



A nigiri-zushi bonanza – just one of several good value set meal options

★★★★★

Bijou Japanese in Kentish Town

It's compact to the point of cramped. Come in wearing a puffa jacket, and you'd be struggling to pass between the tables. Luckily, smart, cheerful decor – accents of red and black on spanking fresh white – and large photo-canvases of alluring Japanese morsels save Satuma from being just another hole-in-the-wall sushi joint.

That, and an only-too-pleased-to-help Korean manager, who explained to us there's no need for them to pay regular visits to Billingsgate Market as Satuma gets its fish delivered by the same company that supplies the ever-reliable Japan Centre. This might explain our superb yellowtail and satisfyingly creamy salmon.

However it's rare to get a 100 per cent hit rate at any restaurant, and sadly the sea bream was only so-so. Our gyoza were similarly hit-and-miss: thrilled by perfectly steamed-fried crescents of juicy chicken, we went on to try the seafood version – a bland mistake.

Other types of food on the menu include noodles, Japanese curry, lunchtime bentos, Korean bibimbap and the usual side side orders, of which agedashidofu (coated, deep-fried tofu) was exemplary.

Overall, we can forgive the odd disappointment when the prices are so appealing and the good dishes are that good. So Satuma's menu is worth exploring – just not when you're laden with bags of shopping or in a large group.

If you can read Japanese and are puzzled by the website's *kana* (phonetic Japanese characters) showing the restaurant's name as Satsumaimo, the middle 's' had to be dropped in order to avoid legal issues with Satsuma restaurant in Soho, while the 'imo' was dropped for being too easily associated with the emos who throng nearby Camden Town. *Kei Kikuchi Satuma, 8 Fortess Rd, NW5 2ES (7485 7078). Kentish Town tube/rail. 12noon-2.30, 5.30-10.30pm Mon-Fri; 5.30-10.30pm Sat. Unlicensed; corkage charge £2.50. Meal for two with service: around £45.*

FOOD & DRINK ONLINE

www.timeout.com/restaurants
For detailed reviews of all the latest places

Side orders

Meal deals

Save money this month!

January is traditionally the time that the 'broadsheets' (as we used to call them, before they shrunk) have lots of set-price meal deals for their readers: all you have to do is come up quoting 'Daily' and the kitchen somewhere will hustle you up a set meal for under £15 or so. But another way of finding good meal deals is to look at the *Time Out* food website – www.timeout.com/restaurants – under the banner marked 'Offers'. These change daily, but at the time of going to press there were more than 100 offers listed, ranging from 30 per cent off an à la carte menu to the likes of three courses and a glass of wine for £19.50. Every place on this list has been visited anonymously by *Time Out* reviewers, and we can recommend them all; some we strongly recommend (read the online reviews to check). See for yourself what the offers are this week.

Shelf life

Luca's Bakery and Café

Andreas Bajohra was born in south Germany, but spent 20 years working in London as a photographer before fulfilling his desire to bring really good, continental breads and pastries to the public. Having set up his ovens a while back to serve farm shops and markets, this brand new shop and café gives him a chance to demonstrate a quality café, north European style.

A full-height shop window allows you to see the many breads, from baguettes to authentic sourdough, plus a picturesque cake selection. Huge, pale wood refectory-style tables at the back invite you to stay. Slate covered walls declare the day's specials in coloured chalk. A daily changing lunch offer reflects what's in season, with fresh soups, quiches and salads, plus succulent sandwiches (such as fresh ciabatta with serrano ham and quince jelly), and all for under a fiver. A proper, German style 'Frühstück' is in the pipeline: platters of cheese or meats



giving good value for breakfast or brunch. The café's licensed, too, with a half-dozen wines less than £15 a bottle, plus German and Italian lagers or organic ale from Cornwall. Big storm lanterns with flickering candles add warmth on a wintry day, and a bamboo-filled patio will double the dining space in the summer. It's not that East Dulwich needs another café, but Bajohra and his team – a Dutch architect, a French head chef and an Austrian pastry chef – successfully recreate a continental experience.

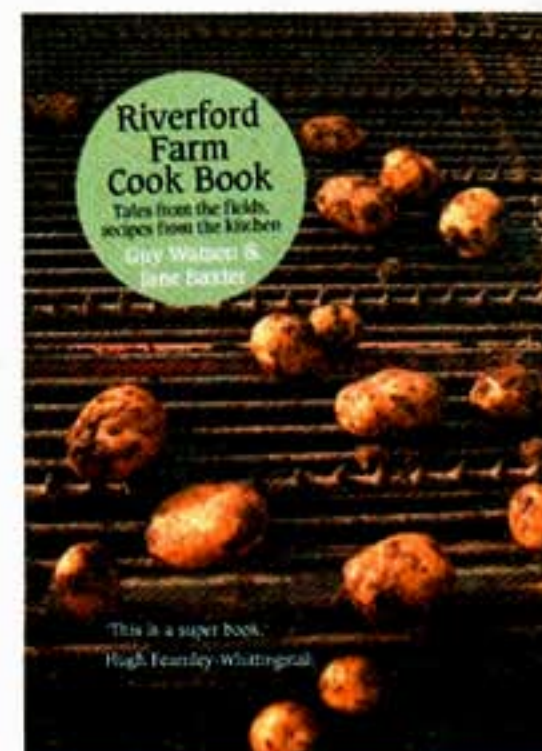
Veronica Simpson

Luca's Bakery and Café, 145 Lordship Lane, SE22 8HX (8613 6161). East Dulwich rail or bus 40, 176, 185. 8am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-4.30pm Sun.

Book of the week

'Riverford Farm Cook Book'

If your new year's resolution is to commit to a regular organic veg box delivery, be in no doubt that using up all the contents before they become inedible can be a challenge. Sadly, suppliers are often more committed to the ideology of their schemes than good food – witness the all-too-frequent inclusion of sprouts, withered greens, brown avocados and bruised bananas.



However one veg box company, Riverford Farm, has literally put its money where its mouth is, opening an excellent flagship restaurant on its South Devon property. Chef Jane Baxter is a River Café alumnus, and the restaurant's style can clearly be seen in her dishes, which make up a large portion of this beautifully photographed book. It's an inspiration when you're looking for more ways to glam-up the carrots, cabbage and turnips that play such a monotonous role in our winter diets, or need to use 'The Last Leek', as one section is called.

The bonus is compelling essays by Riverford owner Guy Watson, which are scattered throughout. His frank tone and years of experience in the organic movement combine to give readers much food for thought. *Jenni Muir 'Riverford Farm Cook Book' is published by Fourth Estate at £16.99.*