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# Welcome to the Pacific

2023-2024



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# JAPAN & OKINAWA



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#### Cover photo

David Ince captured this rainy scene at Kabukicho in Tokyo's Shinjuku District. Ince is stationed at Yokota Air Base and said his favorite thing about Japan is the intricate details of the buildings and scenery: "Especially in Tokyo, if you look closely there are always interesting details to be found," Ince said.

# Welcome to the Pacific

2023-2024

## Let Stars and Stripes be part of your journey

Let us be among the first to welcome you to the Pacific! Moving overseas can feel mind-boggling and overwhelming. Learning to navigate your way through a new country, different policies and laws, as well as local host-nation traditions and customs, is enough to make your head spin. We know you have questions, but rest assured Stars and Stripes is with you all the way.

We are here to support you as you transition to your new home. This guide contains the information you need to help get your time overseas started right so you don't have to go about it alone. Every magazine, newspaper, story and online article we publish is for you.

We are committed to our role in keeping you informed and are here to support you and the mission. Without you, there is no us.

As you flip through these pages and admire the photographs, know that many of the stunning shots inside and on the cover were taken by members of the military community just like you. Beyond the beautiful photos, you'll find key information about living in mainland Japan and Okinawa. Not sure about Space-A travel? Anxious about driving or where to find a car? We've got your answers on Pages 34 and 46.

Once you've settled in, don't forget to grab a copy of Stars and Stripes Japan or Okinawa on base or visit [japan.stripes.com](http://japan.stripes.com) and [okinawa.stripes.com](http://okinawa.stripes.com), where there is plenty more to discover! Hiro Takiguchi and Shoji Kudaka (learn more about them on Page 10) are ready to give you amazing restaurant tips, language lessons and suggest some fun day trips to get you out and about in no time. If there is anything we haven't covered, we're open to feedback and suggestions.

Have an interesting story to share? We'd love to tell it. This is your space, so let us know. If you're a spouse working on a project, know of an awesome military child, or want to give us your travel tale, we want to hear it. Send us your stories, photographs or ideas, and you may find them in an upcoming magazine, paper or on our community sites.

The last few years have been some of the most difficult and uncertain for many of us. Stars and Stripes will continue to be with you on this journey. As we adapt to our new normal, we strive to meet the needs of our servicemembers, military families and DOD civilians in the Pacific. Join us on Facebook (Pacific Stars and Stripes) and Twitter (@StripesPacific) as we continue to bring you the latest information and resources you don't want to miss.

Thank you for being a valued reader and as they say here in Japan:

いらっしやい! (Welcome!)

Denisse Rauda

Publishing and Media Design Editor

Stars and Stripes

[japan@stripes.com](mailto:japan@stripes.com) and [okinawa@stripes.com](mailto:okinawa@stripes.com)

#### Background photo

Liz Byrne took this shot on the rooftop of Ginza Six in Tokyo.

Welcome to the Pacific Staff

Denisse Rauda  
Editor

Yukiyo Oda  
Layout Designer

#### Writers and Photographers

Shoji Kudaka Hyemin Lee  
Takahiro Takiguchi

Max D. Lederer Jr.  
Publisher

Lt. Col. Michael M. Kerschbaum  
Commander

Michael Ryan  
Chief of Staff

Scott Foley  
Revenue Director

Marie Woods  
Publishing and Media Design Director

Chris Carlson  
Publishing and Media Design Manager

Eric Lee  
Revenue Manager

Kentaro Shimura  
Production Manager

Rie Miyoshi  
Engagement Manager

Area Managers  
Monte Dauphin, Japan/Guam  
Enrique "Rick" W. Villanueva Jr., Korea

#### Multimedia Consultants

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

#### Sales Support

Ji Young Chae Yu Mi Choe  
Hiromi Isa Yoko Noro  
Toshinori Numano Yusuke Sato  
Kanna Suzuki Saori Tamanaha  
Toshie Yoshimizu

#### Graphic Designers

Mamoru Inoue Kazumi Hasegawa  
Kenichi Ogasawara Yuko Okazaki  
Kayoko Shimoda Yosuke Tsuji

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

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

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

Pick up your free copy at one of the 800 locations throughout the Pacific region — look for the bright blue Stars and Stripes boxes located on installations.

You can also contribute to Stars and Stripes in the form of article submissions, reviews, or suggestions. We capture most of

your contributions in special publications such as “Best of the Pacific,” “Destination Paradise” and “Welcome to the Pacific,” which are published in three separate editions for Guam, Japan and Korea.

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

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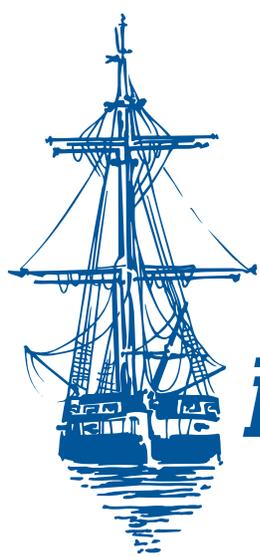
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# HISAI!

(Greetings in Okinawan dialect)

I am Shoji Kudaka, a native Okinawan who has been writing for Stripes Okinawa for over seven years. I am here to share with you what our beautiful islands have to offer. Have you relaxed on Emerald Beach or slurped Okinawan Soba noodles topped with pork ribs and seaweed? If you haven't yet, don't worry, I'll tell you all the best spots on Okinawa and take you on journeys you have never experienced.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent my time cooking up recipes and virtual vacation videos for our readers. But now I've been able to go back out and explore again. These days, the island's stunning beaches and adventures on its jungle trails are back on its itinerary. While I still enjoy cooking and making videos from the comfort of my home, there is truly nothing like soaking up the sun, exploring Okinawa and enjoying a superb ocean view.

Starting with basic information on where to travel and dine, my reports include in-depth coverage of what's happening in the local scene, fo-

ocusing on up-to-date information on culture, leisure, food, and festivities.

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

And, of course, the incredible nature here lends itself to fun adventures you'll never forget. Scuba diving. Whale watching. Fishing. Hiking in the mountains. You name it, Okinawa has it all!

I grew up passionately learning English, watching WWF, NBA games, and sometimes Star Trek on Channel 6. My childhood love for American culture carries on today and continues to motivate me to bring you stories and information about another kind of love: my love of Okinawa.

Look for our Japanese lessons online!



# KONNICHIWA!!

I am Takahiro Takiguchi from Yokosuka City in mainland Japan. For 10 years, I have been bringing our military community all the info they need to have a great time during their stay in my country.

Though COVID had me switching from travel to home activities, crafts, culture, Japanese lessons and virtual vacations, I am once again out and about bringing you new stories and new spots you've got to see for yourself! The past few years helped me to reprioritize my family and friends and brainstorm story and video ideas you'll love.

Count on me and the rest of the staff to bring you the information you need, as our job is to help you explore Japan's natural beauty, profound traditions, history, and unique pop culture. The Land of the Rising Sun is blessed with countless natural attractions.

My wife and I live near Yokosuka Naval Base and enjoy taking day trips and longer excursions to explore. We cherish being showered by cherry blossom petals, picking sunflowers in a large field, sampling hot coffee while taking in the gorgeous colors of autumn, soaking in an outdoor onsen bath as snow falls, and strolling to a Shinto

shrine at midnight to wish for a happy new year on Oshogatsu.

While viewing majestic Mount Fuji and walking the Gion streets in Kyoto illustrate the elegance of Japan, discovering the "Hidden Christian" ruins in Hirado give you a peek into how our Japanese ancestors lived through years of oppression. My countrymen are known for their splendid architecture craftsmanship throughout the ages. The shrines, temples and castles dotting the Japanese landscape will amaze you.

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

So, during your stay in Japan, you have a mission: Get off base and explore! Don't worry, you can count on me to be your guide!



## Stories

Quick trip to beautiful Cape Zanpa



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Virtual Vacation in Hiroshima



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Speakin' Japanese



Winter Illuminations



# The Japan way

## Crash course in customs & etiquette

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

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

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

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

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

### First encounters

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

The degree of bowing depends on the formality of the situation

and the relationship between the people.

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

Take time to review your counterpart’s card carefully. You can ask about correct pronunciation of his or her name, or for an explanation of a job title. You want to show interest in, and respect to, the other party.

Never shove the card into your back pocket.

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

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

Every Japanese home has a “genkan” (hallway) with a lower tiled floor right inside the door where you take off your shoes

(and never step on without shoes) and the upper wooden floor where you should walk without shoes or with slippers on. Often, if you use the toilet, you’ll have to change slippers again. If you see slippers or sandals at toilets in hospitals or other offices, you should use them. It is a sanitary custom.

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

### Eating out

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

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

slurp loudly. In fact, they say it improves the flavor!

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

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

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

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

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

See CUSTOMS on Page 12



For more on chopsticks  
**SEE PAGE 24**

Culture

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# Okinawan traditions

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



Murasaki Mura Lantern Festival in Yomitan, Okinawa. Photo by Dan Moulton

crewmembers crammed into long, colorful and traditional boats rowing in unison. It’s fun to watch. Even better to participate!

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

– Shoji Kudaka

CUSTOMS continued from Page 11

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

exit when leaving in order to pay.

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



A delicious dinner in Tokyo. Photo by Jerome Baquilar

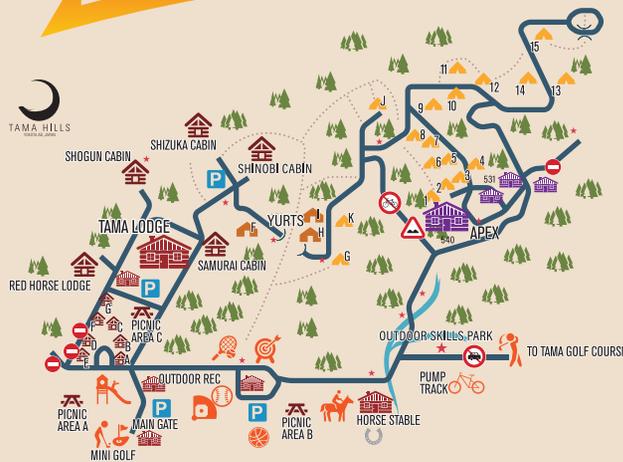


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Wed. 8 a.m. - 12 a.m. Thu - Sun 24 Hours

### Country Store

Mon 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Tue Closed  
Wed / Thu 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fri 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Sat / Sun 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

### Hillcrest Lounge

Wed-Sun 1 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Mon & Tue Closed

### Tama Outdoor Recreation / DSN: 227-5248

March - October

Sun 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Mon 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Tue Closed  
Wed / Thur, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Fri / Sat 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

November - February

Sun 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Mon 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Tue Closed  
Wed - Sat 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### Kiji Dining Room Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Sun 7 a.m. - 11 a.m.	Sun & Mon 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Wed - Sun 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Mon 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.	Tue Closed	Mon & Tue Closed
Tue & Wed Closed	Wed-Sat 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.	
Thu & Fri 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.		
Sat 7 a.m. - 11 a.m.		

A Great Breakfast is served Sat. & Sun. from 7 a.m!

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tamahillsjapan.guests@gmail.com  
(No Reply Tues.)



**Conveniently located!**

# 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



(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.

## BASIC JAPANESE VOCABULARY

<b>NOUN</b>	Last year <b>kyonen</b>
Water----- <b>mizu</b>	<b>MONTHS OF THE YEAR</b>
Morning----- <b>asa</b>	January -----
Day ----- <b>hiru</b>	<b>Ichigatsu</b>
Night----- <b>yoru</b>	February <b>Nigatsu</b>
Fire ----- <b>hi</b>	March <b>Sangatsu</b>
Toilet----- <b>toire</b>	April -- <b>Shigatsu</b>
House----- <b>ie</b>	May -- <b>Gogatsu</b>
Mountain - <b>yama</b>	June <b>Rokugatsu</b>
River----- <b>kawa</b>	July <b>Shichigatsu</b>
Soap--- <b>sekken</b>	August -----
Blanket-- <b>moufu</b>	<b>Hachigatsu</b>
Hospital <b>byouin</b>	September ----
Police <b>keisatsu</b>	<b>Kugatsu</b>
Train station <b>eki</b>	October <b>Jyugatsu</b>
Money----- <b>okane</b>	November -----
McDonalds-----	<b>Jyuichigatsu</b>
<b>Makudonarudo</b>	December -----
	<b>Jyunigatsu</b>

### ADJECTIVES

Light----- <b>karui</b>	
Heavy ----- <b>omoi</b>	
Dirty ---- <b>kitanai</b>	
Clean----- <b>kirei</b>	
Strong--- <b>tsuyoi</b>	
Weak --- <b>yowai</b>	
Deep ----- <b>fukai</b>	
Shallow ---- <b>asai</b>	

### SEASONS

Spring----- <b>haru</b>	
Summer - <b>natsu</b>	
Autumn ----- <b>aki</b>	
Winter ---- <b>fuyu</b>	

### TIME REFERENCES

Today----- <b>kyo</b>	
Tomorrow -----	
<b>ashita</b>	<b>DAYS OF THE WEEK</b>
Day after tomorrow ----- <b>asatte</b>	Monday -----
Yesterday <b>kinou</b>	<b>Getsuyoubi</b>
Day before yesterday----- <b>ototoi</b>	Tuesday <b>Kayoubi</b>
Tonight--- <b>konya</b>	Wednesday ----
This month-----	<b>Suiyoubi</b>
<b>kongetsu</b>	Thursday -----
Next month -----	<b>Mokuyoubi</b>
<b>raigetsu</b>	Friday <b>Kinyoubi</b>
Last month-----	Saturday <b>Doyoubi</b>
<b>sengetsu</b>	Sunday -----
This year <b>kotoshi</b>	<b>Nichiyoubi</b>
Next year <b>rainen</b>	

## SOME USEFUL JAPANESE PHRASES

**GAMBATTE!**  
(GOOD LUCK TO YOU!)

My name is~.

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

What’s your name?

**Anata no namae wa nandesuka?**  
Ana-tah noh na-ma-eh wah nan-de-sue-kah.

Thank you.

**Arigato (informal)**  
Air-ee-gah-toe.

Thanks.

