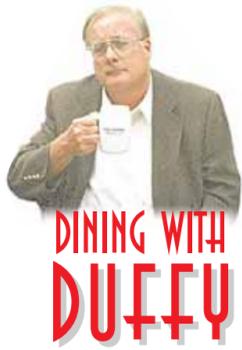


ACCENT

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DINING WITH DUFFY

Mikado Japanese Restaurant

Address: 148 S. Illinois St., Indianapolis
Phone: 972-4180
Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday; noon to 11:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon to 10 p.m. Sunday
Entrée price range: \$5 to \$36
Credit cards: Major cards accepted

Japanese restaurant offers upscale Asian dining

Mikado Japanese Restaurant opened in 1997 on northwest corner of Illinois and Georgia streets across from Circle Centre mall, but a fire more than two years ago nearly knocked the restaurant out for the count.

Chef and owner Yumei Lee and her family are nothing if not determined that downtown Indianapolis should not be denied the international delights of sushi and their upscale renderings of Asian cuisine, thus the restaurant was remodeled and reopened more than a year ago.

Mikado doesn't skimp on décor, with an attractive 13-seat sushi bar off the entrance, a tiki-style bar and lounge, and attractive dining area, including some partitioned off with a Japanese tea room ambience.

In addition to the sushi offerings, Mikado lays on creative and upscale-priced seafood; teriyaki glazed black Angus beef; lamb chops; duck breast in a sake-Mandarin orange sauce; peppered and curried prawn dishes; wild mushrooms sautéed in garlic-ginger sauce; scallops in a sauce of garlic, ginger and chili; and lobster tails.

I started a luncheon repast with an expertly crafted spicy scallop handroll (\$8.95), the rice encasing sprightly and fresh scallop topped in a spicy mayonnaise that provided wonderful flavor, with sesame seeds sprinkled about for further flair.

I immersed myself in the Bento box luncheon special, a multicourse meal served at once in the compartments of the elegantly decorated wooden Bento box, with salmon teriyaki the featured attraction (\$14.95).

The Bento feast offered a smidgen of finely shredded seaweed salad greens in a sweet and wonderfully tasty ginger-like sauce that made me wish there were more where that came from.

It was topped by a fried pork dumpling, called shumai, which Lee is particularly gifted at creating.

Also a genuine treat from the Bento box are the crispy battered tempura shrimp, onion and vegetables, although the accompanying salted dipping sauce offered little flavor.

Further included in this well-rounded ensemble is a delicious, spicy and creamy Japanese potato salad, a dollop of rice in a spicy curry sauce and char-grilled strips of marinated beef wrapped around greens.

The star attraction, grilled salmon, proved moist and tender, with the thick, sweet teriyaki sauce working well in enhancing the flavor.

The overall rendering left me suitably delighted that Mikado gives downtown Indianapolis a first-rate Japanese restaurant, with plenty to satisfy the most ardent sushi enthusiast.

Mikado offers a solid menu that seeks to bring cosmopolitan flair to Japanese and Asian cuisine. The restaurant should be of particular appeal to those visiting and doing business with our capital city ever growing in international savvy.

Veteran restaurant critic Reid Duffy writes a weekly review for the Daily Journal. Comments may be sent to letters@thejournalnet.com.



Fresh and dried herbs each add unique flavor to dishes

By ANNETTE JONES
 DAILY JOURNAL FEATURES EDITOR
 ajones@thejournalnet.com

Dick Heiney uses thyme leaves he grows in his garden instead of salt for cooking.

An avid gardener, the Greenwood man enhances the flavor and aroma of foods with many varieties of fresh herbs, which don't add significant sodium, calories and fat.

He prefers the taste of fresh herbs to dried ones. The flavor of herbs changes when moisture and oils are extracted, Heiney says.

"They lose some of the balance," he says.

Fresh and dried herbs both can improve food depending on how they are used, says chef Ben Lierman, who teaches cooking classes on the southside.

"Sometimes there are situations where you wouldn't want to use fresh herbs," Lierman says.

When herbs are evaporated, they become more resilient and stronger in flavor. That makes them more suitable for dishes that require extended cooking.

Dried herbs are best in soups because they typically simmer for long periods.

"If you use fresh herbs, the flavor would dissipate and all the volatile oils would disappear," Lierman says.

"You would have no flavor left."

Dried herbs build the flavor foundation needed in a soup, while fresh herbs are a garnish to add at the end. They can be a finishing flavor in broth, he says.

Dried herbs shouldn't be your first choice when cooking with steam, however.

When steaming vegetables, add fresh herbs toward the end of cooking, and the heat will wilt them for flavor, Lierman says.

Lierman advises shoppers to buy dried spices at busy stores because the quality degrades if they sit on the shelf too long. Most are labeled with an expiration date, he says.

Dried herbs should be stored in an airtight container away from heat and direct sunlight. Don't keep them in the refrigerator or freezer or near the stove.

Fresh herbs can be stored in the refrigerator for up to five days.

Wrap them loosely in a barely damp paper towel and seal in a plastic bag. Or put the stem end in a glass of water and cover the leaves with a plastic bag.

