Southern Guide

The south of Okinawa is home to people with a strong sense of brotherhood, richness in culture and a place that stands as the beacon of balance and harmony. Set between both the tranquil and the modern, the south of Okinawa is still arguably the best place to live in Okinawa. Block 5 consists of 6 towns (Haebaru, Yonabaru, Itoman, Nanjo, Tomigusku and Yaese) that offer a series of activities as well as an abundant number of natural spots to enjoy. It also boasts in its large number of beaches, sacred locations and interesting attractions.

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Picture of the Okinawa Peace Hall located in Itoman City. (from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Okinawa_peace_hall_01.JPG)

Haebaru Town

Haebaru is surrounded by all the southern-most towns, hence it is the only town in Okinawa that does not face the ocean. Known as the safest place to live, considering its high altitude, Haebaru is bustling with things to do, izakayas to eat at and a variety of stores to shop at.



Left to right: Map location and logo of Haebaru (from https://www.town.haebaru.lg.jp/). The logo is embellished with bougainvillea flowers which grow locally in the area. Picture of Haebaru's arched viaduct (from https://www.shimz.co.jp/)

a) Attractions and Activities

- Kanegusuku in Shimajiri District holds a very busy road (82) with stores lined up next to each other. Here you can find Round 1, housing a bowling alley, an arcade, karaoke area, darts and billiards, and a ping pong area.

- Manekineko karaoke, a famous karaoke franchise in Japan, is also located in Kanegusuku.

- Haebaru is also home to Okinawa's only ice rink located in Sports World Southern Hill. Here you can find an ice arena, a bowling alley, batting, table tennis, bedrock spa (also known as ganban-yoku) and a restaurant.

- If you are interested in taking special classes, courses or picking up a new hobby, Well Culture Centre (ウエル カルチャースクール) is the place to go. This educational institution provides a variety of classes from cooking and martial arts to folk dancing and calligraphy. The courses are mostly in Japanese if you want to push yourself towards interacting with Japanese people. More information can be found on the website https://well-cs.jp/

- The Okinawa Prefectural Archives building is a site to behold. It is one of the most unique and beautiful buildings in the South of Okinawa. You can visit the prefectural archives museum and library and learn more about Okinawan history.

- The Haebaru Cultural Centre is another place where you can learn about the history of Okinawa. At this centre, guests can visit the museum showcasing information and a variety of artifacts pertaining to Haebaru during and post WWII. The centre also offers visitors the opportunity to tour the Okinawa Army Hospital Haebaru Outdoor Battlefield and Bunker #20 locations with a resident guide. Here visitors can experience the underground cave spaces war patients

were treated in and its surrounding area. Please keep in mind that this tour requires a reservation and a maximum of 8 people per party, for more information please visit the Haebaru website, https://www.town.haebaru.lg.jp/site/kankou/2898.html

- Southern plex is a great hub to enjoy food and movies in Haebaru. Located across Haebaru Aeon, this movie theatre shows a variety of mainstream English and Japanese movies.



Photograph of Southern Plex (from https://www.showa-sign.jp/works/m_recreation_p01.html)

b) Shopping

Whether it is grocery shopping in Tsukazan, acquiring home appliances in Kanegusuku or perusing through the stores at Aeon, Haebaru has just what you need in proximity. Here is a list of shopping places you can visit in Haebaru.

- Aeon Haebaru
  This is a shopping centre holding a variety of stores including Uniqlo, GAP clothing store and Threepy.

- Kanegusuku Area (82)
  a. Yellow Hat - Car garage and Auto parts Store
  b. Makeman – Home Improvement Store and Hardware
  c. Marukin Kagu Ichinichibashi – Furniture Store

d. Nitori – Furniture and Home Appliance Store
e. Workman – Work apparel, PPE and Hardware Store
f. Ademok – Bakery

- Tsukazan Area
  a. SanA – Mini shopping centre with a grocery store, cosmetic store, pharmacy, electronics store, book, 100yen and stationary store
  b. Second Street – Second hand store
  c. Gyomu Supermarket – You can find both local and international products in this store. Most international products are sourced from Thailand and Europe. You can also find Halal poultry and a variety of halal products here.
  d. JA Okinawa Market – This is a large farmers market where you can buy produce at cheaper prices.
  e. パティスリ AkaHiro Cake Shop – This cake store is very popular amongst the people of Haebaru. They sell a variety of cakes, pies, cookies and arguably the best macaroons.

c) Izakayas and Restaurants

There are many izakayas in Haebaru that accommodate for both a small and large group of people. These places offer a variety of different food from Japanese local delicacies to Western foods.