**Domo (very casual)**  
Dough-moe.

Nice to meet you.

**Hajimemashite.**  
Ha-gee-meh-mash-ee-teh.

Thank you very much for everything.

**Domo arigato gozaimashita (formal)**  
Dough-moe air-ee-gah-toe go-zah-ee-mash-ee-tah.

You’re welcome.

**Doutashimashite.**  
Dough-tash-ee-mash-ee-teh.

What time is it now?

**Ima nanji desuka?**  
Ee-mah nan-gee deh-sue-kah.

What is that?

**Sorewa nan desuka?**  
Sore-eh-wah nan deh-sue-kah.

That’s ok.

**Daijoubu desu.**  
Day-joe-boo dehs.

Could you please take me there?

**Soko made tsuretette itadakemasuka?**  
So-co mah-deh zoo-reh-teh-ee-tah-dah-keh-mass-kah.

Please drop me here.

**Koko de oroshite kudasai.**  
Cocoa deh oh-roe-she-teh coup-dah-sigh.

When?

**Itsu?**  
Ee-tsoo.

What?

**Nani?**  
Nan-ee.

Please follow me.

**Tsuite kite kudasai.**  
Suite-teh kee-teh coup-dah-sigh.

I didn’t know.

**Shirimasendeshita.**  
She-ree-mass-end-esh-tah.

I don’t understand.

**Wakarimasen.**  
Wack-ari-mass-en.

See you tomorrow.

**Mata ashita.**  
Mat-ah-shoe-tah.

See more Japanese phrases



**TANOSHII!**  
(FUN!)



**Check this link!**

For more katakana and hiragana





# VISIT SASEBO GOBANGAI

FEATURING POPULAR SHOPS AND FOOD VENUES FOR EVERYONE!

## 5TH AVENUE SHOPPING MALL NEAR SASEBO NAVAL BASE, JAPAN

Sasebo Gobangai, a major commercial complex on the Sasebo waterfront near Sasebo Station and Sasebo Port, offers 73 specialty shops covering a wide selection of imported brands and ladies' fashion, as well as trendy accessories and local gourmet items. Restaurants and cafes look out over the water, and the complex hosts events for the whole family on weekends. Come and enjoy the ocean view in a unique shopping mall!



- FASHION
- FASHION GOODS
- LIFE STYLE
- SERVICE
- FOOD
- RESTAURANT



**SUSHIRO**  
Conveyor Belt Sushi that goes around and around in front of you to pick up and eat. Offering a wide variety of sushi & side dishes, prices start at ¥110 a plate!  
PROMENADE WEST ZONE 1F / 11:00 am – 11:00 pm



**ABC-MART SPORTS**  
ABC-MART SPORTS: A new concept in sports style, with sneakers like Nike and Adidas, and leading apparel.  
PROMENADE EAST ZONE 2F/10:00am~9:00Pm



**Seria**  
Get lost in Japan's very own "Dollar Shop". Attractive & Fashionable items that add a nice touch of happiness in your daily life!  
TERRACE ZONE 2F / 10:00 am – 9:00 pm



**Lemoned Raymond**  
Sasebo's famous lemon steak specialty restaurant, a juicy steak sizzling away with the mouth-watering aroma of our special lemon sauce!  
TERRACE ZONE 2F / 11:00 am – 10:00 pm



**STARBUCKS**  
Classic to fancy, grab a Starbucks drink with our pastries and sandwiches to make a great shopping day!  
TERRACE ZONE 1F / 8:00 am – 10:00 pm



**カリ**  
Serving authentic American hamburgers since 1948, as learned from an American military stationed at Sasebo. Our burgers are famous for the thicker patties and our special sauce!  
TERRACE ZONE 1F / 10:00 am – 9:00 pm

- CHECK OUT THESE FEATURED SHOPS & MUCH, MUCH MORE TO EXPLORE!**
- Mister Donut
  - Momotaro - Steamed Buns
  - Akai Fusen - Baked Goods
  - Baskin Robbins 31 Ice Cream
  - TSUKUJI GINDACO - Takoyaki Fish Balls
  - Prunelle - Bakery
  - Ellena - Supermarket
  - GODIVA
- RESTAURANT**
- SUSHIRO - Sushi
  - STARBUCKS COFFEE
  - Ootoya Gohan Dokoro- Japanese Cuisine
  - Osakana Kazoku Zakoya - Izakaya, Japanese Style Bar
  - SAGAYA Yakiniku - BBQ Beef Restaurant
  - Sanuki Udon HANAMARU - Noodle Shop
  - Mendokoro AKIRA - Ramen Shop
  - SOJIBO Soba - Noodle Shop
  - Hamburger Shop Hikari
  - Brezza Terrace - Pasta
  - Ringer Hut - Nagasaki Champon
  - Lemoned Raymond - Lemon Steak



**VILLAGE VANGUARD**  
Popular for its knick-knacks and entralling-books, Village Vanguard offers a huge array of unique items that are sure to tickle your fancy.  
TERRACE ZONE 2F/10:00am – 9:00Pm



**あさら**  
Our broth brings out all the hidden flavor of selected pork bones, in the new standard in Nagasaki Sasebo ramen.  
TERRACE ZONE 2F/11:00am – 10:00Pm



We accept a variety of credit cards.

\*Not all cards at all shops. Check with individual shops for details.

**Please use the nearest public transportation**

- JR.Matsuura Rail Access .. 1 minute walk from Sasebo Station
- Local Bus Access ..... 5 minutes walk from Sasebo Station Bus Stop (located in front of Sasebo Station)
- Expressway Bus Access.... 6 minutes walk from Sasebo Bus Terminal
- Vehicle Access..... About 3 minutes from Sasebo-Chuo Interchange About 3 minutes from Sasebo-Minato Interchange

**For more information**

Visit our web site at <https://sasebo-5bangai.com/english/>

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# A valuable lesson

## Knowing your yen



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

“It’s 3,240 yen, sir.”

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

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

The exchange rate fluctuates often but as of March 2023 the rate is \$1 = 132 yen. Considering the 10 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 118 yen at the cashier thanks to the 10 percent consumption tax.

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

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

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

– Takahiro Takiguchi



## Behind the bill



### 1,000 yen

76 x 150mm, dark blue

**Front:** Portrait of Hideyo Noguchi, a medical scientist.

**Back:** Mt. Fuji and cherry blossoms.



### 2,000 yen

76 x 154mm, dark green

**Front:** Shurei-mon Gate of Shuri Castle (Okinawa)

**Back:** A scene from the Tale of Genji.



### 5,000 yen

76 x 156 mm, dark violet

**Front:** Portrait of Ichiyo Higuchi, a writer.

**Back:** Painting of irises by Kourin Ogata.

## shopping

“Kore wa ikura desuka?”

= How much is this?

Co-reh wah ee-cure-ah deh-sue-kah.

“Kono ningyo wa ikura desuka?”

= How much is this doll?

Cone-oh knee-n-gee-yo wah ee-cure-ah deh-sue-kah.

“Chiketto wa ikura desuka?”

= How much is a ticket?

Cheek-eh-toe wah ee-cure-ah deh-sue-kah.

“\_\_\_ wa arimasenka?”

= Do you have \_\_\_?

\_\_\_ wah air-ee-mass-en-kah.

“Osusume wa nandesuka?”

= What is your recommendation?

Oh-sue-sue-meh wah nan-deh-sue-kah.

“Nandesuka?”

= “What is ...?”

Nan-deh-sue-kah.

“Kaado wa tsukae masuka?”

= Can I use a credit card?

Cad-oh wah sue-kah-eh mass-sue-kah.

“Kono kuupon wa tsukae masuka?”

= Can I use this coupon?

Cone-oh coup-pon wah zoo-kah-eh mass-kah.

# Protecting your pets in a new country

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

## Finding a vet

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

## Rabies shots

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

veterinarian's office, or even at certain public schools.

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

## Filariasis medication

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

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



## 10,000 yen

76 x 160mm, dark brown

**Front:** Portrait of Yukichi Fukuzawa, a philosopher and preceptor.

**Back:** Statue of Phoenix in Byodoin Temple.

# Trash talk

## How to sort your garbage in Japan

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

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

Not only do recyclables, days of disposal and

designated locations vary by municipality, but so do the types of garbage bags used for each type of trash and each city. Spend more time in Japan, and you'll soon notice the rules also change from time to time.

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



### MOERU/KANEN-GOMI (COMBUSTIBLE WASTE)

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

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



### SHIGEN-GOMI (RECYCLABLES)



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

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

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



### YUUGAI/KIKEN GOMI (HAZARDOUS WASTE)

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

### SODAI-GOMI (BULK TRASH)

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

— Shoji Kudaka



### MOENAI/FUNEN-GOMI (NON-BURNABLE WASTE)

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

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# REFERENCE FOR GARBAGE SORTING

## MAINLAND JAPAN

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■ SASEBO



■ IWAKUNI  
(JAPANESE ONLY)



■ SAGAMIHARA

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■ MISAWA  
(JAPANESE ONLY)



■ ZAMA



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

## OKINAWA

■ CHATAN

PDF



■ KADENA  
(JAPANESE ONLY)

PDF



■ GINOWAN

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■ URUMA  
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# Climate change

## Weather in The Land of Rising Sun

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

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

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

### Spring (March-April)

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

### Summer (June-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 experience the least amount of clear sunny days in the nation, so the end of the rainy season in June is met with joy and a sense of liberation. Then, summer continues July through September, with the annual highest temperature around 90-95°F. Temperatures begin to drop in October, but usually don't get below 60°F.

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

– Takahiro Takiguchi



Fun at Manza Beach in Okinawa.  
Photo Rosie Ortiz-Torres

### Land of earthquakes

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

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



**DID YOU KNOW?**

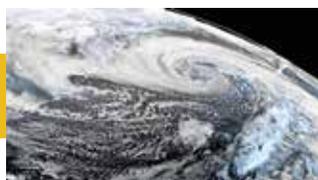
Summer brings typhoons, as well. Tropical storms often hit Okinawa and the mainland causing serious damage between July and October, especially from August to September.

	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])



Stay informed with Storm Tracker



Typhoon season primer



Culture

Online

Education

Transportation

Private vehicles

Base breakdown

Off base

Food

Leisure

# Only in Japan

## You have to see it to believe it

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

### Onsen

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

### Sumo wrestling

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

### Baseball

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

### Mt. Fuji

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

### Naha Tug-of-War

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

of the crowd is the weight of the rope – roughly 40 tons.

### Stores from home

Just because you're halfway across the world from home, doesn't mean you can't get a good ol' taste of the U.S. 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 22



Ryogoku Kokugikan National Sumo Arena.  
Photo by Bill O'Reilly



Soaking in Kofu Onsen.  
Photo by Rosie Ortiz-Torres

For more culture, travel, food and more, be sure to check out [japan.stripes.com](http://japan.stripes.com) and [okinawa.stripes.com](http://okinawa.stripes.com)



Cherry blossoms brooming at Yokota Air Base.  
Photo by Angela Gouger

ONLY continued from Page 21

## 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 a great slice of true Okinawa. Members of each U.S. military branch row in the fiercely competitive boat races, which regularly draw a large crowd.

## Animal/maid cafés

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

## Shrines/temples

As many convenience stores as there are in Japan, there are three times as many shrines and temples combined. Shinto

shrines and Buddhist temples are everywhere. From giant ones like the Meiji Shrine, to small ones you wouldn't even notice, there is definitely no shortage of places for one to worship.

## Blood type

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

## Rest areas

These are not what most think

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

## Water sports

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



Manza Beach in Okinawa.  
Photo by Rosie Ortiz-Torres



Children's Day is celebrated by the Tengan River in Uruma, Okinawa.  
Photo by Patchamaporn Bee Beck

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

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

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

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

# Celebrating holidays

## **New Years' Day (Jan. 1)**

A day to celebrate the new year.

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

Celebrate those who have newly become adults in a given year.

## **National Foundation Day (Feb. 11)**

The day when the first emperor is said to have assumed the position.

## **The Emperor's Birthday (Feb. 23)**

The birthday of Emperor Naruhito.

## **Spring Equinox Day (Mar. 20 or 21)**

A day which supposedly has equal day and night length. Also a day to commemorate ancestors.

## **Showa Day (Apr. 29)**

Originally the birthday of Emperor Hirohito.

## **Constitution Memorial Day (May 3)**

The current Japanese constitution took effect on this day in 1947.

## **Greenery Day (May 4)**

A day to commune with

nature and to be thankful for blessings.

## **Children's Day (May 5)**

A day to adore children and appreciate mothers.

## **Marine Day (3rd Mon. of July)**

A day to appreciate ocean and celebrate Japan as a marine nation.

## **Mountain Day (Aug. 11)**

A day to show appreciation to mountains.

## **Senior Citizen Day (3rd Mon. of Sept.)**

A day to pay respect to senior citizens.

## **Fall Equinox Day (Sept. 22 or 23)**

A day which supposedly has equal day and night length. Also a day to commemorate ancestors.

## **Sports Day (2nd Mon. of Oct.)**

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics kicked off on this day.

## **Culture Day (Nov. 3)**

A day to promote culture and arts.

## **Labor Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23)**

A day to commemorate labor and production and give one another thanks.

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# Chopsticks and Japanese dining

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

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

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

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

to the altar of our departed ancestors.

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

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

In Japan, you’ll have plenty of opportunities to master the technique at restaurants or at the home of Japanese

friends. As Japanese food gains popularity globally, having chopsticks skills will come in handy when you enjoy sushi, soba noodles and other Japanese and Asian dishes.

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

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

As the

## DID YOU KNOW?

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



# 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 "kokoroduke" and should be somewhere around 1,000 or 2,000 yen. These tips should be provided in a somewhat discrete manner. The currency should be placed in some sort of paper or envelop and provided to the hotel staff after you are escorted to your room. If you're staying at a high end western style hotel, it's acceptable to leave some coins underneath your pillow after you check out of the room. But it's not expected.

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

to a "service fee", then a tip has already been calculated into your bill. If you're ever in doubt, simply do not tip.

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

## Gifts of gratitude

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

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

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

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**Check this link!**

A step-by-step video on how to use chopsticks.



