

## 1

## Article :

## How Vending Machines are Evolving for our COVID-19 Lifestyle

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

New vending machines offer fresh vegetables and frozen meals, and plenty in between, with contactless sales and 24-hour convenience for the pandemic lifestyle.

Vending machines offering hot snacks have been popular since the Showa era (1926-1989), but the traditional type are gradually fading out of sight. On the other hand, vending machines that use the latest technology—like AI—are beginning to permeate our lives.

One reason for the shift may have to do with our limited face-to-face interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. But these vending machines have also been gaining popularity as ways to reduce food loss, while also offering a shopping experience that doesn't require human contact.

The machines have a colorful appearance inspired by earth and grass, sun and sky. When you peek inside, there are brilliant salads that look like those offered at restaurants. This latest type has been installed by the company SALAD STAND in the office building SHIBUYA SOLASTA in Tokyo's Shibuya district.

The "Steamed Chicken and Quinoa Nutritional Salad" consists of greens like romaine, frilled lettuce, and spinach, along with steamed chicken, quinoa (a grain known as a superfood), almonds, oranges, and other choices for a total of 15 ingredients, all for ¥980 JPY (\$8.50 USD). The crisp greens and the crunchy almonds give the salad a fun texture. The special dressing is rich and flavorful, and the salad comes decorated with edible flowers for an extra touch of color.

According to Nobuaki Arai, the executive officer of KOMPEITO (Shibuya Ward, Tokyo), the company that operates SALAD STAND, the salad vending machine was set up as an experiment starting in November 2020, and went into full operation in November 2021. They plan to install more in shopping facilities and office buildings throughout the city.

These vending machines meet the need of contactless shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic through their cashless payment options and the fact that employees don't need to act as intermediaries.

They're also equipped with the latest technology—like AI—to grapple with food waste. According to Yuki Umezu, the company director, they're measuring the number of people who pass by and those who stop at the vending machine using an AI sensor.

The AI analyzes that data, as well as other data like expiration dates, to adjust the number of offered items and the timing of discounts to prevent products from remaining unsold. They plan to increase the AI's precision by adding data such as weather information.

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<https://japan-forward.com/corona-ni-makeruna-how-vending-machines-are-evolving-for-our-covid-19-lifestyle/>

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テキストの無断転載・無断使用を固く禁じます。

## 1

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Directions: Read the following article aloud.

**Long-Term Storage, Reduced Loss**

Vending machines offering frozen foods are another type that are rapidly increasing during the pandemic.

Sanden Retail Systems (Sumida Ward), a maker of frozen-food vending machines, began marketing their Dohiemon model in January 2021, quickly selling 1,000 units in the first half of the same year, with installations in all 47 of Japan's prefectures. "Maybe it's because of the demand for restaurants to operate for shorter hours during the pandemic, but many restaurants have added the vending machines as a new business model," states the company's PR representative Hitomi Haga.

Technican, a company that uses a special liquid freezing technology, owns the frozen-food specialty store, TOMIN FROZEN (Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture). They have started using the Dohiemon model vending machines in their own stores, where they offer a variety of frozen lunch boxes such as beef tongue bentos.

"By using liquid freezing, the rice doesn't get dry and the hand-cooked beef tongue retains the aroma of charcoal it acquired when the chef grilled it by hand. This method allows consumers to enjoy the food's original freshly-cooked flavor," says the head of the company's PR department, Hideki Tsudatani. It has a long expiration date of a year, and the risk of food loss is low.

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## 2 Key phrases and vocabulary

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

### 1. latest 最新の、直近の

I usually check the latest news on BBC website.

### 2. have to do with ～ ～と関係がある・つながりがある、～に関与している

He was fired suddenly. Does it have to do with the argument he had with the boss last week?

### 3. inspired by ～ ～に着想を得た、～からアイデアを得た、～に刺激・触発された

This movie was inspired by a true story.

