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L I V I N G



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ONE!
DROP



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The *bento*, or boxed lunch, is a daily mainstay for many Japanese—but some turn it into a work of art.



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AUGUST

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"Welcome" to Okinawa Living

August in Okinawa has a special kind of energy. The heat settles in like a tropical sauna, the ocean feels like a warm bath and the ever-present possibility of a typhoon lingers. All of it blends with festival excitement and those final summer moments before school is back in session.

This month, Okinawans celebrate *Obon*—ancestral traditions, with *eisa* drum festivals and the expression of Ryukyuan culture. Families welcome the spirits of their ancestors home with offerings, prayers and moments of reflection that highlight the deep ties connecting generations. As *Obon* unfolds, the streets come alive with the rhythm of *eisa*. Youth groups, many practicing all year, demonstrate powerful drumming, beautiful costumes and choreography passed down through their communities. These performances are a living expression of Okinawan identity, honoring the past while celebrating the present.

While families on base gear up for back-to-school season, there's still time to enjoy the last moments of summer. It's a great chance to explore southern Okinawa's history and culture, plus squeeze in a Costco run for those last-minute essentials. Turn to page 16 as we highlight Nanjo, where Tamagusuku Castle and the lush paths of Gusuku Road Park remind us how much history sits right at our doorstep. Ojima (Nekojima) remains a favorite, and scenic spots like Sêfâ Utaki, the Nirai Kanai Bridge and Cape Chinen Park offer some of the island's most breathtaking photo opportunities.

August also brings exciting opportunities across MCCS. Youth Sports opens registration for Winter Basketball & Cheer from August 1–31, with programs for ages 3–18 focused on skill building, teamwork and fun. Families are encouraged to register early as spots fill quickly.

Our Marine and Family Programs team is offering workshops including *Unconscious Bias: Understanding Bias to Unleash Potential* and *L.I.N.K.S. Foundations*, with a dedicated session for Japanese spouses.

And if your tastebuds are craving something new, our food and beverage team is rolling out August limited-time offerings across the island, from Bulldogs' Island Burger to LifeJuice's Green Protein Smoothie. Turn to page 39 for more on MCCS August LTOs and page 42 for our review of Taiyo Steakhouse's new Prime Rib Wednesdays.

However you choose to embrace August on Okinawa—through cultural exploration or new MCCS offerings—we hope it brings connection, discovery and a little inspiration along the way! lol



Bobbie Brock

Bobbie Brock
Chief Marketing Officer



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ON BASE

MCCS TOURS+

feedback

from the ICE Program
and Facebook

Our anniversary dinner at Taiyo Steakhouse was nothing short of exceptional. The Wednesday Prime Rib Special, complete with creamed spinach, Yorkshire pudding and the perfectly prepared potatoes was outstanding. Every element of the plate showed care and craft. A particularly memorable touch was the pumpkin crème brûlée, beautifully prepared with "Happy Anniversary" inscribed on the plate. That small gesture elevated the entire evening. What truly set the experience apart, though, was the impeccable service. Ms. Harumi Contreres delivered flawless timing, warm professionalism and attention to detail that was unmatched in any dining experience we've had to date. A heartfelt 'thank you' from Eric and Tina Kisela.

—via ICE

I am grateful for taking the Baby Boot Camp class through the New Parent Support Program on Monday, June 15. I was impressed with the instructors that day who kept the class engaging, incredibly informative and insightful all day. I was given access to all of necessary resources, insights and information needed to deliver here on Okinawa. I am looking forward to sharing information about this program with spouses at my husband's unit as a Command Team Advisor. Many thanks to the instructors and all of their hard work!

—via ICE

My family and I recently moved here, and this was our first time visiting the Butler Officers' Club for their Cookie Monster Family Night. I didn't catch her name, but I wanted to compliment the Club Operations Shift Leader running the event. She was so welcoming and friendly, taking the time to tell us about upcoming family nights and Sunday Brunch, and was especially kind to my little boys. Moving somewhere new can be overwhelming, so her warm personality really made us feel welcome. We had a great experience and are looking forward to coming back.

—via ICE

What an amazing fitness class! I have now completed two full class cycles, and I just wanted to express how much I've gained from working out with Katie! She blends the perfect mix of encouragement to unlock your strengths with modifying your output and listening to your own body. Her humor and spirit as an instructor lends to the awesome atmosphere of the 9 a.m. class. I'm very sad my schedule won't allow for me to join in on the summer sessions! Thank you, Katie!

—via ICE

Give MCCS Feedback—ICE Program & Facebook

Let us know how we can better serve you or thank us for a job well-done. Go to www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org and find the ICE link in the "MORE" section of the homepage or find us on Facebook to share feedback. Comments on this page may be edited for clarity or length.

@okilivingmag

Show us your island adventures and favorite food finds!

@wilmasablan

Some sunsets remind you to look around.
Others remind you to look within.

📍 Itoman



@boridosis

Okinawa memories... with a few extras 🍷

📍 Kokusai Street, Naha



@beki_no_ikubeki

📍 MCCS Okinawa Kinser Bike Race



Domo arigatou gozaimashita and thank you for your posts!
We can't wait to see what else you love about Okinawa!

Captions may be edited for grammar, context, length, and in some cases, added information to better enable readers to visit the location depicted.

— The Okinawa Living Staff

OKINAWA
GUIDE

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CHANNEL 15 / 115

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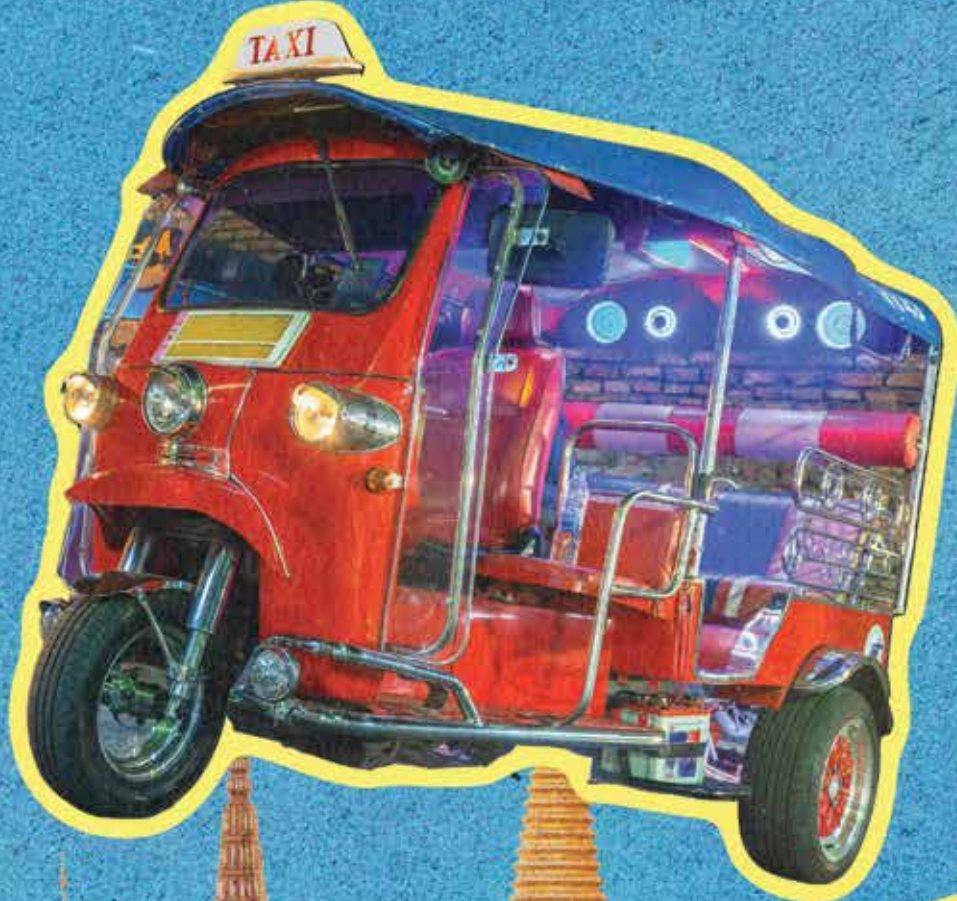
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Visit the Land of Smiles

TOURS+ THANKSGIVING THAILAND TOUR





Text by: Mike Daley
Layout by: Airi Igarashi

Looking for another way to give thanks to your family (or yourself) this Thanksgiving holiday? How about heading on an exotic adventure to the “Land of Smiles” with MCCS Tours+ from November 26 to December 1? Although the moniker was originally coined by Thailand’s Tourism Bureau, there probably isn’t one that’s more appropriate for Thailand because of its natural beauty, fascinating culture and helpful, courteous and kind residents.