- 居酒屋きちんと

This izakaya is a bustling place, filled with many patrons from the time they open daily. 居酒屋きちんと has a variety of delicious dishes on its menu at very reasonable prices and is recommended for drinking

parties or lunch time. It is located at the corner of the Naha Itoman-sen Street and Tsukazan bypass, Opposite the JA market.
https://maps.app.goo.gl/GoWfhJ7XG5hnAzWQ8

Our menu recommendation: Grilled Mackerel and Sushi Platter

- 十三屋

This place is more reserved and has small private rooms to accommodate patrons. Their menu constitutes mainly of Japanese and some Korean dishes and there is also an all-you-can drink option available. The izakaya is located in Kanegusuku, opposite the Round 1.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/G5iEMdXPKGBUj6qp6

Our menu recommendation: Kimchi Chahan, Eggplant and mushroom tomato pasta and Honey bread

- Baru Steak

Baru Streak is a cozy steak house near Haebaru Aeon mall. They serve a variety of steaks, which you can choose the doneness for, accompanies by delicious sauces. The customers are also offered some set options to choose from, some offering rice and vegetables and others with salads and chowders.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/U4B4JZTGPoGs3Vpg9

Our menu recommendation: Any steak paired with their corn chowder or mushroom chowder

- Sandaimeuobushi

This izakaya offers its guests a wonderful experience through its unique seating arrangements and interesting decorative displays, inspired by life at sea. The menu boasts a variety of Japanese dishes ranging from sashimi and grilled fish to gyoza and hamburger.

P.S. drinks are quite affordable here.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/jNzCTuGBXTdQRbWPA

Our menu recommendation: sashimi and sushi platters

- Syofuen

Syofuen is a fine dining restaurant located in Tetsuo Kinjo Museum, the home of the creator of Ultraman in Tsukazan, Haebaru. At this restaurant patrons can enjoy Japanese cuisine served in platters and sets. The cost of a meal ranges from 3000 yen or more.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/j9Q1eKxMfgUhcwDA7

Our menu recommendation: all the food sold here is made with premium ingredients, anything you choose is bound to taste good.

d) Health Care

Although Haebaru has an abundance of medical care facilities and clinics most of them are unfortunately Japanese only. Visiting these places can be a bit overwhelming if you don't know Japanese but the staff in most of these

places is very kind and will help you if you just have your smartphone translator to assist you.

- Nambu Medical Centre and Children's Medical Centre

This is a big public hospital with many specialists and departments. It is open to the public during weekdays from 8:30am to 3:00pm. Departments include Cardiology, Dermatology, Dentistry, Intensive care and many more.

- Minami kazenaika Clinic

This private clinic in Tsukazan specializes in the treatment of respiratory diseases and has a general practitioner. You can also get your annual checkup done here. They are open every day, excluding Sunday, from 9:00am to 3:30pm.

- Okinawa Nambu Health Centre

This is a public medical centre. Usually, people visit this centre to get their annual health check as well as other cancer checks done. Getting your health check done does require making an appointment in advance, so it is advised to ask your coordinator or a Japanese speaking friend to help with that. The centre is open on weekdays between 8:30am and 3:15pm.

Nanjo City

Nanjo City is the heart shape city located in the east coast of the Southern part of Okinawa. It borders Yonabaru, Yaese and Haebaru and has a variety of tourist sites along its coastline. Mainly, Nanjo city is known for its spiritual and sacred places but it's also popular among locals for its restaurants and cafés. Furthermore, included in the city is the small island of Oujima, famous for its tempura.



Left to right: Map location and logo of Nanjo city (from https://www.kankou-nanjo.okinawa/nanjo/) The logo is embellished with red hibiscus flowers which grow locally in the area. Picture of a place of worship in Sefa Utaki Nanjo (from https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e7124.html/)

a) Attractions and Activities

- The sacred locations in Nanjo

Many places in Nanjo city fall under the ritual sites of the Ryukyu Kingdom era therefore gaining their UNESCO status and spiritual importance. The most famous UNESCO world heritage site is the "Sefa Utaki," an area in Chinen, Nanjo covered by forest and containing special rock formations. The natural elements of this place of worship are considered very important for the Okinawan people but visiting is allowed in order to learn more about the religious practices of the Ryukyu kingdom. Other sacred places include Yabusatsu Utaki and the Tamagusuku Castle ruins.

- Nanjo City was also home to many Castles and today visitors can explore the castle ruins. Most of the ruins still include the exterior surrounding stone walls and some structural elements that once supported the homes to royalty and visitors can get a feel of how vast the castle grounds were. Castle ruins include, Itokazu, Tamagusuku, Chinen, Nanzan and Shimimashi Ozato castle ruins respectively.

- On the grounds of Ozato castle ruin park there is Ozato Park Golf. The golf course is located at the top of a hill overlooking Nikaki bay and players can enjoy the view while completing all 18 holes. People of all ages are welcome to use the course, and guests can borrow the balls and golf clubs from the reception hut by using the vending machine. The golf course is quite open however, so it is advisable to wear a hat and sunscreen.

- Treat yourself to the ultimate relaxation at one of Okinawa's public hot springs. The Apeman Spa and Natural Hot Springs offer daytime guests the opportunity to enjoy different baths, a dry sauna and spa facilities located in the same building. The onsen

features an observation bath, where guests can relax while looking out at the sea. Guests of all ages can enjoy this facility (there may be some rules regarding those with tattoos).