For Heiney, who has gardened since childhood, growing his own herbs is as fulfilling as the flavor they add to food.

"I always grew things for the table," he says.



Dry herbs and fresh ones, like parsley, right, both can enhance foods.

STAFF PHOTOS BY MATT OOLEY/mooley@thejournalnet.com

Growing from seeds extends garden season

Plants can be ready for outdoors in six weeks

By JOE LAMP'L
 DIY NETWORK

Starting flowers and vegetables from seed is a great activity when you just can't wait any longer to get your hands dirty before spring.

It's an inexpensive project, and the varieties of seed available from multiple sources far exceed what you can find locally.

It usually takes six to eight weeks for plants started from seed to be ready for outdoor planting.

Seed trays can be purchased for growing, but household items like small cups or bowls are just as effective.

I like the plastic containers you get at the grocery store or from a take-out restaurant. They have a clear plastic lid, perfect for watching your progress and for keeping the moisture in.

When planting, use a seed-starting mix without soil. You can make your own or buy ready-made products at a garden center. These mixes usually are

made up of a combination of peat moss, perlite and vermiculite.

Avoid using garden soil; it is too heavy for tender seedlings and often contains disease pathogens that can kill your plants.

When sowing seeds, pre-moisten the mix so the seeds are not disturbed by water immediately after planting. Assuming the container or tray stays covered, the mix should hold all the moisture the seeds need to germinate. Not all seeds have the same germination requirements, so refer to instructions on the seed packet.

Don't plant seeds in soil. It can contain diseases.

Next, cover the trays with a plastic lid that allows light through but holds moisture in. Plastic bags also work well. With adequate moisture, condensation will develop inside the cover. Supplemental lighting is important for best growth. A shop light with two 40-watt florescent bulbs is perfect and inexpensive. Place your light just above the container covers. The lights should stay on for about 16 hours each day.

As soon as you notice the seeds sprouting, remove the cover. Place a small fan nearby to keep air moving across the soil to help keep the seedlings disease-free.

Lastly, continue to add water as needed to keep the soil moist but not wet. Once the cover has been removed, soil will dry out more quickly. Be sure to continue to raise your light, keeping it to within an inch or two from the tops of your sprouts. In about six weeks, the seedlings will be ready to transition into the garden.

Joe Lamp'l hosts "Fresh from the Garden" on the DIY Network as well as a gardening radio show.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR: ANNE YOUNG

A career move brought Anne Young from her home in Kentucky to the far southside 21 years ago.

In August, the 59-year-old educator changed hats again to become director of Clark-Pleasant Academy, an alternative high school in Whiteland.

Young is a master gardener who loves roses. She and her husband, Steve, share three daughters, 13 grandchildren and a love for travel.

A possession from childhood: A bookcase Steve made when he was 16 and I was 15. "If the house was on fire, that would be what I would want to carry out."

Weirdest thing in your purse: A little carving from China, a gift from an artist for luck.

What you're reading: A home-design book and a novel by Mary Stuart.

What you love most about your home: The yard. "Every plant is one I've chosen for a reason. I have all the things I love to see every day."

Before I die I want to: Go salmon fishing in Canada. "Pulling one of those out of the water has always intrigued me."

Pet peeve: Malicious gossip

Best advice from your dad: Don't forget where you come from.

I'd love to meet: Eleanor Roosevelt. "She was someone that life wasn't always kind to, but she reached above that."

Favorite childhood memory: Tagging along with my dad to measure tobacco plots. "I remember riding along with him in the truck, and I got to hold the tape measure for him."



Web extra

For more questions and answers, visit www.thejournalnet.com.

Know someone we should profile? Send suggestions to newstips@thejournalnet.com.



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/roberson@thejournalnet.com

Anne Young, a native of Kentucky, loves to travel with her husband, Steve. The couple has three daughters and 13 grandchildren.

Regular Joe: Caffeine-lovers prefer hot fix

Scripps Howard News Service

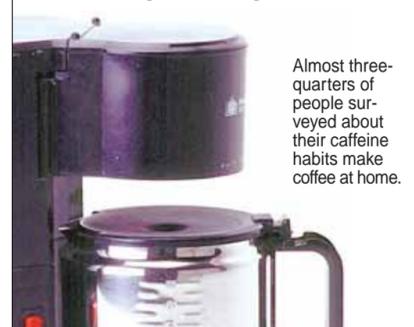
When choosing a caffeinated drink, about 50 percent of men and women surveyed by Shopzilla prefer regular coffee to espresso, lattes, cappuccinos, tea and soda.

• Starbucks is overwhelmingly the most popular coffee shop (53 percent of men and 63 percent of women).

• About one-third of panelists spend between \$5 and \$10 a week on caffeinated drinks, with 38 percent of men and 46 percent of women spending less than \$5 a week.

• Almost three-quarters of respondents (72 percent) use a coffee maker at home.

• Women are more likely than men to prefer specialty cups of coffee such as lattes, cappuccinos, and espressos over a plain cup of coffee (50 percent to 38 percent).



Almost three-quarters of people surveyed about their caffeine habits make coffee at home.