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October & November 2015

Fall Festivities in Okinawa









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Issue 30



Summer may be coming to a close, but that's no excuse to stay indoors! In this issue, learn about the upcoming festivals and holidays celebrated in Okinawa through November. While you're

out and about, try a new restaurant or two! In this issue, we review Joyfull Restaurant, as well as Tiger Honpo in Aeon Mall. There's also the latest dive report from Reef Encounters, Weird & Wonderful and our regular life coach article: Total You. You can view the magazine online at: www.totalokinawa.com



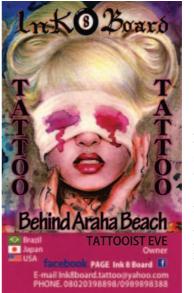
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Restaurant Review

Joyfull Enjoy yourself at Joyfull!



Joyfull is a family restaurant/cafe in the Nakagami district (close to Camp Foster). It's big, bright and very welcoming. Staff are friendly, though do be prepared for a bit of a language barrier. They have several menus, all of which are in Japanese, but there's a picture of the food so you can always do the "point and smile" if your Japanese is below par. I was lucky enough to dine with locals, and they pointed out the fabulous "all you can drink" offer. The drinks selection is insane. Lots of different sodas, hot drinks and teas (iced or hot). You certainly won't go thirsty.

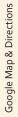
Now let's get down to the good stuff. The food. As I already said, several menus. So big selection. It's a good mix of Japanese and American. They have

traditional ramen, as well as steaks, hamburgers and pasta dishes. I went with breaded chicken on a bed of rice and cabbage, which came with an egg (nice touch, lots of flavour), pickles and a side of miso soup (also french fries; I was pretty hungry!). Portion sizes are very generous, so if you walk out hungry I'll be surprised! On a subsequent visit, I tried a dish consisting of rice, cheese, curry sauce, potatoes and asparagus, again topped with an egg. It was delicious, and tasted like gnocchi but with rice instead of pasta. Value is pretty good too; I paid just over 1,000 yen for my meal (that includes the all you can drink option). Let me briefly mention drinks. They have all the generic sodas and a good selection of hot teas and coffees, but can



I be bold and suggest you try the Uji Matcha? It's a green tea latte drink, taken hot or cold (cold is amazing!) and it's just so good! It's refreshing, a little sweet but not overly, and, at least for me, slightly addicting.

Take the kids, take the better half, take your friends or business associates! Or be greedy and just take yourself! Either way I don't think you can go wrong with this one.





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Highway 58, Ginowan bypass 098-8 Totalokinawa Magazine October - November 2015



Dive Update



to

The summer diving season is coming to a close in Okinawa and that means some of the best diving of the year is upon us. The cooler fall months allow for more comfortable shore dives with cooler temps on those hikes to the site while water temperatures are still warm enough for rash guards or thin wet suits only for thermal protection. The crowds of summer will also diminish as the summer tourist rush tapers off, making it the perfect time to dive in Okinawa. Reef Encounters will still be running daily guided

beach and boat dives to explore the variety of sites around Okinawa and the surrounding islands. Dive classes and specialty courses are also offered year round to improve your diving skill and get ready for those more advanced dives. If you have not become certified, now is the perfect time with warm water temperatures and the winds of typhoon season starting to pass; the calm seas make for perfect learning conditions for the beginner diver. Reef Encounters has classes starting daily so contact us to get started right now.

We will be featuring a dive tip of the month on our page from now on so here we go with tip #1: Proper weighting- one of the most common mistakes new divers and many experienced divers make is over weighting. Carrying too much weight on your dive results in many problems to include: fast air consumption, erratic buoyancy control, poor trim, and poor finning technique. As you gain experience you will be able to dive with less weight, so do a weight check every 10-20 dives especially when new and always when using new gear or exposure suits. To start the dive you can check your weight by getting in the water with all your gear and weight, remove all the air from your BC- make sure its completely empty. You should float slightly with a full breath of air in your lungs and when you exhale you should sink below the water. This should be good to go to start a dive. To fine tune your weighting at the end of the dive with 500psi/40 bar of air in your tank you should be able to hover at 15ft/5m with no air in the BC at all. If you are still sinking take some weight off or if you float to the surface at the end of the dive add a little.

