

Probus Club of Pretoria East



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Sushi

During the last four years the eating of Sushi has become fashionable in South Africa. Many restaurants now offer sushi on their menu. Some venues have a sushi bar where the different sushi cups are displayed on a revolving belt for self service. Some super markets are also now offering sushi in their delicatessen sections.

But what is the history of sushi?

Sushi's history can be traced back to the 4th century BC in Southeast Asia. The salted fish, when in plentiful supply, was covered with rice. A fermentation process started which helped to preserve the fish. The fish was taken out of the rice after a couple of months when the need arose to eat the fish. The fish was eaten but the rice was discarded. Over the time, this method of preserving fish spread throughout China and around the 8th century it spread to Japan. The Japanese preferred to eat the fish and rice and so a new variation became available. This type of sushi was consumed when the fish was partly raw and the rice had not lost its flavour. In this way sushi became more of a cuisine and not a way of preserving the fish.

Later, the Japanese began to make a further change so that the fish and rice could be eaten together. This dish was unique to Japan and is the forerunner of the modern sushi as know it today. Instead of using only rice for fermentation, the rice was mixed with vinegar and combined not only with fish but with vegetables and dried preserved food. Today, each region of Japan still preserves its own unique taste by utilising local products in the making of different kinds of sushi that have been passed on from one generation to another .

In the late 1970's early 1980's the cult of eating sushi spread to America and from there to the rest of the Western world. Sushi is regarded a one of the healthiest meal around and for the health conscious its has gotten more attention and the idea of sushi bars was soon a new development. Then typical America, sushi machines were introduced, which combines the mass production of sushi with the delicate skills use by sushi chefs and this further, increased the popularity of sushi, not only in America but also to other countries all over the world.

The contemporary version, internationally known a 'sushi, was invented by Hanaye Yohei (1799-1858) just before the city Edo became Tokyo, The sushi which he invented was an early form of fast food that was not fermented and could be prepared quickly and because of the seaweed wrapping could be eaten with one's hands at the roadside or even in the theatre. Originally, this sushi was known as *Edomae sushi* because it used fish caught in Edo-mae (Edo bay or Tokyo bay) though the fish used in modern sushi no longer comes from Tokyo bay, it is formally known as *Edomae nigirizushi*.

The common ingredient used in ail the different kinds of sushi is the sushi rice. Sushi is made from short grained white Japanese rice, which has a consistency that differs from the long

Grained rice found in India. The essential quality is its stickiness. Rice that is too sticky has a mushy texture and if the rice is not sticky enough it has a dry texture. Freshly harvested rice has too much water and it is seldom used in making sushi. If used, the cooked rice must be allowed to drain for a long period, which delays the production of sushi. There is regional variation in sushi rice and individual chefs have their individual method for cooking rice and their own secret ingredients that they add to the rice!

The other ingredient that is mostly used in the making of sushi is *nori* or seaweed. Originally the nori (algae) was scraped off the harbour pilings, rolled into thin sheets and dried in the sun. The demand has increased to such an extent that it is today commercially farmed, oven dried and sold in sheets of 180 x 310 mm. The higher quality nori is thick, smooth, shiny, green, and has no holes. If stored for prolonged periods the nori can change its colour to brown.

There are many types of sushi, some consist of rice pressed between the palms of the hand, with fish or other ingredient spread over the top and then cut into bite size pieces, to be eaten with the fingers. Another type is made by placing the fish or toppings in a mould, filling the mould with rice, pressing the lid of the mould down to form an oblong block. The block is removed from the mould and turned upside down so that the filling used is visible. The block is then cut into bite-sized pieces and ready for consumption.

The making of sushi is regarded as an art form in Japan. Competitions are regularly held and sushi chefs are graded according to how their products are graded at the competitions. To see if there were really a difference between the sushi made by a chef with 20 years experience, a learner chef and the machine made variety, an enterprising radiologist took samples of the product of each and subjected it to MRI scanning. Here are the results:

The experienced chef: It was small and light weighing in at 12 g. The scan revealed a lot of open space between the grains of rice. The grains of rice were all neatly aligned which allowed the grains of rice to stick together by creating adhesion along the sides of the rice." When eaten it was soft, airy and melted in the mouth"

The learner chef: It was about the same size, was denser and weighed 15 g and the rice grains were less uniform in their orientation. "When eaten "it was so-so"

The machine made: The grains of rice were hopelessly jumbled; the sushi was thick and heavy and clocked in at 20 g. When eaten it was described as 'sticky"

"Just the history of "these rolled treasures should warrant a taste...so give in and enjoy an authentic Japanese edible art form

P Scribante and the internet

Next monthly luncheon

The next monthly luncheon will be held at the PHSOB Club in Queens Crescent, Lynnwood on 11 September 2009 at 12:00 for 12:30.

