

有火食肆 Newsletter

EatSmart Restaurant Star +



Serving Healthy and Authentic Japanese Cuisine

With so many Japanese restaurants in Hong Kong, restaurant owners might wonder how to make their brand stand out. To attract customers with nutritious and delicious Japanese dishes, read on to find out some useful suggestions from accredited practising dietitian Anson Wong.

Simple Healthy Appetisers

Known for their exquisite delicacy, Japanese meals usually start with appetisers. Taking edamame (salted immature soybeans in the pod) as an example, Anson explained that healthy dishes can be prepared by using simple ingredients and cooking methods. He added that edamame is a good source of dietary fibre. One bowl of edamame offers 8 grams of dietary fibre, which is about one-third of the recommended daily fibre intake for adults. In addition, edamame is very rich in potassium.

Low-Salt, Low-Fat Soup Base and Sauce

The nutrient composition varies among different types of Japanese soup bases and sauces. To satisfy customers' requirements regarding healthy eating, Anson advised restaurants to stick to the principles of "low salt", "low fat" and "flexibility". He said, "Ramen is one of the favourite foods among Hong Kong people. However, according to a survey, if we consume one bowl of ramen with the soup, we may take in more sodium than the World Health Organization's recommended daily limit, which is 2000 mg per day. Actually, a delicious ramen soup base does not need to have an intense flavour. For example, by adding ordinary

ingredients such as seafood and mushrooms to tomato soup, kombu stock and broth with dried bonito, we can maximise the freshness and nutritional value and add more Japanese culinary elements to the dishes."

According to Anson, an emerging trend in healthy eating is to use fruit and vegetables as the ingredients of sauces. "Vegetables such as spinach, tomatoes or pumpkins can be blended to make refreshing sweet sauces," said Anson. "These sauces can be served with cold udon noodles and used as a replacement for the Japanese sesame sauce, so as to avoid excessive intake of salt and fat." When serving a dish, restaurants can provide the soup or sauce separately.

Choosing Quality Carbohydrates

Many Japanese dishes use white rice or udon noodles as the staple food, both of which can cause a rapid rise in blood sugar levels. Anson recommended replacing white rice with whole grain rice or soba noodles. He explained, "Both whole grain rice and soba noodles are unrefined carbohydrates. Consumption of unrefined carbohydrates results in a slower and smaller increase in blood sugar levels. Mixing and cooking different types of whole grain rice also

Anson Wong

Accredited Practising Dietitian
DA(APD), HKNA

gives a rich texture to the dish. As for soba noodles, they have a unique fragrance of wheat and are the favourite of many Japanese food lovers."

Using Healthy Cooking Methods

Tempura is a famous and popular Japanese dish, in which the ingredients are deep-fried. However, deep-fried food is relatively unhealthy and its intake should be minimised. Anson suggested that restaurants use healthy cooking methods that require less oil, such as air-frying. While stir-frying assorted vegetables, it is advisable to use olive oil instead of butter.

In Anson's opinion, there are several things that a Japanese restaurant can do in order to create a healthy eating environment. He said, "Restaurants can provide nutritional information about the dishes on the menu. This can help customers make healthy choices and allow restaurants to establish a good image."

A Yakiniku Restaurant Where You Can Eat Healthily

Ms Ying KWOK

Assistant Area Manager,
Gyu-Kaku Japanese
Yakiniku Restaurant

There is a general impression that yakiniku restaurants (Japanese barbecue restaurants) offer a predominantly meat-based menu with few vegetable options. To avoid being stereotyped, Gyu-Kaku Japanese Yakiniku Restaurant (Gyu-Kaku) strives to be innovative and has a strong commitment to promoting healthy eating. As a three-star EatSmart Restaurant (ESR) under the “EatSmart Restaurant Star+” Campaign (ESR Star+ Campaign), Gyu-Kaku offers “More Fruit and Vegetables” dishes and “3 Less” dishes along with “EatSmart Promotion” on a daily basis, successfully widening its customer base and taking its business to the next level.

According to Ms Ying Kwok, Assistant Area Manager of Gyu-Kaku, participating in the ESR Star+ Campaign is in line with Gyu-Kaku’s brand positioning. This also enables the restaurant group to keep up with the trend of healthy eating. “Many people are now health-conscious,” explained Ms Kwok. “When ordering grilled meat, a lot of customers ask whether vegetables are included in the meal sets, hoping that there are more veggie choices.” In view of this, Gyu-Kaku provides a broad set of customised “EatSmart Dishes”, gaining more popularity among restaurant-goers. Some customers even visit Gyu-Kaku with their friends.

“EatSmart Dishes”: A Return to Simplicity

Gyu-Kaku’s “EatSmart Dishes” are the brainchild of a group of talented chefs. In addition to importing ingredients from Japan, Gyu-Kaku makes good use of various seasonal foods. As a result, the “EatSmart Dishes” are not only healthy but can also bring out the freshness and original flavours of the ingredients, which is the essence of Japanese cuisine. As pointed out by Ms Kwok, the preparation of

“EatSmart Dishes” is neither time-consuming nor complicated. This can be illustrated in “Salted Cabbage Salad” and “Jellyfish Salad with Vinegar and Yuzu Dressing”, the two most popular “More Fruit and Vegetables” dishes at Gyu-Kaku. ““Salted Cabbage Salad” features a special sauce,” said Ms Kwok. “Many customers love this refreshing dish.” To encourage everyone to eat more vegetables, Gyu-Kaku allows customers to go for a second order of “Salted Cabbage Salad” for takeaway at half price. Meanwhile, “Jellyfish Salad with Vinegar and Yuzu Dressing” is prepared with a wide range of ingredients that are trendy in Japan, such as Romaine lettuce, seaweed, jellyfish and yuzu vinegar. Though seemingly simple, this combination of ingredients gives the dish a variety of tastes and textures.

