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Top 5 Things to do... in Koza





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Top 5 Things to do... in Koza

Part of the fun of living in Okinawa is exploring the little, unassuming places, because they often yield interesting discoveries. The Koza area in Okinawa City is filled with such spots, so check our featured article, a round up of our top things to do in Koza. If sightseeing and traveling are at the top of your bucket list, you'll want to read up on our reviews of the Naval Underground Headquarters, Nakagusuku Castle, and Hong Kong Airlines. We've also reviewed the delicious buffet spot Corallo at Moon Beach Resort. Learn about new dive opportunities with our latest Dive Report from Reef Encounters, or read up on atypical Japan news in our Weird & Wonderful feature. You can view the magazine online at: www.totalokinawa.com

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Navy Underground Headquarters

Explore history and cross this tour off your Okinawa bucket list!



The dark, narrow tunnels that once served as the headquarters for almost 4,000 soldiers are a grim reminder of the dark times Okinawa went through during WWII. After the war the tunnels lay dormant until 1970, when some of the rooms were opened to the public.

The Memorial Museum is the first thing you see after paying the entrance fee, and it is worth taking your time to look at the displays

and pictures. Uniforms, tools for tunnel construction, weapons and daily necessities, such as those for cooking, were all salvaged from the tunnels. They have done a good job providing a lot of information in English, so it is easy to understand the displays.

The 300-meter route through the tunnels allows you to visit a number of rooms, such as the Operations Room, Staff Room, and the Commanding Officers Room. Many are ridden with bullets and grenade damage, particularly in the room where Rear Admiral Ota, the commanding officer of the headquarters, took his own life, along with some of his officers. Some of the other rooms and tunnels are closed to the public, but you can still take a peek.



Though it doesn't take too long to walk through the entire route – perhaps 20 minutes – anyone with an interest in war history will no doubt find a visit to the tunnels to be a worthwhile one.

Opening hours are 8:30 to 17:00, with an entrance fee of ¥440 for adults and ¥220 for children. If you happen to be there with kids, after visiting the tunnels be sure to take them to the incredibly long roller slides at the Kaigunjo Park, right next door.

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Coming soon: New dive shop, new pro course, and exotic dive trips!

As we move into the fall dive season on Okinawa, there are exciting things happening for our folks up north. Reef Encounters will be opening a second location—back where it all started—at its new Kin location October 1. Reef Encounters originally opened in Kin in 1995, and now we are returning home. Divers will now have access to the newest dive gear and the best dive training on Okinawa right outside Gate 1 of Camp Hansen. Reef Encounters is also expanding its dive gear lines to include the complete lineup of Cressi scuba gear, to include regulators and computers. Also, the newest in dive computers from Cosmiq by DeepBlu are now in stock. You will be able to sign up and start your training classes daily with no waiting, and also join any of our boat dive tours without having to trek down south. Our new weekend dive shuttle will be picking up divers for classes and boat dives all over the island.

New training opportunities will also open up for divers at both our Chatan and Kin locations. The new Professional Diver course now allows divers who want to work in the dive industry to sign up for a single course to train for all aspects of working in the industry. This is the only course like this offered on Okinawa—no more wasting time on useless specialty courses or incomplete courses. The pro course will cover scuba gear maintenance and overhaul, dive boat operations, marketing, pricing strategies, along with in-depth decompression theory, dive physics, and of course in-water dive skills. No other shop offers a course this complete.

But as we are excited about training and new dive gear, we are also diving. Sign-ups for the 2017 hammerhead shark tours will start now. Upcoming trips to Africa for a dive trip and safari will be happening in December. Coming in the spring, we will be headed to the land of manta rays and stone money as we explore Yap and more. Now is the time to explore the underwater world on Okinawa and around the Pacific. Come see the professionals at Reef Encounters to get deeper into diving now.

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エイサーのまち 沖縄市

Top 5 Things to do... in Koza

by Louise Dupuy

Koza, found in the heart of Okinawa City, is Okinawa's second most populated municipality. It's a hive of activity, with shops, restaurants and a vibrant night life. A stone's throw from Kadena Gate 2 makes it a popular and easy to access site for entertainment. Here are my top 5 things to do in Koza.

1. Sun City

Sun City is a small indoor market, opposite Koza Music Town. It's full of quirky little local shops, selling clothing, household goods and much more. My favourite shop is the homeware place, it has a huge variety of tea pots, catering to all budgets and tastes.



