

SUSHI LEXICON

SUSHI INGREDIENTS

- aji -- horse mackerel
- akagai -- ark shell clam
- ama-ebi -- raw shrimp
- anago -- conger eel
- aoyagi -- round clam
- awabi -- abalone
- ayu -- sweetfish
- buri -- adult yellowtail
- chu-toro -- marbled tuna belly
- ebi -- boiled shrimp
- hamachi -- young yellowtail
- hamaguri -- clam
- hamo -- conger eel
- hatahata -- sandfish
- himo -- "fringe" around an ark shell clam
- hirame -- flounder
- hokkigai -- surf clam
- hotategai -- scallop
- ika -- squid
- ikura -- salmon roe
- inada -- very young yellowtail
- iwashi -- fresh sardine
- kaibashira -- eye of scallop or shellfish valve muscles
- kaiware -- daikon-radish sprouts
- kajiki -- swordfish
- kani -- crab
- kanpachi -- very young yellowtail
- karei -- flatfish
- katsuo -- bonito
- kazunoko -- herring roe
- kohada -- gizzard shad
- maguro -- tuna
- makajiki -- blue marlin
- masu -- trout
- meji (maguro) -- young tuna
- mekajiki -- swordfish
- mirugai -- surf clam
- negi-toro -- tuna belly and chopped green onion
- ni-ika -- squid simmered in a soy-flavored stock
- nori -- dried seaweed
- saba -- mackerel
- sake -- salmon
- sawara -- Spanish mackerel
- sayori -- (springtime) halfbeak
- seigo -- young sea bass
- shako -- mantis shrimp
- shime-saba -- mackerel (marinated)
- shiromi -- seasonal "white meat" fish
- suzuki -- sea bass
- tai -- sea bream
- tairagai -- razor-shell clam

- tako -- octopus
- tamago -- sweetened cooked egg wrapped in nori
- tobiko -- flying fish roe
- torigai -- cockle
- toro -- choice tuna belly
- tsubugai -- Japanese "tsubugai" shellfish
- uni -- sea urchin gonadal tissue

MAKI-ZUSHI (sushi rolls)

- maki-mono -- vinegared rice and fish (or other ingredients) rolled in nori seaweed
- tekka-maki -- tuna-filled maki-zushi
- kappa-maki -- cucumber-filled maki-zushi
- oshinko-maki -- -pickled-daikon (radish) rolls
- kaiware-maki -- daikon-sprout roll
- umejiso-maki -- Japanese ume plum and perilla-leaf roll
- negitoto-maki -- scallion-and-tuna roll
- chu-toro-maki -- marbled-tuna roll
- Otoro-maki -- fatty-tuna roll
- kanpyo-maki -- pickled-gourd rolls
- futo-maki -- a large roll filled with rice, sweetened cooked egg, and pickled vegetables
- nori-maki -- same as kanpyo-maki; in Osaka, same as futo-maki
- natto-maki -- sticky, strong-tasting fermented-soybean rolls (beware)
- ana-kyu-maki -- conger eel-and-cucumber rolls
- temaki -- hand-rolled dried nori seaweed cones filled with raw fish or other ingredients
- maguro-temaki -- tuna temaki

OTHER SUSHI TERMS:

- nigiri(-zushi) -- pieces of raw fish over flattened vinegared rice balls (Tokyo-style)
- Edomae-zushi -- same as nigiri-zushi
- chirashi(-zushi) -- assorted raw fish & vegetables over a bed of vinegared rice
- tekka-don -- pieces of raw tuna over rice
- sashimi -- raw fish (without rice)
- chakin-zushi -- vinegared rice in a thin egg crepe
- inari-zushi -- vinegared rice and vegetables in a thin "bag" of fried tofu
- oshi-zushi -- Osaka-style sushi: squares of pressed rice topped with vinegared fish
- battera(-zushi) -- oshi-zushi topped with mackerel
- tataki -- pounded, seared, almost raw fish
- odori-ebi -- live ("dancing") shrimp
- oshinko -- Japanese pickles
- wasabi -- Japanese horseradish
- gari -- pickled ginger
- shoyu -- soy sauce
- shiso -- Japanese mint/basil-like plant served with sushi

Kaiten-zushi

Most sushi restaurants are quite expensive. It can easily cost US\$100 per person, depending on what you eat. But there are places called *kaiten-zushi*, where the individual plates of sushi circle around the eating area on a conveyor belt of sorts. *Kaiten* means “rotary” and the sushi is presented picturesquely in a sort of sushi merry-go-round. This is sushi "fast-food" and is relatively inexpensive and always fun. It's very popular in Japan, so you can find kaiten-zushi restaurants everywhere. When you go to kaiten-zushi, you wait until your favorite sushi comes around to you, then you pick up the plate(s). If you don't see what you want, you can order it and it will usually be made in front of you by one of several busy sushi chefs and handed to you within a minute. The type or color of plate the sushi pieces are on will indicate the price. You stack up your plates at your side as you eat. If you want to save money, you can avoid picking up the more expensive sushi such as *toro* and *uni*. It usually costs about 150-300 yen per plate. At the end your plates and their cost will be totaled up for you. Many if not most kaiten-zushi restaurants serve good-to-excellent quality sushi which is better than most sushi in the states at any price. It is generally very fresh due to the rapid turnover at these busy restaurants. Although the environment at kaiten-zushi restaurants lacks elegance and there is little emphasis on the artistry of the presentation, the friendly and informal atmosphere, excellent value, wide selection, and the experience of truly dining with the locals makes kaiten-zushi something not to be missed in Japan.

Sushi Etiquette

- Clean your hands with an *oshibori* (hot towel). It is okay to wipe your face as well. Then order a drink.
- Green tea (called *agari* in sushi restaurants) is the traditional drink with sushi, although beer is now extremely popular as well. Green tea is usually free and serve-it-yourself (from a spigot at each seat) at kaiten-zushi restaurants. Sake is often drunk with sashimi but less so with sushi (the rice and sake, made from rice, are yin and yin) – but feel free to do so as this is not a hard and fast rule by any means. It is not uncommon to see the Japanese drinking beer *and* sake with sushi.
- At kaiten-zushi restaurants, you can select from the rotating array of dishes or individually order anything you don't see already made. At regular sushi restaurants and some kaiten-zushi restaurants you can order a “set meal” of assorted sushi at a fixed price. If you are not ordering a set of sushi, it is polite to order no more than one or two kinds of sushi at a time, instead of ordering a lot.
- Feel free to ask the sushi chef for his recommendation of the day.
- Put soy sauce for dipping in the small dish provided. Add wasabi to the soy as desired. You may have to ask for wasabi in Japan – feel free. In kaiten-zushi restaurants it is often on the rotating belt for the taking, along with pickled ginger (*gari*).
- To eat sushi, it's most common to use your fingers, though chopsticks are acceptable.
- When dipping sushi in the soy sauce, do not dip the whole piece of sushi. Just dip the end of the sushi as you eat, fish side down. That helps prevent the sushi from falling apart as you eat it.
- Try not to ask the sushi chef to bring you things (like a drink or your bill). There is a waitress for that.
- Feel free to offer to buy your sushi chef a drink if he/she is doing a good job.