

Reading and Talking

“Nekojita” coffee cup

If you like coffee that is hot but not very hot, in Japanese you are “nekojita,” In English, we don’t say you are “cat’s tongue.” We say that you can’t eat or drink things that are very hot. Doshisha now makes a “Nekojita-senka Tumbler.” If you put 80-degree-Celsius coffee into it, the coffee’s temperature drops to 68 degrees in three minutes, and then it stays over 60 degrees for an hour. Nekojita-senka Tumbler is a cup with a wide mouth and a lid. There are four colors (black, white, pink, or green), and it costs 2,750 yen at Doshisha’s online store.

(107 words)

Do you want to buy a “Nekojita-senka Tumbler”?

↳Yes, I do. / Kind of. (--What do you think about the price? / What color do you want? / Did you drink coffee today?)

↳No, I don’t. (--Do you have a thermos bottle? / Do you buy cups of coffee at a convenience store? / Do you often carry a drink in your bag?)

Have you burned your tongue or the inside of your mouth recently?

↳Yes, I have. (--When and where did you burn it? / How did you burn it? / Did it take a long time to heal?)

↳No, I haven’t. (--Have you burned yourself recently? / Have you gotten a “mizubukure” blister recently? / Do you like taking a very hot bath?)

Do you have your own mug or cup at home?

↳Yes, I do. (--What color is it? / How long have you been using it? / Did you buy it, or was it a present?)

↳No, I don’t. (--Do you make coffee and tea at home? / Do you have your own green tea cup?)

(20 November, 2020)

More Information

“Nekojita” coffee cup

Do you like your coffee hot but not too hot? Then, in Japanese, you are “nekojita” (literally “cat’s tongue”), a term for which there is no snappy English equivalent. All you can say in English is that you can’t eat or drink things that are very hot.

Doshisha, a company that makes vacuum flasks, has a new product called “Nekojita-senka Tumbler” (tumbler for nekojita people). If you pour 80-degree-Celsius coffee into a regular vacuum tumbler, its temperature stays above 70 degrees for an hour. If you pour the same coffee into a Nekojita-senka Tumbler, its temperature drops to 68 degrees in three minutes, and then remains comfortably over 60 degrees for an hour. This magic is achieved by having material in the tumbler that immediately absorbs some of the heat, after which the regular heat retaining properties of the thermos container kick in.

Nekojita-senka Tumbler is a 16-centimeter-tall vacuum cup with a wide mouth and a lid. It holds 320 milliliters, comes in one of four colors (black, white, pink, or green), and costs ¥2,750 at Doshisha’s online store.

(Note: a vacuum flask is often called a thermos, thermos flask or thermos bottle in English, but Thermos is actually a registered trademark.)

(207 words)

(20 November, 2020)

Reading and Talking

Expensive face masks

Covid-19 means that we all wear face masks in public. You can buy disposable masks or washable masks, or you can make your own. Now there is a store that sells only masks. Mask.com is in the Yaesu underground shopping mall by Tokyo Station. Mask prices start at 500 yen, but there are also 100,000-yen masks that are decorated with crystal, and 10 were sold. Then, on November 18th, the store showed Diamond Mask, and Pearl Mask. They cost a million yen each. After they were on TV, more customers wait in line to enter Mask.com.

(102 words)

Do you think someone is going to buy one of the 1,000,000-yen masks?

↳Yes, I do. (--Do you think it's a woman or a man? / Which one do you think is going to be sold first? / Do you think expensive masks are going to be common soon?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you want one? / Do you want a fashion-brand mask? / Do you carry extra masks in your bag?)

Do you use washable masks?

↳Yes, I do. (--How many washable masks do you have? / How do you wash them? / Where do you dry them?)

↳No, I don't. (--Do you use disposable masks? / Where and when did you buy them? / How much were they?)

Do you know someone who is good at making face masks?

↳Yes, I do. (--Who is it? / Can you make masks? / Do you carry hand sanitizer in your bag?)

↳No, I don't. (--What do you think about homemade masks? / Do you know how to use a sewing machine? / Can you sew on a button?)

(20 November, 2020)

More Information

Expensive face masks

The Covid-19 pandemic rolls on, and wearing a face mask has become a way of life. At least there are plenty in stores, where you can pick up a box of 50 disposable masks for less than ¥1000. Washable masks are also available, as are online patterns for making your own.

Now there is a store that sells only masks. Mask.com is in the Yaesu underground shopping mall by Tokyo Station. It has masks for every age and occasion, with prices that start at ¥500. For advertising purposes, the store made ¥100,000 masks that are decorated with crystal, and it has actually sold 10 of them and counting. It was time to up the ante, and on November 18, the store unveiled two different million-yen masks: Diamond Mask and Pearl Mask. The former is decorated with a 0.7 carat diamond and over 300 Swarovski crystals; the latter features 290 Japanese Akoya pearls. After these appeared on TV, the store has seen crowds of customers who wait in line to enter.

Mask.com's Twitter account tells you how long you have to wait to get in <https://twitter.com/mskdotcom_yaesu>. You can also browse and buy online at <<https://tokyodesignchannel.com/f/mask.com>>.

(199 words)

(20 November, 2020)