

***This post was originally published on [www.okinawahai.com](http://www.okinawahai.com) on 05/27/2009***

***Editor's Note: This is the original Okinawa Hai post on the Expressway and ETC. We published a newer post on this establishment in 2015. We've left all of your original comments in place on this post, but we thought after 7 years you might want a fresher take on the place.***

When we first got to Okinawa, I was leery of using the Expressway simply because I didn't know anything about it. I didn't know where its exits dumped out; I didn't know how much it cost; heck, I didn't even know how to get on the thing! Eventually I got tired of inching along in traffic between lights on Routes 58 and 330, so decided to give the expressway a shot.

Not knowing exactly what to do, I proceeded forward in my lane, which happened to be the wrong thing to do! I'd entered the "ETC" lane, which is reserved for those with toll passes - definitely not me. As I sat in the car wondering "Now what?", a voice said something in Japanese over a loud speaker. Since I don't understand Japanese (and was pretty sure it wasn't saying "I am the GREAT and POWERFUL OZzzzz!") I continued to sit, now embarrassed because cars were piling up behind me. Before long a worker trotted out, explained I was in the wrong lane, and very kindly handed me a ticket, gesturing for me to use the other lane next time.

That was several months ago, and now I'm quite the pro at using the Expressway. It's really very easy. Unlike American Freeways which have separate on-ramps for going different directions, the Okinawa Expressway has one all purpose entry way. Enter through the lanes with glowing green lights, stop just long enough to grab a ticket which is automatically ejected from a machine which chirps "Please take a ticket!" in English, then choose the the direction you want to go, North towards Nago, or South towards Naha. Both choices are clearly marked in English. Tool along until the desired exit comes up. Upcoming exits are clearly marked with signs.

Exit procedure is orderly and much like the entry procedure:  
Choose one of the green-light lanes, pull up to the toll booth, hand the friendly worker your ticket, and pay the fee - Yen or Visa only: no American cash.  
Taking the expressway can easily cut your driving time in half, especially if you are going all the way to Nago.

Below is a listing of the entry/exit numbers for the expressway, and the roads they intersect.

10. Kyoda (Nago), with Route 58
9. Ginoza , with Route 329
8. Kin, with Route 329

- x. (not a full exit) Igei Service Area
- 7. Yaka (Kin), with Prefectural Route 88
- 6. Ishikawa (Uruma), with Prefectural Route 73
- 5. Kita, with Route 329
- 4. Minami, with Prefectural Route 23
- 3. Kitanakagusuku, with Prefectural Route 29
- x. (not a full exit) Nakagusuku Parking Area
- 2. Nishihara, with Route 330
- 1-1. Nishihara Junction with Naha Airport Expressway
- 1. Naha (Haeburu), with Prefectural Route 8

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Now that I'm a frequent-flier on the Expressway, I've been considering the Electronic Toll Collection (ETC). Basically, it's an electronic device that mounts in the car, which is used in conjunction with an electronic card, both of which are available at The Spot located on Camp Foster in a cool little shop owned and operated by this very nice woman whose name I would be able to tell you if I wasn't having the most scatterbrained year of my entire life.

The purpose of the ETC is to save money, and lots of it, if you are a frequent user of the Expressway. You see, the tolls are cut in half for ETC users during peak travel hours. However, there is a fee for the equipment (available for monthly rent or to purchase), so using the ETC isn't for everybody. One must do the math and decide if it will be a savings or not.