

Japan and fast food



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The article introduces the history of fast food in Japan. It mainly focuses on McDonalds, but it does mention a few other restaurants such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, MOS Burger, and Mr. Donut. These restaurants are thought more of a social gathering place for families and friends to get together and converse and spend time with one another. Usually, most of the food purchased is shared. Fast food is not new in Japan, a fact that is evident by the big array of fast food options that are available.

Most of these options can be classified as "traditional Japanese fare". Noodle shops at train stations, street vendors selling steamed sweet potatoes, chicken skewers, roasted corn on the cob, and boxed lunches are just a few of the many options available in Japan for a quick meal. The newest innovation to cuisine in Japan is the conveyor-belt sushi shops. It can be the ultimate quick food experience combining both traditional and modern characteristics of fast food delivery. Pieces of sushi float past diners on a conveyor belt on individual plates.

The customer can then choose the pieces they want and drink tea from self-service spigots right at their seats. These sushi shops are able to offer diners quick service, with little, to no interaction with the staff. The article goes on to discuss how a person's definition of fast food in Japan differs with age. The English term "fast food" translated into Japanese is *fuasuto fudo*. The food to which it refers to differs among whom you ask. Everyone has his or her own opinion of what fast food is.

To some, it could be a piece of fruit bought at a convenience store for a snack, and to someone else it could be a bowl of noodle soup. In America

fast food is synonymous with unhealthy options, high in fat and calories. In Japan, it mostly refers to food that can be purchased easily and eaten quickly. To most people in Japan the symbolic golden arches of McDonalds is very familiar. To others, they know what it is but have never eaten there. It is usually Japanese families with children and teens and young adults that frequent McDonalds.

For the families is usually a special time. Most Japanese families only eat together once or twice a week, so it's a special time for the family to be together. This outing to McDonalds turns into a precious memory for the family. The family would enter the restaurant and the mother would immediately go stand in line and order and pay for the food. The father would take the children to sit down and talk and entertain them until their mother returned with the food. When the Mother returned she would place the French fries in the middle of the table and the whole family would share.

They would also share and pass around to each other hamburgers, and chicken nuggets, milk shakes and apple pies. The food did not belong to any one member in the family, it was shared by the whole family. It was common among couples and friends to share this way too. Although fast food chains here and in Japan look the same, and have the same menu, that's where the similarities end. " The most important role of food in Japan is to bring people together and give a sense of community' Ohnuki-Tierney is quoted as saying in the article. He goes on to say " Sharing food strengthens bonds among