

A week of Japanese Food

Last week, we undertook a fun adventure. I love Japanese culture especially the food, the tea, the music and the general attitude the Japanese have towards life and what better way was to start than with food? So we took to the streets, trying 7 kinds of Japanese dishes on 7 different days. And they were glorious days indeed!

Day 1 : Sushi at Nippon Kai



The first stop on our food map was *Nippon Kai*, a Japanese restaurant in Siam. Siam being the food and shopping hub of Bangkok, it was a must try on our list. We tried the Futo Maki, the imitation crab rolls and The Nigiri Set which provided an assortment of my sushi of choice. Coupled with some refreshing hot green tea and the ambiance in the cozy yet open restaurant was very relaxing. The only gripe I have is the food was kind of expensive at 1500 baht.

Day 2 : Karaage Don at Kofuku

Kofuku is this small beautiful restaurant located near where I currently live. It is shrouded in stunning Sakura blossoms and makes for the most picturesque spot to dine. The staff are extremely kind and friendly to foreigners, as well as locals and the food, especially the sushi is spectacular. But this time we went for the Karaage Don, a delightful chicken rice dish cooked with egg. A truly hearty meal for when you're not in the mood for curry or fish.

Their Japanese tea is also really good and all their drinks are on free refills. The price is okay not cheap but still reasonable for the quality of food available.

Day 3 : Chicken Yakisoba at Zen



Zen is a delightful little restaurant. Its clean, white, tastefully yet minimally decorated. If there was one restaurant that could embody what I think of Japan as, it would be this one. The restaurant is all clean lines, wood and Byōbu (Japanese folding screens). And the food was sensational! They offer a wide range of dishes and teas but we ordered the Yakisoba or thick buckwheat noodles and I cant begin to describe how good it was. And I'm not even a huge fan of noodles. If you ever see a Zen near by and are hungry, please go in. Also the price is very reasonable for the large portion sizes and the amazing food offered!

Day 4 : Kakigōri at After You



After You is provably the most popular Desert Cafe in Bangkok and the reason is probably their many many flavours of Kakigōri. Kakigōri is a ice desert similar to the Korean Bingsu, made of shaved ice flavored with syrup and a sweetener, often condensed milk. Sounds sickly sweet doesn't it? But After You makes the balance of flavours just right. We went for the strawberry cheesecake one (gluttons) but there were so many to choose from, including a special of the month : sticky mango rice. There's Nutella, Milo, Raspberry, Tea and so much more. The strawberries were so so tart as if freshly picked from the perfect meadow. The ice was refreshing in the hot tropical weather and the cheesecake, like Smaug's treasure underneath the mountain of ice, was divine. If you're in the mood for desert, this is something you'll love!

Day 5 : Clam Miso Soup At On the Table





I said Kofuku was picturesque but *On the Table* is on a whole different level. It's more modern in its rapport, sort of nautical, incorporating many elements of the West, while still holding onto its Japanese roots. The windows are wall length, opening you to the outside, really does feel like you're on a ship's deck looking out and partaking of your food in the midst of some calm sea. Their menu is a fusion of Japanese and western dishes and their wide array of non alcohol fruity cocktails left me feeling giddy. So much to choose from! In the end I ordered, the clam miso soup, having oddly never tried Miso before though I hear it's a staple in every Japanese household. The taste was clear, meaty and reminded me of French Onion Soup. It was good soup and I rarely like soup.

Day 6 : Chicken Teriyaki at On the Table

Okay I'll admit I was a tad lazy at picking a new restaurant plus I really wanted a panookie that I saw there but couldn't get the other day. Everything else about the restaurant still applies here. Beautiful. This time we got the Chicken Teriyaki. Sweet, sour and sadly sort of bland. The mushrooms were good though. Price is a tad more than I would like.

Day 7 : Charcoal Chicken (Tskuneju) at Ootoya

Ootoya is a restaurant brightly decorated with modern Japanese touches, the hue-y, subdued painting of the cherry blossoms and the Byōbu really gave a very authentic Japanese feel (not much unlike Zen.) But let's talk about the food-right after the drinks: A variety of colourful flavours, teas, and *a lot of matcha*. We ordered the soy milk and black syrup- it was crap, don't get it but their green tea was good. And free refills. The amount of food was generous, filled with rice and an assortment of veggies including bamboo. There was an extra poached egg and soup and the chicken tasted almost like kebab. Always a good thing. A bit on the expensive side though at roughly 400 baht a dish.