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JUNE & JULY 2014

Issue 22



With the weather heating up, it's time to check out all the beaches that Okinawa has to offer. We've got a round up of some of the best locations for a great day at the beach. Also in this issue, we've got reviews of Hamazushi and Nepal Spice Kitchen as well as a travel

update if you're thinking of getting off island this summer. Plus, check out the latest dive report and newest edition of Weird & Wonderful. You can view the magazine online at: www.

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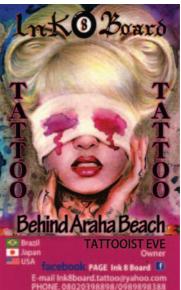
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Travel Update

Time to Escape?

Thinking of a trip out of Okinawa? We've rounded up the latest travel news and tips.

Now that the new international terminal is open, flying internationally from Naha is now



a much more pleasant experience. There's also a wider choice than ever, with more low cost airlines including Vanilla Air and for the first time low cost airline international flights (Peach Air serving Taipei from Naha).

Airport Tips

- Parking is worse than ever. If you want to drive consider using Honest Parking (Search: "Honest Parking" book in advance esp. during Summer) or if able, park at Kinser and get a taxi. There's a lack of parking off airport as a backup plan, so at

peak times don't chance being able to park.

- If you're flying with either Peach or Vanilla be aware that both these airlines being part owned by ANA, depart from the cargo terminal and you CANNOT walk or drive there. The bus leaves from the arrivals level and is well signposted but allow extra time for the transfer.
- This also applies to Peach international. Their flights to Taipei also depart and arrive in the cargo terminal and you'll clear customs and immigration there NOT the new International terminal.
- If you prefer to use the main terminal, but want to fly with a LCC (Low Cost Carrier) then Jetstar make a good alternative as they use the main terminal building.

New Routes

If you're looking for somewhere different to go then there's more choice than ever from Okinawa. Internationally, there are now between 2-3 flights daily to Hong Kong with Hong Kong Airlines and Dragonair.

If you feel like a visit to Korea, then both Jinair and Asiana have direct flights. For even closer to home, Taipei is only just over 1 hour flying time from Okinawa and Peach Airlines have low cost flights direct. Sign up for their newsletter to get sale bargain fares.

Staying within Japan, Peach have low cost flights from Okinawa to Ishigaki for often just a few thousand yen.

Best Fares

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If you're looking for a bargain sign up for the Jetstar and Peach newsletters and get early access to special fares that often only last a few hours!

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to

Dive Update

Summer Diving

Summer is finally here! The rainy season will be wrapping up by mid-June and then we get into the calm seas and warm waters of summer, the perfect time to get certified or



add to those dive numbers. Reef Encounters Dive Center is here to help you out with both of those issues. Our team of instructors has expanded and we are now offering instruction in English, Japanese and Chinese along with a few more languages coming soon.

Getting started diving has never been easier - just come by the shop and pick up your book to get started immediately on your academics with our free online learning programs. We have also made it even easier to sign up and get started on your dive classes for those people in the military on Okinawa. The textbooks for all of our classes will now be available for purchase in the concession malls at both major PX/BX facilities. On Foster stop by the dive shop concession across from the Cinnabon and pick up your text

book, in Kadena the shop is located in the rear of the concession mall. You can now start your dive class on your lunch break. Pick up you books and sign up on the dates posted at the dive shop or call us at Reef Encounters and find a schedule that works for you.

Reef Encounters offers the most flexible diving schedules on Okinawa with our team of professional instructors we run classes daily with weekday, weekend, morning and evening schedules to complete your courses. For those that need a little more hands on academics your instructor can schedule lectures and reviews as needed. Sign up now and be diving this week!

Also the Reef Encounter 1 and our other contracted boats are now running daily to the various dive sites around Okinawa and the Keramas islands. We have daily trips to the Keramas, Dream Hole, Maeda, Horseshoe the USS Emmons and more. Can't wait for the weekend for that dive trip - give us a call! Our boats run daily and large groups are not needed! Reef Encounters International Travel Section is also now offering dive trip scheduling with our partners around the globe. If you are looking for that live aboard in Indonesia, diving in Palau or PI or even more exotic places contact us first. Upcoming trips also include Tanzania in July and Chuuk in the fall, along with our Manta scramble trip in the fall! Start planning now for the trip of a lifetime!

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Directions, Hours, Telephone





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2014 Beach Guide

Okinawa Beach Guide

Our guide to Okinawa's best beaches!

