

# **ANNI'S OKINAWA**

## **SURVIVAL GUIDE**

### **GENERAL SURVIVAL ETIQUETTE**

#### **Shoes.**

Please don't forget to take your shoes off.

Don't leave your shoes lying in the entrance way. Put them in the stands provided.

If you have to leave then in the entrance way make sure they are placed neatly and facing outwards

Try not to step on the ground when you take your shoes off.

Don't sit down on the entrance way to tie up your shoes.

#### **Legs:**

When in the dojo don't sit with your legs out in front of you or pointing at another person.

Also, when in a dojo (formally) you must have your legs covered. No shorts or dresses. This is true of both Zen dojo and Karate dojo.

#### **Chopsticks:**

Don't put your chopsticks upright in your food.

Don't spear your food with your chopsticks or pull dishes towards you. Don't pass food from chopsticks to chopsticks.

When in polite company you should reverse your chopsticks to take food from the dish. (i.e. use the side your mouth has not)

### **ZAZEN**

Many Students when they come to train also like to experience Zazen. The Kozenji International Zen Temple in Shuri can offer you the chance.

The name of the Roshi at this temple is Sakiyama Sogen Roshi, and training is strict. Please note doing Zazen is a personal choice. It is not a requirement.

An introduction is necessary (and polite) so you should consult with Higaonna Sensei

or another Zen student before going.

If you have bad knees please note that the initiation session requires you to sit 30 minutes outside the dojo in seiza. (Knees tucked under you). The rest of the session is spent in either the half or full lotus position.

Zen sessions are Monday - Saturday every morning 6-7am. Sunday sessions are 2 hours and start at 10am.

### **What to wear:**

If you do a Zazen session, just wearing a Dogi is fine but please DON'T wear your belt. Plain, dark colored clothing with no monograms/patterns is also OK. Shorts are unacceptable. As with karate dojo no watches, socks or cell phones in the dojo.

### **How to do?**

Proper explanation of how to sit correctly in Zazen and instruction in breathing will be given by a senior at the temple.

A brief explanation is that you sit in either half or full lotus position (cross legged with one foot or both on the opposite thigh) on a cushion with your back straight. With eyes half closed (never fully) fix your gaze about a meter in front of you. Breathe in through the nose and out through the nose. Breathing should not be forced. Concentrate on the exhalation breath. Hands are in the zazen position in your lap, left on top of right.

Zen etiquette is rather complex, but basically if you are sitting in Zazen you should not move or shuffle about.

There is no talking during Zazen, but you are allowed to cough or sneeze.

### **Zen Temple Location**

Kozenji is in Shuri, near the castle and not far from the main gate the 'Shurei no mon'. If you take a taxi to here and then walk through the tunnel you will see a sign on the right for Zen Meditation center'. Turn down this path and the temple is just down a little way on the left.

The only transport option at 5.30 am is either walking, bicycle or a taxi. From the dojo a taxi takes less than 10 minutes and costs around ¥700.

Walking is free and takes 40 to 50 mins., biking about 25. It is advisable to take an

extra T-shirt if walking/biking and a towel.

## **HOSPITAL / DOCTOR**

Largely doctors in Japan speak only rudimentary English, but you should be able to get your point across.

Emergency hospital: Naha city: ☎ (098) 877-1199

Adventist Medical center: Doctors here speak English ☎ (098) 946-2833

Okinawa central hospital (1-2-6 Yogi District) ☎ 098 854 5511

## **EMERGENCY:**

☎ 119. The word help is 'Tasu kete kudasai'. Ambulance is 'Kyu Kyu Sha' Fire is 'Kaji'

**POLICE:** Naha city police station 098 836 0110

## **BANKS**

Banks are closed weekends and National holidays. Banking hours are *Mon- Friday 10am to 3.30pm.*

You can exchange travelers cheques and foreign currency at most main branches, including the post office.

## **MONEY MACHINES ( ATMs)**

Beware! ATM machines in Japan are only open *Monday to Friday 10.am – 7pm*, and on *weekends 10am ~ 5pm*. They are **not** open 24 hours

Post office ATM's offer a guide in English and accept most major credit cards.

