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October - December 2020



*Xmas & New Year In Okinawa
How To Celebrate
The Japanese Way*

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年末年始を沖縄でお過ごしの方に、クリスマスに使えるアイディアを掲載!

古宇利オーシャンタワーや泊いゆまち、紅虎餃子房、タイムレスチョコレート、大戸屋のレビューもあります。

このマガジンはオンラインでも見ることができます:

www.totalokinawa.jp

Kouri Ocean Tower

by Chris Enriquez

Kouri island has been well renowned for its serene beaches, 2,000 meter long bridge, and its Kouri Island garlic shrimp. One thing that would never cross your mind to see on a remote island is, well – a tower. Kouri ocean tower is remarkably nestled nicely at the south east corner of this tiny island. Although officially it is classified as an observatory tower, Kouri ocean tower offers a lot more than just good serene views. The tower has other facilities and attractions that provide a fun filled day for the entire family.

One of the main popular attractions is the Shell museum. With more varieties than you would find on a one week long stroll along the beach, the museum not only showcases different types of shells and where to find them on island but also, explains the origin of the shell and why it is shaped in that certain way. Very interesting stuff. Oddly though, I think I enjoyed the gift shop more. I mean, how could you go to a museum and not stop by the gift shop right? The gift shop offers anything (and everything) shell related from jewelry to lamps. Heck, they even have table top centre pieces (Not too tacky of course). Pass the gift shop, now it's time to eat. The first restaurant you'll see is the one you go to for actual eating as it has a more robust menu, whilst the second one is more of a café where you can have a light snack or even just coffee. Both have spectacular views, with good (not great) food.

Finally, when you've had your fill, next stop is the actual observatory. With a beautiful 360 degree view of the island, there is a nice cool breeze at the top that just melts your stress away. There is also a giant bell which I am assuming you ring for good luck? Not sure so I rang it thrice just to be safe. The people standing beside me were not particularly happy about that (currently, the bell has been temporarily removed due to COVID-19). Of course saving the best for last, the ride to the top. While this is the first attraction you will encounter, I initially omitted on how to reach the top of the tower on purpose specifically for this reason. In my opinion, it's the climax of the whole Kouri ocean tower experience. Without spoiling it too much, I'll just say that it involves a golf cart. I was in shock and awe the whole journey to the top. That's it, I've said too much!



Overall, this is simply an absolute must. Especially if you've already driven all the way to Kouri Island, it would be foolish not to at least swing by this unique facility. Entrance would cost you about 850 yen per adult but it's totally worth it. Direction are super chill. Basically, look for the signs after you've cross the bridge and head towards the general direction of the tower. If you can't spot the tower, I would say go have your eyes checked. Don't forget to bring your nice camera for this one!



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<https://goo.gl/maps/Q5dPMwbipn3R4DuW9>

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古宇利島は、穏やかなビーチ、全長約2,000メートルの古宇利大橋や古宇利島ガーリックシュリンプでよく知られていますが、離島と聞いて「タワー」が思い浮かぶ人はあまりいないと思います。小さな古宇利島の南東部に位置しているこの古宇利オーシャンタワーは「展望台」と言われていますが、ただ景色を見るためだけの場所ではありません。家族全員が楽しめる施設やアトラクションをご紹介します。

まず最初は、大人気のシェルミュージアム。ここには一週間ビーチを散策しても見つけないくらいの種類の貝殻があり、展示したりどこで見つけられるかを教えてくれたりするだけでなく、その起源や、なぜその貝が独特な形状をしているのか、というところまで説明してくれていて、大変興味深いです。そしてミュージアムを出るとそこにはギフトショップが。個人的には（不思議と思われるかもしれませんが）ミュージアムより楽しかったかもしれません。だってミュージアムに行ったらギフトショップに寄るのが普通ですよね？こちらのギフトショップには、貝殻に関するものならアクセサリーからランプ、センターピースまで何でも揃っています。さて、ギフトショップを出て次は食事の時間です。最初にあるレストランには、食べ応えのあるメニューが揃っておりしっかり食べたい人向け。その次にあるのはカフェなので、軽食やコーヒーだけならこちらへ。どちらもお食事はまあまあという感じですが、眺望は素晴らしいです。腹ごしらえができればいいよ、展望台へ上ります。島をぐるりと360度見渡すことができ、心地よい風がストレスを吹き飛ばしてくれます。また展望台には大きな鐘があります（幸運を祈るため？よくわからなかったので3回鳴らしておきました。現在は感染症拡大防止のため取り外されています）。最後は、お楽しみにとっておいたタワーまでのドライブ。実は、古宇利オーシャンタワーに到着して最初のアトラクションがこれなのですが、最後にご紹介したくてここまで意図的に触れずにいました。個人的には、これが古宇利オーシャンタワーのクライマックスです。あまり詳細をバラしたくないのですが...ゴルフカートを使います。タワーまでの道のりは感動の連続でした。私が言えるのはここまで！

