

## The Great Divide: How Sushi Culture Differs in America Versus Japan

In this article Justin Bolois discusses why there are differences between American sushi and Japanese sushi. He believes that Americans crave a sense of authenticity but ironically abandon that authenticity for crude stereotypes of what we perceive to be true of sushi chefs in Japan- serious, unresponsive. He says that in Japan, sushi chefs are comparable to bartenders here in America, where they are friendly and help you through your order often making his customers what he or she thinks they will like. More importantly Bolois talks about how there was a cultural divide between Japanese chefs and America with language barriers and so they cannot confidently blend into American society. It is just easier for Japanese chefs in America to just become that sullen serious character instead.

This text is part of the marketing and selling genre of food writing because it explains how America tries to sell sushi by “conforming” to the “authentic” Japanese style but in reality we are being far from authentic- skewing American’s opinions on true Japanese sushi chefs. The author, Justin Bolois is an American, UC Berkley graduate and the feature editor at First We Feast. First We Feast is an online food blog, which is a part of Complex, a youth cultured Website targeting teenagers and young adults. He is discussing the differences between Sushi culture in Japan and America with the purpose to let us American’s understand that what we think sushi is is really not the true authentic Japanese sushi. He is trying to expose American sushi for its inauthenticity and help us understand why these differences have occurred in sushi here and in Japan. This text includes ideas from Sasha Issenberg, author of The Sushi Economy, as well as Trevor Corson, author of The Story of Sushi: an unlikely saga of raw fish and rice. With the help of these two sushi experts, Bolois breaks down the variances between American sushi and Japanese sushi in an organized and easy to understand fashion. Bolois brings up the topic of stereotypes in the American Sushi industry, which is something I found extremely interesting. He compares the chefs in Japan to bartenders in America, which is something I mam not used to from the sushi chefs I have experienced here in the states. Americans are so used to this stern, intense idea of what a sushi chef it that it is hard to imagine thę true authentic nature of Japanese chefs. This publication is very trustworthy considering that Justin Bolois is certified on Twitter and is educated from a prestigious university. He is also writing for Complex, which is a highly notable corporation with millions of viewers.

***Author: Justin Bolois***

Bolois, Justin. The Great Divide: How Sushi Culture Differs in America Versus Japan. 28 October 2015. 5 October 2016 <<http://firstwefeast.com/eat/2015/10/differences-between-sushi-in-america-and-japan>>.

## Sushi Standards and the American Way

In this article, Tim Carman talks about who is actually preparing the sushi in America and why that is the reason behind the gap between authentic and non-authentic sushi in the states. One of the main issues Carman brings up is that there is a huge boom in sushi consumption in Japan that many of the chefs who are well trained decide to stay in Asia and not make the trip over seas. This decrease in chefs coming into America from Japan is why there is a lack of well-trained chefs here in America.

This text is part of the “advocating for change” genre of food writing because the author brings to light that there are reasons to why there is a lack of authentic Sushi in America that can possibly be fixed. The author Tim Carman, is writing this article to expose what he found when he was researching the question of why is sushi in America so different than sushi in Japan. By sitting down with a true Japanese sushi chef here in America helps us understand why there is such a growing divide between genuine Japanese cuisine and Americanized Japanese food. By interviewing a native Tokyo headhunter, Okochi, who also explains the difficulties of immigrating to the United States, we are exposed to a Japanese perspective on this question. He explains that the US consulate in Japan has been very tough on chef applicants and he has to basically prove that his Japanese chefs are national celebrities before immigrant officials would approve visas. By seeing a different side of the question we can understand that it is not entirely America’s fault. Many people blame inauthenticity in America’s restaurant industry on ignorance. By writing this article for the Washington Post, Carman is trying to reach out to the American public to help us understand why there is such divide in American sushi and Japanese sushi, and to help us to not jump to conclusions regarding what we think the reasons are. This text is reliable because The Washington Post is a well-known, professional daily newspaper, read by millions of Americans every single day. Tim Carman is also certified on Twitter with hundreds of thousands of followers.

***Author: Tim Carman***

Carman, Tim. Sushi Standards and The American Way. 24 January 2012. 5 October 2016  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/sushi-standards-and-the-american-way/2012/01/18/gIQAI3sINQ\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/sushi-standards-and-the-american-way/2012/01/18/gIQAI3sINQ_story.html)

## Discovering the History of Sushi

In this article, Tori Avey dives into the history of sushi and its first appearance in American restaurants. She talks about how the first sushi restaurant was opened up in Los Angeles, California in Little Tokyo. It started out as a success with Japanese businessmen and then became a restaurant that many celebrities went to in Hollywood. Eventually other major heard about this new type of restaurant and started opening up sushi bars of their own. She talks about how sushi is constantly evolving and slowly losing touch with its authentic Japanese roots.

This text does not explicitly fall under one specific genre of food writing. In her article, Avey discusses the ways in which sushi has evolved in regards to the marketing of sushi as well as how it has been and is currently consumed in America. In this article, Tori Avey discusses the evolution of sushi in America. She is writing with the purpose of exposing the information she has researched and learned about. By exploring the story behind sushi, we- consumers of sushi- can start to understand why we eat what we eat and how the recipes of the Japanese culture has evolved. By teaching us the history of sushi, Avey gives her audience a better understanding as to why sushi is the way it is currently in American restaurants. Being that PBS- an extremely reputable and well known, trustworthy source- picked up Tori Avey's blog allows us to accept this source as reliable.

