Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Yokosuka City curry festival celebrates Japan's spicy side

By MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs and Barbara Smolinski, Seahawk contributor

A short walk from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Womble Gate, *Mikasa* Park is home to the Imperial Japanese Navy battleship *Mikasa*, and the site of the annual Yokosuka Curry Festival.

The two-day festival held in May features the spicy dish that is one of Japan's most popular meals. For the past 13 years, thousands of people have come from all over the area to showcase and sample the many flavors of curry.

The aroma of grilled meat and spices filled the air enticing people to come partake in the fare. People eagerly stood in lines waiting to try the many curry dishes.

Along the sea wall of *Mikasa* Park, tents were set up with 12 different curry vendors representing their dishes. A sample plate was offered for 500 yen ($6) that included rice and choice of four different curries; each possessing their own unique taste, texture and color.

"I was impressed that curry could be made so many different ways," said Tonya Thomas, a festival participant. "All of them had different flavors. One was floral, one was sweet and one reminded me of chicken and dumplings."

Tables were set up with a view of the historic Japanese battleship *Mikasa*.

The battleship, *Mikasa*, was purchased from the British and was commissioned in 1902. The ship served as the flagship of Admiral Togo Heihachiro. During that time, the British Navy introduced curry to the Japanese Navy. Curry is a dish that is easily made in large quantities and serves as the perfect food while out to sea.

"Yokosuka City has its own recipe called Navy Curry or Kaigun Curry," said Kumiko Skomurski, a Yokosuka-native festival participant. "It's very popular, and curry is still served every Friday at the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force."

Curry is a word that is synonymous with soup or stew. Japanese Curry is thick and hearty. It is most often served with rice, but also noodles and nan bread. The curry sauce or "roux" consists of a mixture of turmeric, coriander, cumin, cardamom, oil and flour, although it's popular to use a premade sauce that is widely available. The other ingredients vary by cook, from vegetables such as potatoes and carrots to meats such as beef and pork.

Day two of the festival, the sun pounded down on *Mikasa* Park, and thousands of people came to enjoy the food, fun and wonderful weather. The food lines wound around the park as people waited patiently for the various dishes. Shaded from the sun in their tents, vendors sold other curry items such as curry cookies, curry bread, curry seaweed and even curry chocolate.

Along with plates of food, festival participants viewed performances by jugglers, singers and magicians.

The Yokosuka Society of Commerce and Industry and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force sponsored this year's Yokosuka City Curry Festival.

A juggler entertains a crowd of people at the 2012 Yokosuka Curry Festival in Mikasa Park May 12-13. The annual festival showcases curry dishes from around the Yokosuka area and the tradition of the dish in the Japanese Navy.
U.S. Navy photo by MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski

"I am thankful for events like this so close to home and the opportunities to enjoy local festivals like this one," said Thomas.

For more information on upcoming events or more information in English about the restaurants, stores and other places of interest in Yokosuka, check out Yokosuka-Ichiban's website at http://www.sukaichi-e.com.

Blue Ridge visit helps sustain Indonesian navy partnership

U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) Commanding officer, Capt. Daniel C. Grieco, receives a welcome lei of flowers during the opening ceremonies of the ship's arrival in Jakarta, Indonesia May 11. These port visits represent an opportunity for *Blue Ridge* to serve as goodwill ambassadors of the U.S.; promoting peace and stability in the region and demonstrating the commitment to regional partnerships and fostering relations.
U.S. Navy photo byMC3 Fidel C. Hart

By MC2 Timmy Wakefield, *USS Blue Ridge* Public Affairs

JAKARTA, INDONESIA -- Sailors from 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), embarked 7th Fleet staff and Marines assigned to Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Pacific arrived in Jakarta for a port visit, strengthening bonds between the American and Indonesian navies and governments May 11.

Blue Ridge was last establishing goodwill and maintaining relationships throughout the Jakarta April 2010.

During this port visit, *Blue Ridge* intends to do the same through community service, sporting events with host nationals and interacting with the community.

"Visits like this allow us to continue to strengthen our relationship and share similar interest through our professionalism and personal interactions," said *Blue Ridge* Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Ralston. "This development is critical because *Blue Ridge* and the Indonesian navy have collaborated on major humanitarian assistance operations, including the December 2004 tsunami and the September 2009 earthquake.

Blue Ridge and 7th Fleet staff Sailors will join locals during community outreach projects in Jakarta. Events include visiting a children's home and and participating in various sporting events. The 7th Fleet band will also perform and some of the crew will spend their spare time experiencing Jakarta's culture, shopping and food.

"I've never been to this port before so I'm not sure what to expect," said Engineman Fireman Jonnary Pagan. "That's what makes it so intriguing for me. I just keep an open mind about every new place I go so I'm always learning from the cultures I experience."

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Fiscal Year 2013 chief board package deadline approaches

Sailors who have submitted a iscal Year 2013 Chief Petty Officer Selection Board package to the can confirm its receipt at Navy Personnel Command officials said May 14.

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Childrens book author visits local students, mentors creativity

Deborah Nourse Lattimore, author and illustrator of children's books, visited students at The Sullivan's Elementary School on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka May 4.

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