

VIVA! ひめじ English

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Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation
– newsletter editing volunteers

Introduction of “World Cuisine”①

(From the Himeji International Exchange Festival)

Last October, the Himeji International Exchange Festival was held in *Otemae* Park. Here is a recipe for “Qatayef”, a Syrian pastry served at one of the “World Cuisine” stalls at the festival.

Ingredients (for about 20 pieces)

Batter : A (1 cup semolina flour, 2 cups strong flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, 2 teaspoons baking powder),
3 cups water

Filling : 400g ricotta cheese

Syrup : B (3 cups sugar, 1.5 cups water), 1 teaspoon lemon juice



Preparation

1. Combine the A ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Add water, blend with a whisk until smooth, cover with plastic wrap, and let stand at room temperature for 20 to 30 minutes.
 2. Place a frying pan over a low heat and pour 3 tablespoons of the batter from step 1 into a thin layer in a circle about 12 to 13 cm in diameter. Cook on one side without turning over until small holes appear in the top of the batter (about 2 minutes).
 3. In a small saucepan, mix the B ingredients. Dissolve the sugar over a medium heat, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil, then let simmer for 5 minutes. Add the lemon juice and cook for 1 minute more, and let cool until room temperature.
 4. Place about 20 g of the ricotta cheese into the center of the batter baked in step 2. Fold in half and seal the edges tightly to form the shape shown in the photo.
 5. Deep fry in oil at 200°C until golden brown. After that, drain the excess oil, and dip in syrup.
- ※ It’s best to eat it while it’s still warm!

We will continue to introduce recipes from around the world. We hope you enjoy them!

Let's Take a Walk "Shiso City to Yasutomi-Cho"

A group of volunteer editors went on a small trip to Shiso City and Yasutomi-cho in Himeji City. We took a small monorail to go up the mountain, and enjoyed a lot of fresh air. We saw *Kakashis*(※) (scarecrows) and we bought some souvenirs.



※*Kakashi* . . . Dolls made from straw. Farmers keep the dolls in their fields to scare wild animals away from the crops.

- ① Hyogo Prefectural Kuniminomori Park
↓ 🚗 15 minutes
- ② Anjikamo Jinja Shrine
↓ 🚗 15 minutes
- ③ Okuharima Kakashinosato
↓ 🚗 2 minutes
- ④ Himeji City Green Station Shikagatsubo
↓ 🚗 15 minutes
- ⑤ Yasutomi Yuzu Kobo



- ① Hyogo Prefectural Kuniminomori Park

A cute little monorail took us to Sanjo Station, which is located on the top of the mountain. When the weather is good, you can see the Seto Inland Sea (*Setonaikai*) from the observation deck. The restrooms at Sanjo Station are very eco-friendly. There are no vending machines or kiosks at the top.

Opening hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Closed days: Mondays (the following day if the Monday is a national holiday)

Monorail: Approx. 20 min ride. Reservation is required. No fee.

Parking: Free parking available



The slope was steep, and the fog totally covered the front view, but the monorail ride was still very thrilling. The very front of the monorail is the best spot to experience the thrill. The park is open to learn about nature. We strongly felt the need to protect the nature.

② Anjikamo Jinja Shrine

A huge animal made from straw is displayed every year from Dec. 1 to the end of March the following year. This year, they are displaying a dragon since 2024 is the year of the dragon. The frame is made of bamboo, and they attach straw around it to finish.



③ Okuharima Kakashinosato

There are many *Kakashis* that live in *Seki* in Yasutomi-cho. In fact, there are more *Kakashis* than humans. The “*Furusato Kakashi* Gallery” has many *Kakashi* families. The day we visited, they had an open school, and a math class was being held. Looks like the answer on the blackboard is wrong!



After spending so much time in Kakashinosato, we could not tell the difference between real humans and *Kakashi*.



④ Himeji City Green Station Shikagatsubo

There is Shikagatsubo waterfall in the area.

You can enjoy camping, auto camping, and having a BBQ. They also have some cottages available.

There is a restaurant in the *Fureai Koryukan* at the Green Station.

Parking: Free

⑤ Yasutomi Yuzu Kobo

Many foods such as *Yuzumiso*, *Yuzu Daifuku*, and

Yuzu soft serve ice made with locally grown *yuzu* are sold here.

Yuzu is a small citrus fruit. *Yuzu* is one of the specialties from Yasutomi.

Open Hours: 9:00am to 5:00pm

Closed on Mondays

Parking: Free



The *yuzu* peel in the *Shiro An* (white beans paste) added a slight *yuzu* flavor to the *Daifuku*, and it tasted very good.