***Author: Tori Avey***

Avey, Tori. Discover the History of Sushi. 5 September 2012. PBS. 5 October 2016  
<<http://www.pbs.org/food/the-history-kitchen/history-of-sushi/>>.

## How Does Sushi in Japan Differ From Sushi in the U.S.?

In this response to an online question, Serina Kurahashi answers the question of how does sushi in Japan differ from sushi in America.. She focuses her answer on talking about the rice. She says the rice is the key to telling true sushi apart from Americanized sushi. She talks about how in Japanese sushi the rice is not very packed together and should be able to stay together on a plate but fall apart in your mouth, but here in America the rice is extremely packed together.

This text falls under the genre of making food because the author explains how authentic sushi is made differently than American sushi. This text is a response to a question posted online. Serina Kurahashi, whose grandfather and uncle were both sushi chefs in Japan, felt as if she knew enough about authentic Japanese sushi to answer this question. She puts it simply that the rice is the key to authenticity, giving us an insight into true Japanese sushi. By explaining what she has learned from her family members she allows readers of this forum to better understand the physical difference between American sushi and Japanese sushi. Her response is reliable because her statement was validated by Ken Woytisek, Chef Instructor and [Tilman Ahr](#), trained chef who both are acclaimed sushi chefs here in America.

***Author: Serina Kurahashi***

Kurahashi, Serina. How Does Sushi In Japan Differ From Sushi In The U.S.? November 2015. 5 October 2016 <<https://www.quora.com/How-does-sushi-in-japan-differ-from-sushi-in-the-U-S>>.

## American Sushi

In this article Trevor Corson begins by discussing his nostalgia for authentic sushi from when he lived in Japan. He talks about how sushi chefs in Japan have neglected the authentic way of serving sushi. He continues to talk about how he discovered a sushi bar in Massachusetts and how this is the one restaurant in the U.S that actually reminds him of Japan. He talks about the chef and how he talks to his customers and tries to maintain the traditional style of Japanese sushi bars. The chef, Nick Macioge says that it is not just about the atmosphere but he tries his hardest to serve true authentic Japanese fish that is not usually served in America.

This article falls under the genre of memorializing and celebrating because these American chefs are retaining the tradition Japanese way of running a sushi bar. Trevor Corson is an American author, best known for his book, *The Story of Sushi: An Unlikely Saga of Raw Fish and Rice*. By writing this article he is trying to tell the American public that American chefs are brining Japan's trademark cuisine back to its roots. Corson gives us a reliable text because he is a well-known published author on the topic of sushi. He has lived in Japan for many years and has had dining experiences at sushi bars in Japan, allowing him to make accurate comparisons between American sushi and Japanese sushi.

**Author: Trevor Corson**

Corson, Trevor. American Sushi. June 2009. October 2016  
<<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/06/american-sushi/307431/>>.

## Masa

In this restaurant Review Sam Sifton talks about Masa, America's most expensive sushi restaurant. He discusses just why this restaurant is named the best in American sushi and if it is truly worth the extremely expensive prices. He begins by explain that the food is amazing and the quality of the food and the ingredients were outstanding. He talks about the meticulous way the chefs prepare the meals as if they are a playwright, writing a play. He concludes with the fact that this restaurant is so respectable because it maintains the genuine culture of Japan.

This text falls under the genre of consuming and eating food. By writing this review, Sifton allows us to understand that restaurants of such high quality remain such a success despite the insanely high prices because they remain intact with authentic traditions and cultures of the food they are serving. The sushi chefs, like in Japan, make their sushi as if they are creating art. In Japan, sushi chefs are considered artists- masters of their work. The reason why this restaurant has been named the best sushi restaurant in America is because the chefs are extremely skilled and masters of their trade. They are true Japanese chefs that have been taught by genuine sushi chefs. However, this review was written by an American and there is no input from any Japanese person so there is defiantly a bias when it comes to this review. It would be interesting to see what a native Japanese person thinks about the authenticity of Masa. This text can be considered reliable because it is an article from the New York Times, which is an extremely reputable and professional source, viewed by millions of people every single day. Sam Sifton has also written countless articles for the New York Times proving he is a skilled and knowledgeable reporter and writer.

***Author: Sam Sifton***

Sifton, Sam. Masa. 14 June 2011. 12 October 2016  
<[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/15/dining/reviews/masa-nyc-restaurant-review.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/15/dining/reviews/masa-nyc-restaurant-review.html?_r=0)>.

## **The Story of Sushi: An Unlikely Saga of Raw Fish and Rice**

In this book, Trevor Carson follows novice sushi chefs as they begin their journey at America's first sushi-chef training academy. He discusses how there is an effort being made to bring authenticity back into sushi bars here in America. We get a first hand look at how this process is taking place and just how difficult it is to master the intricate art of sushi making.

This text is a mixture of genres in food writing. By following apprentice sushi chefs, we learn how true Japanese sushi is made, making this text about making food. The book also celebrates authentic Japanese sushi by introducing us to something many people don't know exists- a sushi chef training academy, which strives to keep the authenticity alive in sushi restaurants around America. By getting an inside look at how sushi chefs are being trained and by whom, we can understand more about sushi in general and the rich culture behind the foreign cuisine.

***Author: Trevor Carson***

Carson, Trevor. The Story of Sushi: An Unlikely Saga of Raw Fish and Rice. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008.