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# TOM TOM ENGLISH



## VOCABULARY

### Integral =

essential or  
fundamental

### Home-grown=

grown or produced in  
one's own garden or  
country

### Cachet =

To give part of the  
money towards  
something

## Read the article overleaf and discuss these questions:

1. Do you agree that cup noodles are Japan's greatest invention? Why? Why not?
2. In your opinion, what is Japan's greatest invention? Why?
3. Japan is famous around the world for inventing things that have little or no use, but what do you think? Why?
4. Can you think of some examples? (i.e. chopsticks with a small fan attached to it for cooling hot food down, a silicon doll lap for naps or a fake silicon hand for when chopping food so that you don't cut your fingers)

## VOCABULARY

### Trace =

find or discover by  
investigation

### Tap into =

use or exploit  
a plentiful resource  
for your benefit

### Blanket

### coverage =

covers everything,  
including every  
newspaper and TV  
channel

### Endoscope

### camera =

a camera used to look  
inside the body

Japan's best minds have contributed quite a few important inventions to the world over the years.

Did you know that the portable ECG machine was invented in Japan, for example? So were electric rice cookers, DSLR cameras, CD players, Blu-ray discs, and gaming systems.

Really, the list of Japanese tech that has become **integral** to our daily lives goes on and on.

However, if you ask Japanese people which invention their country should be proud of, it turns out a far humbler product jumps to mind for most: instant noodles.

Five hundred Japanese, split evenly between men and women, were asked in a survey which **home-grown** inventions they thought Japan should be proud of.

They weren't given a list but rather asked to come up with ideas on their own.

The result? An astonishing 57% of Japanese responded that Japan should be proud of instant noodles!

Perhaps instant ramen isn't saving any lives, but you have to admit in terms of cultural **cachet**, it's been a huge success. The appeal of having a hot, tasty meal just by adding a little water seems to be nearly universal, with over 100 BILLION

packets being consumed around the world each year. Not a **trace** of the Galapagos syndrome there. Inventor Momofuku Ando **tapped into** a worldwide demand with that one.

The next closest competitor for Japanese pride is the blue LED light, for which inventor Shuji Nakamura won a Nobel Prize in 2013. Despite recent **blanket coverage** of the award, however, only 41.4% of respondents mentioned it.

Rounding out the top 10 are washlet toilets (36.8%), automatic ticket gates (27.2%), karaoke (25%), curry in a pouch, or retort curry, (21.2%), dry-cell batteries and electric rice cookers (21% each), **endoscope cameras** (20%), and mechanical pencils and erasable ink pens (19.6% each).

No love for AIBO, I guess.