

## 1

## Article :

## To Fight COVID, Open Family Friendly Sushi Restaurants

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

Staying ahead of the curve and adapting to COVID-19, one Japanese pub chain is switching to sushi in its search for economic success in the pandemic.

Pub food or sushi? Watami Co., Ltd., a major izakaya (pub) chain, announced on December 8, 2021 that its first sushi restaurant, “Sushi no Wa” was opening in Tokyo the next day.

Izakayas have been struggling in the COVID-19 pandemic. For much of 2021, service of alcoholic beverages was discouraged. Bars and restaurants were pushed to close early, while business centers were deserted.

This new move is intended to recover sales.

Catering to families, the chain will open stores by train stations and residential areas with a plan to expand to 100 stores nationwide in the next five years.

Unlike conveyor belt kaiten zushi, Sushi no Wa’s chefs will personally roll out the sushi. The price has been set to start at ¥96 JPY (about \$1 USD) per piece. An extended menu with skewered chicken yakitori and chanko nabe (a type of meat and vegetable hot pot popularly eaten by sumo wrestlers) will also be on offer.

The Watami group was running 450 Izakaya Japanese-style pubs back in 2019. But with the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of customers has dropped since then.

Changing its business format is the company’s approach to overcoming the downward trend. Currently the group is operating only 280 Izakaya pubs, while also diversifying into yakiniku Korean barbecue restaurants.

“I wanted sushi as another weapon to change the business format, in addition to yakiniku,” said company chairman and president Miki Watanabe in the December 8 press conference.

Source: To Fight COVID, Open Family Friendly Sushi Restaurants

<https://japan-forward.com/corona-ni-makeruna-to-fight-covid-open-family-friendly-sushi-restaurants/>

## 2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

- 1. ahead of the curve** 先手を打って、時代を先取りして  
Teenage girls are always trying to be ahead of the curve with new styles and trends.
- 2. struggle** 悪戦苦闘する、苦戦する、何とかしようと苦勞する、奮闘する、難航する、もがく  
She struggled with her new work environment at first, but now she is a project leader.
- 3. be intended to** ～することを目的としている、～用のものである、～するよう意図されている  
This class is intended to introduce students to basic theories of political economy.
- 4. downward trend** 下落傾向、減少傾向  
The prime minister emphasized that he would deal with downward trend in employment.

## 3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

- 1. What have many pubs and restaurants been struggling with during the pandemic?**
- 2. How Watami is trying to overcome the struggle?**
- 3. Have you stopped eating out and/or drinking at izakaya since the pandemic began?**
- 4. What other industries have been hit hard by the pandemic?**

## 4

## 日本語関連記事：

## 「もう一つ武器が欲しかった」ワタミ、すし事業参入 5年で全国100店舗

外食大手のワタミは8日、すしを提供する新業態の店「すしの和」1号店を9日に東京都内に開くと発表した。新型コロナウイルス禍で居酒屋が苦戦しており、すし事業への参入で売り上げ拡大を目指す。家族連れを狙って住宅街に近い駅前に出店し、5年で全国100店舗に広げる方針だ。

すしの和は回転ずしではなく、従業員が握る。価格は1貫96円からに設定した。すしのほか、焼き鳥やちゃんこ鍋も提供する。

ワタミの居酒屋は2019年に450店あったが、コロナ禍で客足が落ちたのをきっかけに業態転換にかじを切った。現在は居酒屋を280店に減らし、焼き肉店への転換を進めている。

東京都内で記者会見した渡辺美樹会長兼社長はすし事業に参入する理由を「業態転換のために、焼き肉に加えてもう一つ武器が欲しかった」と説明した。

出典：「もう一つ武器が欲しかった」ワタミ、すし事業参入 5年で全国100店舗

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%e3%80%8c%e3%82%82%e3%81%86%e4%b8%80%e3%81%a4%e6%ad%a6%e5%99%a8%e3%81%8c%e6%ac%b2%e3%81%97%e3%81%8b%e3%81%a3%e3%81%9f%e3%80%8d%e3%83%af%e3%82%bf%e3%83%9f%e3%80%81%e3%81%99%e3%81%97%e4%ba%8b%e6%a5%ad/>

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