When purchasing or setting up a weight belt it is best to use multiple small weights instead of 2 large weights so you can fine tune your buoyancy and trim. Use BC trim pockets to allow you good position in the water if you have them. If you are having problems with weighting or trim come by Reef Encounters and schedule a private buoyancy/weighting clinic with one of the professional instructors to get you squared away and enjoying those dives even more. See you underwater!!

www.reefencounters.org

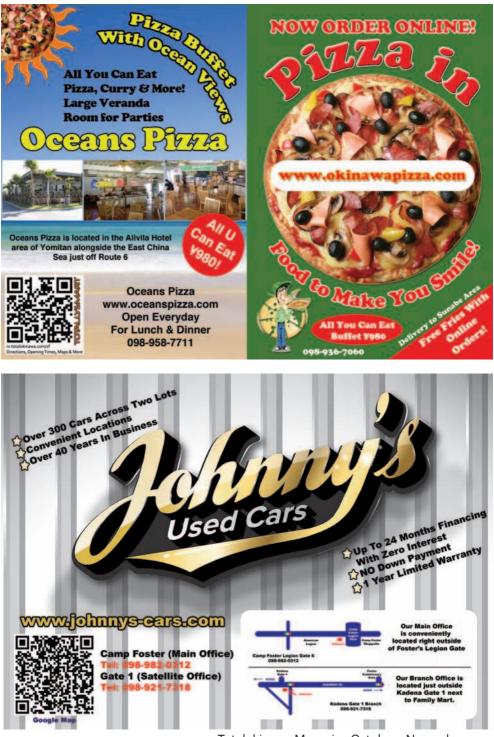
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ou may call it "autumn," "fall," or "aki," but one thing's for sure: the seasons are changing in Okinawa. Sweltering summer days give way to milder temperatures, perfect for ushering in several holidays and festivals in October and November. While some of the festivities are celebrated throughout Japan, some are unique to Okinawa, so check them out while you have the chance! We've rounded up the best festivals and celebrations on Okinawa through October and November, plus when and where they take place, so you can mark your calendars and cross it off your "Okinawa bucket list."





When: October 13 Where: Throughout Japan

Originally, Health and Sports Day commemorated the opening of the 1964 Olympics in To-

kyo. Today, it exists to promote

health and active lifestyles. The biggest celebration in Okinawa happens on Naha's Kokusai Street, where a three-day festival starts the weekend before Sports Day, with parades and other must-see events.





Photo by Garry Brust

Tug-of-War When: October 11 Where: 58 at Kumoji in Naha

Naha's tug-of-war event isn't the only one in Okinawa, but it's the biggest, holding the record for largest in the world. The battle between East and West sides has been

passed down from the Ryukyu Kingdom; today, people come from all over the world to participate. Be sure to bring some gloves to avoid rope burn, and a knife or scissors to cut off a piece of the 40-metric-ton rope for a momento.



On October 17, 1978, the government of Japan recognized Okinawa soba as soba, though distinct from the darker buckwheat noodles and broth of



mainland's. Okinawa's version features wheat noodles, broth flavored with seaweed and pork, typically topped with fish cake, pickled ginger, pork belly, and scallions. If you haven't already, slurp up a bowl at one of the 2,000+ restaurants in Okinawa that serve the famous soup.

Shavi (astle Festivals

When: (Ictober 30 - November 3 Where: Shuri Castle Park & Kokusai Street

Fall is a great time to catch one of several unique cultural events celebrating Okinawa's cultural history of the Ryukyu Kingdom, organized by Shuri Castle Park. A vassal ceremony, reenacting the arrival and welcoming of the Chinese emper-



or, takes place October 31. The following day, feast your eyes on a colorful procession on Kokusai Street of the emperor, Ryukyu king, queen, and court. That same weekend, Shuri Castle Park opens up at night, gorgeously lit with lanterns. For more info, see Shurijo's calendar of events at http://oki-park.jp.e.ms.hp.transer.com/shurijo/event/182.



7-5-3 (Shichi-Go-San)

When: November 15 Where: throughout Japan

Seven-five-three is a rite of passage for children of Japan, to celebrate growth and wish for long life. It honors girls aged seven and three and boys aged three and five (odd numbers are lucky). The children are dressed up in formal kimono and taken to shrines to be blessed. For some girls, this is the first time their hair is worn in a bun, and pictures are often taken. Keep an eye out this day; you may

spot some adorably dressed children walking around!



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

Soggy bread: the newest scam?

A Tokyo man was arrested for scamming millions of yen from companies over soggy bread. He'd make the complaint at the store, then, posing as one of the company execs, sent fraudulent emails ordering the company to pay the customer the day's wages to apologize.

Tokyo man snubs American celeb

American Jason Atsugiri, comedian of the "Why Japanese people?!" skit, tweeted he was filming at Tsukiji fish market when a shop owner denied him use of the bathroom, saying, "Japanese only." Unlike his skit character, he kept his cool, surprising his followers by not responding, "Why Japanese only?!"

