

COSME KITCHEN

NATURAL STRENGTH

As the largest organic and natural beauty chain in Japan, Cosme Kitchen is at the forefront of the country's rapidly growing trend, reports Annemarie Kruse

The organic and natural beauty market in Japan has been picking up pace over the past decade. There are no official turnover figures, but industry experts from trade publication *Diet & Beauty* magazine estimate that the market size for natural and organic cosmetics (including natural-inspired and "green" brands) has now reached some ¥116-124bn which accounts for around 5% of the entire Japanese C&T market. And although certified organic labels are still few and far between, green cosmetics are a major trend in Japan.

Cosme Kitchen is the biggest organic and natural beauty retail chain in the country and the clear market leader, founded in 2004 by Mash Beauty Lab. As the first specialist store chain for organic and natural C&T, Cosme Kitchen has been instrumental in shaping the organic C&T market in Japan, and thanks to its strong market position the chain is also one of the main market drivers. The first Cosme Kitchen opened in Tokyo's Daikanyama neighbourhood and today the company operates 28 outlets across Japan.

Although there are other Japanese beauty retailers that sell some organic and natural brands, and several international organic beauty labels, like John Masters Organics, Melvita and Jurlique, have their own brand boutiques in Japan, Cosme Kitchen carries by far the biggest selection of organic C&T.

Brands and store layout

The retailer's stores are elegantly designed, with dark wood and natural building materials. Cosme Kitchen sells a very wide range of organic and natural brands from all over the world, covering face and body care, hair care and styling, bath and body and baby care. The majority of the Western brands carry organic certifications.

In total, there are some 80 beauty brands, including Weleda, Primavera, Dr. Hauschka and Martina Gebhardt from Germany, Biofficina Toscana and Biorista Organics from Italy and John Masters Organics, Burt's Bees and Dr. Bronner's from the US. There are also a host of Japanese



brands, including F Organics, Cosme Kitchen's proprietary beauty brand, and some Australian brands. Not every brand's entire product portfolio is carried, but the Western brand selection in particular is impressive.

The Cosme Kitchen outlets in Shibuya and Koshigaya (Saitama prefecture) also feature a small salon area – Spir by Cosme Kitchen – where customers can book a range of beauty treatments. There are two Cosme Kitchen cafés, located in the retailer's outlets in Kyoto and in Fukuoka on Kyushu island, and five stores are equipped with Cosme Kitchen Juicery, a juice bar café.

Organic beauty in Japan

The rapid expansion pace of the Cosme Kitchen chain reflects how strongly the Japanese organic beauty market is growing, which is more remarkable as in Japan organic cosmetics are a luxury category.

The majority of Cosme Kitchen's brands carry a masstige or premium price tag. Most products, excluding smaller items like lip balms or soaps, are priced between ¥2500-4000 (€20-30). However, judging by its rapid expansion over the past ten years, Japanese consumers are happy to pay high prices for organic products.

This is not surprising since there is a growing interest in natural products and a healthy lifestyle in Japan. In 2013 Mash Beauty Lab launched its second organic retail chain: Biople by Cosme Kitchen also sells organic beauty, but focuses more on organic products and an eco-oriented way of living. In addition to cosmetics, Biople stores also carry a good selection of organic teas, confectionery, beverages, home fragrance products and groceries. Like Cosme Kitchen, the eight Biople stores in Japan are based in department stores and shopping centres. Biople and Cosme Kitchen also operate their own web stores and the company's customer loyalty card Green Card is valid in both chains.

As the first and biggest organic beauty retailer on the market, Cosme Kitchen already has a very strong market position and a loyal customer base.

Cosme Kitchen is also adding to its media strategy to draw in customers by. In addition to a well-maintained blog on its cosmekitchen.jp website, it has Facebook and Twitter pages. In early 2014 the retailer even launched a radio talk show co-hosted with Japanese fashion label Emmi, on Tokyo-based radio station J-Wave.



Cosme Kitchen sells a wide range of organic and natural beauty brands from all over the world

Fact file: Cosme Kitchen

Founded 2004

Address Cosme Kitchen, 1F, Hikarie, 2-21-1 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, 150-8510 Tokyo, Japan

Contact telephone number +81 (3) 5468-5892

Website www.cosmekitchen.jp