## **POST OFFICE**

The post office is open *Monday to Friday 10am – 5pm*. Main branches only are open *till 12.pm on a Saturday*. They are closed Sundays and public holidays.

A mark that looks like a T with an extra stroke is the symbol for a post office. Generally it costs. 50¥ to send a postcard and 80¥ to send a letter. For International rates just hand your letter to the staff at the counter and they will let you know.

Stamps can be brought from vending machines outside the post office.

For information in English phone Naha City post office. ☎098 853-3390 or 098 853 6149

## **LAUNDROMAT**

If your hotel/ minshiku doesn't have a laundry service there is sure to be a Laundromat nestled away somewhere near by.

You will need to use 100 yen coins and bring your own laundry detergent. It generally costs ¥300 to wash and ¥100 every 10 mins of dryer time.

Not that you need to use a dryer in summer. Beware though, thefts do occur, so it pays to keep an eye on your things.

## **PUBLIC TELEPHONES**

Telephones in Japan are color coded.

*A green phone* takes either coins or a phone card and is used for making domestic calls only.

*A gray Telephone* can be used for domestic or International calls. Cards or coins can be used and there is a guide in English on the telephone display.

*Pre paid calling cards* are available at convenience stores, (lawsons , family mart, hot spar etc.)or you can make collect calls or use your own credit calling service. The country code for Japan is ☎ '81' (+98 for Okinawa)

## **SHOPPING**

Clothing and shoe sizes will differ. When trying on clothes remember to leave your shoes outside the changing room. Don't despair when you keep being pointed towards the large fitting section.

### **Some places to shop in Naha**

#### **Shureido shop:**

Martial artists clothing and accessory mecca. It is on Sogenji dori just down from the stone gates of Sogen temple. Just ask the Taxi to take you to Sogenji. If you walk, head to the very north end of Kokusai dori and take the road that turns left. This is

Sogenji Dori.

(you will be at an intersection just past the stone Lions that guard either end of Kokusai dori. Across the road is the 'san A' supermarket. Go left)

Just keep walking down Sogenji dori (about 10 minutes) till you come to the Stone gates and the Shop is on the left.

### **Ashibina**

New outlet mall offers discount brand name merchandise, such as Armani, etc. The easiest way to get there is to take the monorail to the airport station and a taxi from there. There is no bus service.

### **Jusco:**

Slightly older mall, opposite the Hyper Hotel. Has a good food court and you can buy wide variety of boxed lunches at the supermarket inside.

Not too far from the Budokan. Take the monorail and get off at Oroku station

### **Kokusai Dori and Heiwa Dori market.**

Best places for souvenir shopping. Better discounts can be found further to the back of the market. The 100¥ shop is always fun. Try the goya or squid ink ice-cream for a challenge or shiquasar juice freshly squeezed for refreshment.

### **Mitsukoshi:**

In middle of Kokusai Dori opposite the entrance to the markets. Good example of a Japanese department store in the upper price range. Good quality items at a price but they always come nicely wrapped! (wrapping and labels often being more important than the item in Japan)

### **Shinto shin/Naha main place.**

New shopping mall with a wide variety of shops and a cinema complex. To get there either take a taxi or take the monorail to 'Omoromachi station' and walk about 5mins towards complex.

### **DFS Store.**

Huge thing also in Shin to shin. Directly linked to the Monorail and 'Omoromachi Station'. Also carries all the name brands such as Chanel, Amarni, Dior cosmetics etc. Note that nothing in these shops is likely to be cheap..

### **Ryubo:**

Another big Japanese department store at the South end of Kokusai Dori. Linked to the Kencho mae station.

### **Tsuboya:**

Famous RyuKyu pottery. Located at the back of the Heiwa Dori markets, (not far from the Higaonna Dojo in fact) Tsuboya pottery museum is also here.