**Check this link!**

Learn about things you shouldn't do with chopsticks.

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.



Waribashi

– Takahiro Takiguchi

## Asking for help with your chopsticks

"Hashi no tsukaikata wo oshiete kudasai." = Please teach me how to use chopsticks.

(pronounced – hashee noh zooka-heekah tah woe ohsheeh eyteh coup-dah-sigh)

## Chopsticks chat

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

"Tadashii mochikata wo misete kudasai." = Show me how to hold them right.  
(pronounced – tah-dahshee-ee moecheekah tah woe me-set-teh coup-dah-sigh)

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

## In a Japanese restaurant

"Iraishshaimase" = Welcome!  
(pronounced – ee-rah-shy-mah-seh)

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

"Fooku wo kudasai." = May I have a fork, please.  
(pronounced – folk-oo woe coup-dah-sigh)

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

## Shopping for chopsticks

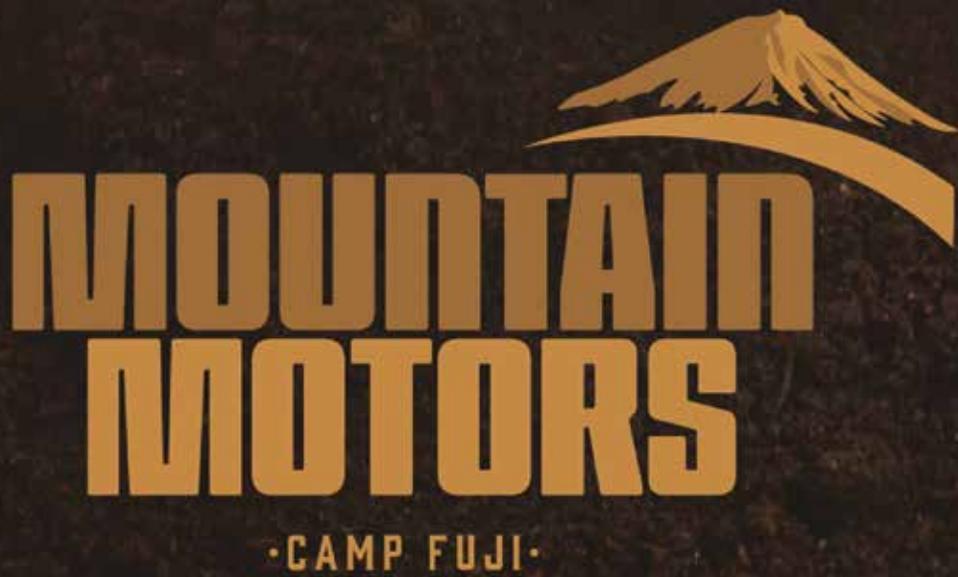
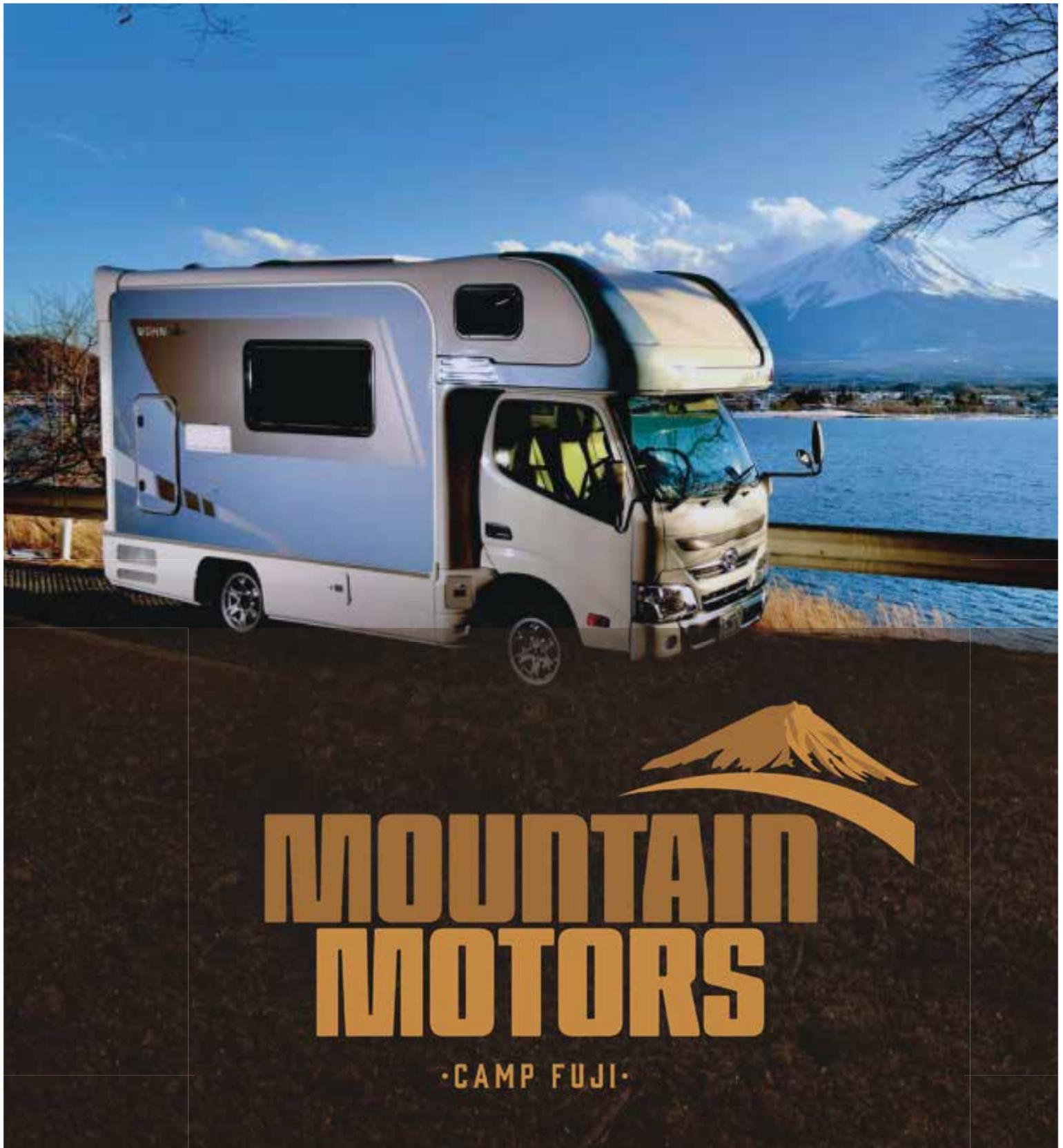
"Kono hashi ga hoshii desu." = I want this pair of chopsticks.  
(pronounced – cone-oh hashee gah hoe-shee deh-z)

"Kirei desune?" = They are pretty, aren't they?  
(pronounced – kee-ray deh-z-neh)

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

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

– Takahiro Takiguchi



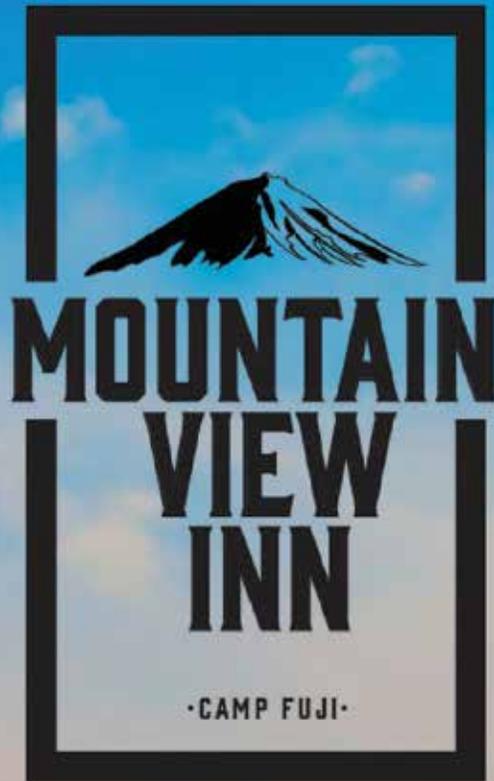
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# Getting connected with a cell phone

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

As you've likely already noticed, most bases in Japan already have a branch where you can get a phone without leaving your installation. There are 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](http://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 mainland Japan and Okinawa.

## docomo

[nttdocomo.co.jp/english](http://nttdocomo.co.jp/english)

It seems like almost every major technological advance in the Japanese cell phone industry has come from the minds of the people from NTT DOCOMO, whose

parent company, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT), is to telecommunications services in Japan what AT&T used to be in the U.S. So it is no surprise that NTT DOCOMO phones can receive signals just about anywhere in the country.

## au

[au.kddi.com/english](http://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.

## Allied Telesis

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

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## Websites worth bookmarking

### NEWS YOU CAN USE

Stars and Stripes and Stripes Japan are the best sources for military and local military community news, respectively. [Japan.Stripes.com](http://Japan.Stripes.com)

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

[ww2.stripes.com/subscribe/newsletters](http://ww2.stripes.com/subscribe/newsletters)

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

<https://militarychild.stripes.com/>

Looking for tips on where to go for a used car, a root canal or the best brunch in town? Every year, your fellow servicemembers, veterans and members of the military community vote for the Best of Pacific. Keep an eye out for the voting period and browse the results online.

<https://bestofpacific.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](http://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](http://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](http://www.gnavi.co.jp) (in Japanese)

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

[www.bento.com](http://www.bento.com)

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

[www.byfood.com](http://www.byfood.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](http://www.debito.org)

### JAPAN BLOGGING

If you're looking for some fun recipes, crafts or activities perfect for kids, visit Allie Whalen's blog where she writes about her and her family's adventures on Okinawa.

<https://www.alliemwhalen.com/blog>

### 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](http://en.japantravel.com)

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

### SKIING/SNOWBOARDING

This site for skiing and snowboarding in Japan covers almost every aspect of getting to the slopes. [www.snowjapan.com](http://www.snowjapan.com)

### KITCHEN SINK

A great site that covers a wide range of topics regarding Japan, especially learning the language. [www.tofugu.com](http://www.tofugu.com)

Provides details about museums, restaurants, historical sites and pop culture spots in the Tokyo area.

[www.timeout.jp/en/tokyo](http://www.timeout.jp/en/tokyo)

### CLASSIFIEDS

With more than 5,000 members, the Facebook page, "Yokota Swap Page" is a testament to its success. Competing Facebook page "New Yokota Swap" also tops 5,000 members. The "Yokosuka Resale" page also has an impressive 5,000+ membership, searching the name "Yokosuka resale" on Facebook will reveal at least two others.

"Misawa Web Sale 2.0" is home to more than 4,000 members, while "Camp Foster Yard Sale" sports more than 2,800

### GUIDES

Information on morale, welfare, and recreation for each branch of service is available at [www.campfuji.usmc-mccs.org/](http://www.campfuji.usmc-mccs.org/), [www.iwakuni.usmc-mccs.org/](http://www.iwakuni.usmc-mccs.org/), [www.navywmrsasebo.com/](http://www.navywmrsasebo.com/), [www.navywmratsugi.com/](http://www.navywmratsugi.com/), [www.navywmryokosuka.com/](http://www.navywmryokosuka.com/), [www.zama.armymwr.com/](http://www.zama.armymwr.com/), [www.35fss.com/](http://www.35fss.com/) (Misawa), [www.yokotafss.com/](http://www.yokotafss.com/)



## Ridin' the storm out with Dave

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



### GuruNavi

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



### Liberty MCCS OKINAWA

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

## Okinawan sites

### NEWS YOU CAN USE

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

[Okinawa.Stripes.com](http://Okinawa.Stripes.com)

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

### GENERAL INFO

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

The site is geared towards tourists to the island, which makes it perfect for someone just arriving and planning on staying for a few years. [www.beokinawa.jp](http://www.beokinawa.jp)

### GUIDES

Courtesy of the Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau, this searchable, user-friendly site has a detailed destination guide and summaries of topics. [visitokinawajapan.com](http://visitokinawajapan.com) On this website, you can enjoy photos and articles on tourist stops and activities on the island. [okinawaclip.com/en](http://okinawaclip.com/en)

Information on morale, welfare, and recreation for each branch of service is available at [www.mccsokinawa.com/](http://www.mccsokinawa.com/), [www.kadenafss.com/](http://www.kadenafss.com/), [www.navymwrokinawa.com/](http://www.navymwrokinawa.com/), [www.torii.armymwr.com/](http://www.torii.armymwr.com/)

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## 1 Iwakuni[MCCS]

Location: Building 410  
Crossroads Foodcourt  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-18:30  
Sun 10:00-17:30  
US holiday 12:00-17:00  
DSN: 253-5851  
TEL: 0827-79-5851

## 2 Sasebo[NEX]

Location: Building 129  
Bayside Foodcourt  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-20:00  
Sun/US Holiday 10:00-18:00  
DSN: 252-3563  
TEL: 0956-50-3563

## 3 Kadena[AAFES]

Location: Concessionaire Mall Bldg  
412 BX 1st floor  
Hour: Mon-Sun 09:00-20:00  
TEL: 1-512-672-7455  
TEL: 03-6868-2241

## 4 Kinser[AAFES]

Location: Building 1227 PX location  
Hour: Tue-Sun 10:00-18:00  
Mon Closed  
DSN: 637-3400  
TEL: 098-878-5769

## 5 Hansen[AAFES]

Location: Building 2419 Foodcourt / PX location  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-19:00  
Sun 10:00-18:00  
DSN: 623-5951  
TEL: 098-969-5951

## 6 Courtney[AAFES]

Location: Building 4131 Commissary / PX location  
Hour: Tue-Sun 10:00-18:00  
Mon Closed  
DSN: 622-6015  
TEL: 098-954-6015

## 7 Foster[AAFES]

Location: Building 1002 Market Place  
Hour: Mon-Sun 09:00-19:00  
DSN: 646-2104  
TEL: 098-971-2104

## 8 Yokota[AAFES]

Location: Building 570  
1st floor of the YCC  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-19:00  
Sun 10:00-18:00  
TEL: 1-214-261-2034  
TEL: 03-6868-2348

## 9 Yokosuka[NEX]

Location: Building 1559  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-20:00  
Sun 10:00-18:00  
DSN: 241-2001  
TEL: 0468-96-2001

## 10 Atsugi[NEX]

Location: Building 958  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-18:00  
Sun Closed  
DSN: 264-5858  
TEL: 0467-63-5858

## 11 Zama[AAFES]

Location: Building 406  
Exchange Annex Bldg.  
Hour: Mon-Sat 10:00-18:00  
Sun 10:00-17:00  
TEL: 1-214-261-2088  
TEL: 03-6868-2382

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<https://www.ymobile.jp/english/military/>



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# Do 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 on-base schools in Guam, mainland Japan, Okinawa and South Korea.