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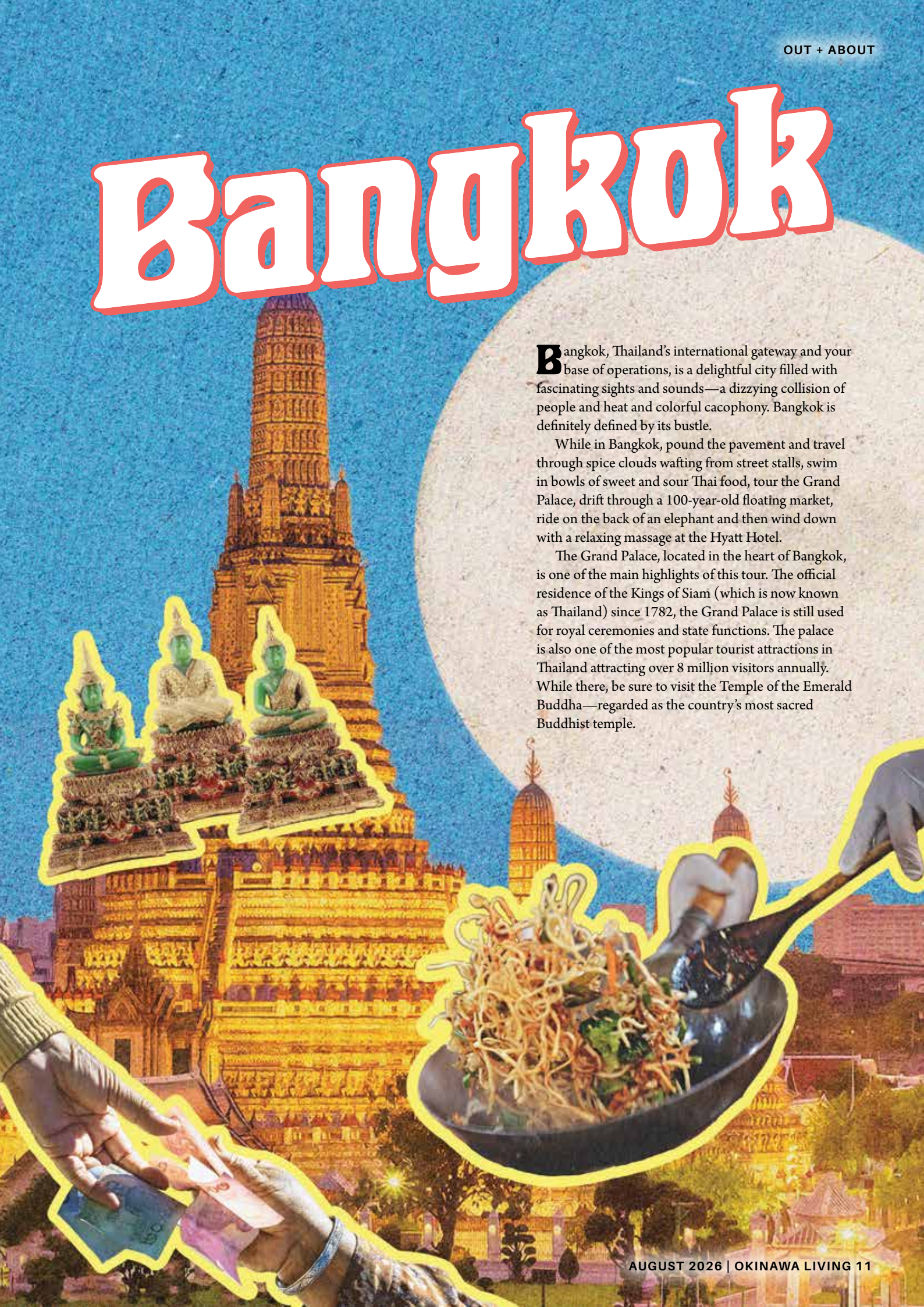


Bangkok

Bangkok, Thailand's international gateway and your base of operations, is a delightful city filled with fascinating sights and sounds—a dizzying collision of people and heat and colorful cacophony. Bangkok is definitely defined by its bustle.

While in Bangkok, pound the pavement and travel through spice clouds wafting from street stalls, swim in bowls of sweet and sour Thai food, tour the Grand Palace, drift through a 100-year-old floating market, ride on the back of an elephant and then wind down with a relaxing massage at the Hyatt Hotel.

The Grand Palace, located in the heart of Bangkok, is one of the main highlights of this tour. The official residence of the Kings of Siam (which is now known as Thailand) since 1782, the Grand Palace is still used for royal ceremonies and state functions. The palace is also one of the most popular tourist attractions in Thailand attracting over 8 million visitors annually. While there, be sure to visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha—regarded as the country's most sacred Buddhist temple.





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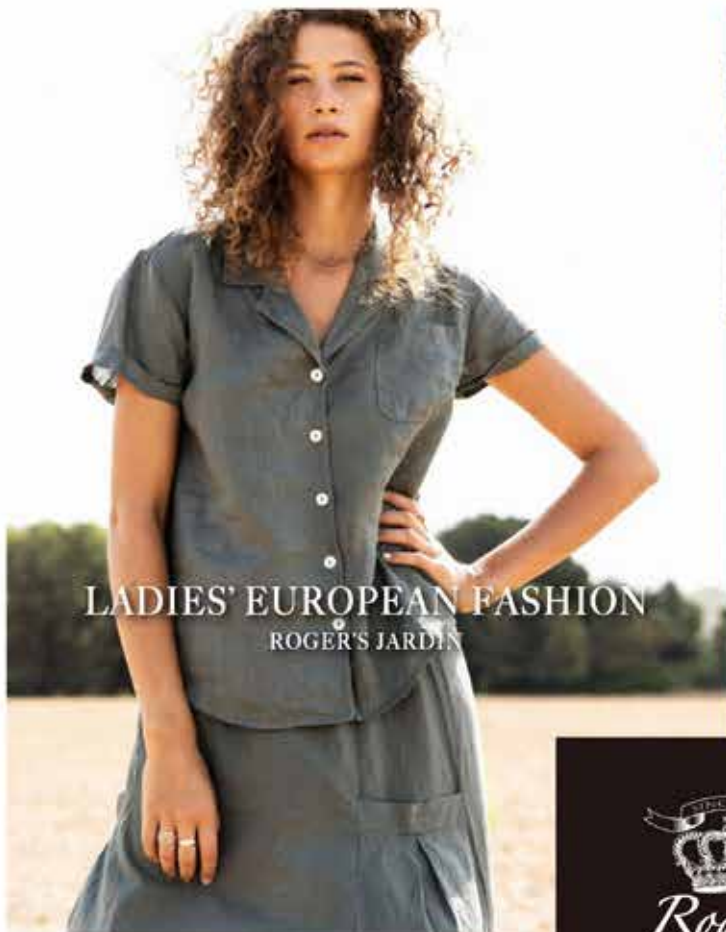
Next, it's time to take a private yacht tour to Pattaya! Located on Thailand's eastern coast, Pattaya is Bangkok's polar opposite in personality. Originally a quiet fishing village known for its beautiful landscape and beaches, Pattaya is thoroughly modernized with resort hotels, shopping malls and vibrant nightlife. While you can enjoy marveling at Pattaya's beautiful coastline during the cruise, you can also take advantage of your free day to explore more of what the city has to offer! You can relax on one of the many beaches or tour the floating market and visit temples such as the Sanctuary of Truth—a 20-story architectural marvel made entirely with hand-made wooden carvings.

Another must-see sight is the Nong Nooch Tropical Garden, which features over 200 hectares of landscaped spaces featuring cacti, bonsai, tropical palms and over 670 native and hybrid species of orchids. Also, don't miss the Pattaya Floating Market (known locally as the Four Regions Floating Market). At this market, over 100 vendors sell wares such as souvenirs, fruit, food, art, clothing, handicrafts and more from traditional boats.



PATTAYA *city*





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The Thanksgiving Bangkok and Pattaya Tour includes roundtrip airfare/transfers, tour guides, five nights at the Hyatt Hotel with daily breakfast, Bangkok Temple, Grand Palace and canal tours, an elephant tour and a private yacht tour to Pattaya. The sign-up deadline is September 15. For more information on this tour, as well as other MCCS Tours+ offerings, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/tours, email tours@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or call 646-3502. **101**

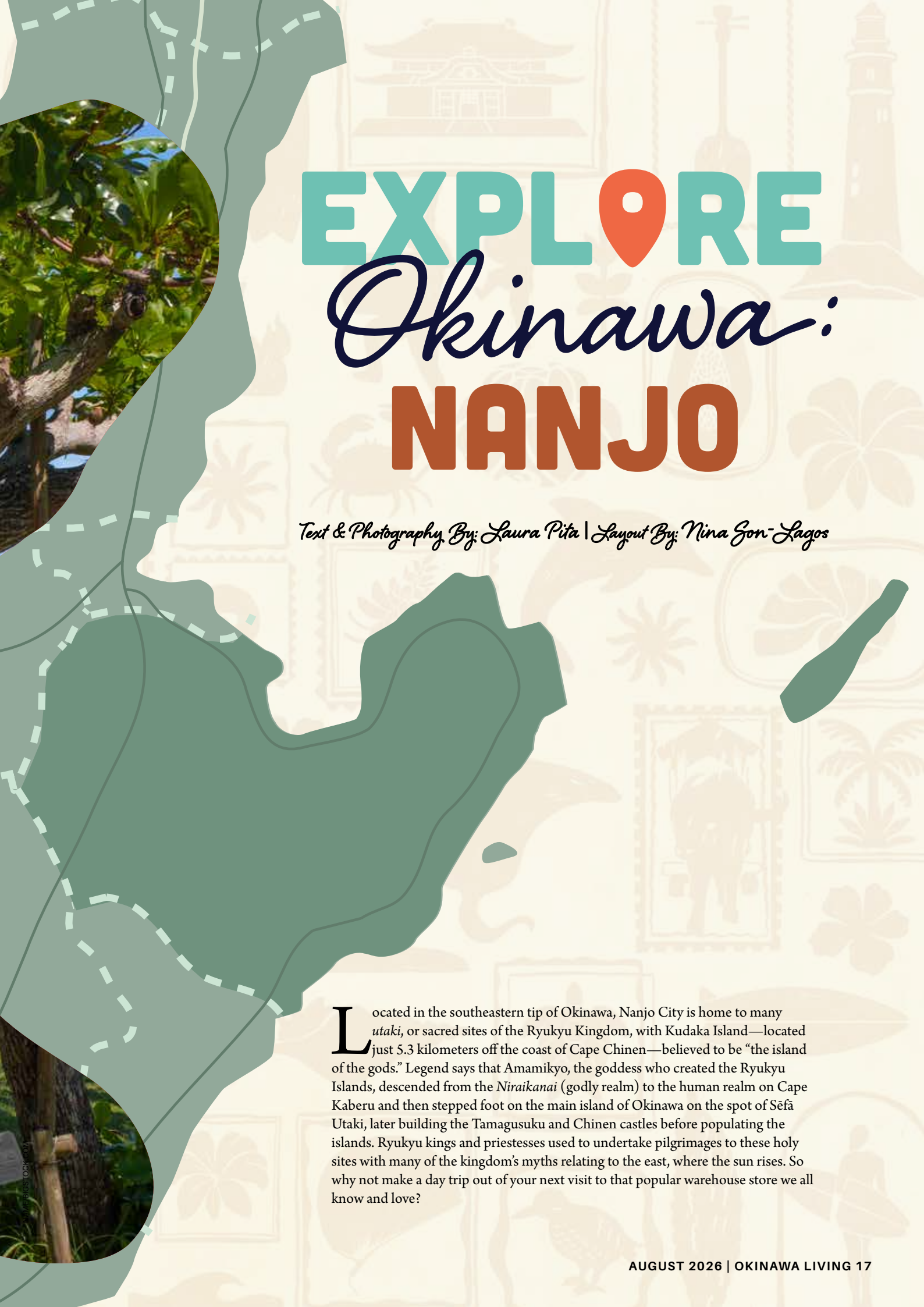
ELEPHANT TOUR

Elephants have a 4,000-year history with the people of Thailand. During times of peace, these noble and powerful beasts served as transport and moved the otherwise unmovable. And, during times of war, the elephant became a fearsome weapon that no sane foe would meet head-on in battle. The white elephant, known as *Chang Samkhan*, was thought to be a gift

fit for a king and for a king to acquire one of these rare pachyderms would ensure the kingdom's prosperity and happiness would endure throughout his reign. During the Thanksgiving Bangkok and Pattaya tour, you will have an opportunity to make the acquaintance of these magnificent and beautiful animals. It's sure to be an experience "you'll never forget!"







