

TRADITIO



Performing Arts

N &



KARATE



Craftsmanship



FOOD

It is not just craftsmanship but also the hope for posterity that we have inherited and carry on

Okinawa Prefecture has developed a unique culture, one that lives and breathes in the performing arts with their elaborate costumes and music, craftwork of dyed fabrics and pottery refined through trade with neighboring

countries, Okinawa karate perfected as the island's ancient martial arts fused with Chinese martial arts, foods as eating is the sustenance of life, as well as many other various forms. Kumiodori, the Okinawan equivalent of opera, was

inscribed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. These works have received high acclaim both inside and outside Japan.

CULTURE

PERFORMING



Kumiodori is a musical theater performance combining recitation, music and dance. It dates back 300 years. /Nidou Tekiuchi



Mekarushi (Master Mekar)/Kumiodori



Onna-munu-gurui (The Madwoman)/Kumiodori



Tumai Ahkah/Okinawan Play



Ryukyuan Dance



Classical Ryukyuan music



Stick fighting /Folk entertainment

ARTS

CRAFTS



Okinawan Yachimun pottery



Bingata, a traditional stenciled dyeing technique



Sanshin, an Okinawan stringed (musical) instrument



Crafted Ryukyu glass



Shuri Ori, a woven Okinawan textile



Shisaa crafted using Yachimun techniques



Okinawa Karate Kaikan conveys to the world that Okinawa is the birthplace of karate



Showcasing that Okinawa is where karate originated



Okinawa Karate striving for inscription as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage



Children's karate performance



International competition held in Okinawa



Court cuisine served when entertaining Chinese investiture envoys



Pineapple, the quintessential Okinawan fruit



Tebichi (boiled pig foot) is a delicacy



Sea grapes have the texture of little bubbles bursting in your mouth



Chinsuko is a traditional Okinawan sweet



Taco rice is the Okinawa variation of tacos



Goya champuru is a family favorite



Mangos ripen under the Okinawa sun



Farmer growing beni imo(sweet potato)



Awamori, the favorite local sake since the Ryukyu Kingdom era



Prefectural Fish: Banana Fish (Takasago, locally known as Gurukun)



All Okinawan's love Okinawa soba

Where the history and prosperity of the Ryukyu Kingdom can be experienced

Okinawa Prefecture was formerly the Ryukyu Kingdom with its seat of power at Shuri for roughly 450 years beginning in the mid 15th century. The Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, which were inscribed as a

UNESCO World Heritage in 2000, provide a glimpse into the Ryukyu Kingdom's culture, which evolved and developed distinctively as an island nation with influence from Asia and Japan. In addition, the castle sites and

architectural styles indicate not only expert craftsmanship, but also provide a glimpse into the history and wisdom of the time.



WORLD HERITAGE

1 Shuri-jō Castle Site

Shuri-jō Castle, the Ryukyuan kings' residence, was the center from which politics, economics and culture emanated. It allows us a view into building techniques employed in Japan and China.

*In October 2019, a fire destroyed eight buildings, including the Seiden (State Chamber). The government has set a target of rebuild the structures by 2026.



2 Nakijin-jō Site
Nakijin Castle was the seat of the Hokuzan King during the Sanzan period. It is the second largest after Shurijo Castle and features beautiful curved walls.



3 Zakimi-jō Site
Zamiki-jō was constructed in the early 15th century by the military commander Gosamaru. The castle is an excellent example of exquisite stonemasonry with the oldest remaining arched stone gates in Okinawa.



4 Katsuren-jō Site
The castle consists of four enclosures connected in a staircase pattern. The various structural remnants inside the castle walls offer hints to how prosperous the resident lord was at the time.



5 Nakagusuku-jō Site
Gosamaru, who built Zakimi Castle, was lord of Nakagusuku Castle. The castle sits on high ground along Nakagusuku bay, affording visitors an impressive view of the sea from the fortress walls.



6 Sonohyan Utaki-Ishimon (Stone Gate)
This stone gate is built of Ryukyu limestone. At the time of the Ryukyu Kingdom, this gate was a site where the royal family would gather to pray for safe journey whenever the king would leave the castle.



7 Tamaudun
This mausoleum entombs the Second Sho Dynasty lineage. Chambers housing the bones of former kings are arranged into a middle chamber with two more on the east and west sides.