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.

## Registration

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

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

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

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. Students must be four years old by September 1 of the enrolling school year. Contact the school directly to learn more about eligibility requirements and how to apply for 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.

## 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 DODEA Pacific website.

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

## School liaison officers

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

## Special needs children

If your child has special needs, be sure to research the available support options



## Sites to visit

DODEA registration information  
[www.dodea.edu/registration-process.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/registration-process.cfm)



DODEA-Pacific  
[www.dodea.edu/Pacific](http://www.dodea.edu/Pacific)



Exchange Student Meal Program  
[www.aafes.com/about-exchange/school-lunch-program/](http://www.aafes.com/about-exchange/school-lunch-program/)



Exceptional Family Member Program  
[www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp)



Tutor.com (Free online tutoring for military families)  
[www.tutor.com/military](http://www.tutor.com/military)



for your desired location. DODEA schools follow student special education plans (IEPs) and are committed to providing supports for students within the least restrictive settings. Services are provided to the greatest extent possible within inclusion environments as well as small group or individualized supports as needed.

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

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

can also be accessed through the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).



## Home school support

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

Home schoolers using or receiving auxiliary services must meet the same eligibility requirements as dependents enrolled in 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.

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. These run in our community  
newspapers in mainland Japan,  
Okinawa, Guam and Korea in April.  
They are also all published at  
<https://militarychild.stripes.com/>. We  
hope you and your children join in on the fun.



— DODEA-Pacific

# Take advantage of on-base colleges

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.

The current contracted institutions are:

## Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

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



## University of Maryland Global Campus

UMGC is one of 12 regionally accredited, degree-granting institutions in the University System of Maryland (USM). The university brings quality higher



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

## Troy University

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



## Education Centers

### Mainland Japan

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

**Camp Zama**  
Bldg. 278  
DSN: 263-5068

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

**Camp Fuji**  
Bldg. 110  
DSN: 224-8353

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

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

### Okinawa

**Torii Station**  
Bldg. 207  
DSN: 652-4954

**MCAS Futenma**  
Bldg. 407  
DSN: 636-3036

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

**Camp Hansen**  
Bldg. 2339  
DSN: 623-4376

**Camp Foster**  
Bldg. 5679  
DSN: 645-7160

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

**Camp Courtney**  
Bldg. 4425  
DSN: 622-9694

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

# Military Tuition Assistance

If you've thought about going to college, but didn't know if you could afford it, then the Military Tuition



Read more

Assistance program may be just the benefit you need. The program is available to active duty, National Guard and Reserve Component service members. While the decision to pursue a degree may be a difficult one personally, TA can lessen your financial concerns considerably, since it now pays up to 100% of tuition expenses for semester hours costing \$250 or less.

After the completion of a course, an officer using TA must fulfill a service obligation that runs parallel with – not in addition to – any existing service obligation.

## Coverage amounts and monetary limits

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

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

## Tuition assistance vs. VA education benefits

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

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

## Eligibility

All four service branches and the U.S. Coast Guard offer financial assistance for voluntary, off-duty education programs in support of service members' personal and professional goals. The program is open to officers, warrant officers and enlisted active-duty service personnel. In addition, members of the National Guard and Reserve Components may be eligible for TA based on their service eligibility. To be eligible for TA, an enlisted service member must have enough time remaining in service to complete the course for which he or she has applied.

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

## TA benefits and restrictions

Tuition assistance will cover the following expenses:

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

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

Tuition assistance will not cover the following expenses:

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

# Space-A travel

## A way to see the world

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

### What is Space-A?

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

### Who can fly Space-A?

Uniformed services duty personnel, their dependents, Red Cross personnel, USO personnel who also support the mission, and veterans. Passengers may not use the flights for personal gain, in relationship to employment, to find a house or for other prohibited activities.

### What do I need to qualify?

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

### How much does it cost?

Most flights offered through

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

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

### Where can I go on Space-A?

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

### When is the best time to fly?

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

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

### Where can I register?

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

The website also offers a smartphone app where, for a couple of dollars, users can quickly sign up for the flights and destinations. Also, save time by monitoring terminal activity

via the phone app.

### What happens after I register?

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

On flight day, decide which terminal you think would be the best chance for Space-A departure and head out. It helps to phone the terminals that you requested for departure and to monitor recent schedules. Check online and on Facebook for your favorite Space-A terminals' information. Available seats are now identified between two to five hours prior to departure but being at the terminal early will help you vie for seats. Be "travel-ready" with the proper luggage, any dependents and paperwork, your car parked or rental returned, etc. If your name is called and you are not physically present to hear the roll call, your name will be put at the bottom of your category list, and you may not make that flight.

### What are the categories?

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

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

EML status.

- Unaccompanied military dependent of non-deployed servicemember.
- Retirees, Reservists.

### What baggage can I bring?

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

### What else should I know?

- 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).
- Sometimes travelers attempt to catch a hop at neighboring base terminals to maximize chances of getting on a flight.
- For your return flight, 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.
- When flying Space-A, be ready for anything.

For restrictions and information regarding COVID-19, please visit: <https://www.amc.af.mil/AMC-Travel-Site/COVID-19/>



## PACIFIC LOCATIONS

### OKINAWA KADENA AB

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



### MAINLAND JAPAN MISAWA AB

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



### MCAS IWAKUNI

Bldg. 727  
Phone: 315-253-5509



### KOREA OSAN AB

Bldg. 648  
Phone: 315-784-6883



### GUAM ANDERSEN AFB

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



### NAF ATSUGI

Bldg. 206  
Phone: 0467-63-3118



### YOKOTA AB

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



### KUNSAN AB

Bldg. 2858  
Phone: 063-470-4666



## Quick links to ease travel

Make reservations on the AMC Space-A Travel page



PE travel FAQs



MC Pet Travel Site



Travel site for military, DOD & veterans



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## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The health and safety of our guests and employees is our first priority. In consideration of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, we have enhanced our standards of cleanliness and hygiene protocols and are taking precautionary and response measures that meet the "Safe Travels" standard by World Travel & Tourism Council. For more information, please visit our website.



## **ROOMS**

Guam Reef Hotel has 426 well-appointed stylish rooms and is located in the heart of Tumon. Our Beach Tower and Infinity Tower offer you a wide range of rooms from modern minimalist to rooms with panoramic views of Tumon Bay. All rooms include a flat-screen TV, hot/cold water dispenser and free Wi-Fi for your pleasant stay.

## **FITNESS & AMENITIES**

A fitness room (678 sq ft) is available to help you unwind and further enhance your stay with us. We also have a microwave on every floor and a free laundry facility located at the lobby level, available 24 hours for your convenience.





# Guam Reef Hotel

*On The Beach in The Heart of Guam*



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 1-671-649-2229 / 1-671-646-6881

 [reservations@guamreef.com](mailto:reservations@guamreef.com)

***\*Military Rates available***



1317 Pale San Vitores Road, Tamuning, Guam 96913

# 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**, 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 ([www.hyperdia.com/en/](http://www.hyperdia.com/en/)) or Jorudan ([world.jorudan.co.jp/mln/en/](http://world.jorudan.co.jp/mln/en/)), 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), including a 500 yen refundable deposit, you can buy your first 2,000 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 800-1,000 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.

Map out mass transit trips at: Hyperdia or Jorudan



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 Hamamatsu cho in Tokyo. Moreover, it can be used as money in many convenience stores, station kiosks and other shops, as well as to make purchases from many vending machines and to rent coin lockers at stations.

JR East (Suica card) and major kanto railines and the Tokyo Metro subway,



Ikura desuka?



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

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

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

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

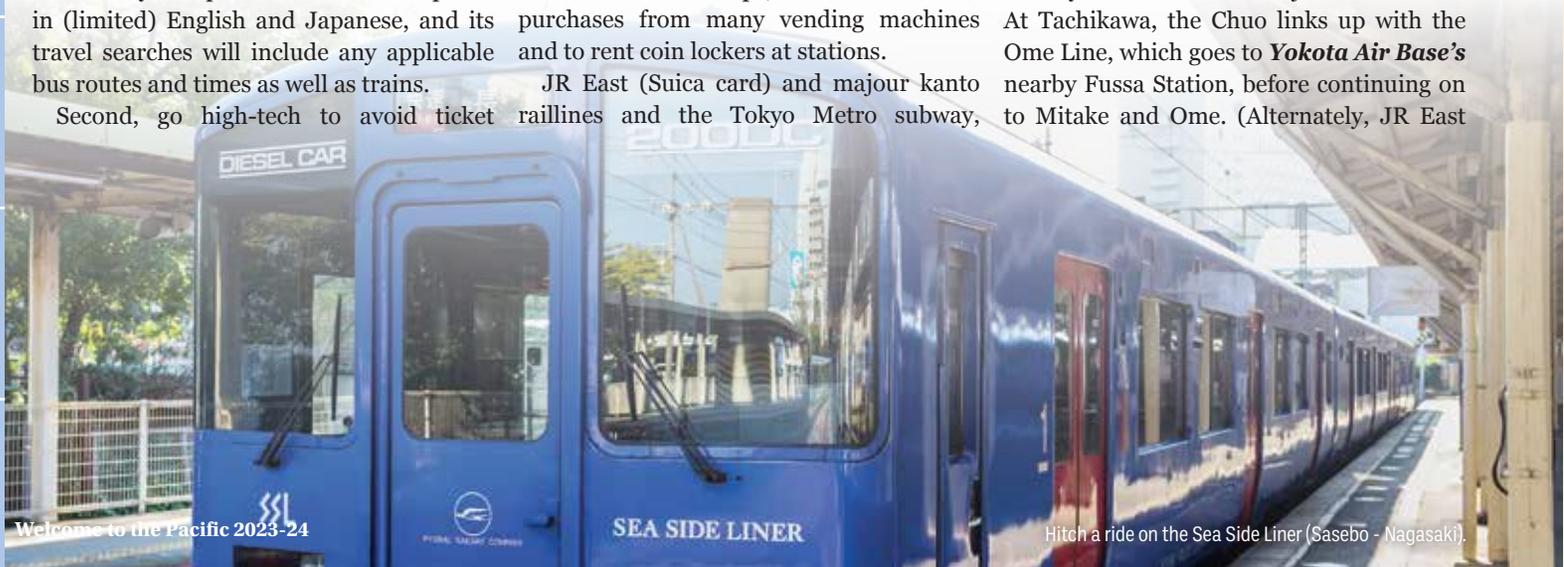
### Mainland maneuvering

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



Hitch a ride on the Sea Side Liner (Sasebo - Nagasaki).



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

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

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



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 Aomori Railway Line stops at Hachinohe Station (15 minutes south of Misawa), where you can connect with the Tohoku Shinkansen bullet train for 580 yen (\$4.40). Aomori (City) Station is about an hour north of Misawa by train

**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.

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(1,830 yen). Misawa Airport is a 15-minute bus ride from Misawa Station (400 yen).

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

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

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

JR Sasebo Station is just over one and a half miles from **Sasebo Naval Base**. Rapid Seaside Liner trains get to Nagasaki in just over 90 minutes for about 1,680 yen (\$13).

See TRANSIT on Page 40

## 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. Both also offer cards for child fares available at select train stations. Ask the gate attendant for assistance to obtain one of the cards designated for child use.

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 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/welcomesuica/](http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/welcomesuica/)  
[www.pasmo.co.jp/visitors/en/](http://www.pasmo.co.jp/visitors/en/)

### Let's go!

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.



TRANSIT continued from Page 39

The Midori Limited Express goes to Hakata Station in Fukuoka City in about one two hours (4,700 yen). From there, a one-mile subway ride takes you to Fukuoka Airport (260 yen).

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

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

### Exploring Okinawa Bus service

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

Monorail in and around central Naha. The bus network is quite extensive, but finding the right bus to take can be complicated. The frequency of service also differs between lines. It is, however, a relatively inexpensive way to travel. There is a number assigned to each line. When riding a line between No. 1 through 17, enter from the front and exit the rear door except No. 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16; the fare is usually paid when entering. For line No. 18 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. For No. 7, 8, 10, 12, 94, enter from the rear door, pick up a ticket, and exit the front door.

Buses No.1 through No. 19 cost a fixed 240-yen fare (approx. \$2.11) for adults and 120-yen (approx. \$1.06) for minors, except No. 8 and 10, whose fare are either 240 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 300 or 250 yen for adults and 150 or 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 installation.

**1. Camp Schwab:** No. 22, 77 (These lines run between Nago and Uruma, and Nago and Naha respectively, going by Camp Schwab and Camp Hansen. No. 77 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 stop at Naha Air Port)

**3. Camp Foster:** No. 20, 25, 60, 92, 93, 96, 125, 152 (No. 20 runs between Naha and Nago. The other lines connect Aeon Mall Okinawa RYCOM 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 and 152 go to Naha Air Port. No. 125 makes a stop near Shuri Castle on the way.)

**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, 62, 228. (28 runs between Naha and Yomintan. 62 between Sunabe near Kadena Air Base and Yomitan. 228 between Shintoshin (Naha) and Yomitan.

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

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



Shintoshin)

Okinawa Urban Monorail, or Yui Rail, is another way to get around in Naha. It runs from Naha Airport to Tedako Uranishi (Urasoe City) in about 37 minutes, and costs between 230 yen to 370 yen. A oneday pass is 800 yen and two days is 1,400 yen. Information on routes, schedules and fares is available online in English

### Taxi service

Taxis are widely available and inexpensive. The initial drop on the meter is 560 yen for the first 1.75 kilometers and then 70 yen for every additional 365 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 saying "Authorized on Base." There is also another type of taxi service available on Okinawa as well as mainland Japan. Known as "daiko," it is used by people who can't drive due to alcohol. Two drivers and a taxi will be sent to the location, one of whom takes the customer's car home with the customer in the passenger seat.