- One of Okinawa's most popular attractions, Okinawa World, is also located in Tamagusuku, Nanjo. Okinawa World is a unique theme park where visitors can learn about Okinawan history, culture, wildlife, fruits and explore the largest limestone cave on the island. Furthermore, the park hosts a variety of workshops and small stores where visitors can learn and buy a variety of traditional crafts such as Ryukyu glass blowing, bingata dying, pottery and weaving.





Top to Bottom: Pictures of the underground limestone caves and Okinawan dance performance at Okinawa World (from https://www.nippon.com/en/guide-to-japan/gu900219/)

- Journey through the wonderful Valley of Gangala in Tamagusuku and discover the stories behind the valley and its caves dating more than a thousand years. The valley of Gangala offers a guided tour through an ancient valley formed by the collapse of limestone caves. During this tour guests can discover the mysteries around the formation of the valley, walk through a subtropical forest, learn about ancient religious practices and observe the amazing,

surrounding flora. Please note that Valley of Gangala only offers guided tours and requires a reservation.

- Nanjo also has a variety of beaches along its coastline.

    1. Mibaru Beach
       This is a shallow and wide beach fit for people of all ages who want to relax on its white sand. Here you can also enjoy a glass bottom boat ride and see all kinds of coral and sea life.

    2. Hyakuna Beach
       Hyakuna beach is a secluded beach with low tides and warm water. It is perfect for those who want to relax and enjoy the ocean view on a cloudy day. It is also associated with pilgrimage during the Ryukyu period. There aren't many things to do here, so if you intend to visit, bring some water along with you.

    3. Azama Sun-sun Beach
       This beach is amongst the popular beaches in Nanjo. It is known for being family friendly, barrier free, and having white sand. The water here is shallow and there are a variety of activities available for visitors. Activities include banana boat rides, jet-skiing, big marble rides and barbeque facilities.

    4. Ou Island Beach
       This is a small beach close to the bridge that connects the island to the rest of Nanjo. It has no barrier, so it is ideal

for swimming or cooling down on a hot summer day. Guests can also just relax on the beach and look out at the ocean. This beach unfortunately doesn't have any beach shops, it is advisable to get what you need in Nanjo and then drive to Ou Island Beach.

b) Cafés and Restaurants

Among local Okinawan people, Nanjo is the place where you can find the best cafés and restaurants in abundant numbers. Here are some we recommend.

- Ou Island Seafood Shikudo

This restaurant is a blockhead favorite. They serve a variety of seafood, tempura and meat dishes in large portions and at reasonable prices. Upon arrival guests are greeted outside by many cats and guests can sit in the restaurant and enjoy local foods. This shokudo is located just as you arrive on Ou Island across the bridge.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/8yRmUxorvi7cjNdv8

Our menu recommendation: Fish bata yaki set (a 100/10 but I'm biased), Egg zosui and Seafood yakisoba

- Pizza Kissa Mimoza no ki

This is a pizza restaurant that mainly serves pizzas and salads made with Okinawan vegetables. The restaurant is located on a hill in Nanjo where guests can enjoy cheesy pizzas and the scenic view of

the ocean and its surrounding environment. Pizza Kissa prides itself in its use of locally sourced vegetables and original dough, making the pizzas a delight for all patrons to enjoy. Furthermore, they also have a selection of pastas to choose from.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/ckNtNUzdFpxR4mY97

Our menu recommendation: All their pizzas are delicious.

- Cave Cafe

Cave café as the name suggests is a café inside a cave. This café is located inside Valley of Gangala and is only available on reservation of a guided tour of the facility. The café mainly serves drinks but they do have a lunch menu with a variety of Okinawan dishes.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/8fC1hwHSCRvtHdLZ9

Our menu recommendation: Any drink from the 35cafe drinks menu.

- Harvest Moon

Harvest Moon is a restaurant with a unique concept rooted in bringing Africa to Japan. Here you can savor African flavors and enjoy their wide variety of coffee and wine. They also provide a space for locals to buy and experience African products and live music.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/YXgERoGe6G6Murvs6

Our menu recommendation: The curry and their African teas and coffee

- Café Surin

At this café you can interact with serval cats while enjoying a delicious and relaxing meal. Their menu offers a variety of set meals including different Hamburg meals, curry bowls and shrimp dishes. If you're a foodie and also love cats, this is the place for you.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/LNMQ1N3cFUKQt6Z39

Our menu recommendation: Homemade herbal tea and spicy garlic shrimp

- Cal Café

Cal Café is a very cute and vintage café located on the outskirts of Nanjo city. This place stands out for its use of old cottage furniture, elegant crookery and use of vintage decorative items. The menu hosts a variety of western foods and some Japanese dishes. This café is recommended for those who want to go back in time while having a cozy meal or for anyone who enjoys some tranquil time appreciating vintage items with friends.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/TzUeMPo5vYS75nHj8

Our menu recommendation: Steak meals

c) Shopping

- Nanjo is home to the only **Costco Wholesaler** in Okinawa. At Costco customers can find a variety of local and international products and purchase in bulk. Costco includes a grocer, pharmacy, auto tire center

and food court. Nanjo city also has other local supermarkets and markets such as **Max Value Ozato, JA Okinawa and Big Express Shashiki.**

- If you're looking to buy clothes and other products, there is also **Aeon Town Nanjo Ozato**. At this shopping center you can find the retail store Honeys, Daiso, Own Days and a few restaurants.

d) Health Care

- Nanjo City has one main general hospital, **Okinawa Medical Hospital**. This hospital is located in Sashiki area, close to Tosoe Fishing Port. They have a variety of departments available to patients during the week on appointment. Unfortunately, the staff at this hospital do not speak English, so it is advised to go with a friend or your coordinator. For more information, please check on their website http://www.o-medical.jp/ .

