

Totoya to open Japan's first zero-waste supermarket in Kyoto *Combining Japan's traditional buying-by-weight style with the latest technology*

Totoya, an importer of organic foods as well as an accelerator for zero-waste stores across Japan, will open its first supermarket-sized zero-waste store in Kyoto this summer. Under the same name, the store "Totoya" will consist of bulk refills of organic and JAS-certified foods that customers can purchase with their own reusable containers, as well as a restaurant for the evening where ingredients are used up strategically from the day to prevent food waste.

Totoya's approach to reduce household waste and food loss, to promote the use of renewable energy etc. are all in line with Kyoto City's missions to contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. Through this new store, Totoya aims to bring a sustainable, circular business model to life.

The store will host hundreds of domestic and imported food products, as well as eco-friendly lifestyle goods such as solid shampoos, detergents, stainless steel straws that support consumers in living a lifestyle with less single-use waste.

Bulk refills are an efficient way to reduce household waste both in terms of packaging and leftover foods, as consumers can choose the exact amount to purchase in a container of their choosing. Totoya believes in cutting out single-use waste at all stages of production, delivery and consumption, and continues to work with suppliers and other partners to create appropriate ways to procure and sell products.



As of 2020, Teraoka Seiko Co., Ltd., a retail solutions provider in IT systems, checkout/POS, weighing and packaging, has been a technology partner for Totoya. The company supplies the scale and checkout solution to Totoya's Tokyo-based store "nue by Totoya". The Kyoto store will see the latest checkout system used for the first time in Japan, which will ensure that the shopping experience will remain as efficient as possible despite it adhering to a zero-waste style.

Kazuharu Teraoka, Chairman of the Board, Chief Technology Architect of Teraoka Seiko Co., Ltd. noted: "The Japanese government has stated to become carbon neutral by 2050, and the bulk refill style of shopping is one great contributor to fulfil this goal. We hope to bring together the traditional ways of bulk-buying that we have had for many years in Japan, with the latest scaling and checkout technology.

Technology alone, however, is not enough to accelerate this shopping style; we need to combine it with collaboration, communication, activism and operational know-how. We believe that Totoya has the ability to bring this together for the sake of our environment, and we look forward to supporting their role as an evangelist in this field.”

Totoya’s product selection: zero-waste / organic / fairtrade

Totoya encourages all customers to use their own containers for their food shopping, but also provide options to buy reusable organic cotton produce bags or use the deposit jar system in-store. All imported products are organic-certified, and domestic products will be carefully selected to promote organic agriculture. Products such as dried fruits and chocolates are all Fairtrade certified.

Evening restaurant operations

As a way to eliminate food waste from unsold fresh products, a restaurant will operate in the evenings. The menu will be decided by products that need to be used up or remade into side dishes, home-cooked meals and convenient preserved foods.

Store interior design

NoMaDos, a creative architecture firm and creator of *slowz*, an app that supports consumers to make more sustainable lifestyle choices, joins Totoya as a design partner. NoMaDos is creating appliances and store interiors that are as sustainable as possible. Ceilings, floors and walls will utilise reclaimed materials, and will be designed so that they can be moved, disassembled, and reconstructed to avoid as much waste in the future. In order to embody the brand concept of Totoya, furniture will be designed to be a prototype that revisits commonly used building materials and deepens the sustainability of commercial architecture.



NoMaDoS’ project team members said the following:

“We discussed over and over again what it means to be sustainable in the field of architecture – especially for a time when the future is uncertain, we focused on what happens to a store beyond its time of operation. Our plan is to ensure that things with usually short life-cycles are able to become long-term assets in the future, and are committed to creating a store that is sustainable for the planet, our society, and the industry.”

Totoya and its partners continue to work towards a summer-launch of the store.

Zero-waste store Totoya

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