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Restaurants,
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8-page pullout





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A Taste of Japan



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RESTAURANT INFO



Chocolate bananas
The most popular sweet item



Photos courtesy of Live Japan

Let's start from street food sweets! Out of the tens of varieties of sweets available, chocolate bananas came in as the most popular! It's also ranked as a familiar food item on street food menus. What do foreign visitors find so appealing about chocolate bananas?

"Aren't chocolate and bananas the perfect combination? It's also colourful and cute!" (Kazakhstan, 10s, Female)

"Chocolate bananas will never let you down! This combination is the best." (Korea, 20s, Female)

"With a thick chocolate coating, I like that it feels up my stomach. No matter where I eat it the taste is consistent, which is great." (USA, 20s, Male)

With a thick chocolate coating and colourful sprinkles, chocolate bananas are really photogenic. More than 80% of our respondents have eaten chocolate bananas before, and almost all of them expressed their love for it. The perfect pairing of chocolate and bananas is a sentiment shared across borders.

Imagawayaki

The Japanese street food sweet that everyone wants to try the most



When asked which street food they would like to try the most, the answer that came up is imagawayaki, a pancake filled with sweet red bean paste. What's so special about this sweet?

"The shape is pretty and seems really tasty! I also love red beans." (France, teens, Female)

"I haven't eaten it before, but we have something similar back in Korea, and it smells really delicious." (Korea, 20s, Female)

"I've eaten taiyaki (fish-shaped pancake stuffed with sweet red bean paste) before and it was really delicious, and I think imagawayaki looks really great too." (USA, 20s, Male)

The main reason for wanting to eat imagawayaki is that it looks delicious. With such a beautiful shape like a taiko drum, it's easy to be intrigued by it. There are also those who expressed their preference for red beans, and amongst those who have eaten taiyaki before, there are many who expressed the desire to eat imagawayaki.

Japan Culture Ranking of street food in the Land of the Rising Sun

In Japan, one thing you definitely can't miss out on is street food gourmet! Recently, the variety of street food available has increased considerably, and the menus available have likewise

increased as well. With such a wide variety of street food available amongst foreigners?

Baby Castella

Neither too small, too big, nor too sweet



The next most popular street food sweet item after chocolate bananas is the baby castella. A one-bite sweet item that tastes like pancakes, it's found not just at street food stores at festivals, but is popular at tourist destinations such as Asakusa as well. We hear why foreign visitors like baby castella so much!

"The size of the baby castella is perfect. It's just nice for eating while walking. On top of that, festivals have many sweet desserts, and the baby castella is not too sweet, making it easy for adults to stomach as well." (England, 30s, Male)

"It's the perfect sweet to eat when you're hungry. With a familiar rich taste, I immediately fell in love with it." (France, teens, Female)

Baby castella are made of flour, baking powder, eggs, sugar, honey, and milk, simple ingredients that combine together to make this wonderful sweet. Its light sweetness stole the hearts of many foreign visitors, making it a hot favourite!

Another reason for its popularity is not just the taste, but the size as well. In contrast to food items that fall apart easily as you eat them, this is one food that is easy to eat while walking, and the ability to share it with others is a definite plus. Wanting to share the feeling of excitement while eating street food with your friends is natural, and this sweet allows you to do just that!

The least favourite street food sweet

Mizuame,

which many cannot seem to enjoy



Mizuame, or millet jelly, is another street food sweet popular amongst foreign visitors, though many said that they do not want to eat it more when interviewed.

"Mizuame is too sweet! It's not naturally sweet, just full of sugar. Children will probably enjoy, but I don't eat it." (France, 30s, Male)

A popular sweet amongst Japan children, this is the least popular sweet amongst foreign visitors, because of its overly sweet taste. As mizuame is considered a sweet even amongst other sweets and desserts, it's definitely not for those who don't like sweet food.

Besides mizuame, there are other street food sweets that people come to dislike after trying them out.

"I don't like imagawayaki. In France, beans usually aren't eaten sweet, and I feel some revulsion to eating it. I can't wrap my head around its sweetness." (France, 20s, Female)

Though the street food sweet that people would most like to try is imagawayaki, there are some who expressed distaste for it as well.

