

Celebrate New Year's Day the Japanese Way!



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Celebrate New Year's Day the Japanese Way!

They say, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." What better way to learn about a country's culture than by taking part in its holiday customs and traditions? In our feature, we share six Japanese New Year traditions for you to try out this holiday season! And, if learning Japanese is one of your resolutions, check out our review of ICLC Language School's immersion program. Want to take some Oki-inspired holiday photos? Check out our newest Total You article with photo tips from Fotoshisa! We've also got reviews of Sand's Diner, Himeyuri Peace Museum, and Jetta Burger, plus our latest Weird & Wonderful news. You can view the magazine online at: www.totalokinawa.com.

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Total You: Tips for Oki Living

Written by Louise Dupuy, Photos by Pete Leong

Okinawa Holiday Photo Ideas

Learn from pro photographer Pete Leong of Fotoshisa Okinawa

tuck on trying to find a nice gift to send home to family, or have you run out of ideas for holiday

Photos? You're in luck. We've teamed up with Pete Leong of Fotoshisa Photography to give you some neat ideas for great on island locations for the perfect snap. Don your ugly sweaters and check out one of the following places!

1. Bios on the Hill. Let's start off with a slightly unusual place for a photoshoot; Bios On The Hill. With a 710 Yen entrance fee for adults, it won't break the bank, and you'll get a pretty backdrop.



2. Murasaki Mura.

Another place with a low entrance fee (500 Yen for adults), Murasaki Mura could be perfect if you're wanting something "Japanese" looking. It's a Ryukyu-period village that's popular for crafts making. It was also was the backdrop for a period drama filmed in the 90's called "Wind Of The Ryukyus".



3. Gala Yomitan.

Home to a salt factory as well as a stunning beach with a pretty little wooden hut, it's like something out of a travel brochure. Nothing says "I live on a sub-tropical island, enjoy the snow!" quite like a holiday photo next to the ocean.

4. Bise Village.

Home to a fukugi tree walk, it embodies serenity and calm. Want to encompass two different ideas? The ocean is visible at the end of the road, affording a spectacular milieu.

5. Zakimi Castle.

Last but by no means least is Zakimi Castle. With free entrance and a unique setting, you really can't go wrong. Zaikai has a beautiful outlook too, allowing you to add more of Okinawa into the shot. Ready to take some fun holiday photos? Pete has kindly offered a 20% discount on his services to our readers! You can also see videos of his work at his YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/doksik For more information, contact Pete on his website, email, or Facebook:

www.fotoshisa.com

fotoshisa@gmail.com

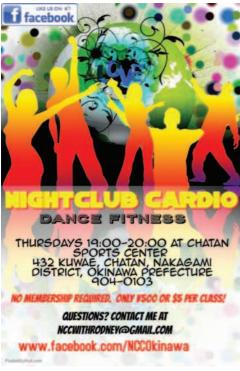
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Restaurant Review

by Louise Dupuy

Jetta Burger

letta Burger is located in the back part of Depot J Island, above retail shops. It's touted as a Mexican cantina (so the name may be a little confusing), but it has so much to offer. Here's how my trip went. Up a flight of stairs, the outside has a take out window and kitchen. A trip further round takes you



to the restaurant area, with kitsch Americana and traditional Mexican art to welcome you. Cheerful staff who speak excellent English greet and seat you, with menus offering so much choice for drinks and food, all in English and Japanese. The inside is like a Day Of The Dead festival, bright colours, sugar skulls, and paper banners adorn every inch.

