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STARS AND STRIPES[®] 2019-20 Welcome to the Pacific

This is your guide!

If you're reading this, then you've likely already arrived in mainland Japan or Okinawa. On behalf of the Stars and Stripes family, we'd like to welcome you as you begin your stay in the Asia-Pacific region. No handshakes or hugs here though – just some useful information you're going to want to know.

Our aim with the Welcome to the Pacific 2019-20 magazine is to get you acquainted as you begin your new overseas journey. Have a hankering for some tasty ramen? We'll tell ya where to go! Need a set of wheels and insurance? Flip a few more pages and find some of the top dealerships and insurance agents in your area.

Please use this as a guide to help you get settled in your new country. It's a big change and hopefully this can provide some help as you learn the lay of the land.

Proceed knowing Stars and Stripes has you covered beyond the valuable information in this magazine. Every week, new editions of Stripes Japan or Stripes Okinawa hit the blue boxes you'll see around base. These community newspapers will give you the run down on off-base events, interesting must-see sights and even that new lunch spot you were curious about but haven't tried.

So, make sure to grab a copy and check us out the next time you pass a blue box.

Forgot to pick up this week's copy? Fear not, StripesJapan.com and StripesOkinawa.com are stocked with thousands of travel, food and culture stories for all your adventure-planning needs.

At Stars and Stripes, our community newspapers and community websites are actually *your* community newspapers and community websites.

Keeping with the theme, this year we sought out community contributions for this edition's front cover. We were pleased to receive many photo submissions from the people in your new community. It was a tough decision, but Michael Faison's photo of Mount Fuji was chosen to grace the cover of the magazine you're holding now. And inside this magazine are several others taken from members of our military community in the Pacific.

We are always interested and would love to hear what you want to read about. Have a story idea? Visit one of our websites and let us know. Better yet, do you have a great story to tell? Maybe it's about a fun trip you took or a group of students working on cool project. Submit your story and photos and you might just find yourself published in the paper!

While you check out our websites, don't forget to like us on Facebook @StripesPacific. Give us a thumbs up to stay up-to-date on all the latest news relating to the U.S. military community in the Pacific. And if free stuff is your jam, make sure to keep an eye out for our photo contests and giveaway promotions.

Thanks for reading and as they say here in Japan: いらっしゃい!

Denisse Rauda
Publishing and Media Design Editor
Stars and Stripes
Spring 2019

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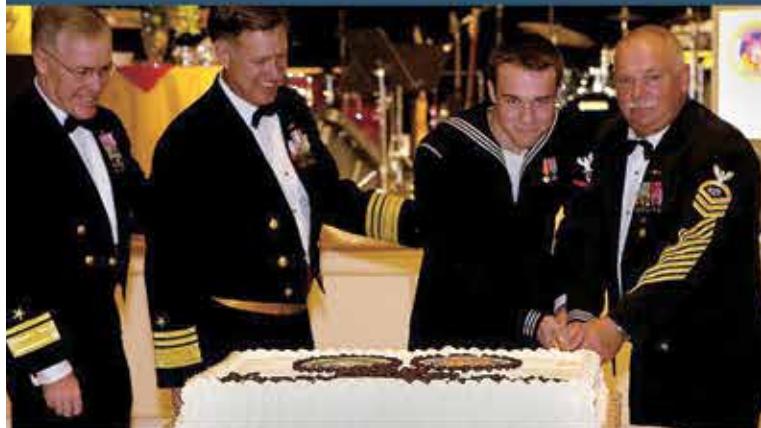


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The Japan way

A 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 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, "go-chiso-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. domburi or noodle soups) or Western-style dishes, each person usually orders and eats one separate dish.

See CUSTOMS on page 10

For more on Chopsticks
SEE PAGE 22



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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 the 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 opposition 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

Sefa Utaki

CUSTOMS continued from page 6

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" (It was quite a feast).

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.



Enjoying bon odori festival in Tokyo
Photo submitted by Beth Schlesener



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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.

HIRAGANA

あ	a	い	i	う	u	え	e	お	o
か	ka	き	ki	く	ku	け	ke	こ	ko
さ	sa	し	shi	す	su	せ	se	そ	so
た	ta	ち	chi	つ	tsu	て	te	と	to
な	na	に	ni	ぬ	nu	ね	ne	の	no
は	ha	ひ	hi	ふ	fu	へ	he	ほ	ho
ま	ma	み	mi	む	mu	め	me	も	mo
や	ya			ゆ	yu			よ	yo
ら	ra	り	ri	る	ru	れ	re	ろ	ro
わ	wa							を	wo
ん	nn								

KATAKANA

ア	a	イ	i	ウ	u	エ	e	オ	o
カ	ka	キ	ki	ク	ku	ケ	ke	コ	ko
サ	sa	シ	shi	ス	su	セ	se	ソ	so
タ	ta	チ	chi	ツ	tsu	テ	te	ト	to
ナ	na	ニ	ni	ヌ	nu	ネ	ne	ノ	no
ハ	ha	ヒ	hi	フ	fu	ヘ	he	ホ	ho
マ	ma	ミ	mi	ム	mu	メ	me	モ	mo
ヤ	ya			ユ	yu			ヨ	yo
ラ	ra	リ	ri	ル	ru	レ	re	ロ	ro
ワ	wa							ヲ	wo
ン	nn								

SOME USEFUL JAPANESE PHRASES

My name is~.

Watashi no namae wa ~ desu.

What's your name?

Anata no namae wa nandesuka?

Nice to meet you.

Hajimemashite.

Thanks.

Domo (very casual)

Thank you.

Arigato (informal)

Nani?



Thank you very much for everything.

Domo arigato gozaimashita (formal)

You're welcome.

Douitashimashite.

What time is it now?

Ima nanji desuka?

What is that?

Sorewa nan desuka?

That's ok.

Daijoubu desu.

When?

Itsu?

Who?

Dare?

What?

Nani?

Why?

Doushite?

Where?

Doko?

Which?

Dore?

Itsu?



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 REFERENCES

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 THE 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 THE WEEK

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



Speakin' Japanese

Pronunciation key: "A" is said like "ah," "E" is short like "eh," "I" is about like "uh," "O" is long like "oh," "U" is long like "oo," and "N" is a vowel-like "uh." Most vowels are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but "YAH" is a long "AH" with emphasis on the first syllable.

Use the following phrases to introduce yourself in Japanese:

1. **Hajimemashite**
(How do you do?)
This expression is only used when you meet someone for the very first time. In future encounters, you may greet that person with simply:
"Ohayo gozai masu" = Good morning,
"Konnichiwa" = Good afternoon

2. **Naha ni sunode imasu.**
(I live in Naha.)
"ni sunode imasu" = "I live in..."
"Kadena ni sunode imasu." = I live in Kadena.
"Kichi ni sunode imasu." = I live in the Base.
"Machi ni sunode imasu."

For more language lessons,

check out our dozens of **Speakin' Japanese** segments at
StripesJapan.com and **StripesOkinawa.com**

Could you please take me there?
Soko made tsuretete itadakemasuka?

Please drop me here.
Koko de oroshite kudasai.

Please follow me.
Tsuite kite kudasai.

See you tomorrow.
Mata ashita.

Have a nice day.
Yoi ichinichi wo.

Good luck to you.
Gambatte.

I didn't know.
Shirimasedeshita.

I don't understand.
Wakarimasen.

Doko?

What day is today?

Kyou wa nanyoubi desuka?

I'm hungry.

Onaka suita.

My ~ hurts.

~ ga itai.

Help!

Tasukete!

How much?

Ikura desuka?

Dore?

Dare?



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 actual exchange rate as of March 2019 is \$1 = 110.01 yen, which indicates a dollar is more expensive than 100 yen by about 10.5 percent. Considering the 8 percent consumption tax and handling charges in exchanging currency, however, one dollar is much 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 108 yen at the cashier thanks to the 8 percent consumption tax. (Note: The consumption tax is expected to increase to 10 percent in October 2019.)

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



1,000 yen

76 x 150mm, dark blue

Front: Portrait of Hideyo Noguchi, a medical scientist

Back: Mt. Fuji and cherry blossoms



2,000 yen

76 x 154mm, dark green

Front: Shureimon Gate of Shuri Castle (Okinawa)

Back: A scene from the Tale of Genji and portrait of its author, Murasaki Shikibu



5,000 yen

76 x 156 mm, dark violet

Front: Portrait of Ichijo Higuchi, a writer

Back: Painting of irises by Kourin Ogata

**10,000 yen**

76 x 160mm, dark brown

Front: Portrait of Yukichi Fukuzawa, a philosopher and preceptor.**Back:** Statue of Phoenix in Byodoin Temple

Giving gifts and tipping in Japan

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 "kororoduke" 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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Climate change

Weather in The Land of Rising Sun

Culture

Education

Transportation

Private vehicles

Base breakdown

Online

Legal

Food

Leisure

The Japan Archipelago stretches nearly 1,700 miles from the northern mainland of Hokkaido to the south most 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-Aug.)

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 (Sept.-Nov.)

Temperatures begin dropping in September, 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 experi-

ence 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

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, and Japan is situated at the intersection of three tectonic plates, making it highly prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity. So, unfortunately, it is highly 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.



	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])

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 many more lesser-known things that can be found in mainland Japan and Okinawa. Here's a look at 20 of the items you're sure to come across during your stay:

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 August.

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!

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 ole 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 20



Kyosera Dome Osaka



Naha O Tsunahiki



Swan Park

Photo submitted by Lovibelle Sciarratta

ONLY continued from page 19

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 and smoky, 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 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, there are maid cafés 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.



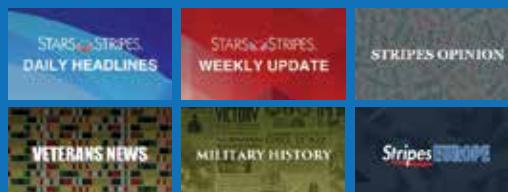
Senso-ji Temple, Asakusa, Tokyo
Photo submitted by Pinchivanhoe Santos

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JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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 people of Hiroshima, Aug. 6 is an important day to reflect back on the day the atomic bomb was 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 often 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 spring.

New Years' Day (Jan. 1)

A day to celebrate the new year.

Coming-of-Age Day (2nd Mon. of Jan.)

Celebrate those who turned or are going to turn 20 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 adore nature.

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.

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 new holiday to show appreciations 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.

- Shoji Kudaka

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Any woman 18 years or older who can prove lineal, bloodline descent from an ancestor who aided in achieving American independence is eligible to join the Daughters of the American Revolution.

If you believe you are eligible for membership and would like to join our chapter, we can have a genealogist assist you with your papers.

If you are already a member of DAR and would like to transfer to our chapter or join us as an associate member, we would be delighted to welcome you.

Please check out our website (<https://sites.google.com/site/sasebochapternsdar/home>) for details.



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 as 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 rice in a bowl – 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 for bringing 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.



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

Planning a visit to South Korea?

You'll notice the differences of Korean chopsticks both in aesthetic and in use.

- “Jeotgarak” is the Korean word for chopsticks.
- Korean chopsticks are typically made of steel or some other type of metal. This may date back to the Baekje period (circa 18 BC – 660 AD) and used to detect poison in royals’ food.
- Because metal is slippery, chopsticks are flat and have rough tips to make picking up food easier.
- For table setting, the chopsticks sit vertically and are paired with a metal spoon.
- Korean chopsticks are slightly longer than Japanese because of meals are shared and reaching across the table is easier with longer chopsticks.

Similarities to Japan

- Chopstick etiquette is something both cultures take very seriously and teach their children early on.
 - Sticking your chopsticks into a bowl of rice is also a no-no in Korea.
 - The same goes for sticking food with your chopsticks.