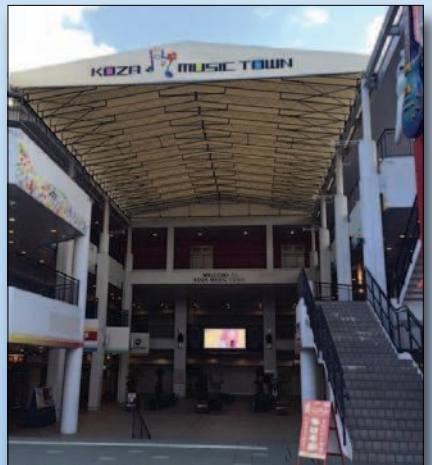
2. Red Kitchen



Had your fill of delicious Japanese food for now? Why not try some Brazilian street food at Red Kitchen? It's a bar mostly, but has space available for food, and boy, is it good. Great value, generous portions and hearty flavour are all the persuasion you need. Wash it down with any of the alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages on sale, also a great price.

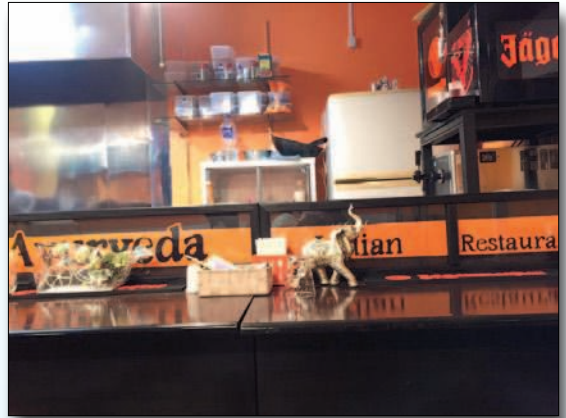
3. Koza Music Town

Possibly the best known place here, Koza Music Town plays host to a plethora of local (and not so local) music acts. It's a great place to catch Eisa drummers, and has a multilevel pavilion, so you can enjoy music from any floor. There are also shops and restaurants, so even if there isn't anything going on, you'll still find something to do.



4. Ayurveda

Do you love Indian food? Look no further. A short walk across from Koza Music Town, you'll find an authentic Indian restaurant. Small but perfectly formed, there's a decent curry selection, set menu's and traditional Indian drinks to keep you sated.



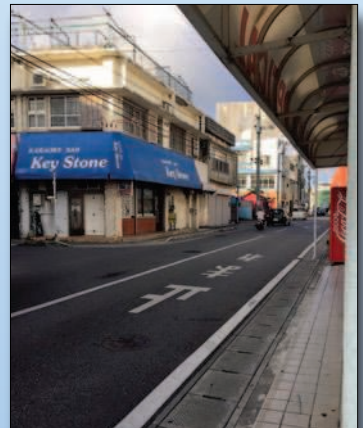
5. Shopping



You'll find a lot of individual businesses in Koza. Head back to Kadena gate 2 from Koza Music Town, and you'll find the street lined with all sorts! Gentlemen looking for suits have their pick of high quality Indian tailors, or ladies looking for something different can find colourful clothes shops (I particularly like the bold print leggings!). There are also bars, a vape store, clubs, tattoo studios (if you're feeling really adventurous!) and restaurants, so you really won't be bored at all.

Bonus Tip: Nightlife

Koza (especially its Gate 2 area) has a long history of lively nightlife. There's a plethora of bars and clubs to be found here. For something a little different, check out Keystone Karaoke! It has that dive bar feel, but with the added bonus that you can embarrass yourself with a rendition of your favourite song!



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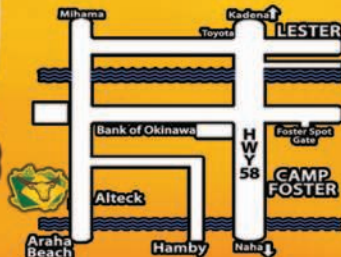
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Weird and Wonderful Japan

Don't work too hard

Tokyo governor Yoriko Koike announced plans to cut down on the amount of overtime workers spent, saying they should go home no later than 8 pm! Besides strict monitoring of those who work late, Koike proposed turning off lights—basically the same strategy retail workers use to kick out stragglers!

Attempted robbery "cut" short

Police in Ibaraki arrested a 31-year old man caught on tape trying to rob a Family Mart. When he threatened the cashier with a pair of scissors from his pocket, the cashier then grabbed his scissors from the counter, which frightened the robber, who then fled.

Dolphins for dinner?

Fishermen from Taiji recently captured and killed 12-15 Risso's dolphins, the first in the annual hunting season. Though the practice has received lots of attention since the documentary *The Cove* was released, defenders argue that not only is it a tradition, but also that these dolphins aren't on the endangered list.

Big Brother is watching

JR Central Railway suspended a bullet train operator for putting his feet up on a control panel while operating the train. He was caught when a train enthusiast took a photo of him with his feet up, which went viral on Twitter.



