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TIME TO ESCAPE? Low Cost Airlines

totalokinawa

CONTENTS

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2013

Issue 14



appy New Year! Suffering from the new year blues? This issue we're featuring the new low cost airlines flying from Okinawa, there's now no excuse not to take a trip!

We've also got two restaurant reviews from the Rose Garden and Tan Tan as well as our regular dive report, weird & wonderful and a

round up of the best Japanese study resources.

As usual you can also view the magazine online at:

www.totalokinawa.com



Need a QR reader? Check out our magazine page on Totalokinawa.com

FFATURE LOW COST AIRLINES

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Restaurant Review

by Melissa Nazario

The Rose Garden

Enjoy breakfast with the whole family or a romantic dinner for two.

Drive past Leonardo's Rose Garden on 330 around brunch time on the weekend, and you'll see the signs of a well-loved local restaurant: cars double parked in the lot with more waiting for a space, an attendant shuffling traffic in and out, and handfuls of folks on benches, waiting for their turn at one of the 20 or so tables inside.

What's all this fuss about? Quite simply, their hearty American style breakfasts. We recommend their French toast set with homemade sausage patties (¥1,100), served with home fries, two eggs, and iced tea or coffee. The two thick slices of French toast are rich and fluffy, as if they've soaked overnight in egg and cream. Eat them as they are, dusted with cinnamon and powdered sugar, or dipped in syrup. Other delicious choices are the eggs benedict (¥1,050), or a huge, 3 egg omelet, like the spicy Taco Diablo with hot salsa (¥1,160), filled with cheese and chunks of savory pork sausage.

Since breakfast is available until 7 pm, it's easy to forget that The Rose Garden also has a large dinner selection, and not just Italian fare, either. For starters, the baked onion soup (¥370) was delicate, not overdone with gobs of cheese. We loved the seafood risotto (á la carte ¥1,200; course ¥1,680), simmered in a creamy, buttery sauce and mixed with warm spinach, cherry tomatoes, and lots of seafood, including mini clams (still in their shells), and tail-on shrimp. The Bang Bang chicken salad (¥1,260) was a much lighter choice, but far from lacking in flavor. This Italian version of a Szechuan favorite starts with a bed of greens. Tomato wedges, cooked zucchini, fresh mozzarella, and avocado are added, and sesame seeds, cashews, and a sweet, nutty balsamic dressing bring complementary flavors and textures to this salad, which we devoured. Next time, we'd like to try the mushroom stuffed pork loin (¥1,390).

With a little room leftover, we perused the dessert menu, and settled on the large raspberry crème brûlée (¥500) and the intriguing black sesame ice cream (¥160). The ice cream had a deep, earthy flavor, an acquired taste for those more used to chocolate and vanilla. The chilled crème brûlée included raspberries mixed in the cream, instead of fresh ones on top, and made for a lovely end to a relaxing, candle lit dinner.

Hours: 8:00 am to 12:00 am every day, breakfast served until 7:00 pm; dinner served 5:00 pm to close (last order at 11:00 pm)

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Dive Update

Giants Of The Deep



t's winter time and dive season is still going strong in Okinawa. As the weather chills the gentle giants of the deep come to visit Okinawa and it's the perfect time of year to dive with these amazing creatures. Reef Encounters runs both whale watching and snorkelling tours with the humpback whales as they cruise through the waters of the

East China Sea to mate and give birth to a new generation of giants. This is truly one of the most awe inspiring sights you will ever witness either above or below the water.

The cool waters also bring in the schooling hammerheads to Yonaguni and swimming with schools of huge sharks numbering in the hundreds is truly not an event to be missed. This migration only happens once a year so if it's something you want to see, don't waste any time! The cooler waters also bring some of the larger critters in close to the islands so many new and interesting sights can be seen this time of year. Remember as the water chills that appropriate thermal protection must be worn, a 5mm suit and a hooded vest make diving the cool waters of winter comfortable for all but the most temperature adverse. If you are a die hard member of the warm water club a dry suit makes winter diving even more attractive.

This time of year is also a great time to step up to the next level of diving. Rescue classes, Intro to Tech and Tech One are just some of the classes available weekly at Reef Encounters to increase your knowledge and skill level. Also for those looking at becoming an instructor now is the perfect time to get started on your professional certs so that you will be able to teach classes as the weather warms up again in the spring. Reef Encounters will be starting it's instructor training programs monthly all winter for those interested.