How to use chopsticks

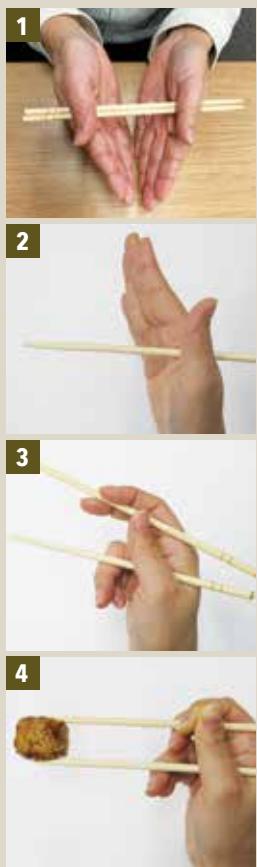
1. Use both hands when you pick up a set of chopsticks.
2. In the same manner you would hold a pencil, hold the chopsticks about one-third from the top.
3. Then, grip the upper stick with your thumb and index finger, while the lower stick rests on your middle and ring fingers.
4. Bend only the upper chopsticks up and down to make the ends of two chopsticks meet (The lower chopstick shouldn't move.)

Watch it!

SCAN THE QR CODE

to find a step-by-step video on how to use chopsticks.

Practice enables you to grip, divide, pinch and even scoop foods with your chopsticks. To hone your chopsticks skills, try picking up beans, shelled peanuts or rice grains when you're comfortable with your grip.



No-Nos with chopsticks

Because chopsticks have a 3,000-year history, various customs and traditions surround their use. Be sure to avoid the following no-nos as they are considered rude:

1. Don't pass food from one set of chopsticks to another.
2. Don't use only one stick to pierce any food.
3. Don't touch others' chopsticks with yours.
4. Don't use your chopsticks to move bowls or plates.
5. Don't suck on your chopsticks.
6. Don't stick potatoes or other foods with chopsticks. Instead, hold food by pinching up to help lift it or split the potato into small pieces with the chopsticks first.

Watch it!

SCAN THE QR CODE

to learn about things you shouldn't do with chopsticks.





Getting connected with a cell phone

So, you've just PCS'd to Japan, and now you need to get a new cell phone. 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 definitely 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.

In Japan, there are three main providers: Softbank, au and NTT DOCOMO. If you want to weigh your options and see all of what 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. It was the first provider to offer Apple's iPhone and iPad devices. SoftBank pioneered discount service plans, and currently has 12 locations on U.S. military

installations throughout Japan and Okinawa.



nttdocomo.co.jp/english

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.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.



Wi-Fi provider

Allied Telesis provides ultra high speed Wi-Fi to off base residents in mainland Japan and Okinawa. Visit their stores located on Kadena AB, Misawa AB, Camp Zama and Yokota AB, or email them at atccstore@alliedtelesis.com.



Allied Telesis
www.atcc-gns.com

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Best Effort

Access to US Video
content without
VPN service

Sign Up
ON-BASE

Convenient
Payment Options
in USD

English Speaking
Customer Service
& Support Staff

No Contract
Requirement

STORE LOCATIONS

YOKOTA AB - Building 570

CAMP ZAMA - Building 406

MISAWA - Building 325

KADENA - Building 412

CONTACT INFORMATION

1-877-722-5440 (Toll Free from a US Number)

1-415-692-8300 (US Number)

03-6868-2300 (Japanese Number)

E-mail : atccstore@alliedtelesis.com



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GTA's exclusive HPO program is the best in Guam because you can upgrade your smartphone anytime!



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LOWER

Your monthly payments.
Add a down payment!



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*Limited time offer. Customer may be required to pay a security deposit & activation fee. If service is canceled, remaining device installment agreement balance is due. Customer is subject to GTA's Product Terms & Conditions and Wireless Data Fair Usage Policy. Other conditions may apply. Visit www.gta.net for details.

Doing your DoDEA homework

The Department of Defense Education Activity is a K-12 American school system for U.S. military, DoD civilian dependents and other eligible families. DoDEA Pacific manages schools in the districts of Guam, mainland Japan, Okinawa and South Korea.

Registration

 Families can register online using the DoDEA Online Registration System (DORS). This system allows perspective sponsors to complete required documentation and include uploads of pertinent forms prior to arriving at the new duty location. A visit to the assigned school is necessary to verify eligibility and enrollment documents, and to finalize registration. Families may also complete their registration in-country upon arrival to the new PCS location. Contact the school website for office hours.

Enrolled students who are advancing to the next grade level will need to revalidate enrollment eligibility by providing a copy of orders or Letter of Employment verification along with any required and updated immunization records for each child.

Students preparing to enter kindergarten must be five 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.

Some DoDEA Pacific schools offer a pre-kindergarten program called Sure Start. The program offers a comprehensive approach to early childhood education in the areas of education, health, social services and family involvement. Contact the school directly to learn more about

eligibility requirements and how to apply for Sure Start.

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 DODEA 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 DoDEA 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

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

Each year,

Stars and Stripes teams up with DODEA 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. All of these run in our community newspapers in mainland Japan, Okinawa, Guam and Korea.

They are also all published at <https://militarychild.stripes.com/>. We hope you and your children join in on the fun.

You can also visit:

DoDEA-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

Let's Move's (nutrition and exercise tips)

www.letsmove.gov

Tutor.com (Free online tutoring for military families)

www.tutor.com/military

and work to provide individualized support as needed.

However, overseas locations may not have the specialized medical or other support services necessary to fully meet your child's unique needs. Parents should consider how limited services may impact the growth and development of their special needs child. DoDEA Pacific staff members are available to help parents with special needs children make informed choices throughout the school year.

You can reach out to the District Special Education Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS) by contacting the DoDEA District Superintendent's Office in the location where you are considering your next assignment.

A very helpful source for information to families can also be accessed through the Exceptional Family Member Program. You can easily access this information at: www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp

Home school support

 DoDEA-Pacific schools offer auxiliary services to eligible military 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

See DODEA on page 28

Welcome to New Connections

A new environment with all new experiences can be stressful. Let GTA set you at ease and keep you connected to those close to your heart but far from your new home.

For over 60 years, GTA has been providing superior service and products to help keep you close to those that matter most. As you serve our country, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve you and your family's communication needs. For your added convenience, GTA stores are located on Andersen Air Force Base and Navy Base Guam for your ease of access.



Wireless:

Fast and Reliable 4G LTE. Affordable voice and data plans, low roaming rates and the best prepaid wireless service.



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24/7 Technical Support



644-4482

www.gta.net



Take advantage of on-base colleges

The majority of colleges and universities offering on-base courses will have an office in your base's education center with a counselor available. The counselors can also provide information on scholarships and other financial assistance specific to their program or school.

Together, such colleges offer a variety of training, undergraduate and graduate programs – including many online distance-learning programs for those stationed on bases where they do not have offices.

Many also have long-standing relationships with the military and cater to the specific needs of service members and their families. This includes the application of military benefits, academic credit for military training and

experience, and military educational programs.

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

The current contracted institutions are:

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

For aviation programs (undergraduate and graduate).

University of Maryland University College

For high school completion (GED), academic skills, undergraduate degree programs, Master of Business

University of Maryland University College:
www.umuc.edu/military

Troy University:
www.troy.edu/military

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University:
www.erau.edu

Administration/Management (graduate) programs and National Testing Center services.

programs are offered at: Osan Air Base, Yongsan Garrison and Camp Humphreys, South Korea; Kadena Air Base, Yokota Air Base, Camp Zama, and Yokosuka Naval Station, Japan; and Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

In-resident undergraduate and graduate aviation programs are now available at: Camp Humphreys and Kadena Air Base.

Undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs are no longer offered in the region.

Contact your education center to learn what in-residence and distance-learning programs are available on your base.

Troy University

For international relations (graduate program).

Undergraduate and Vo-Tech programs are offered at 32 locations throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Graduate programs are only available at a few locations.

International relations graduate programs are available at: Osan Air Base, Yongsan Garrison and Camp Humphreys, South Korea; and Kadena Air Base and Misawa Air Base, Japan.

MBA/graduate management

Education Centers

Mainland	Okinawa
Yokota Air Base Bldg. 316, Rm. 244 DSN: 225-7337	Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni Bldg. 411, Rm. 127 DSN: 253-3855
Yokosuka Naval Base Bldg. 3008 DSN: 243-5058, 8131	Misawa Air Base Bldg. 653, Rm. 203 DSN: 226-4201
Sasebo Naval Base Bldg. 155 / DSN: 252-3511	Camp Zama Bldg. 278 / DSN: 263-5068
Naval Air Facility Atsugi Bldg. 987 / DSN: 264-3280	Camp Fuji Bldg. 110 / DSN: 224-8353
Torii Station Bldg. 216, Rm. 239 DSN: 644-4954	
Kadena Air Base Bldg. 59 / DSN: 634-1500	
Camp Foster Bldg. 5679 / DSN: 645-7160	
Camp Courtney Bldg. 4425 / DSN: 622-9694	
Marine Corps Air Station Futenma Bldg. 407 / DSN: 636-3036	
Camp Hansen Bldg. 2339 / DSN: 623-4376	
Camp Kinser Bldg. 1220 / DSN: 637-1821	
Camp Schwab Bldg. 3429 / DSN: 625-2046	

DODEA continued from page 26

extracurricular and interscholastic activities.

Eligibility is limited to students who are designated as space-required (mainland Japan, Okinawa and South Korea Districts) or DoD dependent students eligible to enroll in Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (Guam District) on a tuition-free basis. Home schoolers using or receiving auxiliary services must also

meet the same eligibility requirements as dependents enrolled in DODEA 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.

DoDEA encourages DoD sponsors who wish to home school

their dependents to communicate the desire to their commanders in order to determine if there are any command policies or other rules ensuring that home schooling practices meet host nation, state, commonwealth, or territory requirements. Sponsors are responsible for complying with applicable local requirements. Contact your local School Liaison Officer or command representative to learn more.

– DoDEA-Pacific



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**RECOGNIZED BY THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION
IN THE US AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IN JAPAN**

DEPENDENTS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL

Lakeland is an excellent transition university for military dependents finishing high school. Small class sizes and close supervision by faculty make transition from high school to university easy.

AT LUJ, students can:

- Commute from home in many cases
- Receive the two-year Associate of the Arts degree in 19 months
- Make new friends easily in the family-like atmosphere
- Enter competitive universities more easily as A.A. degree graduates than high school graduates
- Automatically receive a scholarship upon transferring to the main campus in Wisconsin as LUJ graduates

Quinn Borders

Lakeland
University Japan
Academic Program

My name is Quinn and growing up I lived mostly in America. I was thankful to not have to move very often because my dad was already close to serving 20 years in the military, at which point he retired. When I was 16 we moved to Australia, but I had always been really interested in going to Japan. It started with meeting our neighbors, whose father was also in the military. They had just moved back from Japan and I became really good friends with their son, a half Japanese-American. Eventually, I went to Japan by myself when I was 18 because I really wanted to learn the language. I started at a language school and then was having trouble finding a university that even knew what the GI Bill was. That was when I found Lakeland University and talked with the Dean and was interviewed by staff. Once I was accepted after the interview, the school was very quick with starting me on the GI Bill from my father's service. I really do appreciate my father giving the GI Bill to his two kids. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be able to attend this great school.



LUJ.LAKELAND.EDU

**LAKELAND UNIVERSITY
JAPAN CAMPUS**

5-7-12 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0022

EMAIL: admissions@japan.lakeland.edu

TEL: 03-3225-0425 Fax: 03-3225-0428

Space-A travel

A way to see the world

A privilege to Uniformed Forces personnel, their dependents, retirees, and others who support the mission, the Space-Available travel program may be a great option for seeing the world on a budget ... if the timing is right. The program is nicknamed Space-A, and although that A is short for "available," it could also mean "attitude." Learning how to navigate the program with a positive attitude, plenty of leave and a back-up plan is key for a successful "hop."

What is Space-A?

The Space-A program allows authorized passengers to occupy surplus DoD aircraft seats after all space-required duty passengers and cargo have been accommodated. Most Space-A flights are offered through the Air Force's Air Mobility Command (AMC) or the Navy and are usually free of charge, except for a small tax (usually under \$30) charged per seat and per leg, when seats are on commercial, Patriot Express flights. Common destinations include the Continental U.S. states, Hawaii, Alaska, Germany, England, Spain, Italy, Japan and South Korea. Flights may even go to South and Central America,

Africa and Australia. The best time to obtain seats is when DODEA schools are in session.

Have a back-up plan

Because this program is a privilege and not an entitlement, 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. The first obligation of the AMC is to fill seats for military missions, therefore available seating fluctuates and could change at any time on any part of your destination. So, if you have a specific itinerary, event or obligation waiting for you at your destination or on your return, you may want to reconsider using Space-A for those travel plans. This program is designed for those who have enough available leave, time and flexibility to wait or change their schedule.

