If your service ended before Jan. 1, 2013, you have 15 years to use this benefit. If your service ended on or after Jan. 1, 2013, the benefit won't expire. The TA program is a benefit that is available only while you're in the service.

TA benefits and restrictions

Tuition assistance will cover the following expenses:

- Tuition
- Course-specific fees such as laboratory fee or online course fee

NOTE: All fees must directly relate to the specific course enrollment of the service member.

Tuition assistance will not cover the following expenses:

- Books and course materials
- Flight training fees
- Taking the same course twice
- Continuing education units, or CEUs

Space-A travel

A way to see the world

Space Available travel offers a way for Armed Services personnel, their dependents, retirees and others who support the mission to see the world on a budget... if the timing is right. Below is what you need to know about this great privilege.

What is Space-A?

It is a program that allows authorized passengers to occupy surplus seats after all cargo and space-required duty passengers have been accommodated.

What do I need to qualify?

- Qualified travelers must have completed the proper procedures and have the required documentation for travel.
- Active duty must be on leave before they can register for Space-A.
- Dependents of active duty flying unaccompanied need an Unaccompanied Command Sponsorship from his or her spouse's commander. The letter is valid for one round trip travel via military aircraft, describes the reason for travel and the category of passenger travel.
- Also mandatory for travel: military ID cards, passports, social security numbers and emergency contact information at the final destination.

How much does it cost?

Most flights offered through the Air Force's Air Mobility Command (AMC) or the Navy and are usually free of charge.

Patriot Express flights are commercial, so a small tax (usually under $30) is charged per seat and per leg.

Where can I go on Space-A?

Common destinations include the Continental U.S. states, Hawaii, Alaska, Germany, England, Spain, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Guam. Flights may even go to South and Central America, Africa and Australia.

When is the best time to fly?

The best time to obtain seats is when DoWEA schools are in session.

Because the program is a privilege, it is imperative to understand the circumstances may change due to mission mobility. Flying exactly where you want to go at the time or day you want to fly is not always possible. So, if you have a specific itinerary for your destination or your return, you may want to reconsider using Space-A for those travel plans.

Where can I register?

There are many ways. In-person registration can be completed at the terminal's helpdesk or self-help kiosks. You can also register via email, fax or online through www.takeahop.org. Registration is allowed for up to five departure airports and five countries of destination.

What happens after I register?

Once registered, your information remains active for either 60 days, or for the duration of your leave orders or authorization of flight, whichever occurs first. Print a copy of your registration to keep on hand at the terminal. The time and date stamp of your registration determines your position and priority within your Space-A category.

On flight day, decide which terminal you think would be the best chance for Space-A departure and head out. It helps to phone the terminals that you requested for departure and to monitor recent schedules.

What are the categories?

Each passenger is assigned a passenger category for travel. These categories designate the order by which you may be boarded on Space-A flights. The following list is generalized:

- Emergency travel on a round-trip basis in connection with serious illness, death, or impending death of a member of the immediate family.
- Environmental Morale Leave (EML) and dependents.
- Active duty ordinary Leave and dependents; convalescent leave; permissive TDYs; unaccompanied dependent of deployed servicemember for more than a year.
- Unaccompanied dependent of deployed servicemember on EML status.
- Unaccompanied military dependent of non-deployed servicemember.
- Retirees, Reservists.

What baggage can I bring?

- Two pieces of checked baggage; 70 lbs each; up to 62 linear inches in size. (families can pool baggage allowances)
- Carry-ons must fit in overhead bins (if available) or under your seat
- Travel light as baggage weight could be restricted for your flight.

PACIFIC LOCATIONS

OKINAWA

KADENA AB
733 AMS,
Bldg. 3409
Phone: 315-634-3784

GUAM

ANDERSEN AFB
Phone: 671-366-6148

MAINLAND JAPAN

MISAWA AB
Bldg. 943
Phone: 315-226-2370/2371

NAF ATSUGI
Bldg. 206
Phone: 315-264-3119

MCAS IWAKUNI
Bldg. 727
Phone: 315-253-5509

YOKOTA AB
Bldg. 80
Phone: 315-225-5661/5662

KOREA

OSAN AB
Bldg. 648
Phone: 315-784-6883

KUNSAN AB
Bldg. 2858
Phone: 063-470-4666

Quick links to ease travel

Make reservations on the AMC Space-A Travel page

FAQS

AMC Pet Travel Site

Travel site for military, DOW & veterans

Photo by Senior Airman Gabrielle Spalding/U.S. Air Force

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Going out & about

Mass transit in Land of the Rising Sun

I'm going to [station].
(…-eki ni) mukatte masu.
(…eh-key knee) moo-kat-teh mass.

Where do I go?
Doko yuki desuka?
Doe-coe you-key de-sue-kah

Where is [train line]?
[train line]-sen wa doko desuka?
[train line]-zen wah doe-coe de-sue-kah

Unless you are on Okinawa (see Page 52), you'll likely find the U.S. military base you are assigned to in Japan is somewhat out of the way of the big-city bustle that can make overseas assignments exciting. It is an unfortunate reality, but there are, literally, ways to "get around" it.

All it takes is a little initiative. While in ***Misawa, Sasebo and Iwakuni,*** taxis may be your best bet for getting around just outside the gates. You can navigate Japan's train and subway systems to get where you want to go throughout the Kanto Plain and to many points beyond.

Planning and paying

First, plan before you go. Want to check out that hot new club you've heard about, a restaurant serving delicious food, or a great place to bring the kids, go online to Jorudan (world.jorudan.co.jp/mln/en/), a English-language information site providing train times and travel directions. Google Maps and the Maps (iOS) apps on your phone also have updated train information.

Just type in your starting point, destination and, if desired, time of departure or arrival. This will give you train times, as well as cost, travel time and, if applicable, alternate routes. To return home, simply reverse the direction you are traveling and input a new departure or arrival time. Jorudan's maps are in (limited) English and Japanese, and its travel searches will include any applicable bus routes and times as well as trains.

Second, go high-tech to avoid ticket purchasing hassles each time you go somewhere by train or bus. Instead of repeatedly standing somewhat foolishly in front of the fare maps at train stations figuring out how much to pay, use a physical Suica or PASMO prepaid electronic card issued by East Japan Railway (JR East) or one loaded on your phone.

At the station, you can recharge your PASMO or Suica in denominations of 1,000, 2,000, 4,000, 5,000 and 10,000 yen at a time, up to a maximum of 20,000 yen.

To use, simply place your cellphone or card over the scanner when you pass through the ticket gate at the beginning of your journey. When you reach your destination, pass your phone or card over the scanner one more time and a screen built into the gate automatically tells you how much has been deducted from the card and the amount remaining.

Suica and PASMO can also be used in subways, public buses and the Tokyo monorail, which connects Haneda Airport to Hamamatsucho in Tokyo. Moreover, it can be used as money in many convenience stores, station kiosks and other shops, as well as to make purchases from many vending machines and to rent coin lockers at stations.

Map out trips at:
Jorudan

JR East (Suica card) and major Kanto rail lines and the Tokyo Metro subway, which issues the PASMO card, accept each other's card, making travel in the Tokyo area virtually seamless. Suica and PASMO can also be used on railways in other parts of Japan, such as JR Hokkaido, JR Central in the greater Nagoya area, JR West in the Greater Osaka, Okayama and Hiroshima areas, JR Kyushu in the Fukuoka area as well as the Fukuoka City Subway. But while such cards can be used inside many metropolitan areas, they are still not accepted for travel on the "shinkansen" (bullet train) and some other long-distance trains.

Recently, train line companies have been ditching the transportation card systems and opting for cashless payments with credit cards. The new system allows users to pass through ticket gates by touching a tap-sensitive credit card or digital card on a smart phone in the same manner as they would do with a Suica or PASMO card.

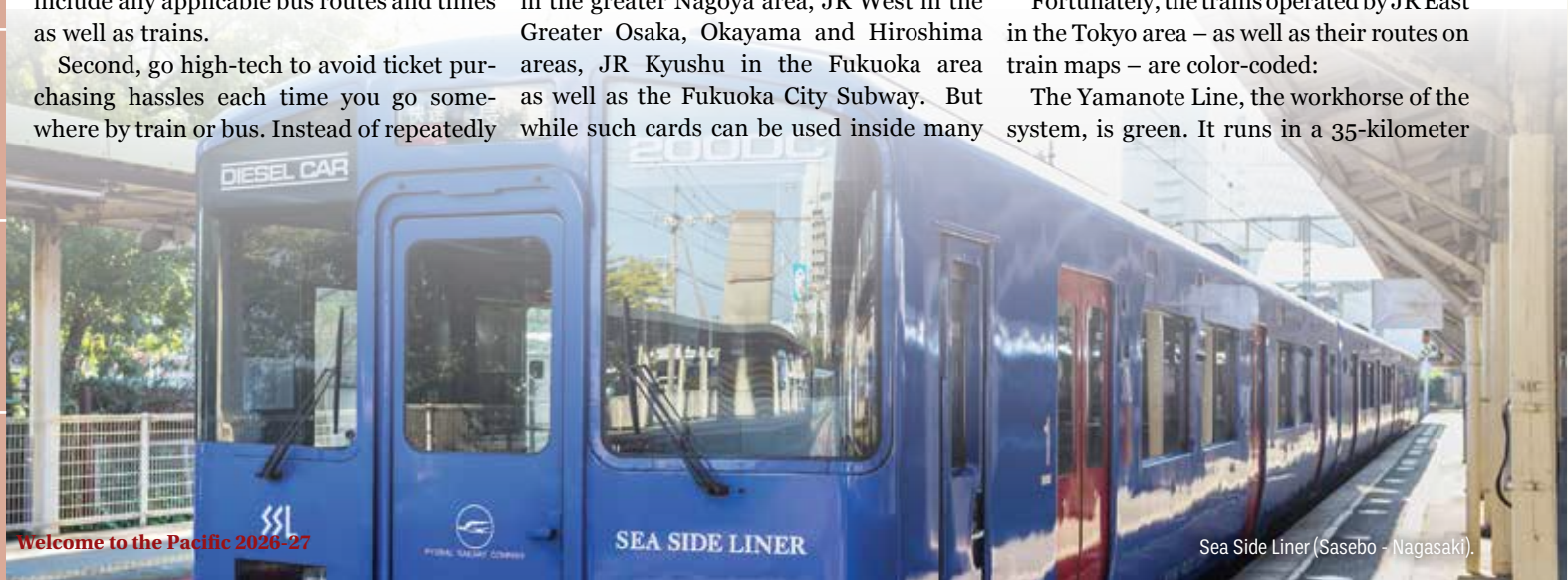
So far, the tap-function of cashless payment at trains is now available in 45 prefectures and 195 business operators (as of 2025). In the Kanto Region, so far the Keio, Odakyu, Tokyu, Seibu and Keikyu along with Tokyo Metro Lines have added cashless payment capabilities to its ticket gates. Despite the slow expansion, expect to see more commuter train companies to start accepting credit card payment in lieu of transportation cards.

Mainland maneuvering

Equally as important as planning and paying, is how to get around on those trains, especially the ones that serve your local train station.

Fortunately, the trains operated by JR East in the Tokyo area – as well as their routes on train maps – are color-coded:

The Yamanote Line, the workhorse of the system, is green. It runs in a 35-kilometer

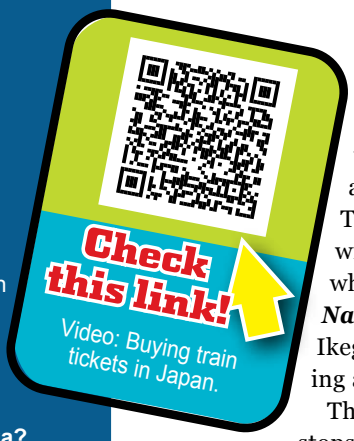


Sea Side Liner (Sasebo - Nagasaki).

Does this train stop at [station]?
(…-eki ni) tomari masuka?
(…eh-key knee) toe-mary mass-sue-kah

How much? (price)
Ikura desuka?
Ee-cure-ah de-sue-kah

How do I get to Tokyo Tower?
Tokyo Tawaa niwa douyatte ikimasuka?
Tokyo ta-wah knee-wah doe-yeah-the icky-mass-kah



(22-mile) loop, in both directions around central Tokyo, passing through stations in popular shopping and entertainment areas such as Shinjuku, Shibuya and Harajuku.

Chuo Line trains are orange and run east to Tokyo and west to Hachioji and Mt. Takao. At Tachikawa, the Chuo links up with the Ome Line, which goes to ***Yokota Air Base's*** nearby Fussa Station, before continuing on to Mitake and Ome. (Alternately, JR East competitor Seibu has a line of the same name running from Seibu Shinjuku Station that stops at Seibu Tachikawa Station, a brief hike or taxi ride to Yokota's East Gate, before ending at Haijima Station.)

The yellow Sobu Line runs local service parallel to the Chuo Line from Mitaka to Ochanomizu, in central Tokyo, before it peels off to go to Akihabara, the electronics mecca, and into nearby Chiba Prefecture, home to Tokyo Disney Resort.

The Keihin Tohoku Line is blue and operates from Omiya in Saitama Prefecture to areas south of Tokyo, where it connects with the Keikyu, Negishi, and Yokohama lines. This ultimately links with the Yokosuka Line, which goes to ***Yokosuka Naval Base*** as well as the Ikego and Negishi housing areas.

The Keihin Tohoku Line stops at Tokyo Station, a major hub for these and other lines, including Shinkansen bullet trains with connections to ***Misawa, Sasebo*** and ***Iwakuni*** stations.

Camp Zama's nearest station is Sobudaimae, which is serviced by Odakyu Railway, a large privately owned transit system. The line runs directly to Shinjuku, one of the major stations in Tokyo, or riders can get off at the shopping town of Machida, where they can change to the Yokohama Line for travel elsewhere.

The Sotetsu Line stops at Sagamino and Sagami Otsuka stations, nearest to ***Naval Air Facility Atsugi***; taking about 30 minutes from Yokohama.

The Tokyo Metro subway, which mainly serves central Tokyo inside the Yamanote loop, is one of the most efficient in the world. Similar to JR East, its train map routes are color-coded, and its stations have numerical designations in addition to names, making them easy to navigate.

Station names are rendered in English as well as Japanese, and most other important signs are also in English or internationally understood symbols.

Navigating Kyushu & northern Honshu

Misawa Station is about three miles from ***Misawa Air Base***. The Aoimori Railway Line stops at Hachinohe Station (15 minutes south of Misawa), where you can connect with the Tohoku Shinkansen bullet train for 580 yen ($4.40). Aomori (City) Station is about an hour north of Misawa by train (1,830 yen). Misawa Airport is a 16-minute bus ride from Misawa Station (400 yen).

Kichi Taxi in Building 14 on Misawa Air Base, provides taxi service with the ability to pick up and deliver passengers both on and off the installation. Call: 0176-53-6481

JR Iwakuni Station is less than two miles from ***Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni***. Buses leave the train station every 5-15 minutes in the direction of Kintai-kyo Bridge, Iwakuni Castle and other local attractions; it takes about 20 minutes and costs about 250-300 yen ($2-$2.30). The JR San-yo Line travels between Iwakuni Station and Hiroshima (City) Station in 50 minutes (770 yen). To Hiroshima Airport, it takes just under two hours and cost roughly 2,000 yen.

In addition to on-base shuttle buses, MCAS Iwakuni has taxi stands at Strike Zone Bowling Center, across from Crossroads Mall and several other locations. You can also call Iwakuni Eki Konai Taxi at 082-721-1111 or Daiichi Kotsu Taxi at 082-731-5151 for taxis with on- and off-base access. A blue sticker on the left side of the windshield indicates a taxi is authorized to drive on base. The fare is about 1,500 from MCAS Iwakuni to Iwakuni Station.