EXPLORE

Okinawa:

NANJO

Text & Photography By: Laura Pita | Layout By: Nina Gon-Lagos

Located in the southeastern tip of Okinawa, Nanjo City is home to many *utaki*, or sacred sites of the Ryukyu Kingdom, with Kudaka Island—located just 5.3 kilometers off the coast of Cape Chinen—believed to be “the island of the gods.” Legend says that Amamikyo, the goddess who created the Ryukyu Islands, descended from the *Nirai-kanai* (godly realm) to the human realm on Cape Kaberu and then stepped foot on the main island of Okinawa on the spot of Sēfā Utaki, later building the Tamagusuku and Chinen castles before populating the islands. Ryukyu kings and priestesses used to undertake pilgrimages to these holy sites with many of the kingdom’s myths relating to the east, where the sun rises. So why not make a day trip out of your next visit to that popular warehouse store we all know and love?



Historical Spots

TAMAGUSUKU CASTLE

One of the stops on the aforementioned religious pilgrimage, Tamagusuku Castle is considered the oldest castle on Okinawa. The stone fortification, built from Ryukyu limestone, is located on a hilltop at 180 meters above sea level overlooking a manicured golf course, boasting views of Kudaka Island and the Pacific Ocean. While the date of construction is unknown, the stone walls suggest they date back approximately 600 years. The most noteworthy feature of the castle is the round stone gateway, known as the “Gate of the Sun.” According to visitokinawajapan.com, the sun beams through the gates during the summer solstice and the light of the sunset illuminates the gateway during the winter solstice. This is a quick pit stop, so make sure to swing by the nearby Chinen Castle Ruins and Itokazu Castle Ruins to experience more Ryukyu history.



Park

GUSUKU ROAD PARK

A few meters away from Tamagusuku Castle there's a popular hillside park with an ocean view and opportunities to spot aircraft flying in and out of Naha Airport! The park features multiple play structures for kids of all ages, including slides, swings, a zipline and a closed-off area for toddlers. Additionally, there's an observation deck, a large lawn where the kiddos can run wild, a bike path, picnic spots under shady banyan trees or at the pavilion, with bathrooms and vending machines available as well.



Café

CAFE LUSH

Nanjo has a plethora of restaurants and cafes that offer meals with a view. Located on the first floor of a brutalist architectural building with geometric designs and exposed raw cement, Cafe Lush manages to bring some warmth to the interior with wood accents, greenery and macrame details. The balcony design frames the ocean view like a work of art! Their doors open at 8 a.m., which is unusually early for cafes on island, and they specialize in *onigiri* and *hot sando* (warm sandwiches), using Okinawan ingredients; with filling breakfast and lunch set options available.





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Grocery Shopping

COSTCO

Oddly as you've visited Nanjo City before on one of your bulk buying trips to this big box store. Costco opened its first store in Japan in 1999 and is up to 37 warehouse locations throughout the country, with its first location in Okinawa Prefecture opening two years ago this month. The best part? If you have stateside membership, you can use it to shop at Japan locations! Throughout the country, Costco offers a mix of American and Japanese products, with their high-quality sushi and *sashimi* platters, high-quality meat products and fresh fish being the standout offerings. The popular food court sells a blend of US classics (hot dogs and pizzas) and Japanese exclusive items (poke roll, *bulgogi* bake and Hokkaido ice cream). If you haven't made the drive down, might we suggest making a whole day of it!



Activity

OJIMA

The Japanese archipelago has thousands of islands and among those are a few animal islands, most notably Okunoshima (Rabbit Island), Tashirojima (Cat Island) and even Miyajima which is known for its free-roaming deer. Did you know that Okinawa has its own cat island? Ojima (or Ou Island), is a quaint fishing village known for its fresh seafood which can be purchased at Ojima Imaiyu Market, crispy Okinawa *tempura* (deep fried seafood and vegetables in a richer, heartier and seasoned batter) available at many stands around the island, freshly caught purpleback flying squids hung to dry in the sun and of course, the free-roaming felines. Don't worry, the kitties are well taken care of by the locals, some establishments ask visitors to refrain from feeding them, especially human food. Go explore this tiny isle and try to keep count of how many adorable *neko* (cats) you spot while delighting in the island's delicacies!





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Culture

📍 SĒFĀ UTAKI

This forested hillside may look unassuming to most but the rock formations hold the most important sacred site of the Ryukyu religion, which was known for its veneration of ancestors and the worship of nature. Utaki were natural, sacred places used for religious ceremonies and rituals. Sēfā Utaki is one of Okinawa's World Heritage sites and to this day is a place of reflection, to pay respect to the goddess creator of the Ryukyu Islands. Park at the Ganju Station roadside stop where you'll find the Sēfā Utaki ticketing office, an exhibition hall, shops offering Okinawan treats, a Nanjo specialty souvenir shop, the "Bridge of Happiness" which makes for a perfect photo spot, and an ocean view restaurant on the second floor. The entrance to the site is a 400-meter walk away, with plenty of shops and vending machines along the way to keep you cool.



Experience

📍 NIRAI KANAI BRIDGE

We recommend skipping the Okinawa Expressway and taking the road less traveled down to Nanjo. The leisure drive offers picturesque views, especially on clear sunny days. Another must do as you head towards the southeastern coast of the island is driving down the winding Nirai Kanai Bridge, a 1,200-meter-long u-shaped bridge connecting Prefectural Road 86 to National Route 331. The top of the bridge starts with a tunnel, its opening framing the blue sky, verdant mountain and azure waters of the Pacific Ocean; the majestic scenery illustrating why the bridge was named after the Okinawan paradise.



HALLOWEEN HORROR NIGHTS



OCT
28-31

4-DAY ITINERARY INCLUDES:

Roundtrip airfare
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Please visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/tours for
pricing, reservations and cancellation policies.



For more information call 098-971-3502,
email tours@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or
visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/tours.





Scenic Spot CAPE CHINEN PARK

Located on the southeastern tip of the island, the park juts out into the Pacific Ocean on the edge of Cape Chinen. Stroll through the lush green grass decorated with hearts and flowers, cross the bridge to take in the full 250-degree ocean view, the cliffs on the north side, the vibrant coral reefs, fishermen sitting on the tidal weir waiting for the catch of the day, the agricultural landscape towards the west and even a faraway glimpse of the Nirai Kanai bridge. On clear days, you can see Ubaki Island, a small sandbar accessible by boat, perfect for snorkeling and relaxing, Komaka Island, an uninhabited island; and of course, Kudaka Island.

Exploring brings forth new experiences and there is only so much time at your home-away-from-home to learn more about the people, the history, the culture and long-lasting traditions that make this island so special. Discover the undiscovered because the best things in life are unexpected. So, what are you waiting for? Go meander around Nanjo City, you may just find a new favorite spot to spend quality time with your family or learn a thing or two about the island's history. | 01



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French & Teppanyaki FOUR SEASONS

Renaissance Okinawa Resort

French Buffet (Lunch)
12:00pm - 2:30pm
(Saturdays & Sundays)

French Dinner & Teppanyaki
6:00pm - 10:00pm
Closed on Tuesdays



Reservation

Enjoy a variety of international dishes and desserts in a buffet-style setting with stunning ocean views.

All Day Dining SAILFISH CAFÉ

Renaissance Okinawa Resort

Resort Lunch Buffet
11:30am - 2:30pm

The Buffet (Dinner)
5:30pm - 9:30pm
Closed on Wednesdays



Reservation



Okinawan Traditional Performance

Okinawa Pops with Sanshin Tue, Sat.
Ryukyu dance & Eisa Thu.

1st Show 6:00 pm (Reservations from 5:30 PM)
2nd Show 8:00 pm (Reservations from 7:30 PM)

About 40 minutes. No charges for the show.



At Coco Garden Resort Okinawa, our restaurant offers authentic dim sum and hot dishes, all freshly prepared to order.



All-you-can-eat Dim Sum

MAKAN MAKAN

Coco Garden Resort Okinawa

LUNCH
11:30am - 2:30pm
(90-minute time limit)

DINNER
6:00pm - 9:30pm



Reservation



Show Off Your Ride

At The Morning Huddle

Calling all car enthusiasts, collectors and motor vehicle aficionados—Typhoon Motors is making your Saturday morning extra sweet with the monthly Morning Huddle, and the next event is happening on Saturday, August 8 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Camp Foster R58 Flea Market Lot. These jam-packed mornings will be filled with the coolest rides, great company, food trucks and delicious complimentary coffee. This summer, show off your iconic JDM, classic muscle car, family vehicle or even your motorcycle to share and connect with like-minded motorheads. Join in on the exciting display of vehicles presented by the local Okinawan community

as well as SOFA-status American drivers. Morning Huddles are completely FREE to attend and FREE to enter, all you have to do is show up and bring good vibes. There's no better way to spend a chill Saturday morning socializing and enjoying the atmosphere.

Car caught your eye? While there, learn about the history of each car from their respective owners, make new friends and even cruise to destinations with others. Although simple in nature—located in a parking lot, sweet cars and supportive community members, the connections will be driven to last. Whether you're a dedicated gearhead or simply looking for a fun weekend activity, these

gatherings offer something for everyone—especially with food and drink available for purchase on site.

