

Egg Scarcity Threatens Japan

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Wholesale (Adjective) /'houɪ,seɪl/ connected with selling goods in large amounts, often at low prices
Example: There's a wholesale supermarket downtown where we can go to purchase some supplies at a much lower cost.
2. Grain (Noun) /greɪn/ the seeds from crops such as wheat, rice, etc.
Example: There are grains of rice scattered on the kitchen floor.
3. Shortage (Noun) /'ʃɔ:rtɪdʒ/ a state in which there is not enough of something
Example: The restaurants are experiencing challenges because of shortages in some ingredients.
4. Outbreak (Noun) /'aʊt,breɪk/ the sudden start of something bad, such as war or disease
Example: The recent outbreak of the disease caused a lot of people to panic.
5. Supply (Noun) /sə'plaɪ/ an amount of something available for use
Example: The family always stores their supplies of daily necessities in the cupboard.
6. Chain (Noun) /tʃeɪn/ a group of shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. owned by the same person or company
Example: Karayama began to open their chain of restaurants in the Philippines in 2022.



The **wholesale** price of eggs in Japan has almost doubled over a year, some supermarkets are running out of eggs, and restaurants are taking eggs off their menus. Japan is in a situation some are calling an "egg shock."

According to a recent survey from Teikoku Databank, 18 out of 100 major Japanese restaurant companies have now taken eggs off their menus. They all blamed a serious **shortage** of eggs and high prices. Even McDonald's has decided not to offer a special spring egg item in 2023, while the Sukiya restaurant **chain** has raised the price of its gyudon beef bowl with raw egg.

The weak yen and the war in Ukraine are part of the reason for the egg shortage, since they have made the **grain** used to feed chickens more expensive. But another major reason is bird flu, a type of influenza that affects both wild birds and poultry — birds like chickens, ducks, and turkeys that are kept for their meat and eggs.

Since October 2021, bird flu has been spreading around the world in the worst **outbreak** of the disease in history. And it has come to Japan, where — according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries — over 15 million birds have been killed to stop the disease from spreading.

Agriculture minister Tetsuro Nomura said in January that it could take from six months to a year for the **supply** of eggs to return to normal. However, Japan is just one of 76 countries hit by bird flu. According to the World Organization for Animal Health, over 200 million birds have died either from the disease or because they were killed to stop it from spreading. And The New York Times reports that the US government is now considering flu vaccinations for poultry.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on Japan's "egg shock"?
2. Does it surprise you that so many restaurants have taken eggs off their menus?
3. Do you often eat eggs? What's your favorite way to have them?
4. What ingredients would you find it most difficult to cook without?
5. Have your grocery shopping habits changed in any way in recent months?