See TRANSIT on Page 48

Train (and other) travel made easy

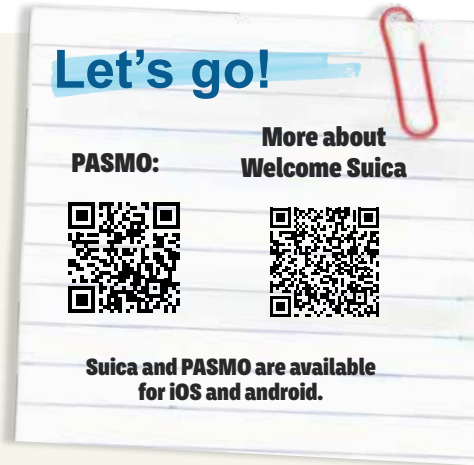
When traveling within mainland Japan, the two most common transportation cards are PASMO and Suica. Both cards allow you to use most of the trains and buses within Japan.

While you can obtain physical PASMO or Suica cards at major train stations and airports, users have digital options including e-card versions of the transportation cards or cashless payments (only available for certain rail line companies).

First, make sure to download the PASMO or Suica card app onto your smartphone. To charge your e-card, you can do so electronically through ApplePay or Google Wallet right on your phone. Another option is to use the station machines that are set up with docks for patrons to place their cellphones and load fare with yen.

If you do already have a physical PASMO or Suica card, you can continue to use and recharge them as in the past.

If you have friends or family visiting, they can obtain a Welcome Suica card, which is a temporary card valid for up to 28 days. These temporary train cards are available at Narita and Haneda international airports and some of the major stations in the Tokyo metropolitan area like Shinjuku, Ueno and Yokohama, according to JR East Rail Company. Iphone users can also download an app for the Welcome Suica which can be used for up to 180 days. Search "Welcome Suica Mobile" on the App Store.



TRANSIT continued from Page 47

JR Sasebo Station is just over one and a half miles from ***Sasebo Naval Base***. Rapid Seaside Liner trains get to Nagasaki in just over 90 minutes for about 1,680 yen ($13). The Midori Limited Express goes to Hakata Station in Fukuoka City in about one two hours (4,700 yen). From there, a one-mile subway ride takes you to Fukuoka Airport (260 yen).

There is also a shuttle bus between the base and Fukuoka Airport for authorized personnel with reservations, military ID and orders. Call: DSN 315-252-3627 or 001-81-956-50-3627. Public buses from Sasebo Station to Nagasaki Airport take about an hour and 45 minutes (1,400 yen).

Most taxis have base access. A green sticker on the left side of the windshield indicates a taxi is authorized to drive on base. It costs about 900 yen from base to Minato Town, and 1,200 yen to Sasebo Station. Call King Taxi at: 09-56-22-4136 or Kokusai Taxi at 09-56-31-5931.

Exploring Okinawa

Bus service

Buses are the only public transportation on Okinawa, except for the Okinawa

Monorail in and around central Naha. The bus network is quite extensive, but finding the right bus to take can be complicated. The frequency of service also differs between lines. It is, however, a relatively inexpensive way to travel. There is a number assigned to each line. When riding a line between No. 1 through 19, enter from the front and exit the rear door except No. 7, 8, 10, 18; the fare is usually paid when entering. For the other lines including No. 7,8,10,18, enter from the front and pick up a ticket. You also usually exit from the front. Fares will be displayed on the front monitor with numbers that match those on tickets.

Buses No.1 through No. 19 cost a fixed 260-yen fare (approx. $1.67) for adults and 130-yen (approx. $0.83) for ages between 6 and 12, except No. 18. For No. 18, costs either 190 or 240 or 260 yen. Fares for buses No. 20 and above change depending upon distance, with the exception of No. 95 and No. 105, which have fixed rates of 300 or 400 yen (No. 95), 190 yen (No. 105), Comprehensive, English language, printed schedules and route maps are a rarity. Although detailed bus information is available in English online, locating the line you need can be daunting. Listed below are some of the lines that can be used around each U.S. military installation.

1. Camp Schwab and Camp Hansen: No. 77 (This line runs between Nago and Uruma, going by Camp Hansenr)

2. Kadena Air Base: No. 20, 21, 27, 31, 63, 80, 90, 110, 112, 113, 123, 127, 331, 777 (No. 20 runs between Naha and Nago going on the west coast. The other lines connect Naha Bus terminal and Goya, which is near Gate 2 of Kadena Air Base. No. 23, 113 and 123 stop at Naha Air Port)

3. Camp Foster: No. 20, 92, 93, 152 (No. 20 runs between Naha and Nago going on the west coast. The other lines connect Aeon Mall Okinawa RYCOM and some locations on the island. 92 go to Naha Bus Terminal. No 93 to Yakena near White Beach, 96 to Chatan. No. 152 goes to Naha Air Port.)

4. Camp Kinser: No. 20, 31, 32, 61, 63, 99, 110, 223, 227, 228, 263 (No. 20 runs between Nago and Naha. 31 between Awase and Naha. 32 between Convention Center and Naha. 63 between Naha and Gushikawa near Camp Courtney. 99 between Naha Air Port and Convention Center. 110 between Naha and Gushikawa near Camp Courtney. 223, 227, 228 shuttle between Shintoshin (Naha) and Gushikawa near Courtney, Yakena near White Beach, and Yomitan near Torri station respectively. 263 runs between Shintoshin and Gushikawa as well.)

5. Torii Station: No. 28, 62, 228. (28 runs between Naha and Yomintan. 62 between Sunabe near Kadena Air Base and Yomitan. 228 between Shintoshin (Naha) and Yomitan.)

6. White Beach: No. 27, 52, 61, 80, 93, 127, 227, 777 (27, 52, 80 run between Naha and Yakena near White Beach. 61 between Yakena and San-A Parco City near Camp Kinser. 93 between Aeon Mall and Yakena. 127 between Naha bus terminal and Yakena via expressway. 227 between Shintoshin and Yakena. 777 is an express between Naha and Yakena.)

7. Camp Courtney: No. 21, 23, 24, 63, 90, 110, 112, 113, 223, 263 (113 runs between Gushikawa near Camp Courtney and Naha Air Port. The other lines connect Gushikawa and Naha bus terminal or Shintohsin)

Okinawa Urban Monorail, or Yui Rail, is another way to get around in Naha. It runs from Naha Airport to Tedako Uranishi (Urasoe City) in about 37 minutes, and costs between 250 yen to 390 yen. A one-day pass is 1,000 yen and two days is 1,800 yen.

The Yui Rail is another way to get around Naha.

Information on routes, schedules and fares is available online in English.

Taxi service

Taxis are widely available and inexpensive. The initial drop on the meter is 600 yen for the first 1.75 kilometers and then 100 yen for every additional 400 meters. When traffic slows down to 10 km/h or below, 100 yen will be charged additionally for every 2 minutes and 25 seconds. There is an additional 20 percent surcharge from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. There are large taxis which charge more than a regular taxi. The doors are automated, meaning that the driver pulls a lever inside the door to open the cab and hits it to shut the door. There is no tipping. Note that some taxi companies are authorized to go on U.S. military bases, so you can get all the way home and not just to the front gate. Such cabs have a written sign saying"Authorized on Base." There is also another type of taxi service available on Okinawa as well as mainland Japan. Known as "daiko," it is used by people who can't drive due to alcohol. Two drivers and a taxi will be sent to the location, one of whom takes the customer's car home with the customer in the passenger seat.

The two drivers will then return in the taxi. The Exchange offers service to connect customers with this service. For taxi, call 645-8888 on base and 098-970-8888 off base. For daiko, call 098-932-4035.

CONTACT INFO

Bus Map Okinawa

Okinawa Urban Monorail

Check this link!
Tip of the Day:
Honk horn with caution

Getting behind the wheel

Buying, registering and driving a vehicle

Driving in Japan can be likened to how one comedian once described red lights here – "optional." Like everyone, however, SOFA-status drivers would do well to stop, not only for red lights, but to consider what is involved in purchasing and registering a vehicle here.

In addition to the usual considerations for purchasing a vehicle, service personnel must choose whether to buy from another service member or the equivalent, a local resident or a car dealer.

A fourth option is Military AutoSource. This last option is ideal for those who can afford it. Vehicles come with import licenses, bill of sale, warranty, U.S. specifications and an English-language manual. Just because someone can afford such a purchase, however, does not mean they can afford to ship the vehicle back home or to their next duty station.

So whether one's "follow-on" orders are likely to include vehicle shipment is one thing to stop and consider with this option. The chances of selling the vehicle for its true value before PCSing out are not likely to be high.

Many people opt for buying used vehicles from military or civilian personnel PCSing out. The ritual usually begins with a visit to the base's so-called (sometimes figuratively, sometimes not) "lemon lot" for a few rounds of tire kicking and/or haggling. It is possible to find one's ideal vehicle in near-perfect shape. The only guarantee, however, is that there are no guarantees.

People with short tours tend to do minimal maintenance, and a vehicle may have had more than one short-term owner. Analyze any defects and consider the repair costs. Without any warranty, the risk is significant.

Also, bear in mind that regulations vary between military installations, requiring different steps for vehicle transfers between bases, import vehicles and motorcycles. Check with the appropriate offices before making any plans or purchases.

An off-base dealer is probably the safest bet for getting a quality pre-owned vehicle. There are likely to be hundreds of cars to choose from.

The registration process isn't difficult and many dealers offer direct finance plans. Since local law and custom dissuade locals from owning older vehicles, reasonably priced cars with low mileage are not hard to find.

If the dealer has a garage for maintenance, that's a bonus. Minor repairs can be taken care of before and after you select your car. If you have access to a base auto hobby shop, and you like working on cars, you can save a lot of money. Always insist on a warranty when buying a car from a dealer.

Note that the auto skills centers on many bases offer inexpensive courtesy inspections of used cars that a servicemember is considering purchasing. This covers most of the points that the Japanese Compulsory Insurance inspection does.

Now that the hard part is over, it is time to talk about mandatory expenses. Japanese Compulsory Insurance, or JCI, is the big one. All cars on the road in Japan must pass inspection every two years. (Certain makes and models must be inspected annually.) Strict government requirements must be met in order to pass the JCI inspection. The process is cumbersome. Either you get used to it and do the paperwork, or you have someone do it for you.

Another cost is road tax. The amount you must pay for the annual road tax, which is due in May, depends on the size of the vehicle's engine. Please see Page 54 for more information on road tax amounts and how and where to pay.

You are also required by law to purchase personal-liability insurance in case of an accident.

It can be purchased from a Japanese insurance agency and some car dealers. (The minimum amount required by U.S. Military Law is 30,000,000 yen for bodily injury and 3,000,000 yen for property damage, according to the U.S. Marine Corps website.) People can save some money by paying an annual fee instead of making quarterly or otherwise divided payments.

To register your vehicle, contact your base's Pass and ID Office, Vehicle Registration Office or the equivalent thereof. You must have liability insurance before reporting to the office. Some car dealers near military bases may be able to do much of this footwork for you.

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Alphabetic order:

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Okinawa Kadena Air Base Office: TEL 03-4580-0152
Okinawa Camp Hansen Office: TEL 098-869-5025
Okinawa MCAS Futenma Office: DSN636-5203

★Johnny's Used Cars

Okinawa Foster Office: TEL 098-982-0312
Iwakuni Office: TEL 0827-35-6507

★Lucky's Car Insurance

Misawa Air Base Office: TEL 080-2804-4262
Lucky's Main Office: TEL 0176-53-5959

★OTS-Insurance

Okinawa Kadena Air Base USO Office: TEL 098-938-4279

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https://japan.stripes.com/
https://okinawa.stripes.com/

to the U.S. Military community in Japan

★WILTEC Insurance

Okinawa Kadena Head Quarter : TEL 098-989-3737
Okinawa Camp Foster 1st Office: TEL 098-971-4601
Okinawa Camp Foster 2nd Office: TEL 098-970-9010
Okinawa Camp Courtney Office: TEL 098-954-6308
Okinawa Camp Hansen Office: TEL 090-2510-2710
Okinawa Camp Kinser Office: TEL 090-1086-2710
Yokota Air Base Office: TEL 03-6868-2363
Yokosuka Base Office: TEL 046-816-4950
Atsugi Base Office: TEL 046-763-6544
Sasebo Base Office: TEL 0956-50-2458

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Car sales for military community

There are many car dealers in Japan anxious for U.S. military business, one of which is even located on base. Military AutoSource offers Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, Ford, Lincoln and Harley-Davidson vehicles to military personnel, U.S. government civilians and civilian contractors who are entitled to unlimited Exchange privileges, are stationed or assigned abroad for at least 30 days, and are authorized to have a Privately-Owned Vehicle at that assignment. MAS has independent sales representatives on or near U.S. bases throughout Japan. www.militaryautosource.com

There are others with close connections to the military overseas. Among them are U.S. Military Sales (usmilsales.com), which sells Volvos at discounted prices, and BMW Military Sales (www.bmw-special-sales.com/en/topics/military-sales/overview.html).

If you are not looking for a new luxury car but want something a cut above what can be found on a base lemon lot, here are some dealers near U.S. bases that cater to SOFA personnel.

Camp Foster

B. C. Used Cars in Chatan has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. www.bc-used-cars.jp, 098-936-6366

Johnny's Used Cars, outside Foster's Legion Gate, offers a one-year limited warranty, zero-interest financing for up to 24 months and a no-down-payment program. www.johnnys-cars.com, 098-982-0312

Pit Stop Used Car Sales is in Ginowan City, about 600 yards south of Foster's Commissary Gate on Highway 58. pitstopcars.jp, 098-898-4061

Camp Shields

BC Used Cars Garage and Rental Car has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. www.bc-used-cars.jp, 098-938-0302

Kadena Air Base

BC Used Cars Garage and Rental Car, outside Gate 2, has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. www.bc-used-cars.jp, 098-932-6651

Johnny's Used Cars Legion Gate, just outside Gate 1, offers a one-year limited warranty, zero-interest financing for up to 24 months and no-down-payment program. www.johnnys-cars.com, 098-982-0312

Koza Used Cars is located just outside Kadena Air Base. They have a translator available Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. To get there, take the first left outside Kadena Air Base Gate 2. Koza Used Cars will be on your left side after a 1-km drive. http://www.okistyle.com/usedcars/koza/, 098-938-8651

Payless Motors, just a 5-minute walk from Kadena's Gate 2, boasts serving Okinawa's U.S. military community for three decades. It has a huge selection of used cars, Yellow Plates and vans to choose from, English-speaking staff and up to 24-month payment plan with zero-percent interest. www.paylessokinawa.com, 098-933-2685

MCAS Iwakuni

Kaz Used Cars, near the main gate, has English-speaking staff and all vehicles are warrantied with registration included in price. They also provide repair/junking and JCI services. http://agent-kaz.com, 0827-35-4917

AUTOREC, serving the Iwakuni community for over 4 years now. Has a nice selection of vehicles at reasonable prices that include registration & JCI. www.autorec.co.jp, 080-3646-2905

Aki Auto Used Car, located outside the main gate with a nice selection and friendly service. Call 090-7501-8792 or FB Messenger.

Misawa Air Base

A-1 Used Cars
A-1 Used Cars is located very close to Misawa AB. They offer warranties for engine and transmission for an entire year and bumper-to-bumper for six months. They have English-speaking staff to assist with car insurance and JCI to car repairs. 0176-57-0483

Lucky's Used Car Center, just outside the base's Falcon (POL) Gate, offers a 60-day warranty and 6-month engine transmission warranty. 0176-53-5959

New Tokyo Used Car Center is near Misawa Air Base. 0176-53-5581

NAF Atsugi & Camp Zama

Gravity Auto on Route 51 specializes in luxury cars, including Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, BMW and Audi, as well as those with U.S. specifications that can be shipped to the U.S. www.hanamaru.co.jp 046-738-0276

Muratomi Used Car Shop is a one-minute drive from Zama's Gate 7 and accepts U.S. credit cards for payment. 042-767-5666

Wellcham Used Cars is a two-minute walk from Atsugi's main gate. It offers a 30-day guarantee and will handle all vehicle registration paperwork. 0467-77-5427

Phoenix Used Cars: Offers a wide range of used cars. www.japanesecartrade.com/phoenix, 050-3538-8456

Araliya Trading Company (ATC) has built a reputation of quality service and reliability. atc.zama.com, 080-4328-8025

Sasebo Naval Base

Sasebo Car Resale on Facebook is an unofficial virtual lemon lot for the Sasebo Naval Base community with more than 1,500 members.

