

Frozen Foods

May 1, 2018

~ PRODUCTION OF FROZEN FOODS HAS BEEN GROWING FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE YEARS. BOOSTED BY TIME-SAVING AND READY-MADE MEALS. ~

According to the Japan Frozen Food Association, national consumption of frozen foods in 2017 was 1,600,968 tons from domestic production, 1,008,783 tons of imported frozen vegetables, and 245,579 tons of processed frozen foods, for a total of 2,855,330 tons (104.7%). Dividing that total by the total population (126,706,000 people) produces a per-capita consumption figure of 22.5kg/year, a new record. The value of the market is JPY1.058 trillion, reaching the trillion-Yen level. The factors behind this growth are the consumer trend for seeking simplicity, and improved sales for home and business use backed by expansion of sales channels, which now include places such as drugstores.

Year	Domestic production (ton)	Imported frozen vegetables (ton)	Processed frozen foods (ton)	Total (consumption amounts)		Per-capita consumption (kg)
				(ton)	Year-on-Year (%)	
2007	1,527,564	821,128	319,796	2,668,488	99.1	20.9
2008	1,471,396	770,563	232,224	2,474,183	92.7	19.4
2009	1,396,035	760,997	201,826	2,358,858	95.3	18.5
2010	1,399,703	829,406	227,618	2,456,727	104.1	19.2
2011	1,417,907	899,356	246,330	2,563,593	104.3	20.1
2012	1,476,368	952,041	273,635	2,702,044	105.4	21.2
2013	1,550,085	924,251	282,651	2,756,987	107.5	21.7
2014	1,541,891	907,964	261,237	2,711,092	98.3	21.3
2015	1,519,883	911,518	250,405	2,681,806	98.9	21.1
2016	1,554,265	943,211	230,735	2,728,211	101.7	21.5
2017	1,600,968	1,008,783	245,579	2,855,330	104.7	22.5

Source: Japan Frozen Food Association

Looking at individual categories, growth is centered on foods that the major suppliers are focusing their efforts on, such as fried rice, spaghetti, yakisoba (sauce-fried buckwheat noodles) and gyoza fried dumplings. Other popular standard products include okonomiyaki savory filled pancakes, gratin, burgers, kara-age battered fries, croquettes, shumai dumplings, and udon noodles.



Honkaku Itame fried rice from Nichirei Foods



Three-cheese Bolognese with fresh pasta from Nisshin Foods

With the aging population and more women working outside the home, the trend favoring frozen foods for their simple and time-saving cooking continues. Frozen foods are also being boosted by the increase in products offered in convenience stores and similar channels.

One of the key phrases about hit foods for the first half of 2018, as announced by the monthly magazine Nikkei Trendy, is “new frozen food ingredients”, referring to meats, fruits, and the like. One such product is the pre-sliced salad chicken launched by Nichirei Foods in March. The chicken is pre-cut to conveniently-sized pieces, and can be stored for a year or more before being defrosted when needed. It can be used in dishes like ramen noodles and bangbang chicken, and is appealing for the advantages only frozen foods can offer.



Pre-sliced salad chicken from Nichirei Foods

Frozen grapes on sale in convenience stores are eclipsing even the sales of blueberries, the constant favorite among frozen fruits. “Delcy Kawagoto Taberareru Budo” (grapes you can eat whole in their skins) from Nippon Access, Inc. are being developed as ingredients for sale in supermarkets, targeting homemakers.



“Delcy Kawagoto Taberareru Budo” from Nippon Access, Inc.

Here we will now introduce the top sellers at Picard, a popular specialist frozen food shop originating in France, which now has nine stores in Japan. The best sellers vary between seasons, but popularity centers on products such as mini-pies, croissants, macaroons, mozzarella cheese and vegetable lasagna, traditional Margherita pizza, and porcini mushroom risotto. “Kuishinbo Mini Eclairs” (which defrost naturally in the refrigerator in three hours) are popular for their Instagrammability. Burgundy-style escargots and fisherman-style mussels sell well in some seasons.



Kuishinbo Mini Eclairs



Mini-croissants

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