Yonabaru Town

Yonabaru Town, the town built around the sea shore of the same name, is a place characterised by its bustling nature and friendly residents. This is a small-town neighbouring Nanjo, Haebaru and Nishihara.



Left to right: Map location and logo of Yonabaru (from https://www.town.yonabaru.okinawa.jp/) The logo is embellished with the tiger's claw, a flower which grows on the towns tree, Deigo. Picture of the Yonabaru tug of war (from https://www.okisocial.com/events/okinawa-yonabaru-tug-of-war-2025/)

a) Attractions and Activities

- The Yonabaru Tug-of-War

The Yonabaru Tug-of-War is the towns biggest annual festival and is also among the 3 biggest tug of war festivals in Okinawa. The festival started as a religious festival for locals to pray for a good harvest, good health and prosperity and has been around for over 450 years. The main event starts with 400 people carrying 2 handmade 45 meters straw ropes weighing up to 5 tons in total from the east and west of the town. The ropes are joined at the tug of war venue with a “kanachi” stick that loops the ropes together. Thereafter people from both the east and west pull on the rope. The festival is finished off with music, food stalls and fireworks.

- Yukata Festival
  This is a small festival hosted by the Yonabaru District Social Dining & Entertainment Association. Residents and visitors gather in their yukatas and enjoy watching the sunset, good music, “kachaashii” dancing (Okinawan traditional dance) and food from food stalls. Some of the food stalls offer discounts on food and drinks if the customer is wearing a yukata at the event. This festival usually occurs in August at Yonakohama Park, Yonabaru.

- Keiben Yonabaru Station Museum
  This museum showcases the history of Yonabaru’s station and the Yonabaru line (a light rail running between Naha and Yonabaru) that existed before WW2. It is also a space where visitors can learn about transportation in Okinawa. Admissions to the museum are 100 yen per person. For more information, please visit https://www.yonabaruekisha.com/

b) Cafés and Restaurants

Yonabaru has a few cozy cafés and restaurants owned by locals. In these places you can encounter friendly staff, good food and wonderful atmospheres.

- Marina's Café

This café is run by a couple that specialize in making authentic dishes inspired by their knowledge of Southeast Asian cuisine. The menu consists of different light meals such as sandwiches, pad thai, curries and Halo-halo.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/2qKWAa3TiHiZ2BtKA

Our menu recommendation: This café has a small menu but all the menu items are delicious.

- Café R

Café R is a cozy café located on the coast of Itarashiki. You can sit at this café and enjoy the view of the ocean if you're attracted to the scenery or you can enjoy their colorful décor while you eat. They specialize in Asian cuisine with a menu ranging from items such as seafood porridge, fried rice and mapo tofu.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/8EsPNj1sUvuXvTSr5

Our menu recommendation: mapo tofu but everything on their menu is good.

- 居酒屋ゆかり食道

This is small izakaya located a few minutes from the rail museum in Yonabaru. They serve a variety of local Japanese and Okinawan dishes from fish to meat skewers at affordable prices. It's a great place to relax and enjoy good food and drink with friends or coworkers.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/5ugQYZH4yzCWJx2q9

Our menu recommendation: Their goya champuru is great, if you enjoy eating goya this is your place.

- 与那原居酒屋 まる匠

与那原居酒屋 まる匠 is another izakaya in the Yonabaru area. They serve the same kinds of food that you can find at most izakayas but specialize in takoyaki, Hiroshima-yaki and okonomiyaki. The atmosphere of this izakaya feels cozy and retro with doodled menus and friendly staff.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/Qe6LkSdEwAM4TNrJ7

Our menu recommendation: Okonomiyaki, there are many styles to choose from.

c) Shopping

- Farmers Market Yonabaru Agarihama Market is a JA market where customers can fine locally grown fruit and vegetables at affordable prices. They also sell bread, bento boxes and other products occasionally. This market is open every day from 9am to 6pm.

- Marine Plaza Agarihama is an informal shopping complex with a variety of retail stores and restaurants.