Drivers, please note that lowered vehicles should exercise caution when entering the venue as the entry ramp leading to the event area is steep, and low-clearance vehicles may scrape or bottom out when entering or exiting. Participants are encouraged to approach the ramp slowly and carefully to minimize the risk of vehicle damage.

For more information about this event and Typhoon Motors offerings, including locations and hours of operation, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/typhoonmotors. **101**

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JUNGLIA OKINAWA

Summer Extreme Group Tour

Okinawa may be known for its history, sub-tropical climate and crystal-clear beaches, but the Yanbaru Forest is having its moment in the spotlight thanks to JUNGLIA OKINAWA. The jungle theme park opened in summer 2025 and boasts over 20 attractions that will ignite your adventurous spirit.

Beginning this month, MCCS Tours+ will be offering an exclusive group package tour! Challenge your nerves on one of JUNGLIA's attractions such as the Sky Phoenix Zipline, the Gravity Drop Freefall, the Titan's Swing or the Tree-Top Trekking or Sky-End Trekking suspended obstacle courses—every participant will have one or two extreme adventures included in their package.

Don't worry—we've also included JUNGLIA's main attractions, such as Dinosaur Safari and Splash Fest, to balance the adrenaline with fun and relaxation.

Join us for an unforgettable summer adventure by hopping on the MCCS Tours+ bus at the Foster Bowling Center, sitting back and relaxing on the way to JUNGLIA! Tour participants must be 10 years or older and 95cm or taller. For more information, including tour dates, call 646-3504, email tours@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/tours. **101**

Tsunami Scuba

Specialty of the Month

Throughout 2026, Tsunami Scuba will be offering discounts and promotions on monthly PADI Specialty Courses, and in August they will be highlighting the Boat Driver Course. Sign up for their class on Saturday, August 15 where you'll learn nautical terminology, boat diving etiquette, practice using lines and/or deploying a surface marker buoy (SMB), and get guidance on packing for a boat trip, stowing gear properly as well as managing seasickness. Participants must have active PADI Club Membership and be eligible for FREE books to participate in the specialty courses.

Been thinking of earning a PADI Master Scuba Diver rating? Each specialty course a student completes will get them closer to earning the "black belt" of recreational scuba, which includes five Specialty Diver certifications, holding Open Water and Rescue Diver certifications, as well as 50 logged dives.

For more information on Tsunami Scuba offerings, call 645-4206, email mccstsunami-foster@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/tsunamisuba. **101**

Kyoto & Nara Thanksgiving Tour

Visit During the Most Beautiful Season

Although August may be a bit soon to be thinking about Thanksgiving plans, it's never too soon to plan a treat for yourself and your family, and having something to look forward to is always nice as well! How about a trip to explore the beautiful and historical cities of Kyoto and Nara, during the most beautiful time of the year?

Unlike Okinawa, Kyoto and Nara have clearly defined seasons that change their colors with spring, summer, autumn and winter each trying to out-do the last. Autumn, when the landscape turns a brilliant ochre and vermillion, is arguably the winner of this beauty contest. Visiting world-famous venues like Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Sanjūsangen-dō and the Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto, alongside the famous Deer Park in Nara—all framed by stunning autumn leaves—is truly the experience of a lifetime.

The Kyoto & Nara Thanksgiving Tour, which runs November 25–29, includes round-trip airfare, transportation, hotel with breakfast as well as bus and walking tours to visit the castles, temples and shrines with a tour guide to answer questions on sights and sounds. For more information on this tour, call MCCS Tours+ at 646-3502 or visit them online at www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/tours. **101**



FAMILY PHOTO

Capture your family's happiest memories in Okinawa.

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Official Site



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BEREL PHOTO STUDIO

Weight Management Month

Achieve and Maintain the Right Kind of Gains!

Most of us know that managing your weight contributes to good health. But, did you know that it also decreases the risk of many health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer? Keeping your weight in check contributes to your overall health now and will continue to pay health-dividends as you age.

August is Weight Management Month—the perfect time to focus (or refocus) on managing a healthy weight through a combination of healthy eating, physical activity, optimal sleep and stress reduction. MCCA Health Promotion is here to support you on your journey with many resources—including One-on-One Nutrition Consultations, Unit Briefs and Body Composition Analysis Counseling using InBody Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis.

For more information on any of these offerings, contact MCCA Health Promotion at 645-3910, facebook.com/mccsokinawa.semperfit or check out their website at www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/healthpromotion.101



Become a Master of the Courts!

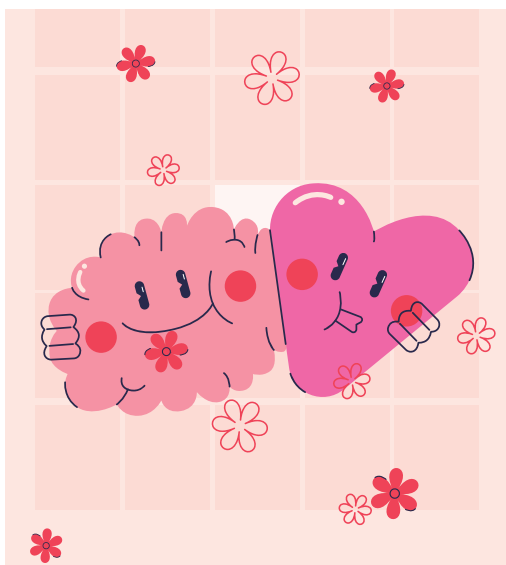
Tennis Lessons with Semper Fit

After watching the pros blast ace after ace, hit the baseline with pinpoint accuracy with a crosscourt backhand and then make a perfect drop shot, you may think to yourself: “Sure, I can do that!” Well...maybe with a bit of instruction, a little practice and perhaps a wish granted by a personal genie.

In all seriousness, playing tennis at any level of competency takes a lot of time and practice; there’s much more to playing the game than just hitting the ball as hard as you can to the other side of the court (or over the fence). Proper instruction will teach you basic tennis mechanics such as grip, strokes, spins, footwork, strategy and tactics that will not only make you a better player but also protect you from possible injuries.

Whether you’re a weekend warrior looking to improve your game or have never picked up a racquet, tennis lessons are a great way to improve your game, or to learn just how fun tennis can be. Not only is tennis a great sport for getting into shape, it’s also a great way to make new friends.

Interested? Tennis lessons for individuals and small groups are offered on Camps Foster and Courtney Monday–Sunday (subject to availability). Registration is accepted at the front desk of Gunners Fitness Center (645-6050) on Camp Foster and Ironworks Fitness Center (622-9221) on Camp Courtney from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, call the fitness center of your choice or email fitnesscenters@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org. 101



Mental Health Awareness Challenge

Stay Active, Mindful and Connected

September is Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Month, and while these issues are vital all-year round, take this opportunity to understand the many factors that affect mental health conditions, such as biology, trauma and a family history of disorders.

To promote wellness, support suicide prevention and encourage daily healthy habits through engaging, purposeful activities, MCCA Health Promotion will be conducting a virtual Wellness & Fitness Bingo Challenge throughout the month of September. This month-long virtual event is designed to boost physical and mental well-being while raising awareness of mental health and suicide prevention.

Participants will complete fun and meaningful activities from their bingo cards—including workouts, self-care tasks, enrichment activities and more. It’s a great way to stay active, mindful and connected no matter where they are.

For more information on the Mental Health Awareness Challenge, visit the Health Promotion team on Facebook at facebook.com/mccsokinawa.semperfit or email them at healthpromotions@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org. 101



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Contact Information:

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Vaping

Do You Know What You're Inhaling?

Throughout the past several years, vaping has become increasingly popular, especially among teenagers and young adults even though it carries many serious health risks. While some people may believe vaping is safer than smoking traditional cigarettes, it can still cause significant harm to the body. Most vapes contain nicotine, a highly addictive chemical that can negatively affect brain development—especially in adolescents—making it difficult to concentrate, learn and control impulses. Vaping can also lead to increased heart rate and blood pressure, raising the risk of cardiovascular problems over time.

In addition to nicotine, vape liquids contain various chemicals and substances that can be dangerous when inhaled such as propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, flavoring agents and other harmful chemical additives. When heated, some of these ingredients can

produce toxic compounds such as formaldehyde and acrolein, which may damage the lungs and airways. Studies have linked vaping to respiratory issues, including coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath as well as lung inflammation, to name a few. In severe cases, vaping has caused hospitalization due to serious lung injuries.

Because of these health concerns, vaping should be known for its negative health impacts. Understanding what is inside vapes and the risks they pose can help people make informed decisions and protect their health. To reduce your health risks, it is recommended to avoid vaping.

For more information about vaping, addiction and substance misuse, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/sacc, call 098-970-3009/645-3009 or email MCB_Butler-SACC-Prevention@usmc.mil. **101**

The Gottman Workshop

7 Principles for Making Marriage Work

The MCCS Family Advocacy Program is committed to fostering strong and meaningful relationships within the military community. They firmly believe that every relationship deserves a solid foundation based on trust, love and understanding. A foundation that is cultivated through a wide range of resources, educational opportunities, support and intervention.

The Gottman Workshop is based on the *New York Times* bestselling book *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John M. Gottman and Nan Silver. It will offer participants skills and tools on how to manage conflict constructively by addressing both solvable and perpetual problems within one's relationship and how to improve their friendship, fondness and admiration for their partner. Lastly, this class aims to allow individuals to create a shared meaning

within their marriage through enhancement of communication and intimate connection.

The Family Advocacy Program will be hosting a full-day workshop on Saturday, August 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Camp Foster. This workshop is open to SOFA personnel and beneficial for pre-marital, newlywed and well-established couples looking to gain helpful skills to successfully enhance their marriage. Registration is required via Eventbrite.

For more information on The Gottman Workshop: The 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work and other offerings by the MCCS Family Advocacy Program, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/fap, email fapprevention@usmc.mil or call 645-2915. **101**

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FOR MORE INFO

Strengthening Our Mission

Through Volunteering

Every successful community program begins with people who are willing to serve. Volunteers bring energy, compassion, creativity and dedication to organizations across our installations. Whether they're supporting family readiness events, mentoring youth, assisting at special programs or helping behind the scenes, volunteers make a lasting impact every day. But many organizations struggle with one important challenge... finding the right volunteers and communicating these opportunities effectively.