Araha Beach

Araha beach is one of the most popular beaches in Okinawa as it's centrally located



Location

Araha beach is located just off Highway 58 opposite Camp Foster. Scan the barcode below for a Map or visit the URL

below on your PC: http://tiny.cc/ araha



and close to all the bases as well as American village. Lifeguards are on duty during the summer months and apart from a clean beach and roped off swimming area they also have basketball courts, beach volleyball, boat and jet ski rides as well as snacks, showers and much more!

Tropical Beach

Location

Tropical Beach is located next to the Ginowan Convention Center. Scan the barcode



below for a Map or visit the URL below on your PC: http://tiny.cc/ tropicalbeach





Tropical Beach (Continued)

Tropical Beach is another popular beach with both the local and military community. It's located next to the Ginowan Convention Center and Laguna Garden Hotel. There's a large sandy beach and a big park if you get bored of all the sand as well as plenty of covered seating if the sun becomes too much.

Sunset Beach

Sunset beach is your choice if you want to combine a day at the beach with



Location

Sunset Beach is just behind the Beach Tower Hotel & Jusco in Chatan. Scan the barcode below for a Map

below for a Map or visit the URL below on your PC: http://tiny.cc/ sunsetbeach



shopping and restaurants as it's located just behind American Village & Depot Island. It's also great for families with a crescent shaped beach and Chula-U onsen very close by.

Toguchi Beach

Location

Toguchi Beach is located close to Torii Station. Scan the barcode below for a Map or visit the URL



or visit the URL below on your PC: http://tiny.cc/ toguchi





Toguchi Beach (Continued)

Toguhci beach is probably one of our favourite beaches in Okinawa. It's a lot more natural than the man made beaches like Araha and has a beautiful park with lots of caves to explore as well as some beautiful views down to the rocks. There's also a large slide and play area for children.

Zanpa Beach

Zanpa is a great choice if you live in the Yomitan area. It's a beautiful crescent



Location

zanpa

Zanpa beach is located a few kilometers after Yomitan village. Scan the barcode below for a Map or visit the URL below on your PC: http://tiny.cc/

shaped beach with plenty to do close by. There's the usual boat rides and BBQ areas as well as a park close by overlooking the beach and the cliffs of Cape Zanpa with it's lighthouse.

Nishihara Marine Park

Location

You'll find Nishihara located on the Pacific side of the island. Scan the barcode



below for a Map or visit the URL below on your PC: http://tiny.cc/ nishihara











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Weird and Wan<mark>derful Japan</mark>

Bear the bad news

Police in Niigata Prefecture said a bear had been sighted on a road near where the mauled body of an 81-year-old woman had been found previously. Bear tracks had been found near her body. A man had spotted the bear while driving his child to a nearby school. Police and a bear hunting club plan to increase patrols to find the animal. Let's hope they find it before it finds the school!

Too close for comfort



A pilot caused a Peach Airlines jet en route from Ishigaki to Okinawa's Naha Airport to dive just 75 meters above sea, after he "misunderstood"

instructions from air traffic controllers. None of the 53 passengers and six crew members was injured. Visibility was apparently low due to rain. Though this may have factored into the confusion, perhaps it also helped those aboard to not panic, either.

So much for honor thy parents

Two different instances of a son murdering a parent have surfaced in Japan. Police in Fukushima arrested a 57-year-old man for killing his 92-year-old father. Similarly, police in Tochigi arrested a 59-year-old man for stabbing his 82-year-old mother at their home. In both cases, the sons had been bickering a lot lately with their parents.

Introducing ... Mountain Day?

As if Japan didn't have enough holidays, the Lower House of the Diet recently passed an amendment to add one more: Mountain Day. The amendment states the holiday is meant "to give opportunities to get close to mountains and appreciate the benefits of mountains." There's also Ocean Day and Greenery Day. What's next--Cloud Gazing Day?

Holy Tuna!

Asumaru ship captain Masanori Isagawa recently caught a giant bluefin tuna weighing 327 kilograms (about 721 pounds) at Tomari Port in Naha, Okinawa. The gigantic fish was sent to the Tsukiji Fish Market in Tokyo for auction. We'd imagine it was bought up by a restaurant, or perhaps a really big family. That is a LOT of sushi!

Man gets swept into sea, found next day asking for cab fare

A 71-year-old fisherman from Miyazaki was swept off his boat and went missing. He was alone, but was wearing a winter life vest and so was able to make it back to shore safely, though he was so tired from swimming he fell asleep. The next day, he walked three kilometers in wet clothes to a convenience store, and called a cab to take him home, where his friends and family were waiting to hear back from search parties for him. His advice on what to do if swept overboard? Don't panic, and always wear a life vest.

to

Restaurant Review

Nepal Spice Kitchen - Kasthamandap Curry House



After several recommendations from friends, we decided to check out Nepal Spice Kitchen – Kasthamandap Curry House at its Chatan location, to see what the fuss was about. There's also a location in Urasoe. Just a block from Camp Foster's commissary gate, Kasthamandap houses about nine tables covered with bright tapestries, and is decorated with murals, chandaliers, and

punched metal wall hangings.

