

SUSHI AT 34 SOUTH

THE SUSHI STORY



The traditions of sushi stretch back almost 2,400 years - to the time when rice cultivation first came to Japan. Sushi began as a method of preserving cleaned, raw fish, which was packed in buckets between layers of rice and salt, pressed down under heavy stones, and left to mature for months.

The rice and salt were originally discarded as waste, but this changed about 600 years ago, when the technique of producing semi-fermented fish (nama-nare) was developed, and people began eating the rice, too.



The idea of using vinegared rice - which reduced preparation time to just one day - was introduced about 500 years ago, and it's still the basis of sushi as we know it today.

Two major advances were still to come, though: the development of hako-zushi in the 18th Century, when chefs began pressing the fish and rice in small wooden frame to produce 'sandwiches,' and serving them in colourful assortments - and the development of the edo-mae (or Tokyo-style), in which sliced, raw fish and vinegared rice are hand-formed into bite-sized mouthfuls (basically, what we now know as nigiri).



Various non-traditional styles - like the California roll and the fashion sandwich, featuring ingredients like avocado and crab sticks - became popular when sushi

spread to the West in the 80s and 90s. But (winks conspiratorially) it was only when sushi came to our latitude - 34 South - that it developed real attitude...

A SUSHI GLOSSARY

- Maki rolls – strips of fish or vegetables rolled with sticky, vinegared rice and wrapped in nori (thin, crisp sheets of dried seaweed).
- Nigiri – slices of fresh fish pressed by hand onto pads of vinegared rice.
- Sashimi – elegantly arranged slices of chilled, fresh, raw fish.
- Kaiten-zushi - our sushi conveyor belt. As in: 'Enjoy our freshly made sushi at our kaiten-sushi, or at your table.'
- Namida – a slang term for wasabi. It means 'tears' - and if you've ever taken too much wasabi in one bite, you'll know why.

SUSHI ETIQUETTE

- If you're sharing a platter of sushi, take your selection with the top ends - rather than the sharp ends - of your chopsticks. Put the sushi down down on your plate, and then pick it up again and pop it into your mouth with the sharp ends.
- Start with lighter, more delicately flavoured items before moving onto the fattier, heavier items like tuna.
- You shouldn't eat sashimi with your shingers - I mean - with your fingers. But it's quite acceptable to use them for the maki rolls. Your fingers, that is. You can eat your maki rolls with your fingers.
- Use the soy sauce only sparingly. The idea with sushi is to taste the fish. Don't overwhelm it with condiments.
- Don't make soy-wasabi soup. You know, in those little white bowls. Wasabi paralyses the palate, and if you overdo it, you won't appreciate the delicate, subtle flavours of the fish. Also: our chef might burst into tears.
- When eating nigiri, you shouldn't dip the rice into the soy – it'll suck up too much of the salty sauce, and your sushi'll disintegrate. Just dip the fishy side into the soy, and you won't have to call in the cleaners.
- Also, that pickled ginger? Don't eat it together with the sushi. Eat it alone to freshen your palate. Especially when moving from one kind of fish to another.

SUSHI PAIRINGS WITH ATTITUDE

- Most sushi connoisseurs recommend beer, green tea, or sake with sushi, but we're here to tell you that single malt whiskies add attitude to the occasion.
- Whisky Magazine recommends Talisker with oysters, Arran Malt with salmon, the Glenmorangie Port Wood Finish with yellowtail, and the Macallan Gran Reserva with fatty tuna.
- Drink an off-dry Riesling with maki rolls – particularly vegetarian maki rolls. The spicy floral notes won't dominate the delicate flavours of the veggies.
- Sauvignon Blanc works well with nigiri or sashimi, adding a lively zestiness to the subtle flavours of the fish.
- Opt for an unwooded or lightly-wooded Chardonnay with the bolder flavoured, fattier fish, but steer clear of the heavily-wooded Chardonnays. (That'd be a pairing with a bad attitude. And we're all about the right attitude at this latitude!)

Enjoy!