When talking about Gyu-Kaku’s future plans, Ms Kwok revealed that healthy eating would continue to play a role. She explained, “We have put a lot of effort in designing the ‘EatSmart Dishes’. To add more diversity to the dishes, we look for seasonal ingredients, such as asparagus and okra.” Gyu-Kaku will continue to introduce new “EatSmart Dishes” from time to time, hoping that customers will continue to patronise Gyu-Kaku for its healthy and delicious dishes.

Salted Cabbage Salad



The crunchy sweetness of cabbage gives the dish a fresh lift.



Jellyfish Salad with Vinegar and Yuzu Dressing



This is a refreshing and appetising dish which combines sweet and sour flavours with a chewy texture.





Combining Good Taste with Nutrition in the Japanese Style

Mr WU Hoi-kin
Operating Manager, Tsukiji
Japanese Restaurant

More than a decade ago, Tsukiji Japanese Restaurant (Tsukiji) had already become an ESR. Since the launch of the ESR Star+ Campaign, it has moved through the ranks to become a three-star ESR. “At the beginning, we registered as an ESR to open up new market opportunities,” recalled Mr WU Hoi-kin, the Operating Manager of Tsukiji’s Causeway Bay Branch. “However, when our owner suffered and recovered from a serious illness, we came to realise the importance of healthy eating. In addition, our ‘EatSmart Dishes’ have received a lot of praise from customers. We’ve now become more committed to promoting healthy eating. When designing new dishes, we will take health benefits into consideration.”

Veggie Sushi Set: A Creative Culinary Delight

To offer healthy dishes to customers, Mr Wu and his team put in a great deal of effort. He explained, “We don’t want to use ready-made processed food. Our goal is to show the essence of Japanese cuisine by making good use of natural ingredients. In doing so, customers can taste the original flavours of the ingredients and eat healthily.” The “Veggie Sushi Set” is one of the signature “EatSmart Dishes” provided by Tsukiji. After several modifications, it now offers yam noodles, black garlic salad and eight types of creative vegetarian sushi. Among them, “Foie Gras Sushi” is an example of how health and taste can go hand in hand. Mr Wu explained, “The vegan foie gras is prepared with soybean fibre and seasoned with condiments. We pan-fry the vegan foie gras without oil until the surface is slightly charred, so that its appearance and rich taste are similar to the real one.”

Concerted Effort in Promoting Healthy Eating

“Udon in Tomato Soup with Vegetables” is another popular “EatSmart Dish” created by Tsukiji to satisfy customers’ demand for healthy hot dishes. As revealed by Mr Wu, the provision of “EatSmart Dishes” has enabled Tsukiji to attract many customers who are aware of healthy eating. He said, “These customers have become our loyal supporters. They even bring along their friends. We will continue to list healthy dishes as recommendations on our menu.”

According to Mr Wu, Tsukiji has been more motivated in creating innovative “3 Less” dishes and “More Fruit and Vegetables” dishes since it became an ESR. He said, “It’s actually not difficult to design healthy dishes. While promoting a culture of healthy eating, we would also like to retain the characteristics of authentic Japanese cuisine and focus on bringing out the freshness of the ingredients.” Tsukiji is planning to expand its business and will continue to participate in the ESR Star+ Campaign. As a concluding remark, Mr Wu encouraged Japanese restaurants to create healthy dishes, which are beneficial to building the brand image.

Veggie Sushi Set



This meal set consists of various vegetarian dishes, all of which are excellent in terms of taste, appearance and nutritional value.



Udon in Tomato Soup with Vegetables



The soup is prepared with fresh tomatoes. With seasonal vegetables, this udon dish is refreshingly pleasant.



EatSmart Promotion Programme

Under the new normal, buying takeaway meals has become a common practice for members of the public. To assist restaurants in informing the public about the details of their takeaway promotion of “EatSmart Dishes”, the ESR Star+ Campaign launched the “EatSmart Takeaway Promotion Pilot Programme” (Pilot Programme) in March 2021. More than 150 ESRs had participated in the Pilot Programme. Due to the overwhelming response, the Department of Health enhanced the Pilot Programme and launched the “EatSmart Promotion Programme” (Promotion Programme).

The Promotion Programme aims to collect the details of ESRs’ dine-in and takeaway promotion on their “EatSmart Dishes”, and upload them to the thematic website of the ESR Star+ Campaign for viewing by the public. The details of the promotion will also be promoted on social media platforms.

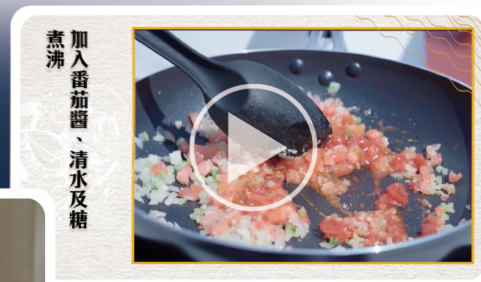


If you would like to join the Promotion Programme or have any enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the ESR Star+ Campaign at 2835 1910 or 2835 1826.

[EatSmart Promotion Programme](#)



New Promotional Videos of the ESR Star+ Campaign



The ESR Star+ Campaign has launched new promotional videos featuring a variety of ESRs and “EatSmart Dishes”. Hosted by Internet celebrities and chefs, the five-episode series was uploaded to the Facebook page and Instagram account of the ESR Star+ Campaign in April 2021. Visit us and watch the videos to learn how to prepare “EatSmart Dishes” and put healthy eating into practice!



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