For example, it may be a breeze to sign up and get seats on the first flight, but when you try to return, you could wait several days for available space. Or, you could even be dropped off in another country to wait for a flight. Remaining calm, positive and being flexible will help. Sometimes

travelers attempt to catch a hop at neighboring base terminals. For example, it is not uncommon to travel between Ramstein and Spangdahlem Air Bases to attempt to get a seat. Or, travelers drive between terminals in Dover and Baltimore on a regular basis seeking seats. When flying Space-A, be ready for anything. Create a back-up plan and have available funds in case you need to make other travel arrangements and accommodations when space just isn't available.

Who can fly Space-A?

The program was created as a way to enhance the lives of Uniformed Services duty personnel by creating an avenue of respite; recognize the careers of veterans who have served; and extend a privilege to other categories of passengers such as dependents of Uniformed Services personnel, Red Cross and USO personnel who also support the mission. Passengers may not use the flights for personal gain, in relationship to employment, to find a house or for other prohibited activities.

Qualified travelers of Space-A travel need to be sure they have completed the proper procedures to ready for travel and also have

the required documentation. For instance, active duty must be on leave before they can register for travel. 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. The following are also mandatory for travel: military ID cards, passports, social security numbers and emergency contact information at the final destination.

How do you register?

You may register in person at each Space-A passenger terminal at either the helpdesk, or through self-help kiosks. You may also register through email, fax or online, for up to five departure airports and five countries of destination. The website www.takeahop.org offers a free service to help you register for five departure airports as well as five countries at the same time. Recently, the site rolled out both a Take-A-Hop iPhone and Android app for smartphone users. For a few dollars, you have instant access to all Space-A terminal contacts, flight information and the ability

to quickly sign up for up to five flights through your phone. You can also monitor available activity at the terminals through the app to save you time and keep you mobile.

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.

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. For a detailed list, please see the Space-A handbook link mentioned above:

Category I – Emergency travel on a round-trip basis in connection with serious illness, death, or impending death of a member of the immediate family.

Category II – Environmental Morale Leave (EML) and dependents.

Category III – Active duty ordinary Leave and dependents; convalescent leave; permissive TDYs; Unaccompanied dependent of deployed Servicemember for more than a year.

Category IV – Unaccompanied dependent of deployed Servicemember on EML status.

Category V – Unaccompanied military dependent of non-deployed Servicemember.

Category VI – Retirees, Reservists.

PACIFIC LOCATIONS

OKINAWA

KADENA AB

733 AMS, Unit 5145 Box 10
Phone: 634-5806 / 098-962
6487
Facebook.com/AMCKadena

NAF ATSUGI

Bldg. 206
Phone: 0467-63-3118
Facebook.com/AtsugiTerminal

KOREA

OSAN AB

Bldg. 648
Phone: 315-784-6883
Facebook.com/OsanABPassengerTerminal

MAINLAND JAPAN

MISAWA AB

Bldg. 943
Phone: 315-226-2370/2371
Commercial: 011-81-176-77-
2370/2371
Facebook.com/MisawaPassengerTerminal

YOKOTA AB

Bldg. 80
Phone: 315-225-5660/5661/
5662
Facebook.com/YokotaPassengerTerminal

KUNSAN AB

Bldg. 2858
Phone: 063-470-4666

GUAM

ANDERSEN AFB

Bldg. 17002 Unit 14008
Phone: 671-366-5165

Baggage requirements

Passengers may check two pieces of checked baggage, 70 pounds each, up to 62 linear inches in size. You and your family can pool your baggage allowances as well. Carry-ons must fit in overhead bins if they're available on the type of flight) or under your seat. Hand-carried baggage must fit under the seat or in the overhead compartment, if available. As always, it is best to travel light because due to aircraft or other restrictions, baggage weight could be restricted for your flight.

Getting a flight

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 monitor their recent departure schedules. For OPSEC reasons, Space-A flight schedules were removed from many online resources. However, terminals usually record a short-term flight schedule, and information is slowly being released by electronic means again.

Check with Facebook for your favorite Space-A terminals. Some terminals are creating fan pages to improve accessibility and help travelers plan their travel.

Available seats are now identified as early as five hours and as late as two hours prior to departure. Being at the terminal early for a flight will help you vie for seats. As soon as you physically arrive at the terminal, visit the passenger desk to be sure you are indeed registered with the correct date, time of registration and number of seats. Use your previous printed email or documentation to help correct any discrepancies. Then, let the desk personnel know you are interested in available flights. Be "travel-ready" with the proper luggage, any dependents and paperwork, your car parked or rental returned, etc.

It's showtime for roll call

You now wait for the "showtime" of the particular flight you'd like to be selected (manifested) for, as well as the upcoming flight's "roll call" of names of those who are designated for the flight's Space-A seating. The priority of your assigned category, the day and time that you signed up to travel and number of available seats will determine if your name makes the roll

call. Remember, be travel-ready. If your name is called and you are not physically present to hear the roll call and manifested (readied for flight and allowed to travel), your name will be put at the bottom of your category list, and you may not make that flight.

Parting tips

A hop flight could be either on a military plane or commercial airline. If you travel on a military plane, be aware that accommodations and services are different, from fold-down jump seats along the wall, cargo in front of you and a plane that is either pretty warm or cool, depending on the time of year of travel and location. Open-toed or open-heeled shoes should not be worn on military planes. So, wear appropriate footwear, bring jackets, blankets, snacks, bottled water and things to keep you busy, like books, games or electronic devices. Available plugs for charging are along the walls. Remember to stay flexible. Travel during off-peak seasons (stay away from summer break and major holidays) and keep a positive attitude about this great privilege. If you look at the program as an opportunity to a new adventure, plan accordingly and have a back-up plan, you are sure to have a great time, wherever you land.

Going out & about

Mass transit in The Land of the Rising Sun

Unless you are on Okinawa (see page 40), 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 (see page 33), 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 HyperDia or Jorudan, two English-language information sites providing detailed train times and travel directions.

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. Both sites also have nearby hotel and map information for each station. HyperDia even has a Chinese-language option, though its maps are entirely in Japanese. 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, purchase a Suica prepaid electronic card issued by East Japan Railway (JR East).

For 2,500 yen (about \$22.80), including a 500 yen refundable deposit, you can buy your first 1,500 yen worth of fare credits for your next trip. Suica cards can be purchased from machines at JR East stations or from the station clerk, and can be recharged 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.

With trains to Tokyo costing around 800-900 yen one way from almost every base on the Kanto Plain, it can be a while before you have to recharge, depending on the amount of credits you choose to purchase.

To use a Suica card, simply place it over the scanner when you pass through the ticket gate at the beginning of your journey. When you reach your destination, pass the 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.

The card can also be used in subways, public buses and the Tokyo monorail, which connects Haneda Airport to 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.

JR East and the Tokyo Metro subway, which issues the PASMO card, accept each



Transportation

I'm going to [station].
(...-eki ni) mukatte masu.

Where do I go?
Doko yuki desuka?

Where is [train line]?
[train line]-sen wa doko desuka?

other's card, making travel in the Tokyo area virtually seamless. Suica 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.

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 (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





Does this train stop at [station]?
...eki ni) tomari masuka?

How much? (price)
Ikura desuka?

How do I get to Tokyo Tower?
Tokyo Tawaa niwa douyatte ikimasuka?



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 Hajima 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 570 yen (\$5). Aomori (City) Station is about an hour north of Misawa by train (1,800 yen). Misawa Airport is a 15-minute bus ride from Misawa Station (320 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-\$2.50). The JR Sanyo Line travels between Iwakuni Station and Hiroshima (City) Station in 50 minutes (760 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 1,200 from MCAS Iwakuni to Iwakuni Station.

JR Sasebo Station is just over two and a half miles from Sasebo Naval Base. Rapid Liner trains get to Nagasaki in just over 90 minutes for about 1,600 yen (\$14.50). The Midori Limited Express goes to Hakata Station in Fukuoka City in about one hour and 45 minutes (3,870 yen). From there, a

See TRANSIT on page 34

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. Picking up one of these cards will make your traveling life that much easier in Japan. The alternative to using one of these cards is purchasing a ticket from the machine each time you take the train. This can take time and often is confusing to someone new to Japan travel.



Either of the cards can be purchased at most train stations and require a 500-yen deposit. When you make the initial purchase of the card, you choose how much you want to put on it. Once you run out of your initial deposit, you just recharge the card you've already purchased. Recharging is as

simple as inserting your card, pressing the amount you want to put on it, and inserting the matching amount of yen. While the process may seem intimidating at first, it is actually very simple and easy to understand. There is even a button to change the language to English.

Both cards also can act as money at vending machines and at some stores, as well as some taxis. They work the same as a credit card that you just place over a reader.

As a note, although the vast

STEP BY STEP

1. Press the PASMO/SUICA button (press English)
2. Press Purchase new PASMO/SUICA
3. Select the type of PASMO/ SUICA you want to buy
4. Select the initial deposit amount to put on your PASMO/SUICA
5. Insert the selected amount into the machine
6. Take your PASMO/SUICA and receipt

majority of rail lines and buses will accept one of these cards, it is not 100%.

For more information, visit:
www.jreast.co.jp/e/pass/suica.html
www.pasmo.co.jp/en/



TRANSIT continued from page 33

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 600 yen from base to Minato Town, and 1,000 yen to Sasebo Station. Call King Taxi at: 09-568-84136 or Kokusai Taxi at 09-563-15931.

Exploring Okinawa

Bus service

Buses are the only public transportation on Okinawa, except for the Okinawa Monorail in 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, 12; the fare is usually paid when entering. For line No. 20 and above, 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 230-yen fare (approx. \$2.10) for adults and 120-yen (approx. \$1.10) for minors, except No. 8 and 10, whose fare are either 230 or 150 or 100 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 250 yen for adults and 130 yen for minors (No. 95), and 160 for adults and 80 for minors (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 facility.



1. Camp Schwab: No. 22, 27 (These lines run between Nago and Uruma, and Nago and Naha respectively, going by Camp Schwab and Camp Hansen. No. 27 goes all the way to Naha Bus terminal going by Kadena Air Base, Camp Foster, MCAS Futenma, and Camp Kinser)

2. Kadena Air Base: No. 20, 21, 23, 27, 31, 63, 77, 80, 90, 110, 112, 113, 123, 127, 331, 777 (No. 20 runs between Naha and Nago. The other lines run between Naha Bus terminal and Goya, which is near Gate 2 of Kadena Air Base. No. 113 and 123 provide a direct transportation between the two stops.)

3. Camp Foster: No. 20, 25, 60, 92, 93, 96, 125 (No. 20 runs between Naha and Nago. The other lines connect Aeon Mall RYCOM Okinawa and some locations on the island. No. 25 and 92 go to Naha Bus Terminal. No 60 goes to Awase area, No 93 to Yakena near White Beach, 96 to Chatan. No 125 goes to Naha Air Port making a stop near Shuri Castle.)

4. Camp Kinser: No. 20, 31, 32, 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, 29, 48, 62, 228. (28 and 29 run between Naha and Yomintan. 48 between Ishikawa and Naha passing by Maeda point. 62 between Sunabe near kadena Air Base and Yomitan. 228 between Shintoshin (Naha) and Yomitan.

6. White Beach: No. 27, 93, 127, 227, 777 (27 runs between Naha and Yakena near White Beach. 93 between Aeon Mall and Yakena. 127 between Naha 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 or Shintoshin)

Okinawa Urban Monorail, or Yui Rail, is another way to get around in Naha. It runs from Naha Airport

to Shurijo Castle in about 27 minutes, and costs between 150 yen to 330 yen. A one-day pass is 800 yen and two days is 1,400 yen. Information on routes, schedules and fares is available online in English. (This monorail line is scheduled to be extended to Uranishi in Urasoe city in the summer of 2019.)

Taxi service

Taxis are widely available and inexpensive. The initial drop on the meter is 550 yen for the first 1.75 kilometers and then 70 yen for every additional 372 meters. When traffic slows down to 10 km/h or below, 70 yen will be charged additionally for every 2 minutes and 15 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 on the 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, with the customer riding home in the passenger seat and the other driver taking the customer's car home. The two drivers will then return in the taxi.

