



NEW SPECIALISED INFORMATION SITE LAUNCHED TO PROMOTE KARATE TOURISM IN OKINAWA

Created by the Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau, the site celebrates Okinawa as the birthplace of karate and helps travellers find themed packages and experiences in the prefecture



From L-R: Kabira Bay on Ishigaki Island, karate on the beach (credit: Asato Dojo), Kerama Island Group

May 2021 – With karate set to receive exposure on a global scale this summer, the Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau has launched a new specialised [website](#) to help travellers discover the sport whilst visiting the prefecture. Available in English and Japanese, the site features experiences to suit all skill levels and interests, from excursions and classes to professional karate tours and camps, alongside information on tour operators with karate packages such as [Ageshio Japan](#), [JTB](#) and [Okinawa Dento Karatedo Shinkokai](#).

Okinawa, which is Japan's southernmost prefecture comprising 160 subtropical islands just three-hours by air from Tokyo, is the renowned birthplace of karate. A martial art form developed through the region's historic trading relationship with China when Okinawa was the independent Ryukyu Kingdom, the sport is still hugely popular today with more than 400 dojos in the prefecture, annual international events hosted and a range of experiences for beginners, sport enthusiasts and seasoned karateka alike. Here, the Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau share some of the top karate experiences featured on the new website to enjoy in 2021, including a virtual class to try from home...



Learn from the masters at Karate Kaikan

One of the best places in Okinawa to experience karate is [Karate Kaikan](#) in Tomigusuku, which is home to the biggest museum and exhibition dedicated to karate in Okinawa. Visitors can enjoy exhibits on the origins of the sport, take classes or enjoy demonstrations by high-ranking masters of traditional Okinawan karate styles. Admission to the exhibition room costs JPY 310 (approx. £ 2) per adult, classes and demonstrations at additional cost.



Kick back with a karate latte

Novotel Okinawa Naha's café lounge GOURMETBAR proves that a love of karate can translate into the world of gastronomy with its Art Latte machine. A karate themed latte can be created with decorative foam art from a photo taken on the spot or a previous image that a customer provides - for example, the word "karate" written in Japanese kanji characters and an image of a karate kata (form). Guests can kick back and relax whilst enjoying this comical nod to the sport for JPY 1,019 (approx. £7).



Strike a pose with the Shureimon Photo Experience

Outside of the 'Gate of Propriety' at Shuri Castle Park, visitors and martial arts enthusiasts can strike a pose with the [Shureimon Photo Experience](#) wearing a traditional karate uniform (karate-gi). With snaps taken by a professional photographer and the historic gate as an impressive Instagram-worthy backdrop, printed pictures can be purchased from JPY 2,200 (approx. £ 14) or a digital copy can be sent to a smartphone for JPY 1,100 (approx. £7).



Delve into the history of karate

Whether a martial arts novice or sporting expert, the [Okinawa Karate History Tour](#) is a great way to understand more about the roots of the sport and the traditional Okinawan culture. The six-hour tour includes visits to lesser-known places off of the beaten tourist track where locals practice, as well as stops at museums and monuments of legendary karate masters. Tour prices start from JPY 13,800 (approx. £90) per person.



Training for the body and mind

Combining the Buddhist tradition of seated meditation with a physical martial arts class, the [Zen + Karate Program](#) at Shuri Kannon-do Temple is ideal for those wanting to train both the body and mind. The 90-minute session begins with 45-minutes of 'zen' meditation led by priest Jouei Yoshikuni, followed by a 45-minute karate class suitable for all skill levels. Prices start from JPY 6,000 (approx. £40) per person.



Kick-start a love of karate from home

[Asato Dojo's online seminars, classes and workouts](#) are a great way to enjoy an Okinawan karate experience from home while travel to the region from the UK remains restricted. Scheduled for the next three months and open to all skill levels, sessions are provided in English with Japanese phrases taught throughout. Average prices start from JPY 2,000 (approx. £13) per person however, some sessions are free to join with a donation suggested.

For more information about karate experiences in Okinawa, visit the new website here:

karate.ocvb.or.jp/

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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 in Okinawa, visit: www.visitokinawa.jp.

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