In Japan, there are many sweets and desserts made with sweetened beans, such as sweet red bean, but there are some foreign visitors who feel some reluctance to eat sweet beans. Due to the difference in food cultures, we can clearly see the difference in food preferences.

Future Shock Street foods in the Rising Sun

BY FUJICO,
LIVE JAPAN

This time, we asked foreigners from six different countries staying in Japan about their favorite and least favorite street food gourmet foods and sweets!

It is **Unshakeable popularity!**
Okonomiyaki
is the most popular street food!

Takoyaki
Surprisingly has people
who do not enjoy it

The most unpopular
Japanese street food:
**Corn dogs and
frankfurters**



Next, we'll be moving on to street foods! With its pungent aroma greeting you at festivals, it's a street food you usually end up eating anyway, and it's popular amongst foreign visitors as well.

"Of course okonomiyaki! I don't just eat them at street food stores, I even go to restaurants just to eat them too." (France, 20s, Female)

"I like okonomiyaki and Hiroshima yaki (okonomiyaki cooked in a style unique to Hiroshima). The sauce and pancake batter are a great match, and is very delicious" (Papua New Guinea, 30s, Male)

"In Korea, there's a similar dish to okonomiyaki called chijimi (spicy Korean pancake), and it's a very familiar taste." (Korea, 20s, Female)

A hot favourite amongst Japanese, okonomiyaki is also the most popular street food amongst foreign visitors. As Japanese food is also popular the world over, there are many people who have eaten okonomiyaki before they even come to Japan. Tempted by its fragrance at street food stalls, there are many who end up eating it when they come.

Similar to okonomiyaki, takoyaki is also one of the kings of Japanese street food. Though you'd think that there are many foreign visitors who would enjoy it as well, there were many surprising answers.

"I can't eat octopus! Especially in takoyaki, there are large pieces of octopus inside, aren't there? I definitely can't eat it." (USA, 20s, Male)

Especially amongst westerners, there are many who don't like octopus and squid, resulting in a resounding distaste for takoyaki. There are many who find the slimy-looking texture of octopus unappetizing, and they don't eat it back in their home countries. However, there are some who enjoy it as well!

"I've liked takoyaki since I came to Japan. I often eat it as a snack as well." (France, 20s, Female)

"I like the combination of ingredients in takoyaki. If you're in Japan, you definitely must eat it." (Netherlands, 40s, Female)

For foreigners who are used to Japanese food, properly grilled octopus doesn't seem to be an issue for them. There are those who eat it as a snack, and who will definitely eat them at street food stalls. Because of the ingredients of takoyaki, there is a clear divide between those who like and dislike it.

Corn dogs and frankfurters are popular not just in Japan, but in other countries as well. However, there are many who don't like to eat them at street food stores, and we find out why.

"Corn dogs and frankfurters are food items that I can buy from the convenience store just down the street. I can easily buy it anywhere, I think it's better not to buy it at a street food store." (Kazakhstan, 10s, Female)

"Honestly, I can eat it outside of Japan, I don't think of eating it here." (USA, 20s, Male)

Corn dogs and frankfurters are foods that you can easily buy anywhere, and not just at street food stores. As there are those who usually eat them in their home countries, they don't eat them at festivals in Japan.

It's not unpopular because it's disgusting, but many feel that there are other foods that they'd much rather eat instead.

File photo

File photo



Perfectly yummy recipe for pasta pomodoro

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES JAPAN

If cooking isn't your forte, but a nice meal is something you want to try to master, try pasta pomodoro! With a variety of tomato sauces available in your local commissary or grocery store, this dish is easy to cook and a tough one to mess up.

One afternoon, after another Work-from-Home day, I threw on my apron and tried to recreate a familiar recipe from my days as a server at an Italian restaurant about 20 years ago. Although I've cooked it at home from time to time since then, the results have always been pretty consistent.

There are no secrets to the recipe below, but I would like to share one tip: fry garlic at the beginning just until it's turned golden brown. Don't overcook because burned garlic will ruin the taste of the sauce. Like people say: the first step is always the hardest.

Give it a try but also make it your own as it goes well with many different toppings and ingredients. Other popular variations include bacon, tuna, and sausage. I love simple and spicy pasta, so I added eggplant, tomatoes, and red chili.

