

Surviving Tokyo's prices

WHEN I want something to eat in a Japanese city I go to a department store, in the basement of which is usually a cafeteria serving good, plain fare and a beer at a fraction of the cost of a touristy-restaurant.

Language is no barrier. All you have to do is point at what you want. Being a curry enthusiast, I always point to curry and rice, which the Japanese do very well.

One of my nicer curries ever, incidentally, was served in the cafeteria on the train between Tokyo and Osaka.

If you want a little more class, department stores, such as those along Tokyo's Ginza, usually have several restaurants with favorable prices on the top floor.

It then gives some good advice on economical dining in the city of 90,000 eateries:

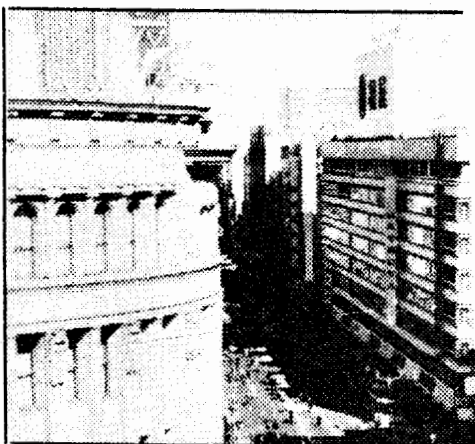
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Try not to order beverage or dessert with your meal, because they can cost as much as the entree. Instead, order tea, coffee or juice later, at a nearby coffee shop, or Kissaten.

The same places offer inexpensive breakfasts, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Hint: You'll easily find them near hotels and train stations.

Instead of an expensive lounge, look for a local beer hall or Mammoth Bar in the major downtown districts where prices are much lower and you can rub shoulders with the average Japanese worker.



GETTING AROUND PHIL HANSON

I CAN hardly wait to get this into the paper: Pacific Western Airlines is having a scratch-and-match competition.

You get a combination boarding pass/playing card at the check-in counter. While waiting for the plane to take off you scratch an image on one side of the card, then scratch the other side to see if the image matches.

If it does, you could win a big trip to Las Vegas...but on the other hand your prize could be a plastic Boeing 737, or no prize at all.

Will Air Canada and CP Air dare match this bold innovation; are you allowed to scratch-and-match during the emergency drill demonstration; and what do the cleaning staff think about 113 discarded scratch-and-match cards at the end of each flight?

AIR FRANCE, meanwhile, has decided to scratch and not match. Its seven supersonic Concorde airliners will end flights to Mexico and Washington next April and fly only between Paris and New York.

The airline already has cancelled flights from Paris to Brazil and Venezuela to try to cut Concorde's huge operating losses. Concorde currently flies between the French capital to New York 11 times each week.

Two flights continue to Mexico and two to Washington and it is these four onward journeys that Air France will cut from April 1, 1983.