The Exchange offers service to connect customers with this service. For taxi or daiko, call 645-8888 on base and 098-970-8888 off base.

CONTACT INFO

Bus Map Okinawa: www.kotsu-okinawa.org/en
Okinawa Urban Monorail: www.yui-rail.co.jp/en/



Getting behind the wheel

Buying, registering and driving a vehicle

Diving 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 serviceman or woman 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 41 for more information on road tax amounts and how and where to pay.

You are also required by law to purchase personal-liability insurance, or PLI, 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.

Car sales for the military community

Culture

Education

Transportation

Private vehicles

Base breakdown

Online

Legal

Food

Leisure



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. It 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 (v3.unilife-bmw-military.com or 098-935-4727).

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 or 098-932-6651

Johnny's Used Cars, outside Foster's Legion Gate, 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

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

B. C. Used Cars (Garage) has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. www.bc-used-cars.jp or 098-932-6651

Kadena Air Base

B. C. Used Cars, outside Gate 2, has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. www.bc-used-cars.jp or 098-932-6651

Johnny's Used Cars, 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 098-921-7318

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, trucks and vans to choose from, English-speaking staff and an 18-month payment plan with 0 percent interest. 098-933-2685 or www.paylessokinawa.com

U.S. Auto Sales, just outside Gate 1 on Highway 58, as well as takes custom orders for cars with certain specifications and offers post-sales services like stereo installation, annual car maintenance and insurance updates. us-autosales.com or 926-1089

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. 0827-35-4917 or visit them on Facebook at Kaz Used Cars Iwakuni.

Iwakuni Auto Sales, is located near Iwakuni base and has used cars available with warranty and loan services. Call 0827-88-0166.

Orange Stage, offers domestic and foreign vehicles for sale near Iwakuni base. Visit them on Facebook or call 0827-35-6606.

AUTOREC, serving the Iwakuni community with a nice selection of vehicles and reasonable prices that includes registration and JCI. Contact them at 0567-56-6111 or visit their web site at www.autorec.co.jp/iwakuni.php

Misawa Air Base

A-1 Used Cars 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 operates a location on Route 51. It 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 or 046-738-0276

Muratomi Used Car Shop is a one-minute drive from Zama's Gate 7 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 paperwork to register the vehicle. 0467-77-5427

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 from the gate at 090-9478-0227 or visit www.sasebo-y-post.com/

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

Yokosuka Naval Base

Yokosuka 4 Sale and Japan Bases are free classified websites that many base residents use to buy and sell used cars. www.yokosuka4sale.com and www.japanbases.com

Tips for used-car shopping

- Bring a trusted mechanic to inspect the vehicle
- Use a checklist
- Check exterior for signs of repair
- Check interior for rust and body work
- Check hoses and fluid levels
- Warm up engine and check for smoke or noise
- Check high-mileage vehicle's timing belt
- Ask to see car maintenance log
- Go to your base auto hobby center for a pre-purchase inspection at rates starting around \$20.



Yokota Air Base

Japan Auto Ltd. located outside the Yokota East Gate, they offer many cars in stock, but will also search vehicle auctions Japan wide. The dealer accepts most trade-ins and offers a variety of payment plans. japanautoonline.com or 042-531-9989

Kelly & Kelly Auto Sales is located near Yokota's Terminal Gate. Kelly & Kelly has been serving the military community for over 50 years. With an inventory of at least 35 vehicles, they offer a warranty on all purchases with a variety of payment plans. For pick-up on base, call 042-551-0556 or visit them at kellyandkellyjp.com.

M Trading is located near Yokota and offers used cars. Call 090-6934-9559

Real Speed Auto is a 5-minute drive from Yokota's Fussa Gate and offers free pick-up service. They provide a full 90-day warranty and free vehicle registration. English and payment plans okay! Call 042-513-3593 or see cars in stock at www.realspeed.jp.

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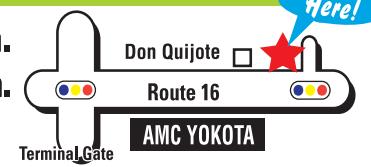
042-551-0556

Email:info@kellyandkellyjp.com

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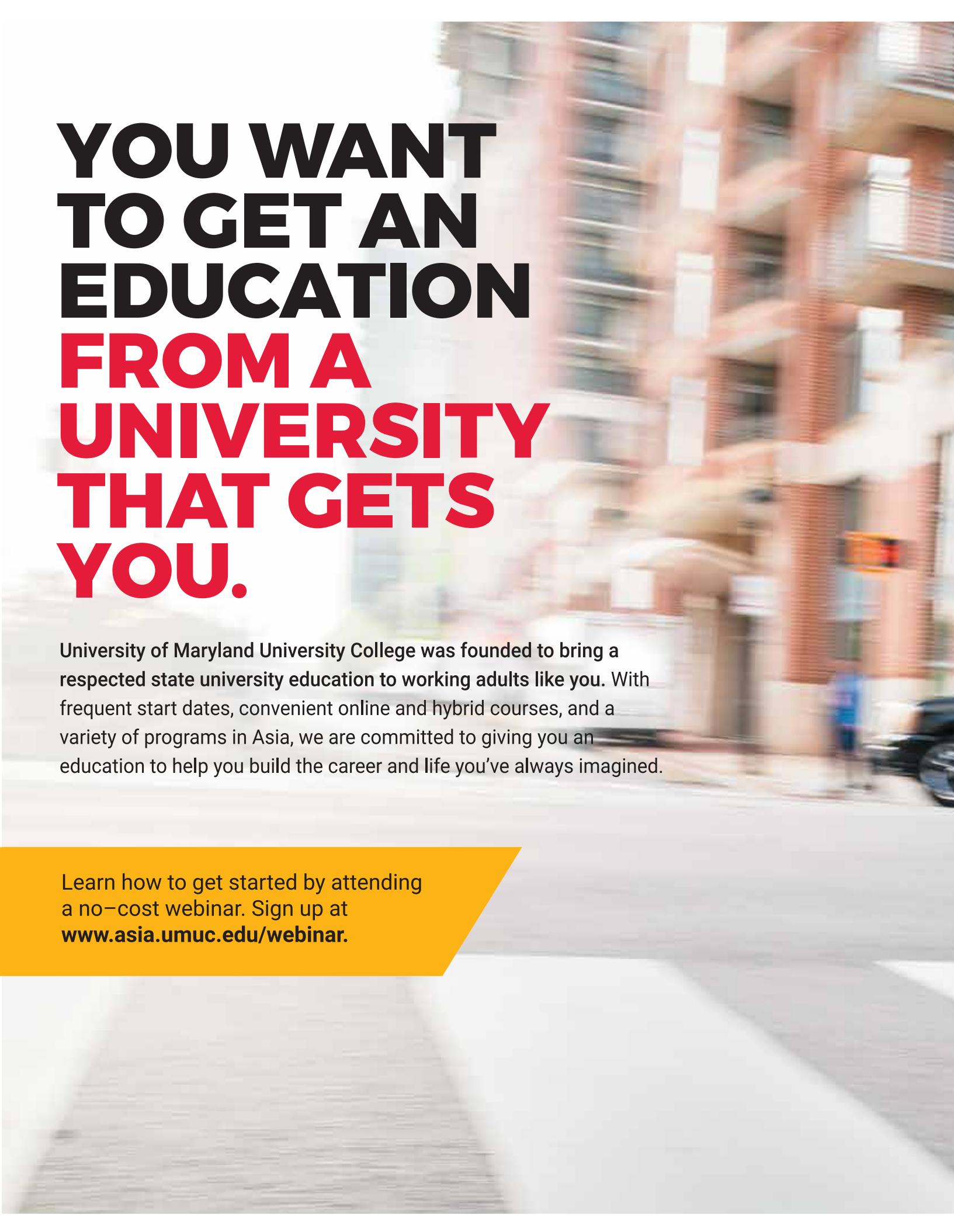


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**Tips for a better ride**

Every place you drive there are local "rules" not found in driver's manuals or license tests, but should be learned for safety's sake. Here are some, based on experience or word of mouth.

- Motorcyclists are an ever-present annoyance. They pass vehicles by driving between two lanes and on the side of the road in the smallest of spaces. Be watchful even if they aren't.
- Most parking here is of the rear-in variety. Practice, because parking spaces are narrower than in the U.S.
- Get physical landmark-type directions when driving somewhere new, as few streets have names and most places do not have addresses visibly posted.
- You cannot make a left on a red light off base. That is only for on-base driving.

Additionally, on Okinawa:

- Drive defensively. Locals know the intersections, and on two-lane roads they often make a third lane – for turning – that sticks into the oncoming lane.
- Pedestrians, particularly older ones, often jaywalk, both against the light in the crosswalk and at places not designated for crossing. One person has called this "a live game of Frogger," as there are so many chances to hit people while driving here.

Electronic toll

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.

ETC:
www.go-etc.jp/english/

JapanETCcard:
www.japanetccard.com

JapanETCcard 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.

The company sends customers monthly bills detailing their ETC charges in English. The service starts from 989 yen (about \$9) per month.

Road wage

Ah, spring, when a young servicemember's fancy turns to ... road taxes?

Yes, it's time to 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 Defense personnel are required to pay their road taxes in order to receive new base vehicle decals for 2019. 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 2019 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 2019 decal. In Okinawa, bring it to the Joint Service Vehicle Registration Office (JSVRO). 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 645-7481/3963.

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:

- Last year's Road tax receipt
- Japanese title

Drivers must provide the following items to receive a new decal:

- 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 2019 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

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FOX

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J:COM Shop Yokosuka-chuo Branch

11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Closed Wednesdays) The Tower Yokosuka Chuo LIDRE 2F, 2-6, Otakichou, Yokosuka-shi, Kanagawa-pref.

• Take the train to Keikyu Yokosuka-chuo Station and walk in the direction of the U.S. military base. The branch is located on the second floor of The Tower Yokosuka Chuo LIDRE.



English support

Call center staff

Shop staff

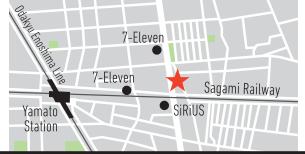
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Note: The navigation menu is set to Japanese by default. Please press 2→1.

If your phone is set to avoid displaying your number when making a call, dial 186 before dialing 0120.

*1: As of the end of January 2019.

*2: Service for J:COM TV Standard Plus, which includes digital terrestrial television broadcasting and BS digital broadcasting. Notes: Numbers are current as of the end of December 2018 (Portions excluded). May not be useable due to circumstances related to the house or building. Company names, product names, or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of their respective holders. Includes some trademarks pending registration.

