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EXPERIENCE THE LUXURY

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BAHRAIN

BUSHIDO & PHILOSOPHY OF FOOD

UNIF¹ED WE STAND
**SHAIKH SALMAN BIN
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Paul Mercer takes a close look at Bushido Japanese restaurant, samples the extensive menu, interviews General Manager Nicolas Budzynski and Executive Chef Chong Yoong Kiong, and visits the kitchen at the height of service!



A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE EVERY TIME

I started my review of Bushido with an interview with General Manager Nicolas Budzynski and Executive Chef Chong. The moment I began my interview it was clear to me that Nicolas and Chong are passionate about their roles, food and Bushido. Nicolas explained that he is striving to create something special at Bushido and his target is for it to be the best food and beverage experience in the Middle East. Not a small target! Nicolas is convinced that Bushido has the necessary ingredients to achieve this ambitious objective and believes that key to achieving this is being responsive to customers and offering a unique experience for each visit. I asked, is it possible for each visit to a restaurant to be unique, isn't that too ambitious a target? Nicolas smiled and replied that Bushido offers different experiences for different occasions. It can be the ideal location for a corporate event, a special family dinner, a romantic evening, hosting an international DJ or a fun evening out with friends.

I then turned to Chong and asked him about the kitchen. With over 20 years of experience Chong spoke with enthusiasm about how he strives for excellence, about how he tries to ensure each dish from his kitchen is perfect. Chong is focused on quality and service so that diners have a unique dining experience and with supreme confidence invited me to see him at work in the kitchen! This was an invitation that I wasn't going to miss!

CAN I WITHSTAND THE HEAT IN THE KITCHEN?

Watching Chong in the kitchen was a fabulous experience. I saw first hand his passion, commitment and culinary prowess. From the careful and diligent preparation of fresh fish flown in from Japan to orchestrating the preparation and service of dishes, it was a

delight to see Chong in action.

I saw certified fresh sea bass, sea bream and yellow tail arrive from Japan and how Chef Chong and his team prepare these for service. Chong examined each fish for freshness, expertly looking for bright eyes and red gills and once a fish passed the fresh test it was then cleaned and gutted and prepared for service.

During service, Chef Chong masterfully coordinates the kitchen in the same fashion as a chief conductor manages an orchestra. Chong receives the orders and shouts these out to his team of chefs who in turn prepare the required dishes for Chong's inspection. I saw him inspect and taste each and every dish. Chong is serious about ensuring all dishes from his kitchen are perfect!

SERVICE

I cannot speak too highly of the service offered at Bushido. In the three visits I made I found the service impeccable. Each member of staff was friendly and helpful and I sensed a real desire to ensure that your dining experience is a good one. The staff-in-waiting are knowledgeable about the menu and for those diners who are unfamiliar with Japanese cuisine or perhaps need guidance as to what to order I would suggest you seek a recommendation from the waiting staff. I did this and I wasn't disappointed! As for timing, the service is prompt – no waiting so you can focus on savouring the culinary delights on offer.

FOOD

The Bushido menu is extensive and offers an impressive range of Japanese dishes including *Sashimi* (very fresh raw meat, usually fish), *Sushi* (vinegared rice with other ingredients such as vegetables and/or fish) *Teppan Yaki* (ingredients cooked on an iron griddle), *Tempura* (battered and deep fried fish and vegetables) as well as a variety of fish, chicken and meat cooked on a Robata Grill (open flame barbecue with flavoured Japanese charcoal). There is a "Bushido Experience Set Menu" which offers a well-balanced selection of dishes to give you a good introduction to what Bushido has to offer as well as a selection of Bento boxes.

For a light starter I would recommend *edamame* (soya beans with coarse salt) or the Bushido salad with herbs dressing followed by traditional Japanese miso soup. If you are feeling a bit hungrier I would recommend something from the Robata Grill - my favourites here were the *Gyu Aspara* (rolled asparagus and sliced beef) and the *Tebasaki* (chicken wings) – each dish cooked and seasoned to perfection – succulent and flavoursome. I must also mention

the rock shrimp tempura in spicy sauce and the grilled scallops – unforgettable! You will not be disappointed.

If you want some action and a bit of a show I recommend the *Teppan Yaki* live station bar – this will certainly keep younger diners entertained as they watch the chefs prepare your dishes in front of your eyes together with tricks involving cleavers and eggs! From the *Teppan Yaki* bar I tried the Angus beef tenderloin with *Teriyaki* sauce and the ginger chicken – delicious.

Alternatively, from the main course section of the menu you could try the chicken cordon bleu or the lamb chops marinated with olive oil and spices or the sea bass with mushroom and cherry tomatoes. I tried each of these and enjoyed them very much. That said, my overall favourite was the prawns with miso mayonnaise cream – exquisite and a must have if you love prawns. The various Bento boxes offer a good selection of Sushi, Sashimi and Tempura with rice and salad and for dessert I would strongly recommend the liquid centre chocolate cake with vanilla ice cream washed down with Japanese green tea.

VALUE

Bushido offers a full range of value options. As you would expect for a fine dining establishment there are items on the menu which are expensive however there are also a good number of options for those more cost conscious. For example, the weekday Bento boxes start at under BD8 which is an absolute bargain. The three-course set menu is BD16 nett and the four-course set menu is BD19 nett, which again is good value and is certainly comparable to other similar restaurants. You could perhaps over order and therefore over spend so feel free to seek guidance from the waiting staff as I found them only too happy to provide suggestions.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at Bushido and consider it one of the very best restaurants in Bahrain, if not the best. The service and the food is first rate. The restaurant building and authentic Japanese décor with Samurai Warrior uniforms displayed throughout is seriously impressive and immediately gives you a sense of quality. As the restaurant has several themed areas you can enjoy Bushido for a range of dining events and I would say that Bushido does offer a unique dining experience in Bahrain. [\[5\]](#)



Paul Mercer is a long time Bahrain resident, international lawyer and food critic. Paul has travelled the Globe and has sampled some of the World's best cuisines. Paul will be combining his two great passions, writing and food, to provide us with his view on Bahrain's best restaurants.