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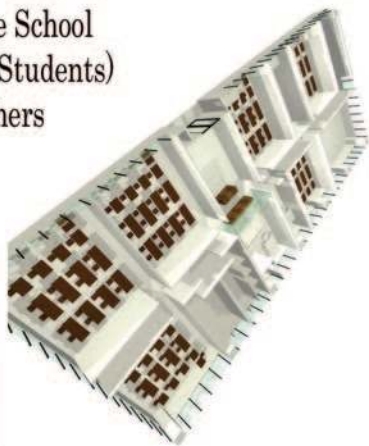
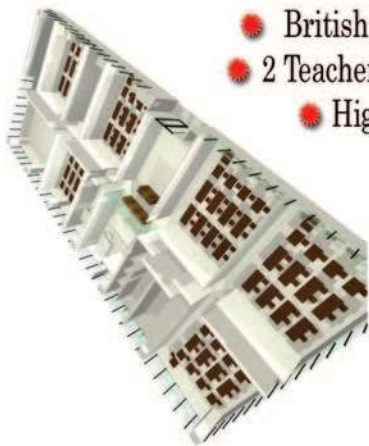


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October 2011 Issue 6

Ocean Expo Park Churaumi Aquarium

This month we've been up to the Ocean Expo Park near Nago. We've got a review of a "must do" attraction on Okinawa, Churaumi Aquarium.

We've also got a review of a great little cafe close to Kin Town, Cafe Kubama. Also included are Japan Tips & Tricks as well as Weird & Wonderful. We've also got our usual dive report included from Reef Encounters and finally we've got a piece on the Kokeshi Roller Dolls.

As usual you can also view the magazine online at: www.totalokinawa.com

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Cafe Kubama

Hidden gem with amazing sea views close to Kin Town.

Now that the heat of the summer has gone, a drive along the coast makes a great choice. The east coast of Okinawa has beautiful views, with less development than the West side. You can also find Cafe Kubama on this side of the island.

In an unassuming white concrete building just past Shikawa heading North is a hidden gem. What makes it really special are the views



both from inside with large glass windows onto the sea or from the terrace outside.

The owner of the cafe, Higa-san often plays the piano for his guests, when he's not playing he takes great care in the choice of music.

They have a variety of food choices, with specials including curry, pasta, pizza and cakes. We had a delicious spicy chicken curry with goya chips and raisins on the rice. They also serve Japanese green tea

made in the traditional way by using powdered green tea mixed with a tea whisk.

Cafe Kubama makes a great choice if you're in Kin or travelling North to just escape for an hour or two and watch the ocean while enjoying a drink or food. Prices range from 800-1200 yen for the set menu.

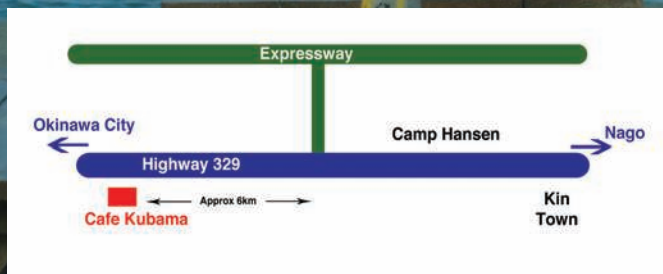
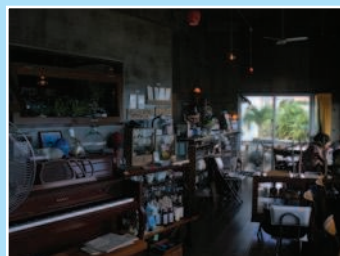
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 Directions, Opening Times, Maps & More

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Dive Update

Calmer Waters..

Good news for divers! The typhoon season is past and some of the best diving of the year is now to be had. As the hot summer temps cool a bit the ocean retains its warmth for a few more months and the diving conditions are calm and clear. This time of year is the perfect occasion to increase your training or get ready for that next dive trip. Expand your boundaries with night diving or a deep diving class or get your feet wet with an Intro to Technical class and see what it takes to really explore the deep expanses of the oceans. Reef Encounters is still offering its daily boat dives exploring the islands and dive sites around Okinawa so contact us today for reservations.