Speaker: David Keyser of the Trans Caledon Tunnel Association
Subject: Lesotho Highlands Water Project

Ladies are, as usual, welcome to attend

Verjaarsdae in September

Baie geluk aan die volgende persone wat in September verjaar. Mag die nuwe lewensjaar vol voorspoed en geluk wees.

2 September	Annette Coetzer
8 September	Lena le Roux
15 September	Cobus Coetzer
17 September	Lettie Oosthuizen

Meeting held on 14 August 2009

Contributed by: Johan Oosthuizen

Our guest speaker was Nicholas Clarke who lectures in Heritage and Appropriate Sustainable Technologies at the University of Pretoria. Nicholas completed an M Phil in Environmental Design in Architecture at the Martin Centre, Cambridge University.

Our speaker addressed the meeting on “the re-legislation of Heritage as a source”. He advised us regarding the existing legislation on Heritage (buildings) and the effectiveness thereof. The problems of the structures older than 50 years being considered heritage structures was highlighted. The lack of ability to handle the mammoth task became abundantly clear. Nicholas did stress however, that there was real commitment to protect cultural heritage.

Willem Serfontein thanked our speaker most suitably and shortly shared some of his experiences in restoration projects

Exception proves the Rules

At his peak he weighed 150 kg and no wonder: 1, 7 m tall Eddie “Bozo” Miller made a career of gustatory excess.

He secured his spot in the Guinness Book of World Records by guzzling 27 1kg roast chickens in one sitting and consuming 1 liter of liquor in an hour. But those eating feats were not once-off affairs.

Reminiscing on a lifetime of professional gluttony, Miller said “In Las Vegas, I ate 12 club sandwiches in a row. I ate 400 raviolis a couple of times. I did eat 6 000 to 12 000 oysters on a half shell. Sometimes I did eat the entire menu”.

In his heyday he would throw lavish dinners for Hollywood pals like Humphrey Bogart and Frank Sinatra.

In his later years he developed diabetes and a heart ailment, but, his daughter said he still “loved blonds, he loved booze, he loved life”

He died in his Oakland California home at the age of 89.

From Time Magazine

Probus Club Pretoria East Twenty Years Young

On 8 September 1989 a group of people met at the Harlequins Club to establish the first Probus Club in Pretoria. It was the Probus Club of Pretoria East.

In Newsletter 1 /1989 (September 1989) the following announcement was made:

It is pleasing to announce that the Probus Club to be named THE PROBUS CLUB OF PRETORIA EAST was formally launched at a luncheon on Friday 8 September 1989.

In Newsletter 2 Of October 1989 the names of the 17 founding members are listed. Of these only 2 members, Willem Serfontein and Bill Pretorius are still with us. A third founding member, Bernard de Winter, resigned later, but is still active in Rotary Club of Pretoria East Willem Serfontein was elected vice-president at the inaugural meeting, but because he was too busy only became president in 2001/02

Frank Lee, who was the driving force to establish the Club, served a secretary till March 2001 and Peter Koster served as treasurer till March 2004. Another long serving member of the committee was Phil Gray who served from 1992 until his untimely death in 2007.

In Newsletter 3 the names of 3 members who joined the club is recorded. The membership grew steadily until it reached a peak of 37 members in 1995. Unfortunately a drop in membership set in and at present we have only 25 members. Despite every effort by the committee and members we have had no application for membership during the last three years.

An informative monthly newsletter was sent out regularly to give information on the next monthly meeting and other important news. Aside from the monthly meeting and lunch members visited a number of interesting places on regular intervals. Interest in outside visits waned and this is no longer an activity of the Club.

May the Probus Club of Pretoria East continue to serve its members for many years to come.

Pieter Scribante