That's where the MCCA Volunteer Management Program comes in. The Installation Volunteer Coordinator is a valuable resource for organizations seeking to grow their volunteer programs and connect with individuals who are eager to serve. From promoting volunteer opportunities through installation channels, helping organizations improve volunteer engagement strategies and offering Volunteer Ready classes, the Volunteer Program serves as a bridge between community needs and community service.

Volunteers are the heart of our military community! And, by working together and making volunteer opportunities more visible, we can strengthen our community programs, support military families and create lasting positive changes across Okinawa. If your organization would like assistance promoting volunteer opportunities or if you would like to enroll in a Volunteer Ready Class, contact the Installation Volunteer Coordinator today. Together, we can build a stronger culture of service and community engagement.

For more information on the MCCA Volunteer Management Program, including steps to get started, eligibility requirements, upcoming events, FAQs and volunteer opportunities, call 645-1575, email mcbb_volunteer@usmc.mil or visit www.okinawa.usmc-mcca.org/volunteer. 101



Take the Next Step

Marine Corps and Navy Commissioning Programs Workshop

Are you an enlisted Marine or Sailor interested in expanding your leadership, advancing your military career and furthering your education? Then join the MCCA Voluntary Education Program for the Marine Corps and Navy Commissioning Programs Workshop on August 26, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Camp Hansen Chapel West (Bldg. 2435).

This workshop offers a comprehensive overview of Marine Corps and Navy commissioning pathways covering eligibility requirements, application processes and mentorship support. Guest speakers include officers who commissioned through programs such as Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) and Officer Candidate School (OCS) as well as representatives from G-1 Admin who process application packages. Attendees can engage directly with these

subject matter experts through breakout sessions to ask questions and gain valuable insight into the commissioning programs and requirements.

Past participants and speakers have praised this workshop for providing enlisted personnel with firsthand experiences from commissioning officers, mentorship opportunities and direct access to experts. The Marine Corps and Navy Commissioning Programs Workshop serves as an important resource for individuals seeking leadership roles, fostering the next generation of officers dedicated to serving with honor, courage and commitment.

For more information, visit your local MCCA Voluntary Education Center, call 645-7160 or email education@okinawa.usmc-mcca.org. 101



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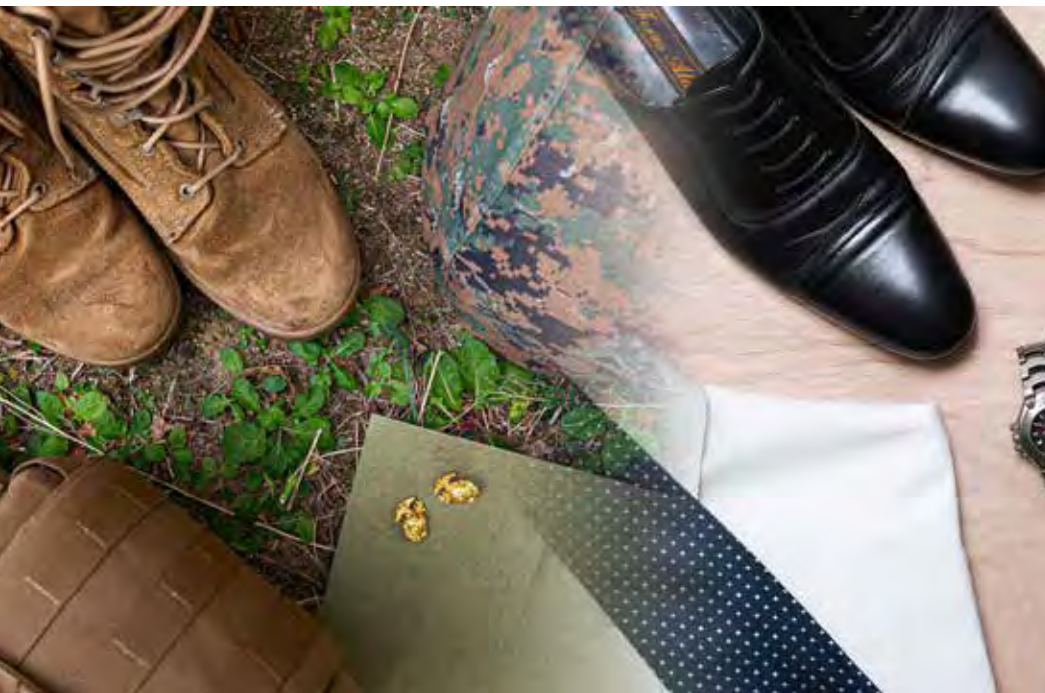
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Transition Toolbox

Preparing for Life After the Corps

Transitioning out of the Marine Corps is a monumental shift, for any family, but for those with adult dependents with special needs, the “Transition Toolbox” requires a specific set of blueprints and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is here for you. The move from the military’s integrated support systems to the civilian sector demands early action, ideally starting 18 to 24 months before your End of Active Service (EAS).

While the change can feel overwhelming, you don’t have to build this bridge alone. Utilize the MCCS Transition Readiness Pro-

gram (TRP) and your EFMP coordinators to identify specific civilian equivalents to the care you receive now. By treating the transition as a mission-essential task and front-loading the paperwork, you ensure your loved one moves into civilian life with the same level of support and security they had within the Marine Corps.

To learn more about the Transition Toolbox, call 645-9237, email efmp@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/efmp. **101**

Feel at Home

MCFTB L.I.N.K.S. Foundations

Are you ready to discover Marine Corps life and your new community? Then join L.I.N.K.S. Foundations workshops hosted by Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) that will help you understand challenges and how they relate to the Marine Corps mission. You’ll also gain valuable resources, knowledge of Marine Corps history and traditions and practical skills to support you along your journey. L.I.N.K.S. is a mentoring program for Marine family members led by experienced Marine spouses.

This month, workshops will take place on August 12 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the

MCAS Futenma Library and on August 18 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at MCAS Futenma Habu Pit. Sessions are interactive and include a mix of videos, group discussions and more.

Interested? Snacks and beverages will be provided, and children are welcome to attend. However, please note that childcare will not be provided. Register now on Eventbrite! For any questions or additional information, and/or special accommodations, please reach out to MCFTBokinawa@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org, email mcftbokinawa@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or call 098-970-3689. **101**

Unconscious Bias

Make a Positive Change

An unconscious bias is a learned stereotype that’s automatic and unintentional. Often from societal and parental conditioning, it’s a result of the brain trying to handle the millions of bits of information it processes every day (it attempts to categorize things into familiar patterns). Everyone has unconscious biases, so it’s important to be able to uncover and minimize them.

Naturally, these unconscious biases find their way into the workplace. This can affect things such as recruitment, retention and more. It can also hinder work performance and lead to poor decision making. To make sure this doesn’t affect your work environment, attend Franklin Covey’s Unconscious Bias.

At this workshop, explore what unconscious bias is and how it develops, how bias influences workplace and personal interactions, common biases that affect decision-making, practical strategies for recognizing and adjusting for bias, ways to foster greater understanding, collaboration and respect and how to take meaningful action that positively impacts your workplace and community.

The next session will be held on August 7 from 9 to 11 a.m. at Ocean Breeze on Camp Foster. You must be registered to attend. To sign up, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/mcftb. For more information, call 645-3689. **101**





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Summertime Eats...

...Available for a Limited Time Only!

August has arrived and summer is in full effect! That means summer vacation, summer fun and more time to enjoy the delicious limited time offerings from MCCC with the whole family!

Gather your family (AND friends) to enjoy some delicious tropical vibes at a Bulldogs Burgers location near you. Why, you ask? Because for this month, and this month only, Bulldogs will be offering the Island Burger! A tried-and-true tropical classic, this special offering is a tart and scrumptious Hawaiian Teriyaki Burger for only \$7.50 that'll bring the "aloha" to your tastebuds. For Bulldogs Burgers locations and hours of operation, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/bulldogs.

For the month of August, Shisa Pizza locations island wide will take you back to your favorite hangout to relax with friends with "The Neighborhood" special pizza. Gather your buddies and gather around the table for this tavern-style loaded pizza available for \$12. And, with everyone grabbing slices at the same time, this pizza's time on the table will be short lived! For Shisa Pizza locations and hours of operation, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/shisa.

Next, load up your friends and cruise on over to the nearest Sumo Burrito location to try their newest low rider—The Slow Rider Pork Burrito! It's low, it's slow-smoked and it's absolutely *delicioso*. The Slow Rider is available for a limited time only at Sumo Burrito loca-

tions island wide. For Sumo Burrito locations and hours of operation, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/sumoburrito.

Now, it's time for a refreshing beverage to battle that August heat! Head to your nearest Bonsai Coffee location to try out their White Chocolate Macadamia Cold Brew for \$6.50 (only available as a medium size). A silky blend of smooth cold brew, creamy white chocolate and buttery macadamia nut flavors, the White Chocolate Macadamia Cold Brew is sure to elevate your morning, afternoon—and, for the caffeine fiends—evening! For Bonsai Coffee locations and hours of operation, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/bonsai.

For those that are more active and spend the hot summer months in the gym (not for the air conditioning, of course), head to your nearest LifeJuice location to enjoy their Green Smoothie! A delicious blend of tropical fruits and crisp cucumber packed with refreshing flavor, the Green Smoothie is perfect for post-workout recovery, a healthy breakfast or an energizing afternoon pick-me-up. The Green Smoothie is \$5.50 and available only during the month of August. For LifeJuice locations and hours of operation, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/lifejuice.

For more information on these offerings, upcoming events and specials visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/clubs. **101**

Beat the Heat...

...at 58 Sweets

Yes, it's 90 degrees out with shade offering only minimal relief... maybe a visit to the Foster Library to cool off (in their blessed A/C) while enjoying something from their charming French *patisserie* 58 Sweets is just the ticket?

