

Mastering Salmon the Japanese Way

Full of practical techniques and unique approaches, the Gohan Society's lecture and workshop entitled "Mastering Fish the Japanese Way: Salmon" amazed NY's top chefs.

Fish and seafood are consumed throughout the world, but Japan enjoys them much more than any other country. Accordingly, it has well-established cooking techniques—sashimi is not merely sliced fish but involves much more sophisticated methods to make it fresh and tasty. This year the Gohan Society is holding a fish themed lecture and workshop series for culinary experts. On April 19th the fifth installment in the eight-part series was held, and this time the theme was salmon.

Although salmon is one of the most popular seafood in the world, the unique cooking techniques introduced here thrilled the culinary experts in attendance. Toshio Suzuki of Sushi Zen, one of the founding members of the organization, gave a lecture and demonstration. First, he talked about particular parasites in salmon and their

treatment. "Understanding bacteria contamination and parasite issues are often overlooked in this country, but this is extremely important in order to serve safe and tasty raw fish," said Chef Suzuki.

Afterwards he demonstrated the cutting of whole salmon and shared recipes for specific parts of the salmon such as *Deep-Fried Gill*, *Pickled Mefun* (salmon kidney), *Vinegar Marinade Gristle*, and *Noodles made from Nakauchi* (fatty salmon meat scraped from the bone). What was presented inspired many participants from cultures where the whole fish is not usually used.

In the second part of the workshop, everyone moved to the kitchen for actual salmon-cutting practice. Chef Suzuki examined the participants' *houchou sabaki* (knife technique) and how they placed all the sectioned parts on a tray. All participating chefs were

working on their respective salmon with excitement. Chef Eric Battes of BLT Steak shared what he learned: "Breaking down the head, seeing it dry out and frying the gills was very interesting. How Chef Suzuki approaches breaking down the fish is actually different from how Western chefs would approach it." Chef Edwin Ballenco of Morrel Wine Bar & Café said, "I love the total utilization of the fish. I don't utilize as much of the fish as I probably could or should. It's really fantastic."

To conclude the workshop, *Kasu-jiru Nabe* (hot pot salmon stewed in a miso and sake lees based broth with vegetables) was served up and participants tasted what they learned about.

The Gohan Society

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Time Line



▲ Chef Suzuki of Sushi Zen gave a lecture and demonstration on salmon and shared the uniquely Japanese approach toward the fish with NY's top chefs.

▼ Salmon nakauchi (fatty salmon meat scraped from the bone) is kneaded into the noodles.



▲ The chefs were focused on how Chef Suzuki prepared the salmon.

▼ Chef Suzuki checking the work of Chef Eddy Leroux of Daniel. (left) Chef Ben Pollinger of Oceana working on the second salmon. (right) All of the fresh salmon was provided by True World, the primary seafood distributor in the United States.