### 4. meet a/the need ニーズに応える、要求を満たす

The school offers higher level IT courses to meet the needs of a broad range of students.

### 5. pass by 通りかかる、付近を通る、通り過ぎる、時間が過ぎる

A car slowly passed by the front of the house.

## 3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How has the pandemic affected the vending machine trends?
2. What technologies enable the new types of vending machines?
3. Have you bought or seen anything unique that are sold in vending machines?
4. What would be available to buy in vending machines in the future?

## 4

**日本語関連記事：**  
**進化系自販機 コロナ禍で続々**

昭和の頃に人気だったホットスナックの自動販売機が町から消えていく一方で、人工知能(AI)など、最新のテクノロジーを備えた食品自販機が暮らしに浸透しはじめている。新型コロナウイルスの感染拡大で人との対面が制約されるなか、非接触で購入できるのに加え、食品ロスの削減につながる一面もあり、注目を集めている。

土と草、空と太陽をイメージしたというカラフルな外観。中をのぞくと、レストランで提供されるような、彩り豊かなサラダが並ぶ。サラダを販売する最新の自販機「SALAD STAND(サラダスタンド)」は、東京・渋谷にあるオフィスビル「渋谷ソラスタ」に設置されていた。

「蒸し鶏とキヌアの栄養サラダ」は、ロメインレタスとフリルレタス、ハウレンソウなどの葉物野菜に、蒸し鶏、高い栄養価で知られる雑穀「キヌア」やアーモンド、オレンジなど全15種類の食材が入って980円。シャキッとした葉物野菜に、カリッとしたアーモンドなど歯応えの変化も楽しい。特製のドレッシングは濃厚でコクがあり、エディブルフラワーが彩りを添える。

運営会社の「KOMPEITO(コンペイトウ)」（東京都渋谷区）の執行役員、新井伸朗さんによると、サラダ自販機は令和2年11月から実験設置を開始。3年11月に事業を本格化した。今後も都心の商業施設やオフィスビルにも進出予定だ。

店員を介さないうえ、キャッシュレス決済で購入可能で、「非接触」が求められるコロナ禍でのニーズともマッチした。

加えてAIによる最新技術を搭載、食品ロス削減に取り組む。取締役の梅津祐希さんによると、自販機上部のAIセンサーで通行人や立ち止まった人の数を計測。そのデータを賞味期限などもふまえてAIが解析し、納品個数や値下げのタイミングを調整、売れ残りの削減につなげている。今後は天気情報なども踏まえ、精度をさらに高めるといふ。

**長期保存でロス削減**

コロナ禍で急速に拡大しているのが冷凍食品の自販機だ。

冷凍自販機などのメーカー、サンデン・リテールシステム(墨田区)の冷凍自販機「ど冷(ひ)えもん」は3年1月に販売を開始すると、同年上半期だけで1千台が売れ、47都道府県に設置が広がった。「コロナ禍で時短要請などが求められるなか、新たなビジネスとして導入する飲食店も多い」(同社の芳賀日登美広報室長)という。

液体凍結という独自の特殊冷凍技術を持つ企業「テクニカン」(横浜市)は、この「ど冷えもん」を使い、自社運営の冷凍食品専門店「トーミン・フローズン」(同市)で、「牛タン弁当」など冷凍弁当の販売を始めた。

「液体凍結でご飯がボソボソにならず、シェフが炭火で手焼きした牛タンは香りが残り、作りたての味わいが楽しめる」と広報課長の津田谷英樹さん。賞味期限も1年と長く、食品ロスを生じるリスクが低いという。

出典：進化系自販機 コロナ禍で続々

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%e9%80%b2%e5%8c%96%e7%b3%bb%e8%87%aa%e8%b2%a9%e6%a9%9f%e3%80%80%e3%82%b3%e3%83%ad%e3%83%8a%e7%a6%8d%e3%81%a7%e7%b6%9a%e3%80%85/>