

VIVA ! ひめじ

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<People> M'yahaka Marina

Marina comes from Kiev, the capital of Ukraine. She studied psychology at university. She got married in Ukraine, and has lived in Himeji since March 2008.

Q: Why did you first come to Japan?

A: I came to Himeji to meet one of my friends who studied in Japan and met a Japanese man living there. Even after flying back to Ukraine, we continued our relationship. Finally, we had a wedding party two years ago, and then came to Japan.

Q: What do you do?

A: I teach English to children at an English conversation school 4 times a week. It is good for my Japanese because I use when I teach. It is also fun to be with children.

Q: You speak Japanese very well. Did you study it in Ukraine?

A: In Ukraine, the national language is Ukrainian. Followed by it, Russian and English are spoken. I had interests in Japan, so I studied Japanese a little by myself. However, I did not have many chances to speak Japanese. Therefore, I could not speak Japanese at all when I came to Japan. Now, I go to "NIHONGO HIROBA" at Egret and study Japanese once a week.

Q: What do you do on your day off?

A: I often go to hot springs with my husband. Japan has many places like theme parks and spaces for relaxation. It is fun to go to those places.

Q: Do you have any dream of what you want to do in the future?

A: I want to have a baby, and live in Japan for a long time. My whole family except me lives in Ukraine, but I don't feel so lonely because I visit them once a year. When I came to Japan, I experienced some confusion because of the different culture and language. However, I love Japan so much now and I even feel as if I had lived here for a long time. I hope my parents will come here to visit me someday.

Information about the end of the year and the New Year events

Here are some New Year's events from the end of 2009 to 2010.

The schedule and the contents may be changed without notice. Please check before attending.

●Mt. Shosha

①Ropeway all-night Run December 31 (Thu) at SHOSHA Ropeway

The ropeway runs every 15 minutes from 21:00 on New Year's Eve.

They offer a free gift, "Certification of the first ride" to the first 70 visitors,

and "a tiger's small pouch (netsuke)" to the first 1500 visitors who ride on the ropeway at midnight on New Year's Day. The first 250 visitors on the second and third day from 8:30 am will also receive a complimentary netsuke.

②Bells on New Year's Eve & New Year's Yume-no-Sho January 1 at Engyo-ji, Mt. Shosha

Visitors can also join the bell-tolling after the events which start from 23:45.

On New Year's Day the head monk performs Yume-no-Sho, writing a single kanji character on a 1.5 sq. meter sheet of paper. Since the road is dark at night, we recommend you bring a flashlight.

< Access > Take a Bus No.8 at SHINKI Bus station north of Himeji Station, to the last stop The Ropeway, about 28 minutes. Fare is 260yen.

< Information Desk > Tel.079-266-3327 (Engyo-ji)

Tel.079-266-2006 (Ropeway)

< HP > <http://www.shosha.or.jp>



●Harima-no-Kuni SOUSHA

①Wanuke Festival December 31 (Thu)

People wish for health and good luck as they pass through a thatch rope three meters in diameter. People believe thatch is good for warding off evil. On New Year's, many people visit for Hatsumode.

②First Ebisu Festival January 14th(Thu) to January 16th(Sat)

Many people visit and pray for safe driving, good business and living happily for the new year.

On the eve of the Ebisu Festival on Jan14, people follow a "Treasure Ship" around Himeji Station.

< Access > About 15 minute walk from JR or Sanyo-Himeji Station, about 10 minute drive north from Himeji Bypass Chuji Ramp.

< Information Desk > Tel.079-224-1111

●Himeji Castle Jan 1st (Fri) • Jan 2nd (Sat) • Jan 3rd (Sun)

On New Year's Day admission is free from 7:00am. Renovation work will start from April 12 2010. Visitors won't be able to climb up to the top for a while, so this is a great way to ring in the New Year while enjoying a great view of the city.

On the second day and third day, the first 500 visitors from 9:00 am will receive a Himeji original eco-bag.

<Access> About 15 minute walk north on Otemae-dori from Himeji Station.

<HP> <http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/guide/castle>

●Kouko-En Jan 1st (Fri)

Kouko-En is open from New Year's Day.

The first 1000 visitors from 9:00 am can get an original mini calendar. Kouko-En is now accepting photo works which represent Kouko-En in the four seasons.

Winning works will be displayed at the photo-contest event from Jan 27th(Wed) to Feb 14th(Sun)

<Access> From Shinki Bus Station in front of Sanyo Department Store, get off at

Himeji Castle Otemon mae. About 5 minutes and bus fare is 100 yen.

About a 15 minute walk from Himeji Station

<HP> <http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/koukoen/index.php>

●Himeji National Kiting Festival Jan 10th (Sun)

Kite enthusiasts gather from all over Japan. The New Years' sky will be filled with over 800 kites in 80 styles, some as large as the size of 20 tatami mats, or a hundred linked kites and many other originals. Every year thousands come to enjoy the spectacle.

There is also a sales corner and you can buy and produce kites. Great fun for both kids and adults.

<Location> Himeji Koen Keiba-jo

<Access> Get bus No.3/62/86 at SHINKI Bus Station and get off at Keiba-jo mae

About 15 minutes and bus fare is 200 yen.

There are many other events at temples and shrines in local areas in the city.

Remember, it gets cold at the end of the year and the New Year, so bundle up!



Don't be tricked!!!

Japan has been known as a safe country for a long time, but these days there has been an increase in fraud cases. You should be aware of fraud!!!