Over the next few months Reef Encounters will be offering a full range of technical classes and training and also such specialties as deep diving, drift diving and wreck exploration. The instructors at Reef Encounters are some of the most experienced divers and teachers on Okinawa, when you want some true expert training or just some simple advice on gear or diving feel free to stop by the shop or send us an email or join our facebook page to interact with our instructors and divers on a regular basis

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/2651041139>

Now is also the time to start planning for our winter trips to Yonaguni. In January, February and March Reef Encounters will be traveling to explore the ruins of Yonaguni and swim with the schooling hammerheads found in the waters off this small island each winter. A drift dive specialty is the perfect way to get yourself prepared for Yonaguni.

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Weird and Wonderful Japan

Disaster Prevention Day

* September 1 was disaster prevention day in Japan, which brought news that the government believes there is a 70% chance of a major earthquake hitting Tokyo within the next 30 years.

All Change

* Following the resignation of Naoto Kan, Yoshihiko Noda has been picked to replace him. This is amazingly Japan's sixth prime minister in five years. The bets are already starting that there will be another change in 12 months!

Japanese Honesty

* Following the terrible looting and riots in England, foreign media has contrasted that with the honesty of Japanese people following the tsunami. In the five months since then, people have turned in thousands of purses and wallets containing more than \$45 million. Also more than 5700 recovered safes have been taken to police, in one safe alone there was \$1 million!

Hot or Cold?

* Following the earthquake which caused liquifaction in Urayasu, the city installed temporary water pipes. The problem, the cold water is hot! So hot the residents don't need to use their water heaters. This is because the

temporary pipes are only 30cm below ground compared to 1m for the old pipes.



Movie Madness

* Movie releases in Japan are quite often months behind other countries. Illustrating this crazy situation is the Easter movie "Hop" which was released in most countries at the beginning of April. Japan's date, 19th August! Maybe there wouldn't be such an issue with illegal downloads if they gave the movies better release dates!

We're Watching You

* It recently came to light that DoCoMo phone have a hidden feature that send your location to them every hour. The information is used to analyze the movement of people following disasters and to help with disaster planning. This comes hot on the heels of the news of tracking data being stored on iPhones. It may be done for valid reasons, but no company seems to be that up front about what they do and why.

Going Swimmingly

* A group of Japanese swimmers swam from Okinawa to Taiwan to thank the Taiwanese for their donations of over 20 billion yen for Tsunami disaster relief.

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Churaumi Aquarium

This month we visited the Ocean Expo Park near Nago.

This issue we're featuring the Churaumi Aquarium, next time we'll be reviewing the other attractions at the Ocean Expo Park. The aquarium is a must-do while you're stationed in or visiting Okinawa. The main tank called Kuroshio Sea is the 2nd largest in the world, holding 7,500 cubic meters of water with an acrylic glass panel measuring a massive 27 x 74 ft and 24 inches thick!

Kuroshio Sea Tank

The main draw at the aquarium has to be the world's 2nd largest tank. It's one of the few aquariums in the world that keeps whale sharks and has an active breeding program.



The size of the tank really is breathtaking especially when you see an 8.5 meter long whale shark swimming by! Apart from the whale sharks they also have a manta ray breeding program. The tank currently holds six manta rays along with a huge variety of more than 70 other fish species.

Don't Miss - Feeding show at 17:00 every day!

Coral Sea Tank

The coral sea tank at Churaumi is directly open to the sky so that Okinawa's sun can reach the living coral. You can see over 800 colonies of coral composed of more than 70 different types. The coral has been successfully growing for over 10 years, having originally been cultivated from collected coral fragments. The tank is fed by a system of fresh sea water from close to the aquarium.

Ocean Expo Park

to

Additional Attractions

Deep Sea - On the first floor check out the deep sea's exhibits and tank featuring creatures that exist with no sunlight over 200 meters below the surface.

Ocean Planitarium - Showcases sea creatures that give off natural light. Check out the glow from coral, fish and other creatures.

Kuroshio Sea Tank Observation Deck - Check out the massive main aquarium from above (Note closed from 14:30-17:30)

Aqua Room - This is a room under the main aquarium with acrylic walls and ceilings. Sit for a while and watch the sharks glide above your head!

Dolphin Shows - There are three ways to get up close to dolphins, the dolphin show (Mar - Sep), diver show and dolphin viewing at the lagoon.

Shark Research Lab - Check out the shark aquarium with 6 different sharks and a variety of displays and exhibits.

Apart from the main draw of the Kuroshio Sea Tank and the other attractions mentioned above, the aquarium has a wide variety of learning exhibits, movies and presentations with audio commentary available in English. Now that the weather is cooler and the tourist crowds are decreasing it's a great time to visit.