今回ご紹介した古宇利オーシャンタワー、必ず訪れたいマストスポットです。特に、古宇利島まで足をのばす予定がもとめるとある人は行かないと損するでしょう。入場料は大人ひとり850円かかりますがその価値は十分あります。アクセスはとても簡単。古宇利大橋を渡って古宇利島に着いたら、タワーの案内に沿って進みましょう。カメラを忘れずに！

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Tomari Iyumachi

by Alice Boddy

Tucked away under that huge bridge toward the airport there's a little seafood market called Tomari Iyumachi. It's right on the water in Naha, so you know it's fresh. It's located in the Minatomachi neighborhood, and if you weren't looking for it you'd miss it. It's probably the most delightful fish market I've ever been to. I'm not a huge fan of seafood markets or even the fish section of the grocery store, on account of the smell makes me nauseous. I was reluctant to go, but I'm glad I did.

When I walked in I was pleasantly surprised with the smell of the ocean (not the fish). Tomari Iyumachi smells how a fish market should smell. It's in a warehouse surrounded by fishing boats and ocean, so I'm not sure why I was surprised. You just never know with fish. Inside there's about 20-25 vendors selling all different kinds of filets, whole, sashimi, sushi, fried, seared, basically any way you want it. I bought two whole fish. Still not entirely sure what kind. I did some comparison to the chart on the wall and translated via Google translate. My best guess is some sort of snapper. The fish monger spoke English well. I could've asked him, but he was busy. When the fish is that fresh, it doesn't really matter.

Now that I had dinner, it was time for a snack. Around the corner from where I got my fish were a couple stands selling ready-to-eat food. Fish anyway you want it, I got one of everything. It was all so delicious and the lady who rang me up was very accommodating with sauce, napkins, and utensils considering it wasn't a full service restaurant. There was a place to sit and eat on the side, or you could take it to go. It wasn't too crowded, even though was a Saturday morning.

On the way back to the car in the parking lot I noticed a funny looking vending machine. It was selling eggs! Of course I bought some. They came out in a carton inside a plastic grocery bag. I didn't hear any gears turning or electrical movement inside so I am left to believe there are Oompa Loompas in the vending machine sorting eggs and what not... naturally. So, minus the confusion around the eggs and possible mistreatment of the egg handlers, I would give my Tomari Iyumachi experience a 10 out of 10.



Google Map & Directions:



<https://goo.gl/maps/9n2NgmZ7nRLRdDPv5>

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泊いゆまち



空港から延びる西海岸道路の橋の上から見えるのは、泊いゆまちと呼ばれる小さな魚市場。那覇市港町の海の目の前にあり、魚が新鮮であることは間違いなし。ただ、気を付けて探さないと通り過ぎてしまうかもしれません。実は私、魚特有の臭いが苦手で魚市場やスーパーの魚売り場はあまり好きではありませんでしたが、今回お邪魔してみて、これまで訪れた市場の中でも最高に楽しい場所でした。行ってみてよかったと思っています。

市場に入るとまず海の香り(魚の臭いではなく)がして驚きました。これぞ魚市場、というにおいなのでしょう。場所は、漁船が係留してある海のすぐ近く、倉庫街のようなところにあります。建物の中には20~25の店があり、魚の切り身や尾頭付き、刺身、寿司、フライ、炙りなど、探している処理・調理方法のお魚がきっと見つかるはず。私はこの日2匹魚を購入しましたが、いまだに何という魚かわかりません(笑)壁に貼ってあった表と見比べググってみたところ、タイカフエダイの一種、ということまではわかりました。購入したお店のご主人は英語がとてもお上手だったので聞いてみればよかった...(忙しそうで質問できませんでした)。