### **Things to buy:**

#### **Bingata:**

stenciled Okinawan fabric, usually in bright colors such as orange and yellow. You can buy some nice Yukata (a kind of summer robe/kimono) in the markets made from bingata at reasonable prices. (1500¥ upwards). Handkerchiefs etc and bags are also popular.

#### **Shisa:**

Okinawan guardian lion dogs. Male has open mouth,(shouting happiness) female closed (catching the happiness)

#### **Sanshin:**

Traditional 3 stringed Okinawan instrument, made from snakeskin. 25,000¥upwards (you may find one cheaper)

#### **Tsuboya:**

Famous type of Okinawan pottery

#### **Lacquerware:**

Unique Okinawan process, expensive but lovely. Many shops on Kokusaidori.

## **FOOD**

Okinawa food products often contain pork. Pork is the main dish of Okinawan people and bits of it turn up in lots of things even broth)

If you are a vegetarian or non pork eater try saying '*Niku nashi*'. (no meat) or '*buta niku nashi*'(no pork please)

Be aware that though you may have avoided the beef/pork dishes they may bring dishes with fish in then anyway. Vegetarians in Japan need good communication skills and patience.

You will have to convince your waiter/waitress that you really don't want meat/pork/chicken/fish/shrimp/horse/whale/dolphin at all.

#### **In general:**

*Soba*: thin buckwheat noodles.

*Udon*: a thicker wheat noodle.

*Tempura*: various food deep fried in batter.

*Yakitori*: grilled chicken.

*Sashimi*: raw fish.

*Sushi*: raw fish on rice.

*Miso soup*: soybean paste soup.

*Sukiyaki*: beef and vegetables in soy sauce.

*Tofu*: soybean curd.

*Tonkatsu*: fried pork cutlet.

### **Okinawan food:**

*Champuru* is the Okinawan word for 'mixture'. There are many kinds of Champuru foods in Okinawa. Usually contain vegetables, tofu and spam (canned pork that is still very popular since the war).

*Somen champuru* is made from thin noodles (somen) with tuna.

*Goya Champuru* contains **Goya** : A bitter melon, green like a cucumber with warts& High in vitamins.

*Okinawa Soba/naha soba/ soki soba*: Soba noodle in pork broth soup, with pieces of pork.

*Ude tofu*: A boiled tofu dish.

*Mimi gwa*: Thinly sliced pigs ears in a peanut sauce.

*Mozoku*: Seaweed dish. Quite refreshing and healthy.

*Taco rice*: Okinawan version of a taco except made with rice. Strangely it does taste like a Taco.

*Tebichi*: Broiled pigs feet

### **DRINK**

*Orien beer*: THE Okinawan brew. (in my opinion)

*Helios*: another Okinawan beer, not as popular as orien. I will let the connoisseurs decide.

*Awamori*. Okinawan spirits/firewater. A type of sake usually mixed with water and ice before drinking.

*Habu sake*: Awamori with the local poisonous snake (a habu) fermenting in the bottom.

*Goya juice*: has to be tasted to be believed. Goya is bitter Okinawan melon.

*Shiquasar juice*: Shiquasar is a citrus fruit. A cross between lemon, lime and unripe mandarin, the taste is sharp but refreshing

*Water* is drinkable in Naha city but doesn't always taste so good. Bottled water is

nicer.

*Sports drinks:* Good for during training and those sweating a lot in the heat. Try Pocari Sweat (yes I know it sounds bad), Aquarius or the more familiar Gatorade.

## **WEATHER**

June to September is Typhoon season in Okinawa. Typhoons do like to lurk around Okinawa and play, but there is plenty of advance warning and they don't stay for too long.

Okinawan sun can be very hot especially on the outer islands and in the water. Always take sunscreen and a hat and sunglasses because your gonna fry!.

Humidity is very high. Wearing cotton is preferable. (Even if it is a heavy dogi) Drink plenty of water. Drink plenty of water, drink more water.

## **INTERNET**

There are a few Internet cafes around. Most can be found on Kokusai Dori. If you want free access to email accounts go to 'Mike and Pauls place', a café and bar on Kokusai street opposite the Mitsukoshi Department building. If you want to do some printing out / downloading etc you can go to a net café.

