



Albacore Tuna on crispy rice

Tokyo Table

A modern twist on traditional Japanese cuisine

By Anahita Naderi

In the past few decades, the OC has become a melting pot of cultural diversity. This movement has not only broadened our world view of human existence, it has unleashed new and tantalizing experiences. When it comes to food we can dine in France for breakfast, Mexico for lunch and Japan for dinner and that is exactly what we are going to do. So please join me on this journey where we will explore the modern flavors of Japanese Cuisine at one of OC's finest restaurants- Tokyo Table.

The Establishment:

Tokyo Table is operated by Dream Dining - a Japanese based company headed by President and CEO Tetsuya Emura - a prominent figure in the hospitality industry of Japan who once served as COO of Watami Food Service Co. In the late 1990's Emura assumed the role of founding CEO of TGI Friday's Japan, INC., bringing the American restaurant brand to Japan. He left Watami to launch his own company, Dream Dining, which successfully opened its first restaurant venture, Shokudo, in Hawaii. His second venture, Tokyo Table, opened in Beverly Hills in December of 2005 with the Arcadia location opening in 2007 and the OC location grand opening in 2008.

The culinary genius behind Tokyo Table is Executive Chef Norimasa Okazaki who also led Watami's China branch for many years. Chef Okazaki's extensive culinary background is a key factor of Tokyo Table's uncompromising success. His attention to detail, flavors and plating is not only delicious but also visually mesmerizing.

Tokyo Table offers a very diverse selection of Sake which is selected by Sake Sommelier Mikako Yoshinaga. One of her roles is to choose the sake and food pairing menus for Tokyo Table's popular monthly Sake Night events, where up to 20 different sakes and cocktails are presented with the restaurant's modern, authentic Tokyo cuisine.

Reservations and More:

My recommendation with any dining experience is to always check out the website first at www.Tokyotable.com. Tokyo Table has an extensive menu and it is always a great idea to learn a bit about the cuisine and prices before arriving to dinner. Tokyo Table also offers two private rooms with maximum capacities of 8 and 14. These rooms are absolutely gorgeous and are seated on a first come first serve basis. Tokyo Table is highly popular, so reservations are recommended but walk-ins are always welcome.

The Arrival and Scenery:

Tokyo Table is conveniently located in beautiful Irvine at the Diamond Jamboree Shopping Center. Arriving to the restaurant and finding parking was hassle free. From the outside, Tokyo Table features modern California architecture. The entry way boasts a handmade wooden wall shaped like hollow blocks where bamboo plants are naturally growing. The restaurant is lit with lanterns and hanging lights. A mock wooden chandelier hangs in the center of the main dining room. Some of the walls are decorated with Shimenawa (Rope Decors) and monuments representing Matsuri (Japanese Festivals).

The interior decor of Tokyo Table is a reflection of the dining scene in modern Tokyo. The man responsible for creating such an inviting ambiance is Japanese designer and architect Toshinori Kamiya of Kamiya Design.

Cultural Experience:

Dining at Tokyo Table is a true feast. The menu is designed in such a way that it guides the guests on their dining tour. First on the list is To-RIAEZU (quick starters) a concept created to feed your instant hunger in a quick and timely manner. We ordered the SAKIKA TEMPURA (deep fried dried squid) and the AGEDASHI EGGPLANT (Sautéed Eggplant



Chef Ana says...

(out of 5 possible oranges)

Food: 5/5

Service: 5/5

Ambiance/Decor: 4/5

Overall Rating: 

Tokyo Table
2710 Alton Pkwy
Irvine, CA 92606
(949) 263-0000

served with soy dashi sauce). Both were at our table within five minutes and were absolutely delicious.

We ordered pomegranate infused sake served chilled in a frosted carafe to go along with our meal.

At this point, we were at the mercy of Executive General Manager Hideyuki Sakurai who took it upon himself to dazzle us with small bites featured on the Zensai (appetizer) menu. We were treated with a trio of Spicy Tuna on Crispy Rice, Albacore Tuna on Crispy Rice and Beef Tataki on Balsamic Sushi Rice - a new concept in Japanese cuisine which turned out to be a pleasant experience. A lighter Zensai followed: the house Yuzu Hamachi Carpaccio (thinly sliced yellowtail yuzu vinaigrette and pickled wasabi) left my guest and I wanting more.

Next we were offered the Anago (sea Eel) Tempura which was fantastic. The tempura at Tokyo Table is crispy yet the meat inside remains soft and juicy.

Tokyo Table restaurant offers fresh homemade Tofu which is served plain with a side of sea salt, green onions, Nori flakes and Soba sauce. The guest is able to season the Tofu to their liking and I personally found a combination of all the condiments a great treat.

We ordered two different sake cocktails - mango and yuzu. The mango cocktail was light, sweet and refreshing. Yuzu is a Japanese citrus and has a very distinct and aromatic flavor, which paired with unfiltered sake made for a very tangy cocktail.

ISHIYAKI is the Japanese style of hot stone cooking. All items are cooked tableside by your server on a 500 degree black stone. One of the most popular items is the Unagi Rice featuring thinly sliced Nahoya-style unagi filet served with rice and broth.

We ordered two types of Sake: Junmai Daiginjo and Junmai Ginjo - one a bit fruity and the other very crisp and full bodied. The interesting factor is that each sake drink is

served in small portions and comes along with a tag featuring the name of the sake, the company who makes it, the region and a brief explanation of its flavors. These miniature cards are souvenirs for guests so when they return they are able to order their favorite sake in a simple manner; an innovative way to introduce sake to the western world.

Pure Indulgence:

The desserts at Tokyo Table are simply described as Pure Indulgence. They feature several flavors of sorbets and ice cream on the menu, not to mention Tokyo Table's famous (and tall!) Brick Toast - a perfect finish to an eventful night.

Planning Your Return:

With any journey as pleasant as the one we have experienced at Tokyo Table there is always a joyous return. Just remember the flavors of Japan await you at Tokyo Table with their gorgeous design, friendly service and tantalizing culinary infusions. Don't hesitate to take a little time with your friends and family to travel the many regions of the OC.

Sakiika Tempura



Ishiyaki



Agedashi Eggplant