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



### CONTACT INFO

Bus Map Okinawa



Okinawa Urban Monorail





# Getting behind the wheel

## Buying, registering and driving a vehicle

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

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

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

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

high.

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

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

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

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

The registration process isn’t

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

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

Always insist on a warranty when buying a car from a dealer.

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

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

pass the JCI inspection. The process is cumbersome. Either you get used to it and do the paperwork, or you have someone do it for you.

**Another cost is road tax. The amount you must pay for the annual road tax, which is due in May, depends on the size of the vehicle’s engine. Please see Page 42 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.







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# Road wage

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

stations to process payments. Remember that payments must be made in yen.

All Department of Defense personnel are required to pay their road taxes in order to receive new base vehicle decals. Payments must be made by May 31 (the end of April on NAF Atsugi), either on base or at the local Japanese

tax office, and new USFJ decals obtained by June 1. Vehicles without new decals will not be allowed to be driven on or after June 1, depending on the base.

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

all of them must be registered at the same time.

Anyone can pay road tax for deployed or absent vehicle owners, but a power of attorney may be required for anyone other than a spouse to obtain a base decal. In mainland Japan, contact your base VRO for more information. On Okinawa, contact the Joint Service Vehicle Registration Office at 645-7481/3963.

## 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 load tax off base:

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

## How much?

Road taxes are determined by the number shown on top of each vehicle's license plate, which identifies the vehicle's engine size. Of course taxes, like all charges, are subject to change; here are last year's tax rates. Check with your on-base registration office for 2022 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



While Japan is known for its impeccable public transportation, a personal vehicle will help you get around base and even help you explore attractions near and far.

When you arrive, buying a vehicle may very well be one of the first things you do after checking into your new base. The following words and phrases will help you negotiating a Japanese car dealer outside of the gate.

**"Kono kuruma wa ikura desuka?"** = How much is this car?

("kono" = this, "kuruma" = car, "ikura desuka" = how much is..?)  
(Pronounced: cone-oh koo-roo-mah wuh eekoorah desookuh)

**"Doru wa tsukae masuka?"** = Can I use dollars? (Do you take dollars?)

("doru" = dollar, "wa tsukae masuka" = can I use..?)  
(Pronounced: dough-roo wuh zookah-ey mass-oo-kah)

**"Yasuku narimasenka?"** = Can you give me a discount?

("yasuku" = cheeper, "narimasenka" = can you make...?)  
(Pronounced: ya-zoo-koo nah-ree-mass-en-kah)

**"Kono kuruma wa nannen-sei desuka?"** = What year was this car made? (How old is this car?)

("nannen-sei" = ..year made)  
(Pronounced: cone-oh wuh nahn-neh-n-say desookuh)

**"Shuurireki wa arimasuka?"** =

Does the car have any repair history? ("shuurireki" = repair history, "arimasuka" = is there..?)

(Pronounced: shoo-ree-reh-kee wuh are-ee-mass-kah)

**Hoken wa doko de kakeraremasuka?** = Where can I insure the car?

("hoken" = insurance, "doko" = where, "kakeraremasuka" = insure/take)

(Pronounced: Ho-ken wuh dough-koh deh kah-keh-are-eh-mass-kah)

**"Donna hoshoo to shiharai hoo hoo ga arimasuka?"** = What kind of warranties and payment plans do you have?

("donna" = what kind of, "hoshoo" = warranty, "to" = and, "shiharai hoo hoo" = payment plans)

(Pronounced: dough-nah ho-show toe she-hair-eye ho-ho-o gah are-ee-mass-kah)

- Takahiro Takiguchi



# Electronic tolls

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

**Japan ETC card:**  
[www.japanetccard.com](http://www.japanetccard.com)

cards. There is an alternative.

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 1,200 yen (about \$9) per month and 989 yen for extended months.



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[afspa.org/fsbp](https://afspa.org/fsbp)

# Car sales for military community



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

There are others with close connections to the military overseas. Among them are U.S. Military Sales ([usmilsales.com](http://usmilsales.com)), which sells Volvos at discounted prices, and BMW Military Sales ([www.bmw-special-sales.com/en/topics/military-sales/overview.html](http://www.bmw-special-sales.com/en/topics/military-sales/overview.html)). If you are not looking for a new luxury car but want something a cut above what can be found on a base lemon lot, here are some dealers near U.S. bases that cater to SOFA personnel.

## Camp Foster

**B. C. Used Cars** in Chatan has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. [www.bc-used-cars.jp](http://www.bc-used-cars.jp) or **098-936-6366**

**Johnny's Used Cars**, outside Foster's Legion Gate, offers a one-year limited warranty, zero-interest financing for up to 24 months and a no-down-payment program. [www.johnnys-cars.com](http://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](http://pitstopcars.jp) **098-898-4061**

## Camp Shields

**BC Used cars Garage and Rental Car** has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. [www.bc-used-cars.jp](http://www.bc-used-cars.jp) or **098-938-0302**

## Kadena Air Base

**BC Used cars Garage and Rental Car**, outside Gate 2, has English-speaking staff and accepts payment in U.S. dollars. [www.bc-used-cars.jp](http://www.bc-used-cars.jp) or **098-932-6651**

**Johnny's used cars legion gate**, just outside Gate 1, offers a one-year limited warranty, zero-interest financing for up to 24 months and no-down-payment program. [www.johnnys-cars.com](http://www.johnnys-cars.com) **098-982-0312**

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

**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 20-month payment plan with zero-percent interest. **098-933-2685** or [www.paylessokinawa.com](http://www.paylessokinawa.com)

## MCAS Iwakuni

**Kaz Used Cars**, near the main gate, has English-speaking staff and all vehicles are warranted with registration included in price. They also provide repair/junking and JCI services. Call **0827-35-4917** and visit their web site at <http://agent-kaz.com>

**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](http://www.autorec.co.jp/iwakuni.php)

**Aki auto used car**, located outside the main gate with a nice selection and friendly service. Call **090-7501-8792** or FB Messenger.

## Misawa Air Base

**A-1 Used Cars** 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](http://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**

**Phoenix Used Cars:** Offers a wide range of used cars. Call **050-3538-8456** or visit [www.japanesecartrade.com/phoenix/](http://www.japanesecartrade.com/phoenix/)

**Araliya Trading Company (ATC)** has built a reputation of quality service and reliability. Call **080-4328-8025** or visit [atc.zama.com](http://atc.zama.com)

## 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 **090-2550-3395** or visit [www.sasebo-y-post.com/](http://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

**CheapToDrive** is across Route 16 from Club Alliance and is a one-stop shop for your vehicle needs. They are licensed by US Military Sales Limited providing you peace of mind when shopping for your next pre-owned vehicle. All vehicles sold at CheapToDrive undergo a 102-point check and come with a 30-day comprehensive warranty. Get your car insured with the on-premise insurance office, which also offers car junking. View vehicle stock at [www.cheaptodrive.com](http://www.cheaptodrive.com) Call **090-3573-2017** or visit [facebook.com/cheap2drive](https://facebook.com/cheap2drive)

**U.S. Navy Cars** Just across and a couple of steps from Yokosuka's main gate. U.S. Navy Cars offers a wide selection of cars to fit you and your family's needs. In-stock vehicle purchase includes 60-day warranty, detailing inside and out and JCI. <https://www.facebook.com/usnavycarsyokosuka> **080-9389-2021**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

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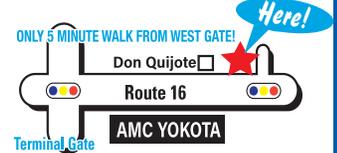


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¥450,000 ~ ¥800,000

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1,500 kgs to 1,999kgs weight car  
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**¥64,000**

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**¥60,000**

- 2years JCI
- Inspection
- Weight tax
- Stamps

Parts will be Extra

~WARRANTY~

- Engine & Transmission 1 YEAR
- Bumper to Bumper 6 MONTHS

• Contact "TOMO" for details



@a1\_misawa

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

**Fuji Automotive**

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

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

**Yokota Air Base**

**Japan Auto Ltd.** located outside the Yokota East Gate, 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. Call for free pick up from Yokota Air Base to our shop at **090-1052-2964** or visit [www.japanautoonline.com](http://www.japanautoonline.com)

**Kelly & Kelly Auto Sales** is a one-stop-shop located only a 5-minute walk from Yokota's Terminal Gate. Kelly & Kelly has been serv-

ing the military community for over 55 Years. With a wide variety of at least 50 vehicles, they offer a warranty on all purchases with various payment option plans. For a free pick-up on base or questions, call **042-551-0556**. Open daily, except Sunday.

**Real Speed Auto** is a 10-minute walk from Yokota's Fussa Gate and offers free pick-up service. They provide a full 90-day warranty and free vehicle registration. English/ Japanese and payment plans okay! TOP \$\$\$ paid for your vehicle disposal! View their cars at

[www.realspeed.jp](http://www.realspeed.jp) Call **042-513-3593** WhatsApp 080-3452-3341 or contact via FB Real Speed Auto

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

**Car junking**

**24 Express** will pick up from any base in the Kanto area and pay to junk your used car when you are scrapping your car, at PCS or any other time. Call **090-7123-7100** for more details or visit [www.24express.jp](http://www.24express.jp)

**Car insurance**

**Chubb Insurance Japan** is available on or near US bases in Mainland Japan and Okinawa. They offer US Forces Automobile Insurance, JCI and

Renter's Insurance, too. They accept US dollars and credit cards to make your life easier! More info: <https://www.chubb.com/jp-en/individuals-families/auto-for-us-military.html>

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

Proudly serving the military community of Okinawa for over 35 years. Voted Best Place to Buy a Car!

Website



Military Used Car Sales

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Google MAP



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**All vehicles include...**

- Sales Tax
- 2 Year JCI
- Road Tax (Current Year)
- 0% Financing - Instant Approval
- 1 Year Bumper to Bumper FULL Warranty



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Down**

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Sat, 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Sun, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Tel: 098-982-0312**



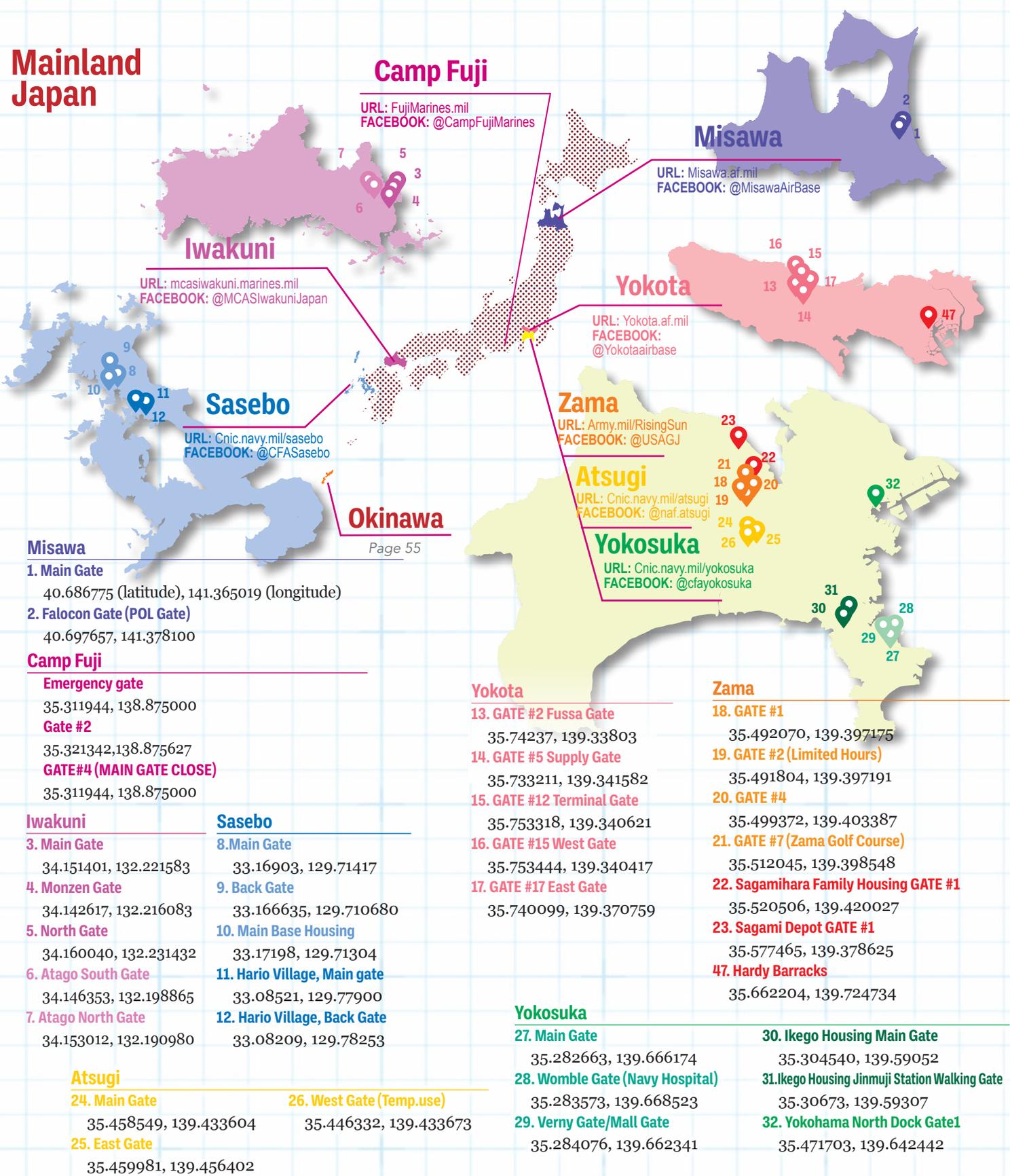
Johnny's is conveniently  
located right outside of  
Foster's Gate#6

**www.johnnys-cars.com**

# Camp coordinates

## Travel base to base

Thanks to GPS, getting lost is nearly a thing of the past. Unfortunately, with military bases, and their many 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 device of choice, and you're sure to make that 7 a.m. tee time.



