

Japan begins commercial whaling after 30 years

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Harder

Japan has resumed commercial whaling after a hiatus of over three decades. Commercial whaling was banned in 1986 by an International Whaling Commission (IWC) moratorium. However, Japan withdrew from the IWC in December. Japan's government has promised all whalers will stay within 320 kilometers from its coast. The Japanese fisheries agency set a quota for killing 227 whales every six months. In the first days of resumed whaling, whalers caught two minke whales, which were taken to the northern port of Kushiro. The whale meat was auctioned in Tokyo and sold for record prices. Eager restaurant owners snapped up the meat at prices of up to \$140 per kilo.

Japan has engaged in the practice of whaling for centuries. Whale restaurant chef Mitsuo Tani summed up why he thought the return of commercial whaling was important. He said: "A country that does not preserve its food culture has no future." He also promoted the health benefits of whale meat. He said: "It is five times lower in calories than beef, 10 times lower in cholesterol, two times less fat than chicken and it's packed with iron. But abroad, people do not know this." However, Japan's return to whaling has brought international outcry. The Humane Society accused Japan of starting a "new and shocking era of pirate whaling". It added: "This is a sad day for whale protection globally."



Sources:
cnn.com / japantoday.com /
nzherald.co.nz



1. Japan had stopped commercial whaling for more than 30 years. T / F
2. Japan is a member of the International Whaling Commission. T / F
3. A kilo of whale meat cost \$140 at an auction in Tokyo. T / F
4. The article said Japan has been whaling for millennia. T / F
5. Chicken contains less fat than whale. T / F



1. Why did Japan stop whaling for three decades ?
2. What do you think of the quota ?
3. What is the difference between eating whale meat and beef ?
4. What do you think of the price of the auctioned whale meat ?
5. How would you describe your country's food culture ?