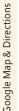
They have a great burger selection, with hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and for those with big appetites, fully stacked burgers bursting with eggs, bacon, and avocado. They also have a huge range of Mexican goodies: Tacos are popular, but also a big selection of that Mexican/Okinawan crossover, taco rice. I went simple, with a double cheeseburger and cheesy fries, washed down with a matcha smoothie, whilst my husband went with avocado taco rice, cheesy fries and a blueberry smoothie. The restaurant does set meals; we both had the smoothie set, and paid an extra 100 yen for the cheesy fries (the meal comes with plain). The food was ultra fresh, packed with flavour, and filling. I enjoyed my burger very much, but after tasting the taco rice, I wish I'd ordered that. The spice level was just right, and mixed with cheese and avocado, as well as the rice, was a taste sensation! Best taco rice I've ever eaten. The drinks menu is also extensive! The blueberry smoothie was refreshing, with a slight sharp taste, great if you don't have much of a sweet tooth. The matcha smoothie had caramel and whipped cream, like a dessert and drink rolled into one! If you've never tried matcha, or matcha with caramel, I urge you to visit Jetta and give it a go. I love all things matcha, and I'm happy to say so far this is the best matcha treat I've tried.

Let's get down to price. How much for all this? Surprisingly, not much. A little over 3,000 yen, which for two people is great. The set menus help keep the price down (I worked it out based on the individual price of all our options, and it came to just over 4,000 yen, so that's a decent saving). This is certainly on my list to visit over and over again.

10:00 am - 12:00 am

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Celebrate New Year's Day the Japanese Way! by Louise Dupuy

The world over, New Year's Eve and Day are seen as a time to celebrate and reflect. Here in Japan, it's an auspicious event. Never celebrated like a local? Here's your chance!



Mochi-tsuki

A popular activity is the pounding of mochi! Pre-soaked sticky rice is placed in a wooden/stone bowl known as an usu, and a large hammer known as a kine is used to pound it into paste. After this, it's shaped into balls. Some are made into offerings, with one smaller mochi sitting atop a larger



one; a symbol for New Year. The rest is saved and eaten post midnight. Some even do it just after New Year! If you don't want to make your own, you can try pre-made mochi at any supermarket or convenience store.

Have a bonenkai party!



Years are seen as separate, and it is expected to have all of your affairs in order before the clock strikes midnight. It's common to hold a "bonenkai" (or year forgetting) party, to wrap up the previous year, before moving on to the next. There's no specific day, just usually in December. The tradition involves lots of alcohol, but drink responsibly! Grab some Orion and snacks, and enjoy!

One last meal

It's customary to serve toshikoshi soba right before the New Year falls. Toshikoshi is made with a buckwheat noodle, and symbolises longevity. Head to any Japanese supermarket for ingredients, and follow this simple recipe: http://www.whats4eats.com/pastas/toshikoshi-soba-new-year-noodles-recipe.



Pay homage

A shrine or temple visit is also a must (known as hatsumode). Held from January 1st- 3rd, most have festivals with food and games. If you visit on New Years Eve, some even ring a bell at midnight (108 times, a Buddhist tradition). Check out Naritasan Fukusenji



for lots of fun games and beautiful omamori! Futenma shrine also celebrates big, with the surrounding streets awash with stalls and festivities.

Grab a lucky bag



Another must-try is fukubukuro. Fukubukuro means mystery/lucky bag, and almost all retailers have them. Stock is cleared out at the end of the year for new items, so merchants place old wares in a bag, seal it, and sell it for a heavily discounted price. You won't know until after what you get, but that all adds to the fun! Head to Aeon Mall Rycom for a great selection of shops.

Greet the day

January 1st is the most important day, best started with hatsuhinode, or sunrise viewing. A perfect spot is Comprehensive Park. The lavish settings provide a perfect backdrop.



Check this out:

We've created this handy map to help you enjoy these New Year's customs. We hope you enjoy! Have a great New Year's from all of us at Total Okinawa! See you in 2017!



https://goo.gl/egIEcp



Commissions are unlimited. Paid travel expense/ reimbursement, medical insurance and other benefits are available. We have a world class training program so no sales experience is necessary but is always helpful. This position is located on U.S. Miltary installations so applicants must be able to pass a 10 year background check for a security clearance. Interested?

