

# OUR TOP 10 UK JAPANESE RESTAURANTS

Craving some sushi? Or got a hankering for some ramen? We've tracked down the best Japanese restaurants in the Midlands and beyond, so you know exactly where to get your next fix. How many have you been to?

# 1

## Art Sushi

BOURNEMOUTH

There is no end to the accolades that Art Sushi, and chef Kamil Skalczynski have been awarded. Mentioned in the Good Food Guide top 100 restaurants and the OpenTable top 100 restaurants, Art Sushi is also named in the Michelin Guide for the third consecutive year! Meanwhile, Kamil was a finalist in the World Sushi Cup and Global Sushi Challenge, and he's an advisor to the World Sushi Skills Institute, so you know this is a great place for sushi!

This restaurant is run Omakase-style, which means the chef creates a personalised menu for his guests, giving him complete creative freedom and allowing him to work with the freshest local ingredients. You can eat in, take away, or learn to make your own sushi at one of Kamil's masterclasses.



credit: Benjamin McMahon

## Endo at the Rotunda

LONDON

Endo Kazutoshi has been learning the art of sushi since he was a young boy, growing up in Yokohama. He is a third-generation sushi master, so he knows a thing or two about how to craft these little parcels of joy.

His debut restaurant in London is a ten-seat omakase experience that prides itself on hospitality. Guests are seated around a 200-year-old Hinoki wooden counter and are treated to an 18-course menu, which they watch Endo prepare in the center. All the fresh food is sourced in the UK, with key ingredients like soy sauce and wasabi coming from Japan.

Regularly topping lists of the UK's best restaurants, just as much thought and attention has gone into the decor as the food. The restaurant was designed by Kengo Kuma, one of the most influential architects in the world, who has created a light, harmonious modern space to enjoy this incredible food.

With no more than two sittings a day and limited space around the counter, this is a restaurant you'll have to book in advance to enjoy, but the wait will be worth it.

## Kanpai Sushi

EDINBURGH

Kanpai means "bottoms up", the perfect way of summarising the ethos of this restaurant. Offering top-quality, traditional Japanese food, Kanpai Sushi has won a host of awards, but it's all about toasting to your health and enjoying the experience while you're there. You can't just take the word of food critics – you need to discover this food for yourself.

If it's sushi you're craving, this is the place to be. The sushi menu is extensive, allowing you to enjoy all your favourites and explore some new flavours. But more choice doesn't mean the chefs skimp on technique – ever single bite is incredible. There are other options too, such as tempura and teppenyaki. And you are seated in the most beautiful, Japanese-inspired surroundings, helping you to get into the sushi mood.



## Sushi Nakamura

LEEDS

For a proper traditional omakase experience, head to Sushi Nakamura. This quiet restaurant in the heart of Leeds doesn't give you menu options. The Omakase course is £150 per person and your meal will consist of various dishes prepared by chef using locally sourced, seasonal ingredients. You'll find premium rolls of sushi, seasonal appetisers and the best Sake outside of London.

There are two servings a day – a reduced lunch menu and an evening sitting. You can book your space, but not a particular time. But it is worth fitting this restaurant into your schedule, as everything is made using traditional techniques that will transport you to Japan.





## Eatchu

BRISTOL

This Japanese restaurant offers a very different experience. With eat in or take-away options, this is a mecca for Japanese street food. Expect irresistible gyozas, noodles and kimchi, amongst other delights and know that, despite its casual nature, this award-winning establishment is highly regarded in the industry. Once you've tried Eatchu, you'll find it hard to eat anywhere else!

Eatchu caters for vegans as well as meat eaters, and they even sell frozen portions, so you can eat some now and save some for later! There are currently two restaurants to choose from, one in Clifton Triangle and one in St Nicks Market, but don't be surprised if these enterprising establishments start popping up all over the place!



## Yuzu

MANCHESTER

Taking the tradition of tapas and applying it to Japanese food, Yuzu is where everyone in Manchester goes to get authentic tempura, sashimi and gyozas. Everything is made fresh from scratch, using as much locally sourced produce as possible. They are no stranger to best restaurant lists either, being regulars in the Michelin Guide and the Good Food Guide. You only have to visit for yourself to understand why.

Yuzu was opened because the founders couldn't find anywhere locally to get proper Japanese food, the way it is supposed to be done. This is part of the reason why you won't find sushi on the menu – they believe it should only ever be created by sushi masters who have trained for up to ten years. So if you ever see it on their menu, you'll know you're getting the best stuff!



## Bincho Yakitori

BRIGHTON

This traditional Japanese tavern (or Izakaya) is a must-visit when you're next in Brighton. The chef learnt his trade in Japan, working 15 hour-days, six days a week for three years to hone his craft. He learnt all there is to know about working in a Japanese kitchen, doing everything from menial tasks to skilled jobs.

When he returned to the UK with a taste for all things Izakaya, he was ready to create his own slice of Japan in Brighton. This is a casual restaurant, focused on food and drinks and catering to a wide variety of food specifications. Well-behaved dogs and children are welcome and you'll experience a friendly greeting and truly delicious street food.



## Satori

BIRMINGHAM

Perhaps the newest restaurant on this list, you might think that Satori hasn't had time to make a mark, given that it only opened in October last year. But it took no time at all to earn a spot in the Michelin guide and it has already gained a space in our hearts (and our tummies!)

The team at Satori is no stranger to fine-dining success and they bring all the knowledge and experience to their new restaurant. Expect high-quality, fresh ingredients, masterful execution and beautiful presentation. This is the type of Japanese restaurant you book when you want to impress. Traditional food designed to stimulate the senses – the word 'Satori' means enlightenment, and we think you'll understand the meaning behind the name after one visit.

Read more about Satori in our interview with head chef Jacky Fung on page 56.



## Humo

LONDON

Wood-fired cooking is at the heart of every dish at Humo. The different wood-fired grills allow the experienced chefs to experiment with flavours and techniques, bringing something original to every meal. Fresh, seasonal, local produce is combined with Japanese influences and cooking techniques to create a mouth-watering experience you'll want to come back to again and again.

There's a pairing menu that relies heavily on Champagne and sake for an authentic match, or you can choose drinks from the extension cocktail menu. But it's the four-meter-long grill that brings the theatre to your meal. 'Humo' means 'smoke' and there's plenty of that in the flavour of your meal, bringing energy and depth to each bite.

And the service is as important as the food itself. The team prides itself on making your visit as pleasant as possible, ensuring Humo is a restaurant you remember forever, whether you are a visitor in London or a local. Humo believes that the best way to experience a culture is through the food, so be prepared for a journey to Japan as you step through the doors.



## Umu

LONDON

Discreet and elegant, Umu is the destination of choice for those looking for Japanese food away from prying eyes. It still managed to draw the attention of Michelin, however, earning its star in 2024.

Umu takes inspiration from the Kyoto region of Japan, acknowledging the traditions and culture of the area. For example, when handling fish, the team use the art of Ikejime to avoid prolonged suffering, while enhancing the flavour of the sashimi. They combine this authenticity with local knowledge, choosing suppliers and seasonal ingredients from the UK. Whether preparing the simplest dish or the most complicated concoction, every meal is attended to with care.

Umu has been in the heart of Mayfair since 2004. There are dedicated seating areas for sushi and sake, and space for up to 64 diners in total. They are also well set-up for larger groups, with a semi-private room and dedicated menus.