- A-Price is a grocery store that sells products in bulk. Retailers and restaurants usually buy from this store but it also caters to the general public, with a variety of preserved and fresh goods. Aside from offering customers the opportunity to buy food in bulk, A-price also stocks on various international products. Amongst their products customers have access to spices, Italian pasta, quality cheeses, wines and various types of meat and poultry (they stock duck here wink, wink – nudge, nudge)

- Higakagu offers a variety of furniture and home décor items. They have 2 branches on Okinawa's mainland including the one in Yonabaru. Through this store customers are able to buy furniture in store, online or via line and have it delivered.

d) Health Care

- Like most areas in Okinawa, Yonabaru has a general hospital available for the general public. The hospital is called Yonabaru Central Hospital and it offers a range of medical departments ranging from general medicine to specialists and patients can also get their medical check-up here. Unfortunately, the hospital staff at this hospital may not speak English so it's advisable to take a translator or ask a friend or your coordinator to accompany and assist with any language barrier. For more information, please visit their website https://www.ycb.or.jp/

Yaese Town

Yaese is a quiet town located between Itoman City and Nanjo. The town is mostly residential, characterised by the tall sugarcane grass stocks and pockets of farmland intersected by narrow roads and huge drainage channels. When driving through Yaese you can feel the rustic atmosphere created by its surrounding nature and occasionally, you can be surprised by Okinawa's beautiful cherry blossoms that bloom in spring. Yaese Town is the ideal place for those who enjoy a simple and quiet life and can appreciate the charm of simplicity.



Left to right: Map location and logo of Yaese Town (from https://www.town.yaese.lg.jp/#gsc.tab=0) The logo is embellished with the marigold flower, the town's flower. Picture of Okinawan cherry blossoms of Yaese Park (from https://www.okisocial.com/events/2024-yaese-cherry-blossom-festival-in-okinawa-japan/)

a) Attractions and Activities

- Yaese Cherry Blossoms Festival
  Annually, around mid-January to early February, the 500 trees in Yaese park bloom with the unique Okinawan cherry blossoms. Guests from all around Okinawa come to view and appreciate the flowers and walk around the park. At night the park is beautifully illuminated with lanterns, illuminated flower arrangements and fairy lights that encircle the trunk of the trees. Furthermore, guests can enjoy foot baths, food stalls, a petting zoo, performances and the view of Yaese from the park during this time of year.

- Minatogawa Haari
  Every May/ June the Minatogawa Haari, Dragon boat race, is held at the Minatogawa Fishing Port. During this festival residents and fisherman race on elaborately decorated long boats as a ritual to pray to the ocean god for safety at sea and for a good catch.

- All-island Sumo Tournament
  This tournament happens on the same day as the Minatogawa Haari, after the boat race. Both male and female locals participate in Okinawan style sumo wrestling

- Youth Eisa Festival
  The Yaese Town Youth Eisa Festival committee hosts an annual festival at Kochidaira Sports Park Athletics Stadium. Entrance is free and attendees have the opportunity to watch various Okinawan traditional performances. Performances include eisa,

shishimai (lion dance) and bojutsu (stick fighting) performed by various local youth groups. This festival takes place in October each year.

- Giza Banta Cliff
  This is a scenic location in Yaese that features beautiful ocean views but also a tragic history. The cliff is located near the peace memorial park and it is known for being the place where countless people sacrificed their lives so that they wouldn't be captured and killed toward the end of World War II. This peaceful location offers guests a place to contemplate the losses that Okinawa faced as a result of war as well as to hike and appreciate the ocean, waterfall and overall nature surrounding the area.

- Hunterban Forest Trekking
  This is a challenging 2-3-hour trekking tour through a forest that stretches along the coastline of Gushiku, the Hunterban forest. Customers are offered the opportunity to experience the nature of Yaese, pass through underground limestone labyrinths and learn more about the hidden locations that the Japanese military used during the war. This is a guided tour and accepts up to 6 people at a time on reservation. For more information, please visit https://www.okinawa-ecotour.com/index.html

b) Cafés and Restaurants

Yaese town is home to a few small restaurants.

- Bistro Chef's Table Ichige

Located in the middle of the countryside area, this is an intimate and fancy bistro that serves French and Italian food. They offer three different set meals that can be customized by the customer but essentially each set consists of a soup with bread, main course meal, dessert and drink. The staff are lovely but they only operate during lunch hours.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/9JkbKwaQFqf13j7z9

Our menu recommendation: Dejeuner meal A, it comes with a soup, bread, pasta, fish or meat dish, platter of 2 or 3 desserts and a drink. All the food here is really good.

- Chef's Kitchen

This is a small family restaurant run by a friendly elderly couple. Most of their meals consist of Japanese dishes including omelet rice, cutlet with rice and Japanese curry. Overall, the food portions are large and affordable.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/SKm1baXonNPCkbBKA

Our menu recommendation: Omuhayashi, a garlic rice dish served with an omelette, beef and Omuhayashi sauce.

- ごはんカフェ CUCURU

ごはんカフェ CUCURU is a Japanese restaurant located near the main road (route 507). They operate 4 times a week with a small menu consisting of 3 meal sets all under 2000 yen.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/yVdt2EsczJ6AkiVa7

Our menu recommendation: Fish lunch set or the tofu hamburger steak with garlic sugar oil sauce.

c) Shopping

Yaese town doesn't have many places for shopping, most people travel to either Itoman or Haebaru for that purpose. However, there is a small shopping centre in the heart of Yaese Town, San-A Yaese and 2 farmers markets, Agri-House Kochinda and South Rest Stop Gushichan. Residents go to these establishments to buy groceries, shop for clothing and other miscellaneous items or to just sit and have coffee.

