

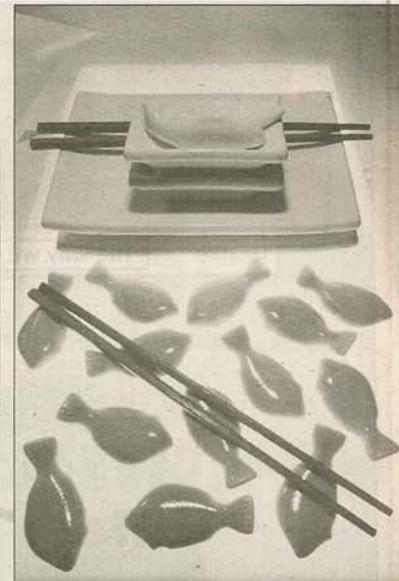


March 9, 2001

## urban buy

# Something fishy

Do-it-yourself sushi ... or just look like you do



**SO SUSHI:** Japanese or Japanese-inspired items such as dishes and tatami mats (top right and left, and below), rice vinegar, wasabi, and seaweed can be found in local stores.



**S**USHI, THE HIP snack served at Julie's party in the 1983 movie *Valley Girl*, has since joined the culinary mainstream. Sure, the thought of eating raw fish makes many people squeamish, and even adventurous diners often prefer that a sushi chef do the fancy finger work. But why limit your raw-fish consumption to sushi bars and goldfish-swallowing frat parties? Make it yourself.

The ingredients for sushi can be found at a number of small Japanese grocers throughout the Boston area. Buy the basics at Kotobukiya in Porter Square: a five-pound bag of Tamaki short-grain rice (\$5.49), a 12-ounce bottle of Mitsukan rice vinegar (\$1.39), a package of Sushihane dried seaweed (\$1.99), an eight-ounce can of Kaneku wasabi powder (\$1.69), and a bamboo sushi mat (\$1.99) are all you need to get rolling. Kotobukiya even sells fresh fish cut to size for sushi.

Not into fish? There's still the paraphernalia. Japanese dinnerware has made as big a splash as the cuisine it's inspired by, and chopsticks and sushi plates abound in a range of prices and styles. For those interested in the basics, Crate & Barrel's accommodating Sushi 2 Go For 2 comes in its own box (\$15.95) containing two sets (hence the name) of chopsticks, chopstick holders, plates, and sauce dishes. The plates' simple design and white glazed surface will accommodate any kind of food. On a more ornate note, Ab-

solutely Fabulous offers the perfect sushi set to complement your tiki bar. The set is adorned with hand-painted bamboo leaves and bamboo-stalk edging (\$25). Ribbed-tipped chopsticks (\$3), boldly striped in red, yellow, green, and black, will bite into slippery squid without remorse.

For more diverse pieces, check out Pod's eclectic blend of modern tableware, such as the bamboo tea-leaf strainer (\$2), hand-crafted ceramic teacup (\$12), and black lacquer geisha platform (\$11). A red leaf-shaped plate (\$8) graces a rustic cedar trivet (\$4),

while a green field of bamboo in the form of a place mat provides a subtle complement to these textures and colors (\$7). Simple wooden chopsticks (\$4), a small black concave rest (\$4), and a variety of distinctive plates fuse everyday durability with the quiet elegance of Japanese design.

Finally, if the idea of slipping off your shoes, pulling up a pillow, and eating sushi at a knee-high table entices you, then you don't have to be a *Shogun* fan to explore the comfort of traditional Japanese dining. Tokai Pottery stocks genuine tatami mats (\$65) — three-foot-by-three-foot straw-covered pads that can be pieced together to dine, relax, or sleep on. Zabuton cushions imported from Kyoto (\$76) and a hand-crafted lacquer table (\$460) complete the effect. Now you can dine as they do in the land of the rising sun.

### Where to get it

- Absolutely Fabulous, 108 Beacon Street, Somerville, (617) 864-0656
- Crate & Barrel, 777 Boylston Street, Boston, (617) 262-8700
- Kotobukiya, 1815 Mass Ave, Cambridge, (617) 354-6914
- Pod, 6 Davis Avenue, Brookline, (617) 739-3802
- Tokai Pottery, 207 Newbury Street, Boston, (617) 578-0976

— Joel Veak