魚を買って夕食の手配は完了したので、次はおやつの時間。建物の中には調理済みの魚料理を豊富に扱っているお店もあり、私が訪れたお店のおかみさんはとても親切で、ナプキンやらソースやら箸やらいろいろお世話してくださいました。買ってすぐ食べるスペースもありますし、持ち帰ることもできます。私が訪れたのは土曜日午前中でしたが、そんなに混雑していなかった印象でした。

最後に、市場を後にして駐車場へと向かっている時、一角に奇妙な自動販売機が。それはなんと、卵の自動販売機!これは買わなきゃ、でしょう。試してみると、ケースに入った卵がビニール袋に入って出てきましたが、販売機の中から何も機械音が聞こえてこなかったのも、内部はどうなっているのか...。とにかく、最後に卵の自動販売機に全て持っていかれた感がありますが、泊いゆまち、100点満点の体験でした!

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How To Celebrate?

Spending the holiday season in Okinawa? We've got some ideas to make it feel more like Christmas and celebrate the Japanese Way!

It's Bonenkai Time



Common in Japan at the end of every year is the "bonenkai" or year forgetting party. The idea is to wrap up the previous year and celebrate everything being done before starting a new year. These are usually held by companies and involve a lot of drinking! If you get invited to one don't miss this end of year Japanese tradition.

Christmas Means KFC

Western countries have a delicious turkey or goose dinner on Christmas day...Japan...KFC! We're exaggerating slightly, but KFC has become synonymous with Christmas meals in Japan. It's the one time of year when you need to pre-order your KFC such is the popularity. Rumour goes that it started when expats in the 70s in Tokyo couldn't find a Turkey substitute for their Christmas lunch so started ordering KFC instead. KFC saw a marketing opportunity and the Japan's desire for KFC Christmas has grown since then!



Does Japan Celebrate Christmas...

Japan is obviously not a Christian country, but you'll still see Christmas trees around and Japanese have taken some parts of the Western holidays to heart.





The Japanese Way

Japan in general sees the 24th December as time for couples to have special romantic dinners. Of course children have also realized it's time for gifts and you'll see popular Christmas stockings or boots filled with candies and treats in supermarkets. Once Christmas has passed though, the serious business of cleaning the home and business starts to welcome in the New Year which is a much more significant event in Japan than Christmas.

Japanese New Year

New Year is a much bigger celebration in Japan than Christmas. Everyone will take time off to visit Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples within the first few days of New Year with family. There's a large Buddhist temple just outside of Foster's Legion gate at the intersection of Highways 330 and 81; Jingu-Ji Temple. The whole area comes alive at New Year with a variety of stalls outside selling food lining the streets and many hundreds if not thousands visiting the temple there. <http://tiny.cc/h5iwsz>



Top 5 Okinawan Gifts

- 1 Shisa**
No home is complete without a pair of these figurines, thought to provide protection from evil spirits. It's also considered good luck to receive them, making them perfect gifts. If authenticity matters, check the label or buy directly from one of the island's workshops.
- 2 Ryukyu glass**
Beautiful and often functional, a piece of Okinawan glass will surely make its receiver smile. Like the shisa, check labels for authenticity.
- 3 Pineapple Treats**
Though not unique to Okinawa, this tropical fruit is a crowd pleaser, whether fresh or made into sweets. While many stores on island sell pineapple wine and cookies, the Pineapple Park is the place to shop (and sample!) for pineapple lovers.
- 4 Minsa textiles**
Traditionally, women from Okinawa's Yaeyama region presented woven minsa as engagement presents to their future husbands. Different parts of the design have different meanings, the most significant being "Yours Forever More." Today, minsa fabric adorns everything from wallets and purses to key chains and glasses cases.
- 5 Okinawa Liquor**
Awamori is Okinawa's unique liquor and is made from distillation of long grain rice rather than brewing like sake. If you prefer something more modern local stores also have local rum and there's even Okinawa gin now!