Culture  
 Online  
 Education  
 Transportation  
 Private vehicles  
 Base breakdown  
 Off base  
 Food  
 Leisure

# Okinawa

- Torii Station**  
LOCATION: Yomitan  
URL: [army.mil/okinawa](http://army.mil/okinawa)  
FACEBOOK: @USAGOkinawa
- Kadena Air Base**  
LOCATION: Kadena & Chatan & Okinawa  
URL: [Kadena.af.mil](http://Kadena.af.mil)  
FACEBOOK: @KadenaAirBase
- Camp Schwab**  
LOCATION: Nago & Ginoza  
URL: [mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Schwab](http://mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Schwab)  
FACEBOOK: @SchwabSMP
- Camp Hansen**  
LOCATION: Kin  
URL: [mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Hansen](http://mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Hansen)  
FACEBOOK: @cp.hansen.18
- Camp Foster & Lester**  
LOCATION: Ginowan, Chatan and Kitanakagusuku  
URL: [mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Foster](http://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](http://cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrj/installations/cfa_okinawa/about/installations/camp-shields.html)  
Facebook: @COMFLEACTOKI
- Camp Courtney & McTureous**  
LOCATION: Uruma City  
URL: [mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Courtney](http://mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Courtney)  
FACEBOOK: @CampCourtneyandMcTureous
- Camp Kinser**  
LOCATION: Urasoe  
URL: [mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Kinser](http://mcbbutler.marines.mil/Camps/Camp-Kinser)  
FACEBOOK: @CampKinser
- MCAS Futenma**  
LOCATION: Ginowan  
URL: [Mcasfutenma.marines.mil](http://Mcasfutenma.marines.mil)  
FACEBOOK: @hhsmcasfutenma
- White Beach**  
LOCATION: Uruma  
URL: [cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrj/installations/cfa\\_okinawa/about/installations/WhiteBeachHistory.html](http://cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrj/installations/cfa_okinawa/about/installations/WhiteBeachHistory.html)  
FACEBOOK: @COMFLEACTOKI



## 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 #7 26.393854149941895, 127.8529440789544  
Gate #12 26.389576, 127.851371 (PX/Commissary main Gate)  
Gate #13 26.384978, 127.850379 (PX/Commissary Back Gate) is closed.
- 36. Camp McTureous Main Gate**  
26.382011, 127.846498
- 37. White Beach Main Gate**  
26.304794, 127.915098
- 38. Torii Station**  
Gate #1 26.385087, 127.739276  
Gate #3 26.374517, 127.745633  
Gate #4 26.370649, 127.735737  
Gate #5 26.384708, 127.732663
- 39. Kadena Air Base**  
Gate #1 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 #4 26.269236, 127.708723  
Gate #5 26.248568, 127.691443 The Gate is closed.
- 44. Camp Shields Gate #7152**  
26.368009, 127.803037
- 45. Chibana Housing Main Gate**  
26.363976, 127.79717
- 46. Naha Port Gate #1**  
26.204525, 127.670788
- 47. Okuma Beach**  
26.7375208, 128.1590747



WingStreet



## PIZZA HUT LOCATIONS:

### Yokosuka 1000-2100

DELIVERY IS AVAILABLE

Offering: Pizza, Personal Pan Pizza, Wings  
Pasta, Breadsticks, Dessert, and multiple drinks.

### Atsugi 1030-2000

DELIVERY IS AVAILABLE

Offering: Pizza, Personal Pan Pizza, Wings  
Pasta, Breadsticks, Dessert, and multiple drinks.

\*We extended Pizza Hut Delivery hours on Friday and Saturday until 2200.



LIVE MÁS



## TACO BELL LOCATIONS:

### Yokosuka 1000-2100

DRIVE-UP WINDOW AVAILABLE

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts  
Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.

\*We extended Yokosuka Taco Bells Drive thru hours on Friday and Saturday until 2200.

### Atsugi 1000-2000

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts  
Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.

### Sasebo 1030-2000

Offering: Tacos, Burritos, Quesadillas, Salads, Desserts  
Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.



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# Keeping up with the law

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

## Cell phone laws

- In Japan, as of Dec. 2019 penalties were toughened for drivers caught talking on cellphones or holding them while looking at their screens behind the wheel.
  - 100,000 yen (\$770) or up to six months imprisonment with hard labor maximum.
  - Drivers who pose a danger to traffic or cause an accident while using a mobile device, face up to one year imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen (\$2,300)
  - On-base: Some bases in Japan and on Okinawa operate on a point system. Talking or texting on a cellphone while operating a motor vehicle will get drivers 3 points on their driving record and a one-week driving suspension.
    - 1st offense- 1-week suspension and 3 points
    - 2nd offense – 1-month suspension and 3 points
    - 3rd offense – 1-year suspension and 3 points
  - Additionally, drivers on base who accumulate 12 points in a year or 18 points in two years will have their driving permit suspended for six months.

## Carrying a knife

- Double-edged blades or switchblades longer than 2.2 inches (5.5 cm) as well as spears, single-edge knives and swords with blades longer than 6 inches (15 cm) are

not to be carried without permission. Violators could face up to three years imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen (\$3,800).

- Exceptions for knives with blades longer than 2.4 inches are for home cutlery. The penalty for carrying knives larger than this is up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen (\$2,300).
- There are exemptions for blades used for cooking, fishing and other utilitarian purposes, as well as for someone with special authorization, (e.g. for use in an art or sport).
- For genuine or antique sword souvenirs, check with customs before making a purchase. Some items may be deemed cultural treasures that can't leave the country; if so, they may be confiscated at airports.

## Child custody disputes

- When it comes to divorce, Japan's family courts do not issue joint custody of children. Sole custody is usually granted to the mother.
- In April 2014, the 1980 Hague Convention on Aspects of International Child Abduction went into effect after decades of Japanese government's refusal to sign on. Now, authorities must help foreign spouses locate their children. However, the new law, which is not retroactive, only applies when the child was a resident of the foreign country before the abduction and their return is not guaranteed – only a ruling on the matter in a Japanese court.
- In cases that the Hague convention does not cover, such as when an international family resides in Japan and the Japanese spouse flees with the child elsewhere in country, her or his counterpart has very little, if any, legal recourse. For all intents and purposes, the parent who already has the child has de facto sole custody, even if it has not been legally

granted. Authorities usually will not treat such incidents as abductions.

## Saying you're sorry

- Apologies and cash payments play an unofficial – yet very important – role in Japan's legal system when it comes to civil disputes and criminal cases.
- "Jidan" is an informal out-of-court settlement for damages and/or to express remorse, is sometimes used in civil disputes such as fender-benders, damage claims or altercations. It is best to get the terms and finality of such agreements in writing. You may want to consider foregoing jidan and get the local authorities involved.
- "Gomen nasai" (I'm sorry) money is a payment made with an apology paid to the alleged victim. This can affect whether you are arrested, released into U.S. custody or prosecuted. (An apology needn't be an admission of guilt, but condolences for the alleged victim's hardship.) Japan's conviction rate is high, so it's not in your best interest, no matter how innocent you may be, to get indicted.
- A letter of apology to an alleged victim from the accused can impact that decision (submit copies of the letter). Apologizing to, paying the alleged victim (usually a lot) and getting them to write a letter on your behalf carries even more weight. Even if you are convicted, an apology prior to indictment – in word and monetary deed – may impact sentencing significantly.

## Working off base

- As in the U.S., proper visas and/or permits are required for foreigners to legally work in Japan.
- SOFA allows some exceptions for military and civilians who fall under it. However, they are responsible for paying Japanese taxes on income earned on the Japanese economy.





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

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

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

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



▶ • 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.

- Review USFJ instruction 36-1001 for the full details.
- SOFA individuals are also prohibited from commercial activity. This includes ownership of, interest in, or private employment at a business that is, detrimental to the best interest of the United States, or affiliated with drugs, trafficking or prostitution. SOFA persons also may not:

- Work in an establishment whose primary service is the sale of alcohol to the Japanese public.
- Work in a business that is in anyway connected with gambling or making/trafficking weapons.
- Sell real estate, stocks, bonds, insurance, securities or mutual fund shares unless licensed by an appropriate U.S. authority and comply with Japanese law.
- Appear in any commercial media, stage plays or make recordings for publication without prior approval.
- Wear military uniforms or refer to their service affiliation while working off base if they are active-duty.

### Biking laws

One thing you'll notice is that Japan has a large amount of bicycle traffic. Locals commute to work, go grocery shopping and transport their kids to school on their bikes. There are strict laws in Ja-

pan regarding bicycles, but in reality, you will find there are more than a few riders who break them. Here are a few tips to make sure you abide by local biking laws:

- Don't ignore traffic signals or ride in prohibited areas.
- Ride on the left side of the street. Bicycles are classified as vehicles.
- If you live on base, you must register your bike at your Pass & ID office. If you buy a bike in Japan, the bike shop will help you register it with the local government if you live off base.
- Do not ride on sidewalks unless the areas are marked for shared space with pedestrians. (Children under 13 and adults over 70 years old and the handicapped are permitted to ride on sidewalks)
- Stop at crosswalks and if you need to turn, you need to follow crosswalks (do not go into traffic/turning lanes for vehicles).
- Don't ring bicycle bells at pedestrians. Pedestrians are given priority and cyclists are expected to dismount if necessary.
- After dark, you must have a front light on your bicycle.
- Do not use umbrellas or talk on your cellphone while riding.
- Children must wear a helmet if under age 13 or if under the age of six in a designated child seat.
- On base, riders must wear a helmet at all times.
- Only park your bike at designated bike parking areas. Parking in prohibited areas will get you a warning ticket or it could be impounded.
- Be aware of pedestrians, vehicles and other cyclists while you're on the road and follow safety rules at all times.



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

## Don't drink and drive!

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

- Japan's traffic law also goes after passengers who knowingly ride with intoxicated drivers – and anyone who provides alcohol or a vehicle to someone that subsequently drives drunk.
  - Three months confinement and 500,000 yen (\$3,800) for refusing a blood alcohol test.
  - Penalties for drunk driving include up to:
    - 15 years confinement and 500,000 yen for a hit and run while under the influence of alcohol.
    - Three years confinement or 1 million yen for a blood alcohol content of 0.25 milligrams per liter (0.05 percent) or more.
    - Five years confinement or 1 million yen for providing the driver with the vehicle; and

three years or 500,000 yen for providing alcohol to, or riding with, the driver.

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

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

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

For more information and travel alerts,  
 visit the U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Japan:  
<https://jp.usembassy.gov/>



# COASKA Welcomes Military Community!

Yokosuka waterfront mall is the perfect place to shop, eat and have fun!

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Yakiniku Restaurant



**Tonkatsu Wako**  
Cutlet Specialty



**SUSHIRO**  
Conveyor Belt Sushi



**Marugen Ramen**  
Ramen Shop



**Marugame Udon**  
Udon Noodle



**Kamakura Pasta**  
Fresh Pasta Specialty



**Saizeriya**  
Italian Restaurant



**Daito**  
Chinese Restaurant



**Yokosuka Gourmet Kantai**  
Curry-Hamburger-Cheese Cake



**SANDAIME BUNJI**  
Beef Tongue Dish



**Grill Topo**  
Hamburg, Steak & Salad bar



**Kooshin Farm**  
Meat Dining



**AMARA**  
Curry & Nan



**Yokosuka Navy Curry Bayside Kitchen**  
Buffet Restaurant



**TSUKIJI-SHOKUDO GEN-CHAN**  
Japanese Seafood Cuisine



**OTOYA**  
Japanese Restaurant



**Nabeyakigohan shirokujichu**  
Japanese Cuisine



**Chegoya**  
Korean Home Made Cuisine



**Ringer Hut**  
Nagasaki Champon



**BAQET**  
Bakery Restaurant



**DuckyDuck**  
Casual Restaurant



**McDonald's**  
Hamburger Restaurant



**Kentucky Fried Chicken**  
Fried Chicken



**mister Donut**  
Donut & Dim sum



**Dipper Dan**  
Crepe



**Baskin Robbins**  
Ice Cream



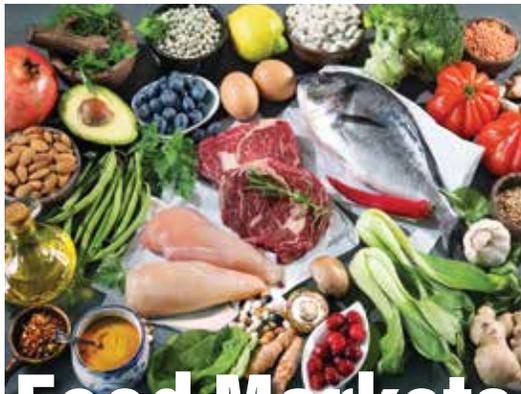
**Tapioca Sweets Bull Pulu**  
Tapioca Drink



**Starbucks Coffee**  
Specialty Coffee Shop



**TULLY'S COFFEE**  
Specialty Coffee



**AEON STYLE**  
Supermarket



**GODIVA**  
Chocolate

# Food Markets

**Yokosuka Kooshin**

Fresh meat, fruits & vegetables, side dishes

**Nagai Suisan**

Fish market with fresh fish and prepared seafood dishes

**WAKU WAKU HIROBA**

Local Direct Sales Open Space

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Fashionable clothing, household goods or a present for a friend!

### Lifestyle Goods



**MUJI**

Clothing, household goods and food items



**NITORI**

Home furnishing

### Fashion



**H&M**

Fashion, homeware & kid's clothes



**Gap**

Women's, men's, kid's & baby clothes



**GU**

Clothing

## Family Fun!

Check out a movie, or get some exercise at Adventure Park!