Camp coordinates

Travel base to base

Culture

Education

Transportation

Private vehicles

Base breakdown

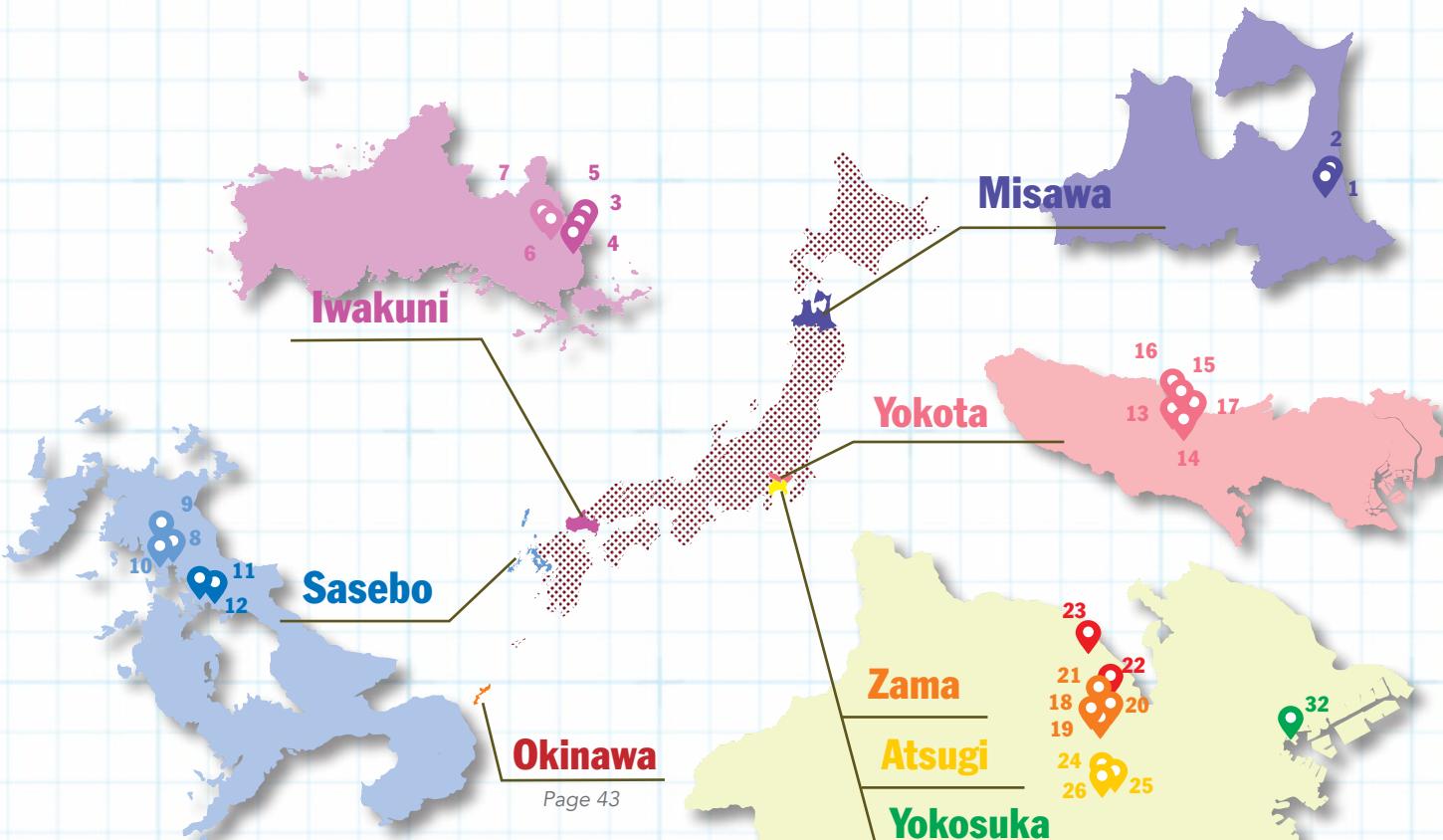
Online

Legal

Food

Leisure

Thanks to GPS, getting lost is nearly a thing of the past. Unfortunately, with military bases, and the sometimes countless entrance gates, finding your exact destination via GPS can often prove harder than it should. Below, you'll find the exact latitude and longitude coordinates for many of the gates located in mainland Japan. Need to find the gate near the golf course at Camp Zama? Just input the coordinates below (35.512045, 139.398548) into your GPS item of choice, and you're sure to make that 7 a.m. tee time.



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Misawa

1. Main Gate

40.686775 (latitude), 141.365019 (longitude)

2. Falocon Gate (POL Gate)

40.697657, 141.378100

Iwakuni

3. Main Gate

34.151401, 132.221583

4. Monzen Gate

34.142617, 132.216083

5. North Gate

34.160040, 132.231432

6. Atago South Gate

34.146353, 132.198865

7. Atago North Gate

34.153012, 132.190980

Sasebo

8. Main Gate

33.167834, 129.714322

9. Back Gate

33.166635, 129.710680

10. Main Base Housing

33.171236, 129.712608

11. Hario Village, Main gate

33.085021, 129.778988

12. Hario Village, Back Gate

33.082211, 129.782040

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

35.742366, 139.338172

14. GATE #5 Supply Gate

35.733211, 139.341582

15. GATE #12 Terminal Gate

35.753318, 139.340621

16. GATE #15 West Gate

35.75386, 139.339696

17. GATE #17 East Gate

35.740102, 139.370531

Yokosuka

27. Main Gate

35.282663, 139.666174

28. Womble Gate (Navy Hospital)

35.283573, 139.668523

29. Daiei Gate

35.284076, 139.662341

30. Ikego Housing Main Gate

35.304129, 139.590343

31. Ikego Housing Jimmuji Gate

35.306486, 139.593520

32. Yokohama North Dock Gate1

35.471618, 139.642627



Okinawa

- 33. Camp Schwab Main Gate**
26.52662, 128.036532
- 34. Camp Hansen**
Gate #1 26.454877, 127.916203
Gate #2 26.459154, 127.92819
- 35. Camp Courtney**
Gate #1 26.390155, 127.857496
Gate #3 26.386004, 127.860215
Gate #12 26.389576, 127.851371
- 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 26.331742, 127.752068
Gate #2 26.33849, 127.794243
Gate #3 26.361554, 127.79403
Gate #5 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 #8 (Plaza Housing)
26.316074, 127.791781
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 #5 26.248568, 127.691443
- 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

Did You Know?

The three most important holidays in Japan are o-shogatsu (Jan. 1-3), o-bon (Aug. 13-15) and Golden Week (Apr. 29 – May 5). Traditionally, during these weeks, Japanese go back to their hometowns to spend some time with their relatives. This means even more people on the roads. So, consider this your warning, as traffic will be worse than usual during this time.


Yokosuka International School



Preschool & Kindergarten





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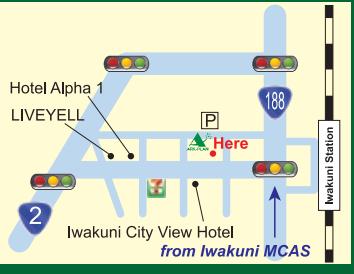
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English
information available

Welcome to Iwakuni





Base breakdown

A look at U.S. installations

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MCAS Iwakuni
LOCATION: Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Pref.
URL: mcasiwakuni.marines.mil
FACEBOOK: @MCASIwakuniJapan

Sasebo Naval Base
LOCATION: Sasebo, Nagasaki Pref.
URL: Cnic.navy.mil/sasebo
FACEBOOK: @CFASasebo

Camp Fuji
LOCATION: Gotemba, Shizuoka Pref.
URL: FujiMarines.mil
FACEBOOK: @CampFujiMarines

Misawa Air Base
LOCATION: Misawa, Aomori Pref.
URL: Misawa.af.mil
FACEBOOK: @MisawaAirBase

Yokota Air Base
LOCATION: Fussa, Tokyo
URL: Yokota.af.mil
FACEBOOK: @Yokotaairbase

NAF Atsugi
LOCATION: Ayase & Yamato, Kanagawa Pref.
URL: Cnic.navy.mil/atsugi
FACEBOOK: @naf.atsugi

Yokosuka Naval Base
LOCATION: Yokosuka, Kanagawa Pref.
URL: Cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka
FACEBOOK: @cfayokosuka

MAINLAND JAPAN

Torii Station
LOCATION: Yomitan
URL: army.mil/okinawa
FACEBOOK: @USAGOKinawa

Kadena Air Base
LOCATION: Kadena & Chatan & Okinawa
URL: Kadena.af.mil
FACEBOOK: @KadenaAirBase

Camp Schwab
LOCATION: Nago & Ginoza
URL: mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Schwab
FACEBOOK: @SMPSSchwab

Camp Hansen
LOCATION: Kin
URL: mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Hansen
FACEBOOK: @cp.hansen.18

Camp Courtney & McTureous
LOCATION: Uruma City
URL: mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Courtney
FACEBOOK: @CampCourtneyandMcTureous

Camp Foster & Lester
LOCATION: Ginowan, Chatan and Kitanakagusuku
URL: mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Foster
FACEBOOK: @CampFoster

Camp Shields
LOCATION: Okinawa
URL: cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrj/installations/cfa_okinawa/about/installations/camp-shields.html
Facebook: @COMFLEACTOKI

Camp Kinser
LOCATION: Urasoe
URL: mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Kinser
FACEBOOK: @CampKinser

MCAS Futenma
LOCATION: Ginowan
URL: Mcasfutenma.marines.mil
FACEBOOK: @hhsmcasfutenma

White Beach
LOCATION: Uruma
URL: cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrj/installations/cfa_okinawa/about/installations/WhiteBeachHistory.html
FACEBOOK: @COMFLEACTOKI

Just a click away

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. Stripes.com and Japan.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. metropolis.co.jp

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/en

This site lets you explore a wide range of Japanese cuisine through pictures and simple explanations. Easy to follow recipes are also included. www.bento.com

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

COMMENTARY

Operated by a naturalized Japanese citizen originally from the U.S., this site monitors legal, social and political issues that may be important. www.debito.org

JAPAN BLOGGING

The perfect blog for someone located in Japan that wants to know where to go. Updated frequently, the site is full of beautiful photos and writing that is chock-full of info that has you in mind. Best of all, it's written by a U.S. military spouse. www.travelswithnano.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

Ride out the storm 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

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.



AFN-360

AFN-360 provides information such as weather, exchange rate, traffic, and gas price.



HYPERDIA

Hyperdia is a website and app, which can be used as a guide to any city/town/village in Japan. It's available in English.



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.



MCCS OKINAWA

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

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

Through featuring how-tos for local travel that range from taxis, car rentals and airport shuttles to driving, renting an apartment and buying housing, the site's detailed travel and beach guides alone testify to its usefulness. www.okinawa-information.com

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.com

GUIDES

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

This digital archive, compiled by Okinawa's government, offers a wealth of info on all things Okinawa. www.pref.okinawa.jp/english/cultures/index.html

On this website, you can enjoy photos and articles on tourist stops and activities on the island. okinawaclip.com/en

Information on morale, welfare, and recreation for each branch of service is available at www.mccsokinawa.com/, www.kadenafss.com/, www.navymwrokinawa.com/, www.toriimwr.com/



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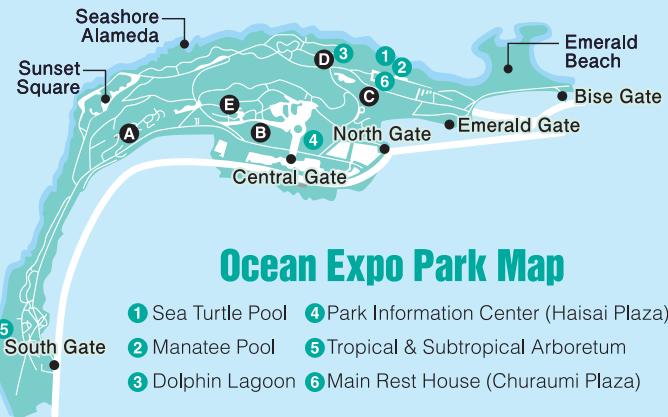
Food

Leisure

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 and sea turtle and manatee pools. Also located on the grounds are Dolphin Lagoon and Oki-chan Theater, where a group of lovable dolphins perform a spectacular show for visitors.



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. The audio guide explains in detail each of the major displays in English, Korean or Chinese.

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
*A half-price entry discount is offered to Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium ticket holders.
(Discounted price: ¥380 for high school students and up)

B Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium)

Experience one of Okinawa's largest planetariums

The facility features a planetarium that allows you to explore the night sky with 140 million twinkling stars and an exhibition through which you can learn how the ocean plays an important role in people's lives in Southeast Asia and countries situated around the Pacific Ocean.

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 for huge whale sharks, one of which measures 8.6 meters in length, along with various other species of fish that can be observed through a massive acrylic panel, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium is a must-see when you visit Okinawa. Divided into three distinct sections showcasing coral reef, the Kuroshio (Black Current) and the deep sea, the exhibits, painstakingly designed to create a natural ocean environment in the aquarium, will take visitors on a virtual dive, starting from a coral reef lagoon and descending 700 meters to the deep sea world.

In order to enjoy these much-in-demand exhibitions of marine life at your leisure, entry towards evening is recommended to avoid crowds in the aquarium. Between March and September in particular is a good season, with the hours of operation extended to 20:00. In addition, discount is available for late entry after 16:00.



Hours: October-February 8:30-18:30 *Last entry 17:30; March-September 8:30-20:00 *Last entry 19:00
Admission: ¥1,850 for adults, ¥1,230 for high school students, ¥610 for elementary and junior high school students, free for children under 6 / Annual passport: ¥3,700 for adults, ¥2,460 for high school students, ¥1,220 for elementary and junior high school students



D Oki-chan Theater

Oki-chan Theater features a dolphin performance by a park idol, Oki-chan, and her friends. The show's stars will fascinate audiences with their dynamic high jumps and humorous, impressive dance routine. The theater is located right next to the aquarium building.