'*Space create*' is at the north end of Kokusai Dori on second floor almost opposite the Takara records shop and near the bus stop. 500¥ per hour, drinks free. Also offers use of pool and ping pong tables and you can hire and watch DVDs.

*NET Café* is in middle of Kokusai Dori located on second floor next to the Doutors coffee shop. (Not far from Mitsukoshi Department store) Price is 500 ¥ per hour, drinks free.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Driving**

Car rental is very simple. Don't forget to bring your International license with you. If you rent a car please remember there is 0 tolerance in Japan for drinking and driving. It is law to wear a seatbelt and no driving in the bus lane (theoretically) As far as I can tell scooters are exempt from any road rules. Some riders can even smoke, talk on their cell phone and ride at the same time. It's amazing. You will often see them belting towards you along the footpath, so pedestrians be careful.



**Rent a car / Rent a bike/ Rent a Bicycle:** Several services offered. Check around tourist brochures etc.

### **Taxis.**

There are many taxi services in Okinawa. Just wave your hand at the driver and they should stop for you. A red sign in the front window means the Taxi is free. A green sign means it is occupied. Fares start from 450 yen and go up from there. Taxi drivers in Naha are generally kind and honest.

### **Monorail**

The monorail (yu ru rail) is reasonably cheap and very handy for getting around Naha city. (200-260 yen) Maps/ timetables are available at the station but basically there is a train every 10 minutes so you won't be waiting long. The first train is at around 6am and the last train of the night is at around 11.30. It runs from Naha airport to Shuri.

Stops that are handy to know are :

*Makishi* or *Asato* stations, both near the Higaonna dojo, (at the North end of Kokusai dori)

*Asato* station is opposite the RyuBo supermarket

*Oroku* station near Jusco department store and the Hyper Hotel,

*Tsubogawa* or *Onoyama Koen* station near the Budokan.

*Asahibashi* station near the Ryu Kyu bank and Naha bus terminal,

*Kencho mae* station connects to the Ryubo department store and is at the south end of Kokusai St.

*Miebashi* station is near the Daiei department store

*Omoromachi* station connects to the DFS department store and is near Naha main place shopping and cinema complex.

*Shuri* station is about 10 mins walk from Shuri castle. The bus (#1) is better if you don't want to walk.

### **Ferries**

There are many ferries that leave from Tomari in (Tomari port) for the surrounding islands. You can make day trips to Tokashiki or Zamami island. March is whale watching season. Tickets can be brought directly from the port office (you don't usually need to book in advance) or ask at the Okinawa tourist information office on

Okieidori (just off Kokusai dori down from starbucks coffee) and they can help you.

### **Bus information**

All buses routes 1 – 20 are city buses and will usually trundle down Kokusai dori and end up at Naha bus terminal. Flat fee of 200¥ paid into box beside driver as you enter the bus.

Buses numbered 20 plus are suburban lines. Take a ticket as you get on and pay when you get off according to your ticket number.

### **Places to visit by bus or on foot:**

#### *Shuri castle and park (World Heritage site)*

Number: 1,12,13,14,17. ¥200 Get off at shuri jo koen mae. Admission ¥800. (or take the monorail to Shuri Station and walk about 10 mins)

#### *Shikina en (Royal family gardens, UNESCO site))*

Number: 1 or 5 bus. 200¥. Get off at 'Maji' bus stop. Entrance fee ¥300. Closed Wednesdays

#### *Okinawa museum*

Number: 1 or 12, 13 17. ¥200. Get off at shurijo koen iriguchi or tonokura. 3 mins walk from stop (behind shuri castle)

#### *Himeyuri park*

From Naha main bus terminal take the Naha Itoman line number 89, ¥.500 Then transfer at the Itoman terminal to the #82 bus ¥400 to the Heiwa peace memorial park. (get off at Heiwa kinen kouen mae) Bus every 20mins

#### *Former underground navy headquarters*

From Naha terminal number 33,46 or 101. Get off at Tomigusuku koen mae and follow the signs, 10 min walk.

