

Trends in Japan

Lifestyle

This section covers the latest developments in a wide variety of fields and products in which Japanese innovations often spread to other countries, such as health, leisure, and communication.

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Golf Simulators Bring 18 Holes Within Easy Reach



Golf is one of Japan's most popular athletic diversions. However, it takes a great deal of time and effort. Golf simulators provide an easier option by enabling golf enthusiasts to squeeze in a realistic round on the way home from work or during other windows of leisure time.



New Products for Watching the Stars



2009 is the International Year of Astronomy, marking 400 years since Galileo Galilei used the first telescope to open a window on the stars. Japan has a great many astronomy enthusiasts of all ages, and there are over 200 observatories situated throughout the country. This year has seen a surge in both sales of Japanese-made telescopes and the number of stargazers. Interest in the night sky and the planets is growing, and several hot new products have appeared to cater to this trend.



Rice-Flour Bread, Pasta, and . . . Jam!

Japan's Traditional Staple Shows Its Versatility

Most people think of bread, cake, and pasta as products made from wheat flour, but it has recently become possible to make them from rice flour too. Rice is a food that is close to the hearts of Japanese people, and has long been

used to make *mochi* rice cakes and other traditional Japanese sweets. But new technology that allows rice to be milled as finely as wheat has opened up an array of new possibilities for this ancient staple. Rice flour has many advantages: it is lower in calories than wheat flour, contains higher levels of protein and other nutrients, and results in a soft, springy texture that brings out the sweet taste of rice as it is chewed. Add to this the fact that it can be enjoyed even by people who suffer from gluten allergies, and it is no surprise that rice flour is growing in popularity.



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Rice-flour pasta



Jam made with rice