Admission: Free
Dolphin show (approximately 20 min): 11:00, 13:00, 14:30, 16:00, 17:30* / *April-September only



E Native Okinawan 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 entertainingly presented by local staff and also enjoy complimentary tea and sweets between 10:00-16:00. Audio guides are available in English and Chinese.

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

<http://oki-park.jp/kaiyohaku/en>

Hours: October-February 8:00-18:00; March-September 8:00-19:30

Ocean Expo Park is closed on the first Wednesday and the following Thursday of December for maintenance.

OCEAN EXPO PARK

Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Admission Fees

	General	Group (20 or more)	Time Discount (after 16:00)	Annual Passport
Adult	1,850yen	1,480yen	1,290yen	3,700yen
High school	1,230yen	980yen	860yen	2,460yen
Junior high / elementary	610yen	490yen	430yen	1,220yen

- 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.
- After 16:00, admission fees become uniformly discounted. School and Group discounts become void after 16:00.
- Annual Passport holders can enter Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium as many times as they like for 12 months.

Open Hours

	Open	Last admission	Close
Oct. - Feb.	8:30	17:30	18:30
Mar. - Sep.	8:30	19:00	20:00

● Ocean Expo Park opens at 8:00.

● Closed on the first Wednesday of December and the following day (the same as Ocean Expo Park).

● No Food or Drink inside. ● No Smoking inside.

● No Pets inside (Except for guide and service dogs). ●

Tropical Dream Center

Admission Fees

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

*A half-price entry discount is offered to Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium ticket holders.
(Discounted price: ¥380 for high school students and up)



Tropical Dream Center | 8:30-17:30 (Oct.-Feb.)
8:30-19:00 (Mar.-Sep.)



Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium) | 8:30-17:30 (Oct.-Feb.)
8:30-19:00 (Mar.-Sep.)

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

<http://oki-park.jp/>

*Hours for the peripheral area of Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium
8:00-19:00 (Oct.-Feb.) / 8:00-20:30 (Mar.-Sep.)

Closed on the first Wednesday of December and the following day



Keeping up with the law

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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.

Carrying a knife

Dreaming of strutting through old-world Japan packin' a samurai sword? Wake up! The law on knives here is a lot more stringent than those in the U.S. – and on U.S. military bases. If you carry a pocketknife, multipurpose tool, etc. consider leaving it at home when going off base. Police will confiscate certain knives and may even take violators into custody.

The Swords and Firearms Control Law prohibits possessing all 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) without permission. Violators could face up to three years imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen (\$4,500).

The law also prohibits carrying any knife with a blade longer than 2.4 inches (6 cm) except when appropriate, such as when purchasing home cutlery. The penalty is up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen (\$2,700).

Explaining to police that an illegal knife is just for personal protection is unacceptable and will not likely produce the desired results. 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).

Those looking to carry a genuine or antique sword out of the country as a souvenir should check with customs or other appropriate authorities 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.

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.

Child custody disputes

In cases of divorce, Japan's family courts do not issue joint custody of children. They tend to award sole custody to the mother. There has also been a long-standing practice of Japanese spouses in international custody disputes fleeing to (or elsewhere within) Japan with children, despite court orders to the contrary from a foreign country. In the past, Japanese authorities did nothing to remedy this.

In April 2014, Japan's signing of the 1980 Hague Convention on Aspects of International Child Abduction went into effect after decades of government refusal to sign on. Now, the Japanese government must help foreign spouses locate such 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. This is often the case even if neither spouse has filed for divorce, according to media reports and advocacy groups. 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.

Driving under the influence

In recent years, Japan has tackled alcohol-related accidents and deaths head on. The result is a drinking-and-driving law that is deadly serious. Whereas the stateside legal limit for blood alcohol content is 0.08 – roughly one or two drinks depending on body weight and type of drink – the legal limit in Japan is 0.03. This means that after only one drink you are too drunk to drive legally.

The penalties for driving under the influence in Japan are stiff, and it's not just the driver that is subject to them. 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. Doing so could result in penalties of up to:

- **10 years confinement and 1 million yen (\$9,000) for a hit and run while under the influence of alcohol.**
- **Five years confinement or 1**





Can you help me?
Tetsudatte kuremasenka?

I have SOFA status.
(Watashi wa) Beigun kankeisha desu.

I'm sorry.
Sumimasen.

I need to make a phone call.
Denwa wo kaketaino desuga.



million yen for a blood alcohol content of 0.25 milligrams per liter (0.05 percent) or more – or for providing the driver with the vehicle; and three years or 500,000 yen (\$4,500) 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) – or for providing the driver with the vehicle; and two years or 300,000 yen (\$2,700) for knowingly providing alcohol to, or riding with, the driver.
- Three months confinement and 500,000 yen for refusing a blood alcohol test.

U.S. military installations in Japan tend to have similar standards when it comes to driving under the influence. 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.

Saying you're \$orry

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. If all parties agree, “jidan,” 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.

In cases involving alleged crimes, jidan or an apology accompanied by what is sometimes called “gomen nasai” (I’m sorry) money to the alleged victim 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.

Japan’s indictment rate, on the other hand, is relatively low because prosecutors have a lot of latitude when deciding whether to indict someone. A letter of apology to an alleged victim

from the accused can impact that decision (submit copies of the letter). Apologizing to and 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. The U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) allows some exceptions for military and civilians who fall un-

der it. However, they are responsible for paying Japanese taxes on income earned on the Japanese economy.

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

R e v i e w
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 serving in the military.

Civilian as well as military SOFA individuals who violate a USFJ instruction risk administrative or judicial penalties. Get permission from your chain of command, and/or clarification from your base legal office or a similar authority in advance.



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Biking rules to obey

DON'T

1. Ignore traffic signals
2. Riding in prohibited areas
3. Riding unsafely on footpaths/riding on undesignated pedestrian roads
4. Riding in the wrong lane
5. Obstructing pedestrians
6. Crossing through active railroad crossings
7. Ignoring intersection safety
8. Obstructing an intersection
9. Riding unsafely in roundabouts
10. Not obeying stop signs
11. Not stopping at crosswalks
12. Riding a bike with poor brakes
13. Riding under the influence
14. Not riding safely

Source: Government of Japan



DO

1. In principle, cyclists should ride on the street and use sidewalks only in exceptional cases.
 - Bicycles are classified as vehicles, so as a general rule, cyclists should use the street.
 - Cyclists should use designated bicycle paths when they are available.
 - Cyclists should use the lanes marked for bicycles on sidewalks or roads when they are available.
 - Children under 13, adults 70 and over, and people with physical disabilities are permitted to ride a bicycle on the sidewalk.
 - When the street is too narrow, cyclists can ride on sidewalks.
2. Cyclists should ride on the left side of the street.
 - Only the left side of the street should be used by cyclists.
 - Cyclists must not obstruct pedestrians if riding inside the lines marking pedestrian paths.
3. Cyclists must reduce speed on sidewalks and give pedestrians the right of way.
 - When passing pedestrians on sidewalks, cyclists should reduce speed enough to enable a sudden stop.
4. Cyclists must obey safety rules.
 - Riding double is prohibited.
 - Riding side by side is prohibited.
 - Cyclists are prohibited from riding under the influence of alcohol.
 - Cyclists must use bicycle lights at night. Cyclists must also use bicycle lights in the daytime when riding through tunnels or during foggy weather.
 - Cyclists must obey traffic lights at intersections and check for safety after coming to a full stop.
 - Cyclists must not use umbrellas or talk on mobile phones when riding.
5. Children must wear a bicycle helmet.
 - Parents and guardians must ensure that children wear a bicycle helmet in the following cases:
 - (1) A cyclist may carry one child under the age of six in a designated child seat.
 - (2) Children under the age of 13 must wear a bike helmet.



Source: National Police Agency and Japan Traffic Safety Association



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 with a pet where they take their animal.** 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.

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 prevalent.

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?

Mt. Fuji is actually an active volcano that repeatedly has small-scale eruptions. The last large-scale eruption was in 1707.



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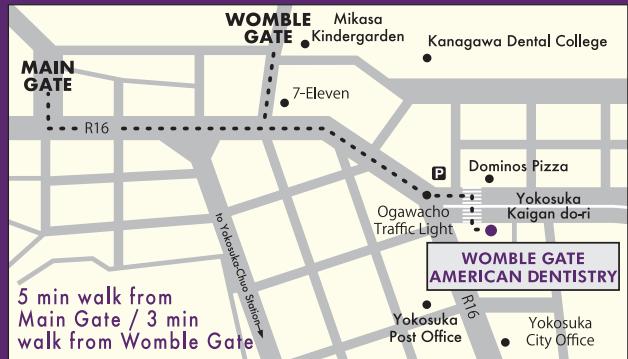
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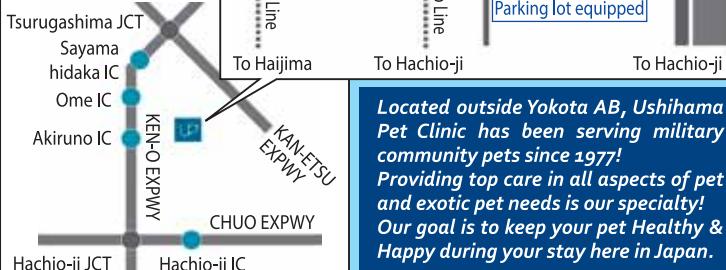
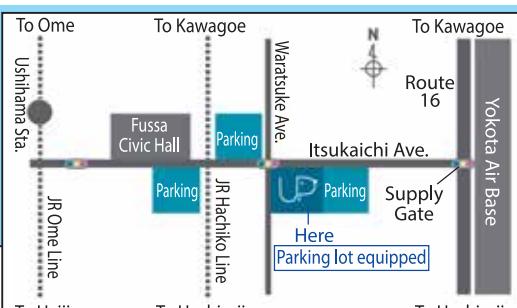


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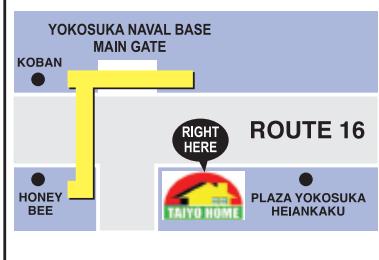
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Know where to park or pay the price

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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 photo-

graph 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 \$100-\$200 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 ap-

propriate 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



Where you can park

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.



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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 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 "Wa" or "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 300 to 400 yen for an hour (100 yen for 20 minutes or 200 yen for 30 minutes) is the average in Naha.

In Okinawa City, 100 to 200 yen for an hour is a common rate. The fees increase every 20, 30 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 commonplace 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 it is not common.

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

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.

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



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"bus lane."

- Takahiro Takiguchi

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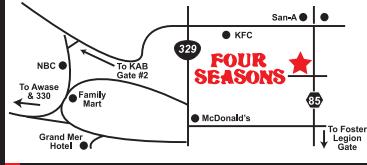
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1. Makizushi

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.



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.



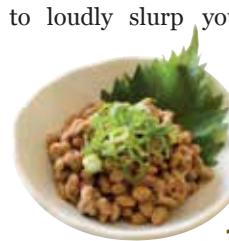
10. Oden

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.



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 tensyu 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 snack. 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.

Sake steals the show

Sake, aka nihonshu, is a Japanese rice wine and a popular item at dinner tables in Japan. Its sophisticated mellow flavor goes well with many Japanese dishes.

Well-polished quality rice and clear mineral spring water, along with the expertise of its brewers, gives the local sake a fresh, gentle and fruity flavor. Long, low-temperature fermentation makes it crisp, dry and smooth.

Sake is categorized according to how much the rice used for brewing is milled or polished. Rice that's milled more creates a smoother and milder sake.

Traditionally, sake is a holy beverage dedicated to the Gods. So, Shinto rituals, along with weddings and other events, are often accompanied by the drink.

On New Year's Day, Japanese take a traditional sip of "otoso" (New Year's spiced sake) to kill off the evils that can bring bad luck to the coming year.

On Okinawa, locals distill "awamori," Japan's oldest distilled alcoholic beverage and Okinawa's official liquor since the days of the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429-1879). It is made from Thai rice (indica) and black rice mold with a one-time fermentation process.