#### *Fukushu en*

Chinese garden made to resemble the gardens in Fukien province China. Fuiken is the sister city of Naha and where white crane style Kung Fu developed.

If you turn right at the intersection at the far South end of Kokusai St and head for

the sea you are going in the right direction. The street you are looking for is called Matsuyama Street.

The gardens are closed on Wednesdays.

*Kanryo Higaonna Sensei and Miyagi Chojun Sensei Memorial site*

Just across the road from the Fukushu Gardens is a small park. Up on the small hill on the left is a stone memorial to Higaonna Kanryo Sensei and Miyagi Chojun Sensei.

*Naminoue beach and Naminoue Shinto Shrine.*

From the park/gardens on Matsuyama road keep heading straight down towards the sea and you will come to the beach and up on the hill, the shrine.

## **MISC:**

**Tipping** is not necessary in Japan.

**Visa:** (The permit to stay, not the credit card) If you have a problem with your visa check with your embassy or ask me, I may be able to help.

**Baths:** You are supposed to shower before you get in the bath. If you use the public bath don't soap up in the tub!

**Convenience stores.** Usually open 24hours the main ones are: lawsons, hot spar and family mart. Most things including phone cards and stamps can be brought from them.

**Helpline,** Japan Helpline is a 24 hour service, toll free and offers advice in many languages. ☎0210-461-997

**Photo booths.** There are many, usually outside supermarkets or inside malls.

**Embassies:** Please try the helpline or ask at Okinawa tourist office or me to help with embassy/ consulate numbers

## **WILDLIFE**

### **Snakes**

Habu is the poisonous snake of Okinawa. It is nocturnal, brown with triangular head and white belly. Usually hides in old stone walls or hangs out in trees at dusk (a bit like a surly teenager of snakes) but now seldom found in the city other than in the bottom of a sake jar. If bitten (highly unlikely unless you go blundering through a

cane field at dusk) ☎119 and seek help ASAP.

### **Cockroaches:** (Gokiburi)

Big, brown with white collars and wings. Not to be taken lightly as have been known to steal houses and run away with them on their backs. Otherwise harmless. The Higaonna dojo has a few as pets.

### **Mosquitos**

Large and lots of them. Very hungry for your legs and ankles during training. At this time no known disease carriers so harmless other than a bump and a scratch.

### **Geckos (yama mori)**

Harmless and very cool in my opinion. Like to sing to you at night and catch the mosquitos

### **Sea Creatures**

There are a few critters in the water you need to be aware of.

The crown of thorn starfish, Box Jellyfish and Scorpion fish all leave nasty stings that need medical attention. Also there is a sea snake to be aware of, but I'm not sure how well he can get his (or her) teeth into you so don't panic (yet). Sharks aren't seen too often but needless to say they enjoy cruising the nice warm Okinawan seas too. Generally swimming areas have nets that keep theses critters out and the floor has been swept free. However it always pays to know where your putting your feet. If you go diving wear the boots and watch the hands.

## **TOURIST INFORMATION**

The Okinawa tourist information bureau is a great place to go for information on sightseeing, booking trips to outer islands, diving excursions etc. Located on corner of Okeidori and Kokusai dori (star bucks is on the corner) they have English pamphlets, internet booking access and staff who are really nice and helpful.

Another place to get in on the local English speaking hub is Mike and Pauls bar and café on Kokusai street. Someone there is bound to be able to answer your questions, connect you to someone else or help in general. Also has range of English books and magazines you can borrow, satalite TV and free internet acces. Aslo good friends of mine so I am bias in this report.. It is opposite the Mitsukoshi department store and not far from the Heiwa markets.

## **OTHER SOURCES**

Here are some web sites about Okinawa you may find of interest or help.

[www.wonder-okinawa.jp](http://www.wonder-okinawa.jp)

[www.okinawaindex.com](http://www.okinawaindex.com)

Okinawa-explorer.wwma.net

## **END NOTE**

The information I have provided in this article is as accurate as I could get but of course it is subject to change.

If you have any comments or notes please let me know.

Regards,

Anni