

Robot makes coffee at new cafe in Japan's capital

February 4 2018, by Mari Yamaguchi



Robot barista named "Sawyer" makes a coffee at Henn-na Cafe, meaning "Strange Cafe" in Japanese, in Tokyo, Friday, Feb. 2, 2018. The cafe's robot barista brews and serves coffee as the rapidly aging country seeks to adapt to shrinking workforce. The arm robot "Sawyer" debuted this week in Tokyo's downtown business and shopping district of Shibuya. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

Japan has a new cafe where customers can enjoy coffee brewed and

served by a robot barista.

The [robot](#) named Sawyer debuted this week at Henna Cafe in Tokyo's downtown business and shopping district of Shibuya. The shop's name in Japanese means "strange cafe."

The single-armed robot scans a ticket purchased from a vending machine and greets the [customer](#).

"Would you care for a delicious coffee?" the barista, with a screen showing a pair of cartoon eyes, asks in a flat tone. "I can make one better than human beings around here."

It grinds the [coffee beans](#), fills a filter and pours hot water over a paper cup for up to five people at once. A cup of brewed coffee costs 320 yen (\$3) and takes a few minutes.

Sawyer can also operate an automated machine for six other hot drinks including cappuccino, hot chocolate and green tea latte.

Customers, many of them young men, took photos with their smartphones while they waited in line.

The cafe operator, travel agency H.I.S. Co., says robots can increase productivity while also entertaining customers.

"An essential point is to increase productivity," said Masataka Tamaki, general manager of corporate planning at H.I.S. He said only one person needs to oversee the robot cafe, compared to several people needed at a regular coffee shop, so it can serve better quality coffee at a reasonable price.



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Tamaki says it's not just about efficiency. "We want the robot to entertain customers so it's not like buying coffee at a vending machine," he said.

Takeshi Yamamoto, a 68-year-old restaurant employee who works in the neighborhood, said his first experience with the robot cafe was very enjoyable, and his robot-made coffee was delicious.

"It's quite rich, and tastes very good," Yamamoto said, as he took a sip. "You can get machine-made [coffee](#) at convenience stores, too, and it's actually good. But here, I had great fun."

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