The liquor is often used to make "habushu" (or habusake) – those iconic bottles of booze that contain venomous snakes.

— Takahiro Takiguchi



Yokota



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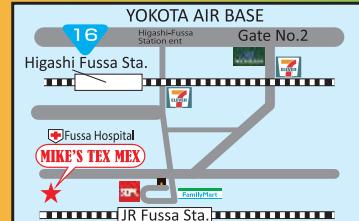
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Japanese food facts

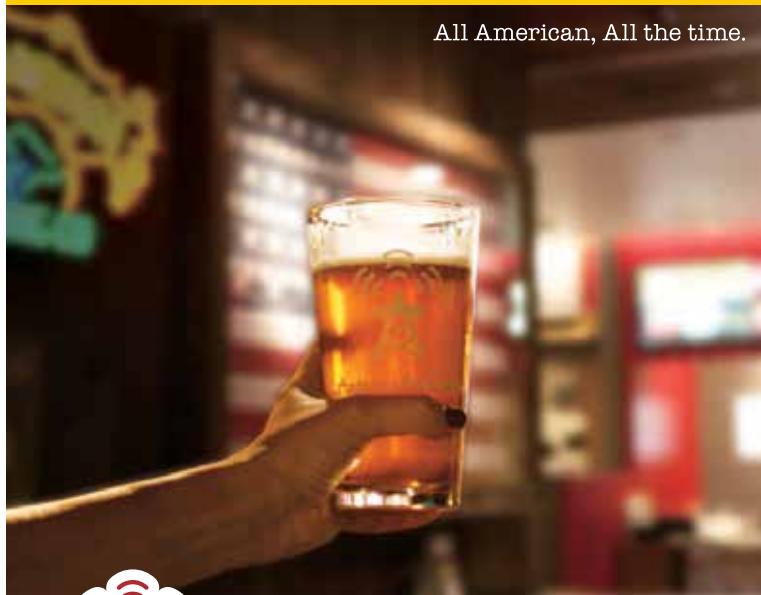
- Many Japanese foods are considered superfoods. Fermented foods include natto, miso, shoyu (Japanese soy-sauce) and amazake; teas - matcha, green tea, bancha (coarse tea); seaweed - konbu (kemp), nori, hijiki, kanten; and traditional natural foods - umeboshi (pickled plum), genmai (unmilled rice), tofu, soba, and azuki are all low in calories and contain many superb minerals.
- The greasy, sweet and sour taste of "Naporitan spaghetti" is very popular among Japanese. The spaghetti is just a ketchup pasta stir-fried with onion, green pepper and ham. Despite the name, you will never find it in Naples, Italy, as it originated here in Japan. A Japanese chef created the dish when the country was under food shortage in the postwar chaos.



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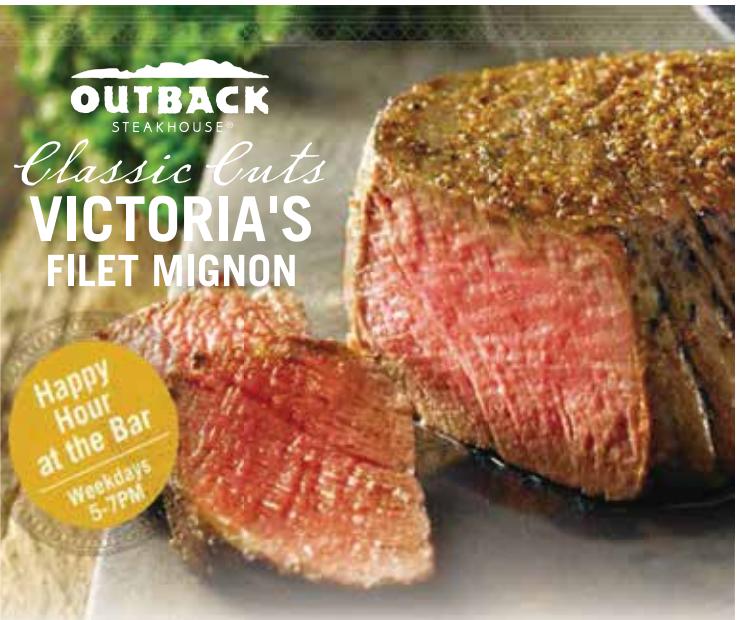
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Dried bonito



- For many in Japan, the harbinger of summer-time is the sight of the first freshly caught bonito fish at the market. In May, chances are you'll see many locals asking for the fish at markets and restaurants. It's eaten as sushi, sashimi or "tataki" (lightly seared but still raw) with soy sauce, ginger, garlic, wasabi or green onion.
- Dried bonito, along with dried kelp, is an indispensable ingredient in miso soup and broths for various types of noodles. They can both also be used as a topping for dishes like okonomiyaki, tofu or even pizza and pasta. Traditionally, dried bonito is made through a complicated process that includes simmering, smoking, sun-drying and fermenting which takes more than a month.
- Each cow carcass in Japan is given a score based on its yield (from A to C) and level of marbling, firmness, color and overall quality (from 1 to 5). The overall grade of the beef is determined by combining these two criteria, with A5 being the highest possible mark. Matsusaka-ushi, Yonezawa-gyu, Miyazaki-gyu, Maezawa-gyu and Kobe Beef are ranked the top five of 170 registered wagyu brands.

boritan spaghetti
Matsusaka-ushi

- Takahiro Takiguchi



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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.



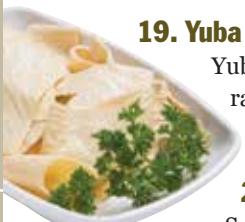
17. Yakiniku

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.



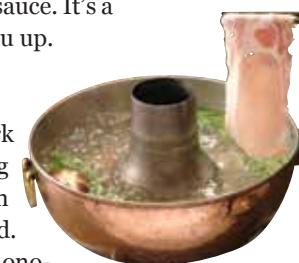
19. Yuba

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. Sukiyaki

Sukiyaki is a Japanese stew that's typically cooked in a hotpot on your table as you dine. It consists of thin-sliced beef, vegetables and tofu in a fairly thick broth of soy sauce, sugar and mirin. Sukiyaki is often served with raw eggs as a dipping sauce. It's a winter food that's thought to warm you up.



21. Shabu Shabu

A hotpot of thinly sliced beef or pork prepared at your table by submerging a single piece of meat in a hot broth and swishing it around until it's cooked. The term shabu-shabu is a Japanese onomatopoeia, or sound-effect word, that imitates a swishing sound. It could be literally translated as “swish-swish.”



22. Yakisoba

Fried noodles in a thick sweet sauce resembling tonkatsu sauce. Despite the name, Yakisoba isn't made from soba noodles but a wheat noodle similar to ramen. Yakisoba is commonly sold at convenience stores and by street vendors at festivals. It's also an easy dish to prepare at home.



23. 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.



24. 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.



25. Agedashi Dofu

Lightly breaded deep fried cubes of tofu in a hot broth of dashi, mirin and soy sauce. Typically topped with negi, daikon and katsuobushi. Agedashi Dofu is one of Japan's oldest and best known tofu dishes that's widely available at izakaya, convenience stores and supermarkets.



26. Chankonabe

A hearty stew that evolved as a way to fatten up Sumo wrestlers. Chankonabe has no fixed recipe, but always contains large quantities of protein sources such as quarter chickens, fish balls, tofu and beef. Everything is chunky and sumo sized. The broth is dashi or chicken broth and starchy vegetables are added for balance.



27. Nikujaga

A Japanese beef and potato stew flavored with shoyu. Nikujaga was invented by the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Meiji-era.



28. Chirashizushi

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



29. Chikuzenni

Chikuzenni is a mix of vegetables such as takenoko, shiitake, gobo, renkon and carrots. Traditionally, a small amount of turtle was added to the mix, but in modern times chicken is used. Chikuzenni is best cooked slowly.



30. Omurice

Fried rice wrapped in a thin omelette topped with ketchup or demi-glace sauce. Omurice is a popular favorite that's found at places such as ski resort food courts or company cafeterias.

– John Spacey



WingStreet



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— George A. Smith

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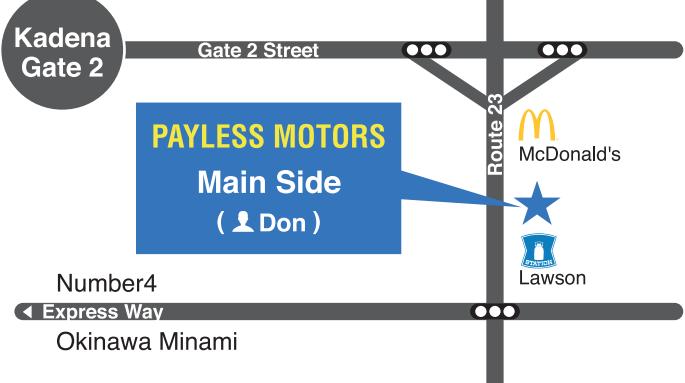


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Ukejo

Ukejo, a traditional ceremony featuring the opening of the Hoshinmon gate by gatekeepers dressed as Shuri government officials, is held every morning at 8:25.



Traditional Performance Arts

Ryukyu Buyo dancing and other traditional performances take place every day at the Yohokoriden (paid area).

► Performance Times: 11:00, 14:00, 16:00



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首里城公園 SHURIJO CASTLE

Symbol of the Ryukyu Kingdom

Spread out over a five-hectare area measuring 400 meters from east to west and 200 meters from north to south, Shurijo Castle, a symbol of Okinawan history and culture, sits atop a hill in Shuri. After walking through the exquisite castle gate, the Seiden, the biggest architectural work in the Ryukyu Kingdom, suddenly appears. Shurijo Castle was inscribed as part of the World Heritage by UNESCO in 2000 for its cultural and historical value, a unique amalgamation of Japanese and Chinese architectural styles and sophisticated masonry techniques. Although the exact date of the first construction of Shurijo Castle is unknown, by 1427 the castle appeared as it does today. It served as the royal residence of the king and his family as well as the headquarters of the Shuri government, which ruled for nearly 450 years. In addition, a variety of festivals and royal rites were held at the castle. The area surrounding the castle developed as a castle town in which many government officials and master craftsmen took up residence. Destroyed during World War II, Shurijo Castle was rebuilt in 1992, and the castle and nearby historic assets, including the religious prayer site known as the Sonohyan Utaki Ishimon (Stone Gate), became a historical park.



With the exception of the Seiden and Tamaudun, the royal family mausoleum, the park is open to the public. In February of 2019, a new area called Ouchibara opened to the public, adding to the attraction of Shurijo Castle Park. This area is situated at the back of the Seiden and was the private area for the royal family. *Shurijo Castle Park has both a paid admission area and free areas.

The environment of Shuri nurtured artists and artisans in and around the castle, making the place a center of culture and the arts. Gorgeous Ryukyuan clothing and exquisite palace cuisine both had their origins in Shuri. Numerous cultural assets, including many smaller gates located between the exterior and interior castle walls, line the way to the Seiden after passing through Shureimon gate and the Sonohyan Utaki Ishimon, one of UNESCO's World Heritage sites in Okinawa. Highly recommended among a number of seasonal events held at the castle park is the Shurijo Castle Festival held in autumn and the New Year's Celebration, where visitors can immerse themselves in the history and culture of the Ryukyus while enjoying a variety of traditional performing arts.

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Okinawa Prefectural Museum &

Art Museum

Museum Permanent Exhibition

Through exhibits ranging from the days of the Ryukyu Kingdom to the early modern, postwar and contemporary periods, visitors can gain deep insight into the various aspects of Okinawan history, nature and culture.

Bankokushinryo Bell

Part of the Okinawa Prefectural Museum collection, the Bankokushinryo Bell symbolizes a prosperous era of the Ryukyu Kingdom when it was engaged in a thriving trade with various countries in East Asia.



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	Paid area	Free area
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Jul.-Sep.	8:30-20:00	8:00-20:30
Oct.-Nov.	8:30-19:00	8:00-19:30
Dec.-Mar.	8:30-18:00	8:00-18:30

Closed

First Wednesday & Thursday of July

Admission

¥820 for adults; ¥620 for high school students; ¥310 for elementary and junior high school students; free for children under 6

Annual Passport

¥1,640 for adults; ¥1,240 for high school students; ¥620 for elementary and junior high school students

*Admission fee and/or other details are subject to change.
Please check our website for details.



