

Reading and Talking

Go to Eat Campaign

The government's "Go To" campaigns help businesses that lost customers because of Covid-19. "Go To Travel" gives 50% discounts for trips inside Japan. Now there is a "Go To Eat" campaign that gives 25% discounts for restaurant meals in your local area when you buy Go To Eat tickets online. You also get points when you make an online restaurant reservation. You get 500 yen of points for lunch, and 1000 yen of points for dinner (after 3 p.m.). You can use these points to pay for future meals. There is more information at <https://gotoeat.maff.go.jp>.

(102 words)

Do you know a lot about the "Go To Eat" campaign?

↳ Yes, I do. (--Where did you hear about it? / Do you think it's a good idea? / Do you think you're going to use it?)

↳ No, I don't. (--Do you want to know more about it? / Do you want to use it? / Do you like eating out?)

Have you used the "Go To Travel" campaign yet?

↳ Yes, I have. (--Where did you go? / Which travel agency did you use? / How much discount did you get?)

↳ No, I haven't. (--Do you think you're going to use it? / Do you know someone who used it? / Do you like traveling?)

What's your favorite place to go out for a drink with friends?

↳ I like [XXX]. (--Why do you like it? / When did you last go there? / Do you like any other places to go out for a drink?)

↳ Nowhere special. (--Are you a big drinker? / What's your favorite place to eat out with friends?)

(9 October, 2020)

More Information

Go to Eat Campaign

The government's "Go To" campaigns aim to help businesses that were hit by Covid-19. "Go To Travel" is up and running, giving 50% discounts for domestic trips. Now it is joined by "Go To Eat," with discounts on restaurant meals in your local area. You save money in two ways.

First, there are vouchers. Participating prefectures have different systems. In Tokyo, for example, you buy a book of 10 vouchers online for ¥10,000. Each ¥1000 voucher covers ¥1,250 of a restaurant bill. In Tochigi, an ¥8000 book of vouchers is worth ¥10,000. Either way, it's a saving of 25%. Vouchers can be used at participating restaurants in the prefecture, but no change is given if you don't spend the whole voucher.

The second way to save is by making an online restaurant reservation at a booking site like Gurunavi, Tabelog or Hot Pepper. Each online reservation for a participating restaurant earns 500-yen's worth of points per person for lunch, and 1000 yen of points for dinner (3 p.m. onward). The points are awarded after you pay for your meal, and they can be used for future visits to participating restaurants.

Vouchers and points are available through January 2021 for use until the end of March 2021. For full details, see <<https://gotoeat.maff.go.jp>>.

(217 words)

(9 October, 2020)

Reading and Talking

A good year for matsutake?

Matsutake mushrooms are a delicious fall food, but they are expensive. If there is a hot summer and a rainy September, matsutake grow well. The weather was good for matsutake in Yamaguchi Prefecture this year. There are going to be more matsutake mushrooms than usual, so they are going to cost less than usual. However, Nagano and Gifu had a hotter-than-usual summer and not enough rain in September, so matsutake may be more expensive there. Matsutake mushrooms from Japan are going to be sold in stores until the end of October.

(99 words)

Have you seen matsutake mushrooms in stores yet?

↳ Yes, I have. (--Where did you see them? / Do you remember how much they were? / Have you eaten matsutake this fall yet?)

↳ No, I haven't. (--Are you going to eat matsutake? / Did you have them last fall? / Have you seen "kuri" chestnuts in stores yet?)

Do you like autumn?

↳ Yes, I do. (--Which do you like better, spring or autumn? / Do you feel a little sad and lonely in autumn?)

↳ No, I don't. (--How come you don't like it? / What's your favorite season?)

What's your favorite autumn food?

↳ I like [grapes / persimmons / chestnuts / sweet potatoes / XXX]. (-- Have you eaten them this fall yet? / What's your next favorite? / What's your least favorite autumn food?)

↳ Nothing special. (--Have you eaten "sanma" yet / Have you eaten "ginnan" ginkgo nuts yet?)

(9 October, 2020)

More Information

A good year for matsutake?

Matsutake mushrooms are an expensive fall delicacy. Their price varies from year to year depending on the harvest, and the harvest depends on the weather in summer and early fall. For a healthy crop, a hot summer followed by a cool, rainy September is ideal. How was the weather for matsutake this year? It seems to have depended on the area.

Asahi TV in Yamaguchi reported a good year for matsutake in its prefecture as there was plenty of fall rain and no typhoon damage. One store in the area expects 50% more matsutake mushrooms than usual to arrive, so prices should be 30% less than average. On the other hand, Nagano and Gifu had a hotter-than-usual summer followed by insufficient rain in September, so the harvest there is poor. Tamba-Sasayama (丹波篠山) in Hyogo Prefecture is one of the best matsutake growing areas in the country. On October 1, at the first auction of the year there, five matsutake mushrooms that weighed 95 grams in total were sold for ¥520,000.

Domestic matsutake mushrooms, at various prices, should be available in stores until the end of October.

(198 words)

(9 October, 2020)