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As the only airline with two direct flights a day between Okinawa and Hong Kong, HKA is the best way to get to the 'Fragrant Harbour'. Tickets are very affordable, and most of their newer aircraft have personal entertainment systems even in economy class. Not that you'll be able to watch an entire movie: with barely two hours of flight time between the two cities you'll be touching down before you get to see the end of the show.



Despite the short flight, HKA does serve a hot 'snack' in economy, typically some type of warm bun. It's edible ... if you're starving ... but you'd definitely be better off buying some obento before you leave Naha.

Business class, however, offers excellent service, fully reclining seats, slippers, blankets and pillows, three-course meals and a wide choice of alcoholic beverages. Staff are incredibly attentive and polite. HKA regularly has offers to upgrade one-way to business class for a very reasonable price at the check-in counters at the airport, if you want to enjoy the pleasures and privileges of 'Z' class. Also be sure to check their website for information about their Airpass specials which sell sets of three or five business class tickets at incredibly low prices.

HKA has an extensive flight route to China and neighboring Asian nations, and recently started flying to Gold Coast, Australia. In November 2016 they will launch a new route to New Zealand. They also codeshare with Etihad Airlines for flights to Abu Dhabi and further to Europe.

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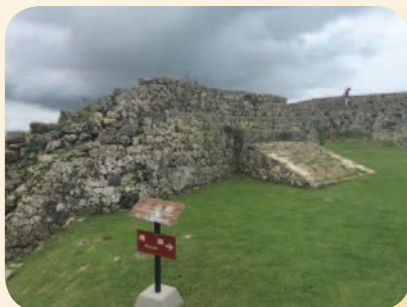
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Nakagusuku Castle

Enjoy a World Heritage Site right here in Okinawa!

Nakagusuku is a 15th Century castle located in Kitanakagusuku. Sadly a remnant of its former self, the castle served as a stronghold by commander Gosamaru, in defence against attacks from the east by Lord Amawari. In 2000, UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site, and there's enough of it left to enjoy today.

There's a small entrance fee (400 yen for adults), then you're in! Facilities include an information desk (they have leaflets in English as well as Japanese), a small restaurant, bathrooms and vending machines for drinks. There's ample parking too, and it's only a short walk to the entrance. A large sign with a map of the ruins greets you, informing you that it is indeed a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In fact, it's considered to be in the top 100 most famous castles in all of Japan.



The grounds are incredibly tranquil, however paths are sometimes non existent or steep, so small children, the elderly and handicapped folk may sadly struggle. There's also no safety barriers, and parts of the ruins can be walked over, be mindful of slip hazards and heights! Although it is a ruin, there's a surprising amount of the original structure left, and you can certainly get a good idea of how it looked back in it's prime.

On top of the great history lesson, you can expect some great views. walk along the top of the ruins to get a breathtaking panorama. Take in the nearby shrine, abandoned building (said to be haunted) and of course, the ocean. If you're a botanist, you'll surely enjoy the rich and diverse flora. Not too much in the way of child friendly activities, but with all the walking required, it'll at least tire them out.

Worth at least 2-3 hours of your time.

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Corallo: Best buffet on island?

Oonaa is home to Moon Beach Resort, a luxury beachside getaway offering a plethora of activities, white sandy beaches and access to crystal clear waters. It's also home to buffet restaurant Corallo. You'll find Corallo on the second floor of the main building, adjacent to the lobby area. A member of staff will greet and seat in the spacious dining area, then you have unfettered access to the all you can eat buffet.

Spacious, clean, and modern, Corallo can facilitate large groups and has a calming atmosphere and a spectacular view. On good days the floor to ceiling windows are open, so you can admire the scenery and breathe in the fresh salt air.



This is arguably the best buffet I've been to on island. Everything is fresh, food is replenished regularly, and it's hard to find anything that wasn't delicious. The restaurant is particularly proud of the curry; the recipe has not changed since 1972! There are three varieties: sweet, original, and spicy. The cuisine is mostly Asian, with a heavy focus on Chinese. The sweet and sour dish, as well as the special fried rice, were my favourites. After you've filled up on the entrees, cast your eyes toward the desserts. Frankly, the selection is insane. Cakes, ice cream, fruit, and jellies are all

on offer. The cakes especially are incredible! Moist, soft, and sweet. I recommend the strawberry sponge.

Included in the price of your lunch are soft drinks, which include juices, water, tea, coffee, and milk. My favourite was the guava juice, not too sweet but very refreshing. Alcohol can be purchased at an additional cost.

Lunch is 2,100 Yen with tax, a fair price for what you get. It's open daily from 1130-1500, with the last orders being at 14:30. Children are also welcome. There are plates and cutlery available for little hands. Staff are helpful, the seating capacity is around 130, and they offer seasonal specials, such as Father's day and Mother's day lunches. All in all this is a very pleasant (and filling!) visit.

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