<http://oki-park.jp/shurijo/en/>



1-2 Kinjo-cho, Shuri, Naha City Tel: 098-886-2020

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For the art museum: ¥310 for adults; ¥210 for high school and university students; ¥100 for elementary and junior high school students; free for preschool age children

*Admission allows entry to the Permanent Exhibition only.

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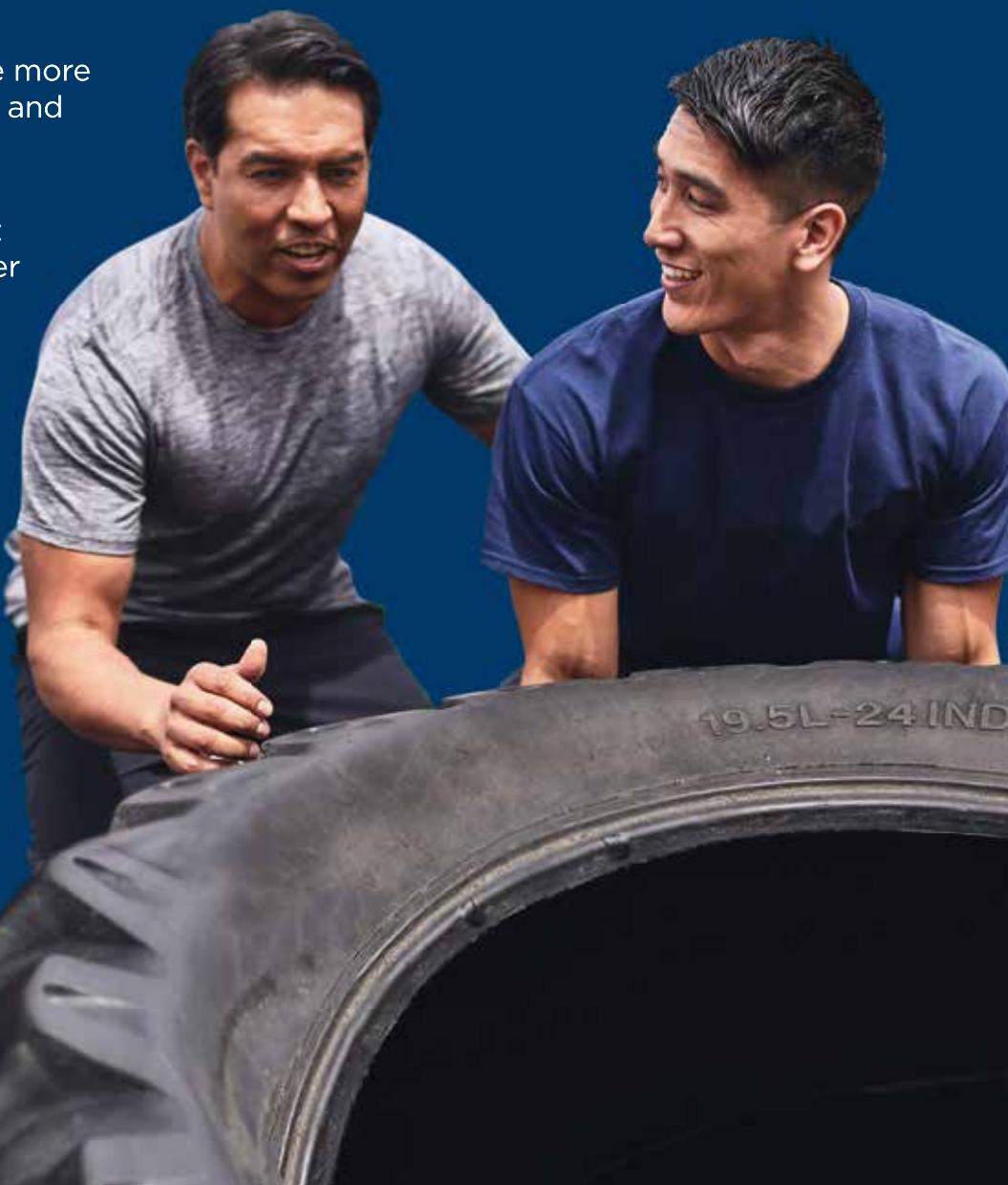
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Don't miss out on these Okinawa musts

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 its 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, 285,000 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.



Dragon Boat



Eisa Festival

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 drum-beats 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. In Kourijima Magic Hour RUN, people can enjoy a beautiful view of the ocean

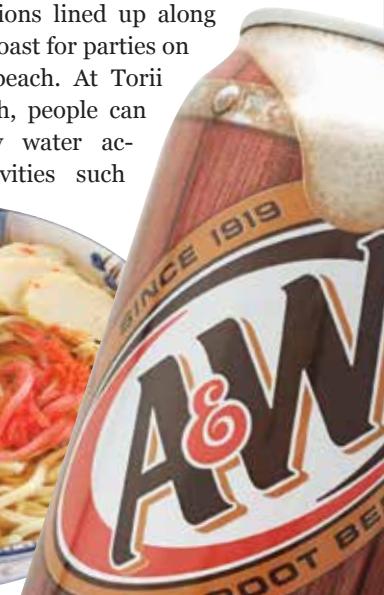
during the sunset. There is also Iheya Moonlight Marathon where runners can enjoy different scenes from sunset well into the night. Naha Marathon and Okinawa Marathon are the two major races on the island and are very popular among runners.

Snorkeling/diving

There are many diving/snorkeling spots in Okinawa. At Sunabe Seawall, people can enjoy spotting colorful tropical fish and soft coral. At Maeda Point, 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 Moon Beach, people can enjoy new water activities such as Flyboard and Hurricane Disco. 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 water activities such



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 go-kart. At **Owls Adventure Park**, they can put the birds of prey on their arms just like Harry Potter.

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. Nagodake, routes are well maintained for mountain climbers. At Daisekirinzen, 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.

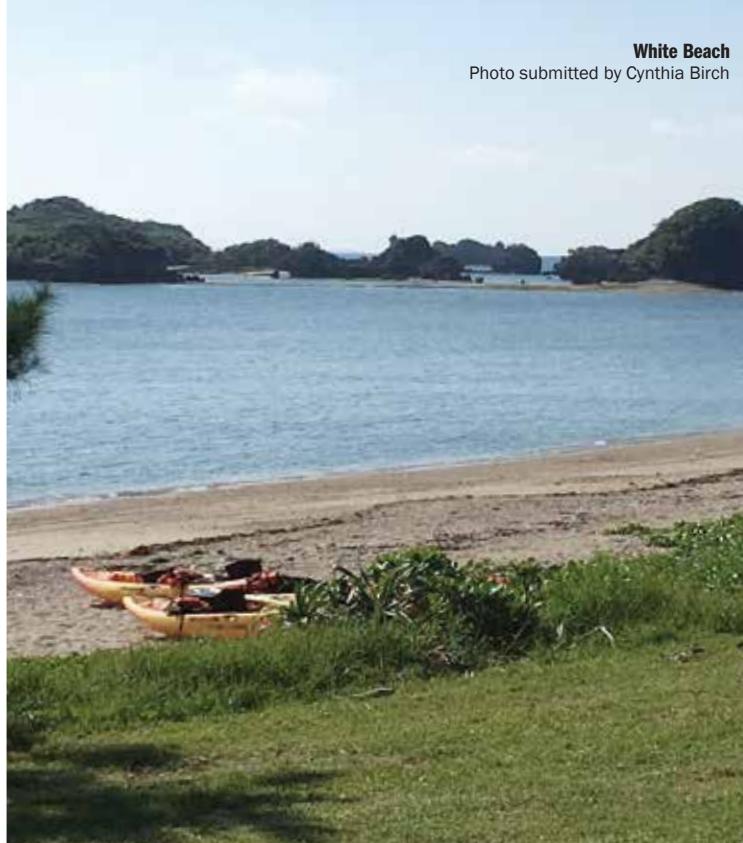
Cultural sites

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 for people to watch craftsmen working on their pottery, or even get hands-on experience making their own. Places like Okinawa Peace Memorial Park, Hacksaw Ridge (Urasoe Castle Ruin) 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 the biggest shopping mall on the island. This is the place to go if you are looking for U.S. brands such as American Eagle, Gap, and Forever 21. Kokusai Street in Naha is crowded 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.

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 Hayatemaaru are popular among service members.

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 service members.

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 40 of them on the island. Some even feature carhops with roller skates 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





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Japan at a glance

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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 on the **Gion** or **Yasaka** district.



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 the **Miyajima Island** are must-see attractions.



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. **Oura Catholic Church**, **Glover Garden** and **China Town** are some of the popular attractions.



OKINAWA

Page 75



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. 1,000-foot-long six-arched **Bandai Bridge** over Shinano River is the city's de facto logo.

Osaka

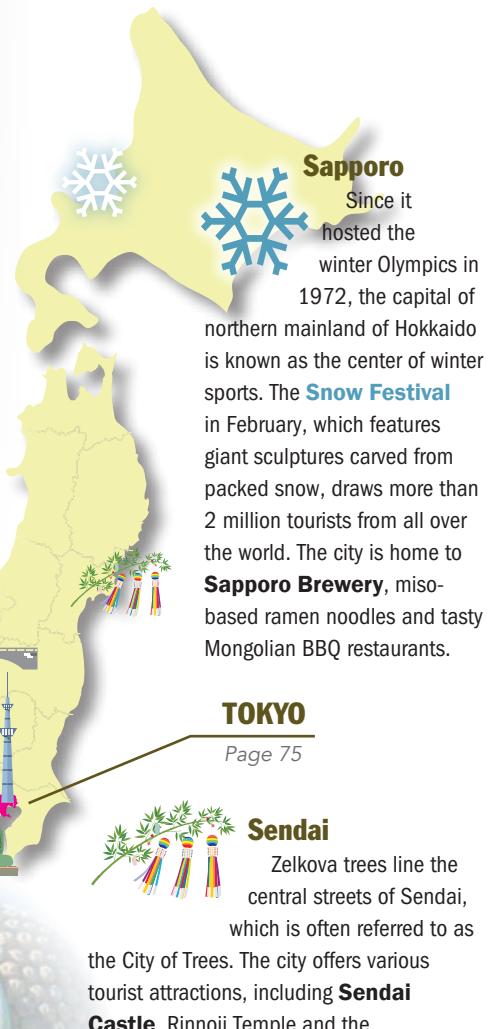
The largest city in the Western part of Japan functions as a business and commerce hub. It was the nation's former capital for brief times in the seventh and eighth centuries. **Osaka Castle**, **Dotonbori Street** and **Universal Studios Japan** are popular attractions. The city offers various tasty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



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.

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.



TOKYO

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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**, Rinnōji 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.



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**.



Tokyo

① Shinjuku

A very busy part of Tokyo full of Skyscrapers and the world's busiest train station.

② Harajuku

With countless boutiques and cafes along the main Takeshita-dori Street, the town is sanctuary for teenagers.

⑦ Ginza

Known for its luxury shopping, all the top stores can be found here.

⑥ Odaiba

An artificial island in Tokyo Bay is full of entertainment and views of the water.

⑤ Asakusa

A very traditional district of Tokyo with lots of tourists, food and a giant shrine and temple.

④ Roppongi

The trendy area has many shops and eateries and is the main entertainment district of Tokyo.

③ Shibuya

Home to the Meiji Shrine, Shibuya is a top stop along the Yamanote Line.

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, old and new, take place in this capital of Okinawa - home to the island's main airport and seaport.

② Nago

The gateway to the northern part of Okinawa's main island, 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. It's also known for a cherry blossom festival and fireworks.



Okinawa

③ Motobu

This town in a large peninsula in the northern area is rich in nature. At Churaumi Aquarium and Ocean Expo Park, two of the most popular tourist spots in Okinawa, you can see large sharks and rays cruise in a giant water tank. In winter, cherry blossoms at Yaedake Mountain draw many visitors.

④ Chatan

The host municipality of Camp Foster and Camp Lester has many shops and restaurants along the coast. In American Village in Mihama, you can enjoy various cuisines, buy souvenirs, or even partake in a cosplay go-kart ride. Seawall Street to the north of American Village is also popular among servicemembers.

⑤ 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.





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