

Where to get it in 2020

SUSHI

FOR THE NEW YEAR

By Marene Gustin



Need to jump-start that New Year's diet? Or, was one of your resolutions to eat healthier? Then put some sushi on the menu. There's a reason the Japanese have lower obesity rates and cardiovascular disease than Americans and live longer, on average, to about 84 years. Diet is a big part of their overall health picture, and a big part of their diet is fish.

When most people think of sushi, they think of raw fish. Sashimi comes thinly sliced as raw fish or meat, but sushi — made with vinegary rice — may contain cooked or uncooked fish or just vegetables. If you have a compromised immune system or other health issues that prohibit you from eating raw fish, a vegetable maki roll or handroll is still a healthy and low-calorie way to dine. But if you're okay eating raw fish, load up on the salmon and tuna, both full of omega-3 fatty acids that are heart-healthy and lower your risk for some autoimmune diseases as well as depression and memory and vision loss in old age. Nori, the seaweed used as a wrap on rolls, is loaded with nutrients and vitamins, and, of course, the rice is relatively low in calories, and it would be even healthier if you can get your sushi made with brown rice. Throw in some inflammatory-fighting edamame (steamed soybeans) and some filling but low-calorie miso soup, and you've got the perfect healthy meal.

But, beware of being too heavy-handed with that high-sodium soy sauce and watch out for that spider roll with high calorie fried tempura crab and the famous California roll, stuffed with cream



Roka Akor interior



Roka Akor's Wagyu flatiron steak



Sushi King's Sashimi combo

cheese. Not the best diet dishes.

Where to head for fresh sushi in Intown? Here are two popular spots:

On the ground floor of a River Oaks high rise, you'll find the tony Roka Akor. The elegant, modern dining room offers a full view of the robata grill and open kitchen. The best bet is to snag a seat at the counter where you can chat with the chefs. Roka Akor has excellent sushi, including bluefin tuna, yellowtail, and amberjack, but the restaurant is also well

known for its Wagyu and Kobe steaks and cooked seafood like the Alaskan King Crab legs. It's pricey, but worth the splurge, to order the Omakase, the sushi chef's tasting menu.

● **Roka Akor**

2929 Wesleyan St.

713.903.8669

rokaakor.com/houston

The name may make you think of drive-through sushi (never a good idea),



Handies Douzo

but Sushi King in Upper Kirby is a sleek, modern restaurant featuring excellent fish and seafood and a happy hour with over 100 items including sushi, poke bowls, grilled lamb chops, garlic laced edamame and beers and wine at incredible prices. Best of all, the discount prices are in effect all day long on the weekends. Maybe the best bang for your buck and an inexpensive way to try sushi if you're a first-timer.

● **Sushi King**

3401 Kirby Dr.
713.528.8998
sushiking.us

There are plenty of other sushi options in InTown, but if you want to venture further afield, here are some spots in different neighborhoods to check out.

● **Sushi Jin**

14670 Memorial Dr.
281.493.2932 | sushijin.us

One of the best sushi spots in Memorial Villages, if not all of Houston, an added benefit is the extensive wine list here.

● **Izakaya Wa**

12665 Memorial Dr.
713.461.0155 | izakayawa.com

A casual Japanese owned and operated spot (now with a second River Oaks location) known not only for sushi but also panko-fried and grilled skewers.

● **Pokeworks**

213 Heights Blvd.
832.271.7392 | pokeworks.com

Poke is Hawaiian, not Japanese, but it's a bowl of diced raw fish mixed with various sauces and flavorings, and Pokeworks makes them fresh and right in front of you.



● **Handies Douzo**

3510 White Oak Dr.
832.831.0912 | handiesdouzo.com

Probably the newest sushi joint in town, this Heights spot specializes in chef-created hand rolls.



Izakaya Wa



Pokeworks

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