Visitor Information

The Ocean Expo Park is located in Motobu in Northern Okinawa. It's well signposted and their website has good directions in English. There's also a useful congestion forecast on their homepage so you can decide when to plan your trip.

Tel: 098-048-2741

Web: <http://oki-churaumi.jp/en>



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Google Map Link

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Etiquette Top 10

Living in Japan can be tough, but learn a few basic rules and life becomes a lot easier! Here's our rundown of what to do and not to do in Japan.

Bowing

A lot more complicated than it seems, with rules including the depth and direction of the bow. Most Japanese are happy to shake hands with non-Japanese but if you want to get it right, then a semi-formal bow would be about 30 degrees from the waist.

Paying

When in shops or restaurants, if there's a small tray next to the register then place your money there. It's a breach of etiquette to hand the money when there's a tray present.

Wedding Gifts

If invited to a wedding it's normal to give a gift of money in a special sealed envelope. The amount may depend on the group of people, their status or it may be a set amount. It's considered inappropriate to give an even amount of notes or to give 40,000 yen as 4 (shi) sound phonetically like death in Japanese.

Eating in Restaurants

There's a variety of rules associated with dining in Japan. Here's some of the most important (most relating to Chopsticks!)

- Unlike China it's considered polite to clear your plate.
- Never rub chopsticks together

- Don't pass food from chopstick to chopstick
- Don't stick your chopsticks upright in your rice
- Don't spear food with one chopstick
- Don't leave chopsticks in your mouth while doing something else
- Don't use your chopsticks as toys, putting them up your nose may make a funny photo but it's not polite!
- Don't point at people with your chopsticks

As you can see there are a lot of rules relating to restaurants especially chopsticks and this doesn't cover all of them! Most of the reasons these rules apply is because certain acts such as putting the chopsticks vertically in rice relate to death and funeral traditions. More etiquette in the next issue!

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A common question and problem for people arriving on island is how to get their imported bikes certified for use in Japan. Gixxer can take care of the entire process for you, including all the testing, shipping, paperwork, pickup, delivery and insurance. It's not cheap getting your foreign bike certified for use in Japan but at least they make it easy for you!

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Roller Derby in Okinawa, Japan

From small beginnings in summer 2010, the Kokeshi Roller Dolls emerged as Okinawa's first women's flat-track roller derby league. The goal? To give Okinawa something it has never seen before! Roller derby has taken America by storm, and its influence can now be felt around the globe.

Chicks. Skate. Fight. Derby! The Kokeshi Roller Dolls came out to the Okinawan public in May 2011 with their first hard-hitting bout, or game, the "Spring Roll" held at Comprehensive Park arena, where over 800 American and Japanese spectators came to see what the fuss was all about.

Now, hungering for more, Okinawa can look forward to annual seasons running from fall to spring and regular recruiting events for players and officials!

For exact bout and event dates, check out www.kokeshirollerdolls.com or look us up on Facebook www.facebook.com/kokeshirollerdolls.

We're like nothing you've ever seen, and we're only getting better! The Kokeshi Roller Dolls play according to the rules and regulations of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (www.wftda.com.)

We look forward to seeing you in the stands this season!



★★★ Kokeshi Roller Dolls 2011-12 Season Dates ★★★★★★★★★★

Fri, Oct 21	Fri, Nov 11	Mon, Jan 16	Fri, Feb 24	Sat, Mar 24
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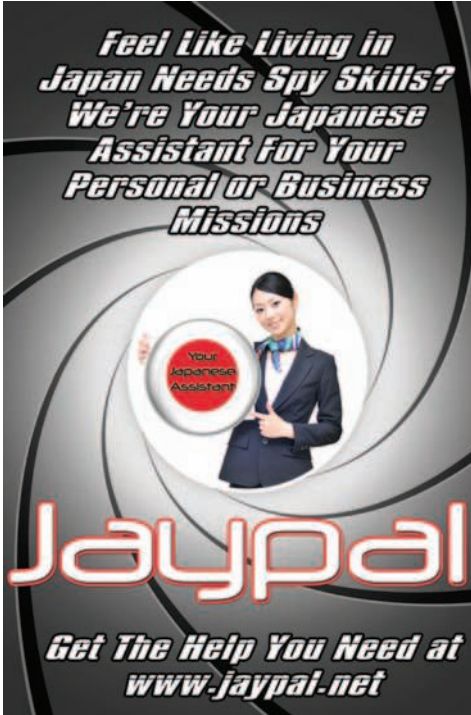




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