

Enjoy #oshikatsu with #handmadevalentinechocolate

Handmade Demand Returns to Pre-Covid-19 Levels!
Meiji Launches 6 Snacks in Packages
Featuring Sanrio Characters!

Perfect for Handmade Chocolate and Sharing with Others!

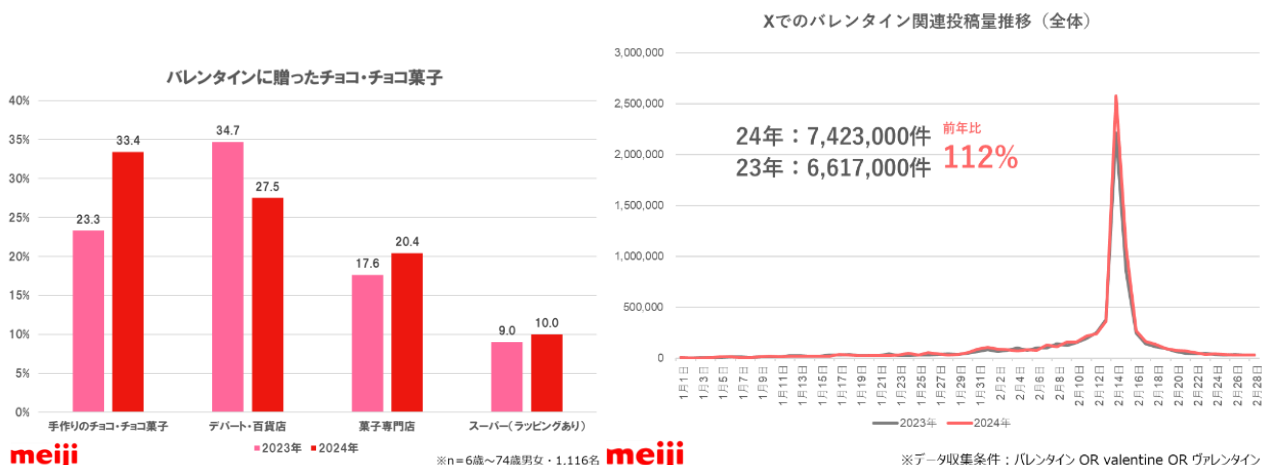
—Meiji Milk Chocolate, popular as an ingredient for handmade chocolate, is now made using 100% sustainable cocoa beans to contribute to a sustainable chocolate industry—

- Limited-offer product featuring a collaboration between Meiji and Sanrio characters, with plans for promotional campaigns and collaboration cafes!
- FRUITS ZIPPER dancing on candy? Introducing new AR content.
- Meiji achieves 100% sustainable cocoa procurement! Meiji Milk Chocolate, popular as an ingredient for handmade chocolate, is now made using 100% sustainable cocoa beans.

Meiji Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Katsunari Matsuda) is pleased to announce that we will be launching various content beginning from early January to make the period leading up to Valentine's Day 2025 an even more fun and enjoyable time for handmade chocolate and *oshikatsu*¹ chocolate. For Phase 1 of this campaign, we will launch products featuring packaging made in collaboration with Sanrio characters available from January 21, 2025. We will also be publishing augmented reality (AR) content featuring FRUITS ZIPPER dancing on candy.

In a Valentine's Day consumer awareness survey², "handmade chocolate or chocolate confectionery" was the top response to the question regarding the type of chocolate respondents gave on Valentine's Day, rising by 10% from the previous year to 33.4%. This also marked the first time since the 2019 survey that "handmade chocolate or chocolate confectionery" surpassed "department store gift" as the No. 1 response. For both middle school and high school girls, over 70% gave "handmade chocolate or chocolate confectionery" for Valentine's Day, indicating that the rate of people who made chocolate by hand had recovered to levels seen prior to COVID-19. These results suggest a recovery in demand for handmade Valentine's Day gifts as people return to viewing Valentine's Day as an event to be enjoyed among friends and classmates.

We are also seeing a continued increase in the trend of simultaneously enjoying *oshikatsu* and Valentine's Day as a single event. An analysis³ of social media indicated 112% year-on-year growth in posts related to Valentine's Day with "oshikatsu chocolate" increasing as a frequently used keyword. This suggests an increase in the number of people using chocolate to express their love and gratitude for their fan favorites.



*1. Oshikatsu:

An idiom derived from the Japanese words *oshi* (support) and *katsu* (activity) that refers to activities conducted by fans to support their favorite characters, performers, artists, etc.

