

《你还吃泡面么？到底是什么原因造成国内的方便面销量急剧下降？》

曾几何时，热腾腾的方便面陪伴无数中国人走过了一段段难忘的岁月。漫漫回家路上，半夜加班的办公桌前，偷懒不愿下楼的学生宿舍里，抗震救灾的救援车中……方便面几乎无处不在。然而现在方便面的销售量却骤然下降，到底是因为什么原因呢？



With their tangy sauces and sachets of dried meat and vegetables, instant noodles were once the bedrock of China's convenience food, but their sales had declined drastically in recent years.

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For Geng Mei, an English teacher in Beijing, munching bowls full of steaming instant noodles was a highlight of her childhood.

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Cheap and delicious, instant noodles were so popular when I was a child, says Geng, who is in her thirties. "But now I cannot even remember the last time I had them."

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Instant noodles were invented in Japan in the 1950s, spreading quickly throughout Asia, Europe and the rest of the world. They flourished in China in the 1980s and 1990s, with noodle bowls and packets ubiquitous in snack shops and supermarkets.

??????20??50????????????????????????20??80??90????????????????????????????????????

In 2013, sales of instant noodles on the Chinese mainland surpassed more than 46.2 billion packets, according to the World Instant Noodles Association -- that is 1,465 packets of instant noodles opened every second.

????????????2013????????????462????????????1465/???????

However, by 2016 sales had dropped to just 38.5 billion packets.

????2016????????????385???

Instant noodle companies are feeling the pinch. Tingyi, which makes and sells Master Kong instant noodles, had a revenue slump in its instant noodle business from 4.3 billion U.S. dollars in 2013 to 3.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2016. The company even had to sell its inoperative noodle and beverage factories in the city of Xi'an, northwest China, earlier this year.

??2013??43????2016??32????????????????????????????????????
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Zhang Xin, associate professor with department of economics and finance at Tongji University, says the shrinking migrant population has damaged the industry as they were one of the largest groups of instant noodle consumers.

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China's migrant population decreased for the first time in about 30 years in 2015. The economic rise of China's interior regions is luring back migrant workers from coastal cities. Skills and capital acquired in cities also help migrant workers start their own businesses in their home town.

2015????????30??

The explosive growth of China's high-speed railway networks turns out to be unexpected enemy of the instant noodles industry.

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I ate instant noodles for breakfast, lunch and as a midnight snack during my 20-hour train trips in the past, says Tang Mingsheng, who works in the eastern Chinese city of Fuzhou.

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But since 2013, Tang's journey home at Spring Festivals is on a high-speed train that takes just six hours. There is no need for midnight instant-noodle snacking.

???2013????????????????????

Trains were once an important market for instant noodles, but railway stations are ordering less and less instant noodles these days, says Long Shuhai, an instant noodle distributor in Yunnan Province.

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Instead, trains sell expensive Haagen-Dazs ice cream, imported fruits and lunch boxes, as the instant noodle market continues to dwindle.

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The rise of food delivery has also played a role in the declining fortunes of the instant noodle industry. From her office, Geng can see dozens of delivery men crowding the streets below, hurrying from office to office to drop off meals.

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Food delivery gives consumers access to quick meals of more diversified tastes, she says.

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Users of food delivery services reached 295 million by the end of June, a 41.6 percent increase from the end of 2016, according to the China Internet Network Information Center.

????????????????6????????2.95???2016???41.6%?

Food delivery services have even reached high-speed trains. In mid-July, 27 major railway stations across China launched a pilot on-demand food delivery service for high-speed trains passing through the stations.

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The decline of instant noodle sales shows a shift in China's consumption patterns, says Zhao Ping with the Academy of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade. "Consumers are more interested in life quality

than just filling their bellies, these days."

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The instant noodle industry is trying to regain its lost glory through developing more flavors. It is also upgrading products in a bid a change people's perception of instant noodles as a "low-end" product. But unlike cooking a packet of instant noodle, that is something that will not happen in an instant.

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