Tamie's Auto offers a 2-month warranty, payment plans and vehicle registration is included in the price. JCI, repair and junking services available, so call for a pick up/drop off. www.sasebo-y-post.com, 090-2550-3395

Yamaguchi Auto prices include registration and they're English friendly. They also offer a pick-up service from the gate. 080-4694-5290

GT Hakata Since 2016, GT Hakata offers used cars at affordable prices with access to car auctions, special orders or display models. Free pick up/drop off services from the back gate on Sasebo. We accept credit cards and offer limited warranties. Other services available for "Y" plates, LTO runs, JCI and title name change. www.hakatagt.com, 080-4274-7574.

Yokosuka Naval Base

CheapToDrive
CheapToDrive is across Route 16 from Club Alliance and is a one-stop shop for your vehicle needs. They are licensed by US Military Sales Limited, providing you peace of mind when shopping for your next pre-owned vehicle. All vehicles sold at CheapToDrive

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

Electronic tolls

Japan ETC Card:
www.japanetccard.com

Japan's ETC (Electronic Toll Collection) system not only saves drivers time by letting them pay without stopping at an expressway tollgate, it also saves money due to discounted tolls for users during certain times and on certain days.

The catch is that it requires a credit card issued by a Japanese financial institution and most credit card companies here require an alien registration card from foreigners. Defense Department personnel in Japan under the Status of Forces Agreement, however, are not issued alien registration cards. There is an alternative.

Japan ETC Card offers a service for SOFA members that allows them to use their U.S.-issued credit card to get an ETC card.

They are able to process U.S. credit cards in such a way that is accepted by Japan's ETC system.

With 40,000 yen deposit (about $270), the company sends customers monthly bills detailing their ETC charges in English. The service starts from 1,200 yen (about $8) per month.

KELLY & KELLY
USED CAR DEALER
ONE STOP SHOP
USED CAR EXPERTS
CELEBRATING 59 YEARS 1967~2026 of Service to the Military Community!
• Registration Included in Price
• Wide Selection of Vehicles
• Payment Plans Available
• Auto Insurance Provider
• Warranty Included
• Cash Back for Car Junking!
STARS & STRIPES BEST OF THE PACIFIC 2023 2023 WINNER
Thank You Yokota Air Base!
Call us for Free Pick-up Service
WE ACCEPT VISA JPY USD
042-551-0556
View our Vehicles Here!
http://kellyandkellyjp.com
Weekdays 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturdays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Closed Sundays & Japanese Holidays
ONLY 5 MINUTE WALK FROM WEST GATE!
Here!
Don Quijote
Route 16
AMC YOKOTA
Terminal Gate

Welcome to Yokota Air Base!
Thank You to the Military Community for Over 12 Years!
BEST OF THE PACIFIC 2025 2025 WINNER
BEST OF THE PACIFIC 2024 2024 WINNER
BEST OF THE PACIFIC 2021 2021 WINNER
Used Car Dealer
REAL SPEED AUTO
Quality cars at affordable prices!
FEED THE NEED!
Customer advantages!
▪ Full Vehicle Registration.
▪ "WE CARE AFTER SERVICE"
▪ We Accept $$ or ¥¥ Payments
▪ Clean & Well Maintained Cars
▪ Payment Plans Available
▪ 90-Day Warranty w/ 2 Free Oil Changes
Free Pick-up/Drop off at Yokota Gate
We Accept Cash and Card!
Our services!
▪ WE PAY TOP $$$ for your JUNK CAR!
▪ New & Used Parts/Tire Ordering
3 or 6 Month Vehicle In-Door or Out-Door Storage Space Available!
Visit us at www.realspeed.jp
REAL SPEED AUTO
REAL SPEED Main Office
REAL SPEED
To Fussa Station
Pachinko
MaruFuji
KC Dining
Post Office
Higashi-Fussa Station
ROUTE 16
Yokota Air Base
Police Box
Gate No.2
7 minute walk from Yokota AB
Open Mon - Fri: 9 am- 6 pm
Sat & Holidays: 9 am- 5 pm
(Closed Sundays)
TEL: 0425-513-3593
WhatsApp 080-3452-3341

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Yuichi Mizuno
President, Autorec
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Road wage

Ah, spring, when a young servicemember's attention turns to ... road taxes? Yes, spring is when you pay your annual road taxes, which are mandated by Japanese law based on vehicle engine size. Luckily, most of you can pay them on base, where Japanese tax officials will be setting up collection stations to process payments. Remember that payments must be made in yen.

All Department of War personnel are required to pay their road taxes in order to receive new base vehicle decals. Payments must be made by May 31 (the end of April on NAF Atsugi), either on base or at the local Japanese tax office, and new USFJ decals obtained by June 1. Vehicles without new decals will not be allowed to be driven on or after June 1, depending on the base.

Unless you are in Okinawa, bring your vehicle's paperwork to the base Vehicle Registration Office (VRO) for issuance of a base decal. In Okinawa, bring it to the Joint Service Vehicle Registration Office (JVRO). If you own more than one vehicle, all of them must be registered at the same time.

Anyone can pay road tax for deployed or absent vehicle owners, but a power of attorney may be required for anyone other than a spouse to obtain a base decal.

In mainland Japan, contact your base VRO for more information. On Okinawa, contact the Joint Service Vehicle Registration Office at 645-7481.

What to bring?

Drivers must provide the following items when paying road tax on base:

- **Military ID card**
- **Military vehicle registration**
- **Base driver's license**
- **Japanese Compulsory Insurance (JCI)**
- **Liability insurance policy**

Drivers must provide the following items when paying road tax off base:

- **SOFA ID Card (registered in DBIDS)**
- **Last year's road tax receipt**
- **Japanese title**
- **Base inspection sheet**
- **JCI insurance**
- **Liability insurance**
- **Parking certificate with current residence**
- **Driver's license**
- **Expired USFJ Base Vehicle Decal**

How much?

Road taxes are determined by the number shown on top of each vehicle's license plate, which identifies the vehicle's engine size. Of course taxes, like all charges, are subject to change; here are last year's tax rates. Check with your on-base registration office for 2024 rates and where you can to pay on base.

Vehicle plates and taxes:

- **40/400 and 50/500 plates: 7,500 yen**
- **33/300 plates (4.5 liter engines and below): 19,000 yen**
- **33/300 plates (4.6 liter engines and above): 22,000 yen**
- **11/100 and 88/800 plates: 32,000 yen**

Minicar and Motorcycle taxes:

- **Minicars: 3,000 yen**
- **Motorcycles 126 cc and above: 1,000 yen**
- **Motorcycles 125 cc and below: 500 yen**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 52

undergo a 102-point check and come with a 30-day comprehensive warranty. Get your car insured with the on-premise insurance office, which also offers car junking. View vehicle stock at **www.cheaptodrive.com, facebook.com/cheap2drive, 090-3573-2017**

U.S. Navy Cars

Just across and a couple of steps from Yokosuka's main gate. U.S. Navy Cars offers a wide selection of cars to fit you and your family's needs. In-stock vehicle purchase includes 60-day warranty, detailing inside and out and JCI.

facebook.com/usnavycarsyokosuka 080-9389-2021

Fuji Automotive

Fuji Automotive business is registered for the sale of used cars in and around Japan to which we have proudly been serving members of the US Military, DOW Civilian and Diplomatic communities in Japan for over a decade. Vehicle purchases include 2-year JCI and standard 30-day engine & transmission protection.

https://www.fujiautomotive.com/ 080-9629-6093

Yokota Air Base

Japan Auto Ltd. located outside the Yokota East Gate, offers many cars in stock, but will also search vehicle auctions Japan-wide. The dealer accepts cash back for your old car and a variety of payment options. Call for free pick up from Yokota Air Base to our shop.

www.japanautoonline.com, 090-1052-2964

Kelly & Kelly Auto Sales is a one-stop shop located only a 5-minute walk from Yokota's Terminal Gate. Kelly & Kelly has been serving the military community for over 59 Years. With a wide variety of at least 50 vehicles, they offer a warranty on all purchases with various payment option plans. For a free pick-up on base or questions, call **042-551-0556**. Open daily except Sundays and Japanese holidays.

Real Speed Auto is a 10-minute walk from Yokota's Fussa Gate and offers free pick-up service. They provide a full 90-day warranty and free vehicle registration. English/Japanese and payment plans okay! TOP $$$ paid for your vehicle disposal! View their vehicles online at **www.realspeed.jp** Call **042-513-3593** WhatsApp 080-3452-3341 or contact via FB Real Speed Auto. Vehicle Rental Storage Available.

Cheap2Drive vehicles are hand-picked based on best condition with low mileage. Located near Yokota Gate #2 Fussa. Committed to providing quality service to all, from first-time buyers to experienced vehicle owners. For friendly, reliable service with direct links to car auctions, call **090-2726-2000** or visit **www.C2DYOKOTA.com**

Car junking

24 Express will pick up from any base in the Kanto area and pay to junk your used car when you are scrapping your car, at PCS or any other time. **www.24express.jp, 090-7123-7100**

Car insurance

Chubb Insurance Japan is available on or near US bases in Mainland Japan and Okinawa. They offer US Forces Automobile Insurance, JCI and Renter's Insurance, too. They accept US dollars and credit cards to make your life easier! More info: **www.chubb.com/jp-en/com/jp-en/individuals-families/auto-for-us-military.html**

AIG Japan Insurance has proudly served the men and women of US Forces Japan since 1946. With AIG, you have 24/7 Free Roadside Service so let us be a part of your heroic journey in Mainland Japan and Okinawa. Find your nearest AIG agent at **www.aig.co.jp/sonpo/military**

Johnny's Used Cars

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STARS AND STRIPES BEST OF THE PACIFIC 2023 — 2023 WINNER

Large selection of higher quality vehicles to choose from!
Our vehicles are graded accident free from mainland Japan!

1 Year, Bumper to Bumper Warranty | **24 Month, Interest Free Financing**

Why Johnny's Used Cars?

- Serving The Military Community for Over 50 Years
- Friendly, English Speaking Staff
- 1 Year, Bumper to Bumper Warranty
- All Vehicles Include a New 2 Year JCI and Current Road Tax
- 24 Month Financing with NO Interest
- All Major Credit Cards Accepted
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Mon-Fri: 9:00am - 6:00pm
Sat: 8:30am - 5:30pm
Sun: 11:00am - 5:00pm

Tel: 098-982-0312

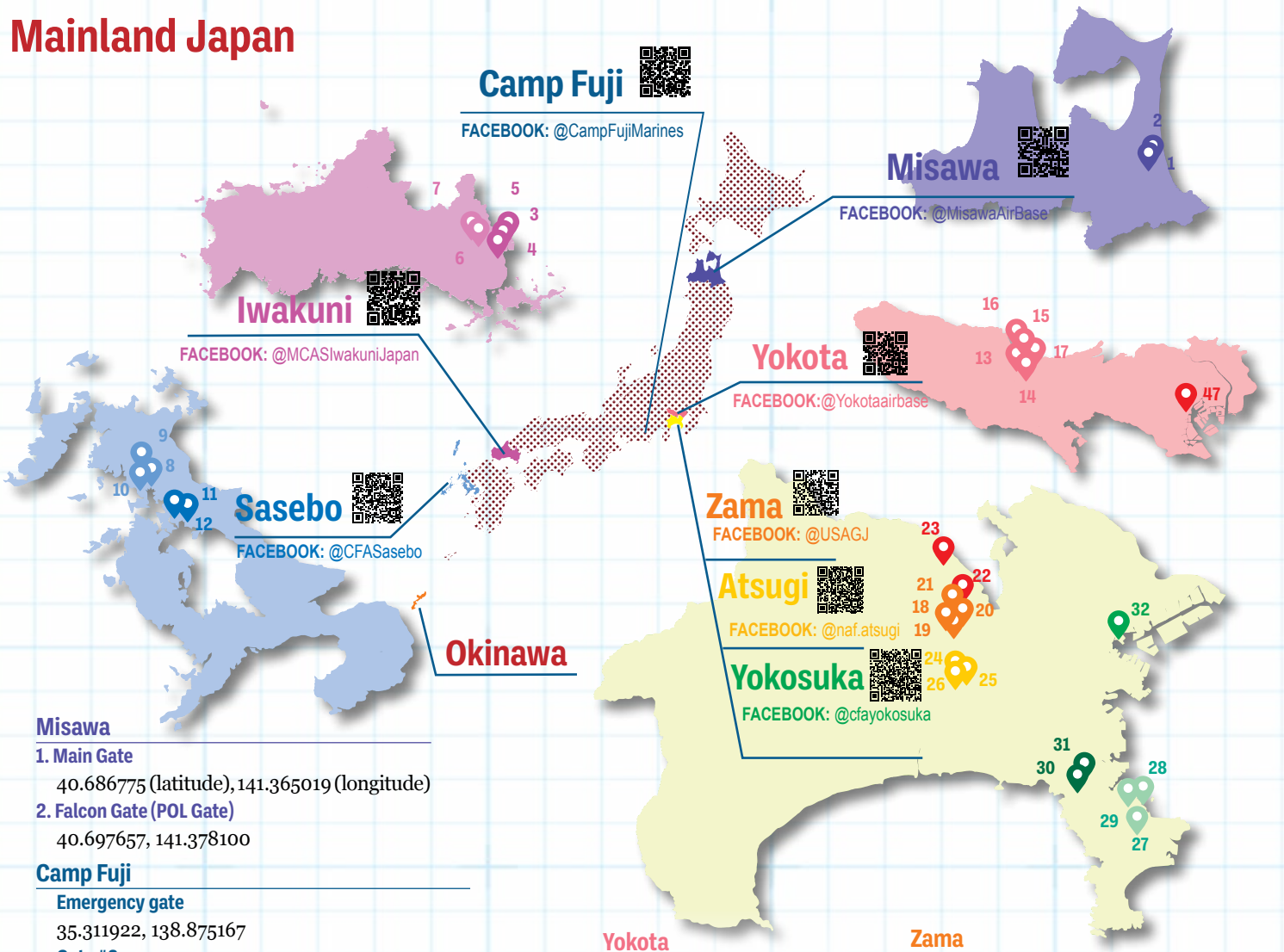
Johnny's is conveniently located right outside of Foster's Gate#6

www.johnnys-cars.com

Camp coordinates

Travel base to base

Mainland Japan



Misawa

1. Main Gate
40.686775 (latitude), 141.365019 (longitude)
2. Falcon Gate (POL Gate)
40.697657, 141.378100

Camp Fuji

Emergency gate
35.311922, 138.875167
Gate #2
35.321344,138.875699
GATE#4 (Main gate close)
35.311702, 138.874862

Iwakuni

3. Main Gate
34.151401, 132.221583
4. Monzen Gate (Limited hours)
34.142617, 132.216083
5. North Gate (Limited hours)
34.160040, 132.231432
6. Atago South Gate
34.146353, 132.198865
7. Atago North Gate (Temp close)
34.153012, 132.190980
WEST GATE (Temp close)
34.157205, 132.224591
C-GATE (Temp close)
34.148697, 132.219722

Sasebo

8.Main Gate
33.16903, 129.71417
9. Back Gate
33.166635, 129.710680
10. Main Base Housing
33.17198, 129.71304
11. Hario Village, Main gate
33.08521, 129.77900
12. Hario Village, Back Gate
33.08209, 129.78253

