

LUXURY

LUXURY MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2017



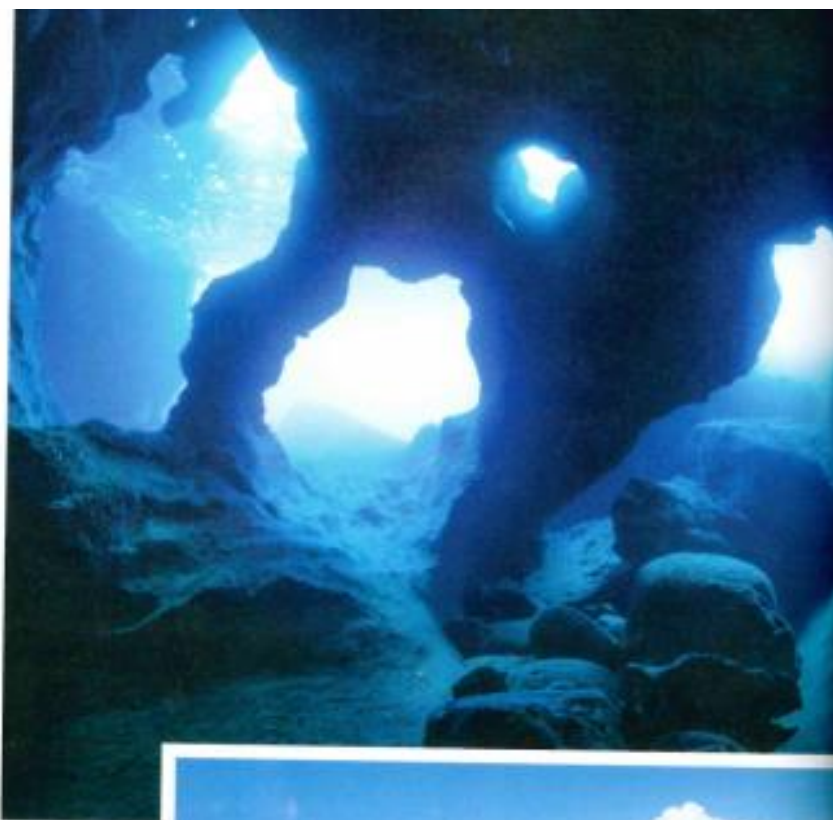
OKINAWA

Snorkeling, surfing, diving to Japan's Atlantis

Just three and a half hours from Tokyo but a completely different world, Okinawa is made up of 161 islands. White-sand beaches. Warm, clear waters. Colorful fish, coral reefs, and the mythical lost continent of Mu (Japan's Atlantis). On Ishigaki Island, swim with gigantic manta rays (there's a popular dive spot called "manta scramble"). On Iriomote, kayak up rivers into dense jungle, then trek to nearly a dozen waterfalls. The Kerama Islands (a new national park) are surrounded by coral reefs, a great place to see exotic fish and explore underwater caves. The sea off remote Yonaguni Island is a popular dive site because of its large population of mostly friendly hammerhead sharks. It is also the location of Japan's real-life Atlantis—walls, pillars, columns, and a star-shaped platform. The inspiration for Pokémon's Abyssal Ruins. reefencounters.org

Surfing's big with locals, especially during typhoon season (August and September), which brings big waves. Favorite spots include Sunabe, Suicide Cliffs (don't ask), and, during typhoon season, Tengan. Source Surf (at Sunabe Seawall) rents boards and has wetsuits in US sizes. sourceokinawa.com

WHERE TO STAY HOSHINOYA Taketomi Island. It's not easy to get to—plane, ferry, and water buffalo cart—but worth the trip. Wake up to birdsong. Lounge on the beach. Bike to town (reserve your bikes before you arrive). Two-person pavilion from \$275; hoshinoyataketomijima.com.



GOOD TO KNOW Eat with locals at Makishi Public Market in Naha (Okinawa Island). Buy fresh seafood—prawns, scallops, conch, and spiny lobsters—from the fish markets on the first floor. Have everything cooked at any one of the restaurants on the second floor for about 500 yen (\$).

GeoEx (geoex.com) offers exclusive nature/culture tours led by Japan expert Don George (he was travel editor of the *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle* for nine years). Zicasso (zicasso.com) and Audley Travel (audleytravel.com) also offer luxury, fully customizable adventure trips to Japan. •