

eat

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FOOD
TRUCKS
& CARTS
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but this Salmon Nigiri was tender, melt in your mouth and full flavored. The Suzuki Nigiri, made with striped sea bass from Baja, California, was topped with ponzu and a bit of ginger and chives. The toppings added a fresh taste that balanced the distinct bass flavor.

Although I tried another sushi venue, the owner asked not to be included in the article. Likewise, a soon-to-be-open sushi food truck did not want to be mentioned. It is likely a matter of diminished supply. These small places do not want to be flooded with orders they cannot fulfill right now. Skomski explained that fishermen have been catching less because of the lower demand for fish during the pandemic shutdown, thereby reducing the supply of fresh fish.

To avoid the supply issue, but increase his customer base, Skomski is considering adding a Thursday night Vegan roll menu if there is enough interest. His favorite spicy tuna substitute made with butternut squash is one possible item. A miso-glazed sweet potato sushi roll with jalapeños is another. Those interested in vegan rolls can contact Skomski through Facebook or Instagram @KusshiNW.

As a comparison to Skomski's sushi and a quick way to satisfy a sushi craving, I picked up a couple of sushi rolls from Market of Choice. Two rolls looked creative and exciting. The first was topped with all four types of fish roe — tobiko (flying fish roe), masago, ikura, and caviar atop toro and maguro (tunas). The second was filled with tempura fried shrimp, fresh avocado and cool chunks of cucumber on the inside. Tuna, tempura crunch, jalapeño, wasabi mayo and spicy mayo on top.

The rolls were \$11 each. Rolls made from these ingredients at a sushi restaurant would probably cost \$5 more. While they were somewhat tasty and could quickly fulfill a sushi craving, it made me aware of sushi quality differences.

The higher the quality of sushi, the more flavorful and tender the fish. The highest quality fish practically melts in your mouth with a burst of flavor. Fresh sushi rice

mixed with vinegar will stick to your fingers and is chewy but not hard or mushy.

Anything covered in tempura is crisp and light. Included veggies will create a good balance with oily rich fish. A fine sushi chef will create interesting combinations and include ingredients that play off each other to bring out all of the flavors.

■ Reporter: barb@barbgonzalezphotography.com

Where to get sushi in Central Oregon

KANPAI

Tuesday through Saturday, 4 to 8 p.m.; call to order 541-388-4636, kanpaibend.com
990 NW Newport Ave., Bend
Kanpai is a “culinary experience,” which is evidenced in the creative high-quality ingredient combinations and preparation of the rolls.

Specialty nigiri and rolls are \$13 each. One example is the Slammin' Salmon which has Salmon around rice with slightly broiled crab, lemon aioli and sweet soy reduction. Other specialty rolls run from \$12 to \$17. The Hatter Hanzo is made with black pepper seared tuna, tempura, mango, avocado, cucumber, scallions, and red curry peanut sauce. A combination of Western cuisine ingredients—salmon, cucumber, goat cheese, macadamia nuts, mango vinaigrette—are used in the Flying Kamikaze.

Kanpai also offers 10 veggie rolls.

BEND IZAKAYA RONIN

Friday and Saturday, 5 to 8 p.m.
bendizakaya.com. 541-797-4325.
70 SW Century Drive #120

Ronin has traditional rolls like a Spicy Tuna roll for \$12 and California roll (real crab) \$13. But it's the Omakase (Chef's choice) roll at \$18 that will surprise and delight your palate with unique combinations of ingredients. For a pure sushi experience try the 5 (\$35) or 8-piece (\$45) Nigiri flights that include tuna, albacore, salmon, hamachi, crab leg and a 6-piece roll.

5 FUSION & SUSHI BAR

Monday through Saturday, 4 to 8 p.m.
541-323-2328, 5fusion.com
821 NW Wall Street

5 Fusion offers 21 rolls that run \$9 to \$18 including Unagi, Spider and Dragon Rolls. One of their unique combinations is the Mr. Potato Head Roll with escolar, cucumber, avocado roll topped with Kanpachi, crispy sweet potato, and yuzu tomato chimichurri for \$17.

CHI CHINESE & SUSHI BAR

Tuesday through Sunday, 4 to 9 p.m.
541-323-3931, bendchi.com, or order on their “Chi Chinese & Sushi Bar” phone app
3118 N Hwy 97, Bend
Chi offers 17 specialty sushi rolls. Snow White and the Sushi Chef has snow crab, cucumber, avocado, topped with yellowtail, shies, green onions and ponzu sauce for \$14.