Expanding the Target of Children's Medical Subsidies

Himeji City expanded the target of children's medical subsidies from 2024 January 1. (point)

Target households	Target persons		Self-expense	
	Age	Income Restrictions	Outpatient	Hospitalization
Other than multi-child households	from age 0 to 2	no	free	
	from age 3 to junior high school graduation	yes	free	
	from junior high school graduation to age 18		30% of the cost (unsubsidized)	free
Multi-child households	from age 0 to 18	no	free	

<Target persons/contents>

- ① The child's hospitalization costs from junior high school graduation to age 18 (※1) will become free (with income restrictions)
 - ② The child's medical expenses in a multi-child household(※2) will be made free up to age 18(without income restrictions)
- (※1) Until the first March 31 after reaching the age of 18
 (※2) Households with three or more dependent children (including those age 19 or older) of the guardian.

<How to apply for people in ①>

You can get a refund after you have paid the hospitalization fee to the medical institution. Please apply at the city office or by mail with the required documents. No beneficiary certificate is issued.

▼Please check the following website for required documents.



<How to apply for people in ②>

You can apply from the Himeji City Online Procedures Portal Site (Medical Expense Subsidies for Multi Child Households), apply by mail, or at the city office. Target persons will receive a beneficiary certificate later.

▼Himeji City Online Procedures Portal Site



▼Please check the following website for required documents.



Inquiry : Himeji City Hall 1F Welfare Affairs Division Welfare Medical Care
 (TEL 079-221-2307)

The Charm of *Ibushi* (smoked) Tiles

Since ancient times, the areas in and around Funatsu-cho of Himeji City has been known as a source of good quality clay, and the local industry of tile making thrived.

This time, we visited the Koyo Tile-Making Corporation. It has been in operation since 1923. There are now about only 60 *Kamamotos*(※) in Japan that produce smoked tiles. Koyo Tile-Making Corporation is one of them.

※*Kamamoto*: A place where pottery, porcelain, etc. is made.

▼Roof of a traditional Japanese house



What is *Ibushi* tile?

It is a beautiful tile with the unique luster of a pale silver. It is mainly used for roofs in traditional Japanese architecture such as those of shrines and castles. The tiles are placed in the kiln and baked at high temperatures (up to 1165°C) for four days. They are stopped baking halfway through and gas is injected into kiln when the temperature drops. The tiles are then smoked. This process gives the unique luster to the tiles. These tiles have air permeability and far-infrared radiation effects, and they can regulate humidity and temperature as well. Known as "100-year tiles," they endure the test of time longer than other kinds of tiles.

▼Process of making *Ibushi* tiles (Website of Koyo Tile-Making Corporation)



From 2009 to 2015, a renovation was completed on the Main Tower of Himeji Castle for the first time in 50 years. All the smoked roof tiles of the main tower were removed and were inspected one by one. The result: about 80% of them were good enough to be reused.

Natsuko Sasada “I will live with *Ibushi-gin*.”

Ms. Sasada is the 4th president of Koyo Tile-Making Corporation, and the first female president. Together with her daughter, she is always ready to tackle new things from a woman’s perspective. In order to attract a large number of people to the charm of *Ibushi-gin* (the unique silver color of the smoked tiles), they thought of using it as part of interior decoration and wall material. They have brought the idea to such places as hotels and shopping complexes where a lot of people visit.

They also hold workshops for schools, business offices, and local residents, where they offer the opportunities to create things of their own making...the only one in the world..., such as photo frames made of small blocks of tile, or whatever they want out of raw clay. You can apply for the workshop on their website.

Ms. Sasada said, “Finding new commercial value in *Ibushi-gin* and continuing to take on global challenges... That’s our hope.”



INFORMATION

from Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation

■New students welcome, the Japanese language course for foreign residents in Japan

We are inviting new students to apply for the Japanese language course starting this May. Classes are for various beginner levels from A to F, and for intermediate level. A total of 10 lessons will take place until July. The tuition fee is ¥3,000 for 10 lessons.

The application is available from April 1st. You can apply at the office of Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation. The capacity is 20 students per class. The application will close once it reaches capacity.

■*Nihongo Hiroba*

On Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays, you can study Japanese with volunteer teachers for an hour and a half. The type of study is a private lesson, or a group lesson with 2 or 3 students. An application is needed, and you can pick it up at the office.

Letter from the Editor

Spring is a season of meeting and farewells. You will have more chances of meeting new people at school or workplaces. There is a saying "*Ichigo Ichie*", which comes from Tea Ceremony. It means that each meeting happens only once in our life. We want you to treasure this moment.

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These names are used with the contributors' permission. Their assistance is much appreciated.

You can read previous issues of "VIVA! ひめじ" on the website of Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation International Exchange Section.

The next issue will be available in June, 2024

We welcome your comments and suggestions. We are also looking for translators and native speakers to assist us with translating and proofreading upcoming editions. If you are interested, please contact us at the address on the right.



Website

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