

Itadakimasu!

Nothing says “autumn” like saury



秋刀魚2種、茄子田楽、きのこバターサラダ

秋刀魚（さんま）の季節がやってきました。日本人倶楽部には、塩焼きはもちろんのこと、お刺身もございます。これが空飛ぶ秋刀魚でして、早朝、築地でせりにかかった魚を空輸し、その日の夕方お出ししています。そして秋といえば茄子。ジョージナさんは、赤味噌と白味噌が半分ずつかかった茄子の田楽を見て、「倶楽部の田楽は、陰陽ね！」



秋刀魚の塩焼き



紅白味噌の茄子田楽

The end of the typhoon season and the arrival of cooler and drier weather can only mean one thing: autumn is here! And with it comes the opportunity to sample some of the Club’s autumnal delicacies.

On a recent visit we started our meal with a mushroom (*kinoko*) salad. Gently fried *enoki*, *shimeji* and *shitake* mushrooms nestle in a bed of crisp iceberg lettuce, with a creamy dressing and deep-fried shreds of burdock (*gobô*).

This was followed by that most autumnal of fish, the Pacific saury (*sanma*), otherwise known as “the autumn knife fish” in reference to its blade-shaped body and seasonality. The saury’s flesh is very delicate and doesn’t travel well, so it’s not normally served raw. However, the marvel of modern logistics means that the Club’s suppliers can buy the fish fresh at Tsukiji market in Tokyo in the morning and have it flown to Hong Kong well in time for dinner that same evening.

The Club’s saury sashimi is a work of art. Thin, silvery slices of saury that literally melt in your mouth and make your taste buds sing. We also tried the grilled whole fish, with a squeeze of lemon and grated daikon, the oily flesh and slightly charred skin providing a delicious, salty contrast to the pale beauty of the sashimi.

Though it’s available all year round, our third dish of miso-glazed eggplant (*nasu dengaku*) felt suitably autumnal. The Club’s version has a bit of a yin and yang vibe, with one half of the eggplant glazed with red miso and the other with white. Garnishes of tiny white poppy seeds and a sprig of *sanshō* pepper leaves add to the effect.

We ended the meal with one of the Club’s tasty vinegared box-pressed sushi. We tried the mackerel, but salmon, freshwater and sea eel versions are also available. Prepared daily by sushi master Mitani-san, box-pressed sushi (*hako zushi*) involves layers of vinegared rice, *shiso* leaves, and pickled fish, topped with a translucent sliver of kelp (*konbu*), tightly compressed in a wooden box for a couple of hours, and then sliced into six generous rectangles. A really fun way to end our autumnal feast!

By Georgina Challen