Remember with the cooler weather dive sites are less crowded and there are plenty of new critters to find. Northern swell can make many of the sites that we normally dive a bit more challenging so pay attention to weather and wave conditions when heading out to dive.

Contact us now to schedule your course or trip at info@reefencounters.org!

www.reefencounters.org 098-995-9414



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Weird and Wonderful Japan

Sailors Suing Tepco

* In March 2011, the USS Ronald Reagan joined in with Operation Tomodachi. The ship kept a safe distance from the stricken nuclear power plant at over 100 miles away. Even though the ship was equipped with radiation detection devices, 8 sailors who served on the ship are now suing Tepco (Tokyo Electric Power Company) for damages and compensation for radiation exposure.

The Return of Abe

* In the recent Japanese election, it's fair to say that the DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) was well and truly trounced by the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party).

The DPJ managed to go from 230 seats down to 57, a truly massive loss.





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The election gave the LDP 294 seats, a massive majority, which will enable them to take control of the Diet and end years of political deadlock.

Senkakus - Again

* The Chinese government appears to have stepped up incursions into Japanese territory around the Senkakus with an incursion by an aircraft in December 2012. This was the first time a Chinese aircraft had entered the territory. The self defence force in Naha deployed several F-15 jets and the Chinese aircraft left the area without incident.

Domestic disturbance and demonstrations in China have died down but the dispute over the Senkaku islands continues.



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Peach Destinations:

Peach is based in Osaka, so flies from Naha - Osaka direct. From Osaka you can fly to Sapporo, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kagoshima domestically as well as Seoul, Hong Kong and Taipei internationally.

www.flypeach.com

Peach

Peach is based in
Osaka's Kansai airport.
It's a joint venture
between ANA and the
Far Eastern Investment
Group. They currently
have a fleet of 6 Airbus
A320 aircraft and also
operate from the cargo
terminal in Naha.

www.jetstar.com

Jetstar

etstar Narita

Jetstar is the budget airline of Qantas. In Japan it's majority owned by Qantas and JAL.

They currently have 7 Airbus A320 aircraft and operate from the main domestic terminal in Naha.



Jetstar Destinations:

Jetstar is based in Narita, so apart from Naha - Narita you can also fly from Naha - Osaka. If you connect through Narita, you can travel to Sapporo & Fukuoka domestically and also Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore & Taiwan.



www.airasia.com

Air Asia

Air Asia is well known throughout the rest of Asia. It's a Malaysian headquartered airline though in Japan it's a joint venture between Air Asia and ANA, hence why they use the Cargo terminal owned by ANA in Naha.



Air Asia Destinations:

Air Asia is based in Narita like Jetstar and flies between Naha - Narita as well as from Narita to Sapporo and Fukuoka domestically.

They also have international flights to South Korea and additional international destination from Haneda.

Need to Know...

- Peach & Air Asia flights both depart from the Cargo terminal in Naha.
- Access is via a bus only from outside the main terminal arrivals, no walking or driving.
- Jetstar is located in the main terminal building. Because the airport usage fees are higher in the main building, the price from Naha can sometimes be a little more than Air Asia for the same route.
- The cargo terminal has toilets and a small cafe both before & after security, but no other shops.
- Check in online & advance pay for baggage to save extra charges at the airport.
- There's no bus from the terminal to the plane for Peach & Air Asia, you walk! If it's likely to rain take an umbrella as there's no cover on the walk across the tarmac.

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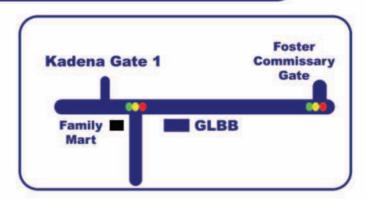


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Google Map



Restaurant Review

to

Tan Tan

With so many ramen shops to choose from in Okinawa, there's a lot of competition to make the noodle soup not just tasty, but distinct. Tan Tan's does this with their spicy tan tan soup, a mix of creamy sesame and hot chili oil, which can be ordered at three different spice levels, or without spice. Level 1 has quite a kick, but isn't so hot that you can't taste the other soup flavors. Level 2 bites more immediately than Level 1, and we have yet to brave the fiery Level 3. Each level costs a little extra, similar to Coco's Curry, as do

additional ingredients, such as onion, egg, or pork.



by Melissa Nazario

The staff at Tan Tan's are quite familiar with the sinus-clearing effects of their signature dish, and now supply patrons with tissue boxes on all the tables. We've heard it's rude to blow your nose in public in Japan (though it's okay to ceaselessly sniffle away), but perhaps in this case it's an exception.