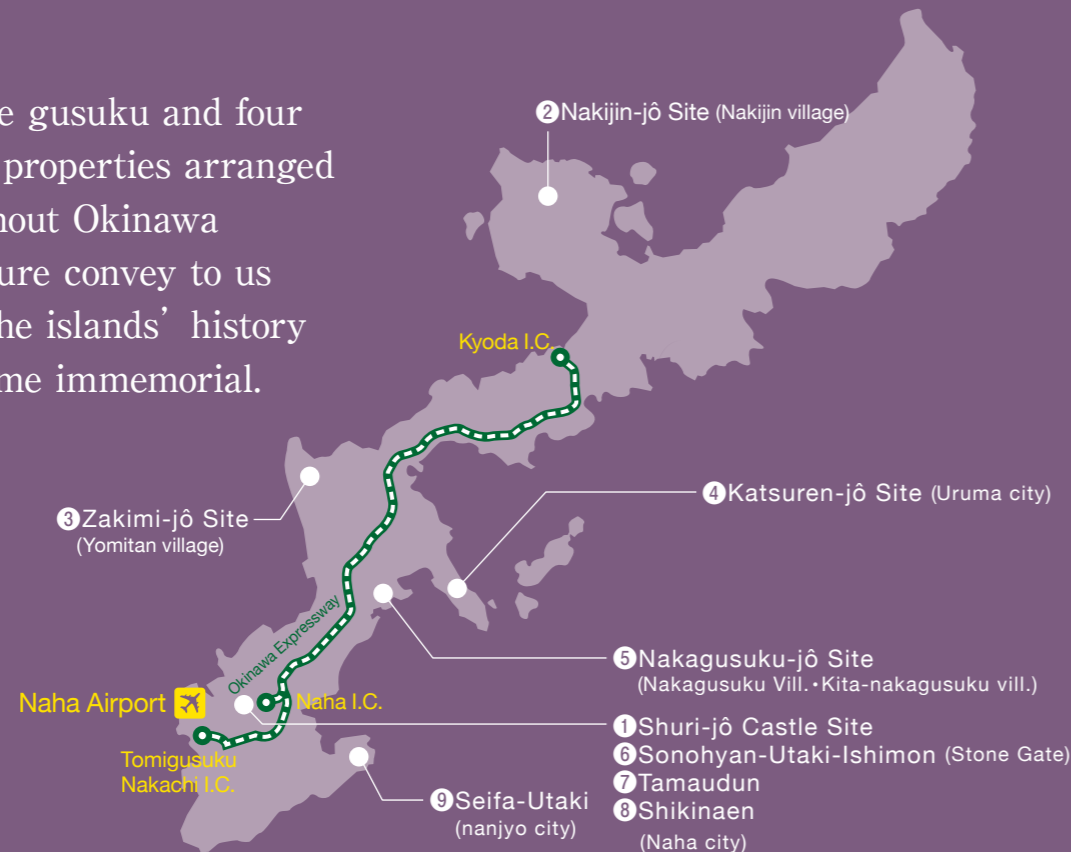


8 Shikinaen
This was a second residence of the royal family and fuses Japanese, Chinese and Ryukyuan garden techniques. It was used to entertain investiture envoys dispatched from China.



9 Seifa-Utaki
One of the seven sacred utaki forged by Amamikiyo, the Ryukyu goddess of creation, is still a place of powerful spirituality today.

The five gusuku and four related properties arranged throughout Okinawa Prefecture convey to us today the islands' history from time immemorial.



COLUMN

Numerous events express the Okinawan people's hope that Shuri Castle be restored to its former glory

With the aim of building momentum for restoration of Shuri Castle, prefecture residents have been volunteering their time to remove mortar from damaged roof tiles so that they may be reused, and have also taken mortar from damaged tiles and put it to use making shisa dogs. The largest projection map ever in Okinawa Prefecture was produced and displayed at Shuri Castle. Banner performances have also been held in cooperation with local communities. The people of Okinawa are expressing their hopes for Shuri Castle in many tangible ways and creating opportunities for everyone to play their part in the castle's reconstruction.



Harvest Festival to give thanks for a good harvest and pray for an abundant one next year



招豊年

RITUAL &

FESTIVAL



Hari boat race to pray for good catch and safe sea voyage

Traditional events and festivals with strong community roots

In Okinawa, seasonal events and festivals have been held and handed down over the years in communities. Families welcome their ancestors back during the Bon Festival held according to the lunar calendar. There are also many other rites and festivals, such as prayers for a bountiful harvest and safe travel at sea as well as to expel pestilence, that are very rich in local flavor. Old-fashioned traditional festivals are honored and carried on as are highly entertaining festival performances incorporating colorful and showy elements. Residents of Okinawa Prefecture as well as tourists from around Japan as well as the world find these rites and festivals endlessly appealing.



Shurijo Castle Festival reenacts procession of the Ryukyu King



Miyako Island's Paantu festival when mask-wearing supernatural beings ward off misfortune



"Hachigatsu Odori" of Tarama Island to pray for abundant harvests



Great Naha tug-of-war represents a prayer for good health and prosperity of our descendants (rope is the largest in the world)

Dance performed to give thanks to our ancestors and the gods, and to pray for the prosperity of our community and health of our families



Traditional performance art Eisa is a powerful dance performed in remembrance of our ancestors



Lion dance performed to the accompaniment of drums and Sanshin



Ogimi Village's Ungami (Sea God Festival) held to pray for good health and bountiful harvest

Embracing different cultures to develop further

Okinawa Prefecture is a mature fusion of many diverse cultures. These islands have embraced the good of different cultures in each age to form and develop a distinctive culture. Okinawa Prefecture has

expanded networks of human relationships, the center pillar of which is the Worldwide Uchinanchu Network comprising people of Okinawan heritage in countries around the world. The Okinawa

Prefectural Government has also promoted exchange in tourism, economic engagement, cultural affairs, and other areas.



Information about Okinawa is available in foreign languages



Foreign tourists experiencing traditional crafts



Okinawa Global Festa 2020
Live discussion on "Okinawa's Future: Taking Action on SDGs"

INTERNATIONAL



Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival is an occasion for Okinawans and their descendants living abroad to come back to their home prefecture.



Shop owner, originally from England, who moved to Okinawa and operates a cheese shop

EXCHANGE

COLUMN

World Uchinanchu Day

At the 6th World Uchinanchu Festival in 2016, October 30 was proclaimed "World Uchinanchu Day." Every year on this day, events and activities are held in Okinawa Prefecture and wherever Uchinanchus gather around the world.

