

Introduction to Sushi No. 1

Entering a sushi restaurant



The mark of a sushi restaurant

Traditional Japanese shops and restaurants hang a short split curtain called a *noren* over the entrance. This *noren* carries the name of the shop or restaurant; if you see “すし,” “寿司” or “鮨” on it, the establishment is a sushi restaurant.



Pass through the *noren*

The *noren* is the face of a restaurant, and these curtains are handed down from generation to generation. It also symbolizes the soul of the restaurant, so handle it with care. After passing through the *noren*, open the door and enter the restaurant.

Greetings

When you enter the restaurant, the staff will greet you. Follow the instructions of a staff member and take a seat. You may be asked, “Would you like a counter seat or *ozashiki* (*tatami room*)?” or “How many people?”

A word of advice

When you go to a sushi restaurant, be aware of your fragrance rather than your clothes.

Since perishables are handled at sushi restaurants, don't wear anything that gives off a strong odor, such as perfume, cosmetics and hair spray. The sushi will absorb these odors, and its flavor will be destroyed as a result; the other customers will not thank you!

Introduction to Sushi No. 2

Inside a sushi restaurant



① *Itamae*

An *itamae* is a sushi chef. The highest ranked sushi chef is called the *taisho* (sushi master), and is usually found at the rearmost part of the restaurant.

② *Tsukedai*

A *tsukedai* is a serving plate on which the sushi chef puts the sushi he has made. Those sitting in counter seats reach out to get the sushi from the plate.

③ *Tsukeba*

The *tsukeba* is where the chefs make the sushi. Customers are not allowed in the *tsukeba*.

④ Counter seats

In a counter seat, you sit facing the sushi chef and watch him making sushi in front of you. It is customary for regular customers to take seats at the back.

⑤ *Ozashiki* (*tatami room*)

An *ozashiki* is a separate *tatami*-matted room. Since many *ozashiki* are private spaces, they are perfect for families and friends wanting to enjoy a meal in comfort.



Photograph courtesy of Sushizen (Honten)

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