Other ramen flavors are also available, including soy, miso, and paitan (pork soup base). Different sets include ramen and sides of gyoza dumplings, fried chicken pieces, or other



dim sum. We recommend the shumai, round, fried dumplings wrapped in a crispy rice wrapper and filled with pork, onion, and other veggies. Shumai come in plates of three, six, or a whopping eighteen dumplings. The fried rice is also pretty good if you don't feel like ramen.

The prices at Tan Tan's are quite reasonable, considering the bowls of soup could easily feed two; larger sets are typically ¥880, not including the extra spice. Kids' sets start at ¥500.

We doubt you'll have room for dessert after a meal at Tan Tan's, but just in case, there's Blue Seal ice cream if your mouth needs a bit of relief from the spicy soup, plus gelatin and fun candies and snacks at the register when you pay.

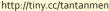
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Learning Japanese

If you made New Year's resolutions, you're either involved in working toward your goals, or trying to forget about them altogether! While in Okinawa, learning Japanese may be near the top of that wish list, whether it's to be able to read menus and signs, or to engage native speakers in conversation beyond "konnichiwa" and "arigato gozaimasu." We break down three different companies that could help you reach your specific language goals.

Kumon: http://www.kumon.ne.jp/jpn/english/

You may have passed the baby blue signs wandering around Okinawa, or even the U.S. Kumon is an international language (and math) program. If reading that Japanese sign or menu is your goal, Kumon may be for you.

Learning Objectives: Reading and writing Japanese

Method: CDs, reading worksheets, writing workbooks, using your native language (English) in instructions

Class environment: correspondence course at home, or twice a week at a center

Teacher instruction: minimal; teachers advise on areas you need to repeat, but mostly support and encourage

Course schedule: self-paced

Cost: Adult correspondence course starts at ¥9400/month; Class course starts at ¥8400/month

Rosetta Stone: http://www.rosettastone.com/learn-japanese

The famous computer-based language program in the yellow box has done a great job of marketing itself as an "immersion" language program—you learn without grammar lessons and without translation into your native language.

Learning Objectives: Understand and speak conversational Japanese

Method: The software presents sets of images, as a voice uses target language words and phrases to describe those images. You repeat the phrases into your headset microphone, and voice recognition software compares your speech to the original. Or, native speaking tutors lead live practice sessions. Class environment: Self-paced, computer-based or online

Teacher instruction: minimal, unless you enroll in a live practice session. The software is meant to gauge your progress.

Cost: starts at \$179 for one level to \$399 for three levels

Tokyo Mokyo: http://www.tokyomokyo.com/

Based out of Tampa, Florida Paul Stevens started teaching Japanese classes in 2003, and has since expanded to offer online courses that are not only equivalent to college courses, but are also as engaging and interactive as if you took his face to face courses If your goal is fluency in Japanese reading, writing, and conversation, Tokyo Mokyo is the way to go.

Learning Objectives: Reading and writing Japanese characters, improving conversation and comprehension, Japanese culture

Method: Live online courses, following the textbook Japanese for Busy People. The three writing systems are taught: hiragana, katakana, and kanji; plus cultural tidbits, extra grammar worksheets, and lots of conversation practice in class. If you miss a live class (which is possible, considering the time difference), Paul edits and posts classes so you can watch as many times as you want. Chapter and Japanese character quizzes are given as you progress through the course, and like a college class, a final grade gauges whether you're ready for the next class.

Class environment: 2 hour class once a week online for 14 week beginner course, 16 weeks for other courses; students start the course at the same time

Teacher instruction: Hands on; regular feedback and engagement Cost: starts at \$99 for 14 week beginner course plus cost of textbook

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