Atsugi

24. Main Gate
35.458549, 139.433604
25. East Gate
35.459981, 139.456402
26. West Gate (Temp.use)
35.446332, 139.433673

Yokota

13. GATE #2 Fussa Gate
35.74237, 139.33803
14. GATE #5 Supply Gate
35.733211, 139.341582
15. GATE #12 Terminal Gate
35.753318, 139.340621
16. GATE #15 West Gate
35.753444, 139.340417
17. GATE #17 East Gate
35.740099, 139.370759

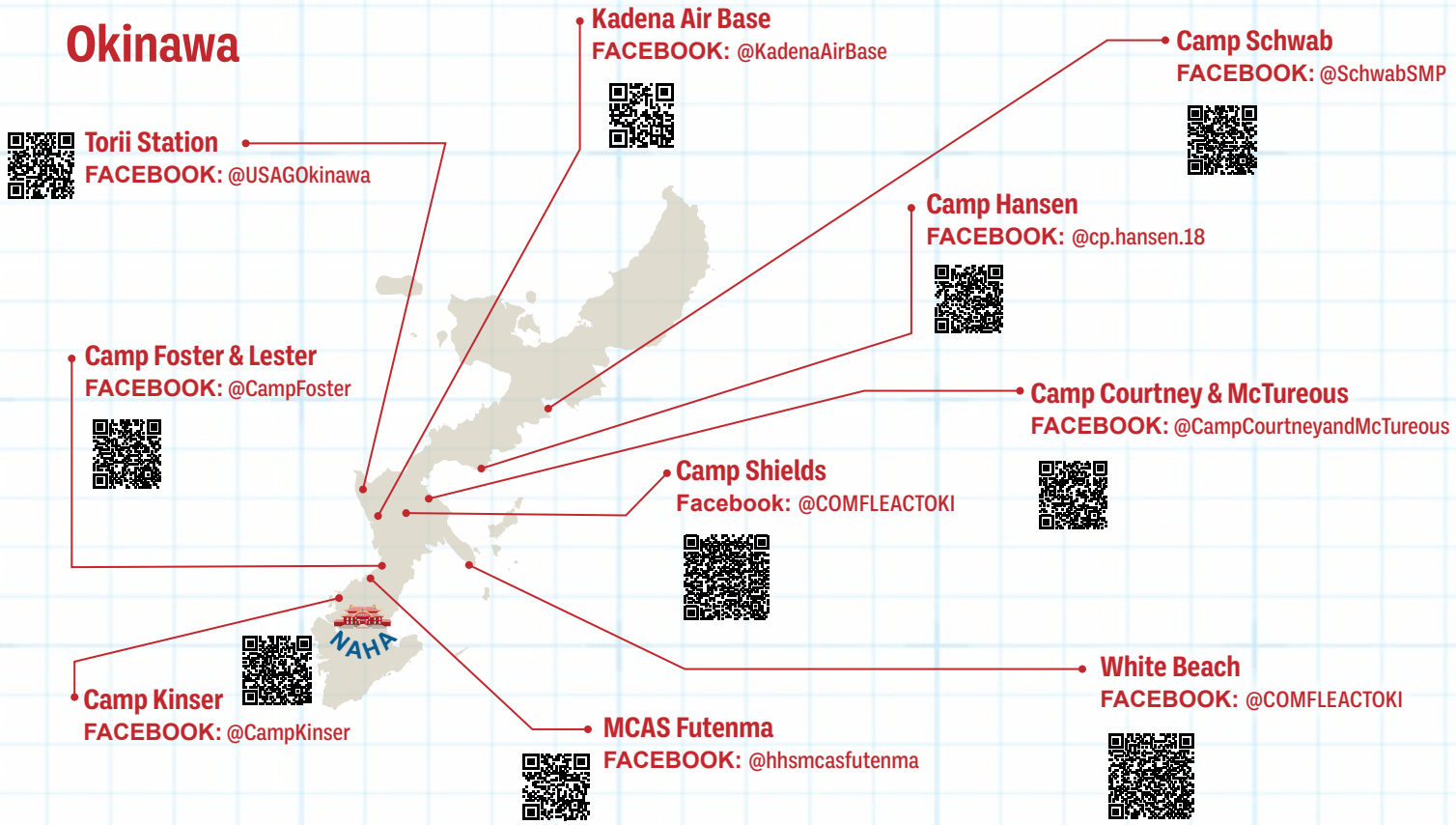
Zama

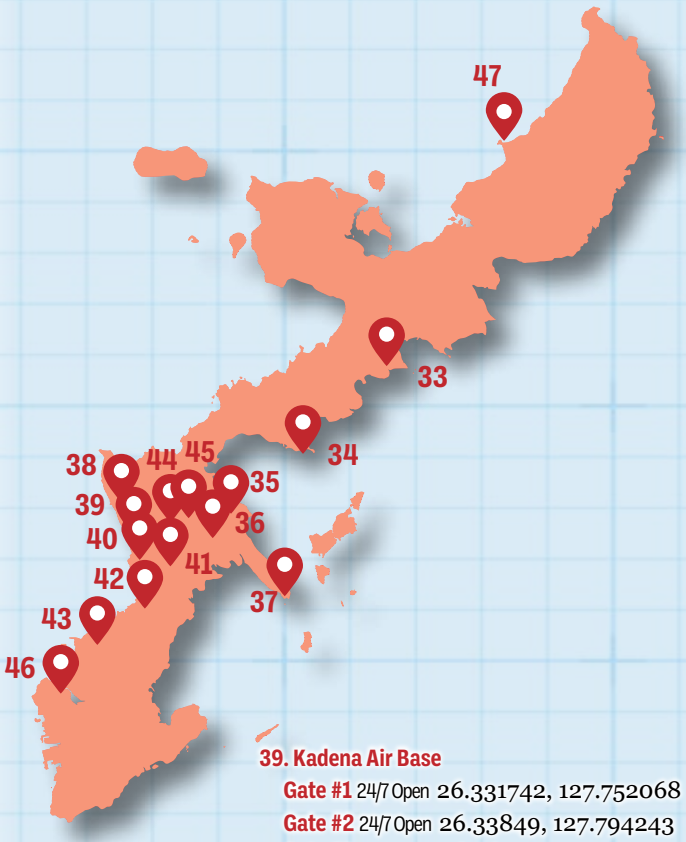
18. GATE #1
35.492070, 139.397175
19. GATE #2 (Limited Hours)
35.491804, 139.397191
20. GATE #4
35.49972429853117, 139.40328461177478
21. GATE #7 (Zama Golf Course)
35.512045, 139.398548
22. Sagamihara Family Housing Gate #1
35.520506, 139.420027
23. Sagami Depot Gate #1
35.577465, 139.378625
47. Hardy Barracks
35.662204, 139.724734

Yokosuka

27. Main Gate
35.282663, 139.666174
28. Womble Gate (Navy Hospital)
35.283573, 139.668523
29. Verny Gate/Mall Gate
35.284137, 139.662318
30. Ikego Housing Main Gate
35.304163, 139.590293
31.Ikego Housing Jinmuji Station Walking Gate
35.30673, 139.59307
32. Yokohama North Dock Gate1
35.471703, 139.642442

Okinawa





Okinawa

33. Camp Schwab Main Gate
26.52662, 128.036532

34. Camp Hansen
Gate #1 (24/7 Open)
26.453812, 127.899278
Gate #2
26.454877, 127.916203
Gate #3
26.459154, 127.92819

35. Camp Courtney
Gate # 1 26.390155, 127.857496
Gate #3 26.386004, 127.860215
Gate #7 26.393854149941895, 127.8529440789544
Gate #12 26.389576, 127.851371 (PX/Commissary main Gate)
Gate #13 26.384978, 127.850379 (PX/Commissary Back Gate) is closed.

36. Camp McTureous Main Gate
26.382011, 127.846498

37. White Beach Main Gate
26.304794, 127.915098

38. Torii Station
Gate #1 26.385087, 127.739276
Gate #3 26.374517, 127.745633
Gate #4 26.370649, 127.735737
Gate #5 26.384708, 127.732663

39. Kadena Air Base
Gate #1 24/7 Open 26.331742, 127.752068
Gate #2 24/7 Open 26.33849, 127.794243
Gate #3 24/7 Open 26.361554, 127.79403
Gate #4 26.358254,127.748229
Gate #5 Limited hours daily; closed weekends and school holidays
26.332647, 127.779516

40. Camp Lester Main Gate
26.314377, 127.761763

41. Camp Foster
Gate #1 26.29815, 127.780819
Gate #3 26.305143, 127.772459
Gate #4 26.30763, 127.766314
Gate #5 26.295444, 127.760969
Gate #6 26.297284, 127.777738
Gate #7 26.290722, 127.773361
Gate #8A (Plaza Housing)
26.3192257, 127.7889783
Gate #10 26.307031, 127.776536

42. MCAS Futenma
Gate #1 26.276305, 127.748613
Gate #3 26.28631, 127.77656

43. Camp Kinser
Gate #1 26.246127, 127.696131
Gate #2 26.253794, 127.705299
Gate #4 26.269236, 127.708723
Gate #5 26.248568, 127.691443
The Gate is closed.

44. Camp Shields Gate #7152
26.368009, 127.803037

45. Chibana Housing Main Gate
26.363976, 127.79717

46. Naha Port Gate #1
26.204525, 127.670788

47. Okuma Beach
26.7375208, 128.1590747

Photo by Staff Sgt. Spencer Tobler/U.S. Air Force

Keeping up with the law

While in Japan, all U.S. military and civilians under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between Japan and America are subject to both U.S. and Japanese laws. While many Japanese laws are similar to those back home, some may catch you off guard. Your base chain of command or legal office should be the first place you go with legal questions, but here are a few local laws and legal customs you might want to consider.

Cell phone laws

• In Japan, drivers caught talking on cellphones or holding them while looking at their screens behind the wheel pay the price.

• 100,000 yen ($670) or up to six months imprisonment with hard labor maximum.

• Drivers who pose a danger to traffic or cause an accident while using a mobile device, face up to one year imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen ($2,000)

• On-base: Some bases in Japan and on Okinawa operate on a point system. Talking or texting on a cellphone while operating a motor vehicle will get drivers 3 points on their driving record and a one-week driving suspension.

  • 1st offense- 1-week suspension and 3 points
  • 2nd offense – 1-month suspension and 3 points
  • 3rd offense – 1-year suspension and 3 points

• Additionally, drivers on base who accumulate 12 points in a year or 18 points in two years will have their driving permit suspended for six months.

Carrying a knife

• Double-edged blades or switchblades longer than 2.2 inches (5.5 cm) as well as spears, single-edge knives and swords with blades longer than 6 inches (15 cm) are not to be carried without permission. Violators could face up to three years imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen ($3,300).

• Exceptions for knives with blades longer than 2.4 inches are for home cutlery. The penalty for carrying knives larger than this is up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen ($2,000).

• There are exemptions for blades used for cooking, fishing and other utilitarian purposes, as well as for someone with special authorization, (e.g. for use in an art or sport).

• For genuine or antique sword souvenirs, check with customs before making a purchase. Some items may be deemed cultural treasures that can't leave the country; if so, they may be confiscated at airports.

Child custody disputes

• When it comes to divorce, Japan's family courts do not issue joint custody of children. Sole custody is usually granted to the mother.

• In April 2014, the 1980 Hague Convention on Aspects of International Child Abduction went into effect after decades of Japanese government's refusal to sign on. Now, authorities must help foreign spouses locate their children. However, the new law, which is not retroactive, only applies when the child was a resident of the foreign country before the abduction and their return is not guaranteed – only a ruling on the matter in a Japanese court.

• In cases that the Hague convention does not cover, such as when an international family resides in Japan and the Japanese spouse flees with the child elsewhere in country, her or his counterpart has very little, if any, legal recourse. For all intents and purposes, the parent who already has the child has de facto sole custody, even if it has not been legally granted. Authorities usually will not treat such incidents as abductions.

Saying you're sorry

• Apologies and cash payments play an unofficial – yet very important – role in Japan's legal system when it comes to civil disputes and criminal cases.

• "Jidan" is an informal out-of-court settlement for damages and/or to express remorse, is sometimes used in civil disputes such as fender-benders, damage claims or altercations. It is best to get the terms and finality of such agreements in writing. You may want to consider foregoing jidan and get the local authorities involved.

• "Gomen nasai" (I'm sorry) money is a payment made with an apology paid to the alleged victim. This can affect whether you are arrested, released into U.S. custody or prosecuted. (An apology needn't be an admission of guilt, but condolences for the alleged victim's hardship.) Japan's conviction rate is high, so it's not in your best interest, no matter how innocent you may be, to get indicted.

• A letter of apology to an alleged victim from the accused can impact that decision (submit copies of the letter). Apologizing to, paying the alleged victim (usually a lot) and getting them to write a letter on your behalf carries even more weight. Even if you are convicted, an apology prior to indictment – in word and monetary deed – may impact sentencing significantly.

Working off base

• As in the U.S., proper visas and/or permits are required for foreigners to legally work in Japan.

• SOFA allows some exceptions for military and civilians who fall under it. However, they are responsible for paying Japanese taxes on income earned on the Japanese economy.

• USFJ also has rules that apply to SOFA personnel. With the exception of teaching English as a foreign language, according to USFJ instruction 36-1001, all SOFA

Rules for e-scooters

Break cycling laws, pay the price

For more information and travel alerts, visit the U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Japan

personnel must apply for permission from their chain of command to work off base. Those teaching English, however, should notify their chain of command.

• Review USFJ instruction 36-1001 for the full details.

• SOFA individuals are also prohibited from commercial activity. This includes ownership of, interest in, or private employment at a business that is, detrimental to the best interest of the United States, or affiliated with drugs, trafficking or prostitution. SOFA persons also may not:

  • Work in an establishment whose primary service is the sale of alcohol to the Japanese public.

  • Work in a business that is in anyway connected with gambling or making/trafficking weapons.

  • Sell real estate, stocks, bonds, insurance, securities or mutual fund shares unless licensed by an appropriate U.S. authority and comply with Japanese law.

  • Appear in any commercial media, stage plays or make recordings for publication without prior approval.

  • Wear military uniforms or refer to their service affiliation while working off base if they are active-duty.

Biking laws

One thing you'll notice is that Japan has a large amount of bicycle traffic. Locals commute to work, go grocery shopping and transport their kids to school on their bikes. There are strict laws in Japan regarding bicycles, but in reality, There are strict laws in Japan regarding bicycles and serious consequences including fines if you're caught breaking the rules. Here are a few tips to make sure you abide by local biking laws:

• Don't ignore traffic signals or ride in prohibited areas.

• Ride on the left side of the street. Bicycles are classified as vehicles.

• If you live on base, you must register your bike at your Pass & ID office. If you buy a bike in Japan, the bike shop will help you register it with the local government if you live off base.

• Do not ride on sidewalks unless the areas are marked for shared space with pedestrians. (Children under 13 and adults over 70 years old and the handicapped are permitted to ride on sidewalks)

• Stop at crosswalks and if you need to turn, you need to follow crosswalks (do not go into traffic/turning lanes for vehicles).

• Don't ring bicycle bells at pedestrians. Pedestrians are given priority.

• After dark, you must have a front light on your bicycle.

• Do not use umbrellas or talk on your cellphone while riding.

• Children must wear a helmet if under age 13 or if under the age of six in a designated child seat.

• On base, all riders must wear a helmet at all times.

• Only park your bike at designated bike parking areas. Parking in prohibited areas will get you a warning ticket or it could be impounded.

• Be aware of pedestrians, vehicles and other cyclists while you're on the road and follow safety rules at all times.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rey Ramon/U.S. Air Force

Don't drink and drive!

In Japan, drinking-and-driving laws are deadly serious. **The legal limit in Japan is 0.03, on and off base!**

• Japan's traffic law also goes after passengers who knowingly ride with intoxicated drivers – and anyone who provides alcohol or a vehicle to someone that subsequently drives drunk.

  • Three months confinement and 500,000 yen ($3,300) for refusing a blood alcohol test.

