

## **Edomae-Sushi: Nigirisushi in the Edo-Style**

I would like to introduce you to Edomae-Sushi

Many visitors, who come to Japan, sooner or later want to try Edomae-Sushi. This is a recent phenomenon. Sushi as diet food is very popular in Japan and overseas. In big cities like Berlin, Paris, Moscow and New York you can find many Japanese Sushi restaurants.

Though Edomae-Sushi has been popular since the Edo period (1603-1868) the recent sushi “boom” has been caused by the trend to purchase healthy food and various (Japanese) delicacies, as well as studies on Edo culture and other publications.

This trend has been spreading in spite of a worldwide shortage of tuna.

Another reason for its popularity is a new type of sushi restaurant, called “kaitensushi” (conveyor belt sushi).

At the moment there are 18 sushi restaurants in Moriya, 15 of them are conventional restaurants and 3 belong to the kaitensushi type. In Moriya one can find one sushi restaurant per 3100 citizens.

### **Q: When and by whom was “Nigirisushi in the Edo Style” invented?**

A: Apparently the first shop was opened at Ryogoku Edo during the Bunka Era (1804-1816) by a chef called Yohei Hanaya. He is said to have invented the style of serving fresh raw fish mounted on a boiled riceball mixed with vinegar. “Yoheisushi” became very popular among Edo citizens. At the beginning Yohei served two kinds of sushi, an eggroll and a “soboro”, which is made of powdered fish. Then followed tuna in “zuke” (tuna preserved in soy sauce), which became a tremendous hit. At that time there had been a large catch in the Tokyo Bay, consisting of sea bass, gizzard shad, garfish, halfbeak, flat fish and prawn.

In the Meiji Period this kind of serving raw fish became known as Sushineta.

### **Q: How many kinds of Sushineta are there?**

A: There are about twenty different kinds, like

Tuna, (lean, midfat, maxfat), Conger, Gizzard, Flat Fish, Sea Beam, Mackerel, Horse Mackerel, Cuttle Fish, Octopus, Bonito, Salmon, Clam, Abalone, Trough Shell, Scallop, Ark Shell, Pen Shell, Urchin, Salmon Roe, Cockle, Prawn, Plovica, Cucumber, Nattou (fermented soybeans), Eggroll

### **Q: Are there different seasons for different kinds of netasushi?**

A: Winter: Tuna from Ohma and Aomori, Mackerel from Tosa, Octopus, Ark Shell, Cuttle Fish

Spring: Trough Shell, Bonito from Tosa, Abalone

Summer: Conger, Prawn, Gizzard Shad, Urchin

Autumn: Urchin, Ark Shell, Clam

**Q: Are there other important ingredients?**

A: 1 Wasabi – Hot Japanese horseradish with a disinfecting function. It grows in areas like the foot of Mt Fuji and Azumino in Nagano Prefecture.

2 Gari- Slices of ginger, pickled in sweetened vinegar. It takes off the aftertaste between different kinds of sushi and like wasabi it has a disinfecting function.

3 Murasaki Another name for “shoya”, soy sauce

4 Sushicha Powdered green tea, which is served free.

If you want to have your bill, call: “Agari”

**Q Tell me how to order**

A At the counter you can choose your favourite sorts. I recommend to start with white fish, followed by different kinds of onigiri. Nattou and Kappamaki (cucumber rolls) should be your last order. You will always get two pieces of the same sushi piece, which means satisfaction for your stomach and your purse!

If you sit at a table you don` t have to worry about your choice but can order from the set menu which is divided into matsu(pine tree), take (bamboo) and ume (plum)

Usually, the prices are written on a big sign hanging on the wall. Keep in mind that the price for different sorts of fish can change depending on the season.

**Q Teach me how to eat sushi in a proper manner**

A Whether you choose fingers or chopsticks, you should not destroy the original shape of your sushi piece.

1. By fingers: Put your thumb on the side of your “neta”, turn sideways, grab the piece with your fore- and middle finger and dip it into the “murasaki”.
2. By chopsticks: Hold your left chopstick to the side of your “neta”, turn sideways and grab it with both chopsticks.

**Q Tell me about the market expansion of the kaitensushi chain**

A This new kind of Sushi restaurant was founded in 1974 and extended to suburban areas in 1978. Since 1998, huge restaurants with 150-170 seats have been opening everywhere. Mass purchasing, opening cost cutting and advanced operation techniques are the reasons for its tremendous popularity. There is a severe competition between conventional restaurants and kaitensushi.

Welcome to Moriya, and don` t forget to look out for a Sushi Restaurant! I am sure you will enjoy a visit there!