*2. 2024 Valentine's Day Awareness Survey

■Survey period: February 15–16, 2024

■Survey method: Online survey

■Target: 1,116 males and females age 6 to 74

*3. 2024 Valentine's Day Social Media Analysis

■Analysis target period: (1) January 1 to February 28, 2023 (2) January 1 to February 28, 2024

■Analysis method: Analysis of social media

■Method: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of post content

■Target: Posts on X (formerly, Twitter)

Collaboration with Sanrio Characters

Meiji will launch six snacks in collaboration with Sanrio. Almond Chocolate, Meiji Milk Chocolate Big Pack, Thick Chocolate Strawberry Sandwich, Thick Chocolate Matcha Chocolate Sandwich, and Petit Assort will be available from January 21, 2025 in limited-time-only packaging featuring popular Sanrio characters.

In response to the strong popularity of Sanrio Company, Ltd. characters in both Japan and around the world, we have planned a collaboration that can be enjoyed by both consumers in Japan and inbound travelers. Product packaging will feature 10 characters—Hello Kitty, Cinnamoroll, Pochacco, Kuromi, My Melody, Pompompurin, Hangyodon, Kerokerokeroppi, Cogimyun, Ahirunopekkle—all based on original illustrations drawn specifically for this collaboration.

○ Almond Chocolate with Sanrio Characters (2 designs); Price: Open price

This is a very cute package featuring Hello Kitty and Pochacco wearing costumes in the same color as the bright red Almond Chocolate package. Also, the almond chocolate on the package is featured in a heart design, making it perfect for Valentine's Day. (The actual almond chocolate inside is the regular shape.)



○ Meiji Milk Chocolate Big Pack with Sanrio Characters, Meiji Milk Chocolate Bag with Sanrio Characters; Price: Open price

There are a total of 10 designs for the two individually wrapped products based on the theme of oshikatsu. Consumers can choose their favorite color or a message and give it as a gift. These are individually wrapped so they are also just cute to carry around.





○ **Thick Chocolate Strawberry Sandwich with Sanrio Characters, Thick Chocolate Matcha Sandwich with Sanrio Characters; Price: Open price**

The package features energetic Sanrio characters holding candy oshikatsu fans, and bringing two different types together reveals a heart design. We will also introduce recipes for Lovely Chocolate Oshi Fans made using Thick Chocolate Sandwiches.



○ **Petit Assort with Sanrio Characters; Price: Open price**

The Petit Assort, perfect for Valentine's Day, features a design of Sanrio characters cooking. Each box has a different color, making it perfect for adding a little special something to handmade confections for your oshikatsu activities.



■ **Campaign: Purchase 3 Meiji chocolate bars and receive 1 original chocolate mold**

Make cute chocolate just by pouring hot chocolate into this mold. Use colorful chocolate to make your creations look even more like a character. This is perfect as a topping for oshikatsu altars and cakes.



*Sample arrangement
*Photo features also separately sold products.

[Campaign details]

Phase 1: From January 6, 2025 (Monday) *Gradual rollout
 Phase 2: From January 27, 2025 (Monday) *Gradual rollout



*Availability varies depending on the store. *Campaign ends once campaign presents run out.

■ Oshikatsu chocolate with Sanrio characters you can make at home

From January 6, 2025, we will be releasing recipes unique to Meiji.

- The Chocolate Mansion is made using a whole bar of chocolate and features windows (indentations) with the iconic rectangle shape of Meiji Milk Chocolate for inserting your favorite characters.
- The Lovely Chocolate Oshi Fan features the motif of a fan, an indispensable item for oshikatsu activities.
- Sanrio Characters Nicolato are perfect for a fun time making together with small children.



“Chocolate Mansion”



“Lovely Chocolate Oshi Fan”



“Sanrio Characters Nicolato”

■ SANRIO CAFE Ikebukuro store and Apollo-chan are collaborating!

To commemorate the 55th anniversary of Apollo, we will conduct a limited-time collaboration with the SANRIO CAFE Ikebukuro store. Hello Kitty, Cinnamoroll, and Pompompurin celebrate Apollo's anniversary in this limited-edition illustration. This is a special menu that comes with stickers and acrylic stands.