Here are the links to the shopping spots discussed above:

- *Agri-House Kochinda: https://maps.app.goo.gl/WnASBFqoy88nBsji7*
- *South Rest Stop Gushichan: https://maps.app.goo.gl/SY4VkarDbyeBVSLTA*
- San-A Yaese: *https://maps.app.goo.gl/6rG2xKG4WFQjsr2aA*

d) Health Care

The central part of Yaese town is home to a few businesses where patients can receive quality healthcare using their medical insurance. Some even offer English assistance for the patients' peace of mind.

- Nambu Tokushukai Hospital
  This is a large general hospital located near the Haebaru south express way ramp, just at the beginning of Yaese. They have a

range of departments including general medicine. The hospital also has systems in place for assisting foreign patients which include having support staff that can translate for patients during consultations and the hospital floor plans in various languages so that patients can easily navigate through the hospital.
Reservations are required in advance if the patient needs an English interpreter. For more information, please check their website https://www.nantoku.org/en/

- Chura Dental Clinic
  This is a dental clinic used by previous ALTs in Okinawa. Unfortunately, they don't speak English but they will assist you in a polite and friendly manner.

Tomigusuku City

Tomigusuku City is the busiest city after Naha and is home to many residents and local businesses. Some would even say that it is an ideal place to live as it borders most of the cities and towns in the south of Okinawa and is closest to Naha International Airport.



Left to right: Map location and logo of Tomigusuku City. The logo sits on a bed of bougainvillea flowers, the city's flower. Picture of Senaga Island which is part of Tomigusuku City (all from https://www.city.tomigusuku.lg.jp/index.html)

a) Attractions and Activities

- Tomigusuku city is home to **Toyosaki**, an area known for its beach coast, shopping hotspot and park.

1) In Toyosaki one can find **Iias Mall**, a relatively big shopping mall with a variety of local and international stores, restaurants and cafes and the **Kariyushi aquarium**.

2) Five minutes away from the mall is **Chura-San Beach**. This is family friendly beach with many activities is ideal for having beach barbeques and swimming. There are also shower and change room facilities on this beach.

3) Near Chura-San Beach and along the coast there are **sports courts, walkways**, a children's **playground** and **Toyosaki Seaside Park**. Usually, residents use these areas to exercise, play sports and relax while watching the planes land.

- Tomigusku city also has a small island dedicated to leisure and accessible by road. This place is called **Senaga Island**. On Senaga Island the general public can visit small beaches, unique restaurants and cafes, attend artisanal classes, such as ring making, and purchase from various boutiques. Most of the businesses are open till 8 or 9pm for visitors to enjoy.

- **Ryujin Hot Springs** is located inside the Ryukyu Onsen Senaga Jima Hotel but open to both hotel guests and the general public. The public bath features a variety of hot baths, including a standing bath that overlooks the terrace and the airplane landing runway, a sauna and massage spa. The bath areas are separated by gender and guests are provided with amenities to use during their visit. Furthermore, tattoos are unfortunately not permitted.

- The former Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters in Tomigusku city are also open to the public. There is a park, memorial tower and a museum on site as well as the opportunity to experience and learn about the trenches that were used by the Navy during the war. These trenches still remain preserved to this day. For more information, please visit https://kaigungou.ocvb.or.jp/

- The Okinawa Karate Kaikan located in Tomigusuku city offers classes and unique karate experiences to the community. Here you can join tile breaking experiences and sanshin classes. For more information, please visit https://karatekaikan.jp/en

b) Cafés and Restaurants

In Tomigusuku city there are many places available to eat at. Here are some we've picked out.

- Kaiyo Diner

Kaiyo Diner is a cafeteria style restaurant that mainly serves Okinawan dishes near the airport. The restaurant is popular for its large portions (syokudo and Teishoku restaurant). They have a variety of set meals at affordable prices.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/94jh4EmnmvaGDdz29

Our menu recommendation: Their goya champuru and any of their tofu dishes are great.

- By – The – Shrimp

This Hawaiian restaurant is located on Umikaji Terrace, Senaga island and is well known for their spicy garlic shrimp dishes. At By – The – Shrimp, patrons can enjoy shrimp rice bowls while looking out at the beautiful ocean.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/UZ83MnbHTZYfjfRP8

Our menu recommendation: The spicy garlic shrimp rice set is a favourite at here.

- Pizzeria Napoletana Bufalo

Pizzeria Napoletana Bufalo offers oven baked pizzas, gnocchi dishes and pasta dishes. There are various pizza flavors to choose from, in medium and small sizes, and packages catering to both families and individuals.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/F1RprU9UCvR9zLjq8

Our menu recommendation: All the pizzas are really good especially the Bufalo and Romana.