Hong Hu Jiao Zi Fang

by Chris Enriquez

Nothing quite describes a peaceful family lunch out like a fight to the death over the last xiao long bao. True, you may get third degree burns on the upper part of your mouth as you rush slurp the xiao long bao soup but really, has that stopped any of us? I know in Okinawa there is a plethora of Chinese dim sum restaurants that offer some great choices but, if you are on the fence on which to go to this coming family weekend lunch, let me recommend to you Hong Hu Jiao Zi Fang (AKA Benitora Gyoza Bo).

For the décor, it has the typical Chinese style table and seats, the overhead lanterns (you know, the one with the tassels), and the highlighted plastic wax ramen dishes on the front show case of their restaurant. For the food, they like to focus on their ramen dishes and gyoza which makes me feel perplexed because it's their dim sum that is the star. At first glance at their menu, it may seem like just your typical average Chinese restaurant however, when you look closer, you can see that they actually offer a wider selection of dim sum which is exactly what you would want in a Chinese restaurant. Some of my favorites are their nira manjyu (meat and spring onion dumpling), steam pork spareribs, and of course the xiao long bao. For the rare few that don't know what that is, they are the soupy dumplings where you punch a hole and slurp in that succulent delicious meaty soup as sort of like a Chinese amuse-bouche before chomping the main dumpling, and what a heavenly soup it is. I sometimes wonder if the epitome of dim sum will be when they start serving that soup in a can via vending machines. One can only dream, I guess. As much as I hate to admit, they also have a good selection of salads. One thing I don't usually like about salad is how the leaves can be somewhat dry but in benitora gyoza bo, they have a lot of dressing infused salads or pickled veggies making them quite juicy and tasty. For the price, since almost every dish is per sampler plate order size, you would probably average about 1,000+ yen per person.

Ultimately, I recommend Hong Hu Jiao Zi Fang best for weekend brunch or lunch with the family. For some reason, there is just something about everybody sharing dim sum that just strikes home to me. They have a couple of branches in Okinawa but the one I liked the most was the one at the Okinawa Outlet Mall Ashibinaa.



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最後に残ったひとつの小籠包を巡って家族喧嘩が始まる...なんて平和(?)なファミリーランチの一幕でしょう。そこで獲得した小籠包を慌てて頬張って口の中を火傷するところまでがセットになりますが、火傷しても小籠包、食べたいですよね?沖縄には美味しい点心を出してくれるレストランはたくさんありますが、もし今週末のランチは家族でどこに行こうかまだ決められずにいるなら、今回ご紹介する紅虎餃子房をお勧めします。

レストランに入ると、いかにも中華料理屋というテーブルと椅子、提灯型の照明やショーケースにはラーメンなどの食品サンプルがあるのが目に入ります。ランチメニューはラーメンや餃子がメイン。メニューを一見するとよくある中華料理屋と思いがちですが、よく見ると点心のバラエティに富んでいることがわかります。私はにらまんじゅう、豚角煮トンポロウ、そしてもちろん小籠包がお勧めです(小籠包を知らない人はいないと思いますが、皮の中に熱々のスープが入った餃子で、皮に穴を開けてスープをすすりながらいただきます)。そのスープがまた最高!缶に入れて自動販売機で売ってくれないかな...。さらに、中華料理が好きな人にはあまり関心がないかもしれませんが、紅虎餃子房はサラダも美味しいんです。私はサラダの葉野菜が乾燥しているような食感があまり好きではないのですが、こちらではドレッシングもたっぷり、ピクルスにした野菜なども使っていて、ジューシーで美味しくいただけます。ランチの価格帯としてはひとりあたり1,000円ちょっとというところ。

今回ご紹介した紅虎餃子房は、週末のファミリーランチやランチにお勧めです。仲良く点心を分け合って楽しんでくださいね。県内に2店舗ありますが、私は沖縄アウトレットモールあしびなー店によくお邪魔します。

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Timeless Chocolate

by Anna Hebel

Coffee and chocolate lovers! This is the spot for you. Tugged away in one of American village's terraces a little cafe is drawing dark chocolate lovers to try specialty drinks and enjoy a minimalistic and simple cafe atmosphere.

Entering Timeless Chocolate (full name: Timeless Bean to Bar Chocolate), you are invited to try different dark chocolate nibs from different origins. If you like your chocolate coarse, black and tasty, this is the place. The Cuba 72% with tarama was my favorite. I immediately fell in love with the chocolate counter and the rustic design of the decor before I even got to ordering coffee.

