

THE FISH in Uptown: Sushi simplified – At affordable prices

Written by By TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
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Walking into a sushi bar is intimidating enough when you know what you're doing. The options and combinations are endless, as are the sauces, condiments and preparation methods. Staff can be a little snobbish, too, when a no-nothing guest sits down at the bar.

We found The Fish Sushi Bar and Lounge on a recent trip to Uptown. They're on the bottom floor of an office building, with the storefront facing a side street off McKinney (3636 McKinney, Suite 150 is their official address). It's best to use your GPS to find it.

Not much was stirring on the Tuesday afternoon we were there, so we sat at the bar. Pat Lawrence, my traveling companion, has extensive experience with sushi. It's one of her favorite foods, but I am a novice. The first time I had sushi was on the North Shore of Oahu, and it spoiled me for anything less than the best, which always seems to be beyond my budget.



The Fish, however, is an exception to the "sushi is expensive and beyond your comprehension" rule. Most of their items range from \$5 for a salad, from \$12-\$20 for a five-piece sushi serving and from \$13-\$25 for samplers. Their most popular dish, The Dallas Tower is \$13. For those who just can't bring themselves to eat their protein raw, The Fish offers cooked pork chops (\$14), pan roasted sea bass (\$20) and even a grilled New York strip steak (\$17.)

After realizing you can afford to try most anything at The Fish, the tough part begins. Their menu is vast. You have 10 options for soups and greens, 10 for rolls, 24 for speciality rolls, 56 sushi options, 12 share it from the bar dishes, 19 share it from the kitchen choices, 5 don't share at all and 9 Bento lunch box options. The sheer number of menu items is fine if you know the difference between fresh salmon and fresh salmon belly, sea bass and red snapper, and fresh water eel versus salt water eel, but if you're clueless, the world starts to get a little fuzzy and the ringing in your ears becomes distracting after the first couple of pages.

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Not to worry. From the minute you walk into The Fish, everyone makes you welcome, answers all your questions and even offers to make a sampler for you, served with special sauces.

Host Angel Galvan and sushi chefs Jamie Ngo and Arnold Davalos realized I was in way over my head. They asked me a lot of questions and then made suggestions as to what they thought I'd like.

Pat was able to hold a lengthy conversation with the guys. I was barely able to answer "yes" and "no."



We ended up with a beautiful sampler of five different, delicate fish, a couple of fabulous rolls that included tempura soft-shelled crab, salmon and avocado and Pat's favorite, nigiri, which is cooked vinegar rice combined with other ingredients, usually raw fish or other seafood and topped with a Japanese-style egg custard, according to Wikipedia. Delicious.

The sushi used at The Fish is flown into Dallas on an "almost" daily basis, said Chef Ngo. Tuna is, by far, the most expensive offering, coming in at \$20 per pound.

While we were deciding what to order, Chef Davalos was preparing one of the restaurant's most popular dishes, The Dallas Tower.

"It really is popular as an appetizer," Davalos said. "People really like it."

Business is good at The Fish, despite the recent downturn in the economy. Both chefs cite fresh fish at reasonable prices for the steady traffic. They also say their staff keeps the bottom line steady, too.

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“We try to help as much as we can,” Davalos commented. “Sometimes our guests like to be helped, like you. Sometimes they want to make their own decisions. We’ll be here either way.”

Davalos has been at the Dallas location for two years, but started with the company in Houston. Ngo has been with the restaurant since it opened five years ago.

If you’re new to the sushi scene, sit at the bar. In addition to tapping into their expertise, you’ll be able to watch the chefs work magic as they fill orders. Presentation is a work of art at The Fish.



The restaurant offers Bentos Lunch, a single-portion takeout, consisting of rice, fish or meat, and one or more pickled or cooked vegetables, usually in a box-shaped container, on Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. The chicken teriyaki consists of your choice of soup or salad, vegetable tempura and rice for \$8. The Bento Sushi Special (\$13) is a daily roll, three pieces of nigiri sushi and the daily hand roll.

We finished with green tea ice cream and tempura fried cheesecake. I will go back, but I’ll probably skip dessert next time and order an additional serving of albacore. It was just divine.

The Fish in Dallas is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. They are open for dinner on Monday through Wednesday from 5 p.m. until 11 p.m., on Fridays from 5 p.m. until midnight; on Saturdays from noon until midnight and on Sundays from noon until 11 p.m. Call 214-533-0071 for more information.

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Check out The Fish's extensive menu [here](#) .