  • Penalties for drunk driving include up to:

  • 15 years confinement and 500,000 yen for a hit and run while under the influence of alcohol.

  • Three years confinement or 1 million yen for a blood alcohol content of 0.25 milligrams per liter (0.05 percent) or more.

  • Five years confinement or 1 million yen for providing the driver with the vehicle; and three years or 500,000 yen for providing alcohol to, or riding with, the driver.

  • Three years confinement and 500,000 yen for a blood alcohol content between 0.15 and 0.25 milligrams per liter (0.03 and 0.05 percent). Five years confinement or 1 million for providing the driver with the vehicle; and three years or 500,000 yen for knowingly providing alcohol to, or riding with, the driver.

• A recent U.S.-Japan agreement also put measures in place to ensure SOFA civilians, as well as military, cannot avoid prosecution – either here or in the U.S. – if they are caught driving while intoxicated in Japan.

• Civilians can also lose their SOFA standing if found driving under the influence of alcohol.

Speakin' Japanese: Legal lingo

Can you help me?
Tetsudatte kuremasenka?
(Tet-zoo-dat-eh koo-reh-mass-zen-ka)

I have SOFA status.
(Watashi wa) Beigun kankeisha desu.
(what-ashy wuh) bey-goon can-kay-shaw deh-sue.)

I'm sorry.
Sumimasen.
(Zoo-me-mass-zen)

I need to make a phone call.
Denwa wo kaketaino desuga.
(Den-wuh woe khaki-tay-no deh-sue-gah)

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- All Womble Gate American Dentistry staff members are native or fluent English speakers, ensuring clear communication and exceptional patient care.

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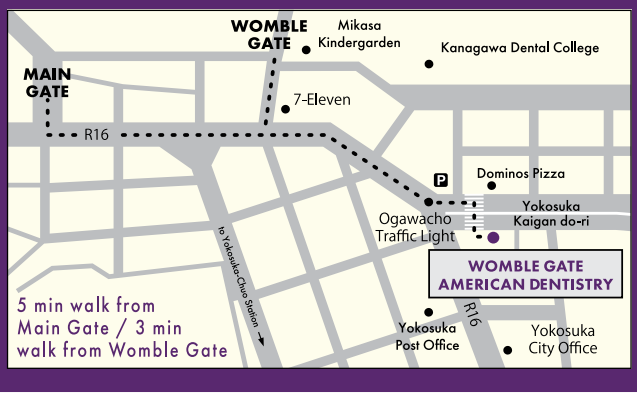

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- Main Street Food Court @ #G59

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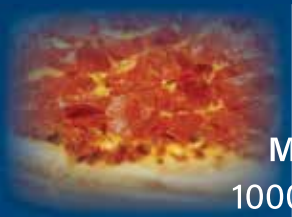
https://nexcomanchoreats.com

WingStreet



Yokosuka

Main Street Food Court

1000-2100 (Delivery 1130-2030)

Bayside

1000-2100 (Delivery 1130-2030)

DSN: 243-FOOD/Commercial: (046)816-3663

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Sasebo

1000-1900

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts, Tostadas and many other TB promotional items

Know where to park, or pay price

You are stationed in Japan for the first time. You just got your government driver's license, purchased a car at the lemon lot, filed all the proper paperwork and paid road taxes.

And now you're revved up to drive off base and explore Japan.

But before you put it in gear, have a plan on where you are going to park. Seriously. Parking can be a problem in Japan if you're not prepared, or don't bring enough yen.

You may think that you can get away with parking your car anywhere for a couple of minutes. Unfortunately, that is wrong. Most public roads in Japan are "no parking" zones unless there are signs that say so.

Parking police

It is very common to see parking enforcement officers (generally two people in green uniforms) walking the sidewalks and backstreets looking for cars illegally parked. And they have no mercy on you. They'll photograph your illegally parked car, and post a ticket on the windshield within a minute. They're like ninjas.

If the green-uniformed parking police don't get you, look out for mini police cars trolling about. Police officers will periodically drive around looking for parking violators. If they find a car illegally parked, they mark a wheel of the car and the road with chalk and come back in five to 10 minutes. When they return to discover the car is still there, they'll issue a ticket.

But beware, a ticket is not the worst thing that can happen. In many cases, especially on congested streets, the police will put a lock on the wheel well of an illegally parked car and call a tow truck. The owner of the car is responsible for paying the tow truck fee and parking ticket, as well as the cost of storage from where you pick up your car after it's towed. This can run you close to $400.

Now that I've made it quite clear not to park illegally on the street, don't think for a second that it's okay to park in unmarked spaces in various parking lots found outside apartment complexes and in neighborhoods. These are reserved spots paid for by car owners.

In Japan, you can't register your car until you have proof that you have a parking spot for that particular car. So if you live out in town and have a one-car garage and two cars, you have to pay for another parking spot. These can run anywhere between $60-$250 a month or more depending on your location.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

How to use coin lots

1. To park:

When there is a vacant parking space, the main sign will read "vacant" (空) or (空車). If all the spaces are occupied, it shows "full" (満車) or (満), often in red letters.

Remember that you pay the fare when you leave the parking lot. After confirming that the locking flap is lowered, enter slowly into the parking space. Park your car within the lines of the parking space, ensuring that the wheels are in contact with the stopper.

The locking flap will automatically rise approximately 3 to 5 minutes after you parked the car.

2. To leave:

Make sure to get the right number of your parking spot, then go to the automated fare adjustment machine and press the number. Press the fare payment button and insert the appropriate amount of yen. After confirming that the locking flap has lowered, exit the parking space within 3 minutes. Remember, the locking flap will rise again automatically after 3 to 5 minutes. If you have any problems, contact the call center by using the handy phone installed on the automated fare adjustment machine.

– Source: Japan Parking Business Association

Finding a spot

When wanting to park, look for blue or yellow signs with a capital "P" on them.

Supermarkets, shopping malls, restaurants, government buildings and some leisure facilities usually have their own parking spaces. While some are free, many will issue you a card when you enter the parking lot. If you use the facility or shop at the department store, you get credit for your purchases, resulting in a couple hours of free parking. You simply pay at the automated fare adjustment machine located in the lot.

If you can't find free parking, you're going to have to fork over some yen. Like in the U.S., there are parking meters on city streets. But, especially in Tokyo, these spots fill up quickly.

But there are many different types of facilities to park, including towers. A lot of foreigners are amazed at the cutting-edge technology used in these parking towers. Your car is driven to the front of the tower, where it is loaded on an elevator and moved electronically. Some of these car towers are 10-15 stories tall and have automated plate-number recognition and cashless payment systems.

There are also parking lots that are underground. You simply drive up to the spot and a car attendant will take your car down on an elevator.

Parking on Okinawa

In Okinawa, many facilities such as shopping malls, restaurants or beaches offer free parking spaces to their customers. Given the fact that we don't have trains in Okinawa, having large parking lots is important for local business owners to draw customers. (We do have a monorail, but it runs only in and around Naha city.)

However, if you go to Naha or Okinawa City, the two most populated municipalities in the prefecture, pay parking lots are common. You can usually find them a block or so off the main streets. On Saturday and Sunday, you will see many rental cars with わ "Wa" or れ "Re" number plates filling these parking lots, indicating that tourists are having a good time shopping at fashionable stores, or discovering unique local goods in a maze-like market.

So, if you are planning to explore local scenes in Naha or Okinawa City, especially in areas near Kokusai Street or Gate 2 street by Kadena Air Base, make sure you have Japanese yen to pay for parking. Rates vary from parking lot to parking lot, but 200-400 yen for half an hour is the average in Naha. In Okinawa City, 200-300 yen for half an hour is a common rate. The fees typically increase every 20, 30, 40 or 60 minutes. Some of the parking lots offer discounts if you shop or eat at specific places.

You also want to pay close attention to where you park. Busy roads like Route 330 have many cars parked on the side, causing traffic congestion. It is a common place to see people just pull over their cars to shop at stores. There are places like Gate 2 Street that have parking meters on the side of the road, but they are out of service.

Most streets in Okinawa don't have space to park your car legally. Realistically, there are cases when you need to park your car on the side of the road, but please make sure to do so in a location where it doesn't cause traffic problems. Use common sense and avoid parking on the side of a road for a long time, especially if you are on a busy street or in urban areas where there isn't much parking. This will also help you avoid getting a dreaded parking ticket.

– Shoji Kudaka

Avoid parking meters!

Driving around Okinawa, you may notice some of the meters have covers marked with **"休止中"** or **"休止"** characters. This means the meter is not in service and not available for parking. However, whether the meter is marked or not, all of the islands, parking meters have now been disabled and parking in these spots is prohibited. Meters are slowly being phased out, but if you see them, do not park there. Avoid a parking fine and look for a paid parking lot instead!

You'll also find small 100-yen parking lots throughout cities. A lot of these lots are owned by individuals and only have 2-10 parking spots. This self-service coin parking is easy to use and usually open 24 hours a day.

According to Yoshio Yamamura, managing director of Japan Parking Business Association, when you use these parking lots, it is important to know the hourly fares before you actually park your car. Most parking lots only take yen, although some of the latest models accept credit cards and IC cards. But be prepared, if you don't have enough yen, you won't be able to drive off.

– Takahiro Takiguchi

Don't get caught in Okinawa's bus lanes

Did you know Okinawa has certain driving lanes that at certain times only allow buses to use?

These bus lanes are those that can only be used by public buses during certain times of the day. And the penalty for violation can be 6,000-7,000 yen plus one or two points as demerit mark.

This law is an important one to know, and should be covered anytime someone is new to Okinawa. If you've been here for a while, you likely have heard of this many times.

There is nothing difficult about understanding the rule. To put it simply, it is a lane designated for buses, most likely the lane you would see on the far left. But it may require special attention to note an actual bus lane when you get behind the wheel.

Although some bus lanes are colored green, some are not. Drivers need to note what time of day it is, because the rule only applies certain times of the day – typically 7:30-9 a.m. in the morning and 5:30 – 7 p.m. in the evening.

- Shoji Kudaka

More on Okinawa's bus lanes

Guide to visiting a Japanese doctor

The thought of seeing a foreign doctor in a foreign country while navigating a foreign healthcare system can understandably leave Department of War (DOW) civilians and their families living and working in Japan in a state of worry.

No need to panic – whether you speak Japanese or not, the process of going to a Japanese hospital and/or clinic is very user-friendly, and depending on the type of treatment sought, can be financially cheaper than if you saw a competing physician in the U.S.

So, let us navigate together what a general visit to a Japanese healthcare provider experience might be like for a first-time, English-speaking client. If you follow the outline below, perhaps your confidence for seeking treatment off-installation will increase, and even increase your cultural understanding of our partners in The Land of the Rising Sun.

To begin with, most Japanese hospitals will see patients of all nationalities, and often offer support for non-Japanese-speaking clientele to some degree, so choosing which facility to visit often doesn't present much of a challenge. Once you've chosen your venue, it is just a matter of beginning the medical process.

Upon entering a Japanese hospital, you might find yourself overwhelmed by the size of the atrium, lack of familiar faces, or perhaps minimal English direction or guidance – that's natural, but like any other hospitals, your journey begins at the reception counter, which in Japanese is "uketsuke madoguchi" (受付窓口). If you see these symbols, you will be sure to be greeted with helpful staff members ready and willing to help in your appointment process.

Hazel Oira, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Japan Engineer District (USACE JED) administrative support assistant, was referred to nearby Kitasato University hospital, and explained the process for checking-in, and the support provided to her family.

"[Although the initial check-in process] took time, everything was fine," Oira said. "[The doctors, nurses, and staff] were how you would expect service in Japan."

Standard procedure for new clientele at Japanese hospitals and clinics is to fill-out a form asking for information such as your name "namae" (名前), birthdate "seinengappi" (生年月日), place of residence "jyuusho"(住所), contact number "renrakusaki" (連絡先), allergies "arerugi" (アレルギー), and brief medical history – much like you would fill-out at a hospital in the U.S.

However, like Oira experienced, checking-in for a first-time visit can take time, as referencing patient history, insurance coverage and potential military installations can cause delay, just like when you visit a clinic for the first time back home.

Regardless of whether a Japanese translator accompanies you, or you choose to use a translation application on your phone, often writing in English or even standard hiragana if you have been practicing Japanese, is enough for most facilities to understand your situation and point you in the right direction.

Once your pertinent details are provided to the reception counter, you may receive a waiting number. You will wait to be called to proceed to the next area and see the resident doctor, or as they say in Japan, "sensei" (先生).

It is important to note that, depending on your ailment or illness, the process for seeing a Japanese physician is one that involves multiple visits. Unless your stressor can be resolved with over-the-counter medication, the doctor will likely recommend a second, and sometimes third, visit, to see your recovery through until the end.

William Barlaan, JED's Operations Officer, explains his experience with multiple visits.

"When visiting a new provider, your first appointment generally does not deal with the issue right away," Barlaan said. "Additionally, if this is a re-occurring health issue, but it is your first time visiting a Japanese provider, they may want to do tests and other steps that meet Japanese medical requirements rather than just take the medical advice/documentation provided from U.S. physicians."

Once called to enter the private room of the attending doctor, they will review your previously written form and engage in conversation, asking you in-depth about your ailment. Questions such as "when did your symptoms begin," "are you currently taking medication," and "do you have any prior history of this particular problem," are all common inquiries just like in the states and can be navigated with a combination of English and translation assistance if necessary.

Japanese doctors in general understand foreign patients' uneasiness related to the language barrier, and as such, their bedside manner is usually accommodating, often involving a second or third nurse in attendance to help support the question-and-answer process.

For Caleb Dexter, USACE JED's strategic planner, the level of comfort and ease felt throughout his multiple visits to Japanese healthcare providers has come to be one facet of the experience he appreciates most.

"The staff [are] great – very patient, understanding, and attentive," Dexter relates. "Customer care is top-notch in Japanese hospitals."

HELPFUL TERMS

■ **At the hospital / clinic**
- Reception counter – uketsuke madoguchi / 受付窓口
- Waiting area – machiaijyo / 待合所
- Doctor – sensei / 先生

■ **Filling out the medical form**
- Name – namae / 名前
- Date of birth – seinengappi / 生年月日
- Address – jyuusho / 住所
- Phone number – renrakusaki / 連絡先
- Known allergies – arerugi / アレルギー

■ **Paying your bill**
- Receipt – ryoshusho / 領収書
- Detailed statement – meisaisho / 明細書
- Split payment – bunkatsubarai / 分割払い
- Credit card – kurejittokaado / クレジットカード

Off-base medical care

Late in 2022, the Defense Health Agency announced that DOW civilian employees in the Indo-Pacific region should plan for off-base medical care from a local provider in the event military hospitals lack the capacity to see them.

Health care providers at bases across Japan may schedule appointments for DOW civilians on space-available basis only, according to an announcement by U.S. Forces Japan.

Seeking a medical provider in Japan can be intimidating and difficult to navigate. Below are some resources to find recommended medical providers off-base. Always check with your insurance company to learn more about the type of services and coverage you can use overseas.

Tricare find a provider search tool- input your nearest base and it will provide local providers in your area.
https://www.tricare-overseas.com/beneficiaries/resources/provider-search

Japan Medical Service Accreditation for International Patients (JMIP) medical institution search tool
https://jmip.jme.or.jp/search.php?l=eng

Foreign Services Benefits Plan (Aetna/AFPSA)
https://www.afspa.org/fsbp/

Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Federal Employee Program
https://www.fepblue.org/

GEHA
https://www.geha.com/

Barlaan agrees.

"Generally, the patient's comfort is taken in mind when it comes to treatments, but provided on a, comparatively speaking, longer timeline and with dosages at a smaller scale than I was accustomed to in the U.S.," noted Barlaan.

"As an example, if I were expecting a quick, 'take this strong medicine and go back to work tomorrow' treatment, [in Japan], I might be surprised to hear the doctor telling me to take a couple extra days to recover and giving me a week's worth of medicine."

