

= Black Thunder (chocolate bar) =

Black Thunder (????????, Burakku Sand?) is a chocolate bar made and sold in Japan by the Yuraku Confectionery Company . It contains a cocoa @-@ flavored cookie bar mixed with Japanese @-@ style rice puffs , coated with chocolate . The manufacturer 's suggested retail price is 30 yen , before tax . The main advertising slogan translates to " Delicious taste in a flash of lightning ! " The story of the Yuraku Confectionery Company and its Black Thunder bar has been treated in the Japanese business press as something of a modern @-@ day rags to riches story .

The Black Thunder bar was conceived as an easily marketable candy bar with three popular components and a reasonable price . The name was partially inspired by the Japanese god of thunder . Black Thunder bars were first made in a factory in the city of Toyohashi in 1994 . The target demographic was university students in the Kanto region and sales growth depended mostly on word @-@ of @-@ mouth recommendations . Through a series of marketing deals starting in 2004 , sales of Black Thunder gradually climbed . In 2008 , the Yuraku Confectionery company sponsored the Men 's Gymnastics team at the 2008 Summer Olympics , and brand recognition correspondingly increased .

Starting in 2008 , Yuraku Confectionery company began developing and marketing variations on the Black Thunder bar . Similar products in the same line include the Big Thunder , Black Thunder Mini @-@ bar , " White Black Thunder " , and the Morning Thunder breakfast bar . In 2009 , Yuraku began collaborative efforts with other agencies to develop related products inspired by the Black Thunder candy bar .

= = Product = =

The original concept was a candy bar that would have three main components , a heavy texture , rich flavor , and a reasonable price ; the combination of these qualities would ensure that it would be an easily marketable product . It was later decided it should be appealing to as many demographic groups as possible , including children . A candy bar was developed with a dark cocoa @-@ flavored cookie pieces mixed with Japanese @-@ style crisped rice , and finally coated with dark milk chocolate . The cookie bar is pressed relatively flat on five sides ; however , the top of the bar presents an uneven surface , even with the chocolate coating . When it came to a name for the product , it was decided that the keyword should be the color " black " , which would allude to the dark chocolate flavor . This is in keeping with other marketing trends in Japan , where the color " black " is associated with dark or bittersweet chocolate , such as the popular Meiji Black chocolate bar . To give the product some " impact " with consumers , it was decided to name it after the Japanese god of thunder , Raijin . Although the name of the product uses the English words " Black Thunder " (pronounced or transliterated as Burakku Sandah) , the outer package also carries the Japanese kanji term for the product in a smaller font (????, pronounced kuroi rajin) , so that the meaning would not be lost on consumers . An advertising slogan recorded from the development period translates to , " Delicious taste like a flash of lightning ! " (?????????? !) , but was initially rejected in favor of the basic one @-@ line descriptive " Black cocoa crunch " .

= = History = =

During initial development , a chocolate bar with three kinds of nuts was developed , called " ChocoNuts 3 " . However , it was terminated within a short time , as it was thought it would not appeal to children . The Black Thunder bar was then developed based on the original concept specifications but also with the idea that it would appeal to multiple demographic segments , including children .

In 1994 , a small factory with only twenty employees in Toyohashi city , Aichi @-@ ken , began making the Black Thunder chocolate bars . The packaging at that time used alphabetic script that read " Black Thunder " , and the suggested retail price was set at 30 yen . By the year 2000 , sales were not impressive , but it was decided to keep the product . At the same time , the package

design was altered , and the concept slogan was added : " Delicious taste in a flash of lightning ! " In August 2003 , the package was changed again to its current design , in which alphabetic font for the brand name was replaced with Japanese lettering in katakana . Finally , a new advertising slogan aimed at a specific demographic was added to the front of the package : " A big hit among young women ! " Throughout this early period , sales growth was largely dependent on word @-@ of @-@ mouth recommendations .

Though initially distributed only to 7 @-@ Eleven stores in the Kanto region , a potential for expanded marketing was realized , and Black Thunder was released for sale through a cooperative business association into more areas . During the 2004 to 2005 sales year , Black Thunder bars saw a sudden surge in popularity in the Kyushu region . During the summer of 2005 , Black Thunder bars were distributed in more regions across the country . By the end of the year , over 900 @,@ 000 units had been sold and Black Thunder bars were the best @-@ selling product of the Yuraku Confectionery Company . In 2006 , it was picked up by the Shiraishi @-@ san Co @-@ op and sold over the internet , and product sales received a boost as it gained in popularity among university students . In the first three years after sales commenced over the internet , about ten times the number of Black Thunder bars were sold since its inception eleven years earlier . In 2008 , the Yuraku Confectionery company sponsored the Men 's Gymnastics team at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing . The team earned the Silver Medal , as did individual gymnast K?hei Uchimura . After the 19 @-@ year @-@ old gymnast actively endorsed the product in news media , brand recognition jumped considerably and from 2008 to 2009 , total sales jumped from just under 50 million units to the landmark number of 100 million . By 2010 , sales had reached 130 million units .

At present , Black Thunder bars are made in four factories located in Sapporo , Tokyo , Osaka , and the original factory in Toyohashi . From any of these , Black Thunder bars can be shipped to various convenience stores and discount stores across the country , and they are still distributed to all university student co @-@ operatives in the Kanto area .

