

What's New in Yokosuka

<http://www.city.yokosuka.kanagawa.jp/0140/english/welcome/documents/cultureinfo.pdf>

Inquiries in English: Yokosuka City, International Relations Division 046(822)8138

* The schedule posted may be subject to change.

January 10, 2014 Vol.29

CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 1~ Strawberry Season
at Tsukuihama Tourist
Farm (~5/5)
- 13 Coming of Age Day
- 19 Miura Peninsula Ekiden
- 26 Nakajima Saburosuke
Festival **pg. 2**
- 28 Mt. Takeyama Hatsufudo
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FEBRUARY

- 8~ Taura Plum Grove
Festival (~3/16)
- 8-9 Not Alone Fair **pg. 2**
- 11 Constitution Day

MARCH

- 1 Japanese Culture
Experience **pg. 2**
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Marathon **pg. 2**
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The Yokosuka Call Center
(046-822-2500; 8am-
8pm daily) can provide
information in English about
most events listed (see page 3
for more details).

Taura Plum Grove Festival

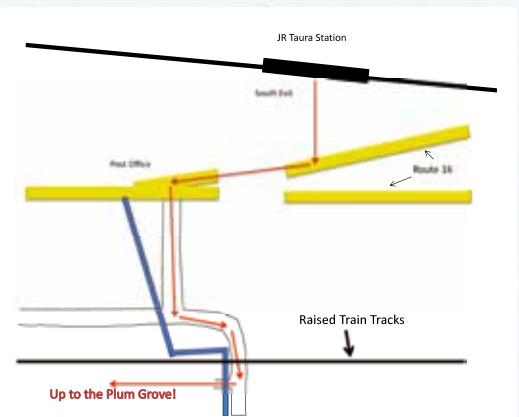
When: Feb. 8 (Sat.)-Mar. 16 (Sun.)

Where: Taura Plum Grove (田浦梅の里 *Taura Ume no Sato*)

What: The Taura Plum Grove is a beautiful 6000 square meter public park. In addition to the playgrounds and open space that are open year round, during this festival there will be over 2000 plum trees in bloom and special events each weekend including a kite flying festival on Feb. 9

Directions: It is a little bit of a hike to get to the park, but it is well worth the effort. The best way is to go to JR Taura Station and follow the red path in the map to the right. It is a 30 minute walk.

Contact: Taura Admin.
Center 046-861-4181



Taura Photo Contest

While you are at the Plum Grove for the festival, you may as well snap a few pictures. You may win ¥30,000 (about \$300)! Each year, the Taura Tourism Association sponsors a photography contest. Any picture that depicts Taura's natural beauty, ruins, cultural treasures, sightseeing facilities, events, or anything relating to Taura is welcome.



"A Fun Field Trip" by Watanabe Kenji
2013 Mayor's Award

How to submit your photograph:

For non-Japanese speakers, the best option is to mail a 25.4 x 30.5cm print to 〒237-0076 Taura Kanko Kyokai, Yokosuka-shi Funakoshicho 6-77. Include a paper with your name, address, phone number, and the title of photo. If you would like the photo returned, include a self-addressed stamped envelope. TEL: 046-861-4181

Photos will be accepted from **2/8-4/30** and the winners will be announced in May. For more details in Japanese: <http://members3.jcom.home.ne.jp/taurakan2008/>

Event Info All events are free unless otherwise noted

Nakajima Saburosuke Festival

When: Jan. 26 (Sun.) 10:00-15:00

Where: Sumitomo Heavy Industries LTD., Uraga Factory Uraga 4-7

What: Nakajima Saburosuke was the first to board Matthew Perry's black ships. This festival includes informational displays and musical performances.

Contact: Uraga Administration Center 046-841-4155

Mt. Takeyama Hatsufudo

When: Jan. 28 (Tues.) 7:00-

Where: Mt. Takeyama *Fudoin* Temple at the summit of Mt. Takeyama

Directions: The summit is reachable by hiking from Ikkizuka bus stop.

What: It is a yearly tradition to pray for good health for the New Year at the top of Mt. Takeyama.

Contact: Takeyama Tourism Assn. 046-856-3157



Experience Japanese Culture

When: Mar. 1 (Sat.) 13:00-17:00

Where: Sogo Fukushi Kaikan Hall

Directions: Just outside the main gates to the U.S. Naval Base. Honcho 2-1

What: A day of fun with Japanese culture! You can try origami, flower arranging, tea ceremony, and calligraphy; put on a kimono or play traditional Japanese musical instruments. Some activities may require a small fee.

English Contact: Yokosuka Int. Assn.: 046-827-2166



Runners' Paradise

Whether you want to hear the waves during a leisurely jog along the bay or challenge yourself on steep inclines, Yokosuka has it all. There are even a number of races coming up. The registration periods have ended, but you can still go to cheer along the runners and enjoy the festivities. Both races' registration windows are in Nov.-Dec., so be ready for next year!

Oppama 15k

Feb. 9 (Sun.) 9:00-12:00 begins at Oppama Jr. High School
2k, 3k, 10k, 15k

Miura International Half Marathon

Mar. 2 (Sun.) 8:00-12:00
Begins near Keikyu Miura Kaigan Station
5k, 10k, Half-marathon

Not Alone Fair

When: Feb. 8 (Sat.) & Feb. 9 (Sun.) 10:00-16:00

Where: Yokosuka Volunteer Support Center

Directions: The area around Daiei and the Arts Theatre

What: Looking to get involved in a local club or organization? Come to this event to get to know a number of groups from around Yokosuka and get more involved in your local community! There will also be a flea market, so be ready for some great deals as well!