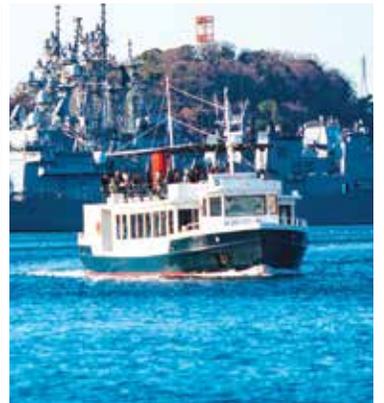
**SPACE ATHLETIC TONDEMI**  
urban-type Athletics



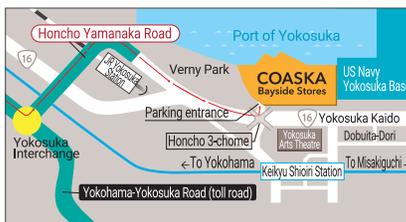
**SPORT Bowling**  
Bowling Alley



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Cineplex



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Alphabetic order:

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### ★ GEA Insurance

Okinawa Kadena Head Office: TEL 098-988-7380

Okinawa Camp Hansen Office: DSN: 623-5025

Okinawa Kadena Air Base Office: TEL 080-6499-7691

Okinawa MCAS Futenma Office: DSN: 636-5203

### ★ Johnny's Used Cars

Okinawa Foster Office: TEL 098-982-0312

Iwakuni Office: TEL 0827-35-6507

### ★ Lucky's Car Insurance

Misawa Air Base Office: DSN: 226-3303

Lucky's Main Office: TEL 0176-53-5959

### ★ OTS-Insurance

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

### ★ WILTEC Insurance

Okinawa Kadena Head Quarter : TEL 098-989-3737

Okinawa Kadena Main Office: TEL 098-936-2710

Okinawa Kadena Air Base Office: TEL 03-5050-1050

Okinawa Camp Foster 1st Office: TEL 098-971-4601

Okinawa Camp Foster 2nd Office: TEL 098-970-9010

Okinawa Camp Courtney: TEL 098-954-6308

Okinawa Camp Hansen: TEL 098-954-4635

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Atsugi Base Office: TEL 046-763-6544

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Chubb Insurance has been dedicated to serving US military members across Japan. Please contact any of our partner agents for a quote on your auto or home insurance.



# Know where to park, or pay price

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

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

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

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

## Parking police

It is very common to see parking enforcement officers (generally two people in green uniforms) walking the sidewalks and backstreets looking for cars illegally parked. And

they have no mercy on you. They'll photograph your illegally parked car, and post a ticket on the windshield within a minute. They're like ninjas.

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

But beware, a ticket is not the worst thing that can happen. In many cases, especially on congested streets, the police will put a lock on the wheel well of an illegally parked car and call a tow truck. The owner of the car is responsible for paying the tow truck fee and parking ticket, as well as the

cost of storage from where you pick up your car after it's towed. This can run you close to \$400.

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

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

sert the appropriate amount of yen. After confirming that the locking flap has lowered, exit the parking space within 3 minutes. Remember, the locking flap will rise again automatically after 3 to 5 minutes. If you have any problems, contact the call center by using the handy phone installed on the automated fare adjustment machine.

— Source: Japan Parking Business Association



## Finding a spot

**W**hen 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.



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

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

– Takahiro Takiguchi

## Parking on Okinawa

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

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

So, if you are planning to explore local scenes in Naha or Okinawa City, especially in areas near Kokusai Street or Gate 2

street by Kadena Air Base, make sure you have Japanese yen to pay for parking. Rates vary from parking lot to parking lot, but 300 to 400 yen for an hour is the average in Naha. In Okinawa City, 200-300 yen for an hour is a common rate. The fees typically increase every 15, 30, 40 or 60 minutes. Some of the parking lots offer discounts if you shop or eat at specific places.

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

The table “休止 pause” is posted on each of them. 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



### Avoid parking meters!

Driving around Okinawa, you may notice some of the meters have covers marked with “休止中” or “休止” characters. This means the meter is not in service and not available for parking. However, whether the meter is marked or not, all of the islands parking meters have now been disabled and parking in these spots is prohibited. Avoid a parking fine and look for a paid parking lot instead!

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



**Check Out**

**For more on Okinawa's bus lanes**



# Guide to visiting a Japanese doctor

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

But there is not any need to panic – whether you speak Japanese or not, the process of going to a Japanese hospital and/or clinic is very user-friendly, and depending on the type of treatment sought, can be financially cheaper than if you saw a competing physician in the U.S.

Although the prospect of seeing a physician in a foreign country who potentially doesn't speak English might seem intimidating, the experience of visiting a Japanese hospital or clinic is not frustrating at all.

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

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

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

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

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

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

in the U.S.

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

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

Once your pertinent details are provided to the reception counter, you might or might not receive a waiting number to take back to your seat,

where you will wait to be called to proceed to the next area and see the resident doctor, or as they say in Japan, 'sensei' (先生).

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

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

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

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

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

For Caleb Dexter, USACE JED's strategic planner, the level of comfort and ease felt throughout his multiple visits to Japanese

## HELPFUL TERMS

### ■ At the hospital / clinic

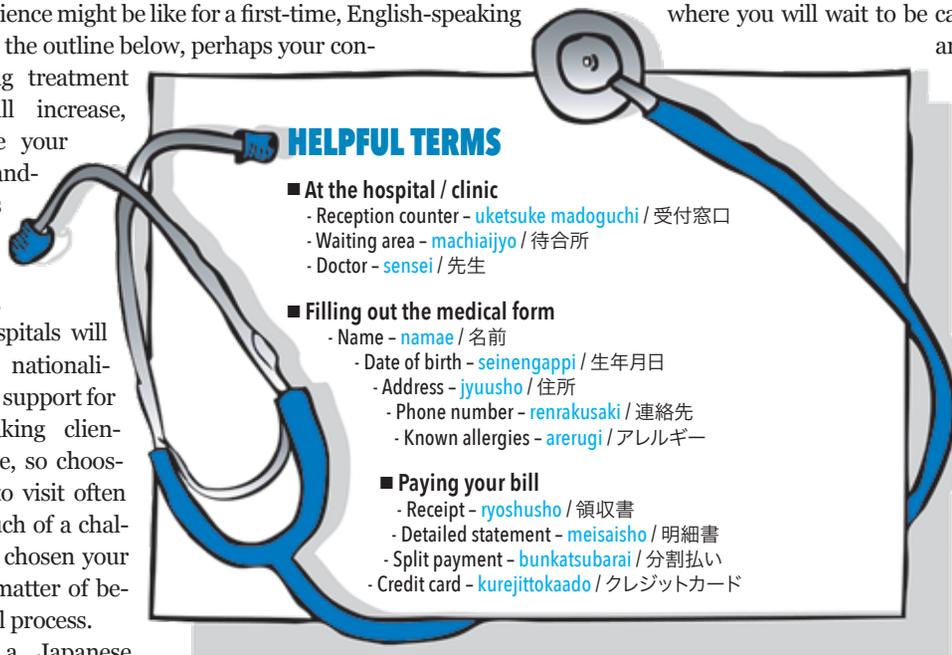
- Reception counter - **uketsuke madoguchi** / 受付窓口
- Waiting area - **machiaiyo** / 待合所
- Doctor - **sensei** / 先生

### ■ Filling out the medical form

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

### ■ Paying your bill

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



# Off-base medical care

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

According to an announcement by U.S. Forces Japan, health care providers at bases across Japan may schedule

appointments for DOD civilians on space-available basis only, according to the USFJ announcement.

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



**Tricare find a provider search tool- input your nearest base and it will provide local providers in your area.**

<https://www.tricare-overseas.com/beneficiaries/resources/provider-search>



**Japan Medical Service Accreditation for International Patients (JMIP) medical institution search tool**

<https://jmip.jme.or.jp/search.php?!=eng>



**Foreign Services Benefits Plan (Aetna/AFPSA)**

<https://www.afspa.org/fsbp/>



**Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Federal Employee Program**

<https://www.fepblue.org/>



**GEHA**

<https://www.geha.com/>

healthcare providers has come to be one facet of the experience he appreciates most.

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

Barlaan agrees.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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\*Mihama Branch does not accept reservations.

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首里城公園  
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CASTLE PARK



Shurijo Castle, built in the late 14th century on a small hill in Shuri, symbolizes Okinawa's and Ryukyu Kingdom's history and culture. The Shurijo Castle ruins was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2000 for its high cultural and historical value and unique architectural style and stonework. The castle is a fusion of the castle-building techniques of China and Japan. It was the residence of the king of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which flourished for about 450 years and was the base for political and religious ceremonies. The castle and the surrounding areas where officials and artisans lived were the center of culture and arts, where performing arts and music flourished, artists and artisans worked, and gorgeous Ryukyuan costumes and court cuisine were created. A fire that broke out before dawn on October 31, 2019, destroyed nine facilities in the castle, including the main hall. The area reopened in June 2020, and the restoration work is underway, with the main hall scheduled for completion in 2026. Visitors can see its progress from the viewing deck in the toll area. The restored Shurijo Castle is a must-see spot for visitors to Okinawa. Inside the castle, the visitors can feel the atmosphere of the Ryukyu Kingdom days. Frequent seasonal events bring the history and culture of the Ryukyu Kingdom era to life. From Agari no Azana, the castle's highest vantage point, you see the entire castle grounds and have a magnificent 360-degree view from downtown Naha, to the west coast, to central Okinawa Island. Equally impressive is the beautiful lighting of the gates and castle walls in the evening. We look forward to welcoming you to the park.



**Tour deck**

A new tour area for visitors to see the progress of the restoration work has been completed.



**Wall graphics**

The intricate Seiden graphics on the wall of the timber warehouse make a great photo spot!



**Agari no Azana**

The highest vantage point in Shurijo, Agari no Azana, offers on a clear day a 360-degree view from Kudaka Island to the east to Kerama Islands to the west.



**Reconstruction Exhibition Room**

An exhibition of burned lion tiles, small dragon pillars and lion decorations from Seiden.



Enjoy Okinawan soba noodles and traditional Okinawan cuisine at Restaurant Suimui. The Ryukyu Tea House serves Ryukyuan sweets and sampincha tea. Also, goods exclusive to Shurijo Park, such as the popular Shurijo Castle Seal, and "Gojoin" stamp cards are on sale.



<b>Hours</b>	Toll area 9:00 to 17:30
	Free area 8:30 to 18:00

<b>Admission</b>	Adults 400 yen
	Junior high school students 300 yen
	Elementary and junior high school students 160 yen

\* Please check the website for the latest information and details.

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

〒903-0815 1-2 Shuri Kinjocho, Naha City

Tel: 098-886-2020

**MAPCODE 33 161 526** 「MAPCODE」は株式会社デンソーの登録商標です。

\*Please check the Shurijo Castle Park website for the latest information and opening hours.



# Get a taste of Japanese cuisine

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

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

## 1. Makizushi



Makizushi is sushi that's rolled into long cylinders. It may be cut into shorter pieces before being served. The word makizushi can be translated "sushi roll."

It's often simply called maki. It usually has nori on the outside but can also be wrapped with leaves such as shiso. Maki is filled with sushi rice and ingredients such as raw fish, cooked fish and vegetables.

## 2. Miso Soup

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



## 3. Yakitori



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

## 4. Tempura

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



## 5. Edamame

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



## 6. Ramen

Hot Chinese-style wheat noodles in a meat, fish, miso or soy sauce broth. It's an inexpensive, filling, easy-to-find 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.



## 7. Mochi

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

## 8. Okonomiyaki

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



## 9. Sashimi



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

## 10. Oden

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



## 11. Soba

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



## 12. Natto



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

## 13. Onigiri

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



## 14. Japanese curry rice



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

## 15. Udon

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



See TASTE on Page 69

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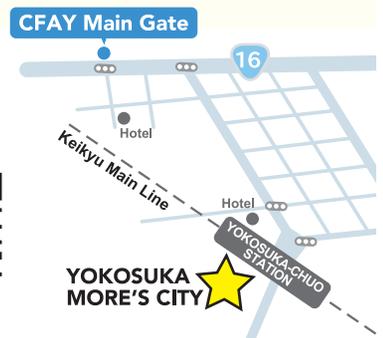
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A T A S T E of J A P A N

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TASTE continued from Page 66

**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.



**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.



**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.



**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."

**18. Takoyaki**

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



**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.



- John Spacey

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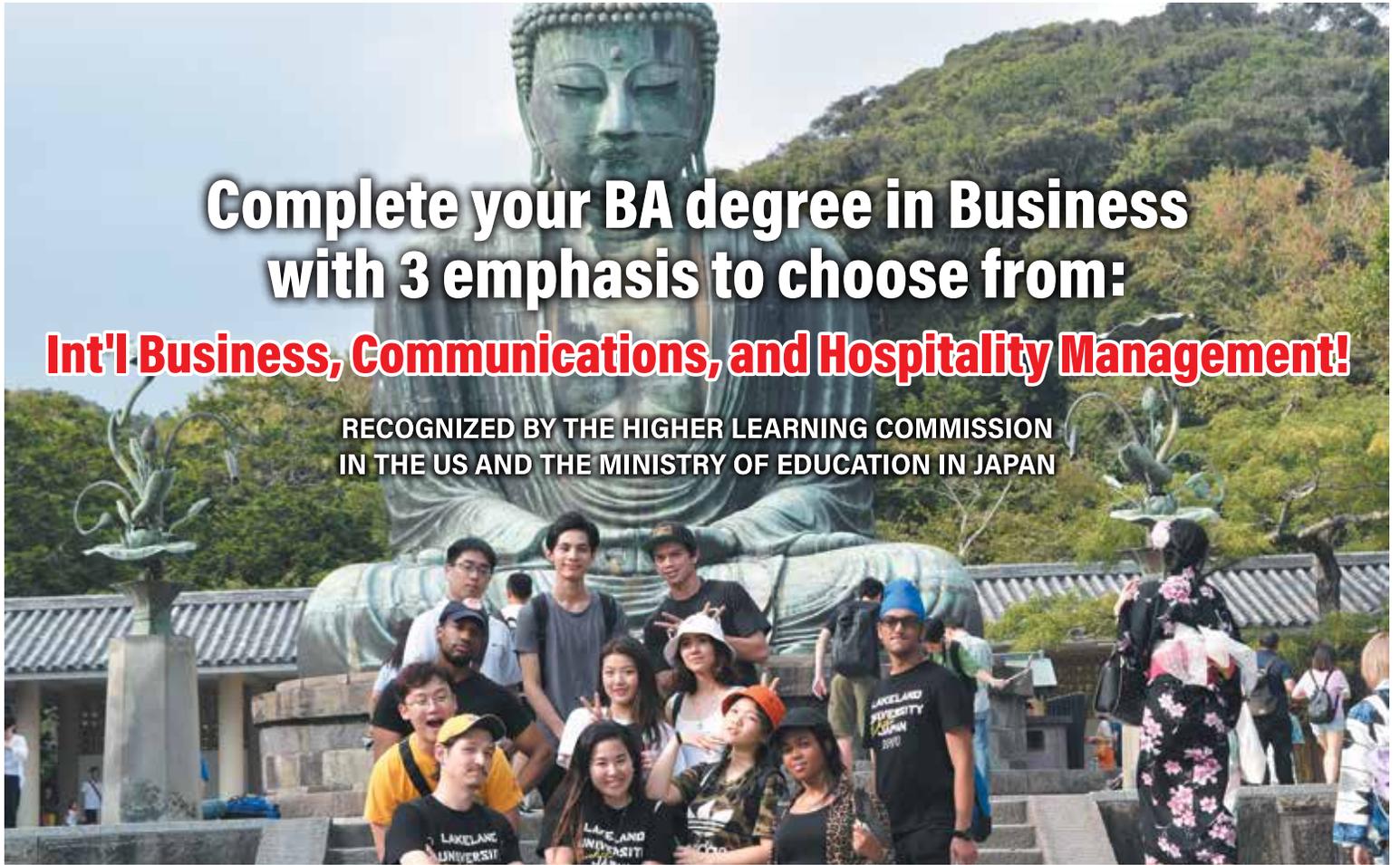
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**M**y name is Thien and I am a 1st-term student at Lakeland University Japan. As a student veteran, I think I have a fairly unique background. I was born in Denver, Colorado, from immigrant Vietnamese parents and as I grew up, I learned to appreciate my heritage and wanted to begin my own legacy as an American.