Following the inquiry process, the resident doctor will often provide a recommendation for a prescription to be obtained at a pharmacy near the hospital and will return you to the waiting area "machiaijyo" (待合所) where your payment process will then begin.

Paying the bill

Returning to the area where you first arrived, you will wait for the billing reception counter to announce your name so you can provide payment.

Thankfully, the price of healthcare in Japan is much, much lower than the price of healthcare in America, something that may surprise you when you see the total cost of your visit.

Many, if not all, Japanese hospitals accept most major credit cards as a form of payment, but in the case they do not, atriums will often contain several ATMs from which you can withdraw Japanese yen. Bills can be paid in one payment, or even be broken up into multiple payments, depending on your preference.

At this point you can ask for an itemized receipt for the services you received that day. This receipt can be turned in to your American health insurance company for reimbursement for the day's cost. The amount of reimbursement you might receive varies per insurer, so questions regarding insurance should be directed at your insurance company, not the medical facility.

When asking for an itemized receipt, please tell the reception desk "ryoshusho to meisaisho wo kudasai," and a definitively totaled receipt will be provided to you with all of the services rendered during your visit.

"At a military treatment facility, they send you a bill in the mail for services rendered," Dexter said, reflecting on the differences between the American and Japanese systems. "[Oftentimes in America] you have no idea what the amount will be. At Japanese clinics, you pay the bill on the way out."

Post-payment, your journey might have you follow-up with the physician at or send you to a nearby pharmacy, where your prescription will be waiting for you with a smiling face and simple instructions for use.

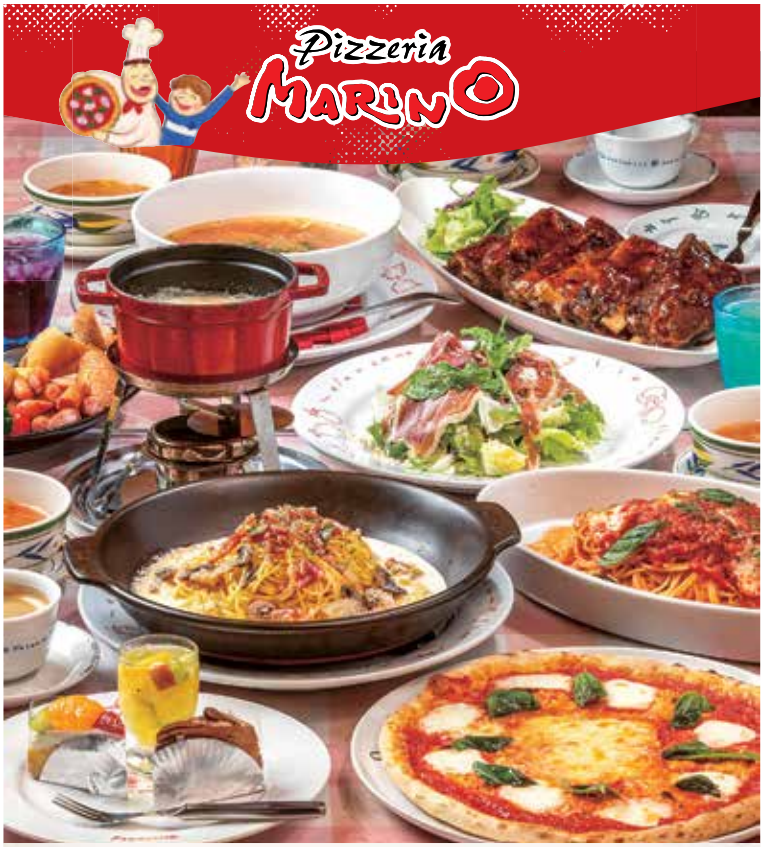
Making a visit to a Japanese healthcare provider might initially seem intimidating, but if you can put some of your fears aside and trust in the kindness of our Japanese neighbors, you might just find yourself frequenting off-installation healthcare facilities more often than you originally thought!

– Patrick Ciccarone,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Japan District

和風亭
Wafutei
Japanese Restaurant

Hamby Town Branch

Urasoe West Coast Parco City Branch



Gushikawa Main City Branch

Naha Main Place Branch

Urasoe West Coast Parco City Branch

大阪王将 Osaka Ohsho
Chinese Restaurant・Ramen・Gyoza・Fried Rice

Gushikawa Main City Branch
450-1, Esu, Uruma-shi, Okinawa

Naha Main Place Branch
4-4-9, Omoromachi, Naha-shi, Okinawa

Chatan Hamagawa Branch
1-37, Miyagi, Chatan-cho, Okinawa

Ginowan Convention City Branch
3-6-1, Uchidomari, Ginowan-shi, Okinawa

Owan City Branch
343, Owan, Yomitan-son, Okinawa

Parco City Branch
3-1-1, Irijima, Urasoe-shi, Okinawa

Ishikawa City Branch
2521-1, Ishikawa, Uruma-shi, Okinawa

とんかつ職人 かつ乃屋
Katsunoya
Pork Cutlet

Naha Main Place Branch

Urasoe West Coast Parco City Branch

Okinawa

Okinawa

A TASTE of JAPAN

Yokosuka

Misawa

Get a taste of Japanese cuisine

What is Japan's favorite food?

Japan has been cooking for thousands of years. As an island nation, it tends to go its own way. As a result, Japanese food evolved into a unique culinary tradition. Beyond tradition, Japanese food is a living part of the culture. It's always growing which has led to countless Japanese dishes.

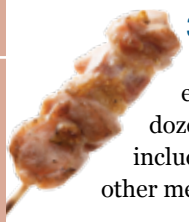
The following are a few foods that all Japanese know well.

1. Makizushi

Makizushi is sushi that's rolled into long cylinders. It may be cut into shorter pieces before being served. The word makizushi can be translated "sushi roll." It's often simply called maki. It usually has nori on the outside but can also be wrapped with leaves such as shiso. Maki is filled with sushi rice and ingredients such as raw fish, cooked fish and vegetables.

2. Miso soup

In Japan, miso soup is as important to breakfast as coffee. It's a hearty soup of dashi, miso and tofu. It often includes a variety of vegetables, seafood and meat. A good miso soup balances ingredients that float with ingredients that sink.



3. Yakitori

Yakitori can be literally translated "grilled chicken." It's a category of Japanese cuisine that includes dozens of items that are grilled on thin bamboo skewers, including every imaginable part of the chicken as well as other meats, tofu and vegetables.

4. Tempura

Tempura is deep fried fish and vegetables in a light batter. Care is taken to cook tempura at a low temperature for a short time to preserve the taste of ingredients. It's served with a light tentsuyu dip.

5. Edamame

Young soybeans cooked in their pod in salty water. Most restaurants serve frozen edamame, but they taste infinitely better fresh from the farm.

6. Ramen

Hot Chinese-style wheat noodles in a meat, fish, miso or soy sauce broth. It's an inexpensive, filling, easy-to-find meal. Despite the fact that ramen is cheap, there's a big difference in quality from one shop to the next. A shop that earns a reputation amongst ramen aficionados will regularly have long lines, while a shop just next door may be empty.

7. Mochi

A sticky variety of Japanese rice known as mochigome that has been pounded into a paste, toasted and eaten directly. It's also used in a variety of Japanese dishes and desserts.

8. Okonomiyaki

A type of savory Japanese pancake that was traditionally prepared to use up leftovers. Okonomiyaki restaurants let you customize your order, and in many cases, you can cook your own. There's an intense okonomiyaki rivalry between Osaka, Tokyo and Hiroshima.

9. Sashimi

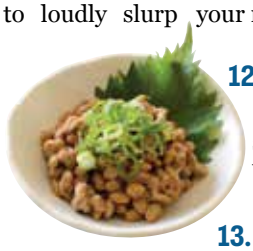
Raw sliced fish or meat. Freshness and aesthetics are important to sashimi dishes. Otherwise, it's just chunks of fish.

10. Oden

Oden is a Japanese hotpot that is ordered item-by-item. It's a popular street food, konbini food, winter food and drinking food.

11. Soba

Thin Japanese buckwheat noodles served chilled with a dipping sauce or in a hot broth. Whichever you choose, it's perfectly polite to loudly slurp your noodles.



12. Natto

A type of fermented soybean. It's stinky and slimy with a challenging taste, but Japan likes it anyway.

13. Onigiri

Onigiri is any rice that's designed to be eaten by hand. It's the Japanese equivalent of the sandwich.

14. Japanese curry rice

A Japanese curry that's based on British Navy Curry. The curry spread from the navy to Japan's civilian population in the Meiji-era. Over the years, it has adapted to local tastes. It's incredibly bland for a curry. Nevertheless, it has become one of Japan's most popular dishes.

15. Udon

Thick wheat flour noodles served hot in a soup, or chilled with a dipping sauce of dashi, mirin and shoyu. Udon is a staple of the Japanese diet and is easy to find in Japan. It's a somewhat thick noodle that's served with dozens of different toppings, including tempura, meat, tofu, seafood or vegetables.

See TASTE on Page 70

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Daigakuimo

When it comes to the food college students consume, your thoughts may immediately go to instant ramen or a number of unhealthy snacks. But, during Japan's economic recession in 1927, college students at Tokyo University were making do with a simple, flavorful, fried and glazed sweet potato dish called daigakuimo.

Tasty kabocha korokke

Kabocha korokke, a fried delight made with kabocha pumpkin, is a common and very popular bento meal item. You'll find this in many schoolchildren's lunch boxes when autumn arrives as it's a great way for moms to get their kids to eat more veggies.

Okinawa's famous Hirayachi

"Hirayachi" means "baked flat" in Okinawan dialect. And though this savory pancake might look like a thin crust pizza, it is a bit different than that. Hirayachi consists of flour, grated mountain yam, vegetables, and seafood and has a light flavor with little greasiness. It's usually dipped into ponzu or Worcester sauces which up the salty tanginess of this pancake.

Okinawan doughnuts

Sata Andagi is an Okinawan donut that is commonly cooked at home. Meaning "deep-fried sugar," Sata Andagi is a local favorite often served up during special occasions.

It's festival time with takoyaki

If you have attended a festival in mainland Japan or Okinawa, you may have tried takoyaki. This ball of batter with chopped octopus inside is a beloved comfort food of Osaka, and a popular festival food nationwide.

Japanese sweet kantan jelly recipe

Back in the Edo times, it may have taken a lot of time and effort to create kanten from red algae, but these days konakanten, powdered kanten, saves us time. Konakanten is mixed with water and milk and once set with fruit, creates a photogenic food which has recently become a popular sweet to cook at home.

TASTE continued from Page 68

16. Kaiseki

Kaiseki is a type of multicourse Japanese meal. It's fine cuisine that can include 5-16 courses. Each course is small and aesthetically pleasing with seasonal ingredients. Kaiseki is the creation of a chef, so there are no standard kaiseki dishes. Instead there are categories of dishes are are traditionally served.

17. Yakiniku

Yakiniku, literally "grilled meat," is Japanese- style barbecue. Yakiniku restaurants typically feature a coal grill built into the table. You order from a selection of bite-sized raw meats and vegetable plates and you cook the food yourself. If you're not skilled at grilling, you may accidentally cause a great deal of smoke and flame, which the staff may help you put out. Yakiniku restaurants are the smokiest places in Japan.

18. Takoyaki

Ball-shaped savory Japanese pancakes with a piece of octopus in the middle. Optionally topped with beni shoga, katsuobushi, nori flakes, mayonnaise and takoyaki sauce, a sweet soy sauce based condiment.

19. Yuba

Yuba is Japanese tofu skin. It can be enjoyed raw with a light dipping sauce. Fresh yuba has a texture that's similar to mozzarella cheese.

20. Chirashizushi

Chirashizushi, literally "scattered sushi," is a bowl of sushi rice with ingredients such as raw fish, shredded egg, nori and shiso on top.

21. Himono

Himono is the Japanese word for sun-dried fish. It's grilled and served for breakfast at home or at hotel breakfasts. It's also served at izakaya as a nighttime treat. It's salty and chewy.

22. Dango

Dango are a type of Japanese dumpling that are usually served on a stick. They have a chewy texture similar to mochi. Dango are made from mochiko: a rice flour that's used to make chewy stuff. They are normally served with a sweet topping such as anko or kinako. Another variation known as Mitarashi Dango has a thick savory-sweet glaze with a soy sauce base. These are amongst the stickiest of all Japanese snacks and are a little tricky to eat.

– John Spacey

Speakin' Japanese — Let's get cookin'

I'm hungry! = Onakaga suita! お腹が空いた！
Oh-nah-cah gah sweet-ah

What should we cook today? = Kyowa naniwo tsukuri mashoka? 今日は何を作りましょうか？
Kee-oh wah nanny-woe zoo-curry mash-show-kah

I would like to try making _____ (okonomiyaki, bread, Okinawa doughnuts).
= _____(okonomiyaki, pan, okinawa doonattsu) wo tsukutte mitai desu.
_____（お好み焼き、パン、沖縄ドーナッツ）を作ってみたいです。
_____ (oh-coe-no-me-yacky, paw-n, oh-kee-nah-wah doh-gnat-zoo) woe zoo-coo-the me-thai deh-sue

Let's go to the grocery store first. = Mazu suupaa ni kaimononi ikimasho.
まずスーパーに買い物に行きましょう。
Mass-zoo soup-ah knee kay-moe-no-knee icky-mash-show

Do you have a shopping list? = Kaimonorisuto wa mochiimashita ka?
買い物リストは持ちましたか？
Kay-moe-no-reese-suit-oh wah moe-chee-mash-tah

Do you have a point card? = Pointocaado wa motteimasu ka?
ポイントカードは持っていますか？
Point-oh-cad-oh wah moat-a-mask-uh

Would you like a bag for your groceries? = Kaimono wo ireru fukuro wa irimasuka? 買物を入れる袋はいりますか？
Kay-moe-no woe I-rare-oo foo-coo-row wah eerie-mask-uh

Flour = komugiko 小麦粉
comb-oogie-coe

Milk = gyuunyuu 牛乳
ghee-yoon-you

Eggs = tamago 卵（玉子）
tam-ah-go

Bread = pan パン
paw-n

Garlic = ninniku にんにく
knee-knee-coo

Onion = tamanegi 玉ねぎ
tam-ah-neg-ee

Tomato = tomato トマト
toe-mat-toe

Vegetables = yasai 野菜
yeah-sigh

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Joining the AFN Family

From a young age, I've always loved to entertain. I enjoy talking with people, listening to their stories, and sharing those stories with the world. Early on, I even aspired to create a commercial that would premiere during the Super Bowl. After graduating high school, I studied TV and radio production at a local community college, but at the time lacked the drive to pursue a career in the field.

Following a short battle with cancer, remission, and a weight loss of more than 130 pounds, I decided to join the military. During processing, recruiters noticed my associate's degree in TV and radio production and believed I would be a perfect fit for the broadcast journalism career field.

My first assignment was in a Public Affairs shop at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D. While there, I learned about the AFN mission through my technical school peers. I was amazed to discover that part of our career field involves interviewing base leaders, key agencies, and even traveling celebrities — sharing their stories with audiences around the world.

My first personal experience with AFN came during my initial assignment in South Korea. Living off base, access to live sports and familiar television programming was essential in helping me stay grounded so far from home. With my decoder set up, I watched 2 a.m. Philadelphia Eagles kickoffs and continued cheering on my other Philadelphia sports teams.

For most viewers, commercials are simply a snack break—but for me, they became an invaluable source of information. AFN programming uniquely combines marquee sports and television events with command messaging and safety information, reaching Department of War personnel across the INDOPACOM area of responsibility.

When AFN Go was released, it made life during my Korea assignments even easier. The app allowed listeners to tune in without a traditional radio, offering channels dedicated to sports, news and specialized music programming.

During my second assignment in Korea, AFN expanded its digital offerings even further with live and video-on-demand television programming and movies with the AFN Now app. Suddenly, I could watch live or on-demand broadcasts of the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, UFC and more — anytime, anywhere.

