

Reading and Talking

Craft cola

Hatomugi Labo is a store in Oyama City in Tochigi Prefecture. It sells food that is made with “hatomugi,” which is “Job's tears” in English. When the owner of the store, Taiko Makita, made a cola drink with Job’s tears, it was delicious. Hatomugi Labo calls it Beppin Cola (Beautiful Lady Cola), and a glass of it is 450 yen at the store. It is called “craft cola” because it is made by a small company, not by a big company like Coca Cola. Beppin Cola is going to be sold at the Michi no Eki Roadside Rest Area in Omoigawa, Oyama from late November.

(110 words)

Do you want to try Beppin Cola?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Which do you like better, Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola? / Do you like Dr Pepper? / Have you ever used cola for cooking?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you like Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola? / Do you drink “mugicha” barley tea? / Do you buy sparkling water?)

Do you want to make home-made cola?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Do you think it's easy to make? / Have you ever made homemade ginger ale or lemonade?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you think it's difficult to make? / Have you ever made a glass of Calpis by adding water to Calbis base? / Do you make instant coffee?)

Do you drink “tansan inryo” sodas?

↳Yes, I do. (--What's your favorite soda? / How often do you buy it? / What's your next favorite soda?)

↳No, I don't. (--How come you don't like them? / Have you ever drunk tea soda? / What cold drink do you like in summer?)

(30 October, 2020)

More Information

Craft cola

Oyama is a city in Tochigi Prefecture. It is home to a specialty store called Hatomugi Labo. As the name implies, Hatomugi Labo sells grains that are called “hatomugi” in Japanese, and Job's tears in English. (The English name “Job’s tears” comes from a character in the Jewish and Christian Bibles called Job. He had many sorrows, and shed many tears, and the many seeds on each stalk of the plant look like tears.)

Hatomugi Labo sells food and other products that are made with Job’s tears. The owner of the store, Taiko Makita, thought that Job’s tears might make a nice addition to a cola drink. To make a cola, you simmer sugar, spices and citrus fruit into a syrup, and mix the syrup with sparkling water. Hatomugi Labo included Job’s tears in its cola recipe, and the result was delicious.

Hatomugi Labo’s cola is called Beppin Cola (Beautiful Lady Cola), and a glass of it is ¥450 at the store. Bottles of this “craft (i.e. made in small amounts) cola” are also available at the Michi no Eki Roadside Rest Area in Omoigawa, Oyama from late November.

(193 words)

(30 October, 2020)

Reading and Talking

Magic Pretz

The Glico company says that November 11th is Pocky and Pretz Day. Just before this year's 11/11, Glico has a new Pretz flavor. It is called "Maho no (Magic) Pretz: Magical Change Milk." If you eat a stick of Maho no Pretz together with a stick of a regular Pretz flavor (Salad, or Tomato, or Roast), it makes a new flavor. Glico says that Maho plus Salad equals cream stew pie flavor, Maho + Tomato = spaghetti with tomato cream sauce, and Maho + Roast = pancakes with maple syrup. A box of Maho no Pretz is 108 yen.

(104 words)

What do you think about Glico's new Magic Pretz?

↳ I think it's great. / I think it's OK. / I think it's stupid. (--How come you think so? / Do you think it's going to be popular? / Did you know about it before you read the story above? / Have you bought a new food product recently?)

Do you like Pretz?

↳ Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--Which flavor do you like best, Salad, Tomato or Roast? / Do you like Pocky?)

↳ No, I don't. (--Do you like potato chips? / Do you like "senbei" rice crackers? / Do you like "gumi" gummies?)

When you eat ramen noodles, do you add something to the soup to make it taste different?

↳ Yes, I do. (--What do you add to the soup? / How much of it do you put in? / Have you ever added olive oil to miso soup?)

↳ No, I don't. (--Have you ever added soy sauce to curry? / Do you put Tabasco on pizza? / Do you spread mayonnaise on toast?)

(30 October, 2020)

More Information

Magic Pretz

What is November 11? It's fairly well-known trivia in Japan that November 11 is, according to the Glico company, Pocky and Pretz Day, because 11/11 looks like four sticks of those popular snacks. Just ahead of this year's 11/11, Glico has introduced an unusual new flavor. It's called "Maho no Pretz" (Magic Pretz).

What's magic about Maho on Pretz"? A clue is that the package has the katakana subtitle "Magical Change Milk," and the package design features a large question mark. This is how it works. You're supposed to eat a stick of Maho no Pretz together with a stick of a regular Pretz flavor (Salad, or Tomato, or Roast) to see what new flavor the combination produces.

Glico suggests that if you eat Maho and Salad together, it produces a cream stew pie flavor, Maho with Tomato gives you spaghetti with tomato cream sauce, and Maho plus Roast equals pancakes with maple syrup. The fun is to see if you agree, or if you can come up with your own flavor description. All in all, it's a good excuse to buy multiple packs of the snacks to celebrate 11/11. A box of Maho no Pretz is ¥108.

(203 words)

(30 October, 2020)