



Japan's Vending Machines for Everything

Article: Japan's Vending Machines for Everything

When you think of a vending machine, you might imagine a place to buy snacks or drinks. But in Japan, vending machines are much more than that. They sell everything from hot meals and fresh eggs to flowers, umbrellas, and even clothing.

Japan has one of the highest numbers of vending machines per person in the world, over 4 million! You can find them on almost every corner, in train stations, side streets, and even in the countryside. Many run 24 hours a day and are very well maintained.

Why are vending machines so popular in Japan? One reason is convenience. People can quickly grab what they need without waiting in line or talking to a clerk. Another reason is Japan's strong culture of safety, machines are rarely vandalized or broken into, which makes them reliable.

Some vending machines in Japan are even high-tech. They have touchscreens, cameras that suggest drinks based on your age or the weather, and payment systems that accept cashless cards or mobile apps. Others are designed for emergencies, offering water, food, and batteries during natural disasters like earthquakes.

There are also vending machines that support local businesses. For example, farmers can sell fresh fruit or vegetables through machines near train stations. This helps connect people in the city with rural communities.

For visitors, vending machines are a fun way to experience Japanese culture. You might find unusual items like ramen in a can, ice cream, or handmade toys. Some people even travel around the country just to discover the rarest or strangest vending machines.

In Japan, vending machines are more than just machines, they are part of daily life, combining technology, tradition, and a touch of surprise.



Vocabulary Practice

Word / Phrase	Definition
Vending machine	A machine that sells items when money or a card is used.
Convenience	The quality of being easy and quick to use.
Clerk	A person who works in a store and helps customers.
Vandalize	To damage or destroy something on purpose.
Touchscreen	A screen you can control by touching.
Cashless	Using cards or mobile apps instead of money.
Emergency	A serious situation that needs fast action, like a natural disaster.
Local business	A small shop or company in a specific town or area.
Countryside	Areas outside cities and towns, usually with farms or nature.
Tradition	A custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time.

Comprehension Questions

1. What are some unusual things sold in Japan's vending machines?
2. Why are vending machines popular in Japan?
3. How do vending machines support local businesses?
4. What kind of technology is used in modern Japanese vending machines?
5. What makes vending machines a unique part of Japanese culture?

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have vending machines in your country? What do they usually sell?
2. Would you buy food from a vending machine? Why or why not?
3. What is the most surprising thing you've ever seen in a vending machine?
4. How do vending machines make life more convenient?
5. Do you think vending machines will become more common in the future? Why?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of vending machines?
7. Would you trust a vending machine to sell you medicine or fresh food?
8. What would you put in your own vending machine if you could design one?
9. Do vending machines take away jobs, or do they help in other ways?
10. Would you enjoy visiting Japan's vending machines as a tourist? Why?