English Contact: Yokosuka Call Center 046-822-2500

Needle Mass

When: Mar. 8 (Sat.) 11:00-12:00

Where: Hashirimizu Shrine

Directions: Hashirimizu 2-12-5. South on Route 16 just before Kannnonzaki.

What: This is a very old tradition for women to retire their used sewing needles. After laying the needle to rest in some tofu, they pray for improvement in their needlework.

Contact: Otsu Admin. Center 046-836-3531

Yokosuka Call Center

The Yokosuka Call Center is an operator service that can provide you with all kinds of useful information about Yokosuka. The service operates 365 days a year from 8am-8pm.

Bilingual operators will do their best to provide you with the information you need, but please understand that there may be times when they will not be able to find the requested information.

Next time you need info give them a call!

046-822-2500



Yokosuka International Association

The Yokosuka International Association (YIA) is a local non-profit organization, commissioned by Yokosuka city, that runs a variety of programs for non-Japanese speakers, including events, Japanese classes, and support counseling in a variety of languages.

Three times a year, YIA runs large-scale events to introduce Japanese culture to foreign residents. *Japan Festival in Yokosuka* is in November, and the *Japanese Culture Experience* is in March (see page 2) and June. In addition to these larger events, the association also holds a variety of smaller scale events, such as tours of local spots and disaster training in English.

Learning Japanese is difficult without guidance. Available to any skill level and made to fit any schedule, YIA offers Japanese language classes taught by volunteers at a very low cost. It is a great way to study Japanese in a small community.

No matter how much you love Japan, living in a foreign country can be stressful and there will always be a lot that you won't understand. To help with the difficulties of living in Japan, YIA offers counseling services in six different foreign languages (Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Tagalog, Spanish, and English). Each language has a set schedule, and English counseling is available Monday and Thursday 9:00-12:00. Call ahead to make an appointment.

YIA offers a lot more than I have space to describe here. For more info, feel free to visit their website at <http://www.yia.info/> You can also reach them in English by email npo-yia@kb3.so-net.ne.jp or telephone: 046-827-2166. Their office is in Werk Yokosuka 2F, 1-5 Hinode-cho.

Travel on the Cheap!

Needing to get out of dodge for bit but strapped for cash? Japan has a number of options to travel on the cheap that you may not know about.

On night busses, you may not get to sleep much, but going across the country overnight could only cost you around \$50 and you won't lose a day traveling! Do a quick search for "night bus" and you will find info in English.

Or turn the travel itself into an adventure with the special *Seishun Juhachi Kippu* JR ticket, which allows the holder to ride unlimited local trains for a day. They are only sold and usable for a limited time. The spring ticket is sold from 2/20-3/1 and valid from 3/1-4/10. The ticket is about \$115 and can be used for 5 days and shared between riders. You can buy it at any JR station or easily find for more information in English online.

Happy travels!



YOKOSUKA LIVING

Bath Time

In a few short months, cherry blossoms will be signaling the start of spring, but for now, we remain in the dark and dreary depths of winter. Yokosuka's winter may not be that severe, but the lack of insulation in most Japanese houses means that it is difficult to escape winter's chill. For me, the best way to melt away the winter is to spend the evening at a public bath or *onsen*. The difference between the two is that public baths use heated tap water, while *onsens* must use water from a natural hot spring.

It may be uncomfortable at first, but once you can shed any Western reservations you may have about locker room nudity, public bathing will become one of your favorite Japanese activities. It was more than seven years ago, but I vividly remember the tranquility of sitting in an outdoor *onsen* in Nagano prefecture after a long day of snowboarding, gazing up at the snow covered mountains and thinking, "Only in Japan."

It is important to note that many bathing establishments do not allow people with tattoos to enter; if you have tattoos it may be worth calling ahead to check the individual bathhouse's policy. Once you arrive, the process is the same for *onsens* and public baths. After storing your shoes in a small locker, pay the entrance fee at the reception desk and rent towels if you did not bring them from home. The locker rooms and baths are segregated by sex, so keep an eye out for the kanji for man (男) and woman (女). Even if you frequent the same bathhouse,

the baths are often rotated between male and female usage, so don't assume that your side will always be the same. Undress, put your clothes into



a locker and head into the bathing area. The large baths are meant for relaxation, not washing, so you will need to rinse off at the rows of low showers which often have soap, shampoo, and conditioner. Once clean, you can spend as long as you like in the bathing area moving between the different tubs, trying to survive the sauna, and avoiding the awkward sight of old men doing naked toe-touches. When you are satisfied, dry off and head to the rest area where you can enjoy refreshments while waiting for the opposite-sex members of your group.

Whether in winter or not, I hope you get the chance to try out a traditional Japanese public bath or *onsen*. There are a number of both within Yokosuka city that are easily found on Google. Get out there, shed your inhibitions, and jump in (but no cannonballs)!

-Marshall Smith, a native of Illinois, U.S.A, is Yokosuka City's Coordinator for International Relations. "Yokosuka Living" is in every issue of What's New in Yokosuka and includes useful information for everyday life in Japan.

Reader Submissions

Don't forget to email in your pictures, questions or anything else you would like to see published here to ir-mo@city.yokosuka.kanagawa.jp by Feb. 20!

Cake and fried chicken,

I hope I can find a date.

Christmas in Japan.

Sunlight on the Bay
Sarushima Island sits
Quietly alone.

Haikus submitted by Hannah S.



"Rawr in Silhouette"

By Risako D.

This month's picture was taken at Kurihama Flower World Hana no Kuni.

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