The big selection of espresso coffees and tea, paired with dark chocolate made it hard to chose a drink but I eventually went with a Mocha, which even though it was unsweetened, tasted very rich and full. It was the perfect drink for me, since I don't like an overload of sugar in my coffee. I chose the iced version and the coarse and powdery chocolate in the coffee made it taste like a shake rather than a coffee. I was really impressed. My friends got hot lattes with chocolate and frappuchinos. The frappe came topped with whip cream and caramel sauce and a perfect pick for those with a sweet tooth. You can even get a little adventurous with a coffee soda called espresso tonic. The bitterness of the tonic makes this drink so refreshing, it is perfect for hot summer days. You can also choose delicious chocolate cakes and desserts to go with your coffee and make your visit a perfect afternoon treat, which you will want to repeat as much as you can.

There is seating inside the cafe, as well as outside on the terrace, which overlooks American village. You can even watch coffee desserts being prepared in the next room through a glass window and purchase cute present boxes for your chocolate loving friends and family. Those chocolate boxes cost around 5000 Yen. The coffees and tea in the cafe sell for about 500-700 Yen, which is worth it because the taste is quite unique. I have never seen another cafe like this before and it is a must visit if you live on Okinawa or visit here.



Google Map & Directions:



<https://goo.gl/maps/d7Ar1XcmJWUAnYjH6>

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Timeless Chocolate (タイムレスチョコレート)



今回ご紹介するタイムレスチョコレートは、コーヒーやチョコレート好きにはたまらないお店。北谷のアメリカンビレッジに店舗を構え、ミニマルでシンプルな内装と雰囲気の中スペシャルティドリンクの提供もしており、チョコレート好きを惹きつけてやみません。

タイムレスチョコレート(正確には、「Timeless Bean to Bar Chocolate(タイムレス・ビーン・トゥ・バー・チョコレート)」)に入るとまず、チョコレートが並ぶカウンターや、無駄な装飾を極力省いた内装に魅せられます。そして様々な産地のカカオニブの試食も可能。粗挽きでダークなチョコレートが好きな人にはたまらないでしょう。個人的には、キューバのカカオ72%に多良間の黒糖を合わせたものが気に入りました。

メニューにはエスプレッソやティーが並び、さらにダークチョコレートとの組み合わせを考えると...選ぶのはとても難しい!結局モカを注文しましたが、無糖と思われるにもかかわらずとてもリッチで濃厚な味わい。砂糖を入れすぎたコーヒーが好きではない私にはピッタリのチョイスでした。今回はアイスでお願いしましたが、粗挽きのカカオとカカオパウダーでコーヒーというよりシェイクのような感覚。驚きでした。友人はチョコレートとフラペチーノのラテをオーダー。フラッペにはホイップクリームとキャラメルソースがかかっており、甘党にはお勧め。「エスプレッソ・トニック」はコーヒーとソーダのコラボレーションで、ちょっと冒険したい人に。トニックの苦味が爽やかさとなり、暑い夏にはピッタリ。自分のコーヒーに合うチョコレートケーキやデザートを選んで、優雅な午後のひと時を...きっとまた来たくなるでしょう。

店内と外のテラスに席があり、テラスからはアメリカンビレッジを見下ろすことができます。店内ではガラス越しにデザートなどが作られているところを見学したり、チョコ好きな友人や家族のためにギフトボックスを購入したりすることもできます。チョコレートボックスは5,000円くらい。コーヒーやティーなどのドリンクは500~700円という価格帯。ここでしか味わえないことを考えると十分価値はあります。このようなカフェに出会ったのは初めての体験で、沖縄に住んでいる人、旅行に来た人、みんなが必ず訪れるべきマストスポットです。

住所:

〒904-0115 沖縄県中頭郡北谷町字美浜9番地46 ディストーションシーサイドビル2階

営業時間:午前11時~午後7時

電話番号:098-923-2880

ウェブサイト:timelesschocolate.com

Googleマップ: <https://goo.gl/maps/9wu4FCGLHXbz1mA28>



Ootoya

by Chris Enriquez

Franchise chain restaurants are so popular that they are just popping up everywhere. Unfortunately, the image associated with these types of restaurants are sometimes sloppy or poor quality. But not this one! Ootoya, whether it's a branch at the busy Chatan area or in a thin alley street in Singapore, the quality of both the venue and the food still holds to an impressive impeccable standard.

