

Japan Ready-To-Eat Food Market Assessment, By Category [Instant Breakfast/Cereals, Instant Soups and Snacks, Baked Goods, Meat/Poultry, Others], By Packaging Type [Canned, Frozen or Chilled, Retort, Others], By Distribution Channel [Online; Offline-Supermarkets/Hypermarkets, Departmental Stores, Convenience Stores, Others], By End-user [Residential, Food Service, Institutional], By Region, Opportunities, and Forecast, FY2017-FY2031F

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Abstracts

Japan Ready-To-Eat Food Market is expected to witness a CAGR of 4.03% during the forecast period FY2024-FY2031. The market was valued at USD 8.14 billion in FY2023 and is anticipated to reach USD 11.17 billion by FY2031. The demand for ready-to-eat foods has been growing in Japan over the past few years due to busier lifestyles and increased households with double incomes. The pandemic's 'nesting demand' since 2020 has contributed to further market expansion. The Japan Frozen Food Association reports that annual shipments of frozen food for home use passed the USD 2.23 billion mark for the first time in 2017 and reached the highest level ever recorded in 2021 at USD 2.91 billion. Particularly, a wider selection of expensive goods is readily available, enabling customers to prepare gourmet meals at home.

The marriage rate and age in the country are declining, resulting in an increase in single-person households. Additionally, the growing number of women in the workforce leaves less time for cooking and shared meals. These factors, compounded by the impact of the pandemic, are driving a higher demand for ready-to-eat meals and home delivery services. In the Tokyo metropolitan area, ready-to-eat food suppliers primarily offer

products such as cooked rice and daily dishes, including lunch boxes, rice balls, sandwiches, croquettes, and vegetable salads. These items are predominantly distributed through convenience stores, specialty stores, and food supermarkets.

Aging Population

Out of all nations, Japan is experiencing the fastest rate of population aging. The Cabinet Office's 2022 White Paper on Ageing Society estimates that there are just over 36.21 million people in Japan who are 65 years or older making 28.9% of the country's total population. The aging population in Japan is a significant demographic trend that has implications for various industries, including the ready-to-eat (RTE) food market. As individuals age, they experience physical limitations or reduced mobility, making it more challenging for them to cook elaborate meals. RTE food products that are easy to prepare, such as microwavable meals or pre-packaged options, cater to the needs of older consumers who require convenient and hassle-free meal solutions. Older adults often have different dietary needs and may require smaller portion sizes or specific nutritional considerations. RTE food manufacturers are recognizing this and developing products that are tailored to the nutritional requirements of older consumers, such as lower sodium content or fortified with essential nutrients. Overall, Japan's aging population presents challenges and opportunities for the RTE food market. By understanding the unique needs and preferences of older consumers, RTE food manufacturers can develop products that cater to this demographic, providing convenient, nutritionally balanced, and accessible meal options.

Busy Work Schedules

The Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry projects that there will be only 60.82 million people of working age in 2025 and 52.45 million in 2040, down from the 65.3 million people of working age in 2017. Besides this, over the past two decades, the consumption of frozen foods has doubled and is still rising. The popularity of ready-to-eat meals is rising as at-home cooking has been steadily declining. The busy lifestyle of consumers in Japan is a significant driver of the ready-to-eat (RTE) food market. With increasingly busy work schedules, Japanese consumers have less time to prepare meals at home. Consumers, especially those working long hours or juggling multiple responsibilities, seek convenient and time-saving meal options. Busy individuals often live alone or have smaller households. RTE food products are often available in single-serve portions, catering to the needs of consumers who prefer individual-sized meals. This eliminates the need for extensive meal planning or dealing with leftovers, providing convenience and reducing waste. Consumers can simply heat, open, or assemble the

ready-to-eat items, saving precious time and effort in the kitchen.

Growing Women Workforce

The female participation rate in the country's workforce rose significantly from 48.06 percent in 2012 to 53.97 percent in 2022. The growing number of women entering the workforce in Japan has a significant impact on the demand for ready-to-eat food. As more women pursue careers, they often face time constraints and busy schedules, leaving them with less time to cook elaborate meals at home. This shift in lifestyle and increased work responsibilities create a greater need for convenient and time-saving food options, such as ready-to-eat meals. These pre-packaged meals allow working women to have quick and easily accessible food solutions without compromising on nutrition or taste. The convenience and efficiency offered by ready-to-eat food products align well with the demands and time constraints of women in the workforce, thus driving their demand in Japan.

Increasing Single-Person Households

Single-person households are playing a significant role in driving the demand for ready-to-eat food products in Japan. As the number of people living alone increases, a growing segment of the population seeks convenient and quick meal solutions. Cooking full meals for one person can be time-consuming and may result in food wastage, making ready-to-eat food products an appealing option. Ready-to-eat food products cater perfectly to the needs of single individuals who need more time, cooking skills, or inclination to prepare elaborate meals. These pre-packaged meals offer a variety of options, from single-serving portions to diverse cuisines, providing a convenient and satisfying dining experience for individuals living alone.

Additionally, single-person households often include working professionals and young adults who have busy schedules, further driving the demand for quick and easy meal options. The desire for convenience and the need to manage time efficiently contribute to this demographic's popularity of ready-to-eat food products. In April 2022, HelloFresh SE ('HelloFresh') commenced its official service in Japan. Japanese customers now have access to a distinctive blend of convenient, time-saving, and delicious home-cooked meals, perfectly tailored to suit busy lifestyles of single people.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted Japan's ready-to-eat (RTE) food

market, leading to challenges and opportunities. there was a surge in demand for packaged and RTE food products as consumers turned to convenient, shelf-stable options. With restrictions on dining out and increased emphasis on hygiene, consumers sought RTE food products as a safe and practical choice. With more people working from home and spending more time indoors, changes in meal patterns, including increased snacking and a greater emphasis on quick and easy meal solutions, influenced the demand for RTE food products. E-commerce platforms and food delivery services experienced a surge in demand, providing opportunities for RTE food manufacturers to reach consumers directly. The Japanese processed food market has historically been thought to be challenging to break into due to the strict regulations. Despite this, the country holds significant potential.

Key Players Landscape and Outlook

The ready-to-eat (RTE) food market in Japan is highly competitive, with a wide range of local and international players operating. Some key players in the RTE food market in Japan are Ryohin Keikaku Co., Ltd., Asahi Group Foods, Ltd., Ajinomoto Co., Inc. and Yamazaki Baking Co., Ltd. The outlook for the RTE food market in Japan is positive, with increasing demand for convenient and time-saving meal options among consumers.

The COVID-19 pandemic also increased the demand for RTE food products, with more consumers opting for packaged foods and snacks for safety and convenience reasons who sought out foods and beverages to prepare at home that were as tasty as those found in restaurants, simple to prepare, and healthy. The market is expected to continue to grow, with RTE food manufacturers introducing new and innovative products that cater to changing consumer preferences, such as healthier, plant-based, and eco-friendly options. However, the market faces challenges such as increasing competition, price sensitivity among consumers, and concerns over the quality and nutritional value of RTE food products.

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*Companies mentioned above DO NOT hold any order as per market share and can be changed as per information available during research work

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