



## Okinawa News Update



Left to right: Karate demonstration, render image of pool at Southwest Grand Hotel and beach in Ikei Island

**23 March 2023** - Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau (OCVB) is delighted to announce a number of new attractions for 2023, including a luxury hotel in Naha, a newly-renovated food market, a brand new visitors centre and karate tour. Please see below some details on each.

### Southwest Grand Hotel set to open in Naha



Naha is set to welcome the opening of [Southwest Grand Hotel](#) this June. The new 12 storey luxury property will be located in the centre of Naha overlooking [Kokusai-dori Street](#), a 1.6-kilometre stretch of stores, restaurants, bars and sightseeing options, making it the perfect base for travellers wanting to explore the archipelago's dazzling capital. There will be 88 spacious rooms (the smallest room being 44 square metres) and five room types: Grand Twins, studio

rooms perfect for extended stays; Corner Kings offering stunning panoramic city views; Balcony Twins boasting a living room and a balcony; Terrace Suites with a spacious terrace as well as an open bathroom for guests to soak in whilst taking in the views; and a Penthouse Suite, spanning over the entire top floor with two bedrooms, living room, kitchen and a spacious terrace dotted with greenery.

Other facilities for guests to enjoy will include an indoor pool with floor-to-ceiling windows, an outdoor bath and sauna facilities on the eleventh floor as well four restaurants, three on the first floor and one adjacent to the pool serving breakfast in the morning and turning into a grill and sunset bar in the evening.

### Makishi Public Market reopens this month



The highly-anticipated [Makishi Public Market](#) reopened on March 19 after closing in 2019 for renovation works. The market is located near Naha's popular Kokusai-dori Street and has been a part of local everyday life since its inception in 1950, and in recent years became a popular stop for international tourists to sample the fresh local produce. The market is a real treasure trove of Okinawa delights with a first floor dotted with stalls selling fresh goods and a second with restaurants and cafeterias serving Okinawan cuisine.

### New visitors centre at UNESCO-listed Katsuren Castle Ruins



The [Katsuren Castle Ruins](#) has opened a historical and cultural facility, [Amawari Park](#), perfect for travellers looking to learn about the history of the area and the Ryukyu Kingdom on what's considered one of the oldest castles in Okinawa and a stunning UNESCO World Heritage Site. The castle and new facility are located atop a hill on the eastern coast of Uruma city in the main Okinawa Island, looking onto the Pacific Ocean and boasting unobstructed 360-degree views of the city and sea below, offering a great combination of history and magnificent scenery. The new visitors centre is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm and offers a variety of exhibits and live performances. The admission fee is 600 JYP (approx. £3.80) per adult and 400 JYP (approx. £2.50) for children over six years.

A short drive from Katsuren Castle Ruins, visitors will find the scenic Kaichu-doro Drive, a five-kilometre-long road with turquoise blue waters on either side and the gateway for island hopping around the four Yokatsu Islands: Henza, Hamahiga, Miyagi and Ikei. These are small islands dotted with secluded beaches and an abundance of fresh and rich seafood to sample. Every year on the first Sunday after May 4 (this year May 7), on the island of Henza, local fishermen celebrate a [dragon boat race](#) accompanied by dancing, singing and plenty of Okinawa's iconic spirit, Awamori.

### Revamped karate history tour



Renowned as the birthplace of karate, there is no better place to learn about this martial art form than in Okinawa. The sport is hugely popular with more than 400 dojos in the prefecture and a range of experiences for visitors to enjoy. Karate specialist [Ageshio Japan](#) has just revamped its popular [Okinawa Karate History Tour](#), a great tour 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 the beaten tourist track where locals practice, as well as stops at museums and monuments of legendary karate masters. Tour prices start from JPY 15,180 (approx. £94) per person.

For further information about Okinawa, please visit: <https://visitokinawajapan.com/>

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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 five longevity hotspots in the world.

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