= = Nutritional information = =

The following tables presents the nutritional information of a standard Black Thunder chocolate bar .

= = Variations = =

Yuraku has produced a number of variations on the original Black Thunder bar , with different target demographics , or in collaboration with other commercial ventures . This section includes some of the more notable products by Yuraku . Other Black Thunder products may be available to a restricted market or for a limited time period .

= = = Big Thunder = = =

In 2008 , Yuraku decided to branch out with the product in an effort to appeal to a broader demographic . The " Big Thunder " candy bar was developed , which is about twice the length and width of the original bar , but about half the thickness . The main slogan can be translated to " Big satisfaction for the glutton ! ! " (?????????? ? ?) , though the package also bears the slogans " Deliciousness ! Size ! Double the lightning strike ! " (???? ? ??? ? ???????? ?) and " The great rage of Raijin ! " (????? ?) .

= = = Black Thunder Mini @-@ bar = = =

Black Thunder was also put in the form of a " Mini @-@ bar " in 2008 . The mini @-@ bars are about half the size and width of the regular size , and sold in packages . It was thought that the greater volume would appeal to cost @-@ conscious families . While the regular Big Thunder bar is sold mainly in convenience stores , the target venue for the Mini @-@ bars has been grocery stores

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= = = Dear Girl Thunder = = =

In March 2009 , in collaboration with the radio show Dear Girl Stories with Hiroshi Kamiya and Daisuke Ono and Nippon Cultural Broadcasting , the " Dear Girl Thunder " candy bar was developed . The flavor of the Dear Girl Thunder bar was advertised as " The Taste of First Love : Salt and Chocolate " (????? ? ???) . In Japan , chocolate is associated with Valentine 's Day and is considered an appropriate gift between sweethearts ; salty foods are considered " adult " and are thus associated with maturity . A person 's " first love " is , like in other cultures , something of a rite of passage ; an episode in life sweet in sentiment , but with maturing results . In July 2009 , a limited edition of 480 units of the Dear Girl Thunder bar went on sale and quickly sold out . In October 2010 , the Dear Girl Thunder bar went on sale in FamilyMart convenience stores (with the exception of the stores in one region) . During 2010 , consumers questioned why Black Thunder bars were not distributed to areas of Hokkaido , Miyazaki , Kagoshima , and Okinawa , and the company responded with research into the feasibility of nationwide distribution . In January 2011 , it was decided that a second edition of the Dear Girl Thunder bar would be distributed to Animate stores , a retailer that specializes in anime , manga , and video games . It would also be marketed on the mail order website of Cho ! A & G + , a branch of Nippon Cultural Broadcasting , Inc . , that focuses on digital radio broadcasting . Both deals ensure that consumers across the country can purchase the Dear Girl Thunder bars .

= = = " White Black Thunder " = = =

In December 2010 , Yuraku Confectionery Company introduced " White Black Thunder " bars , called Shiroy Black Thunder (?????????) , for a limited run of six months . The cookie and rice puff core are the same as Black Thunder , but the outer chocolate coating is white . The package mentions " From Hokkaido " , an area which has been associated with white chocolate since its introduction by the Rokkatei Confectionery , based in Obihiro , Hokkaido , in the 1970s . The advertising slogan can be translated as : " Straight descent into deliciousness ! " (?????) , and uses a term distinctly related to the steep slopes of Alpine skiing . Within a short time , the White Thunder bar has proven to be quite popular , as demonstrated by the rapid depletion of stocks .

= = = Morning Thunder = = =

In January 2011 , the Morning Thunder bar was introduced (?????) . Intended as a breakfast bar , the Morning Thunder contains a cinnamon @-@ flavored cookie mixed with peanuts and soy bean puffs , fortified with extra protein , and coated in milk chocolate . The slogan on the front of the package states : " Protein and peanuts in a filling chocolate bar " (????? ? ?????in????) . A limited run of twelve months is planned for the Morning Thunder bar .

= = = Other products = = =

Various other products related to Black Thunder are or have been marketed by Yuraku for limited periods , including the Chibi Thunder (" Tiny Thunder ") , Black Thunder Manj? , and Toyohashi Special Edition of Black Thunder Mini @-@ bars .

= = Related Products = =

In 2009 , Yuraku collaborated with Royal Foods Company , which began making Black Thunder ice cream bars and Black Thunder Monaka (similar to an ice cream sandwich) . Distribution is restricted to 7 @-@ Eleven stores .

In April 2010 , it was announced that there would be a collaboration with Guacamole brand clothing

designers . The result was a line of swimwear for men and women , and a selection of men 's underwear . Most items sport black or gold lightning designs .

In 2011 , a hardcover book was published about the history and various trivia related to Black Thunder bars . Released on February 9 , 2011 to book stores and convenience stores , the title translates to The Mystery of Black Thunder (??????????) .

= = Competitors = =

Starting in 2000 , a candy bar called Golden Chop (??????????) appeared on the market containing similar ingredients as the Black Thunder , and the outer package presents similar colors , design , and font style . It uses the advertising slogan " Fit to be eaten at lightning speed " .