The award for best toilet goes to...

Japan is known for having some of the cleanest public bathrooms in the world, and now there is one more reason to keep toilets tidy: the government of Japan has initiated given 28 toilet awards to businesses and municipalities that promote clean and safe public toilets.

Netflix comes to Japan

It may be time to put those IP blockers to rest: Netflix has teamed with Softbank to bring the movie subscription service to 36 billion homes in Japan. With Hulu already in Japan and Amazon launching its subscription service in Japan in September, the war over market share should prove interesting.





Total You

by Denise Manning of www.imaginepotentialnow.com

Discover Your Uniqueness!

Often times society dictates to numerous people and by default, defines who they become. I believe that we are here, in this period and place, for a reason. You may wonder why it is obligatory to be unique. A purpose is that which we alone can fulfil. For this reason, it's of necessity to be unique. Unfortunately many of us do not know this reason, this purpose; we attempt to follow what others say.

1. Know that you are already unique.

We all are unique because we are a combination of experiences, character, and outlook that no one else has ever had or ever will have. Our DNA is unique, even identical twins are not 100% identical. Do you want to be unique? Congratulations. You already are.

2. Spend some solitary time.

To really get down to who you are and what makes you unique, you must spend time alone occasionally. Disconnect from everything. What are you left with? Meditate on what matters to you.

3. Discover yourself and be yourself.

In order to be unique, you must be yourself and not a replication of someone else. If you are unaware of your status, that process can seem a bit scary. To be yourself, you have to discover yourself. Do you know what it is you like? What you are like? Who are you when no one else is nearby?

4. Know what you want.

Be very certain that you truly want to be unique. What does different actually mean to you? What do you perceive as normal? What is it about people that strike you as "the same?" Every person's interpretation of "unique" varies. It is how they look? Act? Talk? Dream?

5. Don't strive to be "normal", "trendy" or "abnormal."

Chasing any label, including unique, is unproductive. That's a self-centered drive to be different. There are a billion other people on planet earth that are striving for normal, trendy or abnormal, just aim for you. Whatever it is, it's good and true.

It's easier to pursue no labels when you realize they don't exist.

6. Know how you want to be unique.

Once you've pinpointed what "unique" is to you, how do you want to go about it? You could be unique in so many ways.

7. Observe your environment.

Take a step back from your surroundings for a moment and just observe. How are people behaving? How do they interact with each? What assumptions do they all make? How are they dressed? For example, an European man that bows instead of shaking hands will be different in his culture, but be pretty normal in Asia. In order to know how to be different, you have to take into account your environment. Think of three words to describe yours. Now, what's the opposite of that?

8. Experience New Things.

Your life experiences set you apart from everyone else. This directly leads to your uniqueness. Take look at the impact of some people that dared to be unique. Thomas Edison, Steve jobs, Madonna, Lady Gaga, Oprah, e.t.c.

If you want to make a difference in life, BE UNIQUE! Be proud to be different. Remember that 14 being unique is just that... being. Be you! Embrace who you are and live unapologetically.





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Restaurant Review

Tiger Honpo

Go mad for gyoza!



Tiger Honpo is one of over 80 eateries to be found at the sparkling new Aeon Mall. You can find it in on floor 3F, in the Rycom Gourmet World.

The food is Chinese Deli style. They have a couple of menus, but on my visit I went with the tray dish, which gives you a choice of either rice, noodles or half and half (100 Yen extra), then the choice of two main dishes. I went with rice, sweet and sour chicken and pork, chili and aubergine. I also ordered a side of five gyoza for an extra 360 Yen. For anyone unfamiliar, gyoza is a

steamed dumpling brimming with meat and vegetables. Five gyoza is pretty generous for the price, and they aren't small (a little over the size of a boiled egg). Although they are dumplings, they aren't stodgy in the way western dumplings are. They are light and full of flavour. These especially were juicy and delicious. If you haven't tried, give them a go here.

The rest of my meal was equally good; you get a good portion size. The sweet and sour

chicken was divine, not too overpowering. And the pork, chili and aubergine was my favourite part of the meal. I like a bit of kick to my food, but it wasn't so spicy you couldn't taste it.

As for drinks, you can get soda, juice, and they also stock beer. Value for money is good, and as I mentioned before portion sizes are fair. It's worth a look if you only go to try gyoza for the first time!





Aeon Mall: http://en.okinawarycom-aeonmall.com

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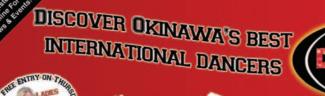
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