

# OKINAWA INFORMATION

Okinawa, the principal island of Okinawa Prefecture's 160 or so islands, is often referred to as the "Keystone of the Pacific" because of its strategic location relative to major Far East cities. Okinawa is located about 900 miles from Tokyo, Manila, Seoul and Hong Kong, and about 1,200 miles west of Guam. The island is 67 miles long and varies from 2-17 miles wide. The climate compares to U.S. southeastern coastal areas, making it perfect for those who enjoy swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, golfing, boating and taking part in other recreational activities.

Temperatures range from the mid-90s to high-40s and humidity is relatively high throughout the year. With the heat and high humidity, mold and mildew can be a problem. Plan accordingly when packing goods to be shipped to Okinawa and be prepared to deal with the moist climate when you arrive.

With our normally warm, sunny climate, you will have an opportunity to trek the miles of sandy beaches, enjoy local attractions and visit neighboring islands. Since Okinawa is in "Typhoon Alley," high winds and rain periodically affect the island between July and November. In May, the island usually experiences its rainy season, which lasts about 30 days.

If you take time to learn conversational Japanese and get out and use it, you will find it easy to enjoy the company of the pleasant and industrious people of this subtropical island nestled between the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Because of its geographical location, Okinawa has been influenced by many cultures. The most prominent of those are Japanese, Chinese and American.

The primary influence on Okinawan life comes from mainland Japan, since the island is Japan's 47th prefecture. Okinawan business, fashion and social behavior are similar to Japanese. Okinawa's population is estimated at about 1.3 million people.

Living in Japan can be relatively expensive, so U.S. military members are authorized a cost of living allowance which offsets added expenses. Some Department of Defense civilian employees are authorized a similar expense known as post allowance.

The military bases here have many American familiarities found stateside - Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlor, an Italian restaurant, Burger King, Popeye's Chicken, Chili's restaurant, a Chinese take-out food facility, Taco Bell and several other fast-food outlets. There are also movie theaters, numerous video rental outlets, golf courses, outdoor roller skating rinks, in-line skating rinks and state-of-the-art physical fitness centers.

There are more than 40 beaches on the island, and numerous cultural events and attractions in which to take part. Internet capability is available on base, as is cable television.

The U.S. population in Okinawa approaches 80,000. Nearly 30,000 are active-duty military people from all four branches of the armed forces. One thousand, four-hundred Department of Defense civilians, 700 DoD Dependents Schools teachers and staff, and almost 25,000 U.S. family members form our military community here. Service members reside and train on numerous major installations on Okinawa.

Look forward to a safe and exciting tour. The combination of excellent on-base facilities and exciting off-base activities provide for a pleasant overseas tour.