- Crazy Spice

This is a curry restaurant located inside Iias shopping mall. The menu contains a range of delicious Indian and Nepalese curries, different types of nan breads and lassi drinks. If you are a fan of spicy and strong flavors this is the restaurant for you.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/3guS5hVv57e3n4BF7

Our menu recommendation: Seafood, Chicken Tikka or Mutton curry with garlic or cheese nan and blueberry lassi are delicious.

- Café Luana

Café Luana is a small unique café located near Tomishiro High School. Their menu consists of lunch meals, desserts, and other baked goods. This café is special because they host a variety of events where members of the community can come to the café and interact with each other. These include board game nights, exhibitions and special workshops. We totally recommend checking this place out.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/ZqYpp42Vm6bc2ySt5

Our menu recommendation: Their bagels are awesome and their gratin dish is very popular among customers.

c) Shopping

- In Toyosaki there is a shopping complex, **Okinawa Outlet Mall Ashibinaa**, that offers shoppers the opportunity to buy clothing and products from different Japanese and international luxury brands.

- **Iias Mall** is one of the bigger shopping malls in the south of Okinawa. There are a variety of stores at this mall selling both Japanese and international brands.

- Tomiton is a small shopping complex located in Toyosaki. The complex has a few retail stores, including Sports DEPO, Daiso and a variety of small restaurants. This mall is a favourite among residents.

- Mega Don Quijote Tomigusuku City has a variety of products ranging from food, toys, cosmetics and much more. The store spreads over 2 floors and is popular among both locals and tourists and everything is easy to find and affordable.

- Tomigusuku city is also home to one of the Jimmy's pastry franchise stores. At this pastry shop customers can buy a variety of cakes, pies and other baked goods. They also have a small section for other international and frozen products.

d) Health Care

Tomigusuku City has 3 main general hospital with many medical clinics surrounding them.

- Tomishiro General Hospital is the closest hospital to the airport. They are typically open during the week, both the mornings and the afternoons and are closed to outpatients on weekends and public holidays. The departments in this hospital range from internal medicine to dentistry and dermatology. Most of the staff at this hospital don't speak English but they are very welcoming to tourists and foreigners and will try to assist you through I-pad translation apps. Here is their website, https://tch.yuuai.or.jp/

- Toyomi Seikyou Hospital is a public hospital that was recently renovated. At this hospital patients can find Internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, rehabilitation, orthopedics, pediatrics, neurosurgery, dermatology, urology departments. Here is the website, https://www.toyomiseikyou.okinawa/

- YuuAi Medical Centre is also located close to Naha Airport. This large medical centre has many departments and also allows for internation. The staff are friendly and willing to help anyone who visits regardless of whether they are Japanese or a foreigner. The website also includes an English section dedicated to explaining the centre's operation systems and how to reserve a consultation. Here is the website, https://ymc.yuuai.or.jp/

Itoman City

Itoman City is located on the southern-most tip of Okinawa's main island. Its neighbours Tomigusuku city and Yaese town and is historically known as the fisherman and peace city. Itoman city is a place that embraces tradition and seeks to share the message of peace with the rest of the world. In Itoman one can find a variety of beaches, historical sites of worship, old public markets, unique experiences, good food and historical landmarks.



Left to right: Map location and logo of Itoman City. The logo is embellished with the Periwinkle, the city's flower (from https://www.city.itoman.lg.jp/site/kankou-navi/1131.html). Picture of Itoman's Uminchu festival (from https://mice.okinawastory.jp/en/en-contents/contents-all/c-543/)

a) Attractions and Activities

- Although, Itoman city's coastline runs for more than 400 km there are only **3 beaches** along its coastline.

    1) Itoman **BiBi Beach**
    This beach is popular amongst locals and tourists as it is close to the airport and the Southern Beach resort. This beach is equipped with many facilities, rentals and water activities. These include a BBQ area, parasailing, banana boat rides and marble rides. Visitors can also experience snorkelling and sea bob activities at BiBi beach as the water is clear. For more information, here is the website https://bibibeachitoman.com/

    2) Odo Beach
    Odo Beach, also known as John Man Beach, is more of a scenic beach that offers visitors freedom as to how they want to experience it. It is popular for its crystal-clear water making it the best place in Itoman to do snorkelling. During high tide people go swimming and during low tide the locals explore the exposed corals and other sea creatures. Oda beach is also known for being the place where the sea turtles lay their eggs during the summer months. This beach is equipped with a public bathroom and parking but lacks any other facilities. If visitors are interested in trying any water sports this is permissible as long as they bring their own equipment.

    3) Kita Nashiro Beach
    Kita Nashiro beach is a natural and sandy beach that extends for up to 300 meters. Unfortunately, this beach is

not regularly maintained but it is open to those who would like to use it. Most locals visit this beach to have snorkel, swim, have BBQs or freely camp on the beach sand. There are public restrooms but no other formal facilities at this beach so visitors must take their trash home with them after visiting the beach.