I enlisted into the U.S. Marine Corps at the age of 17 and left home to boot camp right after high school graduation. Stationed in southern California, I served 4 years as a Field Wireman and deployed multiple times on Marine Expeditionary Units and Unit Deployment Programs.

Those deployments gave me the opportunity to explore many different countries, cultures, and cities throughout the Persian gulf and Southeast Asia. However, one country stood out to me from the rest during my enlistment and it was Japan.

Drawn in by the unique culture and people, I decided to return. During a rainy day in the chow hall line, I read about LUJ off of an advertisement in the Stars and Stripes Magazine. The school was an opportunity

for me to pursue a college education while experiencing Japanese culture. So I applied.

Now having parted from my friends and family state-side, I am studying and taking university level classes while creating new connections with locals, international students, and other fellow veterans. LUJ gave me a chance to utilize my G.I. Bill and experience the unique and robust lifestyle that is found only in Tokyo.



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AFN continues to evolve as the network seeks new and innovative ways to connect with audiences worldwide. Today's AFN stations enjoy advantages unimagined generations ago. Once a single channel, today AFN radio offers a dozen different audio services and can even be streamed over the internet. In Japan and South Korea, the popular radio broadcast, AFN Eagle, is also readily available.

A generation ago, a single channel of AFN television was a major morale boost. Now the global network offers shore-based audiences eight television channels. Including dedicated movie and news channels - and two sports channels! At sea in the Pacific, Sailors can even receive four AFN channels: AFN|sports, AFN|sports2, AFN|news and AFN|prime.

The latest excitement is over the recent

launch of AFN's new streaming app, "AFN Now". AFN Now offers both live and video-on-demand programming. You can stream your favorite shows with AFN Now and even catch-up on the previous five episodes. The new video streaming service is available on most smart devices, including Apple TV, iPad, and iPhone, Android tablets and phones, Fire Stick, Roku, Smart TV and Android TV.

For Sports fans on AFN Now, recent deals with major sports leagues provided the 2023 NFL playoffs and Super Bowl! You can stream ESPN and the Australian Open on your schedule and not miss a play. In the works are broadcast rights to upcoming NBA,

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Download AFN Now in your app store. Or visit MyAfn.net, to download the app. Along with the latest program schedules and frequently asked questions. You'll also find links to our radio app, AFN Go, for streaming music, information, and even podcasts.

Over the years AFN's television, radio, and new streaming services, have been crucial to providing commanders tools for connecting with U.S. forces and their families during emergencies. During typhoons, the COVID-19 pandemic, and natural disasters, AFN repeatedly proves itself the trusted source for "as it's

happening" information.

Of course, weather delays and the unpredictable nature of live sports and breaking news can make schedules subject to last minute changes. Be sure to bookmark MyAfn.net for the very latest!

Wherever you're stationed in the Pacific, you can count on AFN station managers and their radio DJs to be the gold standard, engaged with local communities, and connected to their audiences. Your AFN Pacific team is dedicated to providing the most deserving audience in the world the very best entertainment, news, and sports.

As always, we value your feedback. Please let us know what you think of our programming. Click on the "contact us" tab at MyAfn.net!

AFN's parent organization is the Defense Media Activity, DMA, which oversees an array of military-produced media brands. Including the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS), Defense.gov, the military service websites and news services, publications like All Hands and Airman magazine, and AFN.

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Our Coffee Connection program allows spouses to relax in a comfortable setting, share advice, learn about local events, and make new friends over a cup of coffee and pastries. Many centers offer story time and crafts for children each month.

USO Japan and USO Okinawa locations offer many amenities. To see the full scope of our amenities, programs, events, and operating hours, please visit [okinawa.uso.org](http://okinawa.uso.org) or [japan.uso.org](http://japan.uso.org) and follow us at [Facebook.com/USOOkinawa](https://www.facebook.com/USOOkinawa) and [Facebook.com/USOMainlandJapan](https://www.facebook.com/USOMainlandJapan).



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# A whole day of fun for everyone

## Ocean Expo Park

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



Ocean Expo Park Map

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

### A Tropical Dream Center

Exotic botanical garden

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

### B Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium)

Experience one of Okinawa's largest planetariums

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



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

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

### C Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

Okinawa's No.1 tourist attraction

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

To enjoy at your leisure these much-in-demand exhibitions of marine life entry towards evening is recommended to avoid crowds in the aquarium.

Hours: Off Season 8:30-18:30 \*Last entry 17:30 Peak Season 8:30-20:00 \*Last entry 19:00  
Admission: ¥2,180 for adults, ¥1,440 for high school students, ¥710 for elementary and junior high school students, free for children under 6.  
Annual passport: ¥4,360 for adults, ¥2,880 for high school students, ¥1,420 for elementary and junior high school students  
\* Please confirm the Peak Season details on the official website



### 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 15 min): 10:30, 11:30, 13:00, 15:00, 17:00



### E Native Okinawa Village

Get a taste of old Okinawa

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



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

海洋博公園  
OCEAN EXPO PARK

For more information

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

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

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



## Tropical Dream Center

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

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



## Oceanic Culture Museum (Planetarium)

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

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

# Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium

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

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

Open Hours	Open	Last admission	Close
Off Season	8:30	17:30	18:30
Peak Season	8:30	19:00	20:00

\*Please confirm the Peak Season details on the official website

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

# 海洋博公園

## OCEAN EXPO PARK

For more information

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

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

8:00-18:00 (Oct.-Feb.) / 8:00-19:30 (Mar.-Sep.)





Southeast Botanical Gardens on Okinawa.  
Photo by Gortney Lamar

# 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.

### Eisa and beer festivals

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

### Cherry blossom festivals

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

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### Marathons

On Okinawa, many marathons take place from fall through spring. Each race

provides unique challenges and attractions. In Ayahashi Kaichu Road Race, runners will hop around islands as they cross bridges overlooking the water. 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 Cape Maeda, a stunning view of the Blue Grotto welcomes divers and snorkelers. If you travel to Kerama Islands, you can even swim with sea turtles.

### Beaches

Beaches in Okinawa offer all sorts of fun. Water obstacles at Manza Beach draw many Japanese and American kids during the summer. At Manza Beach, people can enjoy new water activities such as water obstacles and sea kayaking. Some military

## Places for kids



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

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

### Trekking/hiking

There are places in Okinawa where people can enjoy trekking/hiking in the northern part of the island. At Mt. Yonahadake or Mt. Katsuu, routes are well maintained for mountain climbers. At Daiseikirinzan, 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 Ruins) or the Former Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters provide learning opportunities about the Battle of Okinawa.

## SHOPPING & DINING

### Shopping areas and a big mall

AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom near the Plaza Housing Area is one of the biggest shopping mall on the island. This is the place to go if you are looking for U.S. brands such as American Eagle or the Gap. Parco City near Camp Kinser is another large shopping mall, which houses brands such as H&M and ZARA. Kokusai Street in Naha is crowded with tourists looking for



Fun day at the beach on Okinawa.  
Photo by Ariel Karp

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 Hayatemauro are popular among servicemembers.

### Steak houses

Okinawans love steak. And because of that, there are many steak houses on the island.

Jack's Steak House serves up one of the rarest steaks you'll find on the island. SAM's restaurants are very popular for sirloin steak, and Four Seasons near Kadena Air Base is popular among 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 27 of them on the island. Some even feature carhops bringing food to your vehicle. Foremost Blue Seal Ice Cream is another example of "born in America, raised in Okinawa." The ice cream maker was originally established by USA-based Foremost Ltd. Now, the ice cream maker is recognized in Okinawa as a major brand along with Baskin Robbins.

— Shoji Kudaka

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### Brief History of Okuma

*Okuma resort was first envisioned in 1947 and a place where servicemen and women could go to relax and get away. With the help of the local population and with material scavenged from across the island Okuma was started as a home away from home.*

*More on the History of Okuma at Okuma HP. <https://okuma.kadenafss.com>*

*Today, the Okuma Peninsula contains not only the Military Okuma Recreation Facility, but also a Japanese Okuma Resort.*



\*Pets without an existing pet-friendly lodging reservation, glass containers of any type, spear guns, fireworks and privately owned, motorized watercrafts are NOT allowed at Okuma Beach. Failure to comply may result in occupants being asked to leave as well as a room cleaning fee.



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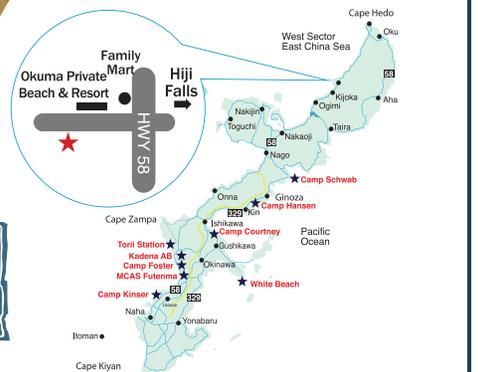
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# Japan at a glance

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

## Kyoto



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

**Taking a bullet train to Kyoto**



(Video)

**Virtual vacation: Kyoto**



(Video)

**Virtual vacation: Sapporo**



(Video)

## Sapporo

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



## Hiroshima



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

**Virtual Vacation: Hiroshima**



## Nagasaki

The peaceful port city hills filled with Western-style buildings is often



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

**Virtual Vacation: Niigata**



(Video)



## TOKYO

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**Virtual Vacation: Miyagi Prefecture**



(Video)

## Sendai

Zelkova trees line the central streets of Sendai, which is often referred to as the City of Trees. The city offers various

tourist attractions, including **Sendai Castle**, 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.



Photo by Karoline Barthelmes

**Virtual Vacation: Kamakura**



(Video)



## Kamakura

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

**See Osaka**



**Virtual Vacation: Osaka**



(Video)

## 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).



Shinsekai district in Osaka.  
Photo by Chris Chandler

## OKINAWA

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## 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**.

## Yokohama



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

**5 places to check out in Yokohama**



**Virtual Vacation: Yokohama**



(Video)



Red Brick Warehouse in Yokohama.  
Photo by Bryon Wells

# Tokyo



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

**Check out Kabuki in Ginza**



**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.

**Tokyo's River Walk**



**1 Shinjuku**  
A very busy part of Tokyo full of skyscrapers and the world's busiest train station.

**Shinjuku: A walk in the sky**



**Virtual Vacation: Shibuya**



(Video)

**2 Harajuku**  
Home to the Meiji Shrine with countless boutiques and cafes along the main Takeshita-dori Street, the town is sanctuary for teenagers.

**3 Shibuya**  
Home to iconic Shibuya crossing, Shibuya is a top stop along the Yamanote Line.

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

**New Sanno, Hardy Barracks great options when visiting Tokyo**



Senso-ji is an ancient Buddhist temple located in Asakusa in Tokyo. Photo by Sunilkumar Naik



# TOKYO

# OKINAWA

**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.

**Get ready for the Naha Tug of War**



(Video)

**Exploring Tsuboya Yachimun Dori in Naha**



**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.

**Enjoy off-road adventure in Okinawa**



**Neo Park Okinawa**



(Video)

**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.

**Virtual Vacation Ishigaki Island**



(Video)



Family fun at Southeast Botanical Garden on Okinawa. Photo by Megan Moulton

**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.

**Pedal your way around Motobu Peninsula**



(Video)

**Cherry Blossoms in Okinawa**



(Video)

**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. Seawall Street to the north of American Village is also popular among servicemembers.

**Pizza Sun serves up tasty pie on Okinawa**



**Speakin' Japanese Dining al fresco**



(Video)





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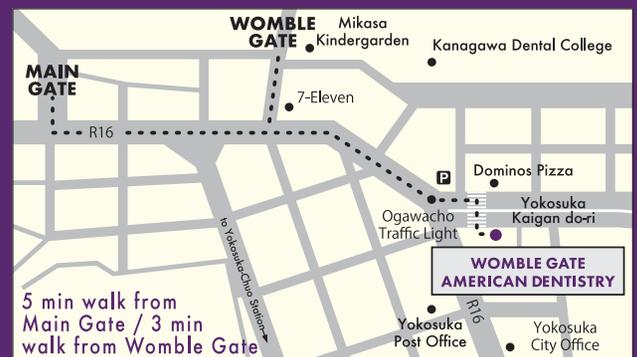
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