Jeep

Please contact Jeff Klose - jklose@militarycars.com





Weird and Wonderful Japan

Days of our (Olympic) lives

In a step beyond mere product placement, NHK recently announced that their 2019 "taiga" period historical drama will be about the Olympic Games, from when Japan first participated in 1912 to when it hosted in 1964.

Foot fetish gone wild

Police in Kyoto arrested a man who tricked a woman into helping him fix his brakes, then proceeded to climb into the car, take off her sandal, and lick her foot for 30 minutes. Scared he might have a weapon, the woman allowed this to go on for 30 minutes, but recorded the encounter and his license plate, which helped police to later catch him.

Squatty potties no more?

A recent study by the government of Japan found that Japanese-style toilets on the floor are increasingly disappearing in schools, as newer buildings have replaced them with Western-style toilets at parents' requests. It looks as though the Western toilet in in, and squatty potty is out, going the way of the outhouse before it.

Super Mario gives Nintendo boost

Nintendo enjoyed a 5.5 point boost in its stock shares after announcing a Super Mario game app for iPhone. Looks like the company is on a roll, having also released the internationally popular Pokemon Go app earlier this year.





Restaurant Review

by Louise Dupuy

Sand's Diner

Have a Mexican standoff in your mouth

and's Diner is at the heart of Kokusai Street, a shopping district in Naha. It's touted as a Mexican grill and bar, but they also have a great selection of American food.

First off, it's up a small flight of stairs and set back from the street a small ways, so it's quieter with no traffic constantly rolling by. It's dimly lit but has a relaxed feel, and the decor is a mix of Mexican and American, which is pretty neat. Choose from booths, benches, and tables, or prop up the wellstocked bar if you're old enough to drink and aren't driving.



Alright, now the good stuff. Food. Menu is fairly extensive. It's mostly chilis, burgers, and the like, with a good selection of side orders like wings and fries. They also have pancakes, which I'll be honest, was a nice surprise, because I love pancakes. I decided to go with nachos, a burger, and pancakes. I was pretty hungry! The nachos were fully loaded and delicious, and the burger was huge! Also delicious, lots of flavour and the ingredients tasted fresh. The pancakes were the cherry on top of the ice cream,



absolutely amazing! Three fluffy pancakes topped with fresh fruit and whipped cream, I practically had to roll out of there! Drinks-wise, there is a big selection. I mentioned the bar, right? Well you can order soft drinks, juices, hot drinks, and of course, alcohol. They have a wide variety of local and international beers to try, so it's great if you're a hops fan! Service is polite and efficient, and there's plenty of seating for large groups. It's a great place for families during the day, or for friends, groups, couples, and work colleagues unwinding in the evening.

Price-wise, it's pretty reasonable! I paid around the 2,000 yen mark for everything, including non alcoholic drinks, which is fair considering the amount I ate! However, you can spend much less, with average lunch prices at around 800 yen, and dinner at 1,000 (excluding drinks), so you're sure to find a dish to fit your budget as well as your taste.

Sun-Thu 10:30-23:00, Fri-Sat: 0:30-24:00

www.sands-diner.com

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Cultural Site Review

by Louise Dupuy

Himeyuri Peace Museum & Cenotaph

Visit this symbol of peace while learning WWII history

South of Naha, nestled between shops and restaurants, you will find a very unassuming park. At it's entrance, a small booth with a kindly lady sits, selling small, pretty bunches of flowers for 200 yen. However, these are not meant as a token of love for your significant other, but as a respect to be paid within the park. This is Himeyuri, the grounds of which house a Cenotaph (war memorial) and a Peace museum. Visitors purchase a bunch, rest it on a platform in front of the Cenotaph, and say a prayer for peace.





