

Okinawa Day 2024

Press Release

Okinawa Day 2024

Organiser: London Okinawa Sanshinkai

Representative Members: Takeshi Hayatsu and Junko Nakamoto

Location: The Blue Market, Bermondsey, London SE16 3UQ

Date and time: Saturday 22nd June 2024, 11:00-17:00

Summary

London Okinawa Day is a yearly festival celebrating the unique music, food, and culture of Japan's southernmost prefecture. Okinawa Prefecture encompasses an archipelago of islands in Southern Japan that formed part of the historic Ryukyu Kingdom and as such has its own distinct music and traditions.

Okinawa Day 2024 is a family friendly event that will introduce the audience to music, dances, and food from the islands of the Ryukyu archipelago to highlight its incredibly rich cultural diversity.

Okinawa Day 2024 Event Plan

Performance Stage

A variety of performances showcasing Okinawan culture will feature throughout the day. From elegant Ryukyu Classical Music and energetic sanshin performances of Okinawan Folk Songs to traditional Eisa dance performances. There will be the chance to try Eisa dance through a workshop taught by the Sonda Youth Association along with demonstrations of Ryukyu Karate, a martial art originating from Okinawa.

In addition, guest performers from the Japanese islands of Yaeyama and Amami will be visiting the UK to showcase their unique island folk songs and dances. Visitors can also expect to see guest performers from Switzerland and France thanks to our long-standing friendship with the Paris Sanshin Club.

Food and Goods Stalls

Taking advantage of the venue's historic use as a street market, Okinawan cuisine, food, and crafts will be on sale from a variety of stalls run by the *London Okinawa Sanshinkai* and other independent retailers.

About Us

London Okinawa Sanshinkai

London Okinawa Sanshinkai was formed in 1999 at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) by academics specialising in Ryukyu Classical Music and Yaeyama Folk Songs studies. Since then, the group has been disseminating Okinawan music, dances and culture through a variety of activities and performances not only in the UK but also in other European countries. At the centre of these activities is our annual “Okinawa Day” event.

A history of “Okinawa Day” in the UK

There have been many events in London over the years introducing traditional Okinawan music and dance to the UK. Notably, the *Rinken Band's* performance in Hyde Park, *Sonda Eisa's* performance at the Thames Festival, and recitals by *Shinji Kise* (Master of the Nomura School of Ryukyu Classical Music).

In June 2009, *London Okinawa Sanshinkai* and *Okinawa Kenjinkai* (The UK Okinawan Association) organised an event called “Okinawa Matsuri” at Café Oto in North East London. In Okinawa, a public holiday called Memorial Day is observed annually on the 23rd June, and to coincide with this, we have been holding our London Okinawa Day event on the third Saturday of June ever since.

Since 2010, the event has been held under its new name “Okinawa Day”. Moving its location to Spitalfields in East London, it has successfully run for 10 years, growing to the point of attracting an audience of around 8000 visitors each year.

Unfortunately, from 2020, Okinawa Day was on a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, but had a successful second start in 2022 in a new location; The Blue Market in Bermondsey, South London (<https://thebluemarket.co.uk>). The Blue Market, built with a unique architectural style focusing on sustainability and community was a perfect fit for our event and allowed 2023's Okinawa Day to be our biggest and most captivating yet. The Blue Market's central philosophy of embracing the diversity of people and culture matches our own and we hope to attract even more people, from all backgrounds, to enjoy this year's Okinawa Day and celebrate music from across the world.

As usual, Okinawa Day 2024 will be held on Saturday 22nd June at The Blue Market, Bermondsey.

Contact:

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London Okinawa Sanshinkai

Website: <https://sanshinkai.uk/>

Okinawa Day Media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/okinawadayinlondon>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/okinawaday.uk/>

Okinawa Day 2023 (Youtube):

https://youtu.be/Ux5P_VrF62g?si=K6iSHXpi9H8zr6iS

https://youtu.be/FplH_Jlh_dc?si=hJHJLbL4XOjDuxpx

Committee Members

Stage Manager: Sherry Sugita

Stalls Manager: Saori Motohashi

Web Master: Paul Battley

PR Manager: Richard Green

Sponsors & Partners

The Blue Market <https://thebluemarket.co.uk>

Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau <https://www.ocvb.or.jp>

Sakai TransEuro Ltd <https://sakaieurope.com/london/>

SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) <https://www.soas.ac.uk>