- Itoman is home to Okinawa's **Peace Memorial Park.** It is located on a plateau and landmarking the area where the Battle of Okinawa ended. On the Peach Memorial Park grounds guests can visit different monuments, sacred grounds and learn about Okinawa's history, art and culture at the **Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Memorial Hall**. The park grounds are open to the public and visitors can access the museum and hall at a fee. For more information, please visit https://heiwa-irei-okinawa.jp/

- Itoman city has a deep fishing and maritime heritage. This history and heritage can be learned through **the Itoman Uminchu Koubou (Art & Craft Center)**, an NPO dedicated to passing down the culture and teachings of the fisherman community. The center offers a range of experiences and tours as well as access to a museum that displays the traditional Okinawan wooden fishing boats, sabani, and other fishing equipment. Unfortunately, the tours are only available in Japanese, so having a translator would be advisable. Here is the website, https://hamasuuki.com/

- Every year, Itoman city hosts a **Great Tug-of-War festival**. This is one of the biggest festivals in the south of Okinawa. The festival usually takes place in summer and constitutes a number Eisa groups parading the streets, traditional music and dancing and

the main event, the tugging of the rope. For this festival the two teams are divided by north and south. This festival is hosted to pray for a good harvest, bountiful catch and overall safety.

- Every year Itoman city hosts a hometown festival called **Furusato Festival.** This festival takes place in November near the fishing port where people gather to enjoy various activities together. These activities include a basketball tournament, dance performances, and a sailing sabani experience. Some of the activities require visitors to pay a fee in advance but attending the festival is free.

- The other biggest annual event in Itoman is the **Itoman Harley**. This event happens in June and mainly consists of a traditional dragon boat (Haari) race at Itoman Fishing Port. This event was started as a ceremony for fishermen to pray and show thanks for a bountiful catch, blessings at sea and safety during their voyages. Many community and youth groups, including schools, participate in the race every year bringing life to this old tradition.

- In winter, annually, Itoman city lights up with the **Itoman Illuminations**. Trees are decorated with fairy lights and LED illuminated displays can be enjoyed by visitors of all ages at either BiBi Beach or Itoman Tourism Farm. There are also other activities that members of the public can enjoy from car rides, photo booths, and food stalls to a new year countdown and fireworks.

- Itoman is the home to Okinawa's largest Ryukyu glass workshop, **Ryukyu Glass Village**. Visitors usually go to the glass village to buy traditional Ryukyu glass pieces and participate in various

workshops. The different workshops specialized in glass blowing, Shisa painting and the making process of various accessories.

b) Cafés and Restaurants

Itoman city has a few interesting restaurants and cafes that are worth checking out.

- 土〜夢 ごはんカフェ 琉球ガラス村店（Tsuchi-Yume Gohan）

This café is located in a traditional Okinawan house in Fukuji district. It is interesting because the café itself is surrounded by a collection of unique pottery and other crockery. Customers can enjoy their meals on interesting tableware and buy unique pieces of pottery.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/CwJUg3v6oARQj7rP9

Our menu recommendation: The Tsuchi-Yume Hamburger Plate is great and the most popular meal amongst customers.

- KOA Itoman

KOA is a Hawaiian pancake café. They specialize in souffle pancakes and authentic Hawaiian food. This café overlooks the ocean and brings a relaxing feel to each customer. The menu consists of both sweet and savory meals as well as various drinks and cocktails.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/L9nuwBky8Mb4xwWW7

Our menu recommendation: Hawaiian Pizza with Prosciutto and Pineapple or the KOA special pancake plate.

- cafe MONDOOR

For those who really enjoy a good coffee, café MONDOOR is the best place to visit. This is a small quaint café that serves a variety of different coffees, sandwiches, and desserts. It is located near Itoman's west port waterway and offers a quiet and sophisticated atmosphere.

https://maps.app.goo.gl/F1RprU9UCvR9zLjq8

Our menu recommendation: Any coffee drink you appreciate along with the tiramisu

c) Shopping

- Itoman has a retail complex deal for those shopping for local products and souvenirs, this complex is Roadside Station Itoman. At Roadside station Itoman shoppers can find the JA farmers' market, a fisheries market, Itoman city produce center and a few restaurants. Locals and tourists usually come here to shop and eat delicious food.

- 糸満市場いとま～る or Itoman Itamaru Public Market is a place with many restaurants, artisanal stores, a events area and souvenir stores. This public market is known for its rich history as it was a bustling hub for the fishing industry. Today the public market

celebrates the union between the old and the new by embracing old fashioned stores with new and modern renovations.

d) Health Care

There are 2 main hospitals in Itoman City, Nishizaki Hospital and ウェルネス西崎病院 (Nishizaki Wellness hospital). Nishizaki hospital is the largest of the two with 6 floors and a variety of departments. The Nishizaki wellness hospital is a hospital that recently branched out from Nishizaki hospital, so it is fairly new to Itoman city. Both these hospitals may not have English speaking staff, it is advisable to take a translator or ask a friend to help you if you wish to visit them. For more information, please visit the website, the information for both hospitals can be found here, https://iwakikai.net/