These are budget scams:

Imaginary charge fraud

They send mail or e-mail to people who have never used their website. The content is, for example: You have not paid a fee for a website, which they claim you used!! Yes, they charge you an imaginary fee! Also, they demand you pay money into their account.

What to do

- You should not contact them, nor answer the phone if you don't recognize the number.
- Just ignore the claim if you know you haven't used their website.
- Do not open unknown e-mails.

Finance deposit fraud

They contact you, just as above, and try to make you believe in a fake document! They say you can get a bank loan, but they need a deposit. That's how they make their money. However, they won't contact you again after they get the deposit, cheating you out of your money!!!

What to do

You should not pay the deposit, even if they give you an insistent request!! Ordinary loan companies never request a deposit.

Suspicious!!!

They request that you send money by simple courier service, e.g.: Expack, Pospacket, Yupack, etc. These types of courier service do not accept money for delivery!! Don't send any!!!

They rush you and do not give you time to think. Also, they use dirty threats, e.g.: I will take you to court (sue you), if you don't pay me 100,000 yen by six o'clock!!

They give you a false name, claiming to be a Police Officer or bank employee and ask for your credit card numbers. Sometimes they insist on keeping your cards!!! Unbelievable!!

Talk with someone if you are in this situation!!

If you follow their requests, even once, it will not stop!! They will contact you and cheat you, again and again.

Please do not worry about it, or try to solve it by yourself. Talk with your family, local city council or a police officer. If you have already given them money, you should call the police and submit an offence report. They are always on your side.

Emergency phone No. for Police: 110

Himeji Police and Crime Prevention Association: 079-222-0110



Oden

Oden is a style of Japanese stew. A soy sauce flavored stew with tofu, boiled egg, Japanese radish, Satsuma-age (deep-fried fish patty). This a great dish on cold winter days. In Himeji, Oden is served with a mix of soy sauce and ground ginger.

Each family or district has their own ingredients such as octopus, sausage, chicken, beef, carrot, potato etc. There is also a wide variety of Satsuma-age. I heard some oden restaurants serve tomato oden, but I'd like to know how they boil and keep it's shape at the same time. Hmm...

1. Recipe of Oden (for two people)

Soup ingredient

Water, 5 cups (1 liter)

Kombu seaweed, 3×15cm 4 pieces

Katsuo bushi, 10g

Soy sauce, Sake, Sugar, 2 table spoons

Salt, 1/2 of table spoon

Ingredients

- Japanese radish, 300g: peeled and cut 2cm thick round. Boil until boiled till transparent.
- Konnyaku (yam starch cake) 1 piece: first cut into 4 square pieces and cut them into 8 triangles.
- Peeled boiled egg, 2 eggs
- Satsuma age, 2 pieces
- Yaki tofu (Surface toasted tofu) 1 cake

• Recipe for soup

1. Pour water into a pot and immerse Kombu seaweed for 20min.
2. Add Katsuo bushi into boiled water. Turn off the heat when it re-boils.
3. Remove Kombu seaweed and Katsuo bushi and add soup ingredients.

• Stew the contents

1. Place and simmer Japanese radish and Konnyaku for 15~20mins. Carefully control the heat and prevent boiling to keep the soup transparent.
2. Add boiled egg, Satsuma-age, Yaki tofu and simmer for 15mins and be careful not let the soup boil. The Satsuma-age may be surprisingly enlarged.



2. Is there an EASIER way to enjoy homemade Oden?

Homemade Oden is special but do you feel it is hard to cook at home? You can find Oden soup at the grocery store. All you need to do is add water and simmer ingredients. Enjoy!

3. Is there a SUPER EASY way to enjoy Oden?

Convenience stores sell a variety of Oden in winter season. You can buy even one piece of oden.

☆☆☆ Information from Himeji International Exchange Center ☆☆☆

International Go and Shogi (Japanese chess) Meeting

We have a Go and Shogi meeting once in a month at Egret Himeji. Anyone can join for free. Beginners are welcome too! Enjoying *Go* and *Shogi* makes your mind clear. It's a Brain Sport. Let's enjoy cultural exchange on the chess board.

○The schedule of Go and Shogi Meeting

Sat. December 19th, 2009

Sat. January 16th, Sat. February 13th, Sat. March 13th, 2010

Time and Place: 18:00~19:30 Japanese Room 1, 4th floor

※ For more information about the meetings after April,
please contact the Himeji International Exchange Center (the phone number is below.)



The organizer: Fumio Takenaka

※※※※Editors' Note※※※※

We have many articles on current issues such as H1N1 influenza and Supplementary Income Payments (Teigaku Kyuufu-kin) in our VIVA! Himeji 2009. We hope these articles have helped our readers' lives.

We are facing many changes in the politics and laws after the ruling party changed to the Democratic Party of Japan last August.

We will provide you with more information to catch up on these changes in VIVA! Himeji 2010. I hope all the readers will continue to read this bulletin.

The next VIVA! Himeji Vol.32 will be published in March, 2010. We welcome your comments.

The volunteers for translation and native checking

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Spanish : Saori Horii, Keiko Abo, Mika Oya, Arredondo Gonzalez Ana Rosa

Vietnamese : Ken Ishida, Vo Minh Nhut, Hoang Nam Phuong, Pham

Only the names of those who agreed to be publicized are shown.
Thank you for your corporation.

VIVA! Himeji needs more volunteers for translation and native checking. If you are interested please call the number below. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

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