

KAKI-NO-TANE

Senbei rice crackers are typically savory snacks that have been eaten in Japan for centuries. Of the countless varieties, *kaki-no-tane*, named

Kameda Seika Co. has been making and selling *kaki-no-tane* in the United States since 1989.

“Obesity and adult-onset diseases became recognized as social problems in the United States in the 1980s, and low-fat, low-calorie Japanese rice crackers started to attract attention as a result,” says Aiko Maruyama of Kameda Seika. “In the United States, rice crackers are regarded as a kind of health food.”

In the United States, *kaki-no-tane* are marketed under a different name, Kameda Crisps, but the snack is prepared using exactly the same recipe as that used in Japan. Initially Kameda Crisps did not sell well in a country that was still new to rice crackers, but since the launch of a registered gluten-free variety in 2013, sales have doubled.

Kameda Seika also manufactures and sells a range of rice crackers in China, Thailand and Vietnam.

“Asian countries have their own traditional rice crackers but many seem to enjoy the characteristic crunchy texture of Japa-



Kaki-no-tane served with peanuts in the popular combination known as *kaki-pi*
Courtesy of Kameda Seika

after the little crackers’ distinctive persimmon seed shape, are particularly popular throughout Japan. Often sold together with peanuts in a combination known as *kaki-pi*, the highly moreish chili-infused soy sauce coated snacks have been winning fans overseas.

Have a Break

nese rice crackers even more. Above all, Asian markets think highly of Japanese food manufacturers,” says Maruyama, who adds that the company is considering a launch in Europe in the future.

Wasabi- and chili-flavored Kameda Crisps
Courtesy of Kameda Seika



KIT KAT

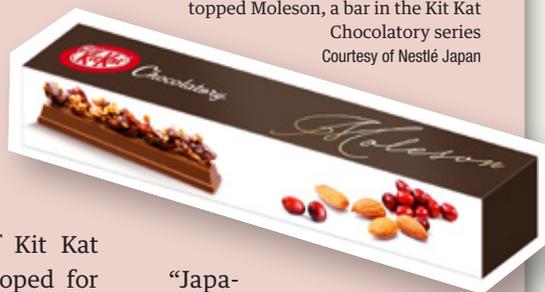
Kit Kat bars as the world knows them today were created in England in 1935. It is said that around 700 of the chocolate-covered wafer bars

ture of Kit Kat bars in Japan is the wide variety of flavors in which they are manufactured, such as fruit, Japanese sake and matcha green tea flavors. More than 300 varieties of Kit Kat bars have been developed for sale exclusively in Japan.

“Japan’s diverse food culture helps to explain the development of so many differently flavored Kit Kat bars,” says Takuya Hiramatsu of Nestlé Japan.

So-called regional Kit Kat bars utilizing local food specialties such as apples or strawberries are popular souvenirs for Japanese and international tourists alike. The first such regional Kit Kat bar was produced in 2002, this being a Kit Kat flavored with melon, a specialty of Yubari in Hokkaido. It became so popular that overseas tourists went all the way to Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan’s four main islands, just to get their hands on one.

A stick of cranberry and almond-topped Moleson, a bar in the Kit Kat Chocolatory series
Courtesy of Nestlé Japan



“Japanese Kit Kat bars have been widely discussed in social media channels and have become something of a phenomenon overseas,” says Hiramatsu.

According to Hiramatsu, the most popular regional Kit Kat bar is currently the *wasabi*-flavored version available in Shizuoka Prefecture.

Meanwhile high-end Kit Kat varieties in the Chocolatory series have been available in Japan since 2014. Selling for between 300 and 500 yen, these special edition Kit Kats are created under the supervision of leading Japanese pâtissier Yasumasa Takagi. Carefully manufactured using luxurious ingredients and beautifully packaged, they have become extremely popular as gifts. Kit Kat bars in the Chocolatory series are also available in London and Melbourne.

Introducing two of the most sought-after snacks of Japan

KUMIKO SATO



A box of the popular *wasabi*-flavored Kit Kat bars on sale in Shizuoka Prefecture
Courtesy of Nestlé Japan

are consumed every second.

Japan is second only to England in the number of Kit Kat bars consumed in the country each year. One contributing factor to the popular success of Kit Kat bars in Japan is their role as good luck charms for students taking school entrance exams. Another distinguishing fea-



A box of Kit Kat bars embossed with encouraging messages for students taking exams
(Product not currently available)
Courtesy of Nestlé Japan