OISHI JAPANESE RESTAURANT

Tuesday through Sunday for lunch and dinner
541-548-3035, oishijapanese.com

511 SW 6th St. Redmond
Many unique roll combinations including the Wonderful Roll with salmon, cream cheese, and avocado wrapped in Ika (squid) instead of rice and lightly fried on outside, \$15; The Tower is a delicious stack of spicy tuna, crab meat, scallop, avocado with mayo sauce, \$16.

OKAWA STEAK HOUSE AND SUSHI

Open daily for lunch and dinner
541-640-8056, https://qmenu.us/#/okawa-steak-house-sushi-bend
1180 SE 3rd St
Okay offers an extensive selection of rolls starting with 11 traditional rolls for around \$7, 17 non-traditional rolls priced from \$4 to \$12, and 31 Signature Rolls for \$10-\$15. One Signature is the Special Yum Yum Roll has Lobster tempura inside smoked salmon with avocado on top. Stinky roll is topped with cajun albacore.

MIO SUSHI

Open daily for lunch and dinner
541-241-1008, mioshushi.com/mio-bend
Old Mill, 375 SW Powerhouse Drive

Mio offers 22 premium rolls, including the Ahi Tataki — real crab, cucumber, takati tuna, tobiko, avocado, sweet sauce, pineapple sauce, and spicy cream sauce, green onion.

SHINSEI SUSHI

Open daily for lunch and dinner
541-306-3486, shinseibend.com
At Cascade Village Shopping Mall

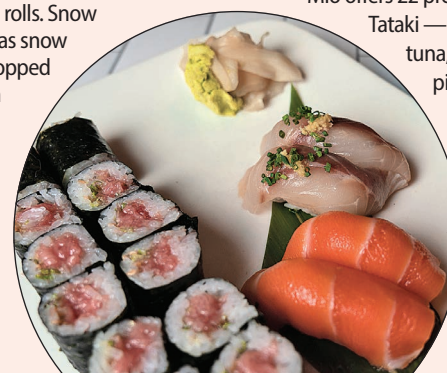
Shinsei offer an extensive list of 23 regular rolls \$7-11, 5 Tempura Rolls \$9-\$12, 10 Crispy

Rolls. \$10 — \$12, 15 Premium rolls \$14-\$18, and 7 Veggie Rolls. The “Amazing” is a jalapeño stuffed with Spicy Tuna, deep-fried topped with spicy tuna, tempura flakes, and Unagi sauce

SORA SUSHI

Open for lunch and dinner daily
541-318-3838, sorasushibend.com
744 Northwest Bond Street;
541-923-9867, sorasushiredmond.com
3853 SW 21st St, Redmond

It may be a while before we can enjoy the sushi conveyor belt again. Still, this reasonably priced sushi is available for pickup and delivery. Sora offers 38 Special rolls from \$10.25 to \$15 and has 14 Rolls for less than \$9 and 9 vegetable rolls.



Negi-hama maki, salmon and Suzuki Nigiri complete the meal from Kusshi NW.

Sushi glossary

Unless you are an avid sushi diner, you may find it confusing to read menus with so many Japanese words and ingredients. Here's a short cheat sheet of common terms you'll find on a sushi menu.

Nigiri: What we think of as sushi with fish on top of rice.

Sashimi: thinly sliced raw fish

Nori: toasted sheets of seaweed.

Maki: A sushi roll with nori and sliced into round, bite-sized pieces.

Hamachi: yellowtail fish

Unagi: cooked eel (eel is poisonous if raw)

Kanpachi: amberjack fish

Krab: imitation crab that is made of starch and white fish

Bonito: similar to tuna but can only be caught and served in certain seasons, often dried into bonito flakes for topping sushi rolls

Tobiko: flying fish roe; the orange eggs are often used as a topping on sushi rolls. Masago, ikura and caviar are four other types of fish roe.

Ponzu sauce: citrusy sauce with tart and

tangy flavor

Yuzu: This fruit is like a sharp hybrid of lime, lemon and grapefruit. It is made into a sauce that is acidic, tart and has a kick.

Don or donburi: Japanese rice bowl
Kaiware: sprouted daikon radishes that add a peppery flavor to sushi rolls

Yamagobo: pickled burdock root — looks like a long thin carrot

Sushi restaurants offer cooked and vegan options. Many have cooked fish like eel or seared Tuna, or tempura fried shrimp, soft-shell crab, and the like. Vegan rolls feature vegetables wrapped in nori and rice.