We were ready to test out the food. The restaurant offers several sets, with various choices of curry as well as naan bread, grilled meats (tandoori), kebab, plus salad, soup, drinks, and dessert. We chose the Special Set, which is advertised as being for two people. At just under ¥4000, it included four choices of curry, two choices of tandoori, rice, naan, two bowls of soup, pus one small salad, one drink choice, and vanilla ice cream for two. It was quite a bit of food, though we wished that we could've had more naan instead of rice, and two drinks and two salads instead of just one.

Our favorite curry was the butter chicken. Kasthamandap gets this right—it's slightly sweet, slightly spicy (though you can get it even spicier upon request), and full of rich flavor and chunks of seasoned grilled chicken. Along with the naan bread, which was not-too-crispy, yet not-too-doughy, this one disappeared fast. The seafood curry was simple and sweet, and included little shrimp, chopped scallops, clams, and squid. The vegetable curry was also mild and sweet, but probably our least favorite of all the curries we tried. For deeper flavor, the keema or lamb curry is pretty good, too.

If you have room for it, there are lots of extra sides and drinks to try. The steamed momo were little dumplings filled with chicken, and had a slightly tangy flavor, as if they were sprinkled with lemon juice. They came with an orange dipping sauce, which reminded us of the butter chicken curry. The lassi, or yogurt drinks, will come in a goblet, and have quite a strong yogurt flavor. The coconut or mango flavored lassi are both tasty, and cool the mouth after eating spicy curry or tandoori.

While this curry house isn't necessarily the most budget-friendly of restaurants, it is



http://tiny.cc/nepalspice

comparable in price and quality to other well-known curry restaurants, such as Bollywood Dreams or Taj Okinawa. We're not sure what distinguishes this curry as Nepalese, but one thing's for sure: we'd definitely return, and next time, try the naan pizza, or else the cinnamon naan to go with our ice cream.

1-10-10 Kitamae, Chatan cho 904-0117 Hours: Lunch 11:30-15:00. Dinner: 15:00-23:30

Takeout OK, can call ahead to make reservations for groups

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Restaurant Review

to

by Melissa Nazario

Hamazushi



Despite having 66 tables, Hamazushi on 58 gets crowded fast, and you have to get there even before they open at 11 or else wait a while for a table. Hamazushi, the newest sushi-go-round restaurant in Chatan, is extremely popular, and here's why: it's a great value, there are lots of menu items to choose from, and it caters to both Japanese- and English-speaking customers. Knowing a few tips will make your first experience go smoothly.

Everyone loves a good deal, and that's especially true when dining out in Okinawa. Because Hamazushi's items start at ¥90, lunch for two is easily less than ¥2000. When you arrive, check in via a kiosk, and indicate the number of guests and seating preferences. Print out the ticket, and wait for your number to be flashed on the screen and called out by staff. If they call your number twice and you don't respond, however, they'll give your table to the next group, so you have to pay attention. Once called, the staff will give you a piece of plastic with your table number, to seat yourself.

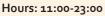
Once seated, you can either grab plates that pass along the sushi-go-round, or order from the touch screen, which has both English and Japanese options (the yellow English button is at the screen's top right). Beware, however, of grabbing items that are on black or red platforms if you didn't specifically order them: these were specially ordered by another table, and it's poor etiquette to take them.

Ordering from the touch screen is pretty straightforward—it'll have options to order multiples of the same item,

and also with or without wasabi for sushi. The screen also lets you know exactly when your order is about to arrive to your table, so you can grab it before it passes by. After ordering 4 or 5 different things, a blue screen will appear, limiting you from ordering sushi and some other entrée items until most of your food arrives.

Water is self-serve at the station on the side counter, and green tea, different kinds of soy sauce, forks and spoons, and even takeout boxes are available at the table or on the

platform above the sushi train. As for food, we particularly liked the shrimp tempura roll and the fried tuna roll, rare treats in most sushi-go-rounds. Besides sushi, soups like miso, udon, and ramen are available, as are sides like French fries and desserts like cheesecake and fruit. The blueberry cheesecake and layered "Mil Crepes" are quite good, as is the black bean hot chocolate.



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http://tiny.cc/hamazushi

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Steak Sandwich





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