



Okinawa Events Update



*Left to right: Naha Great Tug-of-War Festival and Shurijo Festival celebrations
Images are available for download [here](#).*

28 September 2023 - Okinawa, Japan's southernmost prefecture comprised of 160 subtropical islands, is set to welcome a number of anticipated cultural and sports events in October and November. Please see an update below:

Cultural events

Naha Great Tug-of-War Festival

When: October 7-9

Okinawa's capital is gearing up to welcome the prefecture's greatest tug-of-war festival with three days of festivities in early October. Certified by the Guinness World Records as the world's largest tug-of-war event, this event is a highlight for locals and visitors welcoming thousands of people to take part. The rope often exceeds 200 metres in length, weighs around 43 tonnes and has around 280 smaller ropes attached to it for everyone to get in on the fun. Amidst the exhilarating contest, traditional music, dance performances and colourful parades grace the streets, celebrating Okinawa's distinctive culture and folklore. Further details here:

<https://visitokinawajapan.com/discover/events/naha-tug-of-war-festival/>

Yomitan Matsuri

When: October 28-29

On the western coast of the central part of Okinawa's main island, approx. a 45-minute drive from the international airport, travellers will find Yomitan Village. Popular for exuding all that makes the archipelago famous (blue skies, white sandy beaches with clear waters, iconic food and rich Ryukyu culture), the village will welcome its largest festival in late October: the two-day Yomitan Matsuri. This annual event is a lively spectacle that showcases the unique cultural heritage of the Okinawan people featuring a dazzling array of performances including traditional folk dances, music and vibrant parades. One of the main highlights is the classical Ryukyu music concert performed by some 300 enthusiasts of traditional music from around the village and held to honour the Akainko, a

legendary character said to be the father of *sanshin* music. Further details here:

<https://www.vill.yomitan.okinawa.jp/soshiki/somu/gyomu/event/matsuri/4391.html>

Shurijo Festival

When: November 3-5

The iconic Shurijo Castle is a not-to-be-missed site in Okinawa. The UNESCO-listed castle dates back to the 14th century and was once the centre of politics, diplomacy and culture of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Currently under restoration due to a tragic fire in 2019, it is possible to visit the site for those planning a visit and keen not to miss this cherished historical symbol and admire the [restoration works](#), which are due to be completed around 2026. From 3-5 November, the SHURIJO Festival takes place paying homage to the rich history and traditions of the Ryukyu Kingdom and offering visitors a remarkable glimpse into Okinawa's unique heritage. The highlight of this anticipated event is the grand reenactment of the Ryukyu Dynasty's royal court ceremonies, alongside a colourful display of traditional costumes, ceremonial dances and vibrant music played on the *sanshin*. Further details here: <https://oki-park.jp/sp/shurijo/event/>

Sports event

Izena 88 Triathlon

When: November 19

Keen triathletes looking for the ultimate picture-perfect course should look no further than the Izena 88 Triathlon, taking place on November 19 on the remote Izena Island, accessed only by ferry from Okinawa's main island. This triathlon is renowned for its scenic beauty and demanding course, attracting both professional and amateur athletes from around the world. Participants are tasked to complete an 88-kilometre course including a 2 km swim through the crystal-clear waters of Izena Beach, a 66 km cycle along the island's hilly terrain and a 20 km run through the lush and tropical landscapes of Rinkai Fureai Park. Further details here: <http://izenatriathlon.jp/about/>

Find out more about what's happening in Okinawa here:

<https://visitokinawajapan.com/discover/events/>

Note to editors

Image credits:

Image 1: Naha Great Tug-of-War Festival. Credit: Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau or OCVB.

Image 2: Shurijo Festival celebrations. Credit: Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau or OCVB.

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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.

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