Now, as the AFN Tokyo Station Manager at Yokota Air Base in Japan, my dream of creating that Super Bowl commercial came true when I saw spot that I helped produce air during Super Bowl 58. Ever since, I constantly encouraged people to download AFN Go and AFN Now for free from Google Play or the Apple App Store, or to visit MyAFN.dodmedia.osd.mil. The MyAFN website provides program schedules, answers to frequently asked questions, access to streaming radio and television and even podcasts.

AFN PACIFIC

We at AFN are very personal media, maybe the most personal media. Whether in your car, home, office and really anywhere in Asia, AFN is there with you. Wherever you are stationed in the Pacific, you can always count on our AFN Pacific station managers and radio DJs to remain the gold standard by being engaged with local communities and connected to their audiences. The AFN Pacific team is proud to deliver the world's most deserving audience the very best in entertainment, news and sports.

As AFN continues to evolve, we encourage you to help us better meet your needs by providing feedback. Visit MyAFN.dodmedia.osd.mil and click the "Contact Us" tab to share your thoughts, access TV and radio schedules, and stay up to date on programming changes.

As always, AFN is here for you.

– Master Sgt. Timothy Dischinat, AFN Tokyo Station Manager

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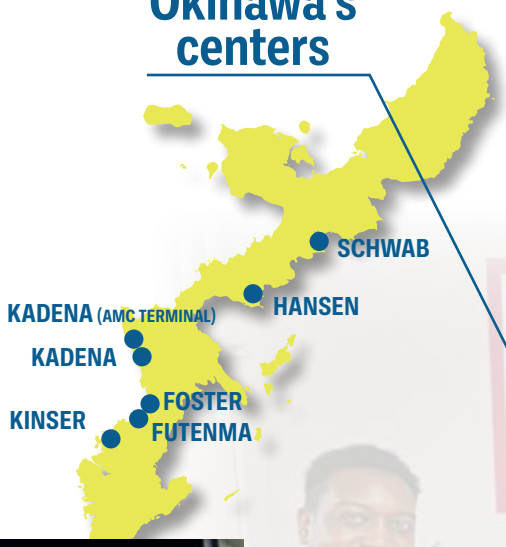
Okinawa's centers



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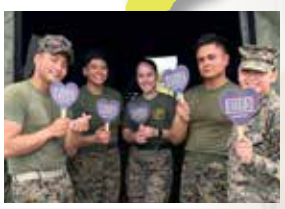

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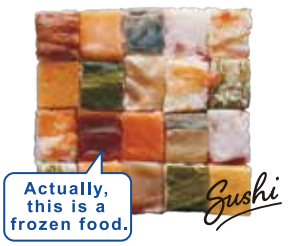

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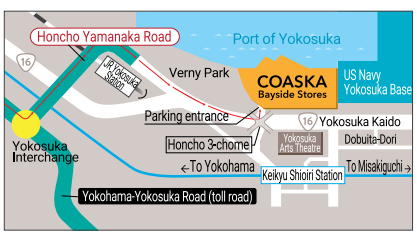

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Okinawa Kingyo Museum, Naha, Okinawa, Japan.
Photo by Wymeah Martinez

Don't miss out on these Okinawa musts

Okinawa may not be the biggest island, but it sure has a long list of fun things to do. Sometimes, though, you just need to know where to go. Here is a look at some of the island's highlights. Let the adventure begin!

LOCAL FESTIVALS

Naha Dragon Boat Race

The major event in May draws around 200,000 people every year. Each heat features three teams that sail side-by-side for 2,000 feet. Rowers' stamina, teamwork and ability to make a smooth turn makes a difference between winners and losers in this physically challenging race. Among the many matchups scheduled for the event, the rivalry among men's and women's teams from the four service branches of the U.S. military attract much of the attention.

Naha Tug-of-War

This event is huge – literally. Known for it is exceptional scale, the giant rope of the event was recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest rice straw rope used in a tug-of-war. Annually, 280,000 Okinawans, Americans, and tourists show up and either pull the rope or root for one side or the other.

Shuri Castle Festival

The age of the Ryukyu Kingdom is brought back to life in this autumn event. Traditional ceremonies, parades, and dance/music performances are presented with authentic costumes at Shuri Castle. At night, the venue is illuminated with candles.

Eisa and beer festivals

From August through September, many festivals take place that present Eisa, an Okinawan style of dance. Choreographed dancers perform as a group to audiences at a venue, or march through local communities with their drumbeats marking the season of the dance. The Okinawa Zento Eisa Matsuri, the biggest among all the Eisa festivals on the island, is now combined with a beer festival.

Cherry blossom festivals

In Okinawa, cherry blossoms begin blooming in late January. The early bloomers draw many people at places such as Yaedake Mountain, Nakijin Castle and Nago Chuo Park. Unlike those on the mainland, the petals on Okinawa don't dance in the wind, but their vibrant pink color still dazzle countless visitors.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Marathons

On Okinawa, many marathons take place from fall through spring. Each race provides unique challenges and attractions. In Ayahashi Kaichu Road Race, runners will hop around islands as they cross bridges overlooking the water. There is also Iheya Moonlight Marathon where runners can enjoy different scenes from sunset well into the night. Naha Marathon is a very popular among runners.

Snorkeling/diving

There are many diving/snorkeling spots in Okinawa. At Sunabe Seawall, people can enjoy spotting colorful tropical fish and soft coral. At Cape Maeda, a stunning view of the Blue Grotto welcomes divers and snorkelers. If you travel to Kerama Islands, you can even swim with sea turtles.

Beaches

Beaches in Okinawa offer all sorts of fun. Water obstacles at Manza Beach draw many Japanese and American kids during the summer. At Kin Sunrise Beach, people can enjoy new water activities such as wakeboarding and sea kayaking. Some military facilities have beautiful beaches on site. On White Beach, there are cabins and pavilions lined up along the coast for parties on the beach. At Torii Beach, people can enjoy

Places for kids

Round 1 Stadium is an amusement center where kids can enjoy various arcade games, bowling, karaoke, batting cages and more. At **Kukuru Yomitan Circuit**, kids can get behind the wheel of a go-kart. At **Bios on the Hill**, they can have fun with eco-friendly attractions such as riding a water buffalo cart and playing with goats and pigs.

water activities such as ocean kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding. Kadena Marina is home to many water activities such as scuba diving, jet skiing and sailing. Plus, the beautiful Okuma Beach is a perfect destination for a getaway.

Trekking/hiking

There are places in Okinawa where people can enjoy trekking/hiking in the northern part of the island. At Mt. Yonahadake or Mt. Katsuu, routes are well maintained for mountain climbers. At Daisekirinzan, people can see unique rock formations or tropical trees and plants. Around Hiji Falls, there is camping area as well as a route for trekking.

Theme parks

Although Okinawa may not have Disneyland or Universal Studios, there are theme parks that offer unique fun. At Expo Park, you can watch dolphins pull off acrobatic stunts or a large whale shark swim in a giant water tank. At Okinawa World, people can explore caves like a spelunker or catch a habu snake show at Habu Museum Park. At Doki Doki Yambarunture, an exhilarating ride on an ATV is available. Okinawa Zoo & Museum near Kadena Air Base has 150 kinds of animals and creatures. There's also Forest Adventure, a zip-line park in Onna Village, and Junglia, a new theme park in Nakijin Village and Nago City.

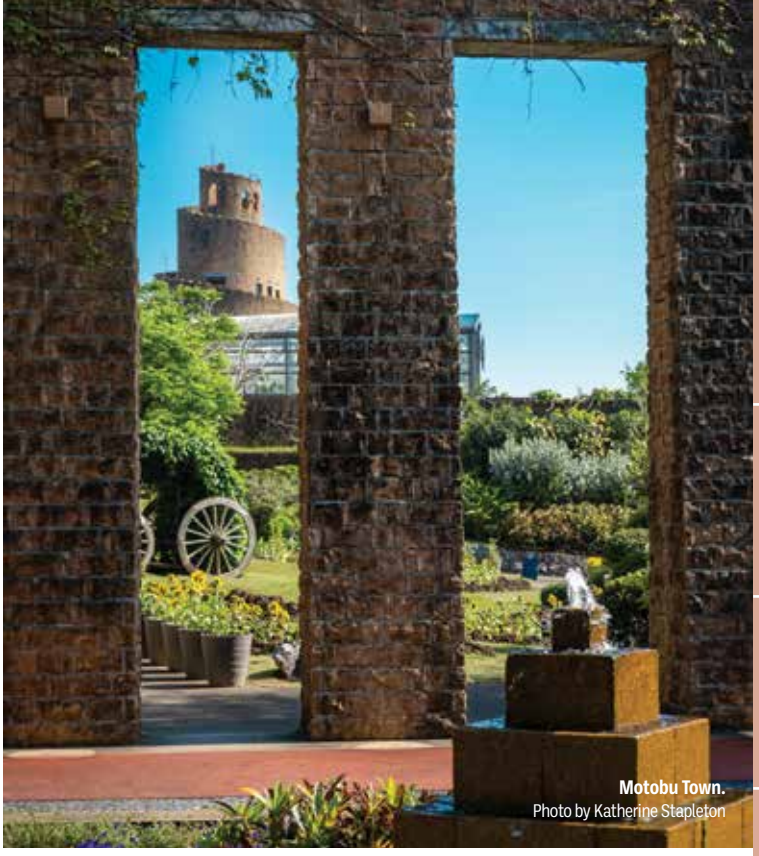
Cultural sites

Places like Nakagusuku and Katsuren Castles offers an opportunity to learn the history of the Ryukyu Kingdom. At Tsuboya Pottery Street or Yomitan Pottery Village, view and purchase some of the signature products of Okinawa. There are opportunities to see craftsmen working on their pottery, or even get hands-on experience. Places like Okinawa Peace Memorial Park, Hacksaw Ridge (Urasoe Castle Ruins) or the Former Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters provide learning opportunities about the Battle of Okinawa.

SHOPPING & DINING

Shopping areas and a big mall

AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom near the Plaza Housing Area is one of the biggest shopping malls on the island. This is the place to go if you are looking for U.S. brands such as Ray-Ban or the Gap. Parco City near Camp Kinser is another large shopping mall, which houses brands such as H&M and ZARA. Kokusai Street in Naha is crowed with tourists looking for local souvenirs and foods. Heiwa Dori off of Kokusai Street is also popular with many shops lined up in a maze-like arcade. American Village near Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base offers all sorts of different dining experiences. iias Okinawa and Ashibinaa shopping malls near Naha Airport are popular among tourists.



Motobu Town.
Photo by Katherine Stapleton

Noodle joints

Okinawa soba noodles are one of the popular foods that the prefecture proudly presents. There are countless places where you can enjoy them. Chiruguwa Mihama and Hamaya are notable soba joints near Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base. There are many ramen noodle restaurants on the island, as well.

Chain ramen restaurants such as Tenkaippin or Hayatemauru are popular among servicemembers.

Steak houses

Okinawans love steak. And because of that, there are many steak houses on the island. Jack's Steak House serves up one of the rarest steaks you'll find on the island. SAM's restaurants are very popular for sirloin steak, and Four Seasons near Kadena Air Base is popular among servicemembers.

Old American brand

On Okinawa, there are many examples of "good 'ol America." One example of that is A&W restaurants. While it is becoming difficult to find them in the States, there are 24 of them in Okinawa. Some even feature carhops bringing food to your vehicle. Foremost Blue Seal Ice Cream is another example of "born in America, raised in Okinawa." The ice cream maker was originally established by USA-based Foremost Ltd. Now, the ice cream maker is recognized in Okinawa as a major brand along with Baskin Robbins.

– Shoji Kudaka

Yubu Island.
Photo by Brigit Hendrix

A whole day of fun for everyone

Ocean Expo Park

Located on the beautiful west coast of the Motobu Peninsula, Ocean Expo Park is home to such major tourist attractions as Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium and Tropical Dream Center, featuring an exhibition of approximately 2,000 orchids, as well as Tropical & Subtropical Arboretum, Native Okinawan Village and Oceanic Culture Museum with its planetarium. Also located on the grounds are the sea turtle and manatee pools, Dolphin Lagoon, and Oki-chan Theater, where a group of lovable dolphins perform a spectacular show for visitors.

Ocean Expo Park Map

1 Sea Turtle Pool
2 Manatee Pool
3 Dolphin Lagoon
4 Park Information Center (Haisai Plaza)
5 Tropical & Subtropical Arboretum
6 Main Rest House (Churaumi Plaza)

A Tropical Dream Center

Exotic botanical garden

Featuring over 2,000 orchids displayed throughout the year in three individual greenhouses, the vast six-hectare grounds of Tropical Dream Center include the Cloister Gallery, the Observatory Tower, the Fruit Tree Greenhouse and the Victoria Greenhouse, all of which welcome visitors into a tranquil setting in which they are surrounded by beautiful, fragrant flowers and exotic fruits and plants. Visitors can borrow an audio guide for free at the counter located in the entrance hall.

Hours : October-February 8:30-17:30 *Last entry 17:00; March-September 8:30-19:00 *Last entry 18:30
Admission: ¥760 for high school students and up, free for junior high school students and under

B Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium)

Experience one of Okinawa's largest planetariums

The Oceanic Culture Museum features a planetarium that allows you to explore the night sky with millions of twinkling stars and an exhibition through which you can learn how the ocean plays an important role in people's lives in the Pacific Ocean area including Okinawa.

Hours : October-February 8:30-17:30 *Last entry 17:00; March-September 8:30-19:00 *Last entry 18:30
Admission: ¥190 for high school students and up; free for junior high school students and under

*The following planetarium shows can be enjoyed in English:
"The Great Voyage of Roy and His Friends"
"Okinawa's Chura Bushi" (Beautiful Stars)

C Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Okinawa's No.1 tourist attraction

Internationally renowned as the keeper of gigantic whale sharks and various other fish species visitors can observe through a massive acrylic panel, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is a must-see when you visit Okinawa. Divided into three distinct sections showcasing the coral reef, Kuroshio (Black Current), and the deep sea, the painstakingly designed exhibits create a natural ocean environment in the aquarium. It will take visitors on a virtual dive, starting from a coral reef lagoon and descending 700 meters to the deep-sea world.
To enjoy at your leisure these much-in-demand exhibitions of marine life entry towards evening is recommended to avoid crowds in the aquarium.

Hours: 8:30-18:30 *Last entry 17:30
Admission: ¥2,180 for adults, ¥1,440 for high school students, ¥710 for elementary and junior high school students, free for children under 6. Annual passport: ¥4,360 for adults, ¥2,880 for high school students, ¥1,420 for elementary and junior high school students
*Bussiness hours may be extended during certain periods. Please check the official website.

D Dolphin Show

Making the most of the dolphins' superior athletic ability, the false killer whales and bottlenose dolphins put on an entertaining show. Dolphin ecology and their abilities are also explained.
*Dolphin shows are held at the Dolphin Lagoon.

Admission: Free
Dolphin show (approximately 15 min): 10:30, 11:30, 13:00, 15:00, 17:00

E Native Okinawa Village

Get a taste of old Okinawa

This is the re-creation of an old community of the 17-19th centuries where visitors can explore traditional houses and high-floored storehouses, get a glimpse into the old-fashioned lifestyle of Okinawa. Audio announcements in English are set up in each house.

Hours: October-February 8:30-17:30; March-September 8:30-19:00 / Admission: Free

海洋博公園
OCEAN EXPO PARK

For more information

Ocean Expo Park Management Center
424 Ishikawa, Motobu-cho, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-0206
Tel: 0980-48-2741 Fax: 0980-48-3339

https://oki-park.jp/kaiyohaku/en
Hours: October-February 8:00-18:00; March-September 8:00-19:30

Tropical Dream Center

Admission Fees	General	Group (20 or more)
Adult / high school	760yen	550yen
Junior high / elementary	Free	

8:30-17:30 (Oct.-Feb.) 8:30-19:00 (Mar.-Sep.)

Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium)

Admission Fees	General	Group (20 or more)
Adult / high school	190yen	80yen
Junior high / elementary	Free	

8:30-17:30 (Oct.-Feb.) 8:30-19:00 (Mar.-Sep.)

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Admission Fees

	General	Group (20 or more)	Annual Passport
Adult	2,180yen	1,730yen	4,360yen
High school	1,440yen	1,140yen	2,880yen
Junior high / elementary	710yen	560yen	1,420yen
Under 6 years old	Admission free		-

- Admission is free for children under 6.
- School groups are eligible for discount. For elementary / junior high / high school activities only. Applications must be made in advance.
- Persons who are designated as physically or mentally disabled are eligible for free admission. Please show your certificate at the ticket counter. Escort (1 person only) is also admitted for free.
- Annual Passport holders can enter Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium as many times as they like for 12 months.

Open Hours

	Open	Last admission	Close
Normal period	8:30	17:30	18:30

*Bussiness hours may be extended during certain periods. Please check the official website.

- Ocean Expo Park opens at 8:00.
- No Food or Drink inside.
- No Smoking inside.
- No Pets inside (Except for guide and service dogs).

海洋博公園
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8:00-18:00 (Oct.-Feb.) / 8:00-19:30 (Mar.-Sep.)

1 Oki-chan Theater
2 Sea Turtle Pool
3 Manatee Pool
4 Dolphin Lagoon
5 Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium
6 Park Information Center (Haisai Plaza)
7 Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium)
8 Native Okinawa Village
9 Emerald Beach
10 Tropical Dream Center
11 Tropical & Subtropical Arboretum
12 Main Rest House (Churaumi Plaza)

Hokokuji Temple, Kamakura.
Background photo by Gabriela Irwin

Japan at a glance

There are so many places worth seeing while you're stationed in Japan. To fit them all in this space would be impossible. So, here's a look at some of the most popular cities to visit while on the mainland and Okinawa, and a few of the hotspots within Tokyo.

Kyoto

The former capital of Japan, countless tourists visit the city to enjoy numerous temples, shrines and traditional houses. **Kiyomizu Temple**, **Gold Pavilion** and **Arashiyama** district are some of the top attractions. If you are lucky, you might see **maiko dancers** in traditional attire strolling **Gion** or **Yasaka** district.

Bullet train to Kyoto (Video)

Virtual vacation: Kyoto (Video)

Hiroshima

Often called the City of Water, six large rivers flow through the center of Hiroshima, which has countless bridges, fountains and water monuments. Hiroshima, of course, will always be remembered as the first city to have the atomic bomb dropped on it. **Peace Memorial Park**, **Hiroshima Castle**, along with **Itsukushima Shrine** on **Miyajima Island** are must-see attractions.

Japan's City of Water praying for peace

Virtual Vacation: Hiroshima (Video)

Nagasaki

The peaceful port city of hills filled with Western-style buildings is often called "the San Francisco of Japan." It is the first port to open to the world after the nation's closed-door policy, and is the city that met atomic devastation alongside Hiroshima. **Ooura Catholic Church**, **Glover Garden** and **Chinatown** are some of the popular attractions.

Osaka.
Photo by Chris Chandler

Osaka

The largest city in the Western part of Japan functions as a business and commerce hub. It was the nation's former capital for brief times in the seventh and eighth centuries. **Osaka Castle**, **Dotonbori Street** and **Universal Studios Japan** are popular attractions. The city offers various tasty foods, including takoyaki (octopus ball) and kushikatsu (deep fried pork cutlet and onion).

Virtual Vacation: Osaka (Video)

OKINAWA

Matsuyama

The largest city in the mainland of Shikoku offers various tourist attractions, including the magnificent **Matsuyama Castle** and Japan's oldest **Doogo Onsen** hot spring. You can enjoy your soak in the hot spring at a 130-year-old wooden public bathhouse. Shikoku region is famous for the pilgrimage to the **Eighty-Eight Sacred Temples**.

Niigata

Facing the Sea of Japan, the city is a relaxed elegant port town with traditional streets, famed sake breweries and quaint attractions that draw about 17 million tourists annually. A bullet train connects it to Tokyo via a two-hour commute. The 1,000-foot-long, six-arched **Bandai Bridge** over Shinano River is the city's de facto logo.

Northern Honshu's biggest city

Virtual Vacation: Niigata (Video)

TOKYO

Virtual Vacation: Miyagi Prefecture (Video)

Sendai

Zelkova trees line the central streets of Sendai, which is often referred to as the City of Trees. The city offers various tourist attractions, including **Sendai Castle**, Rinnoji Temple and the **Matsushima Gulf** with its 260 pine islands. While the lines of trees are decorated with thousands of lights for the Pageant of **Starlight** during wintertime, **Tanabata** (star festival) is celebrated with colorful street decorations in mid-summer.

Photo by Stefanie Lynn Casacelli-Hendra

Virtual Vacation: Kamakura (Video)

Kamakura

The city is home to magnificent **Big Buddha** and various prestigious shrines and temples. Since it is located only 31 miles southwest of Tokyo, it offers great one-day sightseeing destination. Kamakura offers surfing and other marine sports on the beaches, as well.

Yokohama

The second largest city in Japan, Yokohama is a nice day-trip for many installations in the Kanto Plain. With a beautiful bay area, the city has plenty of picturesque views to go along with attractions that include: **Chinatown**, **Cup Noodle Museum**, **Red Brick Warehouse** and a giant **Ferris wheel**.

5 places to check out in Yokohama

Virtual Vacation: Yokohama (Video)

Yokohama.
Photo by Chris Chandler

Sapporo

Since it hosted the winter Olympics in 1972, the capital of northern mainland of Hokkaido is known as the center of winter sports. The **Snow Festival** in February, which features giant sculptures carved from packed snow, draws more than 2 million tourists from all over the world. The city is home to **Sapporo Brewery**, miso-based ramen noodles and tasty Mongolian BBQ restaurants.

Virtual vacation: Sapporo (Video)

Tokyo Tower, Tokyo, Japan.
Photo by Wymeah Martinez

Tokyo

7 Ginza
Known for its luxury shopping, all the top stores can be found here.

Check out 'Ginbura' in Ginza

6 Odaiba
An artificial island in Tokyo Bay is full of entertainment and views of the water.

5 Asakusa
A traditional district of Tokyo with lots of tourists, food and a giant shrine and temple.

Tokyo's River Walk

1 Shinjuku
A very busy part of Tokyo full of skyscrapers and the world's busiest train station.

Shinjuku: A walk in the sky

Virtual Vacation: Shibuya
(Video)

2 Harajuku
Home to the Meiji Shrine with countless boutiques and cafes along the main Takeshita-dori Street, once a sanctuary for local teenagers.

3 Shibuya
Home to iconic Shibuya crossing, Shibuya is a top stop along the Yamanote Line.

4 Roppongi
The trendy area has many shops and eateries and is the main entertainment district of Tokyo.

New Sanno, Hardy Barracks great options in Tokyo

TOKYO

OKINAWA

Kunigami Hedo.
Photo by Marco

1 Naha
The most populated city in Okinawa has many shopping areas and tourist spots. Kokusai Street, the city's main street, is lined with many souvenir shops, old markets and night life spots. Many festivities take place in this capital of Okinawa.

Shuri Castle

Pottery Street
(Video)

2 Nago
A gateway to the north, Nago is known for its large forest and beautiful beaches. The city hosts many unique attractions such as Pineapple Park, Underwater Observatory, Sweets Palace, and a brewery.

Mt. Nago

Beryl the Ride
(Video)

7 Onna Village
This is a popular tourist destination on the west coast with many resort hotels. The village also has many beautiful beaches, a zipline park, craft shops that offer hands-on experience, and more.

Forest Adventure (Ziplining)

A crafty day in Okinawa

8 Ishigaki
This remote island with beautiful nature is a one-hour flight from Naha. Among its many natural attractions such as a river with mangroves, Sunset Beach and a limestone cave, Kabira Bay would be the most famous for its iconic view. Ishigaki beef, a signature brand of the island, is popular across the country.

Virtual Vacation: Ishigaki Island
(Video)

3 Motobu
This town in a large peninsula in the northern area is rich in nature. Churaumi Aquarium and Ocean Expo Park are two of the most popular tourist spots in Okinawa.

Bisezaki
(Video)

Floating Fisherman

4 Chatan
The host municipality of Camp Foster and Camp Lester has many shops and restaurants along the coast. American Village in Mihama, and Seawall Street are popular among servicemembers.

Sweet Sounds (Sanshin story)

Five Star Deli

5 Yomitan
The host municipality of Torii Station is known for many attractions and relaxing atmosphere. It is easily accessible from Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base making it a great destination for a quick getaway.

Happy Surfing Okinawa

Yachimun no Sato

6 Higashi Village
This village on the northeastern coast attracts many tourists who look to enjoy nature. Among the many attractions that it has to offer, Azalea Festival, Matayoshi Coffee Farm, and ATV ride are some of the notable ones.

ATV

Mangrove and beach

Nagoya Castle in Japan.
Photo by Wymeah Martinez

Virtual Vacation

Travel around mainland Japan, Okinawa and across Asia!

Hakone

Head to Hakone for some fresh mountain air, seasonal flowers and crystal blue waters. The Mt. Daikanzan parking area on the top of turnpike is a great stop to make for a splendid view of majestic Mt. Fuji and the impressive Hakone Mountain Range. Hakone is an onsen haven with great views, great art and many cultural points of interest, which makes the area a short, great getaway.

Yamaguchi

Known for countless historical buildings and natural beauty, Yamaguchi is a top-notch attraction. Here you'll find unique samurai heritage, numerous Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, along with an otherworldly karst plateau and limestone cave, which make Yamaguchi a great getaway.

Kuroishi City

Situated at the north end of Honshu and a 2-hour drive from Misawa Air Base, Kuroishi City is home to impressive streets filled in traditional wooden arcades and local craft art museums. The area also offers lush forests and a wonderful view of Mt. Hakkoda. A great place up north for a daytrip.

Gokayama & Shirakawago

Both Gokayama and Shirakawago are recognized as World Heritage Sites. Here you'll see farmhouses shaped like "hands-in-prayer" dotted along the pristine rural landscape. We'll check out must-see spots like Ainokura Village, Ogimachi Village and Gujo Hachiman City to learn more about this beautiful place.

Hokuriku

Elegant townscapes with traditional town and farmhouses, numerous traditional gardens, breathtaking natural beauty, high-quality crafts and delectable gastronomy make Hokuriku a top-notch attraction and a great getaway.

Yonaguni

Known as the western-most island of Japan, Yonaguni Island has plenty of nature, culture, activities, and food for those looking for a vacation long away from home. We'll stop at Agarizai Cape, Rokujo beach and Tategami-iwa, a 30-meter monolith and symbol of the island.

Iriomote Island

To get here, hop on a flight then a ferry ride from mainland Japan. Or, if you're stationed on Okinawa, a short flight and a ferry ride from Naha will get you there. Despite the distance, Iriomote Island has plenty of nature, culture, activities, and food for those looking for a getaway that's out of the ordinary.

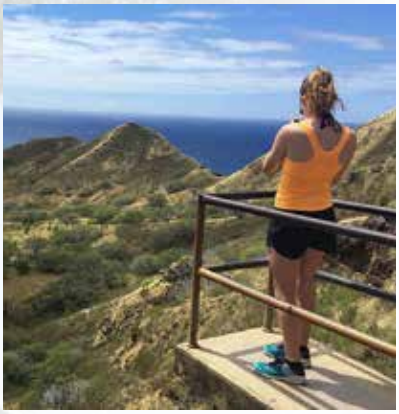
Amami Oshima

With beautiful nature and pristine beaches, Amami Oshima is an island paradise worth visiting. From Tokyo, it takes a 2.5-hour flight go get to this remote island between Okinawa's main island and Kagoshima's mainland. From Naha, you can take either a one-hour flight or a 14-hour ferry ride. Explore Ayamaru Misaki Cape, Tsuchimori Kaigan beach and head to Kinsakubaru Genseirin for a canoe ride under the mangrove trees.

Miyako Island

Here's another great island to add to your Okinawa bucket list! On our virtual trip, we'll explore Sunayama Beach, Higashihennazaki Cape, Irabu-Ohashi Bridge and diving on Tooriike on neighboring Shimoji Island. Don't miss the local mango, it's delicious!

Hawaii



The tropical archipelago made up of eight main-islands and more than 120 small islandsis blessed with natural beauty, rich history, traditional Polynesian culture and arts, and delicious cuisine. Hawaii is truly a dream destination.

Singapore

Singapore is a small island country where old-meets-new and where influences of European, Chinese, Malayan, and more cultures collide. Join us as we visit the Raffles Landing Site, Marina Area and Little India.

Australian Gold Coast

Gold Coast is a beautiful 20-mile coast in Queensland, Australia, which is blessed with natural beauty, traditional aboriginal culture, arts, and delicious cuisine. Learn more about Surfers Paradise, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the Pacific Fair.a

Guam

Guam is an island blessed with beautiful beaches, rich history, traditional Chamorro culture and arts, and delicious cuisine. The great thing about this destination is that it is easily accessible from almost anywhere in the Pacific theater and getting there can be relatively inexpensive thanks to many budget airline options in the region.

Seoul

Seoul has plenty of culture, history, and food which makes it ideal for a quick getaway. We'll take a virtual trip to busy Insadong, Myeongdong, Hongdae and kick it Gangnam-style.

Busan

Easily accessible from most stations in the Pacific, Busan is a bustling seaport offering exquisite seafood and stunning scenery. Take a trip to Gamcheon Culture Village and Haedong Yonggungsa Temple. Hop on the Songdo cable car for incredible views.

Manila

The Philippines is a country blessed with nature, rich culture and arts, delicious cuisine and warm-hearted people. Some of the great spots we'll visit are Fort Santiago, Manila Cathedral, Caliraya Lake and Clark Park for fun, food and history.

Ho Chi Minh

In the largest city in Vietnam with an 80-year French colonial history, you'll find many aspects here have Western and Eastern influences. Exploring Ho Chi Minh is to walk in a resilient culture with delicious food, friendly people and interesting architecture. We'll cruise along the Mekong, stop at the Chua Vinh Nghiem Buddhist temple and shop along Dong Khoi Street.

Quick tips to get you started in Japan!

Restaurant reservations made easy with app
Making a reservation at a restaurant in Japan can be difficult and intimidating if you don't speak the language. Fortunately, there are many options available for phone apps that can help ensure you have a table waiting for you.

Preparing gift for weddings
If you have family members or friends who are Japanese, you may have opportunities to attend local wedding ceremonies. If that's the case, you will need to prepare a handsel. Learn the ins and outs of this expected gesture.

Travel Japan through cuisine using Tabechoku app
Only in Japan can you order fish that is about 800 kilometers (about 497 miles) away from Tokyo to be delivered fresh and ready to eat. Check out a way to enjoy some regional delicacies without having to leave the comfort of your home.

Recycling PET bottles at grocery stores
Once the moving dust has settled and you've figured out your living situation, you'll find one more overwhelming task to conquer: disposing of recycling. Learn how to recycle PET bottles at your local grocery store, so you don't have a pile up at home.

Betting on Japan Racing Association horses
Horse races are surprisingly very popular in Japan, so if you're interested, there are many tracks around the country to catch a race live.

Honk your horn with caution
Drivers in mainland Japan and Okinawa, did you know that there is a law that regulates when you should honk the horn? If not, join the club.

What to know before traveling to Japan
Here's some great tips for when you have friends and family visiting you in Japan. Whether they're curious about transportation, luggage storage, SIM cards, this is a great place to start.

How to sento
In Japan, tattoos, or irezumi, are frowned upon. Because of this, onsen hot spring etiquette has excluded anyone with body ink, no matter the size, type or location, whether Japanese or foreigner. Here are some tips to find tattoo-friendly spots and how-to soak when you visit!

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