58 Sweets offers a variety of delightful creations including an assortment of French macarons with flavors like Vanilla, Chocolate, Coffee, Salted Caramel, Red Velvet, Birthday Cake, Coconut and more. In addition to macarons there are also various cakes including Blueberry, Cheesecake (strawberry and plain), Tiramisu, Lemon Cake, Red Velvet Shooters and much more! Pair your pick of dessert with a rich espresso, a

creamy *café au lait*, or really beat the heat with a hefty serving of soft-serve ice cream enhanced by a variety of available toppings.

While you're at the library, you can also take advantage of their many resources (which include books, computers, Innovation Lab equipment, games, movies and more) after you treat yourself. Just think of it as the perfect escape from the bustle of everyday life and the brutal hammer-strokes of the summer sun.

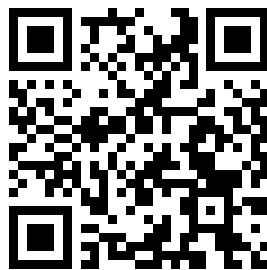
58 Sweets is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is located inside Bldg. 5679 on Camp Foster. For more information on 58 Sweets including their menu, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/58sweets. **101**



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Family Luau Dinner Show

Butler Officers' Club

Looking to experience the flavors of the Hawaiian Islands? Then come on down to Butler Officers' Club on August 22 from 6 to 9 p.m. for an evening of island fun at the Family Luau Dinner Show. Guests will enjoy a Hawaiian-inspired buffet along with LIVE entertainment, music and family-friendly activities in a fun tropical atmosphere. Bring the whole family together for a relaxing evening filled with food, entertainment and island culture. Attendees are encouraged to wear Hawaiian prints or island-inspired attire to join in the luau spirit.

Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$15 for children ages 5–11 and absolutely FREE for those under 5. Don't miss your chance to experience a quick trip to a Hawaiian luau as tickets are on sale via Eventbrite and the last to grab 'em is on August 18 (1 p.m.)! This event is open to DoD ID card holders island wide.

For more information, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/clubs. **101**

Chef's Summer Pick

Limited Time Only

Spice up your tastebuds with TERRA's limited time offering...the one and only mouthwatering Fried Buffalo Chicken Sandwich delivering the perfect balance of heat and flavor! After the chicken is golden-fried and irresistibly crispy, it is then generously tossed in TERRA's signature buffalo sauce, creating a bold and tangy kick in every bite. The chicken sits in between two buns paired well with fresh, crisp lettuce, juicy tomatoes and bites of savory bleu cheese crumbles.

Available for a limited time only, this flavorful item

is the perfect choice for guests looking to try something new and exciting. The creaminess of cool bleu cheese complements the spicy buffalo sauce, while the fresh vegetables add a refreshing finish to this hearty sandwich. To get your fix, stop on by TERRA to experience this downright delicious buffalo chicken favorite before it's gone!

For more information about TERRA, including hours of operation and more, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/terra. **101**





Taiyo Steakhouse

Treat Yourself to Something Special

Text by: Mike Daley | Photography by: Alex Steward

Taiyo Steakhouse, located at Taiyo Golf Club, is a special place. Taiyo's prime beef is famed throughout the island and is available in a variety of cuts—all broiled using 1,200-degree heat and seasoned with sea salt and fresh ground black pepper. The restaurant's ambiance and service are also a cut above anything you have experienced in an on-base facility—making it the perfect place for special occasions. Whether it's a 10-year anniversary, a birthday party for that cherished someone or even something as simple as rewarding yourself for finishing an especially difficult work or school project, Taiyo Steakhouse is the perfect place to celebrate.

The ultimate celebratory prize is the Taiyo-favorite Tomahawk Ribeye—a magnificent bone-in masterpiece cooked to your specifications and brushed with savory butter. For those who have never experienced a Tomahawk Ribeye, it's an occasion that will not soon be forgotten—*especially* if it's a Taiyo Steakhouse Tomahawk! In addition, Taiyo Steakhouse also offers many more prime cuts, including Boneless Ribeye, a thick and generous Porterhouse, the grandiose Chateaubriand for Two and more alongside additional delectable proteins such as their Lamb Rack, Kurobuta Pork Chop, a variety of seafood selections, poultry and decadent desserts such as their Espresso Tiramisu, Pumpkin Crème Brûlée and other scrumptious sweets.

Beginning this year, Taiyo Steakhouse is now offering a new way to celebrate, a *meatier* way to celebrate, that is! Every Wednesday, whether it's a celebratory occasion with friends or just yourself,

head over for their Taiyo Prime Rib Dinner for only \$30 (limited availability). Enjoy your choice of the Taiyo Cut, English Cut (3 slices) and the 20 oz. King Henry VIII Cut (+\$10 but totally worth it). Dinner accompaniments include horseradish sauce, a house salad with your choice of dressing, creamed spinach, mashed potatoes or a baked potato and Yorkshire pudding.

"Our anniversary dinner at Taiyo Steakhouse was nothing short of exceptional," stated recent patrons Eric and Tina Kisela. "The Wednesday Prime Rib Special, complete with creamed spinach, Yorkshire pudding and the perfectly prepared potatoes was outstanding. Every element of the plate showed care and craft. A particularly memorable touch was the Pumpkin Crème Brûlée, beautifully prepared with "Happy Anniversary" inscribed on the plate. That small gesture elevated the entire evening. What truly set the experience apart, though, was the impeccable service."

Dinner at Taiyo Steakhouse is served Wednesday–Sunday from 5 to 9 p.m. Brunch is available Monday–Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Reservations are recommended (required for dinner) and can be made by calling 622-2020.

Taiyo Steakhouse is located on the second floor of Taiyo Clubhouse in Uruma City near the Kurashiki Dam in central Okinawa, just minutes from Camp Courtney and only 20 minutes from Camp Foster via the Okinawa Expressway.

A full menu is available for viewing at www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/taiyosteakhouse. **101**

Location

1183 Enobi
Uruma, Okinawa
904-2205

Hours of Operation

Brunch

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays,
7 a.m.–2 p.m.

Dinner

Wednesday–Sunday, 5–9 p.m.

Bar

Wednesday–Sunday, 3–9 p.m.
(Bar Bites menu available)

Beverage Cart

Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays,
7:30 a.m.–6 p.m.

Phone Number

622-2020
098-954-2020

Website

www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/taiyosteakhouse

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ISO - urasoe

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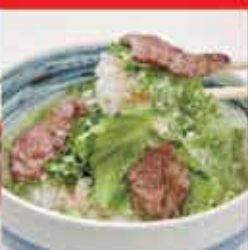
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EGA

Bars & Beam Bootcamp

Is your budding gymnast looking for classes to help them become better—specifically on the foundational apparatuses known as bars and beams? Then get your child ready for two hours of flipping, swinging and sticking the landings at Excellence Gymnastics Academy's (EGA) Bars & Beam Bootcamp happening on September 19! Designed for young gymnasts ages 7 to 15, this focused-based clinic is all about building confidence and sharpening skills on uneven bars and the balance beam.

At the bootcamp, young athletes will learn step-by-step techniques with smart drills, sharpen their skills and help one another as they improve their swing, control and consistency—all in a fun, motivating environment! Whether they're working towards cleaner casts or sticking those beam skills like a pro, this training session is the one to learn all about it. Registration is required via iClassPro.

For more information or any questions you may have, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/ega, call 645-1602 or email ega@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org. **101**

Parent & Child Scramble

Fun "Fore" the Whole Family!

When looking for the ultimate day of bonding with your kid...does it involve being outside surrounded by 247 acres of rolling hills and beautifully maintained fairways with golf clubs in your hands? Then we've got the perfect event for you and yours when you enter the 2026 Taiyo Golf Club Parent & Child Scramble happening on August 15 from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.!

The format will be a scramble over 18 holes and will be played with teams consisting of one parent and one child (must not have graduated high school); lunch and prizes will follow play. This event is open to DoD ID card holders and registration will be accepted at the Taiyo Pro Shop until August 12 for \$40 per team (green and cart fees not included). This is the perfect event "fore" making tons of happy family memories!

For more information about Taiyo Golf Club including hours of operation, location and more, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/golf or call 098-954-2004/622-2004. **101**



Youth Basketball & Cheer Season

Jump Into Youth Sports

Is your little one completely obsessed with their footwork on their crossover to step-back combo? Do they happen to have an innate ability to turn a frown upside down with their song-and-dance routines? If you answered yes to either of the above, or you just want to enroll them in a fun activity that'll make them new friends and keep them active, then maybe you should consider signing them up for Youth Basketball or Cheer with MCCS Semper Fit Youth Sports.

Semper Fit Youth Sports programs are recreational leagues built around the idea that all kids should have the opportunity to play sports and have fun doing so. Whether your kiddo has moves like Kyrie, is a master TikTok choreographer or tends to trip over their two left feet, they can find fun and joy in developing skills in the sport of their choice. What's more, kids who participate in team sports develop lifelong bonds with teammates, have a sense of fair play and are better able to collaborate during school projects—so what are you waiting for? Sign up your kid today!

Youth Basketball and Cheer teams are open to children ages 5 to 18 (children who are 4 years old may register if they turn five before January 25, 2027). Families with younger children can also take advantage of the Start Smart Basketball & Cheer program, now accepting ages 3 to 5. This six-week parent-and-child program introduces young athletes to basic motor skills, coordination and sports fundamentals through guided activities held each Saturday.

Registration for the 2026–2027 Youth Basketball and Cheer season runs from August 1 to 31 and can be completed online at www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/youthsports or at any staffed MCCS Fitness Center. For more information, call 645-3533/34 or email youthsports@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org. **101**

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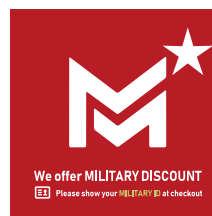
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Dive-In Movie Night

Kinser Aquatic Center

Summer on Okinawa is filled with humid days, beach outings and quality time with kids on summer break. After all, trying to stay cool in the intense heat of summer can be tricky when spending time with members of your household—A/C on full blast and all. But there's nothing that screams family time like movie night—the gathering of beloved family members with the battle for the optimal seat for perfect viewing. If you're a parent that doesn't enjoy these battles, why not take the whole family up to watch flicks in the pool? Yes, that's right, everyone can have the

best seats at Dive-In Movies! Bring the whole family down to the Kinser Aquatic Center on August 7 to float under the stars and watch your favorite family-friendly films. Movies will begin playing at 7:30 p.m. with FREE popcorn and beverages provided (while supplies last). All ages are welcome to chill poolside and have a good time.

