



Iwata

Jet ovens support the production of “Smart Meal” bento boxes

An example of one of Iwata's Smart Meal bento boxes. Overseen by a nutritionist, the menu changes daily and includes at least seven food items. The cost is 500 yen per box and comes with rice.

Iwata Co., Ltd. has been producing bento boxes (meals in a box) in Nihonbashi-hakozakicho, Tokyo, for over 50 years. It is a pioneer in “Smart Meal” bento boxes, which are gaining popularity in corporate management as a way to contribute to employee health management through food. Using Fujimak's jet ovens and combi ovens, Iwata prepares and delivers 10,000 bento boxes every day filled with balanced and varied food that overseen by a nutritionist for just 500 yen to mainly offices and factories.

— The first “healthy meal” to be certified by an academic organization

“Smart Meals” are prepackaged meals that are healthy and nutritionally balanced. They contain less than 3.5 g of salt per meal (for the “Shikkari” type, which has a caloric value of 650 to 850 kcal per meal) and are rich in variety with a balanced combination of staple foods such as rice, main dishes, and side dishes. Providers of Smart Meals are certified by the Consortium for Healthy Eating and Eating Environments, which includes 12 academic organizations (as of September 9, 2022), including the Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Japanese Society of Hypertension.

Iwata Corporation, a provider of bento boxes and school/office lunches whose headquarters and manufacturing plant are located in Nihonbashi-hakozakicho, Tokyo, is a pioneer in providing Smart Meals, having received the first certification in the ready-made meal category in February 2018. Although production is lower than before due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company still produces and delivers about 10,000 boxed lunches each weekday, mainly to offices and factories in Tokyo's 23 wards and suburbs. Although the company sells a wide range of bento boxes, such as ready-made meals for meetings, “Smart Meal” bento boxes account for nearly 90% of all orders.

Smart Meal standards per serving

		“Chanto” Regular Meal	“Shikkari” Power Meal
		450-649 kcal	650-850 kcal ※
		Aimed at general women who want to eat properly with nutritional balance in mind	Aimed at men and women who want to eat a more filling meal with nutritional balance in mind
Staple food	Rice, bread, noodles	(For rice) 150-180g (approx.)	(For rice) 170-220g (approx.)
Main dish	Fish, meat, eggs, soy products	60-120g (approx.)	90-150g (approx.)
Side dish	Vegetables, mushrooms, seaweed, potatoes	Min. 140g	Min. 140g
Salt equivalent		Max. 3.0g	Max. 3.5g

※ 620-850 kcal in the 8th edition; prepared based on the "Healthy Eating and Eating Environments" certification system on the website of the Consortium for Healthy Eating and Eating Environments.

— “You are what you eat”

Iwata Co., Ltd. was established in 1965 as a catering bento box shop. President Masato Iwata worked at the Imperial Hotel before becoming Iwata's second president in 2008. He says, “The human body can only be built from the food that is consumed.



President Masato Iwata

My father, Iwata's founder and current executive chairman, always said, 'You are what you eat', and we plan and prepare our menus with the understanding that every meal we provide becomes a person's flesh and blood."

It was in his 10th year as president that President Iwata made the important decision to introduce boxed lunches that meet Smart Meal standards. He explains, "At the Imperial Hotel, where I used to work, I learned that 'food is something to be enjoyed,' but I also learned the fundamental management principle that there are some things in an organization that should not be changed and some things that should be changed. There are many challenges to Smart Meal bento boxes, such as keeping the price at 500 yen per meal while striving for variety and keeping the calorie and salt content within specified limits."

"However," he reflects, "in order to preserve the philosophy of our predecessors that 'we are what we eat' and to actively contribute to the health of those who eat our bento box meals, we decided to change our product mix to mainly Smart Meals."

— “Jet ovens are the best choice for cooking grilled food”

Iwata has relied on Fujimak's jet ovens at its main factory for over 20 years. Shinichiro Ono (Executive Officer, Executive Chef and General Manager of the Food Preparation Department) says, "I believe jet ovens are the best option, especially for roasting. Preparing bento boxes for office delivery is a race against the clock, and I really like how the jet ovens are able to roast food evenly and quickly."

Executive Officer Ono, who is in charge of food preparation, emphasizes the importance of not only the performance but also the dependability of the equipment when preparing bento boxes. "Since we cook thousands of broiled foods every day, I consider us very heavy users. Despite this, the jet ovens rarely break down. In the rare event that something does break, we just call Fujimak, who takes care of it immediately. Equipment reliability, including support, is essential because we can't be making excuses like, 'The machine broke down this morning, so we couldn't make the food we promised'" . President Iwata adds, "Fujimak has had the same person working with our company for many years, and this person understands our business characteristics very well. We have complete peace of mind knowing that it is always the same person handling things."



Shinichiro Ono (Executive Officer, Executive Chef and General Manager of the Food Preparation Department)

— Space-saving design that fits the characteristics of the downtown preparation site

In addition to the jet ovens, Iwata also uses combi ovens at its main factory. Ono says, "We make extensive use of the steaming feature, which is really convenient because we can steam and then go straight to broiling."

President Iwata praised Fujimak's products from the perspective of a business operator, saying, "Because our main factory is located downtown, about 1 km from Nihonbashi, we don't have as much space as if it were in the suburbs. What we love about both the jet ovens and the combi ovens is that, despite their advanced performance and functions, they require very little installation space."



The jet oven was highly praised for its ability to roast food quickly and evenly.



Combi ovens also cook steamed foods such as shumai (Chinese dumplings).

Causing a rapid expansion of remote work, the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic has been a strong headwind to the production of bento boxes for business offices. However, in corporate management, the degree to which a company implements “health management,” meaning how concerned they are with managing their employees' health, is becoming one of the indicators used by investors and other sources of funding to evaluate companies.

President Iwata says, “As part of their health management efforts, an increasing number of companies are adding to their employee benefit programs subsidies for Smart Meal boxed lunches, which are overseen by nutritionists and offer a wide variety of well-balanced meals.” The social value of Iwata's Smart Meal Bento Boxes is sure to increase in the years to come.



Iwata

Company name	Iwata Co., Ltd.
Head office address	3-11 Nihonbashi-hakozakicho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
Phone	03-3667-9930 (Main Office in Nihonbashi)
Company launch	July 1965 (company established in April 1966)
Activities	Manufacture and sales of bento boxes and side dishes
Website	http://e-bento.co.jp/



Related Products



Jet Oven



Combi Oven Series iCombi Pro

Inquiry For queries and consultations relating to the case, please send email.

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