

## Naha: J3 Ms. Uchino & Mr. Matsuura

Today we would like to tell you about a famous and fascinating city in southern Japan. This city is more than 1000 kilometers away from Kobe. However, you can easily reach the city by plane. It has a population of about 300,000 people and an area of 40 square kilometers. There are many fun and exciting things to do in this city. The people in this city have a different culture than the people in the mainland of Japan, and the atmosphere is different, too. This city is Naha!

There are many power spots in Okinawa, and Okinawa is called "the Island of God". You can feel the energy and sacred atmosphere overflowing from the magnificent nature. Many people think of Shuri Castle and Kouri Island as the symbols of Okinawa. They are places where the scenery is beautiful, and there is a lot of history, and many tourists go there.

Shuri Castle was the residence of the king and the center of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which prospered for about 450 years. The building is a perfect fusion of Chinese, Japanese, and Ryukyu architectural styles, with beautiful bright red roof tiles. However, on October 31, 2019, Shuri Castle burned down, and six major buildings and many arts and crafts were destroyed by fire. Still, Shuri Castle has many charms. First of all, we recommend visiting Shureimon Gate. When you look at the Shureimon, you will realize that you have come to Okinawa. After passing by the Shureimon, you will see the Sonohyan-utaki Stone Gate, which is registered as a World Heritage Site. In addition, there is a restaurant in the castle that sells taco rice and soki soba. We really want you to visit Shuri Castle.

Wait a minute. What about Kouri Island?! Let us tell you about that. Kouri Island is an island next to Yagaji Island at the north part of Okinawa Island. There two reasons why this island is fascinating. First, here is a beach called Tokeihama. We recommend this spot because it has a very beautiful landscape. Second, there are two rocks called Heart Rock. Let me explain about this. There is a beach called Chine Beach opposite Kouri Ohashi Bridge. From there if you look at the rocks from a certain angle, they look like a heart. This is Heart Rock. We really recommend this spot because it's romantic.

In Naha, you should also visit International Street. It is the most popular shopping street in Okinawa. It is a lively downtown area. The main boulevard is the center of commerce and entertainment, lined with Western and Okinawan boutiques. There are various food shops on International Street. We recommend buying the "Red Potato Tart Okinawa Kirari". It's a very delicious dessert, so please try it once. We also recommend making a "Shisa". The "Shisa" is a legendary beast statue and is very famous in Okinawa. You can experience various things such as painting Shisa and making Shisa. Girls can also make accessories using natural stones.

Today, we talked about a beautiful and fascinating city in southern Japan, In Naha, we really recommend that you go to International Street. It is a shopping street loved and cherished by the people of Okinawa. Please visit there when you go to Naha. If you are tired of COVID-19, please visit Naha once. There are many beautiful beaches, and you can easily visit them. You will be able to experience the atmosphere different from Kobe. Please go to Naha. You will have a great time!