[Implementation period] January 15, 2025 (Wednesday) to February 14, 2025 (Friday)

[Site] SANRIO CAFE Ikebukuro store

(Sunshine City Alpa B1, 1-28-1 Higashiikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo)

[Business hours] 10:00–21:00 (L.O. 20:00)

[Regular holidays] Based on Sunshine City Alpa's regular holidays



■Wallpaper image present

Through the special campaign website, we will be distributing free wallpaper images to further invigorate oshikatsu activities. Users can download their favorite characters and download images representing the colors of their favorite artists.



About collaboration products and campaign information

<https://www.meiji.co.jp/products/brand/cmp/sanrio-characters2025/?link=cde24102301> (Japanese)

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“FRUITS ZIPPER” Collaboration to Enjoy Oshikatsu and Valentine’s Day

Through a collaboration with the popular idol group FRUITS ZIPPER, from January 7, 2025 we will be releasing the first phase of AR content designed to help users enjoy Meiji products and oshikatsu. Use the TikTok camera to view target products and enjoy FRUITS ZIPPER members appearing in AR. You can watch the FRUITS ZIPPER members dance to the Meiji Chocolate Theme covered by the group’s members. Through this event, we hope to help consumers enjoy sweets by hand on Valentine’s Day.

[How to enjoy the content]

- (1) Tap the icon of the member you want to see on the special website
- (2) When you move to the TikTok camera screen, set it to 60-second shooting mode, hold the camera over the package of the target product, and the members will appear!
- (3) Tap the play button to start AR! Share the video you shot on your favorite SNS with #OshichocolateValentineAR!

*TikTok app required to partake in this experience.

*Please display the target product in full.

*We recommend using a target product that has not been opened.

[Event period]

January 7, 2025 (Tuesday) to February 16, 2025 (Sunday)

[Target products]

- Poiful: Karen Matsumoto
- Kaju Gummy Unshu Mikan: Suzuka Chinzei
- Kinoko no Yama: Noel Hayase
- Kaju Gummy Grape: Luna Nakagawa
- Meiji Milk Chocolate: Yui Sakurai
- Apolo: Amane Tsukiashi
- Marble Chocolate: Mana Manaka





About Meiji Sustainable Cocoa Beans and Meiji Milk Chocolate initiatives

To contribute to the realization of sustainable cocoa bean production, we have been working to achieve a 100% sustainable cocoa bean procurement ratio for Meiji by FYE March 2027, and achieved this goal in FYE March 2025.

Meiji sustainable cocoa beans are cocoa beans produced in areas where we have supported farmers. We believe this initiative can contribute to resolving social issues in the areas where cocoa beans are produced. While working to achieve this goal for all products, we recently achieved a 100% rate of Meiji sustainable cocoa beans for Meiji Milk Chocolate (50g), which is popular as an ingredient for handmade chocolate*4. We now indicate this achievement on the back of the product package.

Starting with this product, we will launch an initiative to convey our Meiji Cocoa Support activities to customers via the highly comprehensible method of outlining our efforts on the packaging of various products.



Meiji Milk Chocolate (50g)



Meiji Milk Chocolate (50g) reverse side

*4. Excludes cacao mass, which is included in some raw materials other than cocoa beans.

■Meiji Cocoa Support, Meiji's unique cocoa farmer support program for walking hand-in-hand with producer regions

Demand for cocoa, the main ingredient in chocolate, is increasing worldwide. However, there are various issues surrounding producer regions and farmers, including deforestation, child labor, and lack of knowledge concerning cultivation techniques. Since 2006, Meiji has engaged in a unique cocoa farmer support activity, Meiji Cocoa Support, to help resolve these issues. Our employees go directly to cocoa producer regions to provide support to local farmers to address various issues. We are working to improve the lives of cocoa farmers by providing support in the areas of both productivity and profitability. For example, we hold study sessions on cultivation and pest control methods. We have also opened seedling centers necessary for cultivation and provide technical guidance on cocoa bean fermentation methods. Furthermore, we are working to support people's daily lives by developing wells and donating school supplies. We believe that cumulative effect of these activities will lead to the realization of sustainable cocoa production. Refer to the following URL below for details on these activities.

Details on region-specific support activities:

<https://www.meiji.com/global/sustainability/cocoa/farmers/>



■ **World Traveler Uncle Karl is also a fan of Meiji Cocoa Support**

Uncle Karl has traveled all over the world and conveyed the importance of Japan's Satoyama for over a half-century since appearing in TV commercials. More recently, Uncle Karl began conveying his support for Meiji's sustainability initiatives. His first activity will begin promoting Meiji Cocoa Support.



■ Detailed website for Meiji Cocoa Support: <https://www.meiji.com/global/sustainability/cocoa/>

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