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Sushi for Beginners

Most sushi is a calorie bargain, but many people hear *sushi*, think “raw fish,” and get scared off. We asked Graham Bartlett, a chef at Zengo in Washington, D.C., about the best way to ease into the sushi habit.



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Q WHAT SHOULD BEGINNERS TRY FIRST?

A I would recommend a roll that is not totally raw, like a California roll or a steamed lobster roll. Eel rolls are also good for beginners because they have a barbecue flavor.

Q IS IT DANGEROUS TO EAT RAW FISH?

A Raw fish does carry some greater food-safety risks than cooked fish, but unless you're a young child, pregnant, elderly, or very ill, it's generally safe to eat. The most important thing is that it's fresh: Go to

a restaurant that's busy and has a fast turnover—signs that the fish is delivered often (ideally daily).

Q I HAVE NO CLUE HOW TO HOLD CHOPSTICKS. HELP!

A Hold one stick between your thumb and middle finger, and place the other between your thumb and forefinger (of the same hand). Keep the tips of both sticks parallel; the one closer to your body remains still as you move the other one around the food and toward the stationary chopstick.

SUSHI CHEAT SHEET

Ready to give sushi a try but unsure of the lingo? Here's what you need to know:

❖ **SASHIMI** Sliced raw fish, often served with a side of rice.

❖ **SUSHI** Sweetened pickled rice. The term is often used to refer to *norimaki* and other sushi rolls.

❖ **NIGIRI SUSHI** A small slab of rice topped with raw fish.

❖ **NORIMAKI** The basic sushi roll, in which a filling (raw fish or another delicacy) is

surrounded by a layer of sushi that is wrapped in *nori* (dried seaweed). It often comes in a set of six or nine pieces.

❖ **FUTOMAKI** A thick sushi roll.

❖ **TEMAKI** A large sushi roll, usually in the shape of a cone; also known as a hand roll.

❖ **WASABI** A spicy green paste used as a condiment.

—CELIA SHATZMAN