Ootoya is a Japanese style restaurant that serves a variety of different bento-like meals in a more indoor dining atmosphere. They have all the standard popular dishes such as the Stir-fry dishes, tonkatsu, karaage, saba-miso (mackerel in miso sauce), and many others. I personally tried the chicken nanban set which is basically a deep fried battered chicken with tartar and sweet soy sauce. I found it delicious but honestly, I am a bit partial as I think anything with battered fried chicken and tartar sauce is a win in my book. The rice which comes with almost every meal is also "swappable". Basically, if you would like to go a little healthier and at the same time, add some kick into your regular boring steamed rice, you can have it swapped for gokokumai (5 grain rice) which is a mix of some wheat, sesame, and red beans. Trust me, it's good. They also put importance in having a balanced meal. With most of their set meals, you will get your main dish, your rice, miso soup, and a small side salad. Excellent value for money. For desserts, they maintain the theme and offer a lot of green tea, red bean, and mochi sweets. I personally recommend their classic – the zenzai parfait – which is red bean paste with white mochi balls on top of vanilla ice cream. Heavenly stuff. For the price, you get a real-deal-feel-meal (in other words, a good quality bargain meal) as most of the set menus range around 800 to 1000 yen which is more than enough food for 1 meal.

Ootoya is truly a solid choice for your regular lunch outs, quick dinner, or even family night out with the kids. With quality like this, it's not surprising that they have branches all over the world including China, Thailand, and even in the U.S. For Okinawa, they have a whopping 16 branches with the easiest to access probably being the one in Chatan. Directions are, from route 58 headed north, just as you pass Camp Lester main gate, the Ootoya will be on your left. It's along the major route 58 highway. You can't miss it.



Google Map & Directions:



<https://goo.gl/maps/rWqx5F1NoN22>

Yen, Credit Cards & IC Cash

098-923-0851

<https://www.ootoya.com/>

大戸屋

人気のフランチャイズレストランチェーンは至る所で見かけるようになりましたが、残念ながらこういったレストランについてまわるイメージは「料理が雑」とか「クオリティーが良くない」とかネガティブなものになりがち。しかし大戸屋は違います！繁盛する北谷でもシンガポールの路地裏でも、店舗と食事の質はともに申し分のないレベルを死守しています。



大戸屋は、アットホームな雰囲気でもバラエティに富んだ定食を提供している和食レストラン。炒め物やとんかつ、唐揚げ、鯖の味噌煮など、定番料理が揃います。私は今回チキン南蛮をいただきました。とても美味しかったです、鶏肉に衣をつけて揚げたものにタルタルソースをつけたらうまいのは当たり前ですよ（笑）。また、ほとんどの定食についてくるご飯は変更可能。ヘルシーに行きたい、いつもの白ご飯にはちょっと飽きた、という時には五穀ご飯に変更できます。大戸屋はバランスの取れた食事を重視していてほとんどの定食にはメインの他にご飯、味噌汁、そしてサイドにサラダがついてくるため、お得感満載です。デザートは、和食レストランならではの抹茶や小豆、餅を使ったスイーツが多め。個人的には、バニラアイスの上にあんこと白玉が乗った白玉ぜんざいパフェがお勧めです。価格帯は、ほとんどの定食が800～1,000円。この価格でこの量とクオリティーは驚きですよ。

今回ご紹介した大戸屋は、いつものランチや、手軽に済ませたい夕食、家族連れでの食事などには間違いないチョイス。大戸屋クオリティーで今や、中国、タイ、アメリカにまでビジネスを拡張しており、沖縄県内でも16店舗を展開しています。北谷店へのアクセスは国道58号線の伊平交差点を北から南向けに進み、交差点を過ぎた左手にあります。

店舗名：大戸屋

Googleマップ: <https://goo.gl/maps/rWqx5F1NoN22>

電話番号: 098-923-0851

ウェブサイト: <https://www.ootoya.com/>

支払い方法: 現金、クレジットカード、Edyなどの電子マネー

営業時間: 午前11時～午後10時 (L.O. 午後9時30分)。定休日なし

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