The park itself is small but tranquil, designed to allow visitors to not only pay homage, but to reflect on the

consequences of war, and the sacrifices made by those involved. Himeyuri Peace museum, a short walk from the Cenotaph, is dedicated to the some 200 schoolgirl victims mobilised as nurse assistants during the Battle Of Okinawa in 1945. They were known as the Himeyuri Student Corps. The museum is home to photos, personal effects and reconstructions of shelters, as well as testimonies from survivors on the desolation of war.

Entrance fees apply to the museum, but not the Cenotaph.

It's 400 yen for adults, less for children and students. It has bathroom facilities, the surrounding area has shops and restaurants, as well as vending machines, so plenty of options if you get peckish or thirsty.

Visitors of all ages are welcome, but be mindful that it is a memorial, and keep young children from running around.

Overall, a beautiful sentiment, and well worth a visit. A worthy history lesson from the other side of the War. It's worth at least 2-3 hours of your time.

Hours: 9:00 - 17:25 every day

Cost: 400 yen per adult

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Google Map & Directions

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Business Review

by Emily Dickson

ICLC Language School in Naha

The fast track to learning Nihongo

earning a new language is hard. But the LICLC Japanese Language Institute makes it... well, not easy, because really, how easy can it be to learn hiragana, katakana, and thousands of kanji? But don't let that put you off- the instructors at ICLC make it fun, you progress fast, and with virtually no English in the classroom, you are truly immersed in Japanese.

Starting a course at ICLC is not for those just looking for a casual conversational class. When you embark on this journey, you are committed



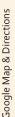
to studying Japanese for three hours a day, every day, in the classroom.

The shortest course, which runs for a minimum of three months, is available for visitors/tourists, residents, and people on work-holiday visas. If you are a foreign student, you can get a student visa for up to two years, and school accommodation is available.

To start a course, you must take a placement test to gauge your current level. If you have no hiragana or katakana reading ability, you start with the Beginner Class in order to learn how to read and write. The Japanese textbooks, Minna no Nihongo, are all in Japanese, and come with an accompanying translation and explanation book in English (as well as other languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish, French, and Vietnamese).

Almost all of the students are there on student visas, and many of them do not speak English, so everyone really tries their best to only speak Japanese while at school. It's really interesting to watch a group of people from places like Kyrgyzstan, China, Indonesia, and France all speaking Japanese together as a common language!

Daily class life involves learning and practicing grammar and conversation, memorizing new vocabulary, and once you've mastered hiragana and katakana, you have kanji practice. With frequent short tests during the week, periodic longer tests, and homework assignments, you progress quickly. Those who do complete a long-term course and pass the JLPT exams may be able to attend a local community college or get a work visa. By the time you reach that level, students are expected to be truly fluent in Japanese.





https://goo.gl/maps/Gp94fvLEceP2

If you're really serious about learning Japanese, and intend to stay in Japan to live, work, or study, then ICLC is a great place to stick your brain in that Nihongo blender and turn it up to full speed.

From my experience, being a student there for just six months, it was incredible how much you learn in a short period of time. Before you know it, you'll no longer be afraid to pick up the phone to make a reservation at an izakaya. And you'll go into a doctor's office feeling confident about your language skills instead of nervous about the language barrier. Learning Japanese is not an impossible task – take it from someone who only spoke English the first 35 years of her life!







Those who like fresh quality food, cooked to order, know where to find us.

The Rose Garden offers the best quality food for customers. Try our Japanese beef and chicken Thai curries. Our curries are flavorful, delicious and an absolute must for any curry lover. Once you taste our curries, you will never go back to other places. Don't forget our certified juicy Angus beef steaks and Louisiana gumbo with large tiger shrimp. Russian beef stroganof is also popular among our customers. When it comes to dessert, there's no better place for freshly baked pies and cakes. We highly recommend our sour cream cheesecake, so stop by and we'll cut you a slice!

Tel: 098-932-2800 www.rosegardenokinawa.net Open 8am to 11pm - 7 Days a Week - Last Order 11pm