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INGREDIENTS

- 7 garlic cloves
- Water [roughly 70% of a pot, enough to let pasta soak in]
- 120 grams of store-bought pasta [I used "Ma Ma Spaghetti" a Japanese brand with a thickness of 1.4 millimeters]
- Two tomatoes
- Two eggplants
- A few sprigs of parsley (for topping)
- 180~200 grams of tomato sauce (I used Prego Italian Sauce)
- Two red chillies plus a morsel of sliced red chillies (add as needed)

RECIPE (FOR ONE PERSON)

Before you start cooking, prepare ingredients by chopping garlic cloves into small pieces, dicing tomatoes into medium-sized chunks and dicing eggplants. Also, chop some parsley.



Eggplants



Garlic



Tomatoes



Parsley

3. While pasta is boiling, fry garlic and red chili with olive oil in a frying pan just until the garlic is golden brown.



4. Add sliced tomatoes and eggplants into the pan and fry for a minute or so until the vegetables are tender.



5. Next, add the tomato sauce and fry for another minute or so, then remove from heat. Wait until the pasta is cooked to the softness desired by the cook.



6. Once the pasta is ready, strain the water and incorporate the pasta into the pan with the tomato sauce. Fry over high or medium-high heat for another minute or so.



7. Plate your pasta and top with chopped parsley.



8. Enjoy!

1. Bring water in a pot to a boil on high heat.
2. Add the pasta to the boiling water and turn the heat down to medium-heat. Leave the pasta in for about five minutes.



VIEW VIDEO!



Popping up Disney's Pooh Popcorn

View video!



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES JAPAN

These days popcorn comes in a variety of flavors. When you have options such as “Gin and Tonic” popcorn or “Eggnog” popcorn, “honey” popcorn may not sound that unique. However, the taste of this snack available around Pooh’s Honey Hunt, a popular attraction of Tokyo Disneyland, can be a big surprise.

I stumbled upon a recipe for this popcorn on a YouTube channel. Although not the theme park’s official recipe, the video’s hot popcorn mixing with the yummy-looking honey sauce made up my mind — I had to give it a try!

The cost of materials was very reasonable. All I needed was a pack of popcorn kernels from the Daiso 100-yen store and butter. Everything else this recipe called for I had at home.

The recipe seemed pretty simple and straightforward, too. The first step was to fry the kernels, then heat the honey, sugar and butter before

mixing with the popped corn kernels.

When I gave it a try, however, it turned out to be a lot more eventful than it was supposed to be. Kernels went flying in all directions when I foolishly, and out of curiosity, removed the lid during the first step. Later, when attempting to let the glazed popcorn cool, I made the mistake of placing them on a paper towel instead of parchment paper. Needless to say, it took a bit of effort to peel off the paper towel from the batch of popcorn.

Redemption came when I had my first taste of these delicious puffs. I could hardly stop eating the sweet popcorn, just like Winnie the Pooh can’t stop thinking of anything but honey.

My cooking was a bit too adventurous, but, just like the stories in the Hundred-Acre Wood, this, too, worked out OK in the end!

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Honey Popcorn



- Based upon Kotori's Kitchen on YouTube -

Materials

- Popcorn kernel --- 35g
- Oil ----- 15g
- Honey ----- 30g
- Butter ----- 30g
- Salt ----- A pinch.
- This is unnecessary if your butter includes salt.
- Sugar ----- 20g

Recipe

1 Put popcorn kernels and oil in a pan (or a pot) and mix them.



2 Put the pan over medium heat. Make sure you put a lid on the pot while heating.



3 When the popcorn starts bouncing, shake the pan.



4 Once the kernels are done with popping, put the popcorn on a plate and let them cool down.



5 In the pan, mix butter (30g), sugar (20g), and honey (30g) together. (Add a pinch of salt if the butter is unsalted)



6 Place the pan over medium heat and keep stirring the ingredients to avoid burning the sauce.



7 The sauce gets thick and its color changes gradually.



8 When the sauce turns brownish, turn off the stove.



9 Add the popcorn back in the pan and mix them with the sauce quickly.



10 Spread the popcorn out on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and let it cool. (Make sure to spread the popcorn as the sauce is sticky and this will ensure the popcorn is coated separately.)



11 Once the sauce has hardened on the popcorn, it's time to enjoy! いただきます (Bon appetite)!





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