

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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Men in the Teahouse

Tea Ceremony Serves to Soothe Stress



A tea ceremony lesson in progress.



A photo of an *ikebana* lesson.
(C)Ikebana Sessyu-ryu

The tea ceremony, known in Japanese as *sado* or *chanoyu*, has been regarded as an art that is largely preferred by women. In a developing trend, however, a growing number of men are stopping by tea ceremony salons on their way home from work. Classes teaching other Japanese arts, such as *ikebana* (flower arrangement) and traditional musical instruments like the *shamisen*, are also attracting more male enthusiasts. The overall picture is of men revisiting the artistic traditions that have spiritually supported the Japanese down the ages.



A cover illustration from the *Hyogemono* manga. (C)Yoshihiro Yamada / Kodansha

Hotpots for Health and Beauty

Soymilk and Collagen and Tomato Feature in New Varieties of *Nabe*



Collagen *nabe*.

No dish is better suited to Japan's cold winter nights than the *nabe*, or hotpot. Sitting with friends and family around a simmering pot full of vegetables, fish, and meat has been a favorite wintertime activity of the Japanese for generations. Boiling softens the fibers in the vegetables, making it easier to gobble up large, healthy portions of the nutrients they contain, while the bubbling soup soaks up vitamins and minerals from the meat and fish and is full of nutritious goodness. The combination of piping hot food and lively conversation warms both body and soul and makes the *nabe* perfect for get-togethers with friends and family.



Tomato *nabe*. (C) KAGOME CO., LTD.



Soymilk *nabe*. (C) ikimonoya Corp.

Transforming Trucks

Vehicles Offer a Wide Range of Mobile Services

If you thought that trucks were simply a way to transport goods from one place to another, think again. Innovative trucks have been hitting the roads of Japan recently, sporting trailers that have been converted for use as restaurants, offices, and other purposes. Their mobility gives them the advantage of being able to take their services to customers, rather than the other way around, and they also incur fewer costs compared with operating from brick-and-mortar structures.



The mobile travel agency.



The exterior of the sushi bar truck.
(C) TME 2009



Inside the sushi bar truck, where sushi is prepared and sold. Diners can also eat inside the truck.
(C) TME 2009



The exterior of a mobile securities brokerage.

B-Grade Cuisine Gets an "A" for Taste

Local Dishes Become National Hits



Yokote yakisoba

Home-style dishes previously known only to people in particular regions of Japan are increasingly finding favor nationwide. These "B-grade" local specialties, as they are known, include dishes that were until recently popular within such a narrow geographic area that even people living in the next town had never heard of them. What all B-grade local cuisine has in common is that it is tasty, filling, and reasonably priced. Various events are now being organized to harness these dishes as a means of revitalizing local communities.



Hachinohe senbei-jiru



Atsugi shirokoro horumon