For more information about this event and other MCCS Aquatics offerings, call 637-1592 / 645-3180, email mccsaquatics@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/aquatics. **101**

NPSP Infant Massage

Learn Proper Techniques

Looking for a way to connect with your little bundle of joy? According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), massages have a positive impact on baby's sleep quality, relaxation, pain relief, digestion, colic and strength building. For caretakers, giving baby massages can also reduce stress and depression, promote confidence, relaxation and non-verbal communication with their baby.

Now's the time to learn the proper techniques! Join the New Parent Support Program (NPSP) for their Infant Massage Class, offered

in a four-part series once a week on Thursdays each month, classes take place at the WestPac Inn (Bldg. 14) on Camp Foster for expectant parents and families with children under the age of 6. During the class, staff will teach participants how to create a relaxing environment, massage techniques and practices as well as numerous benefits.

Registration is required to attend. To register, call 645-0396 or email npspokinawa@usmc.mil. For more information, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/npsp. **101**

Back To School

Family Fun Nights

Can you believe it's August already? If you're asking yourself, "Didn't summer just start?" and find yourself wondering where the time has gone, you're not alone! Before you know it, the kiddos will be off to a new school year. If you've already started back-to-school shopping you're the real MVP, if not, it's definitely time to find that list and start gathering the supplies!

MCCS invites you to celebrate the back-to-school season with not one or two, but *three* Family Fun Nights that are sure to yield good times and lasting memories. Join us on Thursday, August 20 from 5 to 9 p.m. at Surfside on Camp Kinser, Ocean Breeze on Camp Foster or Tengan Castle on Camp Courtney to enjoy a buffet and plenty of activities for the young ones! This month attendees can expect music, snacks and fun activities to celebrate learning and friendship. There'll be school-themed games, prizes and maybe even a few surprises!

Family Fun Nights are \$12.95 for adults and teens, \$6.95 for children ages 5–11 and FREE for children under 5. Surfside and Ocean Breeze hosts Family Fun Nights every third Thursday of the month, while Tengan Castle hosts them every Thursday. For more information, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/clubs. **101**



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Two player teams consisting of one parent and one child (must have not graduated high school) will play a scramble format for 18 holes. Lunch and prizes to follow play.

\$40 per Team
Green and cart fee not included.

www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/golf
622-2004/2004 | 098 954-2004/2006



TAIYO G.C.
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Register by August 12; open to SOFA teams.



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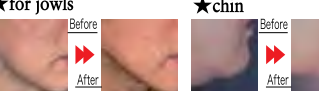
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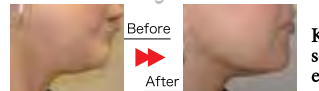
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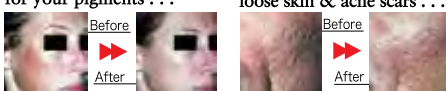
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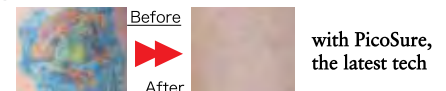


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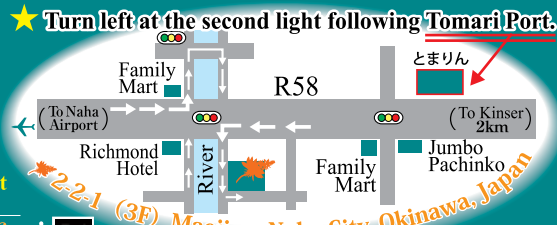
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Stay Cool during the Dog Days of Summer

with Typhoon Motors Sales

Summer vacation may be ending for the little ones, but the season of heat is long from over on Okinawa—we have quite a way to go before the dog days of summer end. Although driving on Okinawa in this summertime heat may be pleasant with the A/C on full-blast, it can be harder on your ride—especially with an engine-full of old sludgy oil!

Well, there's no better time than now to book an oil change! Typhoon Motors will be offering 20% OFF complete oil changes at all locations island-wide during the entire month of August. It is recommended to change your car's engine oil every 8–12,000 kilometers or every 6–12 months. Regular oil changes improve your engine's performance, extend its longevity and help your car achieve its peak gas mileage.

Now that your ride's engine is purring like a kitten, it's time for an evening cruise! There's nothing like gathering your crew and motoring up and down R58 to the soundtrack of your favorite tunes. Well, you can enhance that experience as well by heading over to Typhoon Motors on Camps Kinser and Foster to take advantage of 10% OFF all Kenwood products during their Hot Summer Nights Audio Sale August 24–31.

For more information on upcoming sales as well as Typhoon Motors locations, hours of operation and more, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/typhoonmotors. **101**



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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY



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Summer Vacation 2026

Notes:
*Please bring your own change of clothes and towels.
*Swimsuits are required.
*Showers are available free of charge.
*Lockers are not available; please keep your belongings with you at all times.
*Infants and toddlers are required to wear swim diapers.

Event Period: NOW–September 27

Open on weekends and holidays only after August 31.

Hours: 10 AM–5 PM
(Last admission at 4:30 PM)

Admission Fee: ¥600
(Free for children 3 years old and under.)

Watch amazing birds fly just above your heads and discover fun facts about these fascinating creatures. A photo opportunity with the birds is available after the show!

One of the highlights of Southeast Botanical Gardens is meeting a variety of unique animals, including adorable capybaras and playful squirrel monkeys. Visitors can observe these charming creatures up close and enjoy a relaxing and memorable experience surrounded by nature.

Bird Performance Show

Schedule:
Weekends & Holidays Only
① 11 AM ② 3 PM
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Admission: Free
Event may be canceled due to inclement weather.



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Admission Fee:
Adults (15+): ¥2,000
Children: (4–14): ¥800
Children Under 3: FREE

Garden Hours (August 1–September 27):
August:
Weekends & Holidays: 7 AM–9 PM
Weekdays: 9:30 AM–9 PM
*August 31: Open until 6 PM only.

September:
Weekends & Holidays: 7 AM–9 PM
Monday–Thursday: 9:30 AM–6 PM
Friday: 9:30 AM–9 PM
*Last admission is 30 minutes before closing.

Advance tickets available at



Oki-Prepared

Preparedness = Confidence

Okinawa is currently in the heart of typhoon season, the recent earthquakes throughout the world along with heavy rains and flooding locally have reinforced the fact that “it’s always better to be safe than sorry.” Preparedness is an important part of everyday life and being prepared for an emergency can build confidence, reduce stress and strengthen one’s ability to respond quickly.

To help your family be better prepared, base agencies and emergency services on MCB Butler will be holding Oki-Prepared, in alignment with National Night Out which is overseen by the MCIPAC Provost Marshal’s Office (PMO).

Oki-Prepared, which will take place August 14 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Camp Foster Theater, will focus on building family preparedness for emergency situations and highlight available community resources.

Agencies that are participating in Oki-Prepared include the MCCS Emergency Family Assistance Center, American Red Cross, Camp Butler Food Pantry, Fire Department, PMO and the 18th Medical Group. Planned activities and demonstrations include a K9 demonstration, emergency response and operational demonstrations, medical and life-saving skills exercises and more. The event will also feature games, activities and entertainment for the whole family. For more information on Oki-Prepared, call 645-1618.

MCCS Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) also offers Readiness & Deployment Support workshops designed to help service members, spouses and families navigate both expected and unexpected challenges and emergencies.

These workshops will cover everything from developing Family Care Plans for those with qualifying family situations and organizing important documents to understanding available installation resources, emergency communication planning and more to assist families before, during and after an emergency.

To learn more about MCFTB programs and resources, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/mcftb, email mcftbokinawa@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org or call 645-3689. **101**



Natural Earth Paints

Arts and Crafts

If you’ve been stepping out of your comfort zone and trying creative hobbies like painting, you must know that both MCCS Arts and Crafts Centers on Camp Foster and Camp Courtney carry Natural Earth Paints! This brand prides itself on using natural earth and mineral pigments as well as organic ingredients to make completely safe, sustainable and beautiful art supplies.

The Arts and Crafts Centers have everything you need to get started on your next project, including acrylic and oil paint kits and pigments with a wide range of colors to choose from that you can mix to make your own natural paints; suitable for all ages.

Foster Arts and Crafts also has a plethora of frames and mattings to service your largest of large and smallest of small

paintings, photos, sketches and anything you desire to be framed! The knowledgeable staff members are always available to answer questions, provide expert guidance and offer friendly support to help bring your ideas to life.

On top of all this, there are a wide variety of classes, including Clay Shisa and Ikebana, as well as a Woodshop at Courtney Arts and Crafts to help bring out your creativity. And, if you’re on the market to find the perfect gift for a creative friend or family member, then come browse the unique merchandise, including GoatGuns, Geeki Tikis and more!

For more information on classes, hours of operations, locations and more, visit www.okinawa.usmc-mccs.org/artsandcrafts or email artsandcrafts@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org. **101**

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Bento

Packed to Perfection

Text by: Swetha Gogue | Layout by: Taylor McFarlane

Photography by: Alex Steward

**Food Styling: Ayako Kawamitsu, Airi Igarashi,
Taylor McFarlane & Swetha Gogue**

Transportable, compact and handmade with love, *bento* is synonymous with nourishing the body through a well-thought-out single-portion meal ready to eat outside. Tracing back to the 12th century, the original bento consisted of humble grains of dried, cooked rice known as *hoshii*—a necessity for royalty, travelers and the fighting class going the distance—to be eaten with care, gratitude and portion in mind.





A top-down view of a wooden bento box filled with various food items. At the top, there are three brown meatballs, each with two white circular eyes made from egg and a black dot for a pupil. They are surrounded by green leafy vegetables and pink cherry blossom-shaped rice cakes. In the center, there is a large white rice ball with two eyes. To the right, there is a pile of purple rice with small white eyes. At the bottom right, there is a white rice ball with two eyes. A large tomato slice is on the left, and a small green vegetable with a pink and orange garnish is in the center. The bento box is set against a background of a blue and white striped circle and a white circle with black dots.

