



## EXPERIENCE LOCAL LIFE IN OKINAWA'S SUBTROPICAL CAPITAL

*From a new guided tour and masterclasses in traditional crafts and local martial arts to a longevity enhancing cuisine, Naha is a city that shouldn't be missed when visiting the subtropical islands*



*From L-R: Okinawan cuisine, gate of Shuri Castle, traditional glass blowing class*

**January 2021** – With a year-round warm climate comparable to Hawaii and Cancun, it's Okinawa's remote beaches and idyllic waters that attract the most visitors, but within easy reach of the golden sands is Naha - the cosmopolitan capital of Japan's southernmost prefecture. Here the relaxing charms of island life are contrasted with the vibrant buzz of a city that's oozing with history, culture and experiences.

An easy day trip from some of Okinawa's most popular resort towns or a great addition to an island-hopping adventure, there's plenty to enjoy for those wanting to learn more about local life in the prefecture. From a brand-new English-speaking guided city tour taking in the capital's atmospheric alleys and markets to masterclasses in the local cuisine, traditional crafts and martial arts, here Visit Okinawa shares its top tips for an experience-packed stop in the city and its surrounding areas.

### **Explore the city on foot with this new English-speaking tour...**

A new English-speaking city tour, [Machi Mai](#), is set to launch in Naha in April 2021 and will offer an authentic glimpse into the traditional life of Okinawans past and present. Visitors will be able to enjoy the two-hour walking tour on foot, guided by a local expert on a route that includes Shuri Castle, the Makishi Public Market and the city's historic alleys packed with independent eateries and stores.

### **Experience marital arts in the birthplace of karate...**

Okinawa is the birthplace of karate, a marital art developed through the region's historic trading relationship with China. The sport is still popular across the prefecture today, with dojos found on many islands and annual international events hosted in the capital. One of the best places in the Naha area to experience Karate is [Karate Kaikan](#) in Tomigusuku, which has the biggest museum and exhibition dedicated to the sport in Okinawa. Beginners' classes are available through the Okinawa

Karate Information Center located withing Karate Kaikan and can be booked for as little as JPY 2,000 (approx. £14) per person or JPY 1,000 (approx. £7) per person for bookings of five people or more.

### **Cook longevity enhancing cuisine...**

Okinawa is famed for its healthy diet, thought to be a key contributor to its recognition as one of only five 'blue zones' (longevity hot spots) in the world where locals live exceptionally long lives. Visitors can learn the secrets of this cuisine with the [Taste of Okinawa Cooking Experience](#) in Naha, which includes a visit to a local market followed by a hands-on masterclass to learn how to cook some of the region's most loved dishes. Classes are available from JPY 6,500 (approx. £46) per person.

### **Get creative with crafts from the Ryukyu Kingdom...**

Okinawa is home to a number of traditional crafts whose origins date back to the time of the Ryukyu Kingdom, such as pottery, lacquerware, dyed goods, textiles and glass making. These crafts are still popular today, with many younger Okinawans choosing to carry on the traditions of their ancestors. Visitors can try their hand at these historic crafts at the [Ryuku Glass Village](#) in Itoman close to Naha, which offers experiences such as glass blowing, candle making, accessory building and shisa (guardian lions) colouring from JPY 1,100 (approx. £8) per person.

**ENDS**

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### **About Okinawa:**

Japan's southernmost prefecture, Okinawa, comprises 160 subtropical islands boasting a year-round warm climate comparable to Hawaii, Miami and Cancun. Just 3 hours by air from Tokyo and blessed with incredible natural beauty, from lush forests to crystal blue waters with abundant coral and golden sands, Okinawa is perfect for beach lovers and sport enthusiasts alike whilst still appealing to culture seekers thanks to its unique history and heritage. Using the bountiful fresh produce its natural environment produces, Okinawa's culinary culture is also unique and is believed to be a key factor in Okinawa's status as one of only five blue zones in the world recognised for longevity.

*For more information, visit: [www.visitokinawa.jp](http://www.visitokinawa.jp).*

*For media information and images contact Be Okinawa's UK & Ireland Representative: Rebecca Pasha / E: [rebecca@humewhitehead.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@humewhitehead.co.uk) / T: +44 (0) 203 375 4054*