Bento, also politely known as “*obento*,” provided sustenance on-the-go to farmers who tended to the land under the hot sun, satisfied the hunger during an odyssey and provided delightful appetizing sights through attention to detail. Fast forward to modern-day, bento is popular during *hanami* (flower viewing, usually during *sakura* season), outdoor picnics surrounded by natural landscapes and at school field trips during an outing. In fact, children are taught *Obentōbako no Uta* (The Lunchbox Song) at any early age to educate them about the main components of their lunch! While bento at school is not a daily regimen since lunches are subsidized up until middle school, parents are still tasked with providing bento a few times a year, oftentimes leaving a quiet gem of *origami* to be found in the form of a handwritten note.



Balanced with carbs (rice), protein (eggs, fish and meat), vegetables (broccoli, edamame, etc.) and probiotics (*tsukemono* or pickled vegetables), each container is neatly packed tightly to prevent food from shifting. In addition to prioritizing whole foods, each independent item is strategically placed to yield an amalgamation through texture, tinge and temperature. Frequently, elements are sectioned by *baran* (decorative green plastic leaf) or side dish cups to divide food from mingling into one another alleviating cross-contamination from savoriness, sauces and smells. For dessert, fruit is the sweet ending, packed separately in a container accompanied by decorative miniature skewers to add delight. On rare occasions, specifically in school settings, children indulge in chips, candy and crackers after a filling bento.

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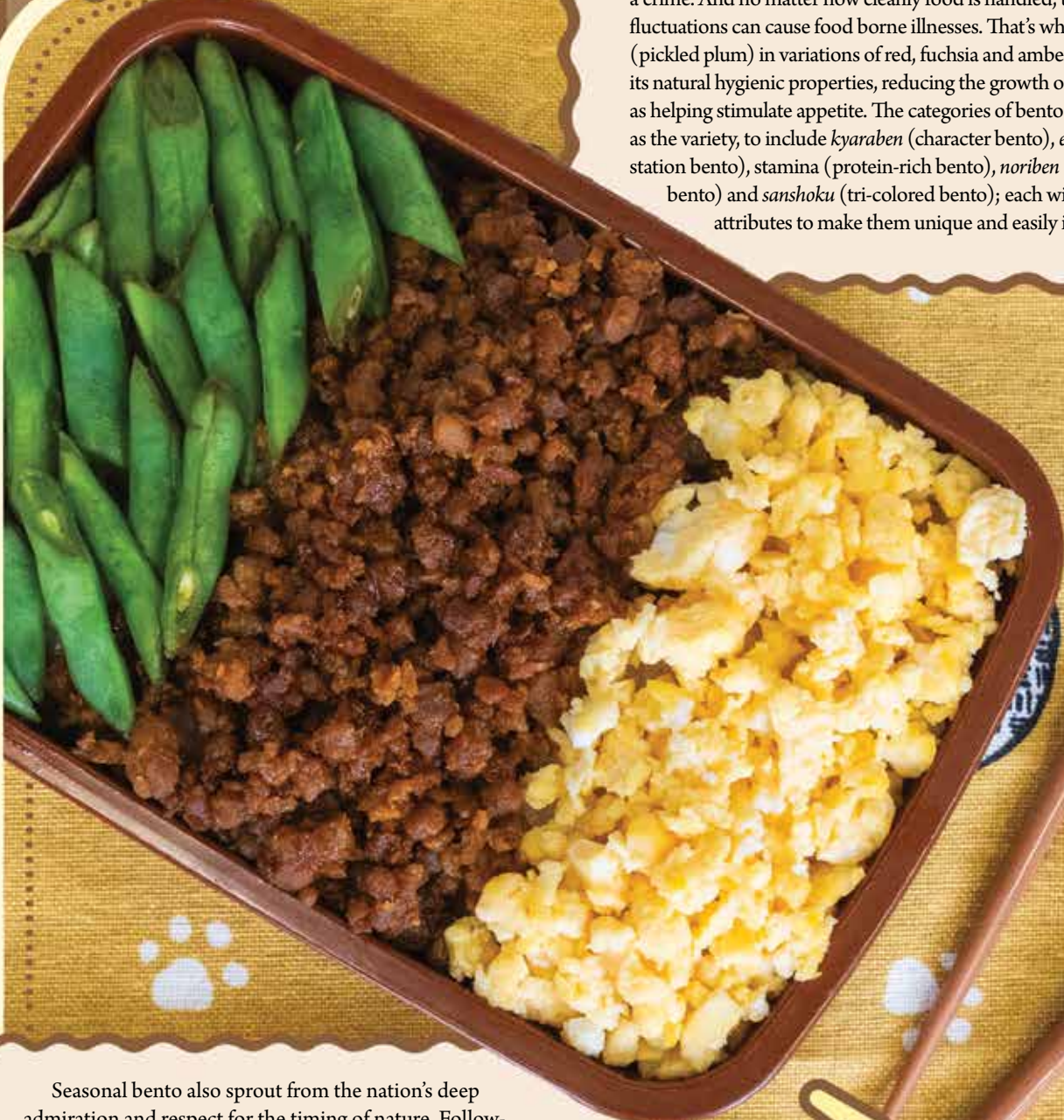
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A brown rectangular bento box is shown at an angle. It contains three distinct sections: a top-left section filled with bright green snap peas, a middle section filled with a dark brown, crumbly meat or vegetable mixture, and a bottom-right section filled with fluffy yellow rice. The box is placed on a light brown fabric surface with a subtle pattern. A pair of wooden chopsticks lies diagonally across the bottom right of the frame. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border with a brown background, vertical stripes, and small yellow hearts.

Although peculiar to Westerners and everything taught about food storage temperatures, bento is meant to be eaten without the need for refrigeration; however microwaving bento would *not* be considered a crime. And no matter how cleanly food is handled, temperature fluctuations can cause food borne illnesses. That's where *umeboshi* (pickled plum) in variations of red, fuchsia and amber sits atop rice for its natural hygienic properties, reducing the growth of bacteria as well as helping stimulate appetite. The categories of bento are as expansive as the variety, to include *kyaraben* (character bento), *ekiben* (train station bento), *stamina* (protein-rich bento), *noriben* (seaweed-based bento) and *sanshoku* (tri-colored bento); each with its own distinct attributes to make them unique and easily identifiable.

Seasonal bento also sprout from the nation's deep admiration and respect for the timing of nature. Following mother nature's cycle, fresh ingredients such as *takenoko* (bamboo shoot), *gōyā* (bitter melon), *kabocha* (Japanese squash) and *satsuma-imo* (Japanese sweet potato) rotate to sync up with its respective growing season during *haru* (spring), *natsu* (summer), *aki* (autumn) and *fuyu* (winter). The heart of the meals also follow this format with meat-heavy dishes in the warmer months for extra power to survive the heat and root vegetables in the winter to organically insulate the body inside.

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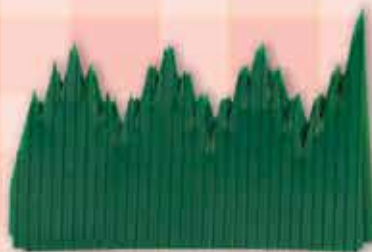
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A bento box filled with creative food art. It features a white rice ball shaped like a cat with black eyes, a purple rice ball shaped like a cat with yellow eyes, and several meatballs with googly eyes. There are also cherry tomatoes, green peas, and other small food items arranged artistically. The bento box is held by a hand with blue nail polish.



Bento Essentials

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Onigiri Tutorial



Ingredients

- * 1 ½ c. Fresh cooked short-grain rice
- * Salt (optional)
- * 2-4 Tbsp. Filling of choice (tuna mayo, cod roe, umeboshi, etc.)
- * *Nori* (seaweed) strips

Materials

- * Bowl of water
- * Clingwrap



Wet both hands then lightly salt them



Add 3/4 c. rice in palm



Gently create a patty then indent the middle



Add 2 Tbsp. spoon of Filling in the indentation



Cover Filling with 1-2 Tbsp. of rice



Compact and shape rice into a triangle



Rotate onigiri through a V-shape motion with hands



Add nori strip



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Chicken Soboro

Soboro is ground, seasoned chicken with a crumbly consistency. It can be used as an onigiri filler, for bento lunches and can most commonly be seen as a part of *Sanshoku Soboro Don* coupled with crumbly scrambled eggs called *iri-tamago* alongside steamed and seasoned green vegetables such as beans or spinach.

Ingredients:

Tori-Soboro (Chicken Soboro)

7 oz. ground chicken
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
2 Tbsp. *sake* (rice wine)
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 tsp. S&B Nama Shouga (ginger paste)

Iri-Tamago

4 eggs
2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
1 Tbsp. *mirin* (sweet cooking wine)
Pinch of salt

Method of Preparation

1. Combine chicken and ingredients in a medium-sized saucepan and mix thoroughly.
2. Set heat to medium low.
3. Once the edges of the chicken begin to brown, stir quickly and evenly to prevent chunks from forming until

completely cooked through (use more than one pair of cooking chopsticks to yield better results).

4. Crack eggs into a bowl and beat until smooth; add other ingredients and mix well.
5. Cook the scrambled eggs using the same method as the soboro.

The “Other” Summer Icons

With summer in full swing on the island, you’ve probably already run into one or both of these two perennial summer evening Okinawan icons—the *yārū* and the *tōbira* (their *Uchināguchi* names). And while we’re not talking about giant bats or slithering reptiles, the level of trepidation (and for some, sheer terror) these two island residents can generate is on the same level.

While the name may sound endearing, the *tōbira* is everything but—namely because we’re talking about the large, disgusting and almost indestructible Okinawan cockroach. Hardened veterans of the *tōbira* wars often swap stories of their epic battles with specimens “the size of Rodan” (the flying monster from the Godzilla movies) and lament that defeating them is a near impossible task.

Although this point may be argued by some, *yārū*, or house geckos, are the far more agreeable member of this iconic pair (except for their disturbing habit of falling from the top of door sills almost surgically onto the back of your neck). The gecko’s name in the Japanese language, *yamori*, translates as “protector of the home”



and it is possible that this moniker stems from the tiny